

ADHD Coaching Standards Crisis: Protecting ADHD Clients Through Industry Reform

An industry analysis of coaching practice, training quality, regulatory incidents, and recommendations for immediate action

August 2025

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Plain English Summary

What This Report Is About: This report investigates problems with training standards in the ADHD coaching industry. The author found that while ADHD coaching can help people when done properly, there are serious concerns about how some coaches are being trained and assessed.

Main Problems Found:

- Some training courses charge thousands of pounds but provide very few hours of actual education
- Several countries have taken legal action against coaching services targeting ADHD clients (with specific examples like Utah's legislation and Australia's NDIS ban)
- Many coaches working with ADHD clients don't have specific training for this group of clients
- Private medical clinics are providing coaches to newly diagnosed patients without checking their ADHD-specific qualifications

Key Findings:

- Training courses range in cost, time and assessment of education
- Professional supervision (ongoing training support) can cost coaches up to 15% of their income, making it financially difficult for new coaches

What Needs to Change:

- Coaches working with ADHD clients should have at least 80 hours of ADHD-specific coach training in courses that are independently audited
- Coaches should clearly explain their qualifications and what they can/cannot do to clients before any contract is signed
- Better systems are needed to verify coach credentials
- International cooperation to address problems across borders

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Executive Summary

Main Executive Summary

The ADHD coaching industry is experiencing a significant and potentially challenging quality variation at a time when the demand for ADHD coaches is at an all time high.

This in depth Industry Report documents systematic issues that require urgent industry-wide intervention.

The Scale of the Problem

- Some training programmes charging more than £3,000 while offering fewer than 40 hours of education
- Private ADHD clinics employing non-specialised coaches with 'white coat' adjacent medical credibility
- "AuDHD" coaching promoted without evidence base for dual-diagnosis coaching methodology
- In the UK, a single online directory lists over 1,200 practitioners advertising "ADHD coaching", yet fewer than 100 appear in accredited ADHD-specific directories (ADDCA and ACO).

The Economic Challenge

Accredited training courses can cost up to £8000 and professional supervision costs can consume up to 15% of revenue, making supervised practice financially challenging for coaches at the start of their career and/or those charging lower fees.

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This creates systemic pressure to reduce professional development investment, directly impacting client safety while reinforcing pre-existing socio-economic inequalities of coaches background, income etc.

The Evidence Gap

While multiple peer-reviewed research papers demonstrate the effectiveness of ADHD coaching when delivered by appropriately trained coaches, the current industry favours lowest-cost-to-consumer coaching.

Future problems begin with coach training, as some training courses cost-per-hour ranging from £30-79 for professionally accredited courses versus £3-6 for “pay-to-play” schemes.¹ If coaches are paid variable low fees, it is more challenging to justify investing in more rigorous (and expensive) training courses.

Immediate Actions Required

- Minimum 80-hour ADHD-specific coach training requirement for coaches working with neurodivergent clients
- Transparent disclosure of coach qualifications and supervision arrangements
- Platform verification systems to prevent unqualified coaches targeting ADHD clients
- International cooperation frameworks to address cross-border enforcement challenges

The choice is clear: professionalise immediately through coordinated stakeholder action, or face imposed regulation designed by authorities who understand neither coaching nor ADHD clients.

¹ See 5.2.4 for a detailed explanation of this term.

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For Current Coaches

Protect Your Profession and Clients

Your industry faces an ethical crisis that threatens both clients and legitimate coaches. Regulatory agencies across five countries have issued multiple enforcement actions in 2024-2025, primarily targeting services for ADHD and autistic populations.

The immediate threat: Unqualified or poorly trained coaches are undermining professional credibility while potentially harming neurodivergent clients who face information challenges in service evaluation because of or related to their executive function challenges.

Why this affects you: Consumer protection failures create regulatory pressure that could restrict all coaching services. Media investigations and legislative hearings are already examining coaching industry practices.

Your role in the solution:

- Support evidence-based minimum competency frameworks for ADHD coaching
- Advocate for transparent qualification disclosure across the industry
- Report harmful practices through professional body complaint processes
- Invest in accredited ADHD-specific continuing education even if not your primary niche

Economic reality: Quality coaches face systematic disadvantage as supervision costs (£1,200-2,400 annually) make high quality, professional practice financially challenging at current low market rates.

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Call to action: Join professional organisations supporting enhanced standards. The coaching profession must elevate itself before external regulation imposes restrictions designed without professional input.

For Training Providers

Competitive Advantage Through Quality Standards

Market analysis reveals dangerous fragmentation threatening industry credibility. Training providers charging £3,000+ for minimal ADHD-specific education create consumer protection failures that invite regulatory intervention.

Risk factors: Regulatory agencies are scrutinising training adequacy following consumer harm incidents. Pay-to-play accreditation schemes (IPHM, CMA, IAOTH) no longer provide marketing protection as informed consumers recognise quality indicators.

Competitive positioning:

- Pursue ICF, EMCC, or PAAC accreditation over commercial alternatives
- Document graduate outcomes through follow-up studies and employer feedback
- Provide transparent cost-per-training-hour comparisons
- Include supervision and mentoring as standard rather than optional

Regulatory trend: Australia's NDIS ban on unqualified coaching services and Utah's emergency legislation indicate the direction of policy development. Early adoption of enhanced standards creates market differentiation before mandatory compliance.

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Strategic recommendation: Partner with established professional bodies to develop evidence-based competency frameworks rather than waiting for imposed regulations.

For Potential Clients

How to Find Qualified ADHD Coaching

ADHD coaching can significantly improve both our experience of executive function challenges and quality of life, when delivered by appropriately trained coaches.

However, the rapid market growth has created quality variations that may particularly impact neurodivergent clients due to executive function differences in evaluating the complicated and sometimes confusing coaching service claims.

Red flags to avoid:

- Coaches guaranteeing specific outcomes or "cures" for ADHD
- Training courses completed in under 40 hours or only pre-recorded training
- coaches unable to explain the difference between coaching and therapy
- Services marketed as treating/fixing/healing ADHD rather than supporting goal achievement
- Lack of transparent information about qualifications and supervision

Quality indicators to seek:

- ADHD-specific training from recognised sources (ADDCA, PAAC-approved courses)
- Clear scope of practice boundaries and referral protocols
- Ongoing professional supervision arrangements

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- Transparent fee structures without hidden costs
- Membership in established professional coaching bodies (ICF, EMCC, Association for Coaching)

Questions to ask prospective coaches:

1. How many hours of ADHD-specific training have you completed?
2. What organisation accredited your training programme?
3. Do you receive ongoing supervision? How often?
4. Can you explain when you would refer clients to other professionals?
5. What is your specific experience working with ADHD clients?

Financial protection: Be cautious of high-pressure sales tactics or requests for large upfront payments. Most coaches typically offer consultation sessions and clear cancellation policies.

Your rights: You deserve coaches with genuine competence, realistic outcome expectations, and ethical business practices. Poor coaching experiences reflect industry failures, not ADHD characteristics or YOU.

