



FREE GUIDE · ADULTS, PARENTS AND FAMILIES

The Pall Mall Guide to ADHD

What it is, what it isn't, and how to get a proper answer
for yourself or your child.

Why we wrote this guide

ADHD has never been talked about more. Social media has helped thousands of people put a name to something they have struggled with for years. It has also turned “I’m so ADHD” into a throwaway phrase, and made it harder to tell everyday distraction from a real, lifelong condition.

This guide is here to cut through the noise. It explains what ADHD actually is, how it shows up in adults and in children, what else can look like it, and exactly what happens when you come to Pall Mall for an assessment, from the first conversation to the written report and treatment plan.

Whether you are wondering about yourself, your partner or your child, our aim is simple: to help you get a clear, honest answer from a qualified specialist.

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This guide is general information. It isn't a diagnosis or a substitute for a clinical assessment. Prices and details are correct as of October 2026.

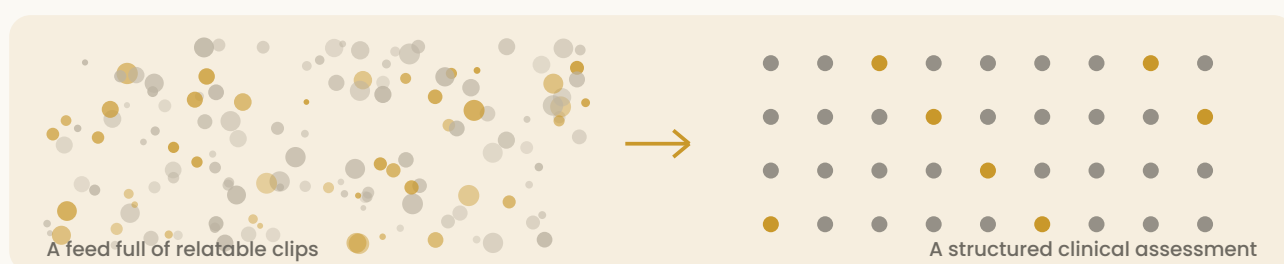
01

THE BASICS

What ADHD is, and isn't

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common **neurodevelopmental condition** that affects focus, impulse control and activity levels. It starts in childhood, and for many people some symptoms continue into adulthood.

ADHD is linked to genetic, neurological and environmental factors. It is not a result of poor parenting or a lack of effort. And because it is a condition you are born with, a specialist will always look for signs that were there before the age of 12, even if nobody noticed at the time.



MYTH VS REALITY



"Everyone's a bit ADHD."

The reality

Everyone gets distracted or loses their keys. ADHD is a persistent pattern that causes real difficulties in more than one area of life.



"You can't have ADHD if you did well at school."

The reality

Many people achieve well only with unusual effort or support. A specialist will ask about that hidden effort.



"ADHD is just bad behaviour or bad parenting."

The reality

ADHD is linked to genetic, neurological and environmental factors. It is not a result of poor parenting or lack of effort.



"There's a test that can prove it."

The reality

No blood test, brain scan or computer test can diagnose ADHD on its own. Diagnosis is a clinical judgement made by a qualified specialist.

02 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ADHD in adults

Adult ADHD often goes unrecognised for years. The signs usually started in childhood but were missed, or put down to personality, stress or “not trying hard enough”. Symptoms fall into three groups.



Inattentive

- Struggling to focus on tasks or conversations
- Easily distracted by what's going on around you
- Forgetting appointments, deadlines or daily tasks
- Difficulty managing time, planning or staying organised
- Misplacing keys, wallets or documents
- Careless mistakes; not finishing tasks



Hyperactive

- Feeling restless or unable to relax, often “on edge”
- Talking a lot, sometimes interrupting without meaning to
- A constant urge to move, even when it isn't appropriate



Impulsive

- Acting without thinking about the long-term consequences
- Interrupting or overstepping social boundaries
- Struggling with patience, such as waiting in queues
- Impulsive decisions or overspending

How it can affect everyday life

At an assessment, the specialist looks at how symptoms affect you across different parts of life. To meet the criteria, difficulties generally need to show up in more than one area, not only at work or during a stressful period.

