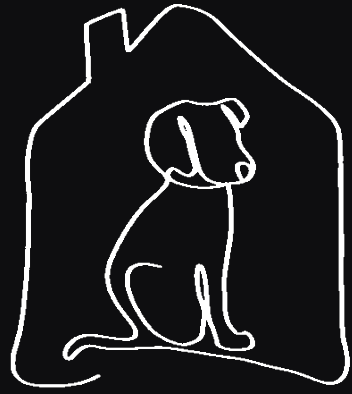




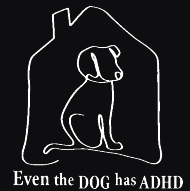
Even the DOG has ADHD

03 / GUIDE THREE

Preparing for Assessment.

What to expect, what to bring, and how to describe your everyday honestly.

An assessment is a conversation, not an exam. There is nothing to revise for and no way to get it 'wrong'. What helps is being able to describe your everyday experience clearly and honestly. This guide helps you gather that, so you can walk in feeling prepared rather than anxious.



KNOW YOUR ROUTE

How assessment works in the UK.

In the UK you can be assessed through the NHS, through the NHS Right to Choose scheme, or privately. Each route has different waiting times and costs. NHS waits are long. Over 397,000 adults are currently on ADHD referral lists in England, and many wait more than a year. Right to Choose can be faster and is free at the point of use; private is usually quickest but paid.

Whichever route you take, the assessment itself is broadly similar: a clinician asks about your childhood, your daily life now, and how your traits show up across different settings.

WHAT TO BRING

Gather your evidence.

You are not expected to perform. You are simply being asked to describe what your life has actually been like. Evidence helps the clinician see the pattern, and it helps you remember things you might otherwise minimise or forget under pressure.

BRING THESE TO YOUR ASSESSMENT

Old school reports, if you have them: look for recurring phrases about attention, effort or behaviour.

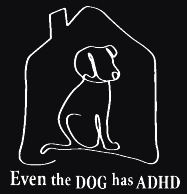
A short timeline of key moments where your traits showed up across your life.

Notes from people who know you well. A partner, parent, sibling or close friend can be invaluable.

A list of how things show up now, at home, at work and in relationships.

Any screener results you have completed, and questions you want to ask.

Something to keep your hands busy or help you regulate if you need it.



DESCRIBING YOUR EVERYDAY

Be honest, not tidy.

A common trap is presenting the polished, managed version of your life, the one where everything mostly holds together because you have spent years engineering it to. The assessment needs the unvarnished version, including the parts you are used to downplaying.

Describe the effort behind the outcome, not just the outcome. If you hold down a job but come home emptied and unable to speak, say so. If your home looks fine but only functions because of elaborate systems that cost you energy, say so. The cost is the data.

WORTH NAMING PLAINLY

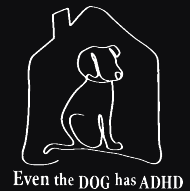
- 01 The invisible effort behind things that look 'easy' from the outside.
- 02 What helps and what does not: strategies you have already tried.
- 03 How things were in childhood, as honestly as you can recall.
- 04 Anything you have spent years feeling ashamed of that you suspect is related.

ON THE DAY

What to expect in the room.

You will usually be asked structured questions, some of which may feel blunt or oddly specific. That is the format, not a judgement. It is fine to pause, to ask for clarification, and to say 'I'm not sure' rather than guessing.

You can bring someone with you for support, and you can take notes afterwards while it is fresh. If you do not understand a question, ask the clinician to rephrase it. A good assessor wants an accurate picture, not a confident one.



AFTERWARDS

Whatever the outcome.

Some people leave with a diagnosis. Some are told their traits are real but do not meet a threshold. Either way, you have gained useful information about yourself, and you are still the same person you walked in as.

If you receive a diagnosis, see Guide One for your next steps. If you do not, your experience is still valid. Traits that affect your life are worth supporting whether or not they meet a diagnostic label.

A last word

You are not starting from scratch.

Late diagnosis often changes the story you thought you were living. Preparing for it well means you can bring your real life into the room, clearly, calmly and on your own terms.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Prepare well with Even The Dog Has ADHD.

Sources & further reading

NHS: autism assessment <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-assessment/>

ADHD UK: Right to Choose <https://adhd.uk.co.uk/>

National Autistic Society: getting a diagnosis

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/diagnosis-process>

NICE: autism guideline CG128 / NG87 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87>