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## **Kids with ADHD at risk of drug taking and depression**

### ***Intervention to address quality of life issues needed during childhood***

New research<sup>1</sup> released today shows that children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are facing significant social exclusion during their formative years, compared with other children their age. Children with ADHD may also suffer low levels of self-confidence and self-esteem<sup>2</sup> - in turn these have been linked to high rates of teenage pregnancy, smoking and antisocial behaviour, such as drug taking.<sup>3,4</sup>

According to the research, 79% of children with ADHD have no or very few friends, 53% spend the majority of their time alone and 53% get picked on by other children often or most of the time.<sup>1</sup> Teenagers with ADHD are more likely to take illegal drugs, abuse alcohol, fail at school and get lower status jobs than their peers.<sup>5</sup> In addition, around one in three children with ADHD require the use of mental health services.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, given the potential long term impact of social exclusion during childhood and adolescence, healthcare professionals warn it is imperative that the quality of life issues of children with ADHD are recognised and addressed early on.

Dr Anne McClure, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at South Tyneside District Hospital, commented, "*When it comes to managing children's health, it is not enough to only treat the basic symptoms. A treatment strategy, including medication and behavioural therapy, should offer benefits throughout the whole day and across all aspects of the child's life. Children are like sponges – constantly absorbing skills from their environment that will help them grow into independent, healthy, social adults. We are doing children with ADHD a disservice if we do not address quality of life issues, which we know are often a struggle, whilst they are young.*"

The findings of the new research reveal the extent of social exclusion and poor life opportunities children with ADHD face. In response, a new campaign called **Lessons 4 Life** is being launched today by Eli Lilly and Company Limited with the support of the National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service (ADDISS). It aims to help improve quality of life and offer support to children and families affected



The **Lessons 4 Life** campaign and research have been sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company Limited

by the condition. A new booklet, also available today, is filled with practical tips and strategies to help parents boost their child's self-confidence and to further educate people about ADHD and appropriate ways to manage the condition.

Monica Harris is the Executive Director/Founder of Milton Keynes ADHD Family Support Groups UK and mother of Nathan, aged 22 years, who was diagnosed with ADHD 10 years ago. She commented, *“Nathan wasn't diagnosed with ADHD until he was 12 years old. He was constantly picked on by other children and blamed by his teachers for things he did not do. Subsequently he lost his confidence and self-esteem. He gradually got into the wrong crowd and started to experiment with drug taking and alcohol which also led to violence. He became extremely paranoid and was angry at the world because of what his ADHD had done to him and the lack of support he received. He is now in prison. If his problems were tackled when he was much younger then his story could have been very different, which is why it's so important to intervene early and help give these kids the best chance they have for the future.”*

Life Coach Gladeana McMahon of ITV's 'Dial a Mum' supports the importance of nurturing social skills among children, *“It is easy to identify whether a child is struggling academically and address the problem through well established channels both in and out of school – but when it comes to social learning and self awareness, although it is arguably more important to long-term success and happiness, it is less 'measurable'. Life coaching can form part of the solution for anyone struggling with low confidence and self-esteem.”* Gladeana's top confidence-boosting tips for children are included in the *Lessons 4 Life* booklet along with information to help parents identify difficult times of the day and offer practical solutions.

Parents should feel encouraged to discuss all their ADHD management needs with their doctor to ensure that their child is receiving the most appropriate treatment. For further information, affected parents are encouraged to request the free *Lessons 4 Life* information booklet by visiting [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk) or emailing their name and address to [info@adhdlessons4life.co.uk](mailto:info@adhdlessons4life.co.uk).

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**Notes to Editors**

**About the Survey**

The survey<sup>1</sup> compared 100 parents of children with ADHD to 50 parents of healthy children, aged 5-16 years during August-October 2006.

***Experiences at School***

- Only 26% of children with ADHD are good at making friends and of these, 65% are poor at maintaining them
- On average, an ADHD child is only invited to another child's birthday party once every six months. This commonly causes the child to feel upset and distressed
- Moreover, on average children with ADHD are only invited to a friend's house eight times every six months compared to twenty times for non-ADHD children
- 57% of children with ADHD get into trouble at school often or most of the time
- 42% of ADHD children come home from school feeling unhappy either often or most of the time

***Family Relationships***

- 60% of parents of children with ADHD spend more time with their ADHD child than with their other child(ren)
- 32% of parents who spend an unequal amount of time with their ADHD child and their other child(ren) feel guilty about doing so
- 46% of children with ADHD spend hardly any time with their brothers or sisters, with 98% having lots of arguments with their siblings

**About ADHD**

- It is estimated ADHD affects 5% or 366,000 children in the UK<sup>7</sup>

- The core symptoms include inattention, hyperactivity and impulsiveness which are not expected of those of the same age and developmental level
- The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), the organisation providing guidance on health and treatments, recommends that the preferences of the child and his/her parent or guardian is one of the key considerations when choosing a treatment for ADHD<sup>7</sup>
- Treatments for ADHD in children and adolescents include methylphenidate, atomoxetine and dexamphetamine (within their licensed indications)<sup>7</sup>
- About one-third of children completely grow out of ADHD; around seven in ten need treatment as teenagers and around six in ten will still have ADHD as adults<sup>8</sup>
- Additional information about managing ADHD can be found at [www.adhdmatters.co.uk](http://www.adhdmatters.co.uk)

### **ADDISS**

- ADDISS (the National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service) is a registered charity providing information, training and support for parents, sufferers and professionals in the field of ADHD and related learning and behavioural difficulties
- ADDISS can be contacted by phone on 0208 952 2800, by email [info@addiss.co.uk](mailto:info@addiss.co.uk) or visit their website at [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk). Journalists wishing to contact ADDISS should call 0208 952 1515

### **Milton Keynes ADHD Group**

- MK ADHD Group can be contacted by phone on 01908 676779, by email [info@mkadhd.org.uk](mailto:info@mkadhd.org.uk) or visit their website at <http://www.mkadhd.org.uk>

### **Lilly**

- Eli Lilly and Company Limited, a leading, innovation driven company, is developing a growing portfolio of best in class pharmaceutical products by applying the latest research from its own worldwide laboratories and from collaborations with eminent scientific organisations
- Headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. Lilly provides answers – through medicines and information – for some of the world's most urgent medical needs

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