

How to Get an Autism Diagnosis in Lewisham

A practical guide for children, young people and adults

This guide is for:

- Parents/carers who are concerned their child or young person may be autistic
- Adults who think they may be autistic and want an assessment
- Professionals supporting families in Lewisham

Step 1: Speak to Your GP (or Health Professional)

The first step is to talk to:

- Your GP, or
- A health professional already involved (e.g. health visitor, school nurse)

Explain:

- What traits or difficulties you are noticing
- How these affect daily life (school, home, work, relationships)

You can ask directly for a referral for an autism assessment.

Step 2: What You Will Need

Before or during the referral, it helps to gather:

- Examples of behaviours or differences you've noticed
- Information from school or nursery (if applicable)
- Any previous reports (SEN support plans, CAMHS letters, SALT, OT reports)

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You **do not** need:

- A diagnosis to ask for support
- To wait until things are “really bad”

Step 3: The NHS Autism Assessment Pathway in Lewisham

Children & Young People

- Referrals are made to Lewisham CAMHS Neurodevelopmental Pathway or Community Paediatrics.
- Assessments are carried out by a multidisciplinary team (MDT)

Adults

- Referrals are made to the Lewisham Adult Autism Diagnostic Service (SLaM)
- Assessments focus on childhood history and current functioning

⚠️ Waiting times can be long, often 1–2 years or more.

Step 4: Your Right to Choose (Adults)

If you are 18+, you may be able to use Right to Choose.

This means:

- Your GP can refer you to an alternative NHS-funded provider
- This can sometimes mean shorter waiting times

Important things to know:

- Not all providers assess children
- Not all providers offer post-diagnostic support
- You must request this at the point of GP referral

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You can ask your GP:

“I would like to use my Right to Choose for an autism assessment.”

Step 5: While You Are Waiting

You do not have to wait for a diagnosis to get support.

You can:

- Access autism advice and wellbeing services
- Attend parent/carer workshops or peer support
- Ask schools about SEN support (EHCP not required)
- Explore reasonable adjustments at work or college

Step 6: After the Assessment

If an autism diagnosis is given:

You should receive a written report

This can be used to:

- Request support at school or college
- Ask for reasonable adjustments at work
- Access post-diagnostic support

If a diagnosis is **not** given:

- You can **still ask for support** around the difficulties identified
- You can **request clarity** on what help is recommended.