WELCOME

CENTRE FOR HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025



Meet the speakers

CHRP LinkedIn

COLLABORATION IN HOMELESSNESS: SHARED VOICES, SHARED IMPACT



"Our mission is to create a platform and space where workers and researchers can collaborate and share evidence-based research and best psychological approaches to working with homelessness."

HCoP Reach

Currently we have 385 members

Members from over 30 counties in the UK

European members from France and Spain

International members from the USA - Missouri, New Mexico, Los Angeles, Utah





ADHD AND HOMELESSNESS

ADHD LIBERTY PRESENTS...



MERYL BENGTSSON

ADHD Coach & Educator

THE HUGE LINK BETWEEN...

- Many prisoners have been homeless and had addiction issues before being incarcerated
- Many prisoners are released from prison with no home to go to so are quickly homeless
- Those with addiction issues often find themselves homeless and incarcerated when stealing to fund their addiction
- Not all, but many people who find themselves homeless have pre-existing or develop addiction issues

"AND THE COMMON DENOMINATOR WITH ALL THESE GROUPS?

A HUGE PROPORTION OF THEM HAVE UNDIAGNOSED OR UNMANAGED ADHD!"



ADHD LIBERTY CHARITY

WE KNOW WHY MOST PEOPLE BECOME HOMELESS, BUT DO WE KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT WHY THAT CAN BE LINKED TO ADHD?

What we know...

PRISON LEAVERS MAKE UP A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

This is for many reasons...

Many have burnt bridges with family or lost relationships so don't have those homes to return to

Some will have lost their council flat tenancy or private rented home due to their incarceration

Many will have license conditions meaning they cannot return to their home area and find themselves stranded in a strange area with no contacts and no network

MANY HOMELESS PEOPLE EXPERIENCED CARE HOMES, FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION



WHY MIGHT THERE BE A HIGH RATIO OF ADHD IN THIS GROUP?

Most children are removed from their family home due to parents with addiction issues, neglect, chaotic living or abuse

Undiagnosed ADHD very often features in the parents contributing to their inability to manage a family

As ADHD is largely hereditary, it follows that the children removed will be ADHD too

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A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE WERE PREVIOUSLY IN THE MILITARY



WHY MIGHT THERE BE A HIGH RATIO OF ADHD IN THIS GROUP?

ADHD people crave structure to escape their chaotic brains and lives

Many are drawn to the forces for this, and to satisfy the adrenaline seeking, risk-taking, thrill-seeking, hyperactive element of their brain

ADHD LIBERTY CHARITY

SO, WHICH ADHD TRAITS ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTE TO PEOPLE BECOMING HOMELESS?

This is what our experience tells us...



DISORGANISATION & OVERWHELM

- Can cause anything from minor struggles to complete paralysis when remembering which bills to pay, and when. Including rent, electricity, gas, water, council tax. This can all be too much and completely overwhelming for an ADHD brain
- Can easily become a bad credit rating, CCJ's and poor landlord references leading to homelessness



POOR SHORT-TERM MEMORY & FORGETFULNESS

Struggling to remember what bills even need to be paid, let alone when!



ADDICTION

- The ADHD brain will be constantly seeking adrenaline meaning primarily alcohol and drugs, but also not so obvious addictions including food, shopping and gambling can eat up the rent and bills money
- ADHD and addiction go hand-in-hand. Especially in undiagnosed and unmanaged ADHD

REAL LIFE CASE STUDY

Mark* is a 60-year-old man with undiagnosed but identified ADHD. He had his own successful business, 4-bedroom house, wife, three children, one grandchild, expensive car and luxurious life.

He went into a bookmakers one day to get out of the rain. He had never gambled in his life but that began a downward gambling spiral where he lost absolutely everything and became homeless.

