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ADHD and autism

Understanding yourself and finding support

Information and places to turn

For people aged 16 and over

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You do not need a diagnosis to use this guide. Some services have rules about who can use them. At 16 or 17, check that a service accepts your age group.

About the links

Check current costs, age limits and availability directly. Read each service’s privacy notice before sharing personal details.

Understanding autism

Autism affects people differently. These websites explain experiences, assessment and everyday support.

NHS autism information

Information about autism, getting assessed and support with health and everyday life.

Open NHS autism information Free.

National Autistic Society

UK information about diagnosis, sensory needs, communication, relationships and work, with links to local branches.

Open National Autistic Society Free information. Choose adult or 16+ material.

Thriving Autistic

Information and meetups run by autistic people to help you understand yourself after diagnosis or when you think you may be autistic.

Open Thriving Autistic Ireland-based. Check fees and access for live support.

Discovery Programme : For newly diagnosed autistic adults. Free videos, guides and worksheets in six sections, to use at your own pace.

Autistica

UK autism research explained for the public, including health, wellbeing and employment.

Open Autistica Free information.

Autistica Tips Hub : An app with everyday ideas shared by autistic people and informed by research.

Autism Central

A free programme commissioned by NHS England and delivered by Anna Freud for families, partners, friends and carers of autistic people. Offers one-to-one support from trained people with personal or family experience of autism, online groups, practical guidance and videos. Helps supporters understand autism, manage everyday difficulties and find services.

Open Autism Central For supporters, not personal treatment.

Autism identity and young people

Autistic women and girls

National Autistic Society information about later identification and masking: hiding or changing your natural responses to fit expectations.

Open Autistic women and girls Free.

Autistic Girls Network

Information about identity, masking, relationships, work and mental wellbeing, plus details of peer support.

Open Autistic Girls Network For girls, women and people of different gender identities. Check adult or 16+ options and fees.

Know Yourself

Videos, guides and worksheets created with autistic teenagers about identity, everyday life and noticing what uses or restores energy.

Open Know Yourself Free. Particularly relevant to ages 16 and 17.

Ambitious about Autism

Information and opportunities for autistic young people about feeling well, relationships, education and moving into work.

Open Ambitious about Autism Check the age range and who can take part.

Know Your Normal

A free toolkit to record your usual mood, sleep, activities and wellbeing, so changes are easier to notice and explain.

Open Know Your Normal For autistic young people, including ages 16+.

Understanding ADHD

NHS adult ADHD information

An overview of ADHD in adults, assessment, medication, talking therapies and everyday support.

Open NHS adult ADHD information Free. At 16 or 17, ask your GP about local services for young people.

CNWL Adult ADHD Service

How to get referred, plus a handbook, videos and online talks about living with ADHD and support while waiting for assessment.

Open referral information and ADHD resources Free resources. For assessment: age 18+, a GP referral and a GP in North West London, including Hounslow. Other rules apply.

ADHD UK

Information about ADHD assessments, work and practical support, plus online groups for adults with ADHD.

Open ADHD UK Free information.

Right to Choose : Explains how some people in England can choose who carries out their NHS assessment and how to ask for a referral.

ADHD Aware

Online groups to share experiences of adult ADHD, daily life and relationships. Some are for partners or parents of adults with ADHD.

Open ADHD Aware Check booking, fees and availability.

ADHD and autism together

Having both ADHD and autism is sometimes called AuDHD. You can use resources from either topic, depending on what fits your needs.

Centre for ADHD and Autism Support

Information, groups and practical support about ADHD, autism and everyday challenges.

Open Centre for ADHD and Autism Support Many services are limited to parts of North West London. Check the area, age range, fees and how to join.

Neurodiverse Connection

Guides about managing noise, light and other sensations, looking after yourself and having a say in your support, plus training and community projects.

Open Neurodiverse Connection Free resources. Some groups or training may charge.

Stimpunks

Articles about noise, light and other sensations, communication, belonging and stimming: repeated movements or sounds that can help someone feel settled or express themselves.

Open Stimpunks Free. US-based personal experiences, work on disability rights and research. UK services and laws differ.

Brain in Hand

A planning app with specialist coaching and human support for organising daily life and managing overwhelm.

Open Brain in Hand Paid service. Ask about funding through work, education or services before paying.

Finding therapy and coaching

Therapy helps with feelings and mental health difficulties. Coaching usually focuses on planning, organisation and routines.

Being neurodivergent does not necessarily make a therapist or coach an expert in neurodivergence or any co-occurring conditions you may have. Ask about their qualifications, relevant training and experience, fees and age range, and how they would support your individual needs.

Autistic Therapist Directory

Profiles of therapists who identify as autistic, with UK online and in-person options.

Open Autistic Therapist Directory Free to search; therapy fees vary.

Neurodivergent Practitioner Directory

Search for therapists, coaches, assessment services, support groups and people who help you speak up for your needs. Listed professionals have personal experience of being neurodivergent, such as ADHD or autism.

