

What to expect from your ADHD assessment

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Your ADHD assessment is a chance to talk with a specialist clinician about your experiences, challenges and strengths, and to explore whether ADHD may help explain some of the difficulties you have had. It is not a test, and there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

Many people feel nervous before their assessment, especially if they are unsure what to expect. However, our clinicians are very experienced at helping patients feel at ease. They will guide the conversation, explain what will happen, and give you time to share what feels important.

About your assessment

Your assessment will usually:

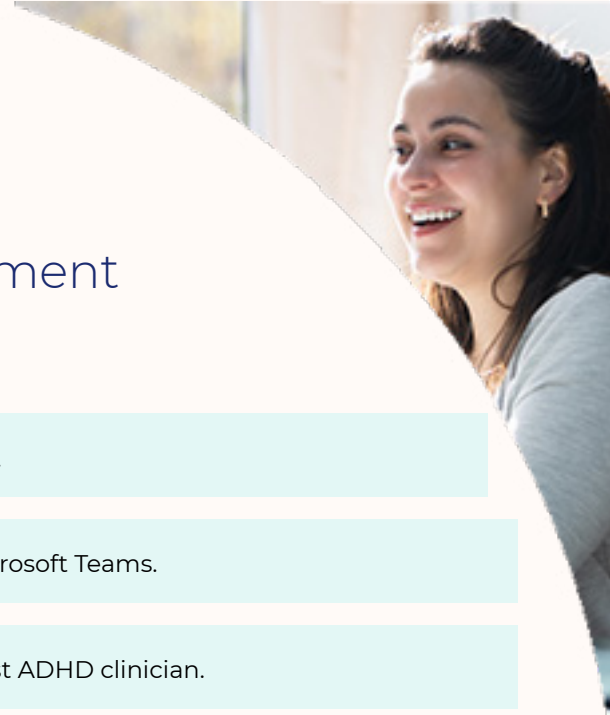
- 1 Last around 50–60 minutes.
- 2 Take place online using Microsoft Teams.
- 3 Be carried out by a specialist ADHD clinician.
- 4 Follow a structured diagnostic approach based on national guidance.
- 5 Include a review of your questionnaires and background information.

It is essential that you attend your assessment from a **quiet, secure location** where you can speak freely. Please keep your camera and microphone switched on throughout the appointment. Observation is an important part of the assessment process.

Joining your appointment

You can join your appointment using:

- 1 The link in your patient portal under **Appointment Links**.
- 2 The link in your booking confirmation email.



We recommend joining around 10 minutes early in case there are any technical issues.

Your clinician will admit you to the appointment when it is due to begin. If there are connection problems, they may try to contact you, so please keep your mobile phone nearby.

At the start of the appointment

Your clinician will begin by explaining the purpose and structure of the assessment.

They will usually:

- 1 Introduce themselves.
- 2 Check your identity by asking to see your photo ID.
- 3 Explain how the appointment will work.
- 4 Ask whether you are happy for the session to be recorded.

Recording can help with accuracy when preparing your report. If you do not want the session to be recorded, please tell your clinician. They will still make written clinical notes as part of your medical record.

What will the clinician ask about?

Your clinician will ask questions about different areas of your life. This helps them understand whether your experiences fit with ADHD and whether anything else may also be affecting you.

They may ask about:

- 1 Childhood and early development.
- 2 School or education.
- 3 Work or employment.
- 4 Relationships and family life.
- 5 Day-to-day challenges.

Some questions may feel personal. You only need to share what you feel able to discuss. If something feels difficult, you can say so.

Remember that your assessment is not a test. It is a guided conversation to help your clinician understand your lived experience.

During your assessment

Your clinician will bring together several types of information, including:

- 1 Your pre-assessment questionnaires.
- 2 Your own description of your experiences.
- 3 Any informant report provided by someone who knows you well.
- 4 Relevant documents, such as school reports if uploaded.

5 Clinical observations during the appointment.

6 Their specialist clinical judgement

They will consider whether your experiences meet the diagnostic criteria for ADHD. They will also think about whether another condition may better explain your difficulties, or whether something else may be present alongside ADHD.

This might include anxiety, depression, trauma, autism, sleep problems or learning differences.

If you feel nervous or stuck

It is very common to feel anxious, blank out or struggle to organise your thoughts during an assessment.

You can ask your clinician to:

1 Repeat a question.

2 Rephrase something.

3 Slow down.

4 Give you more time to think.

5 Return to a question later.

You may also find it helpful to have brief notes or examples with you.

If you remember something important after the appointment, you can message us through the patient portal and ask for it to be considered before your report is finalised.

Can someone attend with me?

