

Teacher poll on perceptions of ADHD

Findings

September 2017

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Poll overview

- Commissioned through Com Res in August 2017
- Poll conducted online, involving 803 currently employed teachers equally split across primary and secondary schools
- Three core aims:
 - **Assess teachers' perceptions of ADHD**
 - **Identify teachers' understanding of ADHD**
 - **Discover levels of support and information for teachers regarding ADHD**
- Results to be packaged into media materials for public launch



Key Findings

Knowledge of ADHD

Most teachers encounter ADHD in their classroom, but knowledge and confidence about the condition is mixed

- 89% of teachers interviewed say they either teach or have previously taught students diagnosed with ADHD
- One in five teachers (19%) feel fairly or very uninformed about ADHD
- 25% of teachers feel unconfident in being able to help students, who show signs of ADHD, access the appropriate services and support

Perceptions of ADHD

Teachers acknowledge the impact of ADHD on students, but many are not aware that ADHD is a real mental health condition

- 72% of teachers interviewed say that ADHD has a significant impact on pupils' life chances
- 21% of teachers disagree that ADHD is a mental health condition and 15% said they don't know
- 78% of teachers agree that ADHD may be used as a way for parents to justify their children's behaviour, with 28% strongly agreeing with this statement
- 68% of teachers believe that children or students with symptoms of ADHD perform worse at school

Support and information for teachers regarding ADHD

Many teachers are not trained about how to teach students with ADHD and would not choose to or know how to refer a child with symptoms to a healthcare professional

- 23% of teachers would not refer a child or student suspected of having ADHD to a health professional
- 42% of teachers have received no training on teaching students with ADHD, despite almost every teacher having encountered a child with ADHD in their classroom
- 22% of teachers would not know how to refer children or students for further support if they suspected they had ADHD
- Teachers are more likely to say they would turn to their Special Educational Needs co-ordinator first for information about what to do if they think a child or student they teach may have ADHD (71%)

Full findings

Knowledge of ADHD

Q1. Please indicate how well informed or uninformed you feel about each of the following conditions?

	NET: Informed	Very well informed	Fairly well informed	Fairly uninformed	Very uninformed	NET: Uninformed
Autism	85%	32%	54%	12%	2%	15%
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	81%	26%	55%	17%	2%	19%
Anxiety	70%	21%	49%	26%	4%	30%
Depression	67%	21%	46%	28%	6%	33%
Eating disorders	62%	16%	47%	28%	10%	38%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- One in five teachers (19%) feel fairly or very uninformed about ADHD
- Senior teachers are more likely than advanced and standard teachers to say they feel informed about ADHD (88% vs. 79% and 76%), a larger difference than for any other condition
- Teachers interviewed who currently or have previously taught a pupil with ADHD are significantly more likely than those who have not to say they feel informed about the condition (85% vs. 56% respectively)
- Teachers who currently or have previously taught a pupil with ADHD are also more likely to say they feel informed about each of the other conditions tested as well

Knowledge of ADHD

Q2. How confident, or otherwise, do you feel helping children/students who show signs of having each of the following conditions to access appropriate services and support?

	NET: Confident	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	NET: Not confident	Don't know
Autism	77%	25%	52%	19%	3%	22%	1%
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	74%	21%	53%	21%	4%	25%	1%
Anxiety	65%	15%	50%	29%	5%	34%	1%
Depression	56%	13%	43%	35%	7%	42%	1%
Eating disorders	47%	9%	37%	39%	13%	51%	2%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- Three quarters of teachers interviewed (74%) say they feel confident in being able to help children / students who show signs of ADHD access the appropriate services and support. However, one in four say they do not feel confident (25%)
- Teachers from secondary schools are more likely than those from primary schools to express a lack of confidence in being able to help pupils who show signs of having ADHD (30% vs. 20% say they do not feel confident)
- Senior teachers are also more likely to feel confident in being able to help pupils with ADHD than standard teachers (80% vs 71%)

Knowledge of ADHD

Q4. Do you currently teach, or have you previously taught, any children/students diagnosed with ADHD?

