

I'm not a bot





























I think that you or your child may have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and have spoken to your GP only to find that waiting times via the NHS are extended, you may be considering private assessment. In this guide, we share our 2024 research into the average cost of private ADHD assessment, along with waiting times around the country and some things to be aware of. The growth in demand for ADHD assessment in the past decade, the number of people seeking information about ADHD assessment for themselves or their children has risen sharply, with historic Google search data illustrating the explosion in interest. Pre-COVID-19, Google search activity in the UK for the term "ADHD assessment" was steadily increasing, but the pandemic triggered an acceleration of interest, which continued well after restrictions were lifted. According to Google Keyword Planner, at the peak of interest in April 2024, there were in the region of 12,000 searches for the term "ADHD assessment." However, if you combine that with variations of the same thing, "ADHD testing" or "ADHD diagnosis," for example, the number of searches was closer to 100,000, showing the scale of demand. What's causing the increase in people seeking ADHD assessment? There's likely not a single factor that's caused the increase in people seeking ADHD assessment, but more a combination, including: increased public awareness of neurodevelopmental conditions; the "unmasking" of symptoms due to lockdowns, school closures and working from home; the vocal work of charities to build awareness; social media users highlighting their experience with ADHD; whatever the cause, one thing is for certain: awareness and demand for assessment has increased significantly.

The lack of NHS ADHD waiting time data led The Petitions Committee to run an online survey in early 2023, asking people about their experiences with ADHD and autism assessments. Of the respondents who were waiting for a NHS ADHD assessment: 27% had been waiting between 1 and 6 months; 26% had been waiting between 6 months and 1 year; 24% had been waiting between 1 and 2 years; and 10% had been waiting between 2 and 3 years. The survey also found that most people who had received an assessment via the NHS had to wait over a year. Indeed, most of those (48%) surveyed and given a diagnosis had received it privately, with only 35% being diagnosed via the NHS. The BBC shines a light on long NHS waits. In July 2024, the BBC published an article claiming that waiting list backlogs in many areas of the UK were so long that it would take eight years to clear them. As part of the BBC's research, they submitted Freedom of Information requests to NHS trusts and health boards to find out how large the waiting lists were across the country, with 44 out of 66 responding. The BBC found that 177,404 people were waiting for ADHD assessments, with just 21,011 assessments carried out in 2023. So, somewhat inevitably, people are looking at the private sector for faster assessment and treatment. How much does it cost for private ADHD assessment and treatment? In June 2024, myTribe researchers contacted 401 private ADHD clinics across the UK, asking what they charge for assessment and follow-up consultations. Key findings - myTribe ADHD research: The average cost of a private ADHD assessment was £1,267 (£1,200 for adults and £1,361 for children). The average cost of a follow-up consultation was £173.55% of clinics offered in-person and online assessments, with 33% only seeing people in person and the remaining 12% being online. In-person assessments carried a slight premium of approximately 3% more than those online. The cost of ADHD assessment and follow-up consultations varied around the UK. The importance of knowing the cost of treatment alongside the benefits to private assessment is that you can see from our figures, waiting times for private assessment are the longest in Scotland, and assessment costs are the second highest in the UK, suggesting that demand for private services is such that providers are pushing prices. The risks associated with a private diagnosis there are undoubtedly benefits to private psychiatrists helping those looking for assessment, not least allowing people to get the treatment they need, but it's not without risks. While the upfront cost of assessment, with the need for follow-up consultations, private prescriptions and potentially therapy if diagnosed, can be costly, many believe that once they complete titration, they can return to the NHS, which can be challenging if their GP refuses a shared care agreement. A survey by ADHD UK in April 2024 found GP practices in Wales were most frequently refusing a shared care agreement, with just 19% being accepted. That's in comparison to 29% being accepted in Scotland, 38% in Northern Ireland and 58% in England. What happens if a shared care agreement is refused? NHS GPs are entitled to refuse a shared care agreement if they are not happy with the burden of responsibility it imposes or feel they lack the clinical experience needed to enter into it. If this happens, the patient with ADHD is faced with continuing to pay for private prescriptions and the associated psychiatrist fees to write the prescriptions (usually around £40 a time) or try to get a referral to the local NHS ADHD service if there is one. The charity ADHDAutUK has published recommendations of what to do if your shared care agreement is refused, which we've summarised below: Meet your GP and explain how not having medicine will impact your life. If your GP is unwilling to accept your diagnosis, you can ask if they will refer you through the NHS pathway and take on shared care while you are waiting. You can try to change your GP if you are having difficulties. You can read their full recommendations on their website. You don't need a GP referral to go private, but it's worth speaking to your GP first. Many people will have gone private, received the diagnosis they have suspected for some time, and then received the treatment they need to live a better life. We're not for a minute saying that those benefits are outweighed by the risks, which are primarily cost-related. But to best protect yourself from the risk of going back to the NHS, in fact, some people find it difficult to return to the NHS and, therefore, have little choice but to continue paying for private treatment (read more about this later in this article by clicking here).

Treatment options for ADHD: The NHS lists numerous treatment options for people with ADHD and states that a combination of medication and therapy is usually best. These are the most common treatment options according to the NHS: Medication that helps people concentrate better, be calmer and less impulsive. Therapy such as psychoeducation, behaviour therapy, CBT and coaching. Eating a healthy and balanced diet and considering taking supplements. What happens when you are diagnosed and recommended to start ADHD medicine? If your psychiatrist recommends and you agree to start a course of ADHD medicines, in most cases, you'll need to titrate under their care before you can look at going back to your NHS GP under a Shared Care Agreement. The process of finding the correct dosage of medicine through careful monitoring and regular follow-up consultations. Shared Care Agreement: An agreement between you, your GP and psychiatrist that enables prescribing and monitoring to be shared. How long it takes for each person to titrate and find a stable dose differs, but, often it'll be a minimum of three to six months before you can seek a shared care agreement and potentially reduce the cost of on-going medication based treatment. With the average cost of a private follow-up being £173, plus private prescription costs varying from £25-£125 depending on the medicine chosen, you shouldn't be surprised if you spend upwards of £1,000-£1,500 on top of the assessment fee, and that's without considering talking therapies or coaching. How much does a private ADHD assessment cost and what are typical follow-up fees? In June 2024, our private healthcare researchers contacted 401 private ADHD clinics across the UK to find the typical cost of a private ADHD assessment and the cost of follow-up consultations if a diagnosis is made. Overall, we found that the average cost of an ADHD assessment was £1,267 (£1,200 for adults and £1,361 for children). 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