



# ADHD assessments for children and young people

A guide for parents & carers

## What is ADHD?

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental condition that affects people's behaviour.

It's most frequently diagnosed in children of an early age, but it's not uncommon for older children and even adults to demonstrate symptoms and be diagnosed as well.

A person with ADHD has differences in brain development and may have trouble concentrating, focusing their attention, and staying on task. This can affect a child at home, at school, and in friendships.

### Signs of ADHD in children and young people

Many children go through phases where they're restless or inattentive. But for a child with ADHD, the symptoms may appear more pronounced and happen more often.

Children with ADHD may be:

- Inattentive, but not hyperactive or impulsive
- Hyperactive and impulsive

#### Inattentive

An inattentive child will likely have a short attention span and be easily distracted. They may not listen well to instructions, miss important details, have trouble staying organised and may underperform in school.

#### Hyperactive and impulsive

Children who are hyperactive and impulsive tend to appear fidgety and restless, especially in quiet and calm situations. They might talk excessively – more so than other children – and may often interrupt conversations, and struggle to wait their turn.

These symptoms can lead to troubles throughout life, including underperforming at school, making and keeping friends, and problems with discipline.



## Choosing the right path

If you think your child's behaviour is different from most children their age, we recommend first speaking to their teacher, the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), or a GP about your child's experiences.

You may also wish to seek a private assessment. In most cases, receiving the right diagnosis is the first step to getting the most appropriate support. But we know how hard it can be to make the right choice. Some assessment options may seem unreliable and untrustworthy. Others might take too long and not provide you with the necessary support after your assessment.

Ultimately, the right option has to be the one that gets all the details right and opens the door for meaningful change.

This guide will explain our procedures and diagnostic methods in detail to provide you with everything you need to confidently choose the path that's right for your child.



## What's included in our ADHD assessment?

- Up to 12 questionnaires depending on the child's age
- The diagnostic interview
- A personalised report which may include a formal diagnosis and will include clear recommendations for any necessary support
- Access to your child's personalised portal, allowing you to track progress, complete questionnaires, and manage the assessment online

## Who will conduct the assessment?

Your child's assessment will be carried out by a Neurodevelopmental Specialist who is experienced in assessing and diagnosing ADHD in children. This person will be extensively trained in the relevant diagnostic tools and will be there to support your child, helping them feel comfortable throughout the assessment process.

Rest assured that all our clinicians are carefully chosen, not just for their years of clinical experience but also for their empathy, warmth and understanding. This ensures that all our treatment and services are delivered by a trusted expert who genuinely cares.

Your child's specialist clinician will be there to provide support at every step, so please try not to worry about any part of the assessment.

### About the diagnostic interview

The appointment is a structured clinical interview that has been specially developed to assess ADHD in young people aged 5-17 years. During the appointment the psychiatrist will go through a full developmental and psychiatric history.

They will ask about the presence of ADHD symptoms, how long they have lasted, and any significant impairments caused by these symptoms. Please rest assured that we only use the most reliable and well-validated diagnostic measures available.

- The appointment will last up to two hours
- You should attend with your child
- The clinician will ask you about your health and the health of other family members, and will attempt to build a full understanding of your child's strengths and difficulties
- They will also observe your child's behaviour and may have a short conversation or ask them to complete a task.



## Preparing for the assessment

Before the appointment, have a good think about the different behaviours and challenges your child has had throughout their life. Your child may be nervous, which is completely understandable. You will be there to support them, but try to reassure them that there are no right or wrong answers and that they progress at their own pace.

- Think back to when they were younger. You might want to look back at old pictures or videos or ask other family members to jog your memory. Did your child behave differently to other children their age? What were their interests? How did they play with others?
- Think about how old your child was when they first walked, talked and potty trained. Was there anything different compared to other children?
- Collect school reports or other communications that show how your child has progressed in school and how they behave in an educational setting.
- It's also important to get someone from your child's school or learning environment to fill in the pre-assessment questionnaires. This is essential for getting a well-rounded view of your child's development.
- Think about your child's awareness of danger, road safety and risk. Try to think of examples that illustrate any worries you have.
- Think about your child's difficulties and how it impacts your family. Is there anything your child or your family would like to do, but feel you can't?
- To fully understand your child's developmental history, the clinician will ask you lots of questions about your child's behaviour growing up. For this reason, you may wish to bring along a friend or relative who knows your child well and can help you answer questions about their development.
- Parents can find this appointment difficult, and it's normal to feel you have missed something important out. To help, you may want to bring along your child's Personal Health Record, AKA "the red book". This often helps parents remember key milestones in their child's development.





## The benefits of an online assessment

Prompted by the pandemic, online health services now play a more significant role than ever before, and growing evidence suggests that many people respond better to online assessments than in-person appointments.

The principles of ADHD assessment, as laid out by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and DSM-5 criteria, remain unchanged. All ADHD Assessments we conduct (both in-person and remotely) conform to the best practice guidelines.

ADHD assessments require skilled observations, and we use information from adapted assessments to inform clinical diagnosis. All assessments are conducted by highly experienced and knowledgeable clinicians who are usually able to discern clinical diagnosis after developmental history and remote observation have been conducted. However, if these assessments are not sufficient to be confident in diagnosis, then an in-person evaluation will be scheduled ASAP.

## Your child's diagnostic report

Once complete, you will be notified that your child's report will be available to view in the portal. This will detail information has been gathered from the assessment, the outcome reached and offer helpful recommendations tailored to your child's specific needs.

Schools and other professionals are often keen to know the outcome so they can put the appropriate provisions in place to support your child. Therefore, it can be helpful for you to share a copy of the report with them. We can share all diagnostic reports with your GP, school and other professionals involved in your child's care, provided you give your consent.

## What should I do next?

If you are interested in finding out more, or would like to know when the next available appointment is, please call us on 0203 326 9160. Our experienced team help thousands of people every year access the care they need and will be able to give you expert advice as to whether this is the right choice for your child.





Speak to us in  
confidence today

**0203 326 9160**

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## About Clinical Partners

We are one of the UK's leading providers of mental health services who work both privately and in partnership with the NHS to help people and families experiencing mental and emotional difficulties get the services, treatment and support they need.

Through in-person and remote appointments, we connect thousands of patients with senior clinicians for a range of mental health difficulties including autism, ADHD, anxiety, and depression.

All treatments and services are designed to help focus on what's truly important - the very best patient care. Our clinicians are all accredited, or members of professional governing bodies and all treatments and therapies are evidence-based and follow guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

