



Acorn Autism Specialists

Diagnosis | Independence | Well-being

Terms & Conditions of Business

Policy & Procedure

Document reference	AAS-POL-029
Version	v2026.1
Issue / review date	April 2026
Next scheduled review	April 2027
Policy lead	Clinical Director / Directors
Statutory / regulatory basis	Consumer Rights Act 2015; Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982; UK GDPR; Data Protection Act 2018; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Children Act 1989 (parental responsibility); HSCA 2008 Regulated Activities Regulations 2014; ICO guidance on AI and data protection.
Legal status	Client-facing - applies to every client engagement

Approved by the Directors of Acorn Autism Specialists

Updated to incorporate Acorn's commitments around the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

These Terms and Conditions of Business are between Acorn Autism Specialists Ltd (“Acorn”, “we”, “us”, “our”) and the employing client and / or the recipient of services (“you”). By booking an appointment or using our services, you agree to be bound by these Terms.

1 Our obligations

- Acorn is a private autism diagnostic service, specialising in autism diagnosis and pre- and post-diagnostic support.
- We provide our service to children from age 3, adolescents and adults.
- We provide a gold-standard autism assessment and will send you a detailed written report confirming whether or not you meet the criteria for an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). An assessment does not automatically result in a diagnosis.
- We are not obliged to accept you as a client if we judge that we are not the right service for your needs. We do not have to give reasons for declining a referral, and we reserve the right to cease working with you at any time if we consider it no longer appropriate to do so. Where possible we will direct you to your GP for onward referral.

2 Our clinicians

- Acorn engages clinicians registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and / or other UK statutory regulators (BPS, GMC, NMC, RCPsych, RCSLT, Social Work England as applicable). All Acorn clinicians are subject to enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in accordance with applicable safeguarding legislation.
- Some elements of the autism assessment may be delivered by associate professionals - subcontracted healthcare professionals with specialist expertise in neurodivergence. Associates are bound by Acorn's Associate Code & Acknowledgement (Policy 28) and act as joint data controllers within the meaning of UK GDPR, sharing responsibility for the lawful processing of your personal data.

3 Your obligations

You agree that:

- You will provide full, accurate and up-to-date information to us at all times.
- You will tell us promptly about any changes to your details, particularly anything that might affect your safety or your suitability for our service - for example changes to medication, mental-health status or involvement with other services.
- You will let us know promptly if you need to cancel or reschedule any appointment.

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- You will complete the Acorn Client Registration Form before your assessment appointment. An appointment date and time cannot be confirmed until that form has been received and completed in full.
 - You will return any external professional reports or other documents we ask for before the appointment date so that the assessment is informed by complete information.

4 Cancellation and lateness

- We understand that appointments sometimes need to be cancelled. Where possible, please give us at least 10 working days' notice.
- If you need to cancel at short notice, please email or telephone us at least 48 hours before the appointment. A 50 per cent cancellation fee may apply if Acorn is unable to fill the vacated slot.
- Email: info@acorn-autism.co.uk. Telephone: 01376 402284.
- If you are unable to attend, please tell us at the earliest opportunity.
- If we need to cancel an appointment, we will reschedule as soon as possible at no cost to you.
- Please contact us as soon as you know you are running late so we can make appropriate arrangements.
- If you are more than 45 minutes late without prior notification, we may treat this as a failure to attend and you will not be eligible for a refund.

5 Fees and payment terms

- Our standard fees are confirmed at the time of booking and may be amended from time to time.
- A non-refundable deposit of £200 is required to secure and confirm your appointment date.
- All appointments and services are chargeable. Payment in full is required at least 10 working days before your initial assessment appointment.
- You will receive an invoice by email before your appointment. Full payment must be received before your appointment date.
- If full payment is not received by the required date, your appointment may be at risk and the cancellation terms above may apply.
- It is your responsibility to ensure payments are made on time. If you are experiencing difficulty making payment, please contact us as soon as possible so we can discuss a payment plan.
- Where payment is made by a third party on your behalf (a parent, guardian or employer), you are responsible for ensuring that third party complies with these Terms, including the payment obligations.
- If, exceptionally, an appointment proceeds without full payment, the outstanding balance must be paid immediately. We reserve the right to take whatever action is necessary to recover sums owed.

Finance via Payl8r

If you choose to apply for finance through Payl8r, your financial obligations are between you (the client) and Payl8r (the finance provider). Acorn Autism Specialists Ltd acts as a credit broker of Social Money Ltd

t/a Payl8r in all Payl8r-related transactions. Please ensure you read the Payl8r terms and conditions and satisfy yourself that you can afford the repayment options before accepting any finance offer.

