

Supporting Young People in Surrey

A Comprehensive Guide to Mental Health,
Neurodiversity & Learning Difference Services

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This guide provides general information only and does not constitute medical, legal, or professional advice. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy at the time of publication, services, contact details, eligibility criteria, and processes change frequently. Please verify details directly with services before acting on this information.

This resource was compiled using:

- Contact with services to verify current processes and contact details
- Professional documentation including NICE guidelines, the SEND Code of Practice, and local pathway guidance
- AI assistance to help organise, structure, and draft content comprehensively and clearly
- Real-world experience of navigating these systems with families

Contents

Introduction	4
How to Use This Guide	6
Section 1: For Parents, Carers & Young People	9
Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing	
Neurodevelopmental Support (Autism, ADHD, Learning Differences)	
SEND Advice & Advocacy	
Support for Wider Family & Local Surrey Groups	
Bereavement Support	
Online Resources & Information	
Section 2: For Schools	28
Educational Support Services	
Professional Referral Pathways for Schools	
Exam Access Arrangements	
Section 3: For Mental Health Professionals, Therapists & GPs	35
Referral Pathways for Professionals	
Professional Support & Resources	
Section 4: Crisis Support	45
Section 5: Understanding Waiting Times	47
Section 6: NHS Right to Choose	50
Section 7: Private Assessment Options	54
Section 8: Understanding the Legal Framework	62
Key Legislation	
NICE Clinical Guidelines	
Understanding the THRIVE Framework	
Section 9: Support While Waiting	72
Section 10: For Young People (Ages 13+)	80
Section 11: Transition to Adult Services & Recovery College	90
Section 12: Glossary – Acronyms & Terms Explained	98
Appendices	102
Flowcharts & Decision Trees	
Timeline Tables	
Template Letters	
Red Flags – When to Escalate Immediately	
Tips for Effective Advocacy	
Record-Keeping Templates	
Further Reading & Resources	
One-Page Emergency Contacts	

Introduction

This comprehensive resource directory has been developed to address a gap that families, schools, and professionals in Surrey identify – that there is no single place where you can find all the information about support services for young people with neurodiversity, mental health needs and learning differences.

What Information This Guide Brings Together

- Local Surrey services (NHS, local authority, and voluntary organisations)
- National organisations offering specialist support
- Referral pathways explained for different professionals
- Practical information about costs, waiting times, and how to access help
- Support for the whole family including parents, siblings, and extended family members
- Alternative options including Right to Choose and private provision
- Legal frameworks and guidelines that govern SEND provision
- Support while waiting for assessments and services

Why It Has Been Developed

The challenge: Navigating support for children and young people is notoriously complex. Families often describe feeling lost in a maze of different services, unclear referral pathways, and confusing terminology. You might be directed to different places without understanding that there are multiple routes into mental health services.

The reality: The support landscape involves multiple agencies (health, education, social care, and the voluntary sector). Each has different eligibility criteria, referral processes, and waiting times. Information is scattered across websites, and what you find today might be out of date tomorrow.

The response: This guide was created through collaboration between schools working daily with young people and families navigating these systems, therapy services supporting young people's mental health and witnessing the challenges families face, CAMHS professionals who offer support to young people, and family feedback about what information would help them most.

What Makes This Guide Different

1. Comprehensive scope: Rather than focusing on just one type of need or one service type, this guide covers the full spectrum of support – from crisis services to long-term educational support, from NHS to private providers, from national charities to local Surrey groups.

2. Practical and actionable: Every entry clearly states how to access the service (self-referral, via GP, via school, etc.), what they offer, and who they are for. Phone numbers, websites, opening hours, and clear guidance on eligibility are included.

3. Honest about the challenges: This guide does not pretend the system works perfectly. It acknowledges waiting times, funding constraints, and system gaps – whilst also highlighting what is available and how to navigate it effectively.

4. Context and understanding: The guide aims to explain why services are structured the way they are, referencing the legislation and clinical guidelines that inform practice. Understanding the 'why' helps reduce frustration and enables more effective advocacy.

5. Support for everyone involved: Recognising that a young person's difficulties affect the whole family system, this guide includes support for parents, siblings, grandparents, and the professionals working with them.

6. Multiple pathways explained: The guide does not assume everyone will – or can – follow the same route. It explains NHS pathways, Right to Choose options, private alternatives, and voluntary sector support.

Who Should Use This Guide

- Parents and carers seeking support for their young person
- Young people looking for help and wanting to understand their options
- Extended family (grandparents, siblings) wanting to know how they can help
- Schools (teachers, SENCOs, pastoral teams) supporting pupils and families
- Mental health professionals working with young people
- GPs and health professionals needing referral pathway information
- Anyone concerned about a young person's wellbeing

Tips

- Keep crisis numbers accessible – save them in your phone or print Section 4
- Check details directly with services – whilst the guide aims for accuracy, contact information and processes do change frequently
- Share relevant sections with other professionals or family members who need the information

Note: You may notice that some organisations/services are duplicated in different sections of the guide. This is purposeful, as some span multiple categories, and if you are using a single section rather than the whole guide, no information will be missed.