** Name changed for confidentiality*



DISTRACTION

- Can be VERY SEVERE for some ADHD adults
- May have every intention of paying a bill or the rent, something distracts them and the bill/rent gets forgotten
- Sometimes temporarily but often for good



INATTENTION

- Can be VERY SEVERE for some ADHD adults
- They may literally not notice the date a bill needs paying, not notice the date on the calendar and that the rent is due, not notice payment terms on a bill

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PROCRASTINATION

Paying bills and rent is boring and not going to stimulate an ADHD brain. While intentions may be good, ADHD adults will put off paying a bill if something more engaging appears



BOREDOM

- However nice their property, ADHD adults will become bored with where they live
- Their brain will always be pushing them to look for the next newer and more exciting place to live
- Hyperactivity feeds into this and unless their ADHD is managed and usually medicated, they will struggle to settle and will often leave without giving notice meaning bad references

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HOARDING

- Some ADHD adults cannot walk past something cheap, a bargain, something free… Like magpies they just have to pick it up!
- This can result in overloaded properties with quite serious repercussions

REAL LIFE CASE STUDY

Adam* was aged 35 and had undiagnosed but quite severe ADHD. He used to go round the back of shops every evening picking up anything new that had been discarded.

This saw him evicted from a homeless hostel when his room became so full of paper it was thought to be a fire risk.

In the next property, a one-bedroom council flat, he did exactly the same and was evicted from that flat for the same reasons.

** Name changed for confidentiality*

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IMPULSIVITY

- ADHD adults will often walk out of a job on a whim with no new job to go to or thought of how they will pay the rent and bills
- Young adults will angrily strop out of their parents' house with no thought for where they are going to sleep that night and often end up on the streets
- They will often leave relationships with absolutely no thought of where they are going to sleep that night.
- Impulsivity can mean seeing something at the shops and just having to have it without giving a thought to the fact that the money has been set aside for the rent



PEOPLE PLEASING

- ADHD adults, particularly young ones, don't like saying no and often crave friendships
- Some people will take advantage of this vulnerability and raves, drug taking and dealing, loud and neighbour-disturbing activities will take place in the home they have lost control of - often leading to eviction



Anger leading to controlling and coercive relationships and domestic violence

- ADHD women are more susceptible to controlling and coercive relationships. ADHD men are more prone to anger and violence. Of course, this works in reverse but much less so
- Many ADHD women flee domestic violence and become homeless instantly. Homelessness being the lesser of two evils when living with a violent partner
- ADHD adults are also drawn to each other and especially when either have undiagnosed or unmanaged ADHD, explosive and violent relationships can be the result



Struggling to interpret instructions and directions

- Understanding bills, how direct debits work, and different payment terms can be very difficult for an ADHD brain
- A lot of ADHD people don't even know that this is a trait, they just know that they can't do it so because they can't do it, they don't do it



OVERLY COMPASSIONATE

They won't want to see friends on the street and will let people stay even when that goes against their tenancy agreement

REAL LIFE CASE STUDY

Paul*, a prison leaver diagnosed with ADHD, was evicted from his single tenancy caravan when his ex-girlfriend arrived claiming that she was homeless after a row with her mother. This saw him sleeping in a park, and then in temporary housing for months waiting for a permanent home.

** Name changed for confidentiality*



UNDIAGNOSED COEXISTING CONDITIONS

Because so many adults with ADHD aren't even diagnosed with ADHD, let alone the coexisting conditions, they could be struggling with some of these making holding onto tenancies much harder, for instance:

- **DYSLEXIA:** they might struggle to read bills and rent agreements and to compose emails and letters
- **DYSCALCULIA:** numbers can be a nightmare e.g. confusing how much they are supposed to pay and when



TIMEBLINDNESS

ADHD PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO KNOW HOW LONG SOMETHING IS …

