



Private and Confidential

RE: Right to Choose (RTC) referral for child autism assessment

Dear

I am writing to you as my child's GP to request a referral for a child autism assessment for my child under Right to Choose (see Appendix A) through my chosen provider, The Owl Centre.

My child's name is _____ and their date of birth is _____

I have completed an AQ-10 form (attached), as per NHS protocol, which suggests they may be autistic. Further, I can confirm my child is eligible and does not meet any of the NHS exclusion criteria (Appendix B).

To refer my child to The Owl Centre, could you please:

- Visit the Right To Choose homepage on The Owl Centre's website and complete a referral form.
- Include my completed AQ-10 form as part of the referral.
- Include my child's patient summary care record, which should feature my contact details (phone number and email address).
- Send the completed referral form, along with attachments, to owl.rtc@nhs.net.

Background on The Owl Centre

I have chosen to exercise my Right to Choose for my child through The Owl Centre because they fulfil the NHS criteria to be able to offer the Right to Choose service. They have a commissioned contract with Norfolk and Waveney ICB for paediatric autism assessments. The contract details can be found in Appendix C.

The Owl Centre's Neurodevelopmental Service is led by Andrew Ryder (Head of Neurodiversity); accordingly, The Owl Centre's clinicians are relevant healthcare professionals under the terms of the relevant NHS guidance. If you have any questions about any of the information in this letter, please reach out to owl.rtc@nhs.net.

Regards,



Appendix A

Under the Right to Choose legislation, I have the right to nominate which qualified provider delivers my care. This change in the law is set out in NHS Gateway Publication number 07661, "Choice in Mental Health Care", published in February 2018, revised in 2021 and available [here](#).

The referral criteria that allow me to qualify for Right to Choose are as follows:

- "... must be offered, in respect of a first outpatient appointment with a team led by a named consultant or a named healthcare professional, a choice of any clinically appropriate health service provider with whom any relevant body has a commissioning contract for the service required as a result of the referral and a choice of a team led by a named consultant or a named healthcare professional."
- The legal right to choose a mental health provider applies when a patient is seeking an elective referral for their first outpatient appointment or a subsequent treatment and is referred by their GP. The referral must be clinically appropriate, and the service provider must have a commissioning contract with any Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Integrated Care Board (ICB), or NHS England, for the required service.

Common GP queries include:

- Does an IFR (individual funding request) need to be in place? It does not.
- Does the CCG need to be asked for permission? It does not.



Appendix B

The Owl Centre provides high-quality online assessments that offer a convenient and accessible option for many individuals. However, online assessments may not be suitable for everyone. If any of the following apply to you, we advise that an in-person assessment with an alternative healthcare provider would be more appropriate.

An online child autism assessment is not suitable if:

- Your child is under the age of 7.
- Your child is non-verbal and/or selectively mute.
- Your child is unable to communicate at a conversational level in English.
- They have a significant intellectual disability (IQ below 70) or severe developmental delay.
- They have a significant visual or hearing impairment that prevents you from engaging with online autism assessments.
- Your child is currently experiencing psychosis or have had a psychotic episode within the past six months.
- They pose a current risk to themselves or others, have made a suicide plan or attempt within the past six months, and/or are actively self-harming.
- They are awaiting treatment or are currently receiving care for an active eating disorder.
 - If they have been discharged from a specialist eating disorder service, they must wait at least six months before an assessment can take place.
- Your child's drug or alcohol use is significantly impacting your daily life, or you are currently receiving treatment for substance addiction.
- They have experienced a traumatic or acquired brain injury, have undergone brain surgery/ neurosurgery, or have a neurological condition that affects cognitive function.
- They have previously been assessed for autism by the NHS and are seeking a second opinion.
 - If they have had a private assessment before, we may be able to offer a review or full reassessment.
- Your child is currently serving a prison sentence, are on probation, or are on temporary release.
- Your child is undergoing a safeguarding investigation, have a child protection plan in place, or are involved in an ongoing police or criminal investigation.
 - Assessments can only proceed once these matters have been resolved.
- They are detained in a hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 or are under a Community Treatment Order.
- You do not have access to a suitable device for the assessment - a laptop or desktop computer with a microphone and web camera is required.
 - Mobile phones cannot be used for any assessments.
- You do not have access to a private internet connection for the assessment.
- You are unwilling to conduct the assessment with your camera turned on for the full duration.
- They are unwilling to confirm their identity via an online video call.
- You are unwilling to provide the contact details of your UK-based NHS GP.



Appendix C

- **Contract Title:** Autism Spectrum Disorder Service – CYP (2024-2028)
- **Contract Type:** NHS Standard Contract 2024/2025
- **Reference:** NW2024-61 / C282263
- **Signing Parties:** NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board and The Owl Centre