

# Neurodevelopmental Pathway

**Helping your neurodiverse  
workforce thrive**

Available on healthcare  
schemes covering 250+  
members on an Optimum or  
Optimum Referral product.

For employer and adviser use only.





# What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodivergent people have cognitive conditions which mean they think and process information differently. Their cognitive profile is different to that of the average or 'neurotypical' person and their learning, problem solving, sociability and attention may be affected.

Neurodiversity is typically associated with neurodevelopmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The concept of neurodiversity helps us view people as individuals rather than a collection of disorders, conditions or behaviours. This helps create a positive change in social perception and attitude about neurodevelopmental conditions.

Neurodiversity encompasses a wide range of neurodevelopmental disorders including:

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Tourette's syndrome and specific learning differences such as dyslexia.**



# Why neurodivergent people are an asset in the workplace

With around one in seven people estimated to be neurodivergent<sup>1</sup>, it's more than likely you'll have employees with a neurodiverse condition.

Often, their capacity for thinking in a different way means neurodivergent employees bring valuable skills to the workplace. These include:

- ✓ spotting patterns and trends
- ✓ thinking creatively
- ✓ analysing data
- ✓ innovating
- ✓ solving problems
- ✓ processing information quickly
- ✓ taking risks
- ✓ paying attention to detail
- ✓ seeing things from a different perspective
- ✓ keeping things consistent

1. Neurodiversity, The Donaldson Trust. [www.donaldsons.org.uk/neurodiversity/](http://www.donaldsons.org.uk/neurodiversity/)

# Neurodiversity assessment and mental health

Awareness around neurodiversity and neurodevelopmental conditions is constantly increasing, with psychiatry recognising the importance of effective support and guidance. However, people may have to wait a long time for support.<sup>2</sup>

There are plenty of benefits to receiving a formal diagnosis. Mainly, it can help someone's workplace or school environment adapt to suit their needs. Without this, it can lead to increased frustration, stress and anxiety.

It can also help healthcare professionals provide the right treatment and support for mental health. If an autistic person has depression, their emotions and behaviours will be different to a neurotypical person with depression. Knowing their diagnosis can help the clinician provide appropriate help. Without diagnosis, there is an increased risk of misunderstanding, misdiagnosis and potentially poorer outcomes.

**The neurodiversity movement supports the idea that developmental differences should be embraced and seen as typical, instead of treated like symptoms of disorders.**

# Helping fill gaps in NHS support

Our neurodevelopmental pathway can help speed up access to diagnosis for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Tourette's syndrome. This gives your members the clarity and tools they need to understand their condition and start to focus on reaching their potential.

It's available to group members and dependents aged seven years and over, covered on the scheme. This is because children under seven often have more complex needs which can be better supported through the multidisciplinary team approach offered through the NHS.

You can find out more about ADHD, ASD and Tourette's in our employer's guide to [\*\*Neurodiversity in the Workplace.\*\*](#)





# Expert support for employees with neurodevelopmental disorders

The neurodevelopmental pathway is an expert-led service, which helps speed up the initial assessment and diagnosis of ADHD, ASD and Tourette's syndrome.

Working with psychiatric experts, our cover has been specially designed to provide short-term support following diagnosis, either through adapted Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and/or prescription and stabilisation of medication.

The neurodevelopmental pathway offers one-on-one adapted CBT, rather than generic group-based therapy. This means that the support is personalised to the individual's unique needs. Your members can also choose how this is delivered based on their personal needs and which stage of the journey they're on.

## Neurodevelopmental pathway offers:

- ✓ **Support for adults and children aged seven years and over** with traits which could be undiagnosed ADHD, ASD and Tourette's syndrome
- ✓ **Prompt access** to private diagnosis and guidance – removing the need to wait on the NHS
- ✓ **Simple process** - no need for members to get a GP referral before contacting us
- ✓ **1:1 personalised support** from case managers and qualified mental health clinicians from our third party clinical provider. CBT tailored to the individual's exact needs. Support is available online or face-to-face, where appropriate
- ✓ **Clinical best practice** - members receive a comprehensive report offering guidance designed to deliver the best outcomes
- ✓ **Complements** NHS provision and support offered through CAMHS and the workplace. This includes shared care and medication review for up to two years with the patient's GP
- ✓ **Additional support** - seamless transfer to our Mental Health Pathway (if selected) for members aged 12 years and over

# Neurodevelopmental pathway

When people call our dedicated neurodevelopmental claims helpline, they will be referred to the neurodevelopmental pathway provider. A specialist case manager will then guide them to access the online screening questionnaire which is used to determine whether they require a more comprehensive assessment for ADHD, ASD or Tourette's syndrome. It will also be used to highlight any other high risk mental health concerns that require urgent attention.