For Medical Professionals

Understanding Coaching as Adjunct Support

ADHD coaching shows evidence of effectiveness as a complementary intervention when delivered by appropriately trained coaches. However, current industry fragmentation creates referral challenges when referring neurodivergent patients for coaching support.

Evidence base: Multiple randomised controlled trials demonstrate improvements in executive function and goal attainment (effect sizes 0.4-0.6) when clients work

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with ADHD-specialised coaches. Benefits complement but do not replace medical treatment. (See References for studies).

Referral considerations:

- Verify coach has completed substantial ADHD-specific training (minimum 80 hours recommended)
- Confirm clear boundaries around medical advice and treatment recommendations
- Ensure coach maintains referral relationships with licensed mental health providers
- Check professional body membership and complaint resolution processes

Quality indicators:

- **Legitimate credentials:** ICF, EMCC, PAAC certification
- **Supervision arrangements:** Ongoing professional oversight rather than isolated practice
- **Scope clarity:** Coaching focuses on goal achievement, not symptom treatment or past problems
- **evidence-based approach:** Grounded in executive function research rather than unvalidated theories

Risk factors: Private ADHD clinics increasingly offer 'in-house' coaching services but may employ coaches without specialised credentials, creating false authority transfer from medical to coaching competence.

Integration recommendations: Effective coaching complements medication management and therapy by addressing practical daily challenges that medical treatment alone may not resolve. Best outcomes occur when interventions are coordinated rather than competitive.

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Professional boundary: Coaching addresses "what" and "how" questions about goal achievement rather than "why" questions about symptom aetiology or psychological problems.

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1 Introduction

The profession's expansion - from ~53,000 credentialed coaches in 2016 to well over 109,000 today - has occurred without unified statutory oversight. This regulatory vacuum becomes critical when services target neurodivergent populations who may face additional information processing differences in evaluating service quality.

1.1 Methodology & Research Approach

This Industry Report draws from multiple data sources to provide comprehensive analysis of ethical standards in ADHD coaching, with particular focus on ADHD and neurodivergent services.

Primary research included systematic review of regulatory actions across five countries (2013-2025), comparative analysis of UK and US training courses, examination of professional body standards, and economic analysis of coaching business sustainability.

Data sources included advertising standards rulings, professional licensing actions, training provider websites, peer-reviewed literature, and financial records from established coaching practices. Whenever possible, the public links to these sources are included in footnotes or in References.

The research employs a risk-based assessment model, evaluating coaching practices against the needs of the general ADHD client population, potential for harm, and regulatory oversight gaps.

As a practicing ADHD coach with ADDCA and PEERS Certification, an ICF Accreditation, and CEPIO training, the author brings both insider knowledge and commitment to industry accountability, with client protection as the primary

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ethical imperative. Detailed methodology, including specific databases searched and selection criteria, is provided in [Appendix D](#).

2 Coaching and Current Ethical Frameworks

2.1 Comparing Coaching to other Professions

Before examining what coaching is, we must understand the difference between coaching and other professional roles.

The summary table below provides a short, simplified overview.

Profession	Focus	Time Orientation	Method	Power Dynamic
Therapy	Healing, diagnosis, insight	Past & present	Exploration, clinical frameworks	Therapist as expert
Teaching	Knowledge transfer	Present & future	Instruction, assessment	Teacher as guide
Mentoring	Sharing lived experience	Present & future	Advice-giving, role modeling	Mentor as experienced peer
Social Work	Support + advocacy	Whole system	Case management, structural support	Social worker as support navigator

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Coaching	Client-led change	Present & future	Inquiry, reflection, co-created experiments	Coach as equal partner
Consulting	Problem-solving, expertise delivery	Present & future	Analysis, recommendations, implementation	Consultant as expert advisor
Counselling	Emotional support, coping strategies	Past, present and future	Active listening, guidance, skill-building	Counsellor as supportive guide

2.2 What IS Coaching? What IS ADHD Coaching?

Before examining ethical failures in ADHD coaching, we must establish what legitimate coaching involves and why it can be valuable for neurodivergent clients when delivered competently.

Understanding Coaching Methodology

Coaching is fundamentally different from other helping professions in both approach and power dynamic.

Unlike therapy, which often explores past experiences to understand current patterns, coaching focuses primarily on present circumstances and future possibilities.

The coach's role is not to diagnose, interpret, or provide expert solutions, but to **facilitate the client's own discovery and decision-making process.**

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The coaching conversation **centres on client-led inquiry**. Rather than the coach determining what needs to change or how to change it, the client sets the agenda, identifies their goals, and develops their own strategies with the coach's support.

This non-directive approach respects client autonomy while building self-efficacy. This is particularly important for ADHD individuals who may have experienced years of being told what's "wrong" with them.

Coaching operates as a partnership model where coach and client work together as equals, contrasting sharply with the expert-patient dynamic common in medical or therapeutic relationships. The coach brings process expertise (skilled questioning, accountability structures, goal-setting frameworks), while the client remains the expert on their own life, values, and circumstances.

Present and Future Focus

Coaching conversations more typically ask "what" and "how" rather than "why." Instead of analysing the emotional reasons why someone procrastinates, coaching explores what they want to accomplish and how they might move forward. This orientation towards action and possibility can be particularly energising for ADHD clients who feel stuck in cycles of self-criticism about past failures.

The emphasis on future visioning and practical next steps aligns well with ADHD brains that often thrive on novelty, possibility, and concrete action items. Rather than dwelling on historical patterns, coaching harnesses the ADHD tendency towards optimism and enthusiasm for new approaches.

ADHD Coaching: Specialised Application

ADHD coaching applies these general principles to the specific challenges of executive function differences. While maintaining coaching's core methodology, ADHD coaches usually develop specialised competencies in:

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Executive Function Support

Understanding how ADHD affects working memory, attention regulation, task initiation, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility. ADHD coaches help clients develop personalised strategies that work with their brain's wiring and personal strengths.

Practical Strategy Development

Moving beyond generic productivity advice to create individualised systems for time management, organisation, and task completion that account for ADHD Executive function challenges, commonly described as time blindness, overwhelm, and hyperfocus.

Accommodation Planning

Supporting clients in identifying and implementing workplace, academic, or personal accommodations that level the playing field. This might include exploring assistive technology, environmental modifications, or communication strategies with supervisors.

Motivation and Energy Management

Recognising how ADHD affects motivation, interest, and energy levels, then developing sustainable approaches that support clients to achieve their outcomes or goals, while acknowledging these neurological differences.

What Coaching Can and Cannot Address

Coaching is not therapy, medical treatment, or crisis intervention. Ethical coaches strive to maintain clear boundaries around their scope of practice:

Coaching CAN address:

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- Goal setting and accountability
- Strategy development for daily challenges
- Building organisational systems and routines
- Exploring values and priorities
- Developing self-advocacy skills
- Creating structure and accountability
- Processing career or relationship decisions

Coaching CANNOT address:

- Mental health diagnosis or treatment
- Trauma processing or therapy
- Medication management or medical advice
- Crisis intervention or suicide risk
- Substance abuse treatment
- Relationship therapy or family systems work
- Learning disability assessment or accommodation determination

Professional ADHD coaches maintain referral networks to licensed mental health professionals, medical providers, and other specialists, recognizing when client needs exceed coaching scope. This boundary can be complicated by professionals describing themselves as coaches but who are psychologists or counsellors (with or without coach training).

