

# Digital tools for self-management of adult ADHD: A rapid mixed-methods review (brief version)

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Appendices and references

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## Appendix 1. Search strategy

- 1 "attention deficit and disruptive behavior disorders"/ or attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity/ 165600
- 2 (ADHD or "ad dh" or addh or "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" or "Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity" or "attention deficit disorder" or "attention deficit hyperactivity" or "hyperkinetic syndrome" or "hyperkinetic disorder" or "hyperkinesis" or "Minimal Brain Dysfunction" or "minimal brain disorder").ti,ab,kw. 165068
- 3 1 or 2 204495
- 4 (child\* or adolescen\* or teenage\* or infant\* or paediatric\* or pediatric\* or school\*).ti. 4397709
- 5 exp Self Care/ or exp Self-Management/ 205476
- 6 ("self-manag\*" or "self-monitor\*" or "self-car\*" or "self-help" or "self-guide\*" or "self-regulat\*" or "self-evaluat\*" or "self-direct\*" or "self-support\*" or psychoeducat\* or psycho-educat\* or educat\* or "patient education" or "symptom monitor\*" or "low level").ti,ab,kw. 3217905
- 7 5 or 6 3302942
- 8 (digital\* or internet or online or web\* or mobile\* or phone\* or telephone\* or smartphone\* or cellphone\* or smartwatch\* or "virtual reality" or VR or robot or "mobile health" or mhealth or m-health or ehealth or e-health or technolog\* or app or apps or application\* or device\* or "video game\*" or game\* or "social media" or forum\* or "assistive technolog\*" or email\* or software or download\* or SMS or chatbot\* or "artificial intelligence" or innovat\* or "ambient voice" or telehealth or tablet\* or computeri?ed or gaming or "body doubling").ti,ab,kw. 11240339
- 9 3 and 7 and 8 3284
- 10 9 not 4 1827
- 11 remove duplicates from 10 1329

