ADHD SUPPORT SERVICES

ADHD Toolkit

Understand your brain, explore an assessment, and find tools that help with everyday life, starting today

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Understanding. Support. Strategies. Community.

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Short on time? Read the myths and facts page in Section 1, try a brain dump from Section 3, and save the overwhelm reset card from the Printables Pack on your phone.

00

Start Here

A warm welcome, and how to get the most from your toolkit without feeling overwhelmed.

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WELCOME

Welcome

Hello, and thank you for being here.

Wondering whether you might have ADHD can stir up all sorts of feelings: curiosity, hope, worry, even a bit of "am I just making excuses?" All of those feelings are normal, and asking the question is a brave and sensible thing to do.

This toolkit is here to help you understand ADHD, work out whether an assessment might be right for you, and give you practical tools for home, sleep, work, money and more that can make daily life easier right now. **You don't need a diagnosis to start using them.**

How to use this toolkit

- **Start wherever feels right.** You don't have to go in order.
- **Pick one thing.** One tool used well is better than ten tools half-tried.
- **Print it or type in it.** Whatever works for you.
- **Come back to it.** Your answers may change as you learn more.
- **Go gently.** If you need a break, take one. This will still be here.

If you only have 15 minutes today

1. Read the myths and facts page in Section 1.
2. Try a brain dump from Section 3.
3. Save the overwhelm reset card from the Printables Pack on your phone.

> "Pick one thing, start there, and be kind to yourself. I'm really glad you're here."
> **Ashley**

This toolkit is for education and self-reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool and is not a substitute for medical, psychological or professional advice. If you're worried about your health or wellbeing, please speak to your GP. If you're in crisis, call 999 or contact Samaritans on 116 123.

01

Understanding ADHD

Plain English, no jargon, and none of the stereotypes.

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SECTION 1

What ADHD really is

ADHD is a difference in how the brain develops and works. It mainly affects **executive function**, the brain's management system. Executive function helps us to:

- plan and organise
- get started on tasks
- keep track of time
- hold information in mind (working memory)
- manage emotions and impulses
- switch between tasks

> People with ADHD **can** do all of these things. They just take more effort, and they often depend on interest, urgency or energy rather than willpower alone.

The three ways ADHD can show up

Presentation	What it can look like
Mainly inattentive	Daydreaming, forgetfulness, losing things, drifting off in conversations, struggling to finish tasks. Often missed, because it's quiet.
Mainly hyperactive-impulsive	Restlessness, fidgeting, talking a lot, interrupting, acting quickly without thinking it through.
Combined	A mix of both.

In adults, hyperactivity often turns inward. It can feel like **a busy mind that never switches off**, rather than running around the room.

SECTION 1

Myths and facts

Myth	Fact
"Everyone's a bit ADHD."	Everyone forgets things sometimes. ADHD is when these difficulties are persistent, start in childhood, and cause real problems in daily life.
"Only naughty boys have ADHD."	ADHD affects people of all genders. Girls and women are often missed because their signs can be quieter.
"You'd have been diagnosed as a child."	Many adults are diagnosed later in life, especially if they did well at school or learned to hide their struggles.
"People with ADHD can't concentrate."	Many can focus intensely on things that interest them. This is often called hyperfocus.
"It's just an excuse for being lazy."	ADHD is a recognised neurodevelopmental condition. Struggling to start tasks is not the same as not caring.
"You grow out of it."	Many people still have ADHD as adults, although how it shows up can change over time.

Things that can look like ADHD

Some other experiences can look similar to ADHD, or exist alongside it. These include anxiety, depression, poor sleep, long-term stress, hormonal changes, autism and dyslexia.

> This is one reason a proper assessment is so important, and why it's worth being **curious rather than jumping to conclusions.**

SECTION 1

Your ADHD strengths

ADHD isn't only about difficulties. Many people with ADHD also notice strengths like these. Tick the ones that sound like you.

	Strength	An example from my life
☐	Creative, out-of-the-box thinking	
☐	Calm or quick-thinking in a crisis	
☐	Hyperfocus on things I care about	
☐	Curiosity and love of learning new things	
☐	Empathy and kindness	
☐	Humour, energy and enthusiasm	
☐	Resilience, because I've bounced back many times	

What I've noticed about me

Question	My answer
What first made me wonder about ADHD?	
What do I find hardest in everyday life?	
What have I been doing to cope?	