What This Guide Does Not Include

This guide focuses on established services and ongoing support options rather than:

- One-off events and workshops
- Seasonal activities and holiday programmes
- Time-limited projects and pilot schemes
- School-specific provision
- Individual practitioners who are not part of organisations

These opportunities are valuable but change too frequently to document here. The best way to learn about them is to stay connected with the services, charities, and schools mentioned in this guide, subscribe to their newsletters and mailing lists, join parent support networks like Family Voice Surrey, and check the Surrey Local Offer regularly for updates.

My Hope

I hope this guide helps you find the support you need more quickly, understand the systems you are navigating more clearly, and feel less alone in the process. Every young person deserves access to the right support at the right time – and every family deserves clear information to help them advocate effectively. However, no guide can replace professional advice tailored to your specific situation, but I hope it can be a valuable starting point on your journey.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is organised into sections:

- 1. FOR PARENTS, CARERS & YOUNG PEOPLE** – Services you can access directly
- 2. FOR SCHOOLS** – Services schools can access on behalf of pupils
- 3. FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, THERAPISTS & GPs** – Professional referral pathways
- 4. CRISIS SUPPORT** – Emergency contacts for everyone
- 5. UNDERSTANDING WAITING TIMES** – Current timescales
- 6. NHS RIGHT TO CHOOSE** – Alternative NHS pathway
- 7. PRIVATE ASSESSMENT OPTIONS** – Private services and costs
- 8. UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK** – Laws and guidelines explained
- 9. SUPPORT WHILE WAITING** – What to do during long waiting times
- 10. FOR YOUNG PEOPLE** – Information written directly for young people 13+
- 11. TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES AND RECOVERY COLLEGE**
- 12. GLOSSARY** – SEND acronyms and terms explained

Each entry clearly shows:

- NHS | PRIVATE | CHARITY / VOLUNTARY
- How to access: Self-referral | Via GP | Via School / SENCO | Professional referral

Quick Navigator

Use this quick reference to find the right section for your situation:

If you are...	Go to...
A parent or carer	Section 1 (For Parents, Carers & Young People) Urgent help? Section 4 Long waits? Section 9 Private? Sections 6-7
A young person	Section 10 (written specifically for you) Section 4 has crisis numbers to save in your phone
A school professional	Section 2 (school referral pathways) Section 8 explains the legal framework
A healthcare professional	Section 3 (referral pathways for GPs, therapists) Section 6 explains NHS Right to Choose
Wanting to understand your rights	Section 8 (SEND law) and Section 6 (Right to Choose)
Young person approaching 18	Section 11 (Transition to Adult Services & Recovery College)

Section 1: For Parents, Carers & Young People

Parents and carers may also find the following sections particularly helpful: Section 4 (Crisis Support), Section 6 (NHS Right to Choose), Section 9 (Support While Waiting), and Section 11 (Transition to Adult Services).

This section is organised into the following areas:

- Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
- Neurodiversity Support (Autism & ADHD)
- Learning Differences & Educational Support
- Therapies (Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy)
- Parent & Family Support
- Sibling Support

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

Mindworks Surrey (NHS)

The main emotional wellbeing and mental health service for children and young people in Surrey (ages 6-18)

Services include: Mental health support and CAMHS, Neurodevelopmental assessments (autism/ADHD), Community mental health teams, Crisis support

Specialist teams include: Children's Eating Disorder Service, Children with Learning Disability Team, New Leaf (for children in care or who are adopted), STARS (for young people experiencing sexual trauma), Crisis Intervention Service, Hope Service (for young people at risk of psychiatric inpatient admission or family breakdown)

How to access:

Crisis Line (24/7): 0800 915 4644 – Call anytime for urgent support

Out of Hours Advice Line: 0300 222 5755 (5pm-11pm, every day)

Referrals: Via professional such as school or GP (school is preferred by Mindworks)

Access and Advice Team: 0300 222 5755 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Website: www.mindworks-surrey.org

YoungMinds (CHARITY)

UK's leading charity for children and young people's mental health

How to access:

Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544 (free, Mon-Fri 9:30am-4pm)

Self-referral: Visit website for information, online resources and support

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

The Mix (CHARITY)

Support service for under 25s – mental health, relationships, money, work

How to access:

Helpline: 0808 808 4994 (free, 4-11pm weekdays)

Crisis Text: Text THEMIX to 85258 (free, 24/7)

Website: www.themix.org.uk

SHOUT (CHARITY)

Free, confidential, 24/7 text support for anyone struggling

How to access:

Text: 85258 anytime (free, 24/7)

Samaritans (CHARITY)

Confidential emotional support for anyone in distress

How to access:

Call: 116 123 (free, 24/7)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

PAPYRUS (CHARITY)

Prevention of Young Suicide – support for young people with suicidal thoughts

How to access:

Helpline: 0800 068 4141 (Mon-Fri 9am-midnight, weekends 2pm-midnight)

Text: 07860 039967

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

Specialist Mental Health Support

Kooth (FREE ONLINE)

Free, safe and anonymous online mental health support for young people aged 10-18

How to access:

Self-referral: Available to young people in Surrey

Available: Mon-Fri 12pm-10pm, Sat-Sun 6pm-10pm

Website: www.kooth.com

On My Mind (FREE ONLINE)

Mental health website specifically for young people in Surrey

How to access:

Website: www.onmymind.org.uk

Student Minds (CHARITY)

UK's student mental health charity – resources, peer support, campaigns for university and college students

How to access:

Website: www.studentminds.org.uk

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) (CHARITY)

Leading movement against suicide, particularly focused on men (ages 15+)

How to access:

Helpline: 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-midnight, every day)

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

Mary Frances Trust (MFT) (CHARITY)

Mental health and emotional wellbeing charity for adults 16+ in Surrey. Services include Community Connections, one-to-one support, wellbeing courses, peer support groups, Safe Haven in Epsom (6pm-11pm daily).