…IN THE PAST
Forgetting when a bill was last paid

…IN THE PRESENT
Thinking they have longer to pay a bill than they do

…IN THE FUTURE
Overestimating the time before a bill is due

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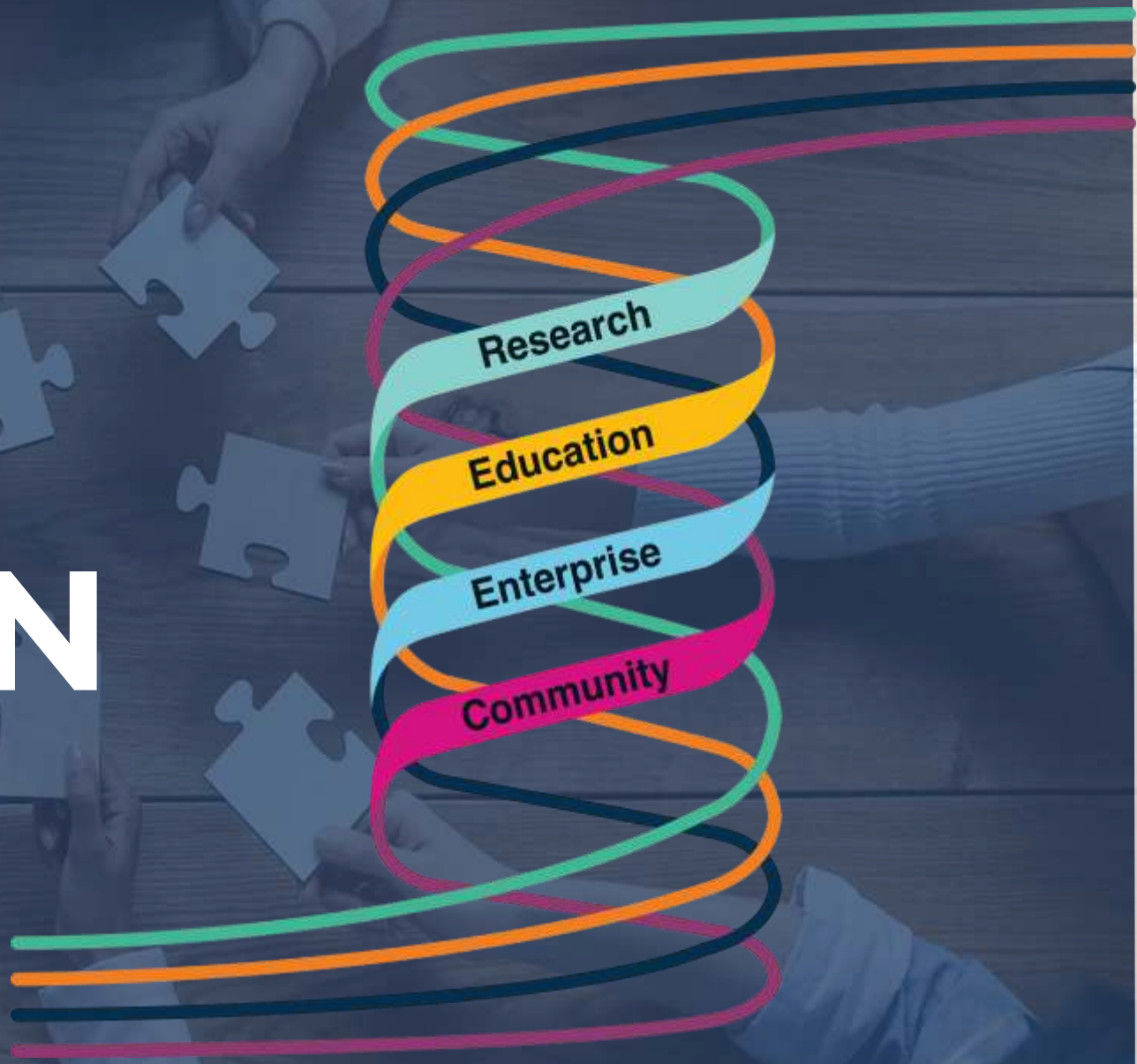
NOW WE SEE HOW EASY IT IS FOR AN ADHD PERSON TO BECOME HOMELESS – WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

We screen all children in school for ADHD, all the coexisting conditions and any other neuro diverse conditions

