

## HEALTH MANAGEMENT FACT SHEET

# Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is considered a form of neurodiversity, along with other conditions such as autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.**

Neurodiversity refers to different ways the brain can work and interpret information. Those with ADHD can feel restless and lack concentration.

ADHD is thought to be caused by a complex mix of environmental and genetic factors, but is a strongly hereditary condition. It is present from childhood, but an increasing number of adults are now being diagnosed with ADHD for the first time.

It affects around 3-5% of children and around 2% of adults in the UK. The condition is usually diagnosed between three and seven years of age, but can be identified later in childhood — or even in adulthood.

## Key takeaways

- > ADHD affects around 2% of the adult population
- > People with ADHD can be restless, lack concentration and be impulsive
- > There is no cure, however it can be managed with appropriate treatment
- > Treatment for adults usually involves medicine or psychological therapies

## Condition overview

Those living with ADHD can experience a variety of challenges, which can affect their home life and work life.

Symptoms often improve as people get older, but many still experience problems throughout their lives. People with ADHD can also have sleep or anxiety issues.

The cause of the condition is unknown, however it has been found to run in families — and has been associated with premature birth or low birth weight.

# Symptoms and signs

There is no definitive list of adult ADHD symptoms, and it can present differently to the way it does in 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.

**ADHD has three core symptoms which affect people to different degrees:**

## Inattention



- > Difficulties with concentration, short term and working memory.
- > Difficulties with planning and getting started (activation).
- > Difficulty with organisation and losing things.
- > Easily distracted by small things which others wouldn't notice.

## Impulsiveness



- > Acting or speaking on the spur of the moment without thinking through the consequences.
- > Difficulty controlling emotions.

## Hyperactivity



- > Adults with ADHD are usually much less active than children with ADHD, but may still have symptoms such as restlessness and the need to tap or fidget.
- > Some people are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, without hyperactivity. This is particularly the case for girls and women.

Co-existent sleep issues can have knock-on consequences for getting up and out to work in the morning.

Some (but by no means all) people with ADHD, also develop mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and depression.

**Strengths associated with ADHD include:**

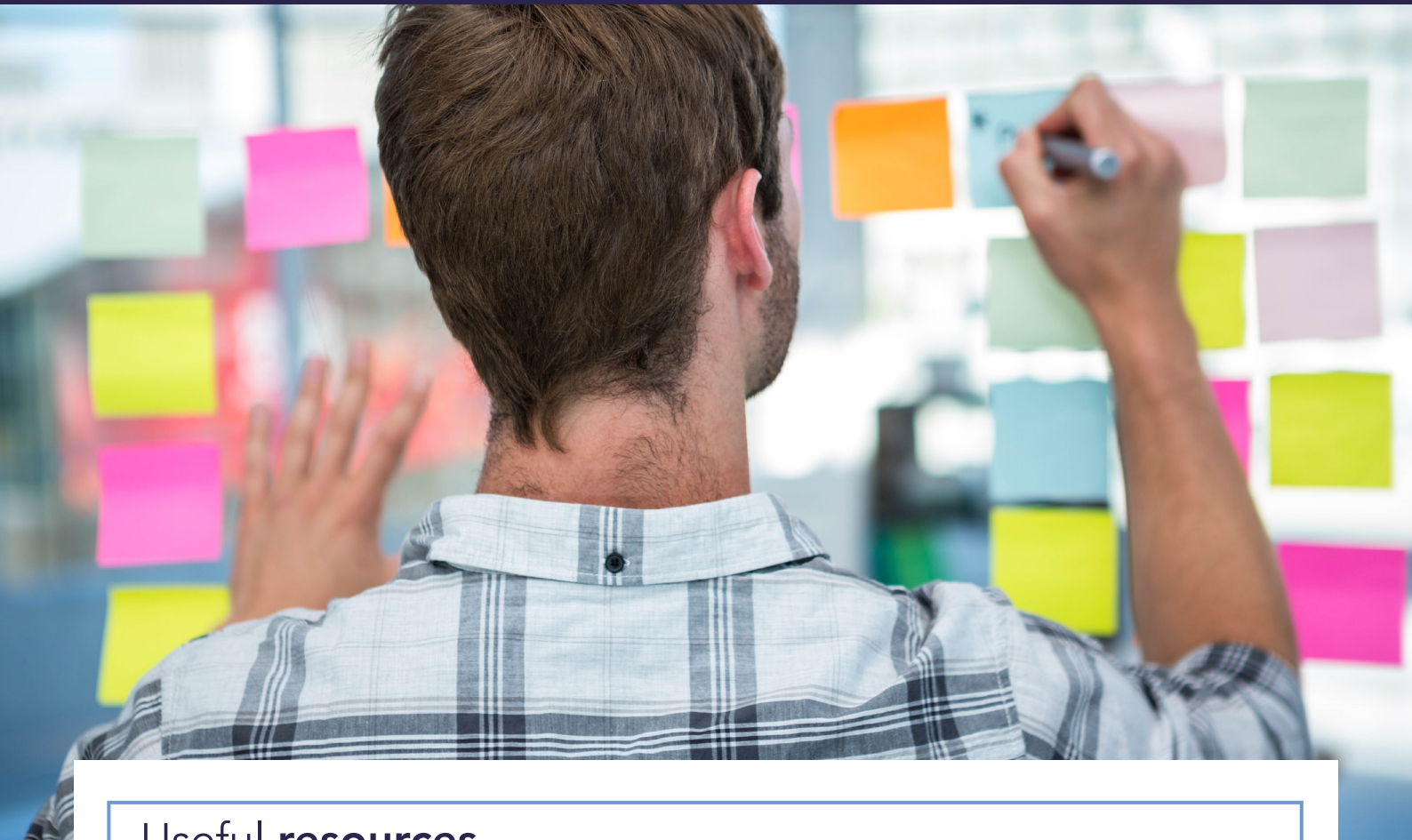
- > Ability to 'hyper focus' on things of interest
- > Willingness to take risks
- > Spontaneous and flexible
- > Good in a crisis
- > Creative ideas – "thinking outside the box"
- > Relentless energy
- > Often optimistic
- > Motivated by short-term deadlines – working in sprints rather than marathons
- > Good eye for detail

# Treatment

There is no cure for ADHD, but medicines and therapies such as CBT have been shown to help.

Coaching can help a person understand their condition better and identify strategies to help them.

Medication can help people with ADHD to concentrate, be less impulsive, feel calmer, and learn new skills.



## Useful resources

[AADD-UK](#)

[ADHD UK](#)

[NHS: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#)

[ADHD Foundation](#)

[Gov.uk: ADHD and driving](#)

Contact us to find out more.



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