

## University of Sheffield researchers used Lego to involve children with ADHD and their parents in research!



Children and young people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can encounter a number of difficulties including finding it difficult to concentrate at school, finding it difficult to communicate with others, struggling with change and school life, finding it challenging to form and retain friendships with others...the list goes on!

There are also some really great things about having ADHD such as often having a great sense of humour, being very creative, and when managing their condition in the correct way, can go on to lead extremely successful lives. For example, Michael Phelps (the most decorated Olympian to date), Louis Smith (Olympic gymnast, also won *Celebrity Strictly Come Dancing!*), Richard Branson (hugely successful entrepreneur), Will Smith (actor) and Jim Carey (actor) all have ADHD.



Here at the University of Sheffield, we are interested in how technology can help children and young people manage their ADHD properly so that they can go on to lead successful lives.

In order to do this, Miss Lauren Powell and Dr Jack Parker (School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield) held a workshop at Ryegate Children's Centre in Sheffield that involved children with ADHD and their parents using Lego to share their experiences of ADHD and how they think technology could help them manage their ADHD. The method used is called Lego Serious Play (LSP) and can be used to engage members of the public in research. To our knowledge, it has never been used with children and young people with ADHD before. This is a new and exciting way to involve this population in our research – something we find very exciting!



One child made a Lego model of a guard dog. They wanted to feel safe and liked boundaries (there was a structure either side of the dog) in their life.

Another child made a model that represented something that doesn't physically exist, whereby each brick represented a different set of instructions. They found that when they are given more than one instruction at a time at school, they struggle to keep up with the class and to learn. This is a common struggle in children and young people with ADHD.





Another child described how anxiety provoking it is when the teacher gets frustrated with him at school. He said the red brick was used to represent the teacher's anger and the person's hand is raised to represent his anxiety.

It was great to hear that all six children that attended and their parents enjoyed the workshop. One person stated that they had learned about ADHD and now realise that the common myth of "ADHD is just naughty children" is hugely inaccurate.

This work was jointly funded by the Research Design Service Yorkshire and the Humber (RDS YH) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Telehealth and Care Technologies (TaCT) theme of the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care Yorkshire Humber (CLAHRC YH).

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