

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

PATIENT GUIDE

THE
ADHD &
AUTISM
CLINIC

Deciding whether to undergo an assessment

Anyone can choose to have an ADHD assessment, but it is important to consider whether an assessment is needed. A good starting point is to consider what an assessment, or diagnosis would change. For people who are in education and employment, a diagnosis may be required to access reasonable adjustments to study/working arrangements. Other people are seeking treatment (including medication) to treat their ADHD symptoms. Some people are curious to understand why they have challenges that other people do not have. It may also be helpful to discuss your thoughts with a family member or your GP.



The assessment process

There are a number of steps when undergoing an ADHD assessment. The process starts with the completion of registration documents. Once we have received your completed registration documents, we will send you:

1. Pre-assessment questionnaires to be completed by you and an informant (usually a parent, family member or partner)
2. A unique test taker ID to complete a computer-based objective measure of ADHD symptoms called the QbCheck.

As soon as you have completed your registration form, you will be able to schedule an appointment with one of our psychiatrists but please note that if we do not receive the completed pre-assessment questionnaires and you do not complete the QbCheck at least 7 days before your appointment, your appointment will need to be released and you will need to schedule another appointment.

Our service uses the ACE+ assessment tool, which is one of several structured assessment tools which are available for the assessment of ADHD. These tools give structure to ADHD assessment to ensure that all the relevant clinical domains are fully explored. Your psychiatrist will discuss their findings at the end of the assessment appointment and if you are found to have ADHD, you will be able to agree a management plan.

Optional pre-assessment

If you are struggling to decide whether to proceed with a full ADHD assessment, we offer a pre-assessment service with no obligation to proceed to full assessment. Again, the process starts with the completion of registration documents. Once we have received your completed registration documents, we will send you:

1. Pre-assessment questionnaires which need to be completed by you and an informant (usually a parent, family member or partner). You would complete these in your own time.
2. A unique test taker ID to complete a computer-based objective measure of ADHD symptoms called the QbCheck.

Once we have received your completed pre-assessment forms and the QbCheck the information will be reviewed by one of our consultant psychiatrists and you will be advised whether there is evidence to warrant a full ADHD assessment.

If you do decide to proceed to a full ADHD assessment, then the fee for the pre-assessment service will be deducted from the full assessment cost.

Letters and reports

After your assessment, your psychiatrist will write a comprehensive assessment letter to your GP. The letter will be sent to you first for checking. This gives you an opportunity to review what information will be shared with your GP. It also gives you the opportunity to correct any information which has been presented incorrectly. You will have five working days to check the letter. If you cannot make the changes in that period, providing that you let our office know, we can extend the deadline.

However, if we do not hear from you, we will assume that you are ready for the letter to be sent to your GP. You will also receive a copy of the final version of your GP letter.

As well as a full GP letter, we will provide you with a brief letter addressed to whom it may concern which will state your diagnosis. These letters may be useful for sharing with education providers, employers etc. The usual format of the letter is to give the diagnosis and to explain that further information may be requested from our service with your written consent. However, most people find that these letters, which read like a diagnosis certificate, are adequate for most purposes. The benefit of having a brief letter is that you do not have to share personal information about your life when providing evidence of your diagnosis.

Pre-medication checks

If you wish to consider ADHD medication, you may complete pre-medication checks before your appointment so that your prescription may be issued at the end of your appointment. However, you may wish to wait to find out whether you have a diagnosis of ADHD before undergoing the required premedication checks, which include:

1. Blood pressure
2. Heart rate
3. Height
4. Weight

Depending on your clinical and family history, you may also be required to have an ECG before medication.



How to complete pre-medication checks

We can accept your own height and weight measurements. Equally, if you have a validated blood pressure device, we are willing to accept your own readings for blood pressure (and heart rate as blood pressure devices will also record heart rate). If you do not know whether your blood pressure device is validated, or you do not have access to a validated blood pressure device, go to <https://bihsoc.org/bp-monitors/forhome-use/> to find recommendations for your purchase.

If you do not wish to take a home recording, you may ask your GP but please be aware that some GPs may refuse your request unless the check is required by your GP surgery.

If you are required to have an ECG, you may ask your GP to do this for you, but again, please note that your GP may refuse. We offer an at-home ECG reading service. If you elect for this service, there will be an additional charge.

To take a home ECG reading, we will send you a small electronic device (9cm x 3cm) which is operated by placing your fore and middle fingers of each hand on to two square pads. The device will then send a six lead ECG reading to your mobile phone, which you would need to send to our office. Once you have finished your reading, you would repackage the device in its protective packaging and return to our office using a Royal Mail Freepost address. We have created a printed guide and a video to show you how to use the device.

Medication

If you receive a diagnosis of ADHD and you are offered medication by our service, the medication must be prescribed on a private prescription. Prescriptions issued on the day of the consultation are issued free of prescribing charge, however if you request a prescription outside of consultation time, you will be charged a prescribing fee.

Please note that ADHD medication is costly. You should expect to pay between £50 and £100 per month to your chosen pharmacy provider, but this does vary and sometimes can be as much as £150. ADHD medication is governed in a different way to most other medications so your GP will not be able to prescribe the medication for you until you have been stabilised on the medication. When you first start taking ADHD medication, there is a period of dose adjustment, and at times, the need to change to another agent. We refer to this as "medication titration".

Medication titration

When you first start taking medication, unless you experience significant side-effects or you have concerns which you need to discuss with your psychiatrist, the initial medication titration may happen by email; however, you will need to have at least one follow-up appointment with your psychiatrist to establish the ongoing stable dose. As soon as you are stable on your medication, our psychiatrists will write to your GP to request a Shared Care Agreement.

Shared Care Agreements

Shared Care Agreements are made between clinical services to set out how treatment will be provided. If shared care is agreed by your GP, you will be able to obtain your ADHD medication using an NHS prescription.

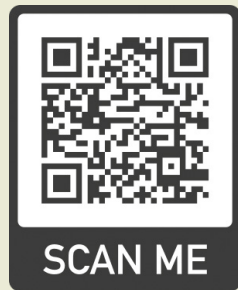
NHS prescriptions are subject to the NHS Prescription Levy for each item you are prescribed. If you have a pre-payment certificate in place, or if you are exempted from paying for your prescriptions, you will not have to pay for ADHD medication using an NHS prescription.

If your ADHD medication is prescribed by your GP under a Shared Care Agreement, you will need to have an annual review with an ADHD specialist. If you remain under our care, you will need to pay for a 30-minute consultation every 12 months with one of our ADHD specialists. Otherwise, you would need to ask to be referred to your local NHS ADHD service to ensure annual ADHD specialist review.

Other interventions

You may wish to consider ADHD coaching as well as, or instead of, ADHD medication. ADHD coaching provides pragmatic help to address the challenges which ADHD may bring. There are various services and practitioners who provide ADHD coaching. Different therapists use different approaches although many will follow an adapted CBT approach. If you are interested in ADHD coaching, your psychiatrist would be happy to suggest names of practitioners and would be happy to make any necessary referral at no additional cost to you.





to view our current fees

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