Areas covered: Banstead, Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley

How to access:

Self-referral: Anyone 16+ with a Surrey GP – no waiting lists, no diagnosis needed

Phone: 01372 377364

Website: www.maryfrancestrust.org.uk

Anxiety UK (CHARITY)

Support for those living with anxiety disorders

How to access:

Helpline: 03444 775 774 (Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

OCD Action (CHARITY)

Support for people affected by Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, including youth service for under-25s

How to access:

Helpline: 0845 390 6232 (Mon-Fri 9:30am-5pm)

Website: www.ocdaction.org.uk

No Panic (CHARITY)

Support for people with panic attacks, phobias, OCD and anxiety disorders

How to access:

Helpline: 0844 967 4848 (10am-10pm, every day)

Youth helpline (13-20): 3pm-6pm Mon, Wed, Fri

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

Beat (CHARITY)

UK's eating disorder charity – support for anyone with an eating disorder, concerned about someone, or for carers

How to access:

Youthline (under-18s): 0808 801 0711 (Mon-Fri 12pm-8pm, Sat-Sun 4pm-8pm)

Studentline: 0808 801 0811 (same hours)

Website: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Hub of Hope (FREE APP)

Mental health support finder – brings together support options based on your location

How to access:

Website: www.hubofhope.co.uk

Neurodevelopmental Support (Autism, ADHD, Learning Differences)

Mindworks Surrey – Neurodevelopmental Service (NHS)

Assessment and support for autism and ADHD

How to access:

Phone: 0300 222 5856 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)

Email (homeschooled): neurodevworkrequests@sabp.nhs.uk

Referrals: PRIMARY ROUTE: Via school consultation (ages 6-17.5). ALTERNATIVE: Via GP when school referral not possible

Out of Hours ND Advice: 0300 222 5755 (5pm-11pm, 7 days)

Website: www.mindworks-surrey.org/our-services/neurodevelopmental-services

IMPORTANT: Current waiting times are 2-3 years from referral acceptance to first assessment. See Section 9: Support While Waiting for help during this time.

Surrey Child and Family Health (NHS)

Health visiting, speech & language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy for children 0-19. Services provided by HCRG Care Group.

How to access:

Phone: 0300 247 0025 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)

Email: scfh.contact@hcrgcaregroup.com

Self-referral: Parents can refer children 30 months+ for speech & language therapy

Referrals portal: <https://surreychildandfamily.co.uk/referrals/>

National Autistic Society (CHARITY)

Leading UK autism charity – information, support, campaigning. Surrey Branch offers local parent support groups and activities.

How to access:

Helpline: 0808 800 4104 (Mon-Thurs 9am-7pm, Fri 9am-6pm)

Self-referral: Can access while waiting for Mindworks assessment

Website: www.autism.org.uk

ADHD Foundation (CHARITY)

Largest user-led ADHD organisation in Europe – supports ADHD, autism, dyslexia, DCD, dyscalculia, OCD, Tourette's

How to access:

Website: www.adhdfoundation.org.uk

ADHD UK (CHARITY)

Support, information and community for people with ADHD

How to access:

Website: www.adhd-uk.co.uk

British Dyslexia Association (BDA) (CHARITY)

Voice of dyslexic people – advice, training, advocacy

How to access:

Helpline: 0333 405 4555 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

Website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Dyspraxia Foundation (CHARITY)

Support and advice for people with dyspraxia/DCD

How to access:

Helpline: 01462 454 986

Website: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

SEND Advice & Advocacy

SEND Advice Surrey (NHS – Independent service)

Free, impartial, confidential advice for families with children 0-25 with SEND. Covers EHC needs assessments, SEN support in schools, school admissions, appeals and tribunals.

How to access:

Phone: 01737 737300

Email: sendadvice@surreycc.gov.uk

Website: www.sendadvicesurrey.org

Family Voice Surrey (CHARITY)

Surrey's Parent Carer Forum – champions the needs of SEND families (ages 0-25). Regular events, representation to local authority, peer support.

How to access:

Self-referral: Join free mailing list

Website: www.familyvoicesurrey.org

IPSEA (CHARITY)

Independent Provider of Special Education Advice – free legal advice

How to access:

Helpline: 0800 018 4016

Website: www.ipsea.org.uk

Contact (CHARITY)

For families with disabled children – benefits, education, health advice

How to access:

Helpline: 0808 808 3555 (Mon-Fri 9:30am-5pm)

Website: www.contact.org.uk

Parenting Mental Health (CHARITY)

24/7 digital community support for parents of children with mental health difficulties

How to access:

Website: www.parentingmentalhealth.org

Charlie Waller Trust (CHARITY)

Mental health charity supporting young people and training professionals. PLACE Network parent carer support groups, free workshops for parents of young people with eating disorders.

