DIVERSE MINDS
LEARNING & LEISURE CIC

A PLANNER FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Preparing for an ADHD appointment

Keep the examples and questions that matter to your family



FOR A FIRST CONVERSATION OR A SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT

You do not need a perfect set of notes. Start with what you and your child are experiencing, including the help already needed to get through an ordinary day.

BEFORE YOU GO

Your observations matter

If you have waited a long time, been passed between services or worried about forgetting something important, preparing for an appointment can feel like another job. A few useful notes can be enough to begin.



Parents have described the uncertainty

A UK study interviewing 41 parents of children aged 5-11 found concerns about unclear waits, poor communication and difficulty getting support. These were families already waiting for an assessment, not a survey of all parents. [3]

An assessment is a conversation about the whole child

A full assessment considers history, impact, different settings and other possible explanations. A questionnaire or a calm appointment on its own cannot provide the whole answer. Bring strengths and interests as well as difficulties. [1,2]

In Scotland, the local pathway can vary

Ask who the appointment is with, what it can cover and what information the service wants beforehand. A GP can discuss concerns and next steps. [1]

NOTES TO TAKE

What happens in everyday life?

Choose a few examples. Include where and when they happen, how often, their impact and what support is needed. You can copy this page for another example. [2]

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

An example I want to explain

Describe what happened in ordinary words. Avoid labels such as lazy or naughty.

The setting and the pattern

Home, education, an activity or another setting. When did this begin? How often?

The effect on everyday life

Learning, friendships, safety, self-care, sleep, wellbeing or family routines.

Help already needed or tried

Include reminders, supervision and adjustments. What changes when help is available?

Not sure of the dates? Say so. Do not change medicines or remove helpful support to make difficulties more visible. Ask the service if you are unsure what to do before the appointment.

NOTES TO TAKE

The wider picture

Include what you know. Missing a school report or being unsure about an early milestone is something to discuss, not a reason to stop asking for help. [2]

Earlier development and school experiences

Any longstanding patterns, changes, reports or people who may add useful information.

Health, sleep and other concerns

Relevant conditions, pain, sleep, hearing or vision concerns, worries or learning difficulties.

Medicines and existing support

Names and doses of prescribed medicines, other treatments, professionals and current plans.

Strengths, interests and what is easier

What your child enjoys; where they feel comfortable; support that helps them participate.

There can be more than one explanation for a difficulty. Sharing other concerns helps a clinician consider the full picture; it does not make your ADHD concerns less worth discussing. [1,2]

FOR THE YOUNG PERSON

What I want you to know

You can write, draw, use pictures or ask someone to record your words. Leave anything blank. Ask about time to speak privately if you would like it. [2]

Things I enjoy and care about

What would I like the person meeting me to understand about me?

Things that feel difficult

What do other people sometimes miss or misunderstand?

What helps me

People, spaces, reminders, ways of explaining or other support.

How I want to take part

Speaking, writing, a communication aid, breaks, a quieter space or another preference.

Who I want to share this with: _____

Ask an adult to explain who will see your information and when they would need to share something to keep you safe.

AT THE APPOINTMENT

Questions and next steps

You can take this planner, use your phone or ask someone to help with notes. If a question is not answered, ask how you can follow it up.

- ☐ What will the assessment involve, and who will contribute?
- ☐ What other explanations or support needs will be considered?
- ☐ What support can we use while waiting or before a decision?
- ☐ If ADHD is not diagnosed, how will the difficulties be addressed?
- ☐ Who will contact us, and what should we do if needs change?

Answers or decisions to remember

Ask for written information if that would help.

The next step, who is responsible and when

Referral or appointment details, contact route, timescale and review arrangements.

Appointment date: _____ Professional/service: _____
Contact or follow-up date: _____

IF THE PROCESS IS DIFFICULT

Keep asking for a clear next step

If accounts from home and school differ

Ask for both to be considered. Parents and professionals have reported girls appearing to manage at school while difficulties were more obvious at home. Share what happens outside lessons and any help already keeping things manageable. Differences need exploring, not ignoring. [4]

If a request is declined

Ask why, what information was considered and what support or review is available. Trust your gut enough to follow up if your child is still struggling, while staying open to the explanation. Ask a trusted person to help you prepare if the process is exhausting.

Support does not have to wait for a label

In Scotland, a diagnosis is not required for additional support for learning. Ask school about current needs and a review date. Enquire can explain options when concerns remain unresolved. If health or safety worsens, seek advice rather than waiting for an assessment. [5,6]

Before paying for a private assessment

Check the clinician's qualifications, what the assessment includes, full costs and aftercare. Ask your NHS health board and GP how they would consider the report and any treatment arrangements. Do not assume a private diagnosis guarantees NHS prescribing or follow-up. [1]

This planner is not a screening test. Local Scottish routes vary; England's Right to Choose arrangements should not be assumed to apply in Scotland.

FURTHER READING

Sources and image credits

Information and links checked 29 October 2026. Worksheet prompts are original planning aids, not validated assessment forms.

1. NHS inform: ADHD in children and young people

Scottish assessment routes, support and private assessments.

Read the Scottish information

2. NICE guideline NG87

Specialist assessment, history, impact and participation.

Read the recommendations

3. Hedstrom and colleagues, 2026

Interviews with 41 parents awaiting assessment; individual experiences, not national wait estimates.

Read the parent experiences study

4. Williams and colleagues, 2026

UK focus groups: 16 parents/carers and 19 professionals; girls with ADHD.

Read the home-school experiences study

5. Enquire: additional support for learning

Needs-led Scottish education support without a diagnosis.

Understanding school support

6. Enquire: solving problems with school

Scottish advice on follow-up and advocacy.

Getting heard at school

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