## Appendix 2: Further details of apps and online interventions

| Tool                         | No. of studies | Availability in UK                   | Regulatory status                            | Description summarised from included studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Adult ADHD</a>   | 1              | Available in app stores - Free       | No UK regulatory approvals                   | A psychoeducational resource for adults with ADHD, aiming to provide evidence based, trustworthy psychoeducation from clinicians while waiting to access ADHD services. The app is divided into 5 sections: about ADHD-related traits, self- help techniques, living with ADHD, seeking help, and services for adult ADHD in Ireland. In total, there are 37 static pages on the app. All pages are written materials, bar the mindful breaks (brief mindfulness audio practices) and SMART goals-based planner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>AttenFocus</b>            | 1              | No                                   | Does not appear to be available as a product | The program utilizes neutral universal stimuli (e.g., circles and squares). The training is organized in a hierarchical structure, is continuously adjusted to individual performance, and delivers immediate feedback on performance. The program focuses on cognitive skills including working memory, inhibition, shifting, selective and divided attention, and persistence. The training tasks require timely and accurate responses to changes in the stimuli with increasing working memory demands provided by conditional instructions (e.g., “Press once as quickly as you can when the ball changes colour, but do not press any key when the colour is white”). All training is conducted online, and performance is automatically recorded.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <a href="#">AwareMe ADHS</a> | 2*             | No                                   | No UK regulatory approvals                   | Smartphone-assisted psychoeducation. Eight psychoeducation sessions accompanied by eight modules accessed via a smartphone. The modules contained an outline of the psychoeducation content covered, corresponding homework assignments, a content quiz, and addressed one of the following topics: basic information on ADHD, personal resources, mindfulness and attention control, self-organisation, stress management, mood regulation and impulsive behaviour control, relationships, and a final evaluation. On a weekly basis, following each group session, the app modules were unlocked.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>CANreduce</b>             | 1              | No                                   | Does not appear to be available as a product | A cannabis reducing self-help web-based programme with psychoeducation and a consumption diary, with the opportunity for individual chat counselling. The programme also had adherence focused guidance-feedback through motivational automated emails with weekly reminders, encouragement and suggestions for further self-help module interventions, and the opportunity to ask questions. The advanced version of CANreduce (2.0) is particularly tailored to people with a common mental disorder (CMD) such as ADHD, to enhance program adherence and achieve better outcomes via improved module content that focuses on dis-related problems. These include associated CMD symptoms such as depressed mood, and problem-solving skills, as well as excessive ruminations and poor sleeping habits. In addition, to help participants with ADHD who are known to be easily distracted, coping strategies (such as focusing on cravings and letting them come and go) are evaluated. |
| <a href="#">Cogmed</a>       | 2              | Accessible at a cost to UK citizens. | No UK regulatory approvals                   | A computer program designed to improve working memory abilities through training accessed online at home. It involves 12 exercises that target verbal and visuospatial working memory. All tasks involve: maintenance of simultaneous mental representations of multiple stimuli,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| Tool                          | No. of studies | Availability in UK                                           | Regulatory status          | Description summarised from included studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               |                | No NHS provision                                             |                            | unique sequencing of stimulus order in each trial and progressive adaptation of difficulty level as a function of individual performance. The program requires 25 training sessions, typically taking about 45 minutes per session, to be completed 5 days per week, for 5–6 weeks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>FOCUS ADHD</b>             | 1              | App available in app stores                                  | No UK regulatory approvals | A mobile app that includes pill reminders, weekly symptom assessment, the option to invite a support network, and twice-a-week psychoeducation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Focus Check</b>            | 1              | No                                                           | Unclear                    | The app involves participants monitoring on-task attention during lectures and independent reading using self-monitoring methods – participants are cued to record on-task or off-task attention during 10-minute intervals. The aim is to allow participants to quickly monitor and, if needed, adjust focus during lectures or reading. The overall aim was to provide an independently administered learning tool to assist with attention regulation.                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>In Focus</b>               | 1              | No                                                           | Unclear                    | Internet-based self-help CBT that focuses on teaching compensatory techniques to handle ADHD-related difficulties. It consists of ten modules made up of information and therapeutic techniques, including behaviour analysis, mindfulness and acceptance, time management, gauging attention span, reducing distractors, organisation and planning, problem solving, behaviour activation, cognitive restructuring and anger control training. There is an optional and non-scheduled function to ask the therapists questions via a contact function.                                                  |
| <a href="#"><u>Inflow</u></a> | 1              | Virtual in-app community. US based. Free access for one year | No UK regulatory approvals | A science-based app to help people manage their ADHD. The app includes daily routines and tools, including various features such as task lists, goals and personal objectives, and CBT based psychoeducation, which includes topics such as time management, organisation, impulsivity, and includes exercises and challenges. The app also has a community space which encourages users to engage with other users. There are also tools such as daily reminders, journal entries, key takeaways and live events (e.g., live Q&A sessions).                                                             |
| <b>Living SMART</b>           | 1              | No                                                           | Unclear                    | An online intervention which aims to improve organisational skills and attention with the help of smartphone applications. It involves support from a coach in finding a routine for organising everyday life. The course consisted of seven text modules distributed over six weeks. The weekly modules taught the use of an online calendar (via computer and smartphone) and applications for reminders and to-do-lists. Furthermore, additional apps were introduced that previously had been shown beneficial for adults with ADHD (e.g., Evernote, N-Back, Simply Noise, Stayfocused, Leechblock). |
| <b>My Friendly Mind</b>       | 1              | No                                                           | Unclear                    | A digital health tool designed to enhance users' knowledge of depression and ADHD and provide preliminary mental health screening. The app's primary function is to screen users' mental health using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) for depression and the Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS) for ADHD. Upon completing these screenings, users receive a score along with a clinical interpretation presented in layman's terms. The app also allows users to keep a log of their mental health score. After screening, the app delivers educational                                      |