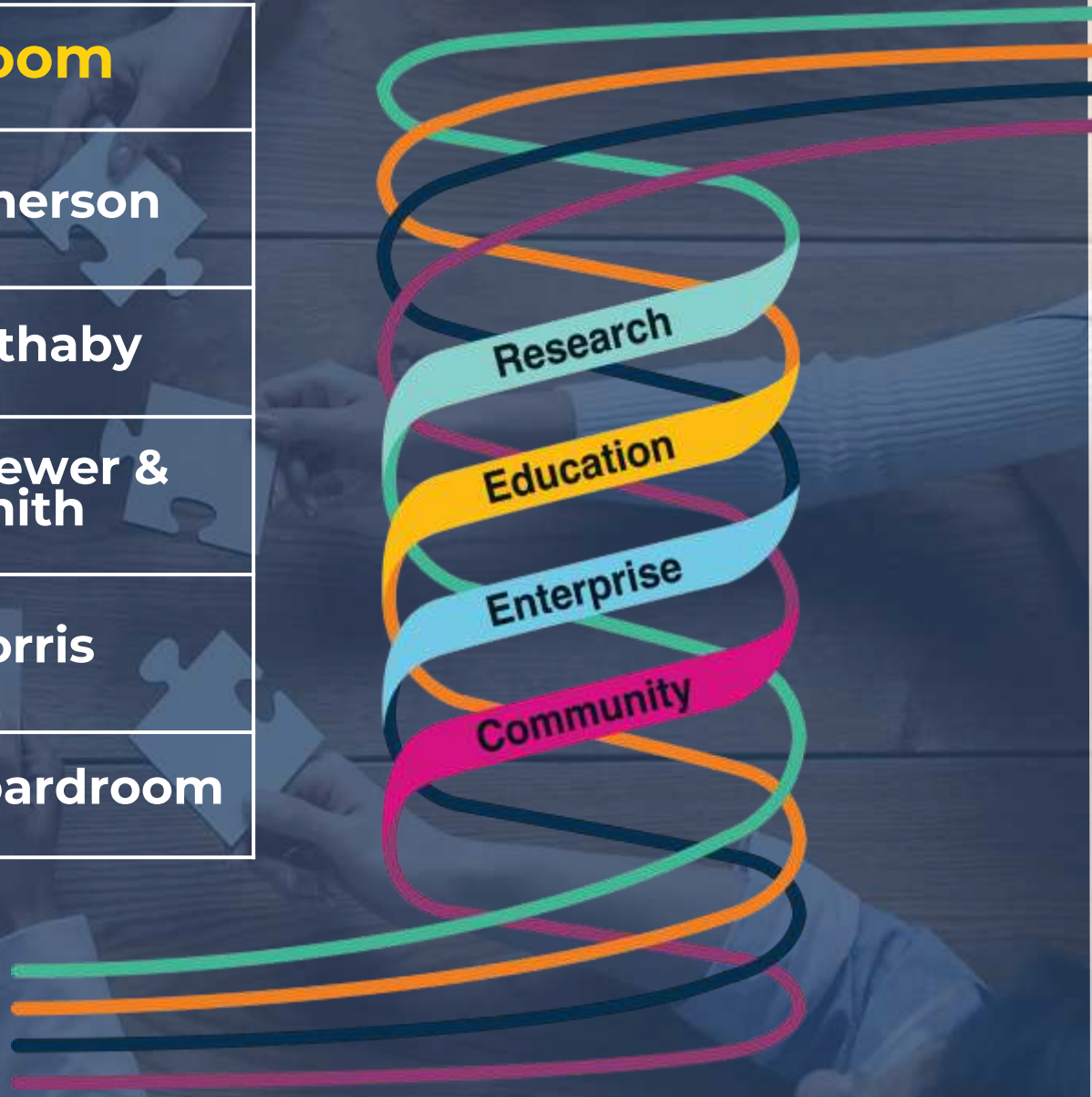
We screen them when they enter school aged 4/5 and at every transition – so to junior school, senior school, college and university. This way we pick up any that aren't showing early signs

Once identified, managed and usually medicated most of these issues will be eradicated!

Q&A PANEL DISCUSSION



Workstreams		Room
1	Climate Change, Sustainability and Homelessness	Emerson
2	Neurodivergence and Homelessness	Lethaby
3	Women and Homelessness	Brewer & Smith
4	Workforce Development and Homelessness	Morris
5	Peer Research and Co-Creation	Boardroom



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

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ON LINKEDIN

ANY
FEEDBACK?