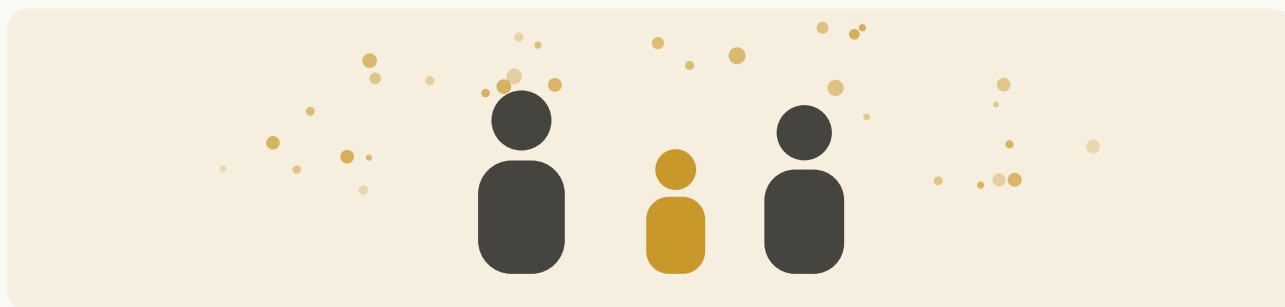
Work	Education	Relationships	Finances
Driving	Self-care	Household tasks	Time keeping

Driven, high-achieving people can present differently. Many achieve well only with unusual effort, so the struggle stays hidden.

Dr Amit Anand, who leads our adult ADHD service, is particularly experienced in assessing high-performing and complex cases.

03 FOR PARENTS **ADHD and autism in children**

In children, ADHD affects the ability to regulate attention, activity levels and impulses. It is often noticed first at school, where concentrating, sitting still and waiting your turn are expected all day.



ADHD and autism are different conditions, but they can overlap, and some children have both. That is why our children's service assesses for both, and can look at them together.



ADHD

A neurodevelopmental condition that affects a child's ability to regulate attention, activity levels and impulses.

What families may notice

- Difficulty concentrating
- Restlessness and being constantly on the go
- Acting on impulse



Autism (ASD)

A lifelong neurodevelopmental condition that affects how a person communicates, interacts with others and experiences the world.

What families may notice

- Differences in social communication and interaction
- Restricted or repetitive patterns of behaviour
- Restricted or repetitive interests

Every child is unique, with their own strengths and support needs. A label from the internet can't capture that. A specialist assessment can.

04 WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE? Before you book

Relating to a video isn't a diagnosis. Many other things can affect focus, energy and organisation, and some can sit alongside ADHD. A proper assessment looks at all of them.

CONDITIONS THAT CAN CAUSE OR WORSEN ADHD-LIKE SYMPTOMS

Anxiety	Depression	Trauma	Autism
Sleep disorders	Substance use	Thyroid problems	

Five questions to ask yourself

If you can answer "yes" to most of these, it may be worth speaking to a specialist.

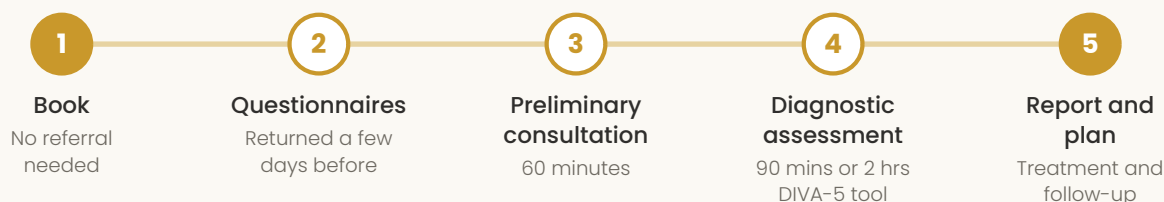
- ☐ Have these difficulties been there for as long as I can remember, including at school?
- ☐ Do they affect more than one part of my life, not just work or a stressful patch?
- ☐ Can I give concrete, everyday examples, such as lateness, unfinished tasks or impulsive spending?
- ☐ Have they carried on even when life was calmer and I was sleeping well?
- ☐ Are they causing real problems with work, study, money or relationships?

No blood test, brain scan or computer test can diagnose ADHD on its own.

Attention tests can help, but NICE guidance says they should support a clinician's judgement, not replace it.

05 AT PALL MALL Your adult assessment

Our adult ADHD service is led by Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Amit Anand. There's **no GP referral needed** and **no waiting list**, with clinics in Manchester and Newton-le-Willows and online consultations available.