6 Access and accessibility

- Our primary clinic is located in a converted stable in the Essex countryside. The setting is quiet and parking is easy, but the building currently has limited accessibility - there are steps at the entrance for which we do not yet have a ramp or grab rail, and the bathroom facilities are not wheelchair accessible.
- If you (or anyone attending the assessment with you) has a mobility impairment or any other access requirement, please tell us before your appointment. We will discuss your needs and, where necessary, arrange for the assessment to take place at one of our wheelchair-accessible alternative venues.
- Please also note that the assessment room has a beam at approximately 6 feet in height. Clients over 6 feet tall should take care when moving around the room.

7 Non-client payers

If you are not the client but have engaged us on a client's behalf, or have made payment on behalf of a client, you agree to be bound by all provisions of these Terms, including any applicable cancellation fees.

8 Confidentiality and data protection

- We manage all personal data in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data Protection and Digital Information Act 2025 as commenced.
- By using our services you consent to us storing and processing your personal data in accordance with our Privacy Policy (Policy 09), Client Privacy Notice (Policy 10), Data Protection Policy (Policy 06) and GDPR Policy (Policy 07), all of which are available on our website at www.acorn-autism.co.uk.
- All information is held in strict confidence and will not be disclosed to any third party without your express written consent (for example, sharing your assessment report with your GP).
- There are limited exceptional circumstances in which we may be legally required to disclose information without your consent. These include: where you disclose information that suggests a serious risk of harm to yourself or others; information relating to terrorism or serious crime; or where we are required under safeguarding legislation to report a concern. By accepting these Terms, you acknowledge that we are legally obligated to act in such circumstances.
- Acorn adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to the diagnostic assessment of possible autism. Our core clinical team may collaborate with other registered professional colleagues within Acorn where a differential diagnosis is clinically appropriate, in line with NICE Guideline 1.1.3.

8.1 Use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools

Acorn uses approved AI tools - currently Claude (Anthropic), Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT (Enterprise tier with a data agreement) and Google Gemini for Workspace - to support some administrative and clinical-

support tasks. The way we use AI is governed by Acorn's Use of AI Policy (Policy 24) and described in plain language in Section 4 of the Client Privacy Notice (Policy 10). The key points relevant to you are set out below; if you would like the full detail at any stage, please ask and we will provide a copy.

- We do not enter your identifiable personal information into any AI tool. Information is anonymised so that you cannot be identified from what is submitted - no name, date of birth, NHS number, address, school name or distinctive combination of details.
- We do not use AI to make any diagnostic decision or any decision about your care. Every diagnostic assessment, formulation and recommendation is made by a qualified human clinician who has reviewed all the information.
- We use only Enterprise / Business / API tiers of AI tools that are bound by a written data-processing agreement and that do not use Acorn inputs to train their models. We do not use free or consumer-tier AI tools for any service work.
- Every AI provider we use is required to handle data in accordance with UK data protection law.
- We have completed (or commissioned, where required) a Data Protection Impact Assessment for any AI tool that processes service data.
- All Acorn employees and associates are required to comply with the Use of AI Policy and the Staff Terms & Conditions - AI Annex (Policy 27), and complete annual AI awareness and anonymisation training.
- If you would prefer that no AI assistance is used in connection with the administrative drafting of any document about you, please tell us in writing before your assessment and we will accommodate that request where reasonably possible.
- You have the right not to be subject to a decision affecting you that is based solely on automated processing, including AI tools (UK GDPR Article 22). Acorn does not make such decisions.

9 Children, young people and consent

- In law, healthcare professionals require consent from only one person with parental responsibility to undertake an assessment or provide treatment. However, Acorn seeks consent from both parents or carers with parental responsibility wherever this is reasonably possible.
- Individuals aged 16 and over are entitled to consent to their own engagement with our service. Children under 16 may also provide valid consent if they are assessed as having sufficient understanding and maturity to make informed decisions about their involvement (Gillick competence). This may extend to a young person refusing assessment, restricting disclosure of their records to third parties (including family members), or refusing to allow communication with their parents without their consent.
- You acknowledge that Acorn will be subject to obligations of confidentiality in those circumstances and that we shall have no liability where we are required to act in accordance with the young person's expressed wishes.

