

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Introduction

The aim of this poster is to explore the additional learning need (ALN), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Snap Cymru (no date) states that the term ALN is used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that cause more challenges for the child with their learning and development than other children that are the same age group. Furthermore, Snap Cymru (no date) also highlights that one in five learners in the UK are faced with daily challenges and have had a diagnosis of additional learning needs (ALN). Although there are many additional learning needs, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a need that is commonly identified in children, it can significantly affect the learning experiences and development. ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition, it is identified by patterns of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity (NHS Inform,2024), these patterns can significantly impact the learner's ability to learn and engage effectively within a classroom environment. This poster will explore the key characteristics, diagnosis process, challenges the children face and the strategies to support children with ADHD.

Barriers

NHS (2023) states that children with ADHD could face various challenges within a school environment, resulting in negative effects on their learning and development. It also states that ADHD may cause difficulty for children's attention and concentration which can then impact their ability to complete tasks and follow instructions, especially tasks that require the child to have prolonged focus. This can be identified within a classroom environment, children with ADHD may be easily distracted by noises in the classroom, internal thoughts or dysregulation this then results in the child becoming disengaged, disruptive, may start to make noises, and trying to draw attention to themselves which may be labelled as "bad behaviour". However, the child's needs need to be recognised and supported with regulation strategies to enable them to maintain focus and access their learning tasks better. Furthermore, impulsivity and hyperactivity are another barrier for children with ADHD in a classroom environment. Impulsivity can be identified by actions such as interrupting others, shouting out without giving other children the opportunity to answer (The ADHD Centre, 2025). This can be disrupting not only for the child with ADHD but also their peers, although these challenges are because of their needs, it can still be misunderstood by staff so it could lead to discipline. Hyperactivity comes with impulsivity; this is when the child is unable to control their regulation, this may be displayed by swinging on chairs, inability to remain seated, fidgeting and withdrawn from any focus tasks. However, these behaviours may also be misunderstood and labelled negatively, without recognition and support, this could break down the relationship between the child, their teachers and peers. Furthermore, without the understanding of the additional learning need, the child may be punished for their behaviours rather than supported. From the social model of disability perspective, this highlights how barriers within schools, such as negative labelling and staff perceptions and lack of support strategies, can cause significant disadvantage to the child. This means schools should adapt the learning environment to reduce barriers and create a supportive environment for all children ensuring no child is excluded from reaching their full potential or accessing learning opportunities (Shape Arts, no date).

Identification and Diagnosis

The identification and diagnosis of ADHD is known to be a complex process; this involves being able to identify patterns of behaviour and doing an assessment to gather all relevant information about the child and their needs. Research has found that three to five percent of children, averaging one child per classroom in the UK are diagnosed with ADHD. The assessments include detailed developmental and psychosocial history, observations of the child's behaviours and in some cases, the child has the opportunity to share their views on their symptoms and how it affects them in their lives (NHS, 2016). However, although there are assessments, it has been suggested that there is no specific testing used to diagnose ADHD. Healthcare professionals such as Paediatricians, Psychiatrists or clinical psychologists have the responsibility, training and qualifications to diagnose ADHD. In addition, the complex diagnosis process is available through the NHS in Wales, however, the waiting times and lack of funding for resources can delay the assessment, this can be challenging for many families that are struggling financially and are unable to go private. Furthermore, due to the long waiting times, children may face further challenges in school, without the right support, this can continue to affect their wellbeing and academic development (Welsh Government,2025).

Strategies

One effective strategy that could be used to support children with ADHD is keeping a consistent and structured routine, ensuring that the child is always aware of what is happening next. Resources such as visual timetables and now and next boards are useful during this supportive approach. These enable clear steps and help the child understand the sequence of the day, expectations and prepare for transitions. This type of support strategy is important for children with ADHD due to the daily struggles with their attention and organisation skills (DuPaul and Stoner, 2014). Using this strategy reduces the anxiety and uncertainty the child may face. Keeping structured routines and consistency can enable better engagement, encourage independence and create a sense of safety for the child. In addition, although this strategy supports focus and reduces the risk of overwhelming the child, it is important that all staff implement this to maintain consistency and make adaptations if necessary. However, this strategy can be a tool that is over-relied on, when changes happen, the child may struggle to adjust and regulate due to relying on the consistent structure. Again, this could be a challenge for the child limiting opportunities and affecting their ability to develop flexibility and cope with change.



Source: Etsy (no date)

