

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Country faces a public health crisis if access to ADHD services is not improved,
UK Governments and regulatory bodies are warned**

**Patients with ADHD in the UK are being failed and face daily stigma and
discrimination, say leading figures in ADHD service provision and academics in a
frank open letter**

UK Governments have come under pressure today as a large coalition of ADHD patient groups from around the country, leading ADHD service providers, clinical and academic healthcare providers and educational specialists, including the Royal College of Psychiatrists in England, come together calling for urgent action to tackle the crisis in ADHD service provision.

In a joint open letter entitled "ADHD Consensus Statement", the four UK Governments and regulatory bodies, including the Care Quality Commission, are urged to act fast to create and introduce a legislative 'ADHD Act' similar to that provided for children and adults with autism, and for the availability of ADHD services to be a requirement of the UK healthcare regulators in both child and adult mental health services.

It comes as patients report having to wait years to access services with implications for their physical and mental health, and the very real concern among healthcare practitioners, expert clinicians and patient groups, that individuals with ADHD are being stigmatised and discriminated against on a daily basis by the commissioning of ADHD services that are either inadequate or unavailable in many regions. This is despite a far greater understanding of the condition and its impact on physical and mental health, and employability, to which the scientific and economic research evidence is unequivocal. Accessibility to essential evidence-based treatment and health education given in NHS guidelines is also not being adhered to by healthcare practitioners or commissioners.

The letter goes on to warn about the devastating consequences to the individual and society as a whole through this lack of awareness - including a rise in suicide, drug addiction, educational and employment failure and unnecessary dependency among those with undiagnosed and untreated ADHD.



"ADHD is a serious condition with major costs to both individuals and society which have been proven by national research reports published by several agencies and university researchers over the last two years," the letter reads. "Due to significant under recognition and misperceptions of ADHD, both children and adults are often undiagnosed or given the wrong diagnosis and treatments.

"The long-term outcome of untreated ADHD has been well documented. These include self-harm, suicide, drug use, drug addiction, obesity and road transport accidents. Educational and employment failure is a considerable cost to society and can be a tipping point that increases the risk of substance misuse and criminality. Around 15% of people with serious addictions and 26% of prisoners have lifelong problems with ADHD.

"Despite advances in scientific research informing our knowledge and understanding about ADHD and accessibility of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN), there remains a continued lack of awareness by many healthcare practitioners of ADHD and the potential benefits early identification can have, both to the individual and society.

"Great efforts have been made to educate healthcare practitioners and clinical commissioning groups about this evidence, but in many cases this does not appear to disseminate to those working in primary and secondary care services. There are concerns that GPs are not trained to recognise ADHD, yet they are usually the first point of contact for the patient, while specialist services are often not readily accessible leading to significant delays in diagnosis and effective support."

The letter goes on to welcome the Government's NHS Long Term Plan, such as NHS England's ten year plan and forthcoming Green Paper on prevention by Public Health England, which, it says, "will reflect the evidence for a national strategy for ADHD in the UK". And while a clear indication of future policy and service provision in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland has not yet been made public - it is clear there is cross party support in UK Governments calling for this issue to be addressed for their constituents.

ends.

Editors Notes

ADHD Consensus Statement



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The ADHD Consensus Statement has been issued on behalf of patients around the country who face the consequences of these discriminatory practices on a daily basis and call on all four UK Governments and regulatory bodies, including the Care Quality Commission, to act urgently on this important public health issue.

A coalition of ADHD patient-led charities and support groups from across the entire UK have been collaborating for the past several months on producing the ADHD Consensus Statement. The statement was compiled in partnership with leading academics, clinicians, educationalists and patient representatives.

The consensus statement highlights the unequivocal scientific and clinical evidence on ADHD and the social and economic impact of untreated, unsupported ADHD, outlined in the DEMOS report of 2018, '[Your Attention Please: The Social and Economic Impact of ADHD](#)'. The patients across the UK have been writing to their MPs asking the question that if the clinical and business case is proven, why is the commissioning and quality of health services for ADHD increasingly failing to meet the requirements of NICE guidelines (SIGN guidelines in Scotland).

As this consensus statement is signed by representatives from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as England, the wording of the statement implies that significantly more needs to be done in the devolved parliaments and their respective health service executives.

To view / download the consensus statement, please click here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nRqiyziJl7yuVtEvkTZSMQH6eMEBkj24/view?usp=sharing>

Interviews with case studies and clinicians are available on request.

#ADHDActNow

On behalf of all ADHD patient-led groups and charities:

Royal College of Psychiatrists England
Dr Tony Lloyd, ADHD Foundation



Dr Ruairi Gallagher, ADHD Foundation
Andrea Bell, ADHD Norfolk
Janine Harris, ADHD UK Wise
Sarah Salters, ADD Northern Ireland
Emma Weaver, Adult ADHD Northern Ireland
Sue Montgomery, ADHD Scotland
Jean Fitzpatrick, ADHD Warrington
Michelle Beckett, ADHD Action
Zoe Piper, ADHD Connections Wales
Dr Helen Read, Adult ADHD Psychiatrist
Annette Wilson, ADHD Richmond and Kingston
Anna Ross, ADD-vance ADHD and Autism Trust
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Sheila Keeling, Addup
Nicky Chaperlin, Space
Lorna Fotheringham, ADHD Perth
Clair Hodgson, Clair's Parent Meeting Parent ADHD Support Services

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD symptoms include hyperactivity, inattention and impulsivity, resulting in frustration, anxiety, low frustration tolerance, anti-social behaviour, inability to regulate emotions, poor organisation and planning skills. Low psychological resilience is a core symptom of ADHD



and predisposes children to other mental health problems such as anxiety and depression in childhood and adulthood.

It is the most prevalent neurodevelopmental condition in childhood, affecting between five and eight per cent of the UK population - which is approximately 500,000 school children. However, population data suggests that the number of children actually diagnosed is somewhere between one and three per cent; with less than 1% of the population who use ADHD medication - it suggests that there are many children, and indeed adults, without appropriate support to reduce the long term risks for health, wellbeing, educational attainment, employability and a range of life chances affected by ADHD.