SECTION 1

What I've noticed about me (continued)

Question	My answer
When did I first notice these struggles?	
What do I hope to understand better?	

Ashley's note

> When I first learned what ADHD really was, so much of my life suddenly made sense. Not because I'd been doing everything wrong, but because I'd been doing everything with a brain nobody had explained to me. Whatever you discover, understanding yourself better is never a waste of time.

02

Exploring an Assessment

How to take the next step, if and when you're ready.

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SECTION 2

Do I need an assessment?

That's completely your choice. Some people want a formal diagnosis so they can access treatment, support at work or simply peace of mind. Others find that understanding ADHD and using practical tools is enough for now. **Both are valid.**

Reasons people choose an assessment	Reasons people wait or decide not to
To understand themselves and their past	Long waiting lists
To explore treatment options, including medication	Self-understanding feels like enough for now
To ask for adjustments at work or in education	Worries about what others might think
To rule other things in or out	Other priorities in life right now

How it usually works in the UK

Step 1: Speak to your GP. In most cases, the NHS route starts with your GP. They'll ask about your difficulties and may ask you to fill in a screening questionnaire. If they agree an assessment would help, they can refer you.

Step 2: The referral. You'll be referred to a specialist service. Waiting times for adult ADHD assessments vary a lot depending on where you live, and they can be long.

Step 3: The assessment. A specialist, usually a psychiatrist or specialist nurse, will talk with you about your current difficulties and your life history, including childhood. They may ask to speak to someone who knew you when you were younger, or to see old school reports.

Step 4: The outcome. You'll be told whether you meet the criteria for ADHD, and what support or treatment options are available.

SECTION 2

Right to Choose (England only)

If you're registered with a GP in England, you may be able to use Right to Choose. This lets you ask to be referred to a different NHS-funded provider, which may have a shorter wait. The provider must have an NHS contract.

- How Right to Choose works varies between local areas, and some areas have changed their processes recently.
- Ask your GP practice how it works locally. Provider websites usually say whether they accept Right to Choose referrals and list their waiting times.
- Right to Choose doesn't apply in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. If you live there, ask your GP about the local route.

Private assessments

Some people choose to pay for a private assessment. If you're thinking about this:

- Check the clinician's qualifications and that they follow NICE guidelines.
- Ask your GP beforehand whether they'd accept a private diagnosis. A private diagnosis isn't automatically accepted by the NHS.
- If medication is offered, ask about **shared care**. This is where your GP takes over prescribing, but it's at your GP's discretion and isn't guaranteed. Without it, you may need to pay for ongoing private prescriptions.

> **Please note:** this information is a general guide and may change. Always check with your GP practice about the process where you live.

SECTION 2

My evidence gathering

Gathering examples before you see your GP makes your appointment much more useful.

Area	Examples from my life
Childhood and school (reports, memories, what others said)	
Work or study	
Home and money (bills, housework, appointments)	
Relationships and friendships	
Emotions and stress	
What I've tried that hasn't worked	

People who knew me as a child and might help:

SECTION 2

My GP appointment planner

Fill this in beforehand and take it with you. Appointments can be short, and it's easy to forget the important bits.

Question	My notes
Why I've booked this appointment	
How long I've noticed these difficulties	
Three real examples of how they affect my daily life	
Anything else that might be affecting me (sleep, mood, stress, health)	
Questions I want to ask	
What happens next (fill in during the appointment)	

What you might say: "I've been wondering for a while whether I might have ADHD. I've been noting down some examples of how it affects my daily life, and I'd like to talk about whether an assessment might be right for me."

SECTION 2

While you wait

Waiting can be frustrating, but you don't need to put your life on hold. You can:

- use the everyday tools in Section 3 and the Printables Pack
- keep adding to your evidence notes
- use the focus, mood and sleep tracker to spot patterns
- try the 30-day tiny steps challenge in Section 11
- learn from trusted sources, like the NHS website and ADHD UK
- connect with others who understand
- look after the basics: sleep, food, movement and rest

> **Tip:** if you think you might forget what to say at your appointment, it's fine to read from your notes or hand them to your GP.

03

Everyday Tools

Simple tools you can start using today, diagnosis or not.