If they go on to receive a detailed assessment, the specialist clinic will produce a comprehensive clinical report offering recommendations and guidance to help support them in their everyday life, where needed.

If they are diagnosed with ADHD, ASD or Tourette's syndrome, they may be recommended to have a course of adapted CBT to help manage their condition and/or any co-existing mental health problems.

The person or their guardian will get a copy of this report and it will be sent by the specialist clinic to their GP, if they have permission to do so. This report can help create a conversation around the person's needs and how adapting their school or workplace can help them.



# Guided pathway offering support every step of the way

## Step 1

The employee will call our dedicated neurodevelopmental claims team, who will refer them to our third-party provider.

## Step 2

After completing an online screening assessment with our provider, results will be analysed by a case manager. They'll receive a comprehensive report which will outline the recommendations like adaptations at home, work, and school, if applicable. The report is routinely shared with the member's GP, with consent.

**A.** If a comprehensive assessment is needed, the employee will be referred to a clinical assessor. This will be either a psychiatrist or a paediatrician if the employee is acting on behalf of a child.

**B.** If no further investigation is required, the employee will be signposted to other useful resources. Employees that don't get a diagnosis on the neurodevelopmental pathway might benefit from our mental health pathway if, your client has selected this.

## Step 3

The member will then receive tailored support in line with the recommendations of their assessment, in-person or online. This might include adapted CBT. The therapist will complete reports about progress, which can be shared with the member's GP.



# Summary of benefit

## What's included

- ✓ Self-referral into pre-assessment screening for ASD, ADHD and Tourette's in members aged seven and above
- ✓ Psychiatrist or paediatrician led assessment for ASD, ADHD and Tourette's in members aged seven and above
- ✓ Adapted CBT for members diagnosed with ASD, ADHD and Tourette's. The session is provided on a one-to-one basis, and the content is tailored to the individual's exact needs
- ✓ Consultations with a clinical specialist for up to two years to support stabilisation and monitoring of ADHD medication (please note that this aspect of the service can only be accessed if you have received your ADHD diagnosis through the neurodevelopmental pathway)
- ✓ Diagnostic tests ahead of prescription of ADHD medication

## Other things to know:

- ✓ If you've selected an out-patient benefit limit on your scheme – this doesn't apply to the neurodiversity benefit
- ✓ If you've selected a member excess on your scheme – this doesn't apply to the neurodiversity benefit
- ✓ This benefit isn't impacted by medical underwriting
- ✓ If you've selected the mental health pathway – members aged 12 years and over can be seamlessly transferred from the neurodevelopmental pathway for additional mental health support, where required

# Summary of benefit

## Other things to know:

- ✓ Assessment of other neurodiverse conditions e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia
- ✓ A second opinion where the member has previously been diagnosed
- ✓ CBT in the absence of a neurodevelopmental diagnosis, this would be covered under the scheme mental health benefit
- ✓ Assessment and support for children under seven years old where required
- ✓ Long-term CBT linked to neurodevelopmental conditions.

## Why aren't other conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia covered?

We've designed our benefits to cover conditions that can be diagnosed by a mental health specialist and that benefit from mental health support.

Conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia are usually diagnosed by a different type of screening test available from the NHS. This screening test can also be arranged by a child's school as part of a broader assessment process.

# Finding additional support

**Autism** - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism)

**ADHD** - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd)

**Dyslexia** - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia)

**Developmental co-ordination disorder (dyspraxia) in children** - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/developmental-coordination-disorder-dyspraxia](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/developmental-coordination-disorder-dyspraxia)

**ADHD Foundation** - [www.adhdfoundation.org.uk](http://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk)

**The Autism Trust UK** - [www.theautismtrust.org.uk](http://www.theautismtrust.org.uk)

**What is Neurodiversity?** - [www.autisticuk.org](http://www.autisticuk.org)

**Useful autism resources and training** - [www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/about/useful-autism-resources-and-training/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/about/useful-autism-resources-and-training/)

**Special educational needs and disability (SEND):** [www.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-and-high-needs](http://www.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-and-high-needs)

**Tourette's syndrome** - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/tourettes-syndrome](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tourettes-syndrome)

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