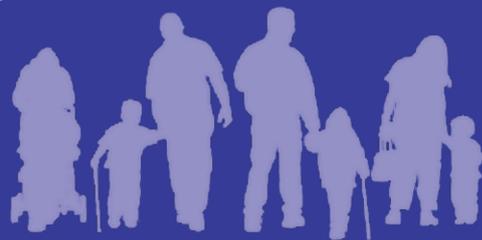


# ADHD

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers.  
Clinical information has been approved by West Sussex practitioners.



## What is ADHD?

'Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder' (ADHD) refers to a neurodevelopmental condition with behavioural symptoms that include inattentiveness, restlessness and fidgeting, impulsiveness and being easily distracted. ADHD is the most common neurodevelopmental condition in the UK. It affects around 2 to 5 per cent of school-age children and is more commonly diagnosed in boys than girls. For most people ADHD is a life-long condition, although the symptoms usually improve with age. Some people, however, may continue to experience difficulties into adulthood.

## Characteristics of ADHD

There are three types of behavioural symptoms that characterise ADHD:

- **Inattentiveness** – signs include: having a short attention span and being easily distracted; appearing forgetful or losing things; finding it difficult to listen or follow instructions; constantly changing activity.
- **Hyperactivity and impulsiveness** – signs include: being unable to sit still or to concentrate on tasks; excessive movement or talking; interrupting; acting without thinking; having little or no sense of danger.
- **Combined hyperactive and inattentive presentation** – a combination of both inattentiveness and hyperactivity

The behavioural symptoms that lead to a diagnosis of ADHD are usually noticeable in children before the age of six and will be seen in more than one setting (such as home and school). Some people with ADHD also have learning difficulties and problems with sleep. ADHD is also common amongst people who have autism, Tourette syndrome and dyslexia.

Children who only have difficulties with inattention tend to be diagnosed with 'attention deficit disorder' (ADD), which can go unnoticed because the symptoms may be less obvious.

## Causes of ADHD

The exact causes of ADHD are unknown. It tends to run in families and research suggests that parents and siblings of a child with ADHD are four to five times more likely to have it themselves. Various other risk factors are thought to play a part, but firm links have not been made, so more research is needed.

## Types of therapy

- **There is no known 'cure'** for ADHD but there are a number of therapies and intervention that can help to manage it, including:
- **Behaviour therapy** – uses a system of positive reinforcement to help parents, families and sometimes teachers to encourage improved behaviour in children with ADHD.
- **Diet and exercise** – the NHS recommends regular exercise and a balanced diet for children with ADHD. Cutting down on certain foods such as sugar can help with symptoms – speak to your GP or a dietician for advice on changes to diet.
- **Medication** – Five drugs are available to provide short-term treatment for ADHD and to help people to feel calmer and to concentrate. Four drugs are licensed in the UK – methylphenidate, dexamfetamine, lisdexamfetamine, atomoxetine and guanfacine.
- **Social skills training** – using role play and drama to help children learn how they should behave in specific social situations.
- **Talking therapies** – regular contact with a counsellor, psychologist or psychotherapist is known to help children better understand and manage their condition.





## ADHD

### Ask About

- **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** – your child may qualify for DLA, a state benefit that will help with their care. For further information visit [www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children](http://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children).
- **Facebook support groups** – search for the closed Facebook groups from West Sussex ADHD Support Group, Worthing ADHD Support Group, and Reaching Families.
- **Learning and Behaviour Advisory Team (LBAT)** – offers consultation & training to schools around learning and behaviour when a pupil's progress is being affected by these issues. Ask your child's school for details & visit: <https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/229>.
- **Portage** – a home-based educational programme for very young children, tailored to individual needs: Crawley & East Grinstead: **01293 572480**, Chichester & Horsham: **01243 536182**, Mid Sussex: **01444 243150** & Worthing: **01903 242558**.
- **Reaching Families** – provides training, information & other fact sheets related to this topic. We also offer benefits advice, peer support, a Facebook group & handbook (see below) for parent carers of children & young people with SEND in West Sussex. See [www.reachingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk).
- **Single Point of Access (SPoA) West Sussex** - a dedicated route to access specialist emotional wellbeing and mental health support for those aged 4-17. Anyone can refer to SPoA including children & parent carers. Referrals will be directed to the most appropriate help from Youth Emotional Support, YMCA Dialogue or Sussex Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Alternatively, signposting to other sources of support may be given. To make a referral, use the online form at: <https://e-wellbeing.co.uk/support> or Tel: **0300 304 0462**.
- **West Sussex Children's Services** – support from health and social care. If your child is under 18, contact the Integrated Front Door (IFD) for West Sussex Children's Services. Tel: **01403 229900** or email: [WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk). The IFD is also an entry point for the Children with Disabilities (social care) service for children & young people with severe and/or complex disabilities. Eligibility criteria apply – See: <https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/265>. For over 18s call the Adults' CarePoint: **01243 642121**, or email: [socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk).

### Further reading and useful links

- ***Making Sense of it All: From Birth to Adulthood*** – Reaching Families' handbook for parent carers of children and young people with SEND in West Sussex. This provides essential information on money matters, including claiming DLA and PIP, as well as social care, health, leisure, travel, education and employment. Go to: [www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/guides.html](http://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/guides.html).
- **ADHD Information Services (ADDISS)** – [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk).
- **ADHD UK** – For further information please visit: <https://adhduk.co.uk>.
- **NHS Health A-Z** has a section devoted to ADHD. Go to: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd).
- **West Sussex Libraries** – For books on this topic available to borrow for free, go to: <https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/welcome> and search the library catalogue for 'ADHD'.
- **West Sussex Local Offer** – go to <https://westsussex.local-offer.org> for local services, support and details of Short Breaks providers for children & young people aged 0 - 25 years with SEND.
- **Young Minds** – the mental health charity for young people has a section of their website devoted to ADHD with fact sheets and advice. Visit: <https://youngminds.org.uk>.