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SECTION 3

Why these tools

Most planning systems are built for brains that love routine and remember to check their lists. If you've abandoned more planners than you can count, it's not you. These tools are quick, flexible and forgiving. Try the ones that click, and skip the rest.

Tool 1: The brain dump

When your head feels full of open tabs, get it all out.

1. Set a timer for 5 minutes.
2. Write down everything on your mind: tasks, worries, ideas, reminders.
3. When the timer goes, sort each item into the table.

Do today	Do this week	Someday or maybe	Let it go

Do today	Do this week	Someday or maybe	Let it go

SECTION 3

Tool 2: Today's Top 3

A long to-do list can freeze you. Choose just three things that matter most today.

Today's Top 3	First tiny step	Done?
1.		☐
2.		☐
3.		☐

Tool 3: Make it smaller

Break big tasks into steps so small they feel almost silly. If a step still feels hard, break it down again.

Big task	Tiny steps
Example: Book a GP appointment	*1. Find the surgery number. 2. Put it in my phone. 3. Set an alarm for 8am. 4. Make the call.*

SECTION 3

Tool 4: Getting unstuck

- **The 10-minute rule:** do just 10 minutes. You're allowed to stop after that.
- **Body doubling:** work alongside someone, in person or on a video call.
- **Visual timers:** seeing time pass makes it feel real.
- **Change of scene:** try a different room, a café or outside.
- **Make it a game:** race a timer, or see what you can do in one song.
- **Start in the middle:** you don't have to begin at the beginning.

Tool 5: My dopamine menu

A list of things that give you a lift, laid out like a menu. When you're flat or stuck, pick something from it.

Menu section	What it means	My options
Starters	Quick boosts of 5 minutes or less (a song, a stretch, fresh air)	
Mains	Bigger boosts (a walk, a hobby, seeing a friend)	
Sides	Things that make dull tasks nicer (a podcast, a favourite drink)	
Desserts	Enjoy in moderation, as they're hard to stop (social media, TV)	

SECTION 3

Tool 6: The launchpad

Pick one spot by your door where everything you need to leave the house lives.

My launchpad: _____

☐ Keys	☐ Wallet or purse	☐ Phone charger
☐ Glasses	☐ Bag	☐ Medication
☐ Water bottle	☐ Letters to post	☐ Other:

Tool 7: Morning and evening anchors

Three to five small steps are plenty. Think of them as anchors, not rules.

Morning anchors	Evening anchors
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Ideas: a glass of water, opening the curtains, checking tomorrow's calendar, laying out clothes, charging your phone outside the bedroom.

SECTION 3

Tool 8: The weekly check-in

Once a week, spend 15 minutes looking back and planning ahead.

Question	My answer
What went well this week?	
What felt hard?	
What's coming up next week?	
One thing I'll let go of	

Ashley's note

> The best system is the one you actually use, and it's allowed to change. If something stops working after a few weeks, that's not failure. It's just your brain asking for something new.

04

Being Kind to Yourself

Big feelings, gentle words, and where to go from here.

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SECTION 4

Why this matters

Wondering whether you have ADHD can bring up a lot: relief, hope, doubt, sadness about the past, or worry about what other people will think. Many people with ADHD have also spent years being hard on themselves. This section helps you look after yourself while you work things out.

The pause plan for big feelings

Many people with ADHD feel emotions, especially criticism or rejection, very intensely. This plan helps you pause before reacting.

Step	What I'll do
Notice it	*e.g. "My chest has gone tight. This is a big feeling."*
Pause	*e.g. Wait 20 minutes before replying*
Check the facts	*e.g. "What do I know, and what am I guessing?"*
Find another explanation	*e.g. "Maybe they're just busy."*
Soothe myself	*e.g. Go for a walk or text a friend*

Your **overwhelm reset card** is in the Printables Pack. Save it on your phone or stick it on the fridge.

SECTION 4

Turning down the inner critic

Write down a thought your inner critic uses, then try a kinder and more accurate version.

My inner critic says	A kinder, truer version
"I'm useless, I've forgotten again."	"Remembering is hard for my brain. I'll set a reminder next time."
"I'm just making excuses."	"I'm trying to understand myself. That's not an excuse, it's self-care."

The "done" list

At the end of the day, write down everything you did, however small. Getting through a hard day counts.