	%
NET: Yes	89%
Yes - currently teach	50%
Yes - previously taught	48%
No	10%
Don't know	2%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- 89% of teachers interviewed say they either teach or have previously taught children or students diagnosed with ADHD, whilst only one in ten have not
- Half of teachers report currently teaching a child / student that has been diagnosed with ADHD (50%), with a similar proportion saying they have previously taught a student with ADHD (48%)
- Secondary school teachers are more likely than their primary counterparts to say they currently teach a student diagnosed with ADHD (60% vs. 40%). This is also apparent in senior teachers when compared with advanced and standard teachers (59% vs. 49% and 44% respectively)

Knowledge of ADHD

Q7. Which of the following, if any, do you think are symptoms of ADHD?

	%
Short attention span	76%
Hyperactive behaviour	74%
Impulsive behaviour	59%
Difficulty with organisation	26%
Difficulty interacting socially	22%
Mood swings	12%
Anxiety	7%
None of the above	1%
Don't know	1%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- Teachers are most likely to correctly identify short attention span (76%) and hyperactive behaviour (74%) as symptoms of ADHD
- However, impulsive behaviour is a less commonly identified symptom, with just three in five saying this is a symptom (59%)
- Teachers from state schools are significantly more likely than those from private schools to identify hyperactive behaviour as a symptom of ADHD (77% vs. 57% respectively)
- Standard teachers are more likely than their senior colleagues to correctly identify the most common symptoms; short attention span (81% vs. 71%), hyperactive behaviour (79% vs. 70%) and impulsive behaviour (66% vs. 57%) as symptoms of ADHD. This is despite senior colleagues saying they feel more informed about ADHD

Perceptions of ADHD

Q3. How much of an overall impact, if any, do you think each of the following conditions has on a child's/student's life chances (e.g. future opportunities for educational attainment, employment and building personal and professional relationships, avoidance of the criminal justice system, hospital visits and days off work due to health problems)?

	NET: Significant impact (4-5)	5	4	3	2	1	NET: Insignificant impact (1-2)
Autism	77%	49%	29%	20%	2%	0%	3%
Depression	77%	44%	33%	20%	2%	1%	3%
Anxiety	76%	38%	37%	20%	4%	1%	5%
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	72%	36%	36%	22%	5%	1%	6%
Eating disorders	67%	33%	34%	26%	6%	1%	7%

Base: All respondents (n= 803)

- A majority of teachers interviewed say that each of the tested conditions has a significant impact on a child / student's life chances, with seven in ten saying this for pupils with ADHD (72%), while only 6% say it has an insignificant impact

- Teachers interviewed who teach at a state school are more likely than those who teach at a private school to say that each of the conditions, including ADHD, will have a significant impact upon their life chances
- Three quarters of teachers interviewed from state schools think ADHD has a significant impact on future life chances compared to half of teachers from private schools (75% vs. 55%)
- Teachers with experience of teaching a pupil with ADHD are more likely than those with no such experience to say that ADHD has a significant impact upon a child / student's life chances (74% of those who currently or have taught a pupil with ADHD vs 59% of those who have not)

Perceptions of ADHD

Q8. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
ADHD is a mental health condition	64%	21%	15%

- 21% of teachers disagree that ADHD is a mental health condition and 15% said they don't know
- Teachers from private schools are more likely than those from state schools to disagree that ADHD is a mental health condition (34% vs. 19%)

