

ADHD/Aroreretini prescribing changes – effective 1 February 2026

Overview of the change

From 1 February 2026, vocationally registered general practitioners and nurse practitioners working within their area of practice will be able to assess, diagnose and start specialist (stimulant) medications for adults aged 18 years and older.

This means it is becoming easier for some GPs and NPs to start specialist medications for tangata whaiora (people seeking wellness) with a new diagnosis of adult ADHD.

GPs and NPs who meet the criteria will no longer require a psychiatrist to be involved for every person being started on stimulant medication.

There is no Ministerial expectation that all practices will offer ADHD services, and ADHD care is not included in capitation funding. Practices may choose whether or not to offer ADHD services and also how they will structure and deliver these services to their patients.

This change does not apply to child ADHD/Aroreretini diagnosis or prescribing.

Specialist (stimulant) medications can only be prescribed when an appropriate assessment has confirmed ADHD.

Who can diagnose ADHD/Aroreretini?

A confirmed ADHD diagnosis can only be made following a **comprehensive, well-recognised assessment**. Health professionals who may diagnose include:

- > Psychiatrists
- > Psychologists with ADHD diagnostic expertise
- > Some vocationally registered specialist general practitioners with ADHD expertise
- > Some nurse practitioners working within their area of practice with ADHD expertise
- > Paediatricians (for children)

Responsibility for prescribing

Specialist GPs and NPs who begin stimulant medications may do so:

- > Based on their own assessment, or
- > Based on an assessment report from a recognised health professional listed above.

Specialist GPs may, for example, choose a model whereby they work alongside a clinical psychologist who undertakes the assessment and makes an ADHD diagnosis and then the GP manages medication initiation, titration and ongoing monitoring.

The responsibility for confirming the diagnosis and determining the medication as part of an ongoing management plan rests with the prescribing clinician. Specialist GPs are not expected to initiate and manage ADHD medication for patients who present to them following a patient-initiated ADHD assessment from a health professional that the GP is not familiar with.

Assessment requirements

An ADHD assessment typically includes:

- > 90–120 minutes of clinical time, usually over multiple appointments
- > Comprehensive history
- > Symptom and functional impact review
- > Collateral information (if helpful)
- > Shared decision-making regarding treatment.

These cannot be completed in a standard 15-minute consult and usually require fee-for-service models.

Service delivery options for practices

Practices may choose to:

- > Provide full ADHD assessment, diagnosis and prescribing
- > Refer externally or develop shared-care/local supervision models using other health professionals with whom the practice chooses to collaborate
- > Refer externally or develop shared-care/local supervision models
- > Not offer ADHD services.

ADHD services will look different across practices and communities.

Practice operational considerations

- > Establish transparent pricing for assessment and follow-up.
- > Develop practice-wide triage and booking processes due to longer appointment times.
- > Provide clarity for reception and nursing teams to manage enquiries.
- > Ensure equity for Māori, Pacific peoples, rural and neurodivergent patients when designing services.

Fine print for all practice materials

“It is important to note that it is within the scope of practice of most specialist general practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand to continue prescribing and monitoring stimulant medications for patients with an existing confirmed diagnosis and agreed management plan.”

Patient communication

Practices should clearly state whether they:

- > Offer ADHD/Aroreretini services
- > Will offer them soon
- > Are not offering this service.

The College has created some posters for you to display this information in your practice. [You can download them here.](#)

Patients should be encouraged to ask staff whether an ADHD assessment is right for them and how to start this discussion. Patients can also check [Healthpoint](#) for local ADHD service availability.