Why Coaching Works for ADHD Clients

The coaching approach addresses several key challenges common in ADHD experience:

Autonomy and Self-Determination

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Many ADHD adults have experienced years of being told what to do differently, creating resistance to expert-driven approaches. Coaching's client-led methodology restores agency and builds on existing strengths.

Action Orientation

ADHD brains often prefer doing to discussing. Coaching's focus on practical experimentation and immediate next steps can be more engaging than insight-oriented approaches.

Customisation

The coaching process recognises that ADHD presents differently in each individual. Rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions, coaching develops personalised strategies that account for individual strengths, challenges, and life circumstances.

Accountability Without Judgment

Many ADHD individuals struggle with following-through and completing tasks but respond well to external accountability which is supportive rather than punitive. Quality coaching provides structure while maintaining the client's dignity and choice.

Strength-Based Approach

Coaching naturally focuses on client capabilities and potential rather than deficits, helping ADHD clients recognise and leverage their unique cognitive advantages alongside managing challenges.

The Evidence Base

Research supports coaching as an effective complementary (or additional) intervention for ADHD.

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Multiple randomised controlled trials demonstrate improvements in executive function, goal attainment, and quality of life measures when ADHD clients work with appropriately trained coaches. Coaching complements but does not replace medical treatment, therapy, or educational support. (see References).

However, these benefits require competent coaches.

The research demonstrating coaching effectiveness involved coaches with substantial ADHD-specific training and ongoing supervision, precisely the standards that this white paper argues are being eroded in current market conditions.

Understanding what coaching is, and what quality ADHD coaching requires, provides the foundation for recognising when services fall short of professional standards and put clients at risk.

2.3 Principles of Ethical Coaching Practice

Understanding what constitutes ethical coaching practice provides the foundation for recognising when services fall short of professional standards. Ethics in coaching go beyond legal compliance to include the moral obligations coaches have towards their clients.

2.3.1 Core Ethical Principles in Coaching

Client Welfare as Primary Obligation

The client's wellbeing takes precedence over all other considerations, including the coach's financial interests, reputation, or convenience.

This means making referrals when issues exceed coaching scope, even if it means losing income. It means being honest about limitations rather than promising outcomes beyond the coach's competence.

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Professional Competence

Coaches must practice only within their areas of genuine expertise. This includes maintaining up-to-date knowledge through continuing education, seeking supervision when needed, and acknowledging the boundaries of their training. For ADHD coaches specifically, this means having actual ADHD-specific education rather than general life coaching skills.

Integrity and Honesty

All representations about qualifications, outcomes, and services must be truthful and easily accessible. This includes transparent disclosure of training credentials, realistic expectations about coaching results, and honest communication about fees and policies. Marketing claims must be substantiated, not aspirational.

Respect for Client Autonomy

Clients have the right to make their own decisions, even when coaches disagree with those choices. The coaching process should enhance client agency rather than create dependency. Coaches avoid imposing their own values, solutions, or timelines on clients.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Client information must be protected according to professional standards and legal requirements. This includes secure data handling, clear boundaries around what information may be shared, and explicit consent for any disclosures.

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2.3.2 Why Ethics Matter More with Neurodivergent Clients

Power imbalances amplify ethical obligations. When clients have cognitive differences, emotional distress or trauma, are in a state of financial desperation, or have limited alternatives, **standard market protections may be insufficient.**

ADHD clients may struggle with:

- **Executive function challenges** affecting their ability to evaluate complex service agreements
- **Rejection sensitive dysphoria** making them more susceptible to promises of social acceptance
- **Impulsivity** leading to rapid purchasing decisions without adequate research
- **Information processing differences** affecting comprehension of coaching limitations

These vulnerabilities do not mean clients lack the mental capacity to choose their coach or support, but they do require enhanced ethical safeguards from coaches.

2.3.3 What Ethical ADHD Coaching Looks Like

Transparent Qualification Disclosure

Ethical ADHD coaches clearly communicate their specific training background. This includes distinguishing between general coaching certification and ADHD-specific education, being honest about supervision arrangements, and explaining how their qualifications relate to client needs.

Example of transparent disclosure: a disclaimer or notice on website and social media which states training, limits and speciality. *"I completed more than 200 hours of ADHD-specific coach training through ADDCA and also receive regular supervision from a PAAC-certified coach supervisor. My training covers executive*

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function coaching and practical strategy development, but I cannot provide therapy, medical advice, trauma therapy or crisis intervention."

Realistic Outcome Expectations

Ethical coaches avoid guaranteeing specific results while honestly discussing what coaching can and cannot achieve.

They help clients develop realistic timelines and understand that sustainable change typically requires ongoing effort and often multiple forms of support.

Clear Scope of Practice Boundaries

Professional ADHD coaches explicitly distinguish their services from therapy, medical treatment, and other interventions. They maintain referral networks and actively connect clients with appropriate professionals when needs exceed coaching scope.

Evidence-based Practice

Ethical coaches ground their approaches in research rather than unvalidated theories or personal anecdotes. For ADHD coaching, this means understanding the peer-reviewed literature on executive function interventions and avoiding unproven claims about "brain optimisation" or "dopamine hacking."

Financial Transparency

All fees, policies, and potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed before clients sign legally binding agreements, ideally upon enquiry or on an accessible website. This includes transparent pricing structures, clear cancellation policies, and disclosure of any financial relationships with recommended products or services.

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Ongoing Professional Development

Ethical coaches invest in and are supported to take continuing education and supervision to maintain and improve their competence. This is particularly important in ADHD coaching, where research continues to evolve and new information and methodologies emerge.

2.3.4 The Difference Between Legal and Ethical

Legal compliance represents minimum standards, while ethical practice aims to provide the very best in client care and service. A coach might legally be able to:

- Market general coaching skills as ADHD expertise
- Charge premium fees for minimal training
- Avoid supervision or continuing education
- Use high-pressure sales tactics

But ethical practice requires going beyond legal minimums to prioritise client welfare, maintain genuine competence, and contribute positively to professional standards.

2.3.5 Ethical Decision-Making Framework

When facing ethical dilemmas, ADHD coaches should consider:

1. **What serves the client's best interests?** (not the coach's financial or ego needs)
2. **Am I practicing within my actual competence?** (not what the coach wishes they could do)
3. **Would I be comfortable if this decision were public?** (transparency test)
4. **What would happen if all coaches made this choice?** (universality)
5. **Who might be harmed by this action?** (including future clients and the profession)

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Professional Responsibility to the Field

Individual ethical choices shape industry standards. When coaches maintain high ethical standards, they:

- **Protect all clients** from exploitation and harm
- **Enhance public trust** in coaching as a profession
- **Support colleagues** by maintaining professional credibility
- **Contribute to evidence-based practice** through quality service delivery

Conversely, ethical shortcuts undermine the entire profession, making it harder for quality coaches to build sustainable practices and potentially triggering regulatory intervention that could restrict legitimate services.

