

## **Case study: Focus ADHD**

Across England the 15 AHSNs are working to deliver a national adoption and spread programme which aims to transform the diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) across the region. In this Q&A style case study a member of the project team talks to Emma, the parent of Tom who has benefitted from the [Focus ADHD programme](#) as well as Holly, the ADHD nurse who undertook Tom's assessment, and Dr Milhench who diagnosed Tom.

### **The parent's perspective:**

**Emma, you've been through quite a journey in the last few years in getting help for Tom. Can you describe the challenges that you've had and how Tom's symptoms present themselves?**

The difficulty for us was that the symptoms have to present in two settings for a diagnosis of ADHD. But Tom masks quite well; at school, he is absolutely fine, and he can sit down, he can do his work, he can do carpet and table time. He will just sit there and do exactly what is expected of him. But the minute he comes out of school, it's very much the Coke bottle effect; he's just so stressed where he's been holding everything in all day. When Tom is displaying his behaviours at home such as at bedtime, they are quite challenging, and he is extremely fidgety.

It was difficult to get the right help, even just seeing a paediatrician was difficult. I went to my GP so many times with Tom and said "Something's not right. He can't even sit still and watch TV". But because he was okay sat there in the surgery, it was difficult to evidence what we saw.

In the end I said to a doctor that I was concerned about his eating and then we got referred to a feeding clinic and the clinician happened to be a community paediatrician who was able to support us and that's how we got the ball rolling.

As part of the ADHD assessment, we did the Connor questionnaire. The home score came out as hyperactive and inattentive whereas school scored him zero. Thankfully, when I mentioned to the paediatrician about the QbTest and paying privately, she said it had just become available through the NHS. And obviously the test showed that he very much does have ADHD. I think how he behaves at home is a such massive difference to how he is in school and the test highlights how big masking is in ADHD as well as autism. Tom has both.

**What was his experience of being tested with QB test like?**

He didn't really know anything was happening. It wasn't much different from us going to the paediatrician. He sat and had a chat with Holly, the ADHD nurse. And Holly explained everything to him clearly. To him it just seemed like a fun activity that he was going to do on the computer. And because he likes computers, he was not fazed by it at all.

**Following the diagnosis, how did QbTest help you to understand the diagnosis and Tom's symptoms?**

It's helped with us being able to say to school that movement breaks and other management strategies are important, because they don't see the little boy that comes home and how

challenging his behaviour can be once he's been masking all day. I like looking at the report, I find it quite interesting to see how frequent the movement was and how much he was just clicking buttons and not paying any attention.

If anything, I think it's a massive of weight off our shoulders because it did get to that point of being told, "Go on this parenting course or it's just you doing this or you doing that", that actually you start doubting yourself as a parent thinking. So actually, being able to see the report has helped to put our minds at rest a little bit. Now we know what we are working with, and we know what strategies we need to put in place to make his life a bit easier.

### **Have they taken on board the diagnosis and advice at school?**

They have said that the movement breaks do seem to help. I think they are now starting to see little things in his behaviour that they did not see before. I showed his class teacher the QbTest report, and she was gobsmacked, she was really surprised.

### **What would you want NHS service managers to know if they were considering implementing QB test?**

Just how different children can be in their home or safe place to how they are at school/elsewhere and the challenges that parents have when that child masks all day and they come home and they are completely different. I think being able to have the QbTest is so worthwhile because it shows a true reflection of how a child really is.

### **An ADHD nurse's perspective:**

#### **Holly, what was the benefit of having QbTest in your ADHD Clinic?**

We hear Tom's story a lot in our ADHD clinics, that the child's behaviour is so different at home than it is at school. We often see results to the questionnaires that we send out are very different between home and school and this makes it difficult to really know whether a child does have ADHD.

Qb testing gives us another tool in the process of gathering information, it allows us to gain an objective measure of the child's difficulties and allows us to see on paper how the child copes with the task.

Since the introduction of Qb in our service, I now feel children are being given a diagnosis of ADHD more quickly and having access to the medication and management that they need to really achieve in life. Previous to Qb, patients with very different questionnaire results would have experienced delays with diagnosis whilst further information was gathered.

### **Diagnosing Tom:**

#### **Dr Milhench, how did QbTest support you in coming to a diagnosis for Tom? Would you recommend QbTest to other services?**

In this case, QbTest was invaluable in reaching a conclusion and diagnosis. Tom's difficulties were not being noted in the school setting, whereas the home behaviours were increasingly challenging. Tom is also academically bright and not disruptive in class, so I think he was not a particular focus or concern in lessons. This situation impacted the SNAP screening questionnaire results, where home responses were significant, but school were scoring zero.

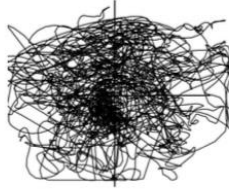
QbTest enabled true, real-time insight into Tom's difficulties with attention and concentration, and in particular how hyperkinetic he is. It gives objective evidence based on Tom's performance. The test has enabled a diagnosis to be confirmed.

I would definitely recommend QbTesting. There are many situations where home and school observations are very different, and difficulties are pinned on poor parenting skills. To be able to gain an entirely objective result is extremely helpful in unpicking the difficulties of complex children. It benefits the child and family to have a diagnosis, and also guides school responses to supporting children as they go through education and their needs evolve and change.

The QbTest results below provide an objective view of your ability to regulate activity, attention and impulsivity. Your test scores are compared with those of boys of your age (a control group\*). Boys who are very active during the test and have difficulties with their concentration and impulsivity may have ADHD. The test result is there to help your doctor/psychologist when he/she takes a history of the problems that brought you to the clinic.

### Your QbTest results from 29/03/2022 at 1:49 pm

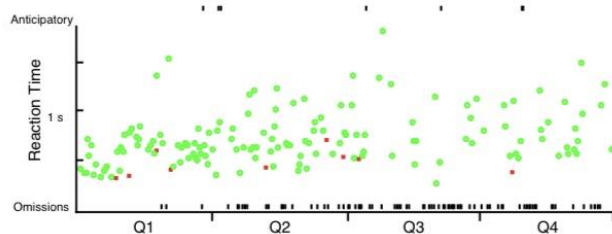
#### Activity pattern



15 min

Your test result, expressed as QbActivity, was 2.3. Your result was higher than for boys of your age. In the control group\*, 99% were less active than you were during the test.

#### Attention & Impulsivity

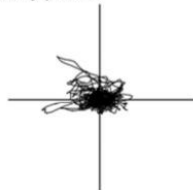


Your test result, expressed as QbInattention, was 1.9. Compared with boys of your age, your result was higher. In the control group, 97% were more attentive than you were during the test.

The test result, expressed as QbImpulsivity, was -1.1, a result that is lower compared to boys of your age group. In the control group\*, 14% were less impulsive than you were during the test.

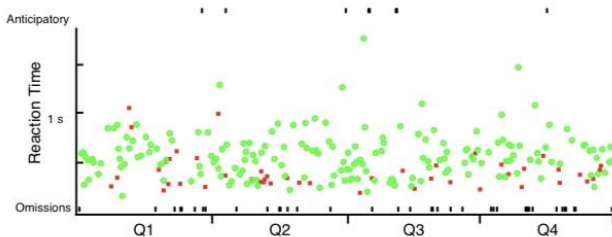
### Examples from the control group

#### Activity pattern



15 min

#### Attention & Impulsivity



The graphs above show examples of QbTest results in the areas of activity, inattention and impulsivity for a person in the control group\*.

[Read more about the Focus ADHD programme in the West of England](#) including our community of practice.