Today I...

SECTION 4

Talking to other people

You don't have to tell anyone until you're ready. If you'd like to, these scripts might help. Change them so they sound like you.

To a partner, friend or family member

"I've been reading about ADHD and a lot of it sounds like me. I'm not sure yet, but I'm looking into it. It would really help to have your support."

If someone is dismissive

"I know it might seem like everyone's talking about ADHD at the moment, but this has been part of my life for a long time. I'd just like to understand myself better."

At work

"I work best with written instructions and clear deadlines. Could we follow up meetings with a quick email of the key points?"

> You don't need a diagnosis to ask for things that help you work well. There's more on this in Section 7.

My support circle

Type of support	Who
Someone I can be honest with	
Someone who makes me laugh	
Someone who helps with practical things	
Professional support (GP, therapist, coach)	

SECTION 4

My next steps

Question	My answer
What I've learned about myself	
The tool I'll keep using	
Whether I want to explore an assessment, and when	
One small step I'll take this week	

Ashley's note

> Whatever you decide, and whatever you find out, you've already done something important. You've chosen to be curious about yourself instead of critical. Keep going, one small step at a time.

If you're struggling with your mental health, please speak to your GP. If you're in crisis, call 999 or contact Samaritans on 116 123, any time, day or night.

05

Home and Cleaning

Doom piles, good-enough cleaning, and a home that works for your brain.

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SECTION 5

Why home can feel so hard

Keeping a home ticking over takes lots of small, boring, never-ending jobs. For an ADHD brain, that's tough. Out of sight is out of mind, starting is hard, and it's easy to get distracted halfway through. If your home doesn't look like a magazine, you're not lazy. You're human, with a busy brain.

> The aim here isn't perfect. It's **good enough**, so you can find your keys and breathe a bit easier.

Tool 1: The doom pile sort

A doom pile is that heap of "I'll deal with it later" stuff. Didn't Organise, Only Moved. Here's how to shrink it.

1. Pick one pile. Just one.
2. Grab three bags or boxes: **Bin it, Do it, Keep it.**
3. Set a timer for 10 minutes.
4. Pick up each item once and put it in a box. No overthinking.
5. When the timer goes, you're allowed to stop.

Tool 2: Good-enough cleaning

Instead of…	Try…
Cleaning the whole house	One room, or even one surface
Waiting until you have a free day	One song, then stop
Doing it all perfectly	Making it a bit better than it was
Doing it alone in silence	A podcast, music, or a friend on the phone
Putting everything away "properly"	A basket in each room for "stuff"

SECTION 5

Tool 3: The 5-minute reset

Before bed, or before you leave the house, do five minutes on whatever bugs you most. Dishes in the sink. Clothes on the floor. The kitchen side. Five minutes, then you're done.

Tool 4: Make it visible

- Use clear boxes, open shelves and hooks, so you can see what you have.
- Give everything a "home", especially keys, purse and phone.
- Keep cleaning things in the room you use them in.
- Put things you need to remember where you'll trip over them.

My weekly home anchors

Pick one small job a day. Small is the point.

Day	One small job	Done?
Monday	*e.g. Bins out*	☐
Tuesday	*e.g. One load of washing*	☐
Wednesday		☐
Thursday		☐
Friday		☐
Saturday		☐
Sunday	*Rest. That counts too.*	☐

Ashley's note

> My house will never be show-home tidy, and that's OK. A home is for living in. If you managed one small job today, that's a win.

06

Sleep and Wind-Down

For the busy brain that won't switch off at night.

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SECTION 6

Why sleep can be tricky

Lots of people with ADHD say their brain gets louder at bedtime. The house is quiet, there's nothing to distract you, and suddenly every thought from the day comes flooding in. Others lose track of time and stay up far later than they meant to. Then mornings are a struggle, and the cycle goes round again.

You can't force sleep. But you can make it easier for your body and brain to wind down.

Tool 1: The wind-down alarm

Set an alarm for one hour before you want to be asleep. When it goes off, it's your signal to start slowing down. Not to sleep yet, just to start winding down.

Tool 2: The bedtime brain dump

Keep a notebook and pen by your bed. When the thoughts start, write them down. Jobs, worries, ideas, all of it. They're safe on paper now, so your brain doesn't have to hold them overnight.

