

Disability Insight

Take a look around you

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

24th February 2022

Key facts about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- About 2 to 5% of school age children can suffer from ADHD.
- Boys are more commonly affected than girls. A UK survey¹ in 2015 found that 3.62% of boys and 0.85% of girls had ADHD.
- Richard Branson has ADHD.

Click below to read the stories of some people who have experience of ADHD:

[ADHD stories](#)

[A Mother's Story](#)

[James, diagnosed with ADHD age 37](#)

¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1087054715613441>

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About Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. Many children, especially under-fives, are inattentive and restless. This does not necessarily mean they are suffering from ADHD. When inattention or hyperactivity is extreme in comparison to other children of the same age and when it affects the child, their educational, social, and family life, it becomes a concern.

The symptoms of ADHD can be categorised into 2 types of behaviours:

- **inattentiveness** (difficulty concentrating and focusing, appearing forgetful or losing things)
- **hyperactivity** (unable to sit still, constant fidgeting, excessive talking) and **impulsiveness** (acting without thinking, little or no sense of danger)

Many people with ADHD have problems that fall into both these categories, but this is not always the case. For example, around 2 to 3 in 10 people with the condition have problems with concentrating and focusing, but not with hyperactivity or impulsiveness.

As mentioned in Key Facts above, ADHD is more often diagnosed in boys than girls. Girls are more likely to have symptoms of inattentiveness only, and are less likely to show disruptive behaviour that makes ADHD symptoms more obvious. This means girls who have ADHD may not always be diagnosed.

Strengths

People with ADHD have specific strengths as a result of their brain functioning difference. They can be more spontaneous, creative, energetic, intuitive, imaginative, and inventive. They also have the ability to hyperfocus on subjects that interest them to a far greater extent than their non-ADHD counterparts.

What are the causes?

The exact cause of ADHD is unknown, but the condition has been shown to run in families. Factors suggested as potentially having a role in ADHD include:

- being born prematurely (before the 37th week of pregnancy)
- having a low birthweight
- having epilepsy

Diagnosis

If you think you or your child may have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speak to a GP. The GP cannot formally diagnose ADHD, but they can refer you for a specialist assessment if necessary. Each Trust has a team of staff specialising in ADHD who will carry out the assessment. The assessment may include:

- a series of interviews with you or your child
- interviews or reports from other significant people, such as partners, parents and teachers

What treatments are available?

For children with ADHD, although there's no cure, it can be managed with appropriate educational support, advice and support for parents and affected children, alongside medicine, if necessary.

For adults with ADHD, medicine is often the first treatment offered, although psychological therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy may also help.

Treatment plans will be determined on an individual basis with the experts in ADHD in each Trust.

Support for you if you care for a person with ADHD

[Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) - provides information on ADHD for parents and carers

[ADHD Information and Support Services \(ADDISS\)](#) - Provides information and resources about ADHD to anyone who needs assistance.

[Young Minds](#) -Parents' helpline: 0800 018 2138: for any adult concerned about the emotions and behaviour of a child or young person.

Further useful websites

<https://addni.org/>

www.additudemag.com

www.performancebreakthrough.co.uk/

www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/information/young-people/

<https://adhduk.co.uk/>

