

Your legal Right to Choose

If your GP agrees that your child is showing signs of autism and is willing to make a referral to an NHS autism assessment service, you have the legal right to choose which NHS provider you are referred to.

Right to Choose is not a practice "policy" and every NHS GP – it is a legal right under the NHS Choice Framework. Remind them that if they agree an assessment is clinically necessary, they must honor your choice of an NHS-contracted provider.

Find out more about your legal right to choose [here](#)

What to do if your NHS GP refuses

If your GP declines your Right to Choose request, follow these steps.

Step 1: The Appointment Request

If your GP refuses the referral during your consultation, ask: "Can you please provide the clinical reason for this refusal in writing for my records?"

Step 2: The Evidence Phase

Present the GP with the documentation regarding the provider's NHS contract. Clarify that this is an RTC pathway, not an Individual Funding Request (IFR).

Step 3: The Administrative Review

If the GP remains hesitant, request a follow-up appointment or a phone call with the Practice Manager to discuss the legalities of the referral.

Step 4: The External Escalation

If the surgery still refuses to process the paperwork, contact your local ICB Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Inform them that your legal right to choice is being restricted by your GP practice.

GP appointment checklist

Before the appointment

Complete Screeners: Have your AQ-10 or CAT-Q forms ready.

Know Your Rights: You are exercising the NHS Choice Framework to select your provider.

Evidence Pack: Bring school reports, SENCO notes, or any previous assessments.

Document the "Why": Note specific impacts on daily life (social, sensory, routines, communication, and emotional regulation).

At the appointment

State Clearly: "I am exercising my Right to Choose to be referred to Paloma Health."

The Referral: Give the GP the link below or scan the QR code to access the secure form.

Verify: Ensure your child's name, DOB, and address are accurate in the system.

Confirm: Ask the GP to confirm the referral has been submitted

GP referral information

To refer a patient to our service:

- **Check Eligibility:** Ensure the patient meets the [referral criteria](#).
- **Submit Referral:**
 - To refer to our **Exeter pathway (hybrid or remote)** please complete the online form at paloma.health/referral.
 - To refer to our **Norwich pathway**
 - If you are an **NHS GP in Norfolk and Suffolk ICB** please complete the local referral form available via your Intranet.
 - If you are an **NHS GP located outside of Norfolk and Suffolk ICB** please contact our support team at paloma.health@nhs.net