Tool 3: My wind-down plan

Pick three or four calm things you'll do in the hour before bed.

Ideas	I'll try it
Put my phone on charge outside the bedroom	☐
Dim the lights	☐
A warm bath or shower	☐
A cup of caffeine-free tea	☐
Read a book (paper, not a screen)	☐
Gentle music, an audiobook or a sleep story	☐
Some slow stretches	☐
Get tomorrow's clothes ready	☐

SECTION 6

Tool 4: Calm breathing

Breathe in for a count of 4. Breathe out slowly for a count of 6. Repeat for a few minutes. Breathing out for longer than you breathe in helps your body feel calmer.

My one-week sleep diary

Day	Went to bed	Woke up	How I felt (1 to 5)	What helped?
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Ashley's note

> Some nights my brain just won't play ball, and that's OK. Rest still counts, even if sleep doesn't come straight away. Be gentle with yourself the next day.

If sleep problems go on for a long time or affect your daily life, please speak to your GP.

07

Work and Friendships

Masking, asking for help, and saying no without the guilt.

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SECTION 7

What is masking?

Masking is hiding the parts of yourself you think others won't accept. Copying how other people act. Rehearsing what to say. Smiling when you're struggling. Working twice as hard so nobody notices.

Lots of women with ADHD mask for years without knowing it has a name. It can help you get through the day, but it's exhausting, and it often leads to burnout.

Where do I mask?

Where	What I hide or change	How I feel afterwards
At work		
With friends		
With family		
Online		

> You don't have to stop masking everywhere. But noticing it helps you choose where you can be more yourself, and plan rest after the times you can't.

SECTION 7

Asking for what helps at work

You don't need a diagnosis to ask for things that help you work well. Here are some ideas, and words you could use.

What might help	What you could say
Written instructions	"Could you pop that in an email, so I don't miss anything?"
Clear deadlines	"When do you need this by?"
A quieter space	"I focus best somewhere quieter. Could I work from there for this task?"
Headphones	"I find headphones help me concentrate. Is that OK?"
Regular check-ins	"Could we have a quick check-in each week, to make sure I'm on track?"

Saying no, kindly

Saying yes to everything is a fast track to overwhelm. Try one of these:

- "I'd love to, but I can't this time."
- "Let me check and get back to you." (Then actually take time to decide.)
- "I can't do all of it, but I could do this part."
- "I've got too much on right now, but thank you for asking."

SECTION 7

Being a good friend, ADHD style

Forgetting to reply, being late, or going quiet for weeks doesn't mean you don't care. Some things that can help:

- Tell close friends that you're rubbish at replying, but you love them.
- Send a voice note instead of a long message.
- Set reminders for birthdays as soon as you hear about them.
- Plan things that suit you: a walk, a coffee, or a quiet night in.

My energy after people

People or places that fill me up	People or places that drain me

Ashley's note

> The right people won't need you to be someone else. Start being a little more you, a little at a time, with the people who feel safe.

08

Hormones and ADHD

A gentle look at how your cycle and life stages might affect you.

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SECTION 8

Why hormones are worth noticing

> **Please note:** I'm not a medical professional. This section is general information to help you notice your own patterns. It isn't medical advice, and it can't diagnose or treat anything. If you have concerns about your hormones or your health, please speak to your GP.

Many women with ADHD say their focus, mood and energy seem to change at different times of the month, or at different stages of life. Researchers are still learning about how hormones and ADHD affect each other, so there's a lot we don't know yet.

What you can do is notice your own patterns. Knowing when you're likely to have a harder week means you can plan for it and be kinder to yourself.

Times some women notice changes

Time	What some women say they notice
The week or so before a period	Feeling more forgetful, foggy, irritable or overwhelmed
After having a baby	Life feeling much harder to manage, on top of everything a new baby brings
Perimenopause and menopause	Brain fog, memory slips and mood changes that feel new or worse

Everyone is different. You might notice some of these, all of them, or none.

SECTION 8

My cycle and my brain

If you have periods, try tracking for two or three months. A period-tracking app works too.

Week of my cycle	Focus (1 to 5)	Mood (1 to 5)	Energy (1 to 5)	Notes
Week 1 (period starts)				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4 (before my period)				

My tough-week plan

If you notice a pattern, plan around it.