2.3.5 The Ethical Imperative for ADHD Coaching

ADHD coaching exists because traditional support systems often fail neurodivergent individuals. This creates both opportunity and obligation.

Coaches have the privilege of serving clients who may have experienced years of misunderstanding, ineffective interventions, or outright discrimination.

This privilege demands the highest ethical standards. When coaches exploit rather than empower, promise transformation which is dependent on client capacity and without training competence, or prioritise profit over protection, they let down not only individual clients but the broader ADHD community's trust.

Ethical ADHD coaching can be genuinely transformative when coaches bring appropriate training, ongoing supervision, realistic expectations, and genuine commitment to client welfare.

The goal is to avoid harm AND to actively contribute to client empowerment and professional excellence.

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2.4 Established Professional Coaching Standards

Body	Scope & Membership	Min. Training Hours*	Supervision	AI / Tech Ethics	Complaint Route	Annual CPD
ICF	Global (≈ 62 % of credentialed coaches)	60-125	Yes - 10 h mentor coaching	ICF AI Coaching Standards 2024	Independent Review Board	40 hrs CCE / 3 yrs
EMCC	Europe / Global	150-500	Mandatory, ongoing	Digital Competence β 2024	External Panel	30 h / yr
Association for Coaching (AC)	14 000 + members	50-250	Strongly encouraged	Global Code of Ethics	Ethics Board	35 h / yr
IAC	Global	Competence-based	Peer review	Not yet stated	Internal committee	Evidence of mastery
WABC	Corporate / leadership	60-300	Recommended	Tech-ethics guide (draft)	Ombudsman	25 h / yr
NBHCW	Health & wellness	75 + coaching log	Yes - approved mentors	HIPAA-aligned data rules	NBHCW panel	36 h / 3 yrs

*Class- or live-training hours; many courses exceed these totals.

Please see [Appendix G](#) for an explanation of how consumers and coaches can compare ICF, EMCC and ILM 'levels' of coach training.

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2.5 Evidence of Efficacy

A growing body of peer-reviewed research supports the effectiveness of coaching as an adjunct intervention for ADHD:

- Kubik 2010 - ADHD coaching had a positive impact on the lives of people with ADHD.²
- Prevatt & Yelland 2015 - Over 5 years, Students who received an 8 week coaching program showed significant improvement in several areas³.
- Bloemen et al 2020 - an 8 week group coaching program for men. Functioning in daily life, as measured with the Weiss, showed a significant improvement although participants did not report their ADHD symptoms improved.⁴

Implications: Coaching shows clinically meaningful improvements in executive-function and quality-of-life measures; however, heterogeneous methodologies warrant further studies.

3 Safeguarding ADHD and Neurodivergent Clients: Heightened Ethical Imperatives?

3.1 Defining the idea of “vulnerable populations” in coaching contexts

² Kubik, J. A. (2010). Efficacy of ADHD coaching for adults with ADHD. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 13(5), 442–453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054708329960>

³Prevatt & Yelland, 2015 - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1087054713480036>

⁴ Bloemen I, Verbeeck W, Tuinier S. The effect of group coaching in adult ADHD. *European Psychiatry*. 2007;22(S1):S205-S205. [doi:10.1016/j.eurpsy.2007.01.680](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2007.01.680)

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Not all coaching clients face an equal risk of exploitation. Certain groups experience heightened vulnerability due to cognitive, emotional, economic, or social factors that can impair their ability to evaluate coaching services, understand complex contracts, or recognise harmful practices. The intersection of socioeconomic inequality and neurodivergence is widely known and shown in multiple large cohort studies.⁵

3.2 Cognitive and Executive Function Vulnerabilities

ADHD and autistic individuals often experience executive function differences that can affect decision-making in coaching contexts. These may include:

- Impaired impulse control leading to rapid purchasing decisions without adequate research
- Difficulty processing complex information such as lengthy terms of service or certification claims
- Time blindness affecting ability to evaluate realistic timelines for coaching outcomes
- Rejection sensitive dysphoria making individuals more susceptible to marketing that promises social acceptance or "fixing" perceived deficits

These are neurological differences, not personal failings. However, they create opportunities for exploitation when coaching providers use high-pressure sales tactics, complex pricing structures, or promise unrealistic outcomes.

3.3 Economic and Social Vulnerabilities

⁵ Hennekam, S., Kulkarni, M., & Beatty, J. E. (2024). Neurodivergence and the Persistence of Neurotypical Norms and Inequalities in Educational and Occupational Settings. *Work, Employment and Society*, 39(2), 449-469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170241255050> (Original work published 2025)

Financial desperation often drives coaching purchases, particularly when individuals face:

- Employment difficulties due to ADHD symptoms or workplace discrimination
- Relationship stress from unmanaged ADHD impacting family dynamics
- Academic struggles affecting career prospects and self-worth
- Healthcare gaps where coaching appears more accessible than proper medical treatment

Social isolation common in neurodivergent populations can make individuals more susceptible to coaching communities that promise belonging and understanding.

3.4 Information Gaps

Coaching clients typically cannot evaluate training quality due to:

- Lack of industry knowledge about legitimate vs. questionable accreditation bodies
- Complex certification landscapes where multiple credentials exist with varying standards
- Marketing sophistication that obscures actual training hours or competency requirements
- Testimonial bias where positive reviews may be incentivized or selectively presented

3.5 Vulnerability as Protection, Not Stigma

Acknowledging vulnerability enables appropriate safeguards rather than restricting autonomy. Consumer protection laws recognise that certain populations require additional disclosures or cooling-off periods - not because

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they lack capacity, but because standard market mechanisms may inadequately protect their interests.

Many ADHD and autistic individuals are highly capable professionals who nonetheless benefit from enhanced transparency in coaching services, just as sophisticated investors still receive SEC protections in financial markets.

3.6 Other at risk client groups

Similar exploitation patterns appear across coaching niches targeting minority and at risk populations, including but not limited to trauma recovery to addiction support.

3.7 The Authority Transfer Problem

Systematic issue: Institutional credibility inappropriately transfers to individual coaches:

- Medical diagnostic clinics employing unqualified coaches or those trained without ADHD-specific coaching qualifications
- ADHD organisations and charities not clarifying the professional scope of volunteers or paid employees training
- Professional websites and testimonials obscuring actual training credentials

This creates **consumer confusion** where people seeking ADHD support cannot distinguish qualified from unqualified coaches.

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4 Documented regulatory actions (2013-2025)

4.1 Recent regulatory actions

Although these are not exclusively focused on cases targeting ADHD clients, it is important to review instances where unethical marketing has involved ADHD or coaching services and products.

