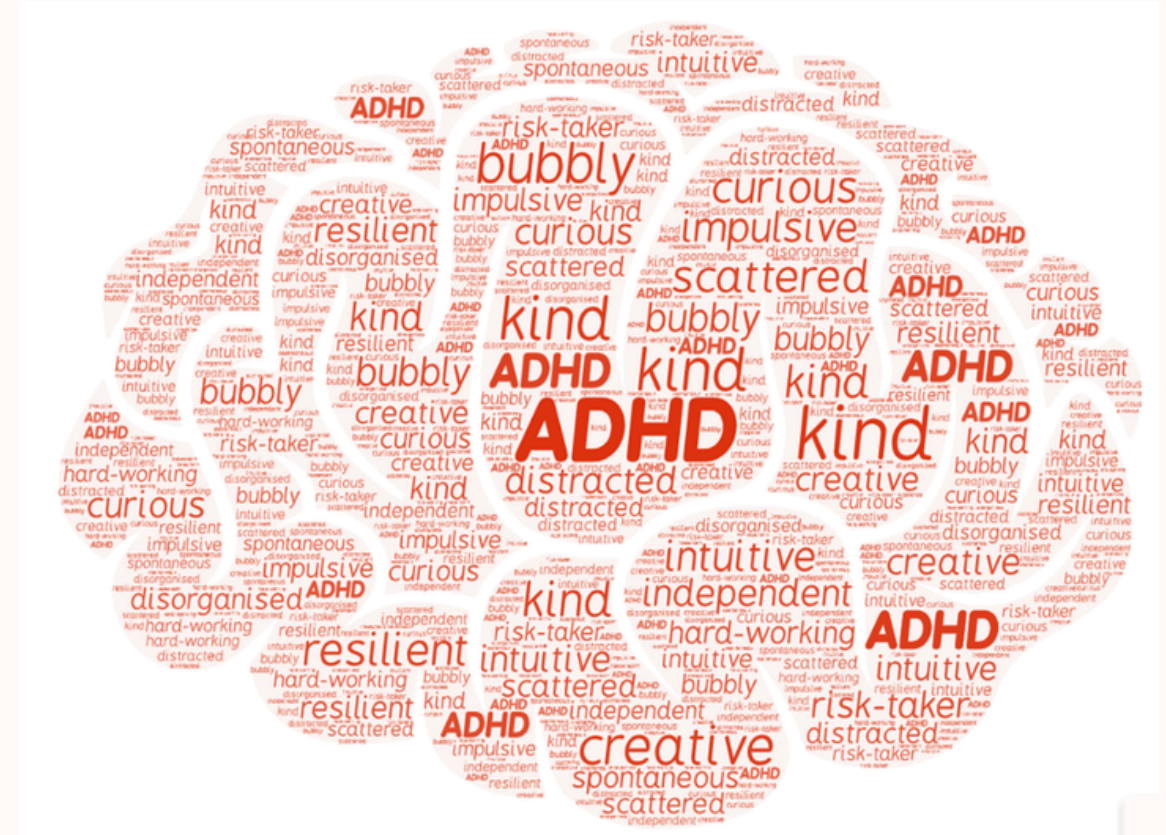




Psychopathological Classifications and Provisions Component

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6A05-(ICD-11) Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)



Introduction



People with ADHD their brains work differently than most people. People of all ages with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, staying still, waiting their turn, or thinking before they do something. Attention, hyperactivity, and impulsive behaviour are the main signs of ADHD (Health, 2025)

Symptoms

- Difficulty paying attention and staying focused.
- Being easily distracted or forgetful in daily activities.
- Trouble following instructions or finishing tasks.
- Fidgeting, restlessness, or finding it hard to sit still.
- Talking excessively or interrupting others.
- Acting impulsively without thinking about consequences.
- Difficulty organising schoolwork, work tasks, or routines.

(Mayo Clinic, 2023)

Causes

- The exact cause of ADHD is not fully known.
- Research suggests that ADHD is linked to genetic differences and often runs in families.
- Other factors linked with ADHD include premature birth, epilepsy, brain injury, and autism.
- ADHD is not caused by bad parenting or too much sugar, although these myths have existed in the past.