Yes. You are welcome to have someone with you for support, such as a partner, family member or friend.

They may be able to help you remember examples or feel more comfortable. Your clinician will still need to hear from you directly, as the assessment is about your own experiences.



Your Diagnostic Outcome

At the end of the assessment, your clinician will explain their findings and talk you through the outcome.

They will let you know whether:

1 You meet the diagnostic criteria for ADHD.

2 You do not meet the criteria for ADHD.

3 More information or further assessment is needed.

4 Another condition or difficulty may better explain your symptoms.

You will have time to ask questions. Your clinician will also explain what happens next.

If you receive an ADHD diagnosis

If your clinician confirms a diagnosis of ADHD, they will explain what this means and how the diagnostic criteria were met.

You will receive a written diagnostic report, usually within 14 days.

Your report will usually include:

1 A summary of your developmental history.

2 Your current symptoms and challenges.

3 Information from questionnaires and informant reports.

4 Your diagnosis and recommendations.

5 A personalised treatment and support plan.

Many people find a diagnosis validating. It can help explain long-standing patterns with attention, motivation, organisation, emotional regulation, energy levels and daily functioning. It can also help you understand your strengths and identify support that may make life more manageable.

If you do not receive an ADHD diagnosis

Sometimes an assessment shows that a person's difficulties are better explained by something other than ADHD.

This may include anxiety, depression, trauma, sleep difficulties, autism, learning differences or another condition.

If this happens, your clinician will explain their reasoning and recommend possible next steps.

Not receiving an ADHD diagnosis does not mean your difficulties are not real. It means the assessment did not find enough evidence that ADHD is the best explanation for them.

Your report will explain which criteria were not met and why. It may also suggest other forms of support or further assessment.

Understanding your report

Your diagnostic report is a detailed clinical document. It may take time to read and process.

You are welcome to read it at your own pace. If something is unclear, you can contact the clinical team through the patient portal.

Your report will also be shared with your GP, so they understand the outcome and any recommendations.



Your personalised plan

After your assessment, your clinician will recommend next steps based on your individual needs.

This may include:

- 1 Medication options, if appropriate.
- 2 Non-medication strategies.
- 3 ADHD coaching or skills-based support.
- 4 Therapy or ADHD-informed psychological support.
- 5 Workplace or education adjustments.
- 6 Support for co-occurring conditions.
- 7 Resources to help you understand and manage ADHD.

There is no single right approach. The best plan is one that fits your needs, goals and preferences.

Medication is covered in a separate guide: [ADHD Medication for Adults](#).



Taking time to process

Receiving an assessment outcome can feel significant. Some people feel relieved or validated. Others feel emotional, uncertain or need time to reflect.

All of these reactions are normal.

You may find it helpful to:

- 1 Read your report when you feel ready.
- 2 Talk things through with someone you trust.
- 3 Learn more about ADHD.
- 4 Think about what support would be most useful.
- 5 Take time before making decisions about treatment.

Support after your assessment

Many people with ADHD also experience other difficulties, such as:

- 1 Anxiety.
- 2 Depression.
- 3 Sleep problems.
- 4 Emotional regulation difficulties.

5 Low self-esteem.

6 Burnout.

If this applies to you, your GP may be able to help you access further assessment or support.

Where possible, psychological therapy should be provided by professionals who understand ADHD and how it can affect everyday life.



Living Well with ADHD

What do I need to do?

ADHD is not something that is 'cured', but the right support can make a meaningful difference.

Many people find it helpful to:

1 Learn how ADHD affects them personally.

2 Build routines that work with their brain.

3 Use tools, reminders, apps or planners.

4 Reduce unnecessary obstacles.

5 Ask for reasonable adjustments in school, college or at work.

6 Connect with others who have similar experiences.

Living well with ADHD is about finding approaches that support your wellbeing and fit your life.

Second opinions

Our assessments follow recognised diagnostic criteria and national clinical guidance. Because of this, Psychiatry UK does not usually offer second opinions within the service.

If you would like a second opinion from another provider, please speak to your GP.

This does not affect your right to raise a concern or make a complaint. Information about feedback and complaints is available on our [website](#).

Useful support

You may find the following organisations helpful:

NHS Mental Health Support

Information and services for mental health support.

[Click here](#)

Mind

Mental health advice, information and wellbeing support.

[Click here](#)

Samaritans

Free emotional support, available 24 hours a day.

[Click here](#)

Rethink Mental Illness

Practical advice, information and advocacy.

[Click here](#)

How can I get in touch?

If you have any other queries, please contact our patient support team via **Live Chat** or by telephone: **0330 124 1980 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)**.