4.1.1 “Therapists-Turned-Life-Coaches” Investigation (Salt Lake Tribune & ProPublica, 2024)

Findings - A data trawl of 43 Utah clinicians who had surrendered or lost licences since 2010 showed one-third were still practising as life coaches or “mental-health associates,” often using identical therapeutic techniques. Victims interviewed reported trauma re-triggering and financial exploitation.

Regulatory outcome -The reporting heightened scrutiny and Utah passed **SB 48 (2025) - Behavioral Health Amendments**, clarifying only licensed professionals may provide mental-health treatment.⁶

4.1.2 Australian NDIS Ban on Life-/Wellness-Coaches (Oct 2024 Rule Change)

Policy change - The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) removed some life-coach and wellness-coach services from allowable supports for autistic and disabled participants, grouping them with “unproven or non-evidence-based” alternative therapies such as puppy

⁶ <https://www.propublica.org/article/utah-life-coaches-mental-health-therapy-law>, <https://le.utah.gov/~2025/bills/static/SB0048.html>

therapy and kinesiology.

Implication - Federal acknowledgement that coaching, when unregulated, can siphon public funds away from evidence-based autism supports.⁷

4.1.3 AI Calendar App Mis-selling to People with ADHD

UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Ruling - Nexusbird Inc t/a Motion, 18 Oct 2023

A paid-for Facebook ad for the productivity app “Motion” claimed it was “the best way to get organised when you have ADHD” and implied users could get promoted at work thanks to the app. The ASA ruled the ad made unauthorised medical claims (treating ADHD symptoms) and discouraged essential medical treatment, breaching CAP Code rules 1.10 & 12.1. The ad was ordered to be withdrawn and Motion committed to removing similar claims.

Reference: Advertising Standards Authority. (2023, October 18). ASA Ruling on Nexusbird Inc t/a Motion.⁸

4.1.4 Saffron Supplement Pitched as an ADHD “Natural Alternative”

ASA Ruling - SaffPro & influencer Chantelle Knight, 25 Jun 2025

TikTok and Facebook posts promoted SaffPro saffron gummies as boosting dopamine and serotonin “through the roof” so users could avoid stimulant medication. The ASA upheld three counts: (1) claiming the supplement could treat ADHD, (2) making unauthorized health claims, and (3) irresponsibly encouraging consumers to abandon prescribed treatment. Both brand and coach had to remove the ads. Ms Knight has a substantial

7

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/breaking-news/cuddle-therapy-crystals-reiki-axed-in-final-ndis-supports-list/news-story/b440568535ba1572c1175ed5cc0cf865>

⁸ <https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/nexusbird-inc-a23-1197735-nexusbird-inc.html>

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Tiktok following where she offers a combination of ADHD ‘coaching’ advice and information on applying for Access to Work funding. *Reference:* Advertising Standards Authority. (2025, June 25). *ASA Ruling on SaffPro*.⁹

4.2 Global Regulatory Trends & Cross-Border Enforcement Challenges

The coaching industry’s borderless nature, amplified by digital platforms, creates enforcement challenges that single jurisdictions struggle to address. Rather than regulating “coaching” as a standalone profession, most authorities act when coaching services overlap with **health claims, financial harm, or data protection** issues.

4.2.1 Canada: Regulation via Health & Consumer Law

- **British Columbia** – In 2024, British Columbia launched consultations on regulating psychotherapy under the Health Professions Act.¹⁰ While not focused on coaching, submissions highlighted risks when unqualified providers market mental-health support under a “coaching” label.
- **Ontario** – Consumer protection reforms coming into force soon have strengthened the Ministry’s ability to act against misleading personal development services. Although no ADHD-specific cases are published, officials emphasise that services promising symptom reduction without medical oversight fall under existing consumer law.¹¹

4.2.2 European Union: Data Protection and Coaching Clients

⁹ <https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/saffpro.html>

¹⁰ <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024HLTH0070-000812>

¹¹ <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/23c23>

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EU regulators increasingly use **GDPR** to address services directed at minority or at risk populations, including neurodivergent adults. While no ADHD-specific ruling has been issued, data protection authorities have stressed that:

- Special-category health data requires explicit consent.
- Coaching providers must apply strict limits on sensitive data retention.
- Breach reporting rules apply if psychological harm arises from data misuse. This has the indirect effect of tightening compliance expectations for ADHD-related coaching services operating in the EU.

4.2.3 Australia: NDIS and Advertising Oversight

- **NDIS (2024 guidance)** – Explicitly excludes life, wellness, career, and cultural coaching from funded supports, grouping them with other non-evidence-based practices such as “puppy therapy” and kinesiology.
- **Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)** – Enforces advertising standards when coaches or supplement sellers make therapeutic claims (e.g., treating ADHD, autism, or trauma). Recent enforcement has focused on unapproved supplements and mental health claims.
- **ACCC** – Includes coaching-style services in its broader focus on scams, misleading influencer marketing, and health-related misrepresentation, signalling greater scrutiny even where coaching itself is not directly regulated.¹²

4.2.4 United States: Scope-of-Practice Debates

There is no federal regulation of coaching. However:

¹²

<https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/scrutiny-of-influencers-and-businesses-for-misleading-advertising-and-online-reviews-continues>

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- **Utah** tightened scope-of-practice rules in 2025 (SB 48) after reporting showed unlicensed clinicians marketing themselves as coaches.¹³
- Other states, such as Texas and California, have considered whether gaps in licensing frameworks leave consumers at risk, but no formal coach registry or statewide licensing has been enacted.

4.2.5 Cross-Border Enforcement Challenges

- **Jurisdictional shopping** – Some coaching providers register companies in one country while marketing or delivering services across others, complicating enforcement.
- **Platform responsibility** – Regulators increasingly pressure platforms like Meta, TikTok, and LinkedIn to police misleading health-related ads, but enforcement remains patchy.
- **International cooperation** – Networks such as ICPEN (International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network) include online services in their remit, but no coaching-specific taskforce exists.

4.3 Implications for UK Coaching Providers

These international trends suggest the UK coaching industry should anticipate:

- Enhanced consumer protection enforcement following EU and Australian models
- Platform verification requirements as digital regulation tightens globally
- Cross-border cooperation agreements that could affect UK-based coaches serving international clients
- Professional liability implications as other jurisdictions raise standards

The global nature of coaching practice means UK coaches cannot assume that regulations introduced abroad will not impact their practice. By understanding and

¹³ <https://le.utah.gov/~2025/bills/static/SB0048.html>

adopting international best practices they can have a professional advantage as working 'across borders' increases.

5 Specific Risks & Standards of ADHD/AuDHD¹⁴ Coaching

5.1 Rapid Market Growth & “Certification Inflation”

“AuDHD” branding merges autism and ADHD as a marketing hook, sometimes overstating overlap and promising “dual-diagnosis expertise” with no accredited curriculum and the heterogeneity of co-occurring presentations means one-size-fits-all interventions risk missing the mark (see [Appendix A](#) for diagnostic complexity)

5.2 Comparative Analysis of General and ADHD Coach Training courses (UK & US)

This section of research focuses on the rapidly expanding 'coach training' courses available to students and trainee coaches in the UK and USA specifically. It is not intended as an exhaustive list but focuses on those with publicly available information.