| Tool           | No. of studies | Availability in UK                              | Regulatory status          | Description summarised from included studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                |                |                                                 |                            | content and mental health management recommendations tailored to the user's screening outcomes via short audio-visual clips (generated using a commercial video generating software). These recommendations help users understand their screening outcome and provide actionable steps to manage their mental health. It is important to note that the app is not intended to replace clinical treatment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>MyADHD</b>  | 5              | Requires subscription. Not available in the NHS | No UK regulatory approvals | A structured, self-guided online intervention with elements from cognitive behavioural therapy, dialectal behavioural therapy and goal management training to target specific challenges experienced by adults with ADHD. It is available via an online secure portal and includes seven modules, with one accessed each week. Modules covered topics such as, breathing, stop, emotions, planning, and acceptance. Each of the first 6 modules included psychoeducation, skill-building exercises, and coping techniques for everyday challenges for adults with ADHD. Modules also featured two video vignettes that explained the use of coping techniques and contextualized their suitability and application. The main goals are to help participants to improve functioning in daily life activities; offer stress reduction strategies, reduce inattention, and improve quality of life. |
| <b>NUMO</b>    | 1              | US based self-management app                    | No UK regulatory approvals | The NUMO app combines psychoeducation, science-based exercises, and a supportive community made of people with ADHD. Features include a daily planner, calendar, task division for procrastination, thoughts testing to lower anxiety or sadness, white noise, sharing of goals, tracking of accomplishments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Terabot</b> | 1              | No                                              | Unclear                    | A guided chatbot based peer support technology prototype accompanying an online self-help programme for adults with ADHD. The chatbot consists of a concept, two scripts, personality traits and requirements and is a conversation prototype. It aims to guide participants through a self-help programme through two chat sessions that concerned an exercise from the programme, which focused on building a foundation and expectations towards the exercise, and execution and experience with the exercise. The long-term aim is to expand the scripts to other programme exercises.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Tokadi</b>  | 1              | No                                              | Unclear                    | An app with a conversational chatbot, Tokadi, designed for people with decreased concentration. The app allows for self-assessment and symptom severity assessment. It also includes a self-help programme focused on behaviour change, emotional control, medication and mindfulness, and a psychoeducational component focusing on the causes, symptoms and treatment utilising a text message CBT format with the chatbot. The app also uses quizzes and automated alarms and allows for tracking of symptoms over time and usage patterns.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### Appendix 3. Overview of reported outcomes

|                  | ADHD symptoms | Quality of life | Depression | Anxiety | Stress | Functional impairment | Acceptability | Engagement | Other | Qualitative |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|---------|--------|-----------------------|---------------|------------|-------|-------------|
| Ahlers 2022      | X             | -               | X          | X       | -      | -                     | X             | X          | X     | -           |
| Biederman 2019   | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | X     | -           |
| Biederman 2020   | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | X     | -           |
| Carvahlo 2023    | X             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | X             | X          | X     | -           |
| Dentz 2020       | X             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | X     | -           |
| Flobak 2021      | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | X           |
| Gibson 2015      | X             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | X             | -          | X     | -           |
| Glickman 2015a   | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | X*          |
| Glickman 2015b   | X             | X               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | X     | X*          |
| Jang 2021        | X             | -               | X          | X       | X      | -                     | X             | -          | -     | X*          |
| Kenter 2022      | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | X             | -          | -     | X*          |
| Kenter 2023      | X             | X               | -          | -       | X      | -                     | X             | -          | -     | -           |
| Knouse 2022      | X             | -               | -          | -       | -      | X                     | X             | -          | -     | -           |
| Luiu 2018        | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | X           |
| Mawjee 2015      | X             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | X             | X          | X     | X*          |
| Moell 2015       | X             | -               | X          | X       | X      | -                     | X             | X          | X     | X*          |
| Nasri 2023       | X             | X               | X          | -       | X      | -                     | X             | X          | X     | -           |
| Nordberg 2019    | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | X             | -          | -     | X*          |
| Nordby 2021      | X             | X               | X          | X       | X      | -                     | X             | X          | -     | X*          |
| Nordby 2022      | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | X          | -     | -           |
| Orel 2024        | X             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | -           |
| Patrickson 2024  | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | X           |
| Petterssen 2017  | X             | X               | X          | X       | -      | -                     | -             | X          | X     | -           |
| Ravishankar 2022 | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | X*          |
| Seery 2025       | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | -     | X           |
| Selaskowski 2022 | X             | -               | X          | -       | -      | X                     | -             | X          | X     | -           |
| Selaskowski 2023 | X             | X               | X          | X       | X      | -                     | -             | -          | X     | -           |
| Shahsavari 2024  | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | -          | X     | X*          |
| Shelton 2022     | -             | -               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | X             | -          | -     | -           |
| Stern 2016       | X             | X               | -          | -       | -      | -                     | -             | X          | X     | -           |

