

Costs, Waiting Times & What to Expect

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- NHS assessment is free but waiting times vary hugely, commonly anywhere from several months to several years.
- Right to Choose is also free and is often (not always) quicker, though this varies by provider and area.
- Private assessments are typically the fastest route, with costs that vary by provider and assessment type.
- All figures below are approximate and change often; always confirm current details before deciding.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Figures, waiting times and costs in this guide are indicative, based on publicly available information as of mid-2026. They vary by region, provider and individual circumstances, and change over time; always check current details directly with the NHS, your ICB, or any provider before making decisions.

Why This Matters

Going in with realistic expectations (on both time and cost) makes it much easier to choose a route and plan around it, rather than being caught off guard partway through.

What This Might Look Like

- Being told a waiting time estimate that later turns out to be longer, due to high regional demand.
- Budgeting for a private assessment, then discovering follow-up or medication review costs weren't included.
- Feeling unprepared for how a report will be used (e.g. for workplace adjustments or shared care).

Approximate Waiting Times (as of mid-2026)

These vary enormously by region and are provided as general context only.

- Standard NHS route: commonly several months up to multiple years, depending on the area and service; some regions report waits of 2–8+ years for a full assessment.
- NHS Right to Choose: often faster, though estimates vary by provider; anywhere from a few months up to over a year is possible, and funding availability can change during the year.
- Private route: typically the fastest, often an initial appointment within a few weeks, though in-demand clinicians may have longer waits.

Approximate Costs (as of mid-2026)

NHS and Right to Choose routes are free at the point of use. Private costs vary by provider, clinician seniority, and scope.

- Private ADHD assessment: commonly in the region of a few hundred to around £1,500, with many providers clustering in the middle of that range.
- Private autism assessment: broadly similar or somewhat higher, depending on the tools used and clinician seniority.
- Combined ADHD + autism assessment: typically priced higher than a single assessment, but often less than booking both separately.
- Ongoing costs: some private routes involve extra fees for follow-up reviews, medication titration, or annual private prescribing if a shared care agreement with your NHS GP isn't in place.

Setting Realistic Expectations

- Ask any provider for a full, itemised cost (including report writing and follow-up) before booking.
- Ask whether a private report will be accepted by your NHS GP, employer or university, as this can vary.
- Waiting time estimates are often approximate and can lengthen due to demand; build in some flexibility.
- A diagnosis (or a decision not to pursue one) is the start of a process, not necessarily the end of one; many people need time afterward to process what it means for them.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

You don't have to use these exact words. Take what fits and leave the rest.

"Before I book, could you send me a full breakdown of costs, including the report and any follow-up appointments?"

"Roughly how long is the current wait for a first appointment, and how often does that change?"

Quick Tips

- Always ask for current waiting times directly; published figures can be out of date quickly.
- Get a full, itemised private quote before committing.
- Check whether a private report will be recognised by your NHS GP or employer.
- Factor in follow-up or medication review costs, not just the initial assessment fee.
- Regional variation is significant; your experience may differ a lot from someone else's.
- It's reasonable to contact more than one provider to compare before deciding.

Want to Know More?

- NHS England and your local ICB website publish official (though sometimes delayed) waiting time data.
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) lets you check a private provider's registration status.

- See our companion guide: “NHS vs Private Diagnosis” to weigh up which route may suit you.

Before You Go

Costs and waiting times are genuinely frustrating parts of a stretched system; if this feels overwhelming, that's an understandable response, not a personal failing.

Whatever route and timeline you end up with, you're allowed to take the process at a pace that works for you.