Provider	Training Hours	Cost (£)	Cost/Hour	Accreditation
ADDCA	200+	£9,600*	£48	ICF/PAAC

¹⁴ See discussion 5.4.1

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Coach Approach	125+	£5,600*	£45	ICF
Barrett Coaching	60	£1,800	£30	AC/UCA
Gold Mind Academy	85	£6,720	£79	ICF CCE
ADHD Works	40	£2,950	£74	Internal Only
Certified Excellence	10-20	£60	£3-6	Pay-to-play

*USD converted to GBP at approximate rates, July 2025. Detailed links in [Appendix E](#).

Key takeaway: Recognised training courses range £30-79/hour, while other schemes offer suspiciously low per-hour costs.

5.2.1 ADHD-Specific Coach Training courses

These courses focus primarily on ADHD coaching. They typically provide dedicated curricula on ADHD and related coaching skills. See **Appendix E for a detailed explanation of each training course format.**

5.2.2 General Coach Training courses with ADHD Specialisation

These courses are broader life coach training curricula or multi-specialty coaching institutes that include a module or track devoted to ADHD/neurodiversity. They blend general coaching skills with specialised ADHD content. See Appendix E for a detailed explanation of each training course format.

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5.2.3 Combining General Coach Certification with ADHD Training (Mix-and-Match Path)

In addition to integrated courses like the above, many coaches attain their credentials through a general life coaching programme and then supplement with ADHD-specific courses or certificates. This two-step approach is recognised by professional bodies. For example, the ADHD Coaches Organization (ACO) notes that to be recognised as a professional ADHD coach, one should have completed *“60 hours of ICF-compliant life coach training plus at least 35 hours of ADHD coach training from recognised sources.”* In practice, this might look like:

- First, taking a general coach training (ICF Level 1 programme or equivalent) - e.g. an EMCC-accredited life coaching diploma, an ICF-approved course from a university or coach academy - to learn fundamental coaching skills and ethics.
- Then, enrolling in a shorter ADHD specialisation course. Recognized sources for the ADHD component include courses like ADDCA's supplemental courses, JST's youth coaching course, Cindy Goldrich's ADHD Parent Coach Academy, or advanced classes by veteran ADHD coaches (many of which ACO lists as “Specialty ADHD Coach Training courses”). These range from multi-week courses to on-demand modules.

For instance, a coach might get certified through a generic programme (like CoachU or an ICF-approved university certificate), then take a 8-week intensive in ADHD coaching skills or attend ADHD coaching workshops at conferences. As long as the ADHD-specific training is substantive (dozens of hours) and taught by experts, this combination can meet industry expectations. Indeed, PAAC (the ADHD coaching accreditation body) will certify coaches who present a mix of general coach training and ADHD-focused training totaling 100+ hours.

The advantage of this path is flexibility - one can choose any reputable life coaching course (for broader credentials like ACC, EMCC Practitioner, etc.) and

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add ADHD expertise on top. Many in the field follow this route if they discover the ADHD niche after starting coaching, or if they prefer not to commit to a single specialised school initially. The caution is that the ADHD training portion should come from “recognised sources” - i.e., established ADHD coach trainers or courses grounded in evidence - rather than quick-fix online classes. With the rise of ADHD in public awareness, numerous short courses claim to certify ADHD coaches (often without credible oversight). It is important for coaches (and clients) to ensure the specialisation training is legitimate (see Accreditation section below).

5.2.4 Training Accreditation: ICF/EMCC vs. ‘Pay-to-Play’ Schemes

A critical differentiator among courses is the type of accreditation (if any) they hold. Legitimate credentials are granted by bodies that vet curriculum and require assessments (e.g. ICF, EMCC, PAAC, the Association for Coaching), whereas some courses tout accreditations from agencies that essentially *sell* endorsements. Below is a comparison:

Reputable Accreditation

Organizations like the International Coach Federation (ICF), European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC), Association for Coaching (AC), and PAAC (for ADHD coaches) have a position of using professionally rigorous standards. They require courses to cover coaching core competencies, coaching ethics, a minimum number of live training hours, and an assessment process.

For example, an ICF Level 1 programme must have at least 60 contact hours, supervised mentor coaching, and a performance evaluation of each student. EMCC and AC similarly require comprehensive tutor-led hours and quality control.

The courses in our analysis that boast such accreditation (Barrett - AC; ADDCA - ICF & PAAC; Coach Approach & CRew - ICF) all had to meet these high bars.

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Students from these courses can be confident the training was evaluated by an independent coaching authority, and their certification has weight in the professional community.

'Alternative' or Commercial Accreditors:

Some training providers use endorsements from bodies like the International coaches of Holistic Medicine (IPHM), International Association of Therapists (IAOTH), or Complementary Medical Association (CMA).

These names sound official, but they function primarily as membership-based directories. Providers can obtain accreditation from these groups often by simply paying a fee and agreeing to basic terms, with little to no pedagogical scrutiny.

For instance, **IAOTH** invites training organizations to join as “Accredited Training Providers” for *“only \$199 annual fee,”* offering a certificate and listing in their directory. In one investigation, a journalist was able to get a 2.5-hour Udemy course “accredited” by IAOTH, highlighting how minimal the requirements were.

Similarly, IPHM and CMA are known to approve short online courses in holistic healing, coaching, etc., lending an appearance of legitimacy via their logo - but this “approval” often just means the course creator paid membership dues.

In the ADHD coaching arena, I found examples of courses leaning on these accreditations.

One online course titled ***“Certified Course to Become an ADHD Coach”*** from a site called Certified Excellence openly advertises that *“Our training center, accredited by IPHM and CMA, will elevate your skill portfolio”*.

This course consisted of pre-recorded modules with a few quizzes and a final exam, and was sold at a steep discount (often for around \$60) - yet it promises an *“internationally recognised certification as an ADHD Coach.”*

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In reality, the “recognition” comes only from the IPHM/CMA seal. Such courses typically do not include any live training or supervised practice - they often are self-paced reading or videos with a simple test.

The ease of obtaining these certificates (sometimes in a matter of days, with no prior coaching experience) raises serious concerns. As one coaching industry commentator quipped, *“even a cat could become certified”* in these schemes if you fill out the forms and pay up (a reference to a famous experiment where a psychologist successfully got his cat credentialed by dubious associations).

5.2.5 Why Accreditation and training standards matter

Credentials from pay-to-play accreditors can mislead aspiring coaches and clients. A new coach might think a course is high-quality because it is “accredited” by, say, IPHM, and spend money on it - but would only receive minimal training.

Likewise, clients may see “Certified ADHD Coach (IAOTH)” on a coach’s bio and assume it is equivalent to an ICF or PAAC credential when the level of training and assessment are very different.

This inflation of certifications devalues the real training many coaches undertake to provide safe, effective, quality coaching for their clients.

