

Supporting an Employee Through Assessment

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Going through an ND assessment process — whether NHS or private — can be a long, uncertain, and emotional experience.
- You don't need to manage the process itself, but small, consistent support from you can make a real difference to how someone copes with it.

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).

Why This Matters

Assessment processes — especially NHS routes — can take months or years, with long waits and little communication in between.

That uncertainty is genuinely tiring to carry alongside a full workload, even when someone doesn't show it outwardly.

Consistent, low-pressure support from a manager can meaningfully reduce that burden, without you needing to be involved in the process itself.

What This Might Look Like

- Someone mentioning an upcoming assessment appointment, then going quiet about it afterwards.

- A colleague seeming more anxious or distracted in the weeks around an assessment.
- Someone asking for time off for an appointment without wanting to explain why.
- A team member waiting many months between an initial referral and an actual appointment date.

What You Can Do

1. Make time off for appointments straightforward.

- Treat assessment-related appointments like any other confidential medical appointment — no interrogation required.
- Offer flexibility around appointment timing without requiring detailed justification.

2. Check in without pressing for updates.

- Let them know you're available to talk, without asking "so, any news?" repeatedly.
- Follow their lead on how much they want to share about progress or outcome.

3. Prepare for possible outcomes without assuming one.

- Assessments can result in a formal diagnosis, no diagnosis, or an inconclusive outcome — all are valid.
- Avoid assuming a diagnosis is coming, or reacting with surprise if it doesn't.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

Offering support without pressing for detail:

"Just checking in — is there anything happening with your appointment that I can help make easier, workload-wise or otherwise?"

Responding after they share an outcome (whatever it is):

"Thanks for telling me. Once you've reflected on how that's landed for you, let me know if anything needs to change about how we work together."

Quick Tips

- Assessment waits can be long — a year or more isn't unusual on NHS pathways.
- Treat appointments as routine confidential medical time, not something to interrogate.
- Let the person set the pace on sharing updates.
- All possible outcomes — diagnosis, no diagnosis, inconclusive — are valid and deserve the same respect.
- Ongoing uncertainty is tiring, even when someone seems fine day to day.
- Your role is steady support, not managing the process itself.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: "Leave/Time-Off Approaches" for practical time-off arrangements.
- See "Financial Support Considerations" if private assessment costs come up.
- See "Post-Assessment Guide" (ND Professionals section) for what the employee themselves may be experiencing

Before You Go

You don't need to solve the wait or the uncertainty — just be a steady, low-pressure presence through it.

That consistency often matters more than anything else you could offer.