- [ ] Put lighter days in my diary during my harder week
- [ ] Batch-cook or stock up on easy meals beforehand
- [ ] Lower my expectations of myself, on purpose
- [ ] Tell someone close that it's a tougher week
- [ ] Use the overwhelm reset card from the Printables Pack
- [ ] Other: _____

SECTION 8

Things to mention to my GP

If you'd like to talk to your GP about hormones, your notes can really help.

Question	My notes
What changes I've noticed	
When they happen (time of month, life stage)	
How they affect my daily life	
What I'd like to ask	

Ashley's note

> Noticing my own patterns helped me stop blaming myself on the harder weeks. Your body isn't working against you. Getting to know it is a kind thing to do.

09

Money and the ADHD Tax

Late fees, lost tickets and things bought twice. Let's make money feel less scary.

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SECTION 9

Money and ADHD

Many people with ADHD find money tricky. Forgotten bills, late fees, impulse buys and subscriptions you forgot you had can all add up. It isn't a sign you're bad with money. It's often executive function at work.

What is the "ADHD tax"?

The "ADHD tax" isn't a real tax, and it isn't a medical term. It's a nickname people in the ADHD community use for the **extra money that ADHD struggles can end up costing you**. For example:

- late fees, fines and parking tickets
- free trials and subscriptions you forgot to cancel
- impulse buys you didn't really need
- buying things twice because you lost the first one
- takeaways when you're too tired to cook

> The name is a bit tongue-in-cheek, but the cost can be very real, and it can leave you feeling awful about yourself. Naming it helps you spot it, plan for it, and stop blaming yourself.

ADHD-friendly money tips

- **Automate what you can.** Set up direct debits for regular bills so they don't rely on memory.
- **Set reminders the day before bills leave**, so you're never caught out.
- **Do a subscriptions check** every few months, and cancel what you don't use.
- **Try the 24-hour rule** for non-essential buys. If you still want it tomorrow, think again then.
- **Keep it visual.** A simple tracker you can see beats a complicated app you forget to open.
- **Make it a little ritual.** Pair a weekly money check with something nice, like a favourite drink.

> **Worried about money?** Free, confidential help is available. MoneyHelper offers free, government-backed money guidance, StepChange is a debt charity that offers free debt advice, and Citizens Advice can help too.

This section offers general tips only and is not financial advice.

SECTION 9

My ADHD tax tracker

For one month, jot down anything that cost you extra. No judgement. Just notice.

Date	What happened	Cost	What might help next time
Example	*Forgot to cancel a free trial*	*£9.99*	*A phone reminder the day I sign up*

My 15-minute money date

Once a week, put the kettle on and do just these four things. Then stop. Fifteen minutes counts.

- [ ] Check my bank balance
- [ ] Open any post that looks like a bill
- [ ] Check what's due this week
- [ ] Write down one thing I'll pay or sort

SECTION 9

Monthly budget

Month: _____

Money in	£
Wages / salary	
Benefits	
Other income	
Total in	

Essential bills	£
Rent / mortgage	
Council tax	
Gas and electric	
Water	
Phone and broadband	
Insurance	
Other	
Total bills	

Everyday spending	£
Food shopping	
Travel and fuel	
Medication / health	
Children / pets	
Fun and treats	
Other	
Total spending	

Summary	£
Total in	
Minus bills	
Minus spending	
Left over	

Savings goal: _____

SECTION 9

Bills and subscriptions tracker

List everything that goes out regularly. Tick when it's paid, and use the last column to spot anything you can cancel.

Bill or subscription	Amount	Due date	Paid	Still need it?
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐

SECTION 9

Spending tracker

Jot down what you spend. No judgement, just noticing. Use the last column to mark impulse buys, so you can spot your triggers.

Date	What I bought	£	Need or want?	Impulse?
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
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				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐

When I impulse spend, I'm usually feeling:

10

My Story, and Yours

From me to you, and space for you to write your own.

ADHD SUPPORT SERVICES

SECTION 10

My story

Growing up

I don't remember much of my childhood, but I remember being compared to the high achievers. My desk was always a mess, and my teacher complained to my mum all the time. I was so scared of parents' evening that I lied and said there wasn't one. **I was only about six.** Looking back, the signs were there. I've lived most of my life scared of doing something wrong.

