



# **The Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Service for North East Lincolnshire**

This leaflet gives information about the condition Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the Adult ADHD service within North East Lincolnshire (NEL). If you are unsure about anything within this leaflet, please ask a member of staff.



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## What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a behavioural disorder that includes symptoms such as inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed at an early age and may become more noticeable when a child's circumstances change, such as when they start school. Most cases are diagnosed when children are 6 to 12 years old.

The symptoms of ADHD usually improve with age, but many adults who were diagnosed with the condition at a young age continue to experience problems.

In adults, the symptoms of ADHD are more difficult to define than those in children and adolescents, which is largely due to a lack of research into the adult form of the condition. It is still uncertain whether or not ADHD can occur in adults without it first appearing during childhood, although it is known that symptoms of ADHD often persist from childhood into adolescence and adulthood. Any additional problems, or conditions, experienced by children with ADHD, such as depression, sleep problems and dyslexia, are also likely to carry on into adulthood.

By the age of 25, an estimated 15% of people diagnosed with childhood ADHD still have a full range of symptoms, and an estimated 65% still have symptoms which affect their daily lives.

There is no definitive list of adult ADHD symptoms and experts agree that simply applying the childhood symptoms to adults would not work. This is because the way in which inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness affect adults, is very different from the way they affect children. For example, hyperactivity tends to decrease in adults, while inattentiveness tends to get worse as the pressure of adult life increases. Also, adult symptoms of ADHD tend to be far more subtle than childhood symptoms.

**The symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can be categorised into 2 types of behavioural problems: Inattentiveness, and Hyperactivity and impulsiveness.**

Most people with ADHD have problems that fall into both of these categories, but this is not always the case.

For example, some people with the condition may have problems with inattentiveness, but not with hyperactivity or impulsiveness. This form of ADHD is also known as attention deficit disorder (ADD). ADD can sometimes go unnoticed because the symptoms may be less obvious.

Below is a list of symptoms which may be used to recognise adult ADHD.

- carelessness and lack of attention to detail.
- continually starting new tasks before finishing old ones.
- poor organisational skills.
- inability to focus, or prioritise.
- continually losing, or misplacing, things.
- forgetfulness.
- restlessness and edginess.
- difficulty keeping quiet, and speaking out of turn.
- blurting responses, and poor social timing when talking to others.
- often interrupting others.
- mood swings.
- irritability and a quick temper.
- inability to deal with stress.
- extreme impatience.
- taking risks in activities, often with little, or no, regard for personal safety, or the safety of others.

As with ADHD in children and adolescents, ADHD in adults can appear alongside many related problems or conditions. One of the most common conditions is depression. Any problems you may have had as a child are likely to persist into adulthood, which can make life extremely difficult. For example, you may have problems finding and keeping employment, as well as relationship and social interaction problems. Some adults with ADHD may even become involved in drugs or crime.

## ADHD Diagnosis in Adults

Diagnosing ADHD in adults is more difficult because there's some disagreement about whether the list of symptoms used to diagnose children and teenagers also applies to adults.

In some cases, an adult may be diagnosed with ADHD if they have 5 or more of the symptoms of inattentiveness, or 5 or more of hyperactivity and impulsiveness, listed in diagnostic criteria for children with ADHD.

As part of your assessment, the specialist will ask about your present symptoms. However, under current diagnostic guidelines, a diagnosis of ADHD in adults cannot be confirmed unless your symptoms have been present from childhood.

If you find it difficult to remember whether you had problems as a child, or you were not diagnosed with ADHD when you were younger, your specialist may wish to see your old school records, or talk to your parents, teachers or anyone else who knew you well when you were a child.

For an adult to be diagnosed with ADHD, their symptoms should also have a moderate effect on different areas of their life, such as:

- underachieving at work or in education
- driving dangerously
- difficulty making or keeping friends
- difficulty in relationships with partners

If your problems are recent and did not occur regularly in the past, you're not considered to have ADHD. This is because it's currently thought that ADHD cannot develop for the first time in adults.

**Treatment for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can help relieve the symptoms and make the condition much less of a problem in day-to-day life.**

A few psychological interventions for adult ADHD have been developed but these are still under review and medication continues to be the first line treatment. Some people find that having a better understanding of their diagnosis and some self-help techniques can be enough to manage their difficulties.

## Medication

There are 5 types of medication licensed for the treatment of ADHD:

- methylphenidate
- dexamfetamine
- lisdexamfetamine
- atomoxetine
- guanfacine

These medications are not a permanent cure for ADHD but may help someone with the condition concentrate better, be less impulsive, feel calmer, and learn and practise new skills. Treatment breaks are occasionally recommended to assess whether the medication is still needed.

Your specialist will discuss how long you should take your treatment but, in many cases, treatment is continued for as long as it is helping.

What does the Adult ADHD service in North East Lincolnshire offer?

The Adult ADHD Service in NEL can be accessed via a referral from your GP or other professional.

### **Medication**

We currently provide medication assessments with a Consultant Psychiatrist and Mental Health Practitioner (Nurse). We work closely with your GP and ask that they prescribe the medication for you. We will talk to you at your appointments about what options are available to you and help you decide which treatment may be best for you. Once started on a new treatment, we will see you regularly to make sure we get the right dose, keeping in touch with your GP to let them know of any changes. When you are stable on your medication we will review your medication regularly, at least once a year, to make sure everything is still ok and update your GP.

## **Support Groups**

Many people accessing our service have reported wanting support to learn coping strategies, including Mindfulness and skills to help them to reduce the impact their ADHD Symptoms have on their life. Therefore, we offer different groups that you can access according to your needs. We will tell you more about what groups are running when you access the service.

## **Therapy**

There is currently no evidence that talking therapy can help people with ADHD, however, we do offer people the opportunity to talk through how their ADHD impacts on their life and we can support people to access mainstream Mental Health Services for talking therapy if they need this for co-existing difficulties, such as Anxiety and Depression.

There are some helpful online resources available which could be useful in developing a better understanding of ADHD for you and those around you. We have listed a few resources and places to start looking below:

**NHS Choices Website:**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd)

**Royal College of Psychiatrists Website:** [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/adhdinadults.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/adhdinadults.aspx)

**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Website:**

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87)

**The UK Adult ADHD Network Website:**

[www.ukaan.org](http://www.ukaan.org)

**AADD-UK The site for and by adults with ADHD Website:**

[www.aadduk.org](http://www.aadduk.org)

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact us. Our Contact details are on the back page of this leaflet.



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The information about ADHD in this leaflet is taken from the NHS Website – see [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) (accessed 16/04/19)



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