Before your appointment

You'll be sent questionnaires about concentration, organisation, restlessness, impulsivity and daily life. Someone who knows you well, such as a partner, friend or parent, may be asked to complete one too. Please return them a few days before you're seen.



Preliminary consultation

A 60-minute, in-depth consultation with a Consultant Psychiatrist. You'll explain your concerns and why you think you may have ADHD.



Diagnostic assessment

A structured, in-person assessment using the DIVA-5 diagnostic tool, including a physical examination and family history. It explores your current symptoms, your childhood and your wider mental and physical health. The 2-hour version is for more complex cases.



Your outcome

You'll be told whether you meet the criteria for ADHD, have some traits but not enough for a diagnosis, may need assessing for another condition, or whether more information is needed first. You'll usually receive a written report with recommendations.

How to prepare for your assessment

The more you bring, the clearer the picture. You don't need everything on this list, and missing school reports won't stop an assessment going ahead.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Concrete examples of your difficulties, from childhood and from adult life |
| ☐ | School reports, if you have them |
| ☐ | Any previous medical or mental health records or reports |
| ☐ | A list of your current medications |
| ☐ | Notes on any sleep problems or physical health conditions |
| ☐ | Your family medical history |
| ☐ | Someone who knows you well who could share their view, if possible |

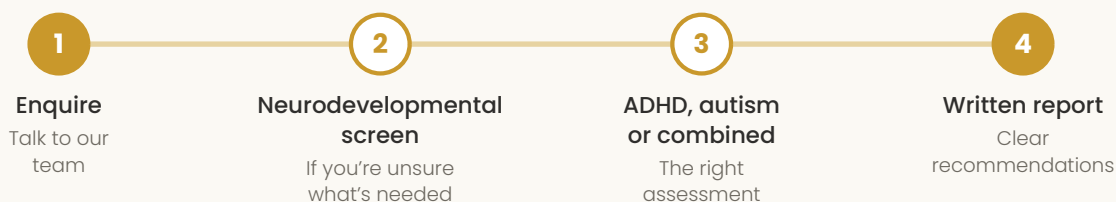
Things worth thinking about beforehand

- Losing or forgetting things
- Struggling to start or finish tasks
- Time management and lateness
- Getting distracted in conversations or at work
- Feeling restless or constantly "on the go"
- Interrupting, impulsive decisions or overspending
- Feeling overwhelmed by everyday responsibilities

Tip: write examples down as they happen in the weeks before your appointment. It's much easier than remembering them on the day.

06 AT PALL MALL Your child's assessment

Children and young people are seen by Dr Howie Isaac, a GMC-registered Consultant Paediatrician with over 30 years of NHS paediatric experience. There's no referral needed and no waiting list.



Assessments are evidence-based, follow current **NICE national guidance** and draw on several sources, so you get a rounded picture of your child, not a snapshot of one appointment.



A detailed developmental history

Your child's early development, health and family history.



Information from home and school

Input from parents and school, including analysis of school reports.



Recognised ADHD tools

The ADHD Child Evaluation (ACE), Conners questionnaires and QbCheck.



Specialist autism observation

The ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule), carried out by a speech and language specialist.

Not sure which assessment your child needs? Start with a Neurodevelopmental Screen.

Its £500 cost is deducted from any diagnostic assessment that follows. All fees include a full clinical assessment and a detailed written report.

Dr Isaac believes in working in partnership with parents and the NHS, so every child receives the assessment, support and guidance they need to reach their full potential.

07 AFTER A DIAGNOSIS **Treatment and support**

A diagnosis is the start, not the end. Treatment is tailored to you and usually combines several approaches.



Medication

Medicines commonly prescribed for adult ADHD include methylphenidate, lisdexamfetamine, dexamfetamine, atomoxetine and guanfacine.

Medication isn't started automatically at your diagnostic appointment. It involves a separate discussion and health checks, such as blood pressure, pulse and weight.



Talking therapy

Approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) give you practical strategies for the challenges ADHD brings.

Our psychology team offers evidence-based support for adults and children, from £250.



Practical strategies

Practical adjustments, coaching-style strategies and lifestyle advice to help with organisation, time and focus at home and at work.



Ongoing follow-up

Regular follow-up appointments to review how treatment is working and adjust it if needed.

"I feel better now that I kind of understand myself, and now it's about how to manage it with the help of the doctors at Pall Mall."