The years of trying harder

I was told to take any job and be grateful, so I was a square peg in a round hole. I'm dyslexic and can't add up, yet I ended up adding up people's pensions! I masked so much that I never asked what would suit me. **In the end, I became a businesswoman to disguise feeling unemployable.** Now I believe we should play to our strengths.

The moment I first wondered

When my daughter was diagnosed with ADHD, the doctor said it can run in families. I looked back at my own life and saw the same struggles. I wasn't going to let her go through life like I did.

What changed

It was a rollercoaster: sadness for that little girl, relief to finally understand, and shock at how different life could have been. But the biggest thing is self-acceptance. **Knowing it's all OK. I'm OK.**

**"Learn about yourself,
and love what you are."**

Ashley x

SECTION 10

Your story

Writing your story down can help you see your life with kinder eyes. There are no right answers, and nobody else has to read it.

Prompt	My answer
Words people used about me growing up	
What I believed about myself because of those words	
Something I've achieved, despite it all	
A moment from my past that makes more sense now	
What I'd like my next chapter to look like	

SECTION 10

A letter to my younger self

What would you tell the younger you, if you could? Be as kind as you would be to a child you love.

Dear younger me,

Love, me

Ashley's note

> Your story isn't finished. Whatever happened before, you get to write the next part with more understanding and a lot more kindness.

11

30-Day Tiny Steps Challenge

One small step a day. Miss a day? Just pick up where you left off.

ADHD SUPPORT SERVICES

SECTION 11

How it works

- Each day has one tiny step. Most take 10 minutes or less.
- Tick the box when you've done it.
- **Missed a day, or a week? That's fine.** No starting again, no guilt. Just carry on.
- Swap any step you don't like for one that suits you better.

Day	Tiny step	Done?
Day 1	Drink a glass of water first thing	☐
Day 2	Do a 5-minute brain dump	☐
Day 3	Write today's Top 3	☐
Day 4	Put your keys in one spot	☐
Day 5	Set a wind-down alarm	☐
Day 6	Tidy one surface for one song	☐
Day 7	Write a "done" list tonight	☐
Day 8	Rest day. Do something you enjoy	☐
Day 9	Unsubscribe from 5 emails	☐
Day 10	Go for a 10-minute walk	☐
Day 11	Try the 10-minute rule on a job you've put off	☐
Day 12	Message a friend you've missed	☐
Day 13	Check one bill or subscription	☐
Day 14	Pick your clothes for tomorrow	☐
Day 15	Rest day. Be kind to yourself	☐

SECTION 11

Days 16 to 30

Day	Tiny step	Done?
Day 16	Try body doubling for a boring job	☐
Day 17	Write 3 things you did well this week	☐
Day 18	Clear one doom pile with Bin, Do, Keep	☐
Day 19	Put your phone outside the bedroom tonight	☐
Day 20	Make your dopamine menu	☐
Day 21	Say no to one thing	☐
Day 22	Rest day. Put your feet up	☐
Day 23	Do the 15-minute money date	☐
Day 24	Write one kind sentence to yourself	☐
Day 25	Try the overwhelm reset card	☐
Day 26	Plan easy meals for 3 days	☐
Day 27	Ask for one thing that helps you	☐
Day 28	Do your weekly check-in	☐
Day 29	Write a letter to your younger self	☐
Day 30	Celebrate. You did it!	☐

When you finish

Question	My answer
The step that helped me most	
The one I'll keep doing	
How I'll treat myself for finishing	

SECTION 11

Looking back

Question	My answer
What surprised me	
What I'd tell someone about to start	

Ashley's note

> You don't have to do 30 days in a row. You just have to keep coming back. Every tick is proof you can do hard things, one tiny step at a time.

12

Printables Pack

Planners, trackers, rescue plans, meal plans and pocket cards. Print them as often as you like.

ADHD SUPPORT SERVICES

PRINTABLES

Bad-day rescue plan

Some days are just hard. On those days, the goal is to get through, not to get things done.

My bare-minimum day

If I only do these things today, it's enough:

- [ ] Drink some water
- [ ] Eat something
- [ ] Take any medication I need
- [ ] Get some fresh air, even for a minute
- [ ] _____

My rescue menu

Things that help me feel a bit better	Tried it
A cuppa and a sit down	☐
A shower	☐
Music I love	☐
Texting someone safe	☐
	☐
	☐

Words for a hard day: "Today is a hard day. It won't be like this forever. I'm doing my best, and my best is enough."

