

# Neurodevelopmental Pathway

Helping your neurodiverse workforce thrive

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

For adviser and  
employer use only



# What is neurodiversity?

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Neurodiversity is commonly discussed within the context of neurodevelopmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Individuals may be described as neurodivergent if they have a cognitive profile that is different to that of the average or 'neurotypical' person.

Neurodiversity is the idea that these cognitive conditions are natural variations in the way people think and process information. Affected traits may include, learning, problem-solving, sociability and attention.

The concept of neurodiversity helps us view people as individuals rather than a collection of disorders, conditions, or behaviours. This in turn is helping drive 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. They bring great value to your workplace. Because they literally think differently to neurotypical people, neurodivergent employees approach situations differently, which can be invaluable.

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
- ✓ Seeing things from a different perspective



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

# Neurodiversity assessment and mental health

Neurodiversity and neurodevelopmental conditions are increasingly recognised as being important within psychiatry. However, it's likely that individuals may have to wait a long time to get the appropriate support for neurodevelopmental conditions on the NHS<sup>2</sup>.

The term neurodiversity is increasingly being used to recognise the unique differences in the way our brains are wired, rather than simply labelling neurodivergent behaviour as a 'disorder.'

Whilst this is a positive move, there are advantages to accessing formal diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental condition. For example, if left undiagnosed, the individual could be faced with a workplace or school environment that isn't appropriate to their needs, unadjusted learning or unsympathetic school or working conditions. This in turn can contribute to increased frustration, stress and anxiety.

Moreover, it can be important to recognise the relevance of the neurodevelopmental condition when supporting someone's mental health. Recognising that a person with depression is also autistic for example, can change how the individual and their emotions and behaviours are understood, and help the clinician provide more appropriate help. Not recognising that the individual has a neurodevelopmental condition could increase the risks 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.**

2. Autism Statistics, July 2022 to June 2023. NHS Digital, Sept 2023. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

# Helping fill gaps in NHS support

The neurodevelopmental pathway can help speed up access to diagnosis for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Tourette's syndrome giving 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**.



# Neurodevelopmental pathway expert support for employees with neurodevelopmental disorders

The neurodevelopmental pathway is an expert-led service, which helps speed 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

Individuals simply call our dedicated neurodevelopmental claims helpline to be referred to the neurodevelopmental pathway provider. A specialist case manager will guide the individual to access the online screening questionnaire. This will be used to determine whether the individual requires 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 requiring urgent attention.

If the individual goes 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 the individual is 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 individual or guardian will get a copy of this report. It will also be sent by the specialist clinic to the individual's GP, if they've permission to do so. The individual/guardian can also share the report with the contact at their child's school or their workplace. In either setting this report could be an enabler to a more 'productive' conversation around an individual's needs and how adapting the setting can help them.



# Guided pathway offering support every step of the way





# 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.

### What's not included

- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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.

## Additional information

**Aviva's employers' guide to neurodiversity in the workplace**

<https://www.aviva.co.uk/healthcarezone/documents/view/gen7433.pdf>

Autism - NHS Autism - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/>

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) - NHS Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) -

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>

Tourette's syndrome - Tourette's syndrome -

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tourettes-syndrome/>

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