

## My child is struggling with their mental health, where can I get support for this?

St Helens has a robust local offer of services that offer the following:

- ◆ Advice: Signposting, self-management and one off contact.
- ◆ Help: Outcomes-focused, evidence informed, low-level intervention.
- ◆ More specialised help: Extensive treatment dealing with complex issues and behaviours.
- ◆ Risk Support: Risk management and crisis response.

This support can be accessed through the THRIVE website at <https://thrivesthelens.my.canva.site> or via the QR code below:



For more information about the developmental paediatric service and signposting to other services please visit the developmental paediatrics website at:

<https://sthk.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk/developmental-paediatrics> or via the QR code below.



## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis and treatment in St Helens

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

**ADHD is not real:** ADHD is a real and a life-long diagnosis that follows children and young people into adulthood.

**At the end of the assessment a diagnosis of ADHD will be given:** If a child/young person (CYP) is being assessed for ADHD, they might not get a diagnosis. Many CYP have behaviour that presents as hyperactive, impulsive or inattentive but they do not meet the specific criteria for a diagnosis.

**A diagnosis is the only way to access help:** Strategies are the best way to help manage behaviour, with or without an ADHD diagnosis. There are local services and online resources from websites such as [ADHDFoundation.org.uk](http://ADHDFoundation.org.uk), that can help with strategies. Local services such as ADDvanced Solutions, or a referral from your Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) into TESSA do not require a diagnosis.

You can also apply for Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) for support in school without a diagnosis, as St Helens has a needs led approach.

**What if the CYP masks in school:** Masking is when children (particularly girls) find a 'socially acceptable' way, to blend in with their peers. The nurses who look at referrals for an ADHD assessment know what masking looks like and consider this when reading referrals.

**We need medication to manage behaviour at home:** The developmental paediatric team 'medicate for school' because the goal of medication is to help children and young people get the most out of their school/college/work day.

It is better to use strategies at home so the CYP can have a break from medication. This is also important as ADHD medication can affect your sleep cycle. It is often recommended that short breaks should be taken without medication.

### Will this impact my career choices?

There are many thriving adults with ADHD who excel in their careers such as:

- ◆ Channing Tatum, (actor)
- ◆ Lewis Hamilton (racing car driver),
- ◆ Simone Biles, (olympic gymnast)
- ◆ SZA (singer)
- ◆ Emma Watson (actor)
- ◆ Richard Branson (entrepreneur)
- ◆ Denise Greenwood (surgeon).

However there are some careers that can be more difficult to access for people medicated or diagnosed with ADHD such as:

- ◆ Pilot
- ◆ Military service
- ◆ Naval service

As ADHD qualifies as a disability under the Equality Act of 2010, there are protections in the work place to support adults to put strategies in place.

However the three fields above commonly require additional medical assessments for employment to be considered. It is also important to consider that different countries will have different entry requirements for these fields. There are also varying restrictions for immigration requirements for different countries.

All children and young people who find impulsivity, inattention or hyperactivity challenging should consider their future career ambitions and what type of job would support them to thrive.

**Play to your strengths!**

### Can my child take this with other medication?

Each medication prescribed for ADHD will have its own list of medications that it cannot be/has to be carefully prescribed alongside.

This can be impacted by the medication type and dosage, however common medications with negative interactions to ADHD medication include:

- ◆ Antidepressants
- ◆ Nasal decongestants
- ◆ Moxifloxacin (anti-allergy)
- ◆ Anti-psychotics
- ◆ Alcohol
- ◆ HIV-protease inhibitors (for amphetamine's)
- ◆ Any medication that elevates blood pressure.

### What health conditions could ADHD medication negatively impact/interact with?

- ◆ Family history of Tourette's syndrome, tics
- ◆ Epilepsy
- ◆ History of heart disease.

### Where can I learn more about ADHD medication?

You can access various free resources for families, children and adults at:

- ◆ ADHDfoundation—<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/resources/>
- ◆ ADHD UK—<https://adhduk.co.uk/adhd-useful-resources/>

For a complete overview of ADHD medication, its uses and potential impacts. You can access the electronic medicines compendium [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk).

A full list of local services can be found on the St Helens local offer website: [www.sthelens.gov.uk/send/](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/send/)

You can also visit the family hub website for a full offer of services near you at: <https://sthelensfamilyhub.sthelens.gov.uk>

### Parenting and family courses

Strategies to support boundaries and routines in the home are the best way to support children and young people at home and in school, whether or not a diagnosis of ADHD is made. Everyone is different and so the same strategies that help one person may need changing to support another. There are several providers of parent training and support in St Helens including:

- ◆ Triple P positive parenting program for 0-16 years
- ◆ Family centers: Invest in Play
- ◆ ADDvanced Solutions Family learning programs.

All families should get support with strategies for home and at school, before applying for an ADHD assessment. Referrals for an ADHD assessment will not be accepted unless the graduated response has been followed and the child/ young person has been seen by TESSA (referred by SENCO).

**Education strategy:** Your CYP's school can put an EHCP in place to help them in the classroom without a diagnosis. It is important that you apply for school support as early as possible.

All families should ask the school for support before applying for an ADHD assessment. As the child/young person can get this help without a diagnosis, and might not need an assessment after this is put into place. Supporting services include:

- ◆ Behaviour Improvement Team
- ◆ Educational psychology
- ◆ TESSA
- ◆ IASS.

## What does a diagnosis mean?

### What help is available without a diagnosis?

- ◆ Parenting courses
- ◆ Family workshops
- ◆ Mental health support
- ◆ Special Educational Needs (SEN) support in school
- ◆ EHCP
- ◆ Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

### What help is only available with a diagnosis?

- ◆ Medication if clinically appropriate (see below for more details)

In addition to being able to request medication, for many people getting a diagnosis helps them understand their own needs and how they can make tasks easier for themselves. It can help children and young people's self esteem, to know that they have a diagnosis and are not 'challenging' or 'badly behaved'. It is important that with or without a diagnosis, the emphasis is put on creating the correct environment for the child/ young person to flourish, rather than focusing on challenging behaviours.

### If I have ADHD, will I be given medication?

Some children/young people diagnosed with ADHD will not be able to be prescribed medication. This is because nurses/doctors have to look at the below before they can be sure it is safe to prescribe:

- ◆ The child/young person's medical history
- ◆ The health of their heart
- ◆ How ADHD impacts them day to day
- ◆ If they have any mental health concerns.

You could be started on medication and later taken off it due to side effects. Many families choose not to access medication and work with strategies instead. No CYP has to take medication, and the child/young person will always be asked their opinion.

## Medication and its impact

### What is ADHD medication?

ADHD medication is strictly regulated, so can only be started by a specialist service like Developmental Paediatrics. There are two types of ADHD medication:

- ◆ Stimulants, which work by increasing activity in the brain, particularly in areas that control attention and behaviour.
- ◆ Non-stimulants, which work by changing the way the brain uptakes certain chemicals.

Most CYP in St Helens will be started on Methylphenidate, a stimulant medication as their first option for ADHD medication.

### How can medication help my child?

For some children/young people with strong presentations of ADHD, medication can make day to day life a lot easier and support them in getting their education, as well as making and keeping friends. The medications do this by helping people feel calmer, less impulsive and concentrate more easily.

### Possible negative impact of medication

Each medication used for ADHD has its own list of potential side effects, that should be considered by clinicians and families before starting medication. A few of the most common or impactful side effects are listed below:

- ◆ Sexual dysfunction
- ◆ Increased heart rate or blood pressure
- ◆ Suicidal thoughts, depression, mood swings, aggression, anxiety, irritability
- ◆ Anorexia, lower appetite, vomiting, stomach pain, diarrhea
- ◆ Liver disease
- ◆ Interrupted sleep, insomnia, headaches, dizziness, fatigue.

If medication has been deemed appropriate for managing your ADHD then you need to inform the DVLA and your insurance of what medication you are prescribed.