10 Making a complaint

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, please contact us. Your feedback is important and helps us continuously improve.

We aim to:

- Make it straightforward for you to raise a complaint.
- Give every complaint the serious consideration it deserves.
- Resolve complaints as quickly as possible.

Please send all complaints to our Complaints Lead, Dr Sarah Clayton:

- In writing: Suite A, Bridgefoot Studios, Kelvedon, CO5 9BE.
- By email: info@acorn-autism.co.uk.
- By telephone: 01376 402284.
- We aim to acknowledge your complaint within three business days. We will keep you informed of progress throughout, and aim to resolve all complaints as quickly as practically possible, recognising that more complex matters may take longer.
- Please refer to our full Complaints Policy (Policy 13), available on our website, for further information.

11 Liability

- We accept liability for the actions of all persons in our direct employ where such actions arise directly from their employment.
- Nothing in these Terms shall limit or exclude our liability for death or personal injury caused by our negligence, or any other liability that cannot lawfully be excluded or limited.
- Subject to the above, we shall not under any circumstances be liable for indirect or consequential loss. Our total liability to you in respect of all other losses arising under these Terms shall not exceed the total fees paid by you in the year in which the loss arose.
- We shall not be liable for any delay or failure to perform our obligations arising from circumstances beyond our reasonable control, including (without limitation) acts of God, extreme weather, pandemic or government-imposed restrictions.
- We hold Public and Employers Liability insurance to indemnify against costs arising from proven acts for which we can be held liable in law.

12 Miscellaneous

- These Terms constitute the entire agreement between Acorn Autism Specialists Ltd and you, the client, and supersede all previous agreements.
- Any variation to these Terms shall only be binding when agreed by us and confirmed to you in writing (including by email). You may not unilaterally vary these Terms.

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- If any provision of these Terms is found to be unenforceable or invalid, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.
 - These Terms shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales. Any disputes shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

13 Website terms of use

Welcome to the Acorn Autism Specialists website (www.acorn-autism.co.uk). By browsing and using this website you agree to comply with and be bound by the following terms of use, which together with our Privacy Policy govern Acorn's relationship with you in relation to this website. "Acorn Autism Specialists", "us" and "we" refer to the owner of the website. "You" refers to the user or viewer of our website.

- The content of the pages of this website is for general information and use only. It is subject to change without notice.
- Neither we nor any third parties provide any warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy, timeliness, performance, completeness or suitability of the information and materials found on this website for any particular purpose. You acknowledge that such information and materials may contain inaccuracies or errors, and we expressly exclude liability for any such inaccuracies or errors to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- Your use of any information or materials on this website is entirely at your own risk. It is your responsibility to ensure that any products, services or information available through this website meet your specific requirements.
- This website contains material owned by or licensed to us, including (but not limited to) design, layout, appearance and graphics. Reproduction is prohibited except in accordance with the copyright notice forming part of these Terms.
- All trademarks reproduced on this website that are not owned by or licensed to us are acknowledged on the site.
- Unauthorised use of this website may give rise to a claim for damages and / or be a criminal offence.
- From time to time, this website may include links to external websites for convenience and further information only. The links do not signify our endorsement of those sites; we have no responsibility for the content of linked websites.
- Any AI-generated content displayed on the website (for example a chatbot or accessibility tool) is identified as AI-generated, is for general information only and does not constitute clinical advice. Always book a formal assessment if you would like a clinical opinion.
- Your use of this website and any dispute arising from such use is subject to the laws of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

14 Contact us

Email	info@acorn-autism.co.uk
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Telephone	01376 402284
Website	www.acorn-autism.co.uk
Post	Suite A, Bridgefoot Studios, Kelvedon, CO5 9BE
Company registration	13511294
Data Protection Lead	sarah@acorn-autism.co.uk

15 Version control

Document reference	AAS-POL-029
Version	v2026.1
Effective date	April 2026
Next review	April 2027
Document owner	Clinical Director / Directors
Approved by	Directors of Acorn Autism Specialists Ltd
Key change	Section 8.1 added to set out Acorn's use of AI tools in plain language; Section 13 (website terms) updated for AI-generated content; cross-references to Policies 06, 07, 09, 10, 13, 24, 27, 28 added; data protection legislation updated for the Data Protection and Digital Information Act 2025.
Audience	Public-facing - clients, parents, carers, referrers, website visitors

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Approval & Sign-off

Approved by	Board of Directors, Acorn Autism Specialists
Date approved	April 2026
Next review	April 2027