PRINTABLES

Daily planner

Date: ..... **Energy today:** 1 2 3 4 5

Today's Top 3	First tiny step	Done?
1.		☐
2.		☐
3.		☐

Time	Plans
Morning	
Lunchtime	
Afternoon	
Evening	

Don't forget

Today I'm grateful for

PRINTABLES

Weekly planner

Week starting: _____ **This week's Top 3:** _____

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Notes and reminders

PRINTABLES

Monthly overview

Month: _____ **Big things this month:** _____

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Bills and birthdays to remember:

PRINTABLES

Brain dump sheet

Set a timer for 5 minutes. Get it all out of your head, then sort it.

Do today	Do this week	Someday or maybe	Let it go

PRINTABLES

30-day habit tracker

Choose one to three small habits. Attach each one to something you already do, like "after I brush my teeth". Missing a day isn't failure. Just start again tomorrow.

Habit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Habit	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

My habit	I'll do it after I...	How I'll celebrate

PRINTABLES

Focus, mood and sleep tracker

Score each from 1 (really hard) to 5 (really good). Patterns are much easier to spot on paper, and this makes great evidence for your GP. **Month:** _____

Day	Focus	Mood	Energy	Sleep	Notes
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					

Focus, mood and sleep tracker (continued)

Day	Focus	Mood	Energy	Sleep	Notes
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					
31					

Patterns I've noticed:

PRINTABLES

Meal planner

Keep it simple. Beans on toast counts.

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Tea	Snacks
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

My easy go-to meals

When I'm tired, I can make...
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

PRINTABLES

Shopping list

Fruit and veg	Fridge and freezer	Cupboard	Household	Other

PRINTABLES

Appointments tracker

Date	Time	Who or where	What for	Reminder set?
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐

PRINTABLES

About my ADHD: one-page summary

Fill this in and hand it to your GP, a manager or someone close to you. It says the important things for you.

My answers
What I find hardest
How it affects my daily life
How long I've noticed it (including childhood)
What I've tried
What helps me
What I'd like help with

Name: ..... **Date:** .....

PRINTABLES

Pocket cards

Screenshot these, or print and cut them out to keep in your purse or on the fridge.

Overwhelm reset

1. **Stop.** Put it down for a minute.
2. **Breathe.** In for 4, hold for 4, out for 6. Three times.
3. **Ground.** 5 things I see, 4 I hear, 3 I touch.
4. **Name it.** "I'm overwhelmed, and that's OK."
5. **Shrink it.** "What's the one next thing?"
6. **Be kind.** "What would I tell a friend?"

Getting unstuck

- Just 10 minutes, then I can stop
- Find a body double
- Set a visual timer
- Change rooms or go outside
- Race a song
- Start in the middle
- Pick from my dopamine menu

Before I spend

- Do I need it, or do I want the feeling?
- Can it wait 24 hours?
- Is it in my budget this month?
- Will I still want it next week?
- Have I already got something similar?

Be kind to me

- My brain works differently, not wrongly
- Done is better than perfect
- One small step still counts
- Rest is productive too
- I'm doing my best with what I've got

Bedtime wind-down

- Wind-down alarm, one hour before bed
- Phone on charge outside the bedroom
- Brain dump in my notebook
- Breathe in for 4, out for 6

Bad day

- Water, food, medication, fresh air
- That's enough for today
- It won't be like this forever
- Text someone safe

KEEP GOING

You've got this

Thank you for spending this time on yourself.

Whatever you've discovered, and whatever you decide next, understanding yourself better is always worth it. Keep coming back to the tools that help, and let go of the ones that don't.

Stay connected

Come and join the free **ADHD Support Services** Facebook group, where we share tips, stories and support every week. You'll be among people who really get it. I've also got something special coming in the new year.

Join the ADHD Support Services Facebook group

facebook.com/groups/1759263171909545

Important information

This toolkit is for education and self-reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool and is not a substitute for medical, psychological, financial or professional advice. If you're worried about your health or wellbeing, please speak to your GP. If you're in crisis, call 999 or contact Samaritans on 116 123.

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