Scott, Pall Mall ADHD patient

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DOCTOR-LED CARE

Meet the specialists

**Dr Amit Anand****CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST · ADULT ADHD**

Dr Anand leads our ADHD assessment pathway, providing a structured, evidence-based process to help patients gain clarity, access treatment and receive ongoing support. He has particular expertise in high-performance and complex cases.

His background in elite sports mental health includes assessing and supporting Premier League footballers, professional rugby players and Olympic athletes.

Qualifications: MBBS; Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists; MSc Clinical Psychiatry (University of Manchester); IOC Diploma in Mental Health in Elite Sport. GMC 6093856.

**Dr Howie Isaac****CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN · CHILD ADHD AND AUTISM**

Dr Isaac is a GMC-registered Consultant Paediatrician with over 30 years of NHS paediatric experience. He specialises in the assessment and management of neurodevelopmental conditions, including ADHD, autism and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

He provides compassionate, child-centred care, helping parents find answers and reassurance when they need it most.

**Dr Edel McAndrew****PSYCHOLOGIST**

Dr McAndrew provides psychological assessment and therapy for adults, children and adolescents, including support for ADHD and autism, at our Newton-le-Willows and Manchester clinics.

09 CLEAR, UPFRONT FEES Prices at a glance

No hidden waiting lists and no referral fees. Finance is available on adult assessments, and children's assessments can be paid in three instalments.

Adults	
Preliminary assessment 60-minute consultation with a Consultant Psychiatrist	£475
Diagnostic assessment (moderate) 90 minutes in person; DIVA-5; physical exam and family history; treatment plan if diagnosed	£725
Diagnostic assessment (advanced) 2 hours in person for more complex cases; detailed treatment and follow-up support	£925
Follow-up assessment Review of your treatment and progress	£295
Children and young people	
Neurodevelopmental Screen Child-centred screening with personalised recommendations; deducted from any later diagnostic assessment	£500
ADHD assessment and treatment initiation ACE, Conners questionnaires, QbCheck and analysis of school reports	£1,100
Multiagency autism assessment Detailed developmental history, school report analysis and ADOS	£1,850
Combined ADHD and autism assessment Both assessed together, with ADHD treatment initiation	£2,200

Children's fees include a comprehensive clinical assessment and a detailed written report. Prices correct as of October 2026; please check pallmallmedical.co.uk for the latest fees.

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FAQS

Your questions answered

Do I need a GP referral?

No. You can book a private ADHD assessment directly. If you have previous medical records or reports, bring them along, as they can help inform your assessment.

Can ADHD be diagnosed in adulthood?

Yes. Although ADHD begins in childhood, many people aren't diagnosed until adulthood. A later diagnosis can help explain long-standing challenges and open up effective treatment and support.

Who carries out the assessment?

Adults are assessed by Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Amit Anand. Children and young people are assessed by Consultant Paediatrician Dr Howie Isaac.

How long does an adult assessment take?

It depends on the type of assessment you need. Appointments typically last between 60 minutes and two hours, allowing time for a thorough evaluation.

I don't have my school reports. Can I still be assessed?

Yes. Missing school reports don't necessarily prevent an assessment. Your own recollections and information from relatives can be considered.

Will I get medication straight away?

Not automatically. If medication is right for you, it involves a separate discussion and health checks, such as blood pressure, pulse and weight.

What if I'm not diagnosed with ADHD?

Not everyone assessed meets the criteria. Your specialist will explain their findings, discuss other possible explanations for your symptoms, and suggest next steps or referrals where needed.

My child might have ADHD or autism. Which assessment do we need?

If you're not sure, start with the Neurodevelopmental Screen. Its cost is deducted from any diagnostic assessment that follows.

How quickly can I be seen?

There are no waiting lists. Availability varies, so contact our team to discuss the earliest dates.

Get a clear answer from a specialist

No referral. No waiting list. A doctor-led assessment and a plan built around you or your child.

0161 832 2111

or enquire online at pallmallmedical.co.uk

Manchester City Centre

Pall Mall Court, 61 King Street, M2 4PD

Adult ADHD

Newton-le-Willows

1 Belvedere Road, WA12 0JJ

Adult ADHD

Liverpool City Centre

5 St Paul's Square, L3 9SJ

Child ADHD and autism

Pall Mall Medical is owned and led by doctors and regulated by the Care Quality Commission. This guide is for general information and is not a substitute for a clinical assessment.

