



### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Kathy Walsh Community Paediatric Team  
Sharon Liversey DHT  
Alice Morphet SENDCo  
Clare Cotton Learning Mentor  
+ 9 parents

### **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Kathy Walsh shared the following information during the meeting:

- Neurodiversity covers many difference eg ADHD, ASD, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia
- ADHD typically has 3 elements
  - Concentration difficulties – eg hard to focus, delays to starting a task, difficulty in completing tasks
  - Hyperactivity difficulties – eg fidgeting, incessant talking
  - Impulsivity – eg difficulty in understanding boundaries, lack of filters, inappropriate actions,
- Children with ADHD can be 'labelled naughty' – people don't understand the condition
- ADHD can affect executive functioning capacity eg lack of organisation
- Anxiety & ADHD are very closely linked eg children report getting into trouble because of their impulsivity but their brains are so busy they can't help
- ADHD referrals are made by school; diagnosis takes into account academic, social differences and behaviours at home
- Children can experience anxiety without having ADHD and/or ASD. Important to address the behaviours regardless of whether a diagnosis is made.

### **Q&A SESSION**

1. Is medication for ADHD prescribed/given into adulthood?
  - Medication can continue into adulthood, and is offered to adults
  - Most children benefit from medication all through their time in education eg primary, high school, Uni
  - Mild/moderate ADHD can be managed by school led support but parents can choose to medicate to help 'busy brains' focus in school
  - Children can come off medication as they move into adulthood but is managed carefully
  - After diagnosis of ADHD medication is offered and children always start on the lowest dose and dosage increased following reviews and the child's response to medication
2. How do you know the medication does what it should be doing?
  - The child will usually respond well to medication resulting in increased concentration in school, less impulsivity and controls hyperactivity. Medication will be regularly reviewed
  - School will able to see the effect of medication and will review the medication to feedback to parents/paediatrician
  - Medication should be taken with breakfast/food eg Medikinet XL has to be taken with food – 50% of the beads within the Medikinet capsule are released straight away and the remaining 50% are slow released with food intake and should then last for 6-8hrs – if not taken with food, immediate release of all beads within the capsule = no slow release and short term impact.

- Other types of medication can be given in 2 doses – 1<sup>st</sup> tablet will last for approx. 4hrs and can suppress appetite, lunch time food intake, followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> dose after to regulate food and have impact on ADHD management in the afternoon
3. Can occupational therapy help?
    - Not ADHD but some OT strategies could support executive functioning skills eg organisational skills
    - School can not refer to OT – referral is made by GP
  4. Is it normal for children with ADHD to gravitate towards each other?
    - Yes – children with ADHD often recognise themselves in others and can emphasise and support each other
  5. Is ASD harder to diagnose than ADHD?
    - Yes, it is a longer process too
    - School makes referrals for ASD
    - ADHD is often diagnosed/ruled out before ASD
    - ASD diagnosis is based more on observations
  6. Does the system miss girls with ASD?
    - There is a 'checklist' for girls but this can be used across the board and not just for diagnosis of ASD in girls
    - ASD can be masked in girls
    - Personality, family dynamics and core behaviour traits taken into account
    - Collaboration with all involved parties is important
  7. Are there any natural therapies/foods that can help with ADHD eg magnesium/fish oil?
    - No – myth and tiktok trends are not useful/accurate and will not 'change' ADHD in children/adults
    - A sensible, well balanced and healthy diet is important

**RECOMMENDED WEBSITES/SUPPORT/NETWORK SPACES:**

- Liverpool ADHD Foundation <https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/> - can also be found on Facebook
- SPACE – soft play area in Chester <https://spacecheshire.org/>
- Yellow Sun ADHD Hub on Facebook – useful information