Perceptions of ADHD

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	NET: Agree	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	NET: Disagree	Don't know
ADHD may be used as a way for some parents to justify their children's behaviour	78%	28%	51%	13%	4%	17%	5%
ADHD is not well recognised or understood within society	74%	17%	57%	19%	3%	22%	4%
Children/students with symptoms of ADHD perform worse at school	68%	10%	58%	19%	5%	24%	8%
The social stigma surrounding an ADHD diagnosis has a more negative impact on children /students than the condition itself	53%	12%	41%	31%	6%	37%	9%
Children/students who show symptoms of ADHD experience are often shunned, isolated or not included by those around them (e.g. other children, young people, teachers or their wider community)	48%	10%	39%	38%	8%	46%	6%
I would not feel comfortable suggesting to a parent that their child may have ADHD	47%	14%	33%	36%	11%	47%	6%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- Primary school teachers are more likely than those from secondary school to acknowledge that pupils with ADHD are more likely to suffer social impact

- 78% of teachers agree that ADHD may be used as a way for parents to justify their children's behaviour, with 28% strongly agreeing with this statement
- 47% would not feel comfortable suggesting to a parent that their child might have ADHD
- 74% agree that ADHD is not well recognised or understood within society
- 68% believe that children or students with symptoms of ADHD perform worse at school
- Over half (53%) believe that the social stigma surrounding ADHD diagnosis has a more negative impact on children or students than the condition itself
- 48% believe that children or students who show symptoms of ADHD are often shunned, isolated or not included by those around them, including other children, teachers or their wider community
- State school teachers are more likely than those from private schools to agree that children with symptoms of ADHD perform worse at school (70% vs. 56%)
- Those who feel less informed about ADHD are more likely to feel uncomfortable suggesting to a parent that their child may have ADHD (62% vs. 43% of those who feel informed about ADHD)

Perceptions of ADHD

Q10. How concerned, or otherwise, are you about each of the following factors when teaching a child/student with ADHD symptoms?

	NET: Concerned	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned	NET: Not concerned	Don't know
The negative impact on your ability to run lessons and teach all the children /students in the class	83%	34%	49%	13%	2%	15%	2%
The effect on the child's /student's life chances (e.g. opportunities for education attainment, employment, avoidance of the criminal justice system)	79%	22%	57%	15%	3%	18%	3%
The lack of resources and specialist support available to support the child/student	75%	26%	48%	19%	4%	23%	2%
The negative impact on other children /students in the class (e.g. on their behaviour or ability to learn)	74%	28%	46%	21%	3%	24%	2%
The risk of the child/student being excluded from school	65%	18%	47%	27%	5%	32%	3%
The risk of the child/student developing other mental health conditions alongside ADHD	58%	13%	45%	29%	4%	33%	8%
The risk of the child/student being bullied	56%	15%	41%	34%	5%	39%	4%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- 83% of teachers are concerned about the negative impact children or students with symptoms of ADHD have on their ability to run lessons
- 79% are concerned about the effect of symptoms of ADHD on the life chances of a child or student
- Over half of teachers are concerned about the risk of the child or student with symptoms of ADHD being bullied (56%)
- Teachers from state schools are more likely than their private school counterparts to express concern about the impact of pupils with symptoms of ADHD on their classrooms
- 75% of teachers are concerned about the lack of resources and specialist support available to support a child or student with symptoms of ADHD
- 65% are concerned about the risk of the child or student with symptoms of ADHD being excluded from school
- 58% are concerned about the risk of a child or student with symptoms of ADHD being bullied
- Primary school teachers are more likely than secondary school teachers to say they are very concerned about the risk of pupils with ADHD developing other mental health conditions alongside it (17% vs 10% respectively) and the lack of resources and specialist support available to support them (32% vs 21%)

