

Understanding Aspects of SEND: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

1. What is ADHD? Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects an individual's ability to focus, control impulses and regulate activity levels. ADHD is commonly identified during childhood, but it can continue into adolescence and adulthood. It is typically categorised into three presentations: inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, or combined. ADHD is not due to laziness or a lack of discipline; it stems from differences in brain development and activity. In the UK, between 2% and 5% of school-age children are considered to have ADD/ADHD. (Optomist Minds)

2. How can ADHD present? ADHD can present differently in every individual, but common characteristics include:

- **Inattention:** Difficulty maintaining focus, being easily distracted or struggling to follow through on tasks and instructions.
- **Hyperactivity:** Constant movement, fidgeting or an inability to remain seated or still for extended periods.
- **Impulsivity:** Acting without thinking, interrupting conversations or struggling to wait their turn.
- **Forgetfulness and disorganisation:** Losing items, missing deadlines or having difficulty organising tasks and activities.
- **Emotional dysregulation:** Intense reactions to emotions or difficulty managing frustration and stress.
- **Task avoidance:** Reluctance to engage in activities that require sustained mental effort, such as homework or long projects.

3. Ways to help manage ADHD Effective support for individuals with ADHD involves structured approaches, understanding and flexibility. Strategies include:

- **Establish clear routines:** Use predictable schedules and visual timetables to provide structure.
- **Break tasks into smaller steps:** Simplify instructions and focus on one task at a time to reduce overwhelm.
- **Incorporate movement breaks:** Allow opportunities for physical activity to help manage energy levels and improve focus.

- **Provide clear, concise instructions:** Use direct language and check for understanding.
- **Use tools and technology:** Employ timers, reminders or apps to support organisation and time management.
- **Foster a supportive environment:** Offer positive reinforcement, patience and encouragement to build self-esteem.

4. Where to Find Out More

- **ADHD Foundation** (www.adhdfoundation.org.uk): Provides resources, training and support for individuals with ADHD and their families.
- **ADDitude Magazine** (www.additudemag.com): Offers practical tips, research insights and community forums.
- **CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD)** (www.chadd.org): Advocacy and resources tailored for individuals with ADHD.
- Book recommendations:
[Driven to Distraction by Edward M. Hallowell and John J. Ratey](#)
[Smart but Scattered by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare](#)