Course Name	Training Hours	Cost	Cost per Hour	Accreditation	Supervision Included?
ADHD-Specific courses					
ADD Coach Academy (ADDCA)	200+ hours	\$12,000 USD	\$60 USD	ICF Level 1 & 2 + PAAC	Yes - extensive mentor coaching
Gold Mind Academy	85 hours	£6,720	£79	ICF CCE accredited	Yes - 10 hours

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					mentor coaching
Barrett Coaching & Training	60 hours	£1,800	£30	AC + UCA accredited	Yes - ongoing 2-year support
ADHD Works	~40 hours	£2,950	£74	None (internal certification)	Limited - peer community only
ADHD Foundation Coaching Diploma	Not specified	£5,400 (for two years)	Unable to calculate	Internal accreditation only (APANC is the ADHD Foundation's own organisation)	2 group sessions in Year 1, 3 in Year 2. Individual sessions offered at 'reduced rate'
General courses with ADHD Content					
Animas Coaching Diploma	~9 months (weekly sessions)	£6,000-10,000 (estimated)	Variable	ICF + EMCC + AC accredited	Yes - ICF/EMCC standard mentoring
Coach Approach Training Institute	125+ hours	\$7,000-9,000 USD	\$56-72 USD	ICF Level 1 & 2	Yes - ICF-compliant mentor coaching
Pay-to-Play Examples					
Certified Excellence ADHD Course	Self-paced videos	£60	N/A	IPHM/CMA (£199 annual fee)	None
All data obtained July 2025 using general internet search					

Detailed explanations of each provider's training programme can be found in [Appendix E](#).

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In our comparison above:

None of the highlighted reputable courses use these questionable accreditations - they either have no accreditation (but don't pretend to) like ADHD Works, or they have genuine ones. It is the lower-tier "quick cert" courses outside our list that lean on them.

We flag this so readers can distinguish meaningful credentials from decorative ones.

As a rule of thumb, **ICF, EMCC, AC, and PAAC** are rigorous;

IPHM, IAOTH, CMA, CPD Standards, etc. require further scrutiny and consideration.

Always check what an accrediting organization actually is: if its website emphasizes "Join now, get accredited in 3 days, boost your marketing!", it is likely not a true quality controller.

Coaching industry experts and even regulators (like the UK Advertising Standards Authority) have started to scrutinise exaggerated claims from some ADHD training providers, especially those suggesting medical treatment of ADHD without evidence. Ensuring the programme is transparently accredited (or honestly unaccredited) helps maintain professional standards and protect consumers.

5.2.6 Conclusion

In comparing UK and US ADHD coach training options, a few clear patterns emerge:

Training Intensity & Hours:

courses range from short courses (~6-12 weeks, <100 hours, e.g. ADHD Works, NewZenler course) to in-depth certifications (6-12+ months, 150-200 hours, e.g. ADDCA, advanced Gold Mind). Generally, the more hours and live interaction, the

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more rigorous and costly the programme. Prospective coaches should align their choice with their desired depth of learning and credential level.

Practicum Requirements:

The top-tier courses require students to practice coaching and often undergo supervised sessions. This experiential learning is crucial for building real coaching skills - significantly differentiating these courses from ones that are purely theoretical or academic. If becoming an effective coach is the goal, courses with substantial practice requirements and feedback are preferable.

Supervision & Support:

We see some courses offering post-certification supervision which can greatly enhance a new coach's confidence and ethical practice. Mentoring by experienced coaches (as mandated in ICF-aligned courses) is a gold standard that helps bridge knowledge into skill and supports coaches in the early stages of their new career.

Accreditation & Credibility:

it is evident that not all certificates are equal. ICF or EMCC accreditation acts as a quality hallmark although some are 'CCE' continuing credits for coaches with an ICF accreditation, rather than 'complete training' courses. For example, ADDCA and Coach Approach leverage dual credentials (ICF + PAAC or niche credentials) for very specific specialisation and recognition.

In contrast, courses relying on IAOTH/CMA et al. may claim students become "certified ADHD coaches" but lack industry recognition or rigor. Coaches aiming for credibility (e.g. to partner with clinics, schools, or receive referrals via professional directories) will benefit from courses with recognised accreditation or at least a well-established reputation.

Cost vs Value:

Pricing varies wildly - from a few hundred dollars (for self-study online courses) to \$10k+ for comprehensive certifications. Often, you get what you pay for: higher cost correlates with live training hours, faculty expertise, and post-course

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support. That said, cost alone isn't a guarantee - one must vet what accreditation and outcomes that money buys.

For instance, ADHD Works charges around £3,000 for a relatively short course (paying for a coaching 'model', listing in their directory and community access), whereas Barrett charges half that for an accredited award with supervision. It is important to evaluate *hourly cost* and *deliverables*.

A programme like ADDCA or Coach Approach may be expensive, but graduates leave with an internationally respected certification and often find it easier to command professional coaching rates. Lower-cost introductory courses can be a good start for those unsure about the field, but may require additional training later to reach equivalent status.

Marketing Claims vs Reality:

Many courses advertise what graduates "can do" - e.g. "*become a trusted, professional ADHD coach*", "*confidently coach people with ADHD*", "*make a real difference*". Generally, courses with proper training hours and accreditation can back up these claims through skill-building - however caution should be used with courses that promise medical-like outcomes ("treating ADHD" - which would breach ethics) or overhype quick success.

The credible courses focus on coaching scope (helping with strategies, not therapy or miracle cures). Several stress ethical practice and knowing the boundaries of coaching vs. counselling/therapy, with individual ethics elements of the course. Potential students must cross-check if the programme curriculum and credentials support its marketing promises about graduate capabilities.

In conclusion, both the UK and US offer a wide variety of ADHD coach training paths.

If one seeks to truly specialise in ADHD coaching as a profession, investing in a comprehensive, accredited programme - whether ADHD-specific or a robust

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general-plus-ADHD programme - will provide the necessary foundation and legitimacy.

Shorter or self-paced courses can serve as introductions or continuing education but typically should not be one's sole training before practicing, especially given the clients involved. As the industry matures, transparency in accreditation and a push for standards (potentially even external regulation) is increasing.

Coaches who have solid training and recognised credentials should have the confidence to stand out as trustworthy and reliable, and be better equipped to deliver safe, effective coaching to ADHD clients.

5.3 Supervision & Mentor Quality

A UK search (June 2025) shows supervision offers without published fees or supervisor credentials - e.g., *One company* advertises "ADHD & Autism Coaching Supervision" with no price and no visible supervisor qualifications.

Typical UK supervision rates (publicly advertised, July 2025).

A scan of several UK coaching-supervision providers shows one-to-one fees between £70 and £250 per hour and group-supervision costs clustering around £50 - £80 per person per two-hour session.¹ These figures align with EMCC-UK anecdotal benchmarks (£75-£200/hr) and underscore how supervision becomes a material line-item in a coach's cost base.¹⁵

Rates balloon when bundled with "certification" add-ons; some providers embed the hourly cost inside a £3,000 + package, obscuring true supervision value.

