Huntcliff Surgery

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Disorder Referral Process and Right to Choose (RTC)

**Introduction**

**Purpose:**This policy outlines the procedure for referring patients for Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessment under the NHS Right to Choose, ensuring that patients are informed of their options and receive timely and appropriate care.

**Scope:**This policy applies to all healthcare professionals within Huntcliff Surgery involved in the referral process for ADHD/autism assessments.

**Policy Statement:**Huntcliff Surgery is committed to providing patients with the opportunity to choose their healthcare provider for ADHD and autism assessments under the NHS Right to Choose. This policy ensures that patients are informed of their rights and that referrals are managed efficiently and effectively.

This document outlines the referral pathways for ADHD/autism and the Right to Choose (RTC) referral process for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessments. It aims to provide clear guidance for both practice staff and patients, ensuring an efficient and safe referral process.

The document is divided into two sections:

1. **Practice Implementation** – Guidance for staff on processing ADHD/Autism referrals
2. **Patient Information** – A structured guide to help patients understand their choices, responsibilities, and next steps.

**How to refer a patient**

A patient can be referred for an ADHD or autism assessment via the NHS pathway or they can pick the NHS Right to Choose Referral.

**What is the Right to Choose?**

Patients have the right to choose their provider for an ADHD or ASD assessment under the NHS Right to Choose (RTC) scheme. The surgery can then send a referral to these providers.

If the patient has any questions about their appointment, they must contact the provider directly. **RTC providers** are typically private companies with NHS contracts.

A useful website for both ADHD and autism Right to Choose: <https://adhduk.co.uk/diagnosis-pathways/>

ASD useful information: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/before-diagnosis/how-to-request-an-autism-assessment>

**Choosing a Right to Choose Provider**

Our GPs **cannot** select a provider on the patient's behalf. Patients must:

* Research their options.
* Choose a provider that meets their needs.
* Inform the practice of their choice so that we can advise on the next steps.

A useful resource for finding RTC providers for autism and ADHD is **ADHD UK**: [https://adhduk.co.uk](https://adhduk.co.uk/)

**Referrals**

Since each provider has its own referral process, our GPs cannot complete different forms for every provider. However, most require the same core information. To streamline this process:

* Patients will receive an **AccuRx questionnaire** to complete.
* This will allow us to **automatically collect the necessary information** for the referral.
* If the provider needs additional details, they can request them directly from the the patient.
* Patient’s must ensure that they provide all the information that the provider requires from them so that the provider can accept the referral. It is not the duty of the secretaries to chase patients for this information.

**Diagnosis and Follow-up**

* Most RTC providers operate remotely and conduct online assessments.
* NHS services may not accept these diagnoses, and additional assessments may be required before transitioning into NHS care.
* The RTC provider is responsible for arranging any transfer of care into the NHS. Some providers claim they cannot do this, but this is incorrect and leads to unnecessary delays and additional work for our team.

**Prescriptions and Shared Care Agreements**

If an RTC provider diagnoses a patient with ADHD, they may recommend medication. However:

* **ADHD medications are specialist-prescribed drugs**, meaning GPs **cannot routinely prescribe them**.
* The prescribing responsibility remains with the **specialist service**.
* The GP will accept shared care for prescribing but the patient must remain under the care of the RTC provider. The GP surgery will not continue to prescribe this medication if they do not have appropriate secondary care review.
* Please be advised that the NHS provider may not accept the RTC diagnosis without reassessment.
* It is the responsibility of the RTC provider to transition into NHS services if needed.

Patients should consider this before choosing a provider and ensure their RTC provider will continue prescribing any recommended medications.