How to access:

Website: www.charliewaller.org

Family Lives (CHARITY)

Support for all aspects of family life

How to access:

Helpline: 0808 800 2222 (Mon-Fri 9am-9pm)

Website: www.familylives.org.uk

Family Action (CHARITY)

Practical and emotional support for families – FamilyLine helpline, Young Carers Support Services, Parent Talk online hub

How to access:

FamilyLine: 0808 802 6666 (Mon-Fri 9am-9pm)

Website: www.family-action.org.uk

Mind (CHARITY)

Mental health information and support – Infoline, Side by Side online community

How to access:

Infoline: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm)

Website: www.mind.org.uk

MindEd for Families (FREE ONLINE)

Free online advice about children's mental health for all adults

How to access:

Website: www.mindedforfamilies.org.uk

Carers UK (CHARITY)

Support, advice and advocacy for all carers – online forum, benefits and rights advice

How to access:

Website: www.carersuk.org

Support for Wider Family

For Siblings

Childline (CHARITY)

Confidential support for under-19s with trained counsellors

How to access:

Phone: 0800 1111 (free, 24/7)

Action For Young Carers Services (CHARITY)

Support for young carers under 18

How to access:

Phone: 0303 040 1234

Website: www.actionforcarers.co.uk

For Extended Family

Grandparents Plus (CHARITY)

National charity supporting grandparents and wider family

How to access:

Advice Helpline: 0300 123 7015 (Mon-Fri 10am-3pm)

Website: www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

Kinship Care (CHARITY)

Support for grandparents and relatives raising children full-time – legal advice, financial guidance, peer support

How to access:

Website: www.kinship.org.uk

Age UK (CHARITY)

Support for older carers including grandparents

How to access:

Advice Line: 0800 678 1602 (8am-7pm, 365 days)

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Local Surrey Support Groups & Activities

Halow Project (CHARITY)

Supports young adults 16+ with learning disabilities and autism in Surrey – independence skills, social activities, employment support

How to access:

Website: www.halowproject.org.uk

Mid Surrey Mencap (CHARITY)

Support for children and adults with learning disabilities in Epsom & Ewell, Banstead, Mole Valley

How to access:

Phone: 01372 374 555

Website: www.midsurreymencap.org

Elmbridge Mencap (CHARITY)

Support in Elmbridge and surrounding areas

How to access:

Phone: 01932 221 304

Website: www.elmbridgemencap.org

ALDAG (CHARITY)

Social opportunities and supported employment for young adults with learning disabilities in Mole Valley area

How to access:

Website: www.aldag.org.uk

F6IT (CHARITY)

Family-centred inclusion organisation in South West Surrey – inclusive activities for all abilities

How to access:

Website: www.f6it.org

Learning Space (CHARITY – Part of Mindworks alliance)

1:1 support for ages 5-18 with anxiety, isolation, bullying, anger, bereavement (6-session programme). Centres: Redhill, Tadworth, Guildford

How to access:

Referrals: Via school or professional referral

Website: www.learningspace.org.uk/mindworks

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (CHARITY)

Campaigns for equality and independent living – specialist interest groups, technology support, physical activity support

How to access:

Website: www.surreycoalition.org.uk

Bereavement Support

Winston's Wish (CHARITY)

Support for children and young people (up to 25) after death of parent, sibling or other important person

How to access:

Helpline: 08088 020 021 (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm)

Website: www.winstonswish.org

Child Bereavement UK (CHARITY)

Support for families when a child grieves or when a child dies

How to access:

Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Website: www.childbereavementuk.org

Hope Again (Cruse) (CHARITY)

Website for young people experiencing grief – online resources and peer stories

How to access:

Website: www.hopeagain.org.uk

Online Resources & Information

Surrey Local Offer (LOCAL AUTHORITY)

Comprehensive online directory of SEND services in Surrey

How to access:

Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/local-offer

Anna Freud Centre (CHARITY)

Self-care strategies, mental health resources for families

How to access:

Website: www.annafreud.org

Royal College of Psychiatrists (FREE ONLINE)

Evidence-based mental health information for young people, parents, teachers and carers

How to access:

Website: www.rcpsych.ac.uk

Early Help Services

Surrey Early Help (LOCAL AUTHORITY)

Support for families before needs become more serious – family support workers, parenting programmes, support coordinating multiple services

How to access:

Self-referral: Possible

Professional referral: Via schools, GPs, health visitors

Note: Early Help referral often required before ND consultations for children not attending school or with attendance below 70%

Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/families/early-help

Section 2: For Schools

Schools may also find Section 8 (Understanding the Legal Framework) essential for EHCP processes and Section 3 (For Mental Health Professionals) helpful when liaising with healthcare colleagues.

Educational Support Services

Learners' Single Point of Access (L-SPA) (LOCAL AUTHORITY)

Central point for schools with concerns about additional educational needs – Educational Psychology consultations, early intervention support, specialist advice, EHC needs assessment requests

How to access:

Phone: 0300 200 1015 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri, year-round except bank holidays)

Schools contact: Via SENCO during term time

EP Consultations: Available Wednesday afternoons (term time)

Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/local-offer/lspa

Educational Psychology Service (LOCAL AUTHORITY)

Support for learning, development and wellbeing (0-25 years). Core offer includes psychological advice for EHC needs assessments, SEND tribunal support, critical incident support, consultations, training.