¹⁵Examples include Catalyst 14 (£500 + VAT for four × two-hour online group sessions ≈ £62.50/hr) catalyst14.co.uk, Dr Trish Turner (£250 + VAT per hour 1-to-1) trishturner.co.uk, RCCS (£70/hr 1-to-1) rccs.org.uk, Magic Coaching (£150 + VAT per 90-min individual ≈ £100/hr) magic-coaching.co.uk, Dawn Gosden Coaching (£125 per 90-min individual ≈ £83/hr) dawngosdencoaching.co.uk, and Searching-for-Serenity blog (range £75-"several hundred" per hour) searchingforserenity.co.uk.

5.4 AI in Coaching: New Risks for ADHD Clients

ADHD and autistic clients increasingly turn to AI for support, creating new exploitation opportunities as the coaching industry adapts. Three concerning trends are emerging:

"AI Coaches" targeting neurodivergent clients claim to provide 24/7 support and "personalised ADHD strategies."

These platforms often lack clinical oversight, evidence-based protocols, or transparency about their limitations. ADHD coaching clients may substitute AI interactions for professional support or medication management and there are ongoing cases of AI/Chat services which have caused harm to users.¹⁶

Human coaches using AI to analyse session transcripts.

This raises serious privacy concerns, particularly for neurodivergent clients who may disclose sensitive information about mental health, medication, or workplace accommodations.

Cross-border data storage (for example where coaches are in another country to the location of the data processing centres) creates jurisdictional compliance gaps, with unclear accountability when data breaches occur.

Unregulated AI coaching and productivity apps specifically market to ADHD populations with claims of "dopamine optimisation" or "executive function enhancement."

These tools often collect extensive behavioural data while providing unvalidated interventions that may interfere with established treatment plans.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/aug/27/chatgpt-scrutiny-family-teen-killed-himself-sue-open-ai>

<https://med.stanford.edu/news/insights/2025/08/ai-chatbots-kids-teens-artificial-intelligence.html>

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Minimal safeguards exist.

Unlike licensed therapists bound by confidentiality and professional rules, coaching platforms face no mandatory disclosure requirements about AI use, data handling, or algorithmic decision-making.

Clients with executive function difficulties may struggle to navigate complex privacy policies or understand AI limitations, particularly around inaccuracy of replies and hallucination. Some LLM Models (such as O4-mini) have hallucination rates of almost 45%.¹⁷ This means that information or conversations provided by the AI are wrong or invented almost half the time.

5.4.1 Data Monetisation of ADHD Clients

The 'neurodiversity/productivity' industry increasingly views clients as data sources for commercial research partnerships.

A February 2025 white paper published by Addie App Ltd exemplifies this trend, outlining explicit plans to reach "1 million neurodivergent users within the next 12 months" to generate "one of the most extensive datasets on neurodivergent productivity, motivation, and cognitive behavior ever collected" (Birss, 2025, p. 4).

The document discussed proposed collaborations with "pharmaceutical companies" and "biotech researchers," including exploring "whether menstrual blood samples from Addie users could reveal biomarkers for ADHD and related conditions, offering a potential new diagnostic route" (Birss, 2025, p. 4).

Additional partnerships would examine "how productivity trends align with medication usage and therapeutic interventions" and develop "AI-driven cognitive screening tools" using client data (Birss, 2025, p. 4).

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<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2479545-ai-hallucinations-are-getting-worse-and-theyre-here-to-stay/>

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This model transforms productivity platforms into data extraction operations, where individuals seeking ADHD support unknowingly contribute to commercial research databases. ADHD and autistic users, who often struggle with executive function and detailed contract comprehension, may be particularly susceptible to agreeing to data-sharing arrangements quickly, without fully understanding the scope or permanence of their consent.

The approach raises fundamental questions about informed consent when users with cognitive processing differences encounter complex data-sharing agreements embedded within app terms of service.

The “impulsivity” challenge increases when platforms position themselves as supportive tools while simultaneously harvesting user data for pharmaceutical partnerships and biomedical research.

5.5 Mentor Coaching - Credential Pathway & Cost Impact

Definition. *Mentor coaching* is a distinct ICF and PAAC requirement focused on observing recorded sessions, giving competency-based feedback, and preparing a coach for credential application/renewal - not on reflective practice or case-processing (supervision).

Aspect	Mentor Coaching	Supervision
Primary Goal	Demonstrate ICF/PAAC core competencies for credential	Ongoing reflective practice & wellbeing
When Required	Before applying/renewing ACC, PCC, MCC (10 hrs over ≥ 3 months)	Continuous throughout practice

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Facilitator Credential	ICF-credentialed coach (\geq PCC) or PAAC PCC-II	Senior coach-supervisor or psychologist
Typical UK Cost	£150-£250/hr 1-to-1; £400-£650 for 7 hrs group + 3 hrs 1-to-1	£80-£150/hr 1-to-1
Economic Impact	One-off outlay £1 200-£2 000 per credential cycle (3 yrs)	Recurring £1 200+ per year

Credential applicants must log 10 total hours, of which at least 3 must be 1-to-1 (ICF 2024 Credential Manual).

Implications for Economic Sustainability. Using our economic model¹⁸, mentor-coaching can add ~£500-£700 per year to a coach's essential costs. For low-priced certificates that omit this requirement, graduates may face an unexpected bill when seeking ICF recognition.

5.5.1 'AuDHD' Coaching

AuDHD is increasingly used as short-hand for clients who meet criteria for both ADHD and autism is attention grabbing but it glosses over a critical evidence gap.

While more than two dozen randomised or quasi-experimental studies now support ADHD-focused coaching, *autism-specific* coaching protocols are still in the pilot stage or have very small numbers ($n=2$).¹⁹

No large RCTs have tested or assessed a unified 'dual-diagnosis' (AuDHD) model, and the heterogeneity of co-occurring sensory, social-communication, and executive-function profiles means one-size-fits-all interventions are more likely to miss the mark than hit it.

¹⁸ See [Appendix C](#)

¹⁹ See [Appendix A](#) for studies so far.

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Marketing “AuDHD expertise” therefore risks overselling an approach that lacks a published evidence base and may encourage coaches to work beyond their current professional competence.

5.5.2 Private Diagnostic/Treatment Clinic Coaching Quality

Private ADHD diagnostic clinics increasingly offer coaching services as 'wraparound care' following diagnosis. However, examination of major UK providers reveals most employ general life coaches or NLP coaches rather than ADHD-specialised coaches.

This authority transfer problem is particularly concerning because newly diagnosed clients are especially likely to assume that medical endorsement equals coaching competence. The clinics' medical expertise in diagnosis does not extend to coaching supervision or quality assurance, yet marketing materials rarely distinguish between diagnostic and coaching service standards.

5.5.3 Private ADHD clinic coach qualifications and experience: anonymised table

Clinic Name	Services Offered	Coach Credentials Listed	ADHD-Specific Training
Provider A	Diagnosis + Coaching	No individual coach listed	No ADHD-specific training visible
Provider B	Coaching	Unclear (partnