



Drs. Norman, Tiffney, Digby, Wickett & Mawdsley

The Avenue Surgery
1 The Avenue, Cirencester, GL7 1EH

St Peters Road Surgery
1 St Peters Road, Cirencester, GL7 1RF

www.cirencesterhealthgroup.co.uk

ADHD AND NEURODIVERGENCE IN ADULTS

Many adults live with undiagnosed neurodivergent conditions. These include ADHD, autism, dyslexia and others. Each condition has distinct features, but traits often overlap, and no two people experience them in exactly the same way.

This leaflet focuses mainly on adult ADHD, while also explaining how adults in Gloucestershire can access local ADHD and autism assessment pathways. It also briefly explains NHS Right to Choose and ADHD medication prescribing.

For full details about Right to Choose and CHG's shared care position, please see the CHG website statement.

A Guide to Understanding & Managing ADHD

What is ADHD?

ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects people from childhood into adulthood. It is not just about attention deficits and hyperactivity—it is a different way of brain functioning that affects focus, emotional regulation, impulse control, and executive function (planning & organisation skills).

ADHD is lifelong—all people with ADHD have had it since childhood, but many go undiagnosed and struggle with school, work, and family life. Some only receive a diagnosis as adults when ADHD is recognised in their children.

Growing awareness is helping more people understand ADHD, leading to better support and recognition for those who need it.

How Common is ADHD?

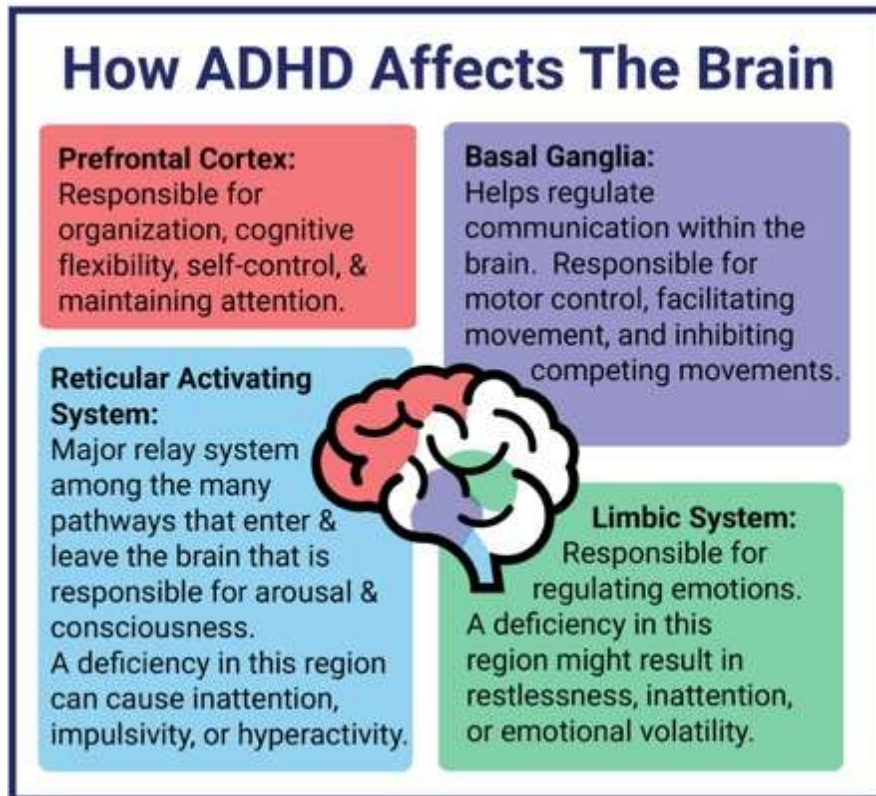
- Children: Around 5% of children are estimated to have ADHD.
- Adults: 3% of adults still experience significant ADHD symptoms.
- Underdiagnosis: ADHD is often missed in women, inattentive-type individuals, and high-achievers who learn to "mask" their struggles.

What Causes ADHD?

ADHD is highly genetic—if a parent has ADHD, their child has a 50–80% chance of also having it. It is linked to differences in the regulation of brain neurotransmitters dopamine and noradrenaline, affecting attention, motivation, and impulse control.

Other possible contributing factors include:

- Brain structure & function: Smaller prefrontal cortex & differences in dopamine pathways.
- Prenatal factors: Premature birth, maternal smoking/alcohol use.
- Evolutionary theory: Some researchers suggest ADHD traits may have been advantageous in hunter-gatherer societies, helping with quick thinking, creativity, and adaptability.



Symptoms & Presentation

ADHD is more than just inattention and hyperactivity—many symptoms go unrecognised, such as overwhelm, emotional dysregulation, and time blindness.

Core ADHD Symptoms:

- ☑ **Inattention** – Easily distracted, forgetful, trouble following through on tasks.
- ☑ **Hyperactivity** – Restlessness, fidgeting, excessive talking.
- ☑ **Impulsivity** – Interrupting others, making snap decisions, struggling to wait.

Additional Symptoms Many Don't Realise Are ADHD-Related:

- **Overwhelm & "ADHD paralysis"** – Feeling stuck or shutting down when faced with too much information.
- **Hyperfocus** – The opposite of distractibility—becoming intensely absorbed in certain activities while ignoring everything else.
- **Time blindness** – Difficulty estimating time, leading to chronic lateness or procrastination.
- **Executive dysfunction** – Poor planning, organisation, and follow-through on tasks.
- **Emotional dysregulation** – Intense mood swings, sensitivity to rejection, difficulty calming down.

You do not need to complete these in advance unless asked to. If you request a Right to Choose referral through CHG, we may ask you to complete a short CHG questionnaire so that we can prepare a clear referral letter.

Completing a questionnaire does not confirm a diagnosis. Diagnosis requires a specialist assessment.

Right to Choose

Right to Choose may allow you to choose an NHS-contracted provider for your first ADHD or autism assessment, where a referral is clinically appropriate.

This is not private care. It is NHS-funded, but the provider must hold an NHS contract for the relevant assessment and age group.

Right to Choose does not apply to purely private providers.

If you are interested in a Right to Choose referral, please read the CHG website statement first. If you still wish to request a referral, contact CHG and we may ask you to complete a short referral questionnaire.

ADHD UK: Right to Choose
<https://adhduk.co.uk/right-to-choose/>



ADHD Medication and Shared Care

Only a specialist can diagnose ADHD and start ADHD medication.

If medication is recommended, the specialist will start treatment, adjust the dose, and carry out initial monitoring. Once treatment is stable, the specialist may ask CHG to take over prescribing under a Shared Care Agreement.

Shared care is not automatic. At present, CHG is only accepting new ADHD shared care requests in very limited circumstances.

We may be able to consider shared care where:

- the assessment meets national guidance
- the medication has been started and stabilised by the specialist
- baseline and early monitoring have been completed
- the specialist remains responsible for annual review, dose changes and medication advice
- safe monitoring can be carried out in primary care
- CHG has capacity to take on the additional monitoring and prescribing work

If shared care is not accepted, the ADHD provider remains responsible for prescribing, monitoring, dose changes, side effects, and specialist review.

CHG does not enter shared care with private providers. If you choose private assessment or treatment, prescriptions must continue to be provided privately.

Treatment Options for ADHD

Treatment for ADHD may include education, lifestyle strategies, workplace adjustments, coaching, psychological support, and medication.

Medications

Medication is not suitable or needed for everyone. If medication is considered, it should be started and monitored initially by an ADHD specialist.

ADHD medication can improve attention, impulse control, and emotional regulation for some people. Common options include stimulant medications such as methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine, and non-stimulant medications such as atomoxetine or guanfacine.

For information about who is responsible for prescribing ADHD medication, see the section above on ADHD medication and shared care.

Therapy & Coaching:

- **CBT** (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) – Helps challenge negative thought patterns.
- **ADHD Coaching** – Focuses on productivity, organisation, and motivation strategies.

Self-Help & Lifestyle Strategies:

- 📅 **Organisation Hacks** – External reminders, sticky notes, time-blocking.
- 👤 **Body Doubling** – Working alongside someone else to stay on task.
- 🏃 **Exercise & Movement** – Helps increase dopamine levels naturally.
- 🌿 **Supplements & Diet** – Omega-3, Magnesium, Vitamin D may support brain function.

ADHD in the Workplace

Common Challenges & Solutions:

- 📅 **Time management struggles** → Task timers, structured check-ins.
- 🔊 **Noise sensitivity in open-plan offices** → Noise-cancelling headphones, quiet workspaces.
- 📄 **Paperwork difficulties** → Voice notes, text-to-speech software.

Workplace Rights (UK)

- ✓ **Reasonable Adjustments (Equality Act 2010)** – Employers must accommodate ADHD in the workplace.
- ✓ **Access to Work Scheme** – Government funding for ADHD coaching & assistive technology. More info: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

ADHD & Relationships

ADHD affects communication & emotional regulation, leading to:

- 💬 **Forgetfulness in conversations** – Zoning out, missing important details.
- 💧 **Strong emotional reactions** – Reacting intensely to criticism.
- 📅 **Difficulty with planning** – Forgetting plans, last-minute scheduling.

Tips for Better Relationships:

- ☑️ **Clear communication** – Be direct and use reminders.

- ☑ **Scheduled check-ins** – Weekly couple or family planning.
- ☑ **Self-awareness** – Learn how ADHD affects relationships.

Long-Term Outlook & Prognosis

ADHD is lifelong, but not a life sentence. Many people thrive when they understand their ADHD and build strategies to manage challenges.

Notable Successful People with ADHD:

 **Athletes:** Michael Phelps, Simone Biles.

 **Entrepreneurs:** Richard Branson, Ingvar Kamprad (IKEA founder).

 **Artists & Entertainers:** Will.i.am, Justin Timberlake, Ryan Gosling.

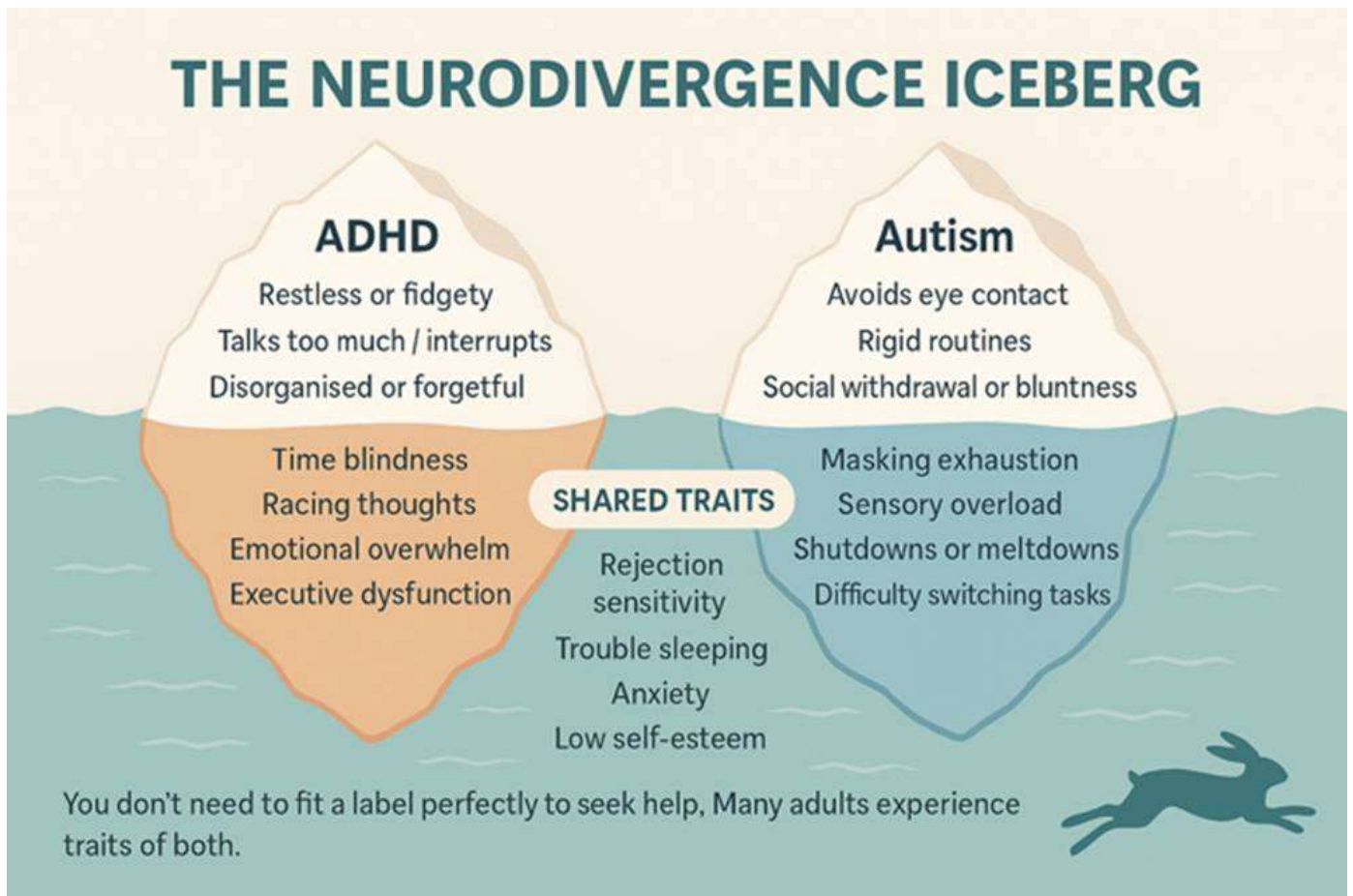
Further Resources

Recommended Books on ADHD:

1. "ADHD 2.0" by Dr. Edward M. Hallowell & Dr. John J. Ratey
 - Offers insights into living with ADHD and strategies for thriving.
2. "Now It All Makes Sense" by Alex Partridge
 - A personal account exploring the challenges and revelations of an adult ADHD diagnosis.
3. "Driven to Distraction" by Dr. Edward M. Hallowell & Dr. John J. Ratey
 - A seminal work that delves into recognizing and managing ADHD in daily life.
4. "Taking Charge of ADHD" by Dr. Russell A. Barkley
 - A comprehensive guide for parents navigating ADHD in children.
5. "Scattered Minds: The Origins and Healing of Attention Deficit Disorder" by Dr. Gabor Maté
 - Explores the root causes of ADHD and offers a holistic approach to healing.
6. "Delivered from Distraction" by Dr. Edward M. Hallowell & Dr. John J. Ratey
 - Provides updated information and strategies for living a fulfilling life with ADHD.
7. "Organizing Solutions for People with ADHD" by Susan Pinsky
 - Offers practical tips and tools to help individuals with ADHD organize their lives.
8. "The Adult ADHD Toolkit" by Dr. J. Russell Ramsay & Dr. Anthony L. Rostain
 - Provides coping strategies and tools specifically tailored for adults with ADHD.

Further Information and Support

- NHS: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>
- Gloucestershire Adult ADHD and ASC Service
<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/adult-adhd-and-asc-service/>
- ADHD Foundation
<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/>
- ADDISS: The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service
<https://www.addiss.co.uk/>
- National Autistic Society
<https://www.autism.org.uk/>
- British Dyslexia Association
<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
- Access to Work
<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>
- ADHD UK: Right to Choose
<https://adhduk.co.uk/right-to-choose/>



TRUSTED NEURODIVERGENCE RESOURCES

- **Autism (NAS):** <https://www.autism.org.uk>
- **Dyslexia (BDA):** <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>
- **Right to Choose (ADHD only):**
<https://adhduk.co.uk/right-to-choose/>
- **Gloucestershire ADHD & ASC Self-Referral:**
<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/adult-adhd-and-asc-service/>

We are here to help. If you are unsure what fits or how to begin, you're welcome to book a call with our team.

If you have further questions:

Fill out a **triage form** on our **website:** www.cirencesterhealthgroup.co.uk

Call the **practice** on *01285 653184* or *01285 653122*

If you require **urgent** medical advice, call *111 (24 Hrs)*

In an **emergency** call **999**