How to access:

Via SENCO: Schools book services

Through L-SPA: 0300 200 1015

Website: surreyeducationservices.surreycc.gov.uk

Mindworks Neurodevelopmental Service – School Consultations (NHS)

Schools can book consultations for pupils with neurodevelopmental concerns

How to access:

Phone: 0300 222 5856

Email: ndspoke@sabp.nhs.uk

Schools book: One-hour consultation slot per month for up to 2 pupils

Requirement: Evidence of implemented strategies needed before booking

Autism Outreach (LOCAL AUTHORITY – Commissioned)

Support for pupils with social communication difficulties (no diagnosis needed). Based at Linden Bridge & Freemantles (primary schools), Limpsfield Grange & The Abbey (secondary schools)

How to access:

Via SENCO: Schools refer pupils – no EHC plan required, no formal diagnosis required

PINS (Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools) (FUNDED PROGRAMME)

Support for primary schools to become more inclusive (fully funded by DfE & NHS England) – whole school SEND support, staff training, parent participation groups

How to access:

Email: PINS@surreycc.gov.uk

Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/local-offer/practitioners/pins

Barnardo's ADHD School Awareness Training (FREE SERVICE)

Free training for the whole school community about ADHD – via Mindworks alliance

Professional Referral Pathways for Schools

Mindworks Surrey Referrals (NHS): For mental health concerns, neurodevelopmental assessments

- Online portal: <https://mindworksrequestforsupport.sabp.nhs.uk>
- Queries after referral: 0300 222 5755

Surrey Child and Family Health (NHS): For speech & language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy

- Online portal: <https://surreychildandfamily.co.uk/referrals/>
- Support: 0300 247 0025 (NOT accepted by email or fax)

Children's Services (Safeguarding concerns):

- Phone: 0300 470 9100
- Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

Exam Access Arrangements – Critical Information

JCQ Guidance on Evidence for Access Arrangements

Schools can use Mindworks correspondence as evidence for exam access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special consideration (including extra time).

Acceptable evidence includes:

- Letters and emails indicating child is on Neurodevelopmental Pathway
- Confirmation emails showing child is waiting for consultation with ND team
- Letters confirming child receiving healthcare for emotional wellbeing or neurodevelopmental needs

Important: Due to administrative capacity, Mindworks teams cannot re-issue documentation. Schools should save all correspondence for future exam arrangement needs.

Section 3: For Mental Health Professionals, Therapists & GPs

GPs may particularly benefit from Section 6 (NHS Right to Choose) and Section 11 (Transition to Adult Services). Mental health professionals supporting families should also be familiar with Section 9 (Support While Waiting).

Referral Pathways for Professionals

Mindworks Surrey Referrals (NHS)

Who can refer: GPs, Schools and education professionals, Social workers, Health professionals, Other professionals working with children/young people

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Referrals:

- Online portal: <https://mindworksrequestforsupport.sabp.nhs.uk>
- Electronic Referral System (e-RS): For GPs (national NHS system)
- Queries after referral: 0300 222 5755 (Option 1 – Access and Advice Team)
- Clinical Advice and Guidance: 15-minute bookable sessions for professionals unclear about referral needs

Neurodevelopmental Referrals (Autism / ADHD)

NICE guidelines for autism (CG128) and ADHD (NG87) recommend that assessments are conducted by multidisciplinary teams with input from education settings. This is why schools are the primary referral route.

Who can refer:

- Primary route: Schools (SENCO, class teacher) for children 6-17.5 years
- Alternative route: GPs when school referral not possible
- Over 17.5 years: GP refers to adult services

School Referral Process:

- Step 1: Email ndspoke@sabp.nhs.uk with child's full name, DOB, criteria met
- Step 2: Complete ND Screening Pack collaboratively (school, parents, young person)
- Requirement: Minimum 10 weeks of targeted strategies implemented

Homeschooled children (NOT on any school roll):

- Call 0300 222 5856 or email neurodevworkrequests@sabp.nhs.uk to request 30-minute discovery conversation
- Early Help involvement may be a prerequisite for children experiencing significant distress

Quick Reference for GPs – When to Refer

Referral Type	When to Use
Mental Health / CAMHS	Moderate to severe mental health difficulties, significant impact on functioning, risk concerns (self-harm, suicidal ideation), complex presentations
Neurodevelopmental	When school referral not possible, young person not in school, over 17.5 years (refer to adult services)
Surrey Child & Family Health	Developmental concerns, speech/language/communication difficulties, motor skill/coordination concerns, sensory processing difficulties
Right to Choose	Patient requests specific NHS provider for ADHD/autism assessment – see Section 6 for details

Professional Contacts – Quick Reference

Mindworks Surrey Access & Advice: 0300 222 5755 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
Neurodevelopmental Service: 0300 222 5856 or ndspoke@sabp.nhs.uk
ND Out of Hours Advice: 0300 222 5755 (5pm-11pm, 7 days)
Surrey Child & Family Health: 0300 247 0025
L-SPA (Educational Psychology): 0300 200 1015
Surrey Children's Services (Safeguarding): 0300 470 9100
24/7 Crisis Line: 0800 915 4644

Key Information for Everyone

What is the difference between services?

NHS Services – Free, clinical services funded by the NHS (Mindworks Surrey, CAMHS, Surrey Child and Family Health). Usually require professional referral. Follow NICE guidelines.

Local Authority Services – Free, funded by Surrey County Council (Educational Psychology, SEND advisory teams, L-SPA). Accessed via schools or direct contact. Follow SEND Code of Practice.

