

Dear Parents,

My name is Andrew Kennedy and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying for the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology in the School of Education, University College Dublin. I am writing to you to invite you to participate in the research I am undertaking for this degree.

The title of the study is *Parental Experience of the Health, Mental Health and Education Services provided for Children identified as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*.

What is this research about?

My research will explore parents' experiences of the health, mental health and education services for children identified as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This study also aims to find out about coexisting difficulties that children with ADHD may have, your experience of the assessment process, and interventions recommended for your child and your family.

Why is this research being done?

Children with ADHD may require support from the health, mental health and education services throughout their childhood and adolescence. It is important to document parents' experiences of these services and for you to provide feedback on your experience. Research indicates that 60-80% of children with ADHD have at least one other coexisting health, mental health or education difficulty. However, there is very little research conducted in these issues in Ireland. Educational psychologists in Ireland are increasingly working with parents of children with ADHD. By exploring this research topic, it is hoped that the findings will inform educational psychology practice in Ireland on how educational psychologists could support parents of children with ADHD in relation to these issues.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research as parents of children with ADHD are the most significant person in a child with ADHD's life. As you are registered with HADD or INCADDS, this indicates that you have identified your child as having ADHD. I would like to hear from parents of children aged 2 to 17 years old. Your participation is voluntary.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?

There are two parts to the research. Firstly, parents will be asked to participate in an online survey (see the link below) which will collect some background information on yourself and your child and your experience of the health, mental health and education services. This should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey you will be asked whether you would like to participate in an interview or focus group.

The interview will involve me asking you some questions to gather more in-depth information and knowledge of your experience. During the interview we will

discuss findings of the online survey. The interview will involve us meeting for approximately one hour, either in UCD, your home, or in your local ADHD support centre (if available).

There is a possibility that you may be invited to attend a focus group, if you choose to make yourself available for it. Focus groups may be offered if there is a group of parents of children who have a child with ADHD and similar coexisting difficulties who prefer this setting.

How will my information be used?

The online survey data will be analysed to find out how many children with ADHD have additional health, mental health or education difficulties, along with feedback on service provision. The interviews and focus group will be audio recorded in order for the conversations to be transcribed (typed up) for analysis. The results will be written up as a doctoral thesis and submitted to UCD for examination for the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology. It is intended that the results will be used towards a publication in an academic journal and be issued to services associated with ADHD. Parents who take part in interview or focus group will also receive a summary of the research.

Will my privacy be protected?

Yes, all information obtained from you, about you and your child during this research will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be stored in a folder on a password protected computer and in a secure location in my home during the duration of the study. Once the data has been analysed, it will be stored in a password protected folder on the UCD server. Each parent who discloses their details to participate in the interview or focus group stage of the research will be given a code number so that I will be the only person who will know the identity of each parent for contact purposes. This code will be stored separate from the main records. Neither you nor your child will be identifiable in the completed research.

Both the online survey and individual interviews will be kept confidential. Focus group data will be kept confidential by the researcher, the researcher will make you aware that confidentiality will be discussed at the beginning of focus groups and participants will verbally agree to abide by group rules. However, the researcher cannot control participants breaking these rules outside of the focus group setting, for example a participant could go home and speak about it, and therefore confidentiality from participation in focus groups cannot be guaranteed.

Are there any benefits in taking part in the study?

While you may not benefit directly from taking part in this research, there may be benefits more generally to all families of children with ADHD. It is hoped that a greater understanding and awareness of parents' experience of the services they receive will help improve services in the future. It is also hoped that by you sharing your experience the practice of educational psychology will be informed.

Are there any risks to me or my child?

There are minimal risks for you in taking part in this research. During the survey, interview, and focus group I will be asking you to recall your experience of the

assessment process and interventions and your experience of health, mental health and education services. It is possible this may highlight some areas of distress for you. I will discuss with you following the interview or focus group any issues which may arise and should you experience any concern or distress I can advise where you may receive further support or advice. Attached below is a list of services that you can contact regardless of whether you choose to participate in this research.

Can I change my mind at any stage and withdraw from the study?

During the online survey you may withdraw at any time. Once the survey is completed you will not be able to have your data withdrawn as it will not be identifiable, I will not be able to identify your survey.

If you choose to partake in the interview or focus group and identify yourself in the online survey I could then have your online data removed. If you wish to withdraw from the interview or focus group, you may do so at any time up until the identifying codes are destroyed. Your right to withdrawal will not affect any service you receive.

If I take part will I be able to find out what the outcome of the study is?

When the study is completed I will email all participants who took part in the interview or focus groups outlining the broad findings. I also intend to write papers which will be submitted for publication in professional journals and I will work closely with ADHD organisations to publicise findings as broadly as possible.

Contact details for further information

If you have any further question, please do not hesitate to contact me:

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The online survey can be accessed here, please click:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FZFXPQ9>