*Note: Any qualitative data that refers to the acceptability of or engagement in the interventions is recorded as “qualitative” rather than as “acceptability” data. Only studies reporting quantitative acceptability or engagement related outcomes are indicated in the “acceptability” or “engagement” columns.*

*\* Indicates that this study was not a qualitative study but did report some qualitative data*

## Appendix 4. Summary of themes and subthemes and the number and types of contributing studies

| Themes and subthemes                                                   | No. of studies | Type of studies                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Theme 1: Presentation of information or the intervention itself</b> |                |                                                                                                |
| Visual                                                                 | 7              | Information (n=1), psychoeducation (n=4), prototype (n=2)                                      |
| Concise and easy to understand information                             | 5              | Information (n=2), psychoeducation (n=3)                                                       |
| Interactivity                                                          | 5              | Information (n=1), psychoeducation (n=3), prototype (n=1)                                      |
| Tailoring                                                              | 3              | Information (n=1), prototype (n=2)                                                             |
| <b>Theme 2: Information or intervention content</b>                    |                |                                                                                                |
| Relating to others with ADHD                                           | 4              | Psychoeducation (n=2), prototype (n=1), information (n=1)                                      |
| Being well informed                                                    | 4              | Information (n=2), psychoeducation (n=2)                                                       |
| Positivity                                                             | 3              | Information (n=1), psychoeducation (n=2)                                                       |
| <b>Theme 3: Intervention benefits</b>                                  |                |                                                                                                |
| Understanding yourself                                                 | 4              | Psychoeducation (n=1), prototype (n=1), information (n=1), guided self-management (n=1)        |
| Enabling self-management                                               | 5              | Information (n=1), psychoeducation (n=3), prototype (n=1)                                      |
| <b>Theme 4: Participant concerns</b>                                   |                |                                                                                                |
| Data                                                                   | 2              | Prototypes (n=2)                                                                               |
| Technical issues                                                       | 4              | Information (n=1), psychoeducation (n=3)                                                       |
| Negative experiences                                                   | 5              | Psychoeducation (n=4), cognitive training (n=1)                                                |
| <b>Theme 5: Considerations for successful engagement</b>               |                |                                                                                                |
| Enabling engagement                                                    | 6              | Psychoeducation (n=2), prototype (n=2), cognitive training (n=1), guided self-management (n=1) |
| Acceptability of AI and bots                                           | 3              | Psychoeducation (n=1), prototype (n=1), information (n=1)                                      |
| Accessibility and user friendliness                                    | 3              | Information (n=1), psychoeducation (n=1), prototype (n=1)                                      |
| <b>Theme 6: Where the intervention fits in</b>                         |                |                                                                                                |
| Where the intervention fits in                                         | 4              | Psychoeducation (n=1), prototype (n=2), information (n=1)                                      |

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