

Wareham Surgery Policy: ADHD in Children (Under 18 Years)

Purpose

This policy outlines the referral pathway, prescribing responsibilities, and key information for the assessment and management of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and young people under the age of 18 within Dorset.

Scope

This policy applies to all clinical and administrative staff at Wareham Surgery and provides guidance for managing enquiries, referrals, and prescribing responsibilities relating to suspected or diagnosed ADHD in patients under 18 years of age.

1. Referral Pathway in Dorset

- Referrals for ADHD assessments must be initiated by the child's school and directed to NHS Community Paediatric Services.
- GPs are not permitted to refer directly to Community Paediatrics for ADHD assessment, as such referrals will not be accepted.
- Parents should therefore liaise with their child's school to request that concerns be raised formally through the appropriate education referral pathway.

2. Private ADHD Assessments

- Some parents may choose to seek a private ADHD assessment to obtain a timelier diagnosis.
- Wareham Surgery GPs cannot assume prescribing responsibility for ADHD medication in children diagnosed and treated privately.
- The private provider retains full responsibility for ongoing review, prescribing, and monitoring until the child reaches 18 years of age.
- Alternatively, private assessment reports can be shared with the child's school, who may then refer to NHS Community Paediatrics, allowing NHS specialists to take over prescribing responsibility.

3. Right to Choose Pathway

Under NHS England's "Right to Choose" arrangements, patients may access certain NHS-recognised out-of-area ADHD providers.

Examples include:

- Psicon Healthcare – <https://www.psicon.co.uk/>
- ADHD UK – Right to Choose – <https://adhduk.co.uk/right-to-choose/>
- Memorial Medical Centre – <https://www.memorialmedicalcentre.co.uk/services/adhd-asd-assessment-right-to-choose/>

Important:

- Wareham Surgery cannot enter into shared care or accept prescribing responsibility for any patient under 18 years who is assessed or treated by a Right to Choose provider.
- Prescribing responsibility remains with the assessing provider until the patient is transferred to NHS Community Paediatric Services, or until they turn 18.
- As with private assessments, the Right to Choose report can be shared with the child's school to enable referral into NHS Community Paediatrics for continued management.

4. Transition to Adult Services (18 Years and Over)

When a patient reaches 18 years of age, a referral to Adult ADHD Services will be required. This may be completed by the Community Paediatrician or, where appropriate, by the GP.

5. Additional Resources for Parents and Schools

For further information and support:

- IPSEA – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice – <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>
- Dorset SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service – <https://www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk/>
- Dorset Council – Autism, ADHD and Neurological Conditions – <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/autism-adhd-and-neurological-conditions>

6. Key Points Summary

- GPs cannot refer children for ADHD assessment directly.
- GPs cannot prescribe ADHD medication for under-18s diagnosed privately or via Right to Choose.
- Prescribing responsibility remains with the private or Right to Choose provider until age 18.
- Schools are the primary referral route into NHS Community Paediatrics.
- Transition to adult ADHD services is required at 18 years.

Approved by: Wareham Surgery GP Partners

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