Open Neurodivergent Practitioner Directory Includes other countries. Check UK practice, qualifications and fees.

Psychology Today

Search UK therapist profiles by location, online access, approach and the difficulties you want support with.

Open Psychology Today Free to search; therapy fees vary.

National Autistic Society services directory

Find UK groups, assessments, therapy and services that help autistic people speak up for their needs.

Open National Autistic Society services directory Costs and rules about who can use each service vary.

Questions you could ask a therapist

1. What training and experience do you have in supporting people with ADHD or autism and the difficulties I want help with?
2. How would you adapt sessions to my communication, sensory and processing needs?
3. How would we agree goals and review whether the therapy is helping me?

These directories are examples and are by no means exhaustive. Many general therapy directories also let you search for therapists by the difficulties you want support with.

PDA Society directory and guides

Information about strong anxiety or distress around everyday demands, practical adult guides and a directory of support. PDA is a term used for this pattern of difficulties, not a separate recognised diagnosis.

Find the PDA directory and support guides Free information. Check qualifications and fees for listed providers.

Professional Association for ADHD Coaches

Information about ADHD coaching, coach qualifications and finding a coach.

Open Professional Association for ADHD Coaches International. Free to browse; coaching fees vary.

The Grove Practice

A therapy directory and a paid online workshop called Thrive with Adult ADHD, led by Dr James Kustow and Robert Rees.

Browse the practice and therapy options Check individual practitioner qualifications and fees.

Thrive with Adult ADHD workshop : A one-day course for adults with diagnosed or suspected ADHD and professionals. It is not assessment or therapy.

Making therapy accessible

Reasonable adjustments are changes that make services easier to use. Ask your service to record and review the changes you agree together.

National Autistic Society professional resources

Articles you can share with a therapist about autism, communication, sensory needs and adapting support.

Open National Autistic Society professional resources — Free information; training may charge.

National Autistic Society and Mind guide

A free guide about adapting talking therapies, including communication, session structure and the environment.

Find the guide to adapting talking therapies

Requesting reasonable adjustments

Examples and a letter template to help autistic people ask mental health services for changes.

Open Requesting reasonable adjustments — Free. Covers laws in England, Scotland and Wales; Northern Ireland differs.

ADHD adjustment ideas from CNWL

Examples of changes such as movement breaks, extra thinking time and written summaries.

Read ADHD reasonable adjustment examples — Free. Many examples concern work or study; discuss which could help in therapy.

An example request: Please send me a short written summary of our session and the next steps, so I do not have to remember everything.

Therapy Passport for Autistic Adults

Thriving Autistic's passport and companion Self-Reflection Guide help you record your therapy goals, communication and sensory needs, and adjustments you would like to discuss with your therapist. Designed for autistic adults; at 16 or 17, discuss its use with your therapist.

Open the Therapy Passport and Self-Reflection Guide

Peer and community support

Ask what a first meeting is like, whether you have to speak and whether you can leave early. These groups help people meet others with similar experiences. They are not therapy or emergency care.

AuPeer

Online groups run by autistic people for autistic adults to meet others and share experiences.

Open AuPeer Check costs, age requirements and joining arrangements.

Asperger London Area Group

London meetings, discussions and events for autistic adults without a learning disability.

Open Asperger London Area Group Check membership, location and costs.

London Friend

LGBTQ+ counselling, wellbeing support and social groups; check current neurodivergent group options.

Open London Friend Check age range, fees and group arrangements.

Resources for Autism

Groups and practical support for autistic people and families, including adult services in some areas.

Open Resources for Autism Check adult or 16+ options, areas covered, fees and how to join.

Meetup

Find independently organised social and interest groups, including autistic and ADHD adult groups.

Open Meetup Check the organiser, fees, age limits and whether the venue meets your needs. These groups are not checked by the NHS.

AutAngel

Groups run by autistic people to meet others and share interests, including books, crafts and gardening, based in Reading.

Open AutAngel Most groups are for people near Reading. Check online options, waiting lists and costs.

Autism reading

Choose one article, book or episode if useful. You do not need to agree with every explanation or finish what you start.

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

Books by autistic people and clinicians about understanding yourself, relationships and personal experiences.

Browse books about autism — Free list. Choose adult or 16+ titles; books may cost.

East London NHS Foundation Trust

Autism information and wellbeing resources about communication, sensory needs and growing up.

Browse City and Hackney autism resources — Free. Includes younger-child material; select what fits age 16+.

For Wired to Feel, see the IFS section on page 14.

ADHD reading

Sorrel Lucy ADHD Coaching reading list

A UK coach's selection of six books about understanding and living with ADHD. The titles are listed below.

Browse the six ADHD books Free list; books may cost. These are the coach's selections.

ADHD 2.0

Edward M. Hallowell and John J. Ratey
An overview of ADHD with ideas for everyday support.

ADHD Explained

Edward M. Hallowell
A visual introduction to ADHD and how it can affect daily life.