Support and information for teachers regarding ADHD

Q8. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
In the event of a child/student being diagnosed with ADHD, my school has a good structure in place to ensure they are supported	69%	22%	10%
ADHD is a mental health condition	64%	21%	15%
I would always refer a child/student I suspected of having ADHD to a health professional	62%	23%	15%
I teach more children/students that I suspect have ADHD than children/students who have a confirmed diagnosis of ADHD	55%	34%	11%
I have received training on teaching children/students with ADHD	54%	42%	4%
Teachers receive an adequate level of training and support in order to support children and students with ADHD symptoms	29%	63%	8%
If I suspected one of the children/students I teach had ADHD I would not know how to refer them for further support	22%	74%	4%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- 22% of teachers do not believe their school has a good structure in place to ensure children diagnosed with ADHD are supported, and 10% don't know
- 23% of teachers would not refer a child or student suspected of having ADHD to a health professional
- 42% of teachers have received no training on teaching students with ADHD, despite almost every teacher having encountered a child with ADHD in their classroom
- 63% of teachers disagree that they receive an adequate level of training and support in order to support children and students with ADHD symptoms
- 22% of teachers would not know how to refer children or students for further support if they suspected they had ADHD
- Teachers interviewed from primary schools are more likely than those from secondary schools to disagree that teachers receive an adequate level of training and support to support children and students with ADHD symptoms (68% vs. 58% respectively)

Support and information for teachers regarding ADHD

Q5. Which of the following sources would you turn to first for information about what to do if you thought a child/student you teach may have ADHD?

	%
Special Educational Needs co-ordinator (SENCO)	71%
Teaching colleague(s)	31%
School senior leadership (e.g. headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of year etc.)	26%
School psychologist or counsellor	25%
Parent(s)	23%
Statutory guidelines (e.g. NICE, SEND Code of Practice)	15%
Internet search (e.g. Google)	8%
School nurse	6%
A teaching resource website (e.g. Tes)	6%
Online community (e.g. Facebook)	1%
Somewhere else	1%
None of the above	1%

Base: all respondents (n=803)

- Teachers are more likely to say they would turn to their Special Educational Needs co-ordinator first for information about what to do if they think a child or student they teach may have ADHD (71%) than any other source (31% or less)
- Teachers from primary schools are more likely to say they would turn to school senior leaders and parents first than their secondary school counterparts (30% vs. 21% and 26% vs. 19% respectively)
- Teachers who have experience teaching pupils with diagnosed ADHD are more likely than those who have not to say they would turn to parents first if they suspected a pupil had ADHD (24% vs. 12%)
- Newly qualified teachers are more likely than any other type of teacher to say that they would turn to the statutory guidelines first (25%)
 - This could be due to their recent completion of studies where they may have engaged with these guidelines more recently than other teachers

Support and information for teachers regarding ADHD

Q6. Which of the following would you say has the most responsibility for informing teachers about what to do if they think a child/student they teach has ADHD?

	%
Special Educational Needs co-ordinator (SENCO)	70%
School senior leadership (e.g. headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of year etc.)	26%
School Behavioural Support/Pastoral services	24%
Child's parent(s)	20%
School psychologist or counsellor	19%
Teacher training days or external courses	15%
Statutory guidelines (e.g. NICE, SEND Code of Practice)	12%
Child's registered GP	7%
Initial Teacher Education or Training (ITET) (e.g. PGCE, PGDE, SCITT, School Direct)	7%
School nurse	4%
None of the above	1%
Another source	0%

Base: All respondents (n=803)

- Teachers are most likely to say that SENCOs have the greatest responsibility for informing teachers about what to do if a pupil has ADHD (70%), compared to any other source tested (26% or less)
- State school teachers are more likely than private school teachers to say SENCOs have the greatest responsibility for informing teachers about what to do if they think their pupil has ADHD (73% vs. 53%), while consistent across all other teacher types
- Primary school teachers are more likely than secondary school teachers to say that school senior leaders (31% vs. 21%), school psychologists (24% vs. 13%) and the child's registered GP (10% vs. 5%) have the greatest responsibility for informing teachers what to do
- Secondary school teachers are more likely to say school behavioural support (29% vs. 20%) and teacher training days (17% vs. 12%) have the greatest responsibility

mhp

6 Agar Street
London
WC2N 4HN
020 3128 8100

mhpc.com
 [@mhpc](https://twitter.com/mhpc)