Charities / Voluntary Organisations – Free or low-cost, funded by donations. Usually accept self-referral. Provide peer support, advocacy, social activities.

Private Services – Pay-to-use services. See Section 7 for details.

You DO NOT need a diagnosis to access support

The SEND Code of Practice makes clear that "a diagnosis is not required to secure an EHC plan". What matters is "the identified needs and whether these can only be met with an EHC plan". Many services, including school SEN support, Autism Outreach, and some therapy services, will help based on need, not diagnosis.

Early help is better – don't wait. Seek advice early.

Section 4: Crisis Support – For Everyone

Immediate Help

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS (ages 6-18)

Mindworks Surrey Crisis Line: 0800 915 4644

FREE, 24/7

ANY YOUNG PERSON IN CRISIS

Text: SHOUT to 85258 (FREE, 24/7)

Call: Samaritans 116 123 (FREE, 24/7)

Call: Childline 0800 1111 (FREE, 24/7)

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

PAPYRUS: 0800 068 4141

(9am-midnight most days)

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

999: Life-threatening situations

NHS 111: Urgent but non-emergency health advice (24/7)

SAFEGUARDING CONCERNs ABOUT A CHILD

Surrey Children's Services: 0300 470 9100

Section 5: Understanding Waiting Times

IMPORTANT: Waiting times vary significantly and change frequently. The information below provides general guidance based on available data as of January 2026.

NHS Neurodevelopmental Assessments in Surrey

Autism & ADHD Assessments (Mindworks Surrey):

- Current wait: 2-3 years from referral acceptance to first assessment appointment
- This is significantly longer than the national target

National Context:

- Children wait on average 525 days (17+ months) for neurodevelopmental assessment
- Only 20% of children's assessments meet the 252-day (8 month) target nationally

Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) in Surrey

Assessment Process:

- Legal requirement: 20 weeks from request to final plan
- Current reality in Surrey: Only 26% completed within 20 weeks (as of 2023)
- Average actual wait: Many families report 40-55+ weeks
- Key bottleneck: Shortage of Educational Psychologists causing delays

NHS Mental Health Services (CAMHS / Mindworks)

- Initial triage/assessment: Usually within a few weeks of referral acceptance
- Priority given based on clinical need
- Crisis support is immediate (24/7 line)

What This Means for Families

While waiting for NHS assessment:

- Support can still be provided based on need (diagnosis not always required)
- Schools should implement Ordinarily Available Provision
- Access Mindworks resources and advice lines
- Consider Right to Choose pathway (see Section 6)
- Explore voluntary sector support

Managing the wait:

- Keep detailed records of difficulties and interventions tried
- Maintain regular contact with school SENCO
- Access parent support groups (Family Voice Surrey)
- Use free online resources and workshops

Section 6: NHS Right to Choose

What is Right to Choose?

Right to Choose is a legal right for NHS patients in England. If your GP refers you for specialist treatment (such as an autism or ADHD assessment), you can choose which provider delivers your NHS care – as long as they have an NHS contract for that service.

Key Points:

- This is a FREE NHS service – no cost to you
- Introduced in 2018, now extended to mental health services
- Can potentially reduce waiting times significantly
- Only available in England (not Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland)

Who Can Use Right to Choose?

You are eligible if:

- You are registered with a GP in England
- Your GP agrees you need a specialist assessment
- You need assessment for ADHD and/or autism
- The provider you choose has an NHS contract for this service

You CANNOT use Right to Choose if:

- You need urgent/emergency treatment
- You are already receiving care for the same condition
- You are detained under Mental Health Act
- You live outside England

How to Access Right to Choose

- Step 1: Check Eligibility – Confirm you meet the criteria above
- Step 2: Research Providers – Major providers include Psychiatry UK, Clinical Partners, Psicon, ProblemShared, RTN Mental Health Solutions, ADHD 360
- Step 3: Speak to Your GP – Take completed screening questionnaires (AQ-10 for autism, ASRS for ADHD)
- Step 4: GP Makes Referral – Must be from NHS GP email address
- Step 5: Provider Contacts You – Can take up to 8 weeks to process

Important Considerations

Medication & Shared Care: If diagnosed with ADHD and medication is recommended, you may need a 'shared care agreement' with your GP. GPs may not prescribe ADHD medication initiated via Right to Choose without this agreement. Check with your GP BEFORE the assessment whether they will accept ongoing care.

Section 7: Private Assessment Options

Understanding Private Services

Why Consider Private:

- Much shorter waiting times (weeks to months vs months to years)
- Can choose your preferred provider
- Typically more flexible appointment times
- Detailed reports often suitable for school/EHCP applications

Considerations:

- Significant cost
- NHS may not accept private diagnoses for medication
- Some schools/authorities may question private reports
- Payment plans may be available

Types of Private Providers

Private Psychiatrists / Psychologists

Fully qualified medical doctors (psychiatrists) or clinical psychologists who can diagnose ADHD, autism, and other conditions. Psychiatrists can prescribe medication. Most expensive option.

Specialist Assessment Clinics

Examples: Clinical Partners, Psychiatry UK, ADHD 360. Often more affordable, video assessments available, quick appointment times, some offer payment plans.

Independent Educational Psychologists

Qualified educational psychologists in private practice. Expert in educational needs, reports suitable for EHCPs, can attend meetings. Cannot diagnose medical conditions like ADHD or prescribe medication.