(ADHD UK, 2020)



Definition

The neurodevelopmental disorder known as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects activity levels, attention, and controlling their emotions. It can affect a person's ability to focus, plan tasks, control behaviour, and control emotions in daily life. ADHD typically begins in childhood and may remain into adolescence and adulthood (Digital.nhs.uk, 2025).



Diagnosis

- In the UK, ADHD is diagnosed by a specialist following a full assessment.
- Diagnosis is based on observed and reported behaviour, not on a single blood test or brain scan.
- Information is usually gathered from parents, carers, teachers, and the individual themselves.
- Early diagnosis is important because it can help people access support, treatment, and reasonable adjustments at school, college, work, or home.

(Anon, n.d.)



Current Services in UK

- **NHS ADHD Services** – assessment, diagnosis, medication reviews, and follow-up support.
- **CAMHS** – support for children and young people with ADHD and related emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- **Adult Mental Health or Adult ADHD Services** – assessment and management for adults.
- **School and College Support** – classroom strategies, SEN support, and reasonable adjustments.
- **GP Services** – referrals, shared care, and monitoring of medication in some cases. (NHS, 2025).



Historical Perspectives



- In the past, ADHD was often misunderstood as simply “bad behaviour” or poor discipline.
- Some children and adults were unfairly labelled as lazy, disruptive, or naughty.
- Over time, research showed that ADHD is a real neurodevelopmental condition affecting attention, activity, and impulse control.
- Today, awareness has improved, although stigma and long waiting times for assessment still remain concerns (Mahone and Denckla, 2017).



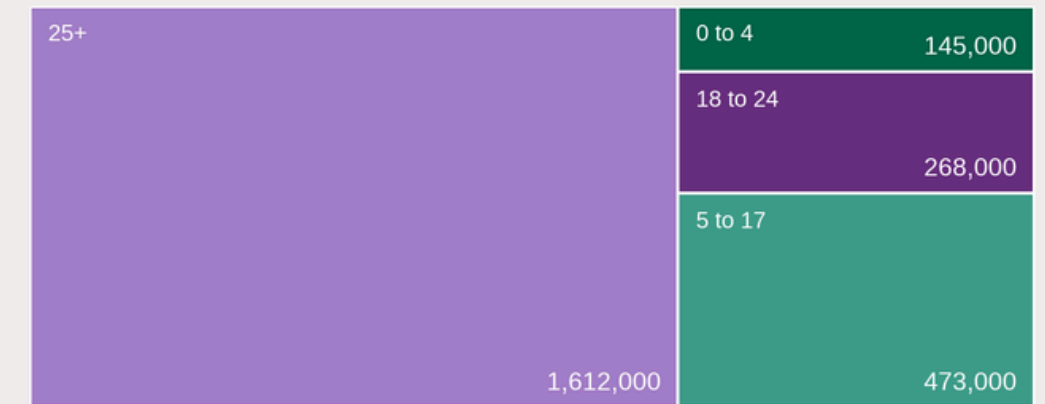
Treatments

- Behaviour therapy – helps with routines, behaviour management, and self-regulation.
- Parent training and support – helps carers support children with ADHD.
- Medication – stimulant or non-stimulant medicines may be prescribed when appropriate.
- Talking therapies – such as CBT or mindfulness, especially for adults.
- Educational support – structured routines, task support, and adjustments in school or college.
- Lifestyle strategies – sleep, exercise, planning tools, and reducing distractions may also help (Loader, 2025).

(Stiebahl, 2026)

Estimated prevalence of ADHD by age group

England, February 2026



Recommendations

- Waiting times for ADHD assessment and treatment should be reduced in accordance with the NHS Constitution for England (2021).
- Greater public awareness should be promoted to improve understanding of ADHD and reduce stigma, in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Great Britain, 2010).
- Enhanced training should be provided for teachers, healthcare professionals and employers through the framework of the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014 (Great Britain, 2014).
- Support in schools, colleges and workplaces should be strengthened in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015).
- More integrated and coordinated services should be developed for children, young people and adults with ADHD, as encouraged by the Care Act 2014 and the Health and Care Act 2022. (England, 2025).

Conclusion

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that lasts for life and can affect attention, behaviour, and daily life. People with ADHD can manage their symptoms, build on their strengths, and do well in school, at work, and in everyday life if they are diagnosed early and get the right help.



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