How to ADHD

Jessica McCabe
Practical ideas and personal experiences about living with ADHD.

ADHD Body and Mind

Miguel Toribio-Mateas
Explores ADHD, physical wellbeing, nutrition and gut health.

How to Thrive with Adult ADHD

James Kustow
A structured approach to focus, daily routines and wellbeing.

Your Brain's Not Broken

Tamara Rosier
Explores emotions, organisation and everyday ADHD challenges.

Books contain different viewpoints and are not NHS treatment recommendations. Advice about nutrition or supplements does not replace medical advice or prescribed treatment.

PAAC ADHD book list

A wider book list about ADHD, relationships, practical strategies and coaching.

Browse the PAAC book list Free list. Includes US, professional and child-focused titles; choose adult or suitable 16+ material.

Work education and everyday support

Access to Work

Government information and applications for help with disability-related work costs, such as equipment, practical support or travel.

Open Access to Work England, Scotland and Wales. Check who can apply before buying support. Northern Ireland has a separate scheme.

Explaining access needs

Unlimited's guide to writing a short document that explains the changes you need to take part in work or activities.

Read the access needs guide Free PDF, written for arts and cultural work. Discuss your requests with the organisation.

Disabled Students' Allowance

How students in higher education in England can apply for help with disability-related study costs.

Open Disabled Students' Allowance Check who can apply. Elsewhere in the UK, ask your student-finance service. School and college students can ask their learning support team.

Learning Disability England

Information about rights, speaking up and good support for people who also have a learning disability.

Open Learning Disability England For people who also have a learning disability. ADHD and autism do not automatically mean someone has a learning disability.

Disability Rights UK

Information on disability rights, benefits, independent living, education and work.
Free online guidance; some publications charge. Check which UK nation applies.

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/guidance-resources

Optional reading about parts work

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is a psychological therapy with a developing evidence base. It describes different feelings and reactions as “parts” of ourselves. Some of the reading in this guide explores using IFS with neurodivergent clients carrying internalised shame from years of masking, or hiding their differences.

Including IFS does not mean it is a recommended treatment for ADHD or autism. It may be of interest if you want to explore a non-pathologising approach. Training levels and certification status vary between practitioners. Completing IFS training is not the same as being IFS-certified. Ask about their qualifications, IFS training, certification and experience with other therapy approaches.

No Bad Parts and the IFS Institute

No Bad Parts by Richard Schwartz introduces IFS and compares it with other therapy approaches. The Institute explains IFS, training and its therapist directory.

Explore the IFS Institute Free website information; books and therapy may cost.

IFS certification requirements : Explains the separate certification process and what practitioners must complete.

No Bad Parts : Information about Richard Schwartz’s introductory book.

Outline of the IFS model : The developers’ explanation of the approach.

Feel Better Live More episode 244

Dr Richard Schwartz explains and demonstrates IFS with Dr Rangan Chatterjee.

Listen to the IFS episode Free. Includes discussion of trauma and personal experiences; choose whether it feels suitable.

Wired to Feel: Autism as a Condition of Sensory Surplus

Sarah Bergenfield and Martha Sweezy

Explores autism through sensory experience, emotions and the nervous system. The authors bring together lived autistic experience, neuroscience and adapted Internal Family Systems (IFS) ideas to explore overwhelm, self-understanding and self-compassion. The book presents a sensory-surplus perspective: differences in how much sensory information is experienced.

Read about the book (publisher)

Explore Sarah Bergenfield's work

Dr Jay Watts, Sarah Bergenfield and Jude Carn all explore IFS in relation to neurodivergence. You can search for their work if you would like to explore further.

Neurodivergence resources and listening

Neurodivergent Insights

Articles, diagrams, videos and workbooks about ADHD and autism, masking, sensory needs, emotions and exhaustion.

Open Neurodivergent Insights US-based. Free articles; some workbooks and courses charge. Resources do not diagnose.

The Help Me Stay Plan for safety planning : A free workbook adapted for neurodivergent people to identify warning signs, ways to cope and people or services to contact. Complete it with a clinician or someone you trust. Add UK contacts; it does not provide emergency care.

Dr Jay Watts

Free ideas for using sounds, textures and other sensations to feel more settled when overwhelmed or distressed, plus links to other wellbeing guides.

Read ideas for feeling more settled Free. The author·s ideas, not NHS treatment guidance.

Read about self-criticism and IFS: Exploring internalised ableism and the shame that can come from hiding difference.

Jenna Free ADHD Regulation Guide

A guide and video about stress, overwhelm and ways of feeling more settled.

Get the free guide and video Requires a name and email address.

ADHD with Jenna Free podcast : Episodes about ADHD, overwhelm and everyday coping.

Jenna Free’s approach is not a proven treatment for ADHD. Use it as optional self-help, not a replacement for treatment.

Jenna describes herself as a therapist with ADHD. Her approach combines body-based (nervous system) regulation with work on thoughts, beliefs and behaviour, placing more emphasis on regulation than on organisation and time-management tips.