Counsellors & Psychotherapists

Trained mental health professionals providing talking therapy and support. Work with emotional wellbeing, anxiety, depression, trauma. Cannot diagnose or prescribe medication but valuable for ongoing support.

Choosing a Private Provider

Essential checks:

- Registered with appropriate professional body (BPS for psychologists, GMC for doctors, BACP for therapists, HCPC for others)
- Uses NICE-approved assessment tools (ADOS-2, ADI-R for autism; clinical interview + rating scales for ADHD)
- Clear fee structure with no hidden costs
- Good reviews/testimonials

- Will provide reports suitable for your needs (school, EHCP, medication)

Section 8: Understanding the Legal Framework

Key Legislation

Children and Families Act 2014

The main law governing SEND support in England. Creates the legal framework for EHC plans (replacing Statements), requires different agencies to work together, gives children, young people and families specific rights, covers ages 0-25.

Key principles:

- Participation of children, young people and parents in decisions
- Early identification and intervention
- Collaboration between education, health and care services
- Focus on outcomes and preparing for adulthood
- Greater choice and control for families

SEND Code of Practice (2015)

Statutory guidance issued under the Children and Families Act 2014. Organisations must follow the Code or explain why they have departed from it.

Key concepts:

- The Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) – four-part cycle to identify and support SEN
- SEN Support – action schools take when child has SEN, funded from school's notional SEN budget
- EHC Plans – for children whose needs cannot be met through SEN Support alone
- Ordinarily Available Provision – what schools should provide from their own budgets

Important statement from the Code: *"A diagnosis does not automatically mean a child has SEN. It is the child's educational needs rather than a medical diagnosis that must be considered."*

Equality Act 2010

Law protecting people from discrimination, including disability discrimination. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

School duties:

- Must not discriminate against disabled pupils
- Must make reasonable adjustments
- Must provide auxiliary aids and services
- Cannot charge for reasonable adjustments

Important: Many children with ADHD, autism, mental health conditions, and learning differences are considered disabled under this Act, even without an EHC plan.

Your Legal Rights

Right to request EHC needs assessment:

- Parents can request
- Young person (16+) can request
- School can request (with parent knowledge)

Local authority must respond within 6 weeks:

- Decide whether to assess
- Must consider evidence provided
- Must give reasons if declining

Right to appeal:

- Can appeal refusal to assess, refusal to issue plan, content of plan, school named
- Must try mediation first (except for school naming)
- SEND Tribunal: Independent, free to attend, legally binding decisions

Section 9: Support While Waiting

Remember: You do not need a diagnosis to access support. Many services and strategies can be put in place based on identified needs.

Free Resources and Support

Mindworks Surrey Online Resources

Access at: <https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/advice-information-and-resources>

- ND flashcards – to help children communicate feelings
- Strategy sheets for home and school
- Videos of workshops
- Advice and information about autism, ADHD

Out of Hours ND Advice Line:

- Phone: 0300 222 5755 (5pm-11pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year)
- For advice about behaviours or difficulties related to neurodevelopmental needs
- Free service – no referral needed

Surrey County Council Parent/Carer Courses

Free courses to help parents/carers support neurodivergent children – various topics covering autism, ADHD, behaviour management. Access through Surrey Local Offer website or via schools.

National Autistic Society – Surrey Branch

Parent support groups, social activities, information and advice. Can access while waiting for NHS assessment – specifically recommended by Mindworks as waiting list support.

What Schools Should Provide

Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) includes:

- Quality First Teaching with differentiation
- Visual supports and timetables
- Structured environment, clear instructions
- Regular breaks, sensory breaks if needed
- Pastoral support, social skills groups, ELSA
- Small group work, 1:1 support where needed
- Regular home-school communication
- Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle

Strategies to Try at Home

For attention/focus difficulties:

- Short, clear instructions

- Visual schedules, timer for tasks
- Minimise distractions, movement breaks
- Praise specific behaviours, consistent routines

For social communication:

- Prepare for changes in advance
- Visual supports, social stories
- Clear expectations, process time after social events

For emotional regulation:

- Calm space at home
- Sensory tools (fidgets, weighted blankets)
- Emotion vocabulary, coping strategies toolbox
- Time to decompress after school

Section 10: For Young People (Ages 13+)

If you are approaching 18, make sure to also read Section 11 about moving to adult services.

This Section is For You

If you're reading this, you might be struggling with your mental health, finding school or college really hard, wondering if you have ADHD, autism, or another condition, or wanting to understand what support is available.

First thing to know: You are not alone. Lots of young people struggle, and there is help available.

If You Are in Crisis Right Now

Text: SHOUT to 85258 (free, 24/7)
Call: Childline 0800 1111 (free, 24/7)
Call: Samaritans 116 123 (free, 24/7)
Thinking about suicide? PAPYRUS: 0800 068 4141

Getting Help – Your Options

Talk to someone you trust:

- Parent or carer, teacher or school counsellor
- Youth worker, older sibling or relative, GP

Access support yourself:

- Kooth (www.kooth.com) – Free online counselling, chat anonymously, message counsellors
- The Mix (www.themix.org.uk) – 0808 808 4994, text THEMIX to 85258

Your Rights

Age 16+:

- Can consent to medical treatment yourself
- Can see GP without parent
- Can access counselling confidentially

Under 16:

- If you're 'Fraser competent' (mature enough to understand), you can consent to treatment
- Therapists/counsellors usually keep things confidential
- They will only tell others if you are in danger

At school:

- Right to reasonable adjustments
- Right to SEN support if you need it
- Do not need a diagnosis to get support

Apps & Online Resources for You

- Kooth (www.kooth.com) – free counselling
- Calm Harm – if you self-harm
- MeeTwo – safe social network for teens
- On My Mind (www.onmymind.org.uk) – Surrey mental health info

Section 11: Transition to Adult Services & Recovery College

Understanding the Transition

Turning 18 brings significant changes in how services are organised. Children's services (including Mindworks Surrey and CAMHS) typically support young people until age 18, after which adult services take over. This transition can feel daunting, but with planning it can also be an opportunity for a fresh start with more independence in your care.

What Happens to Existing Support

Neurodevelopmental assessments (Autism / ADHD)

If a young person is on the waiting list for an autism or ADHD assessment when they turn 18, their referral will be passed to the adult ASD and ADHD Service. The adult team will honour the original referral date, so they will not lose their place in the queue.

Mental health support

If a young person is receiving mental health support through Mindworks or CAMHS, their team will assess whether ongoing support from adult mental health services is needed. Not everyone will need to transfer to adult services – some may be discharged with signposting to community support.

EHC Plans

Education, Health and Care Plans can continue until age 25 if the young person remains in education or training.

Adult Mental Health Services in Surrey

Mind Matters Surrey (NHS)

Free NHS talking therapies for anyone aged 17+ registered with a Surrey GP. Individual talking therapies, group courses for anxiety, depression, stress, guided online self-help.

How to access:

Self-referral: www.mindmattersnhs.co.uk

Phone: 0300 330 5450

No GP referral needed

ASD and ADHD Service for Surrey (NHS)

Diagnosis and support for adults with autism and ADHD – diagnostic assessments, ADHD medication prescribing and monitoring

How to access:

Via GP or healthcare professional referral

Safe Havens (NHS)

Welcoming spaces for adults (18+) who need mental health support. Face-to-face support with mental health professionals and peer support workers. No appointment needed – just drop in. Open every evening including weekends.

How to access:

Locations: Guildford, Epsom, Staines, Redhill, Aldershot

Website: www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/safe-havens

The Recovery College (NHS)

The Recovery College, run by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, offers free courses to help people understand and manage their mental health. Courses are delivered by Recovery Coaches who have their own lived experience of mental health challenges, alongside mental health professionals.

Who can attend:

- Anyone aged 18+ living in Surrey or North East Hampshire
- People experiencing mental health challenges
- Family members and carers
- Healthcare professionals seeking knowledge

Key benefits:

- Completely free
- Self-referral – no GP or professional referral needed
- Attendance is NOT recorded on clinical records
- Courses available online and in person

How to access:

Phone: 01276 454 150

Email: Recovery.College@sabp.nhs.uk

Website: www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/recovery-college

Section 12: Glossary – Acronyms & Terms Explained

Term	Definition
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (in Surrey, now part of Mindworks)
DCD	Developmental Coordination Disorder (also called dyspraxia)
EHC Plan	Education, Health and Care Plan – legal document for children with complex SEND (ages 0-25)
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EP	Educational Psychologist
L-SPA	Learners' Single Point of Access – central point for educational support requests in Surrey
ND	Neurodevelopmental or Neurodivergent
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence – creates clinical guidelines
OAP	Ordinarily Available Provision – support schools should provide from own resources
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator – teacher responsible for coordinating SEN support in school
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
THRIVE	Framework used by Mindworks Surrey for matching support to need level

Appendices

One-Page Emergency Contacts

PRINT THIS PAGE AND KEEP IT VISIBLE

CRISIS SUPPORT (24/7)

Mindworks Crisis Line (ages 6-18): 0800 915 4644
Text SHOUT (any age): 85258
Samaritans (any age): 116 123
Childline (under 19): 0800 1111
PAPYRUS (suicidal thoughts): 0800 068 4141
Emergency: 999 | NHS Urgent Advice: 111

MAIN SURREY CONTACTS

Mindworks Surrey Access & Advice: 0300 222 5755 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
ND Service: 0300 222 5856
ND Out of Hours: 0300 222 5755 (5pm-11pm daily)
L-SPA (Educational): 0300 200 1015
Surrey Child & Family Health: 0300 247 0025
Children's Services (Safeguarding): 0300 470 9100
SEND Advice Surrey: 01737 737300
Family Voice Surrey: www.familyvoicesurrey.org

Final Words

Navigating support can feel overwhelming. The system is complex, waiting times are long, and the journey is rarely straightforward. But please know:

You are not alone. Thousands of Surrey families are walking this same path, and there are people and organisations who genuinely want to help.

You are your child's best advocate. You know them better than anyone. Understanding rights, processes, and pathways makes you even more effective.

Your child's difficulties are real. Even without a formal diagnosis, their struggles are valid – and small supports now can make a meaningful difference while you wait for assessments.

Things can improve. With the right understanding and strategies, many children and young people make significant progress.

Looking after yourself matters. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Access parent support, take breaks, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Keep advocating. Keep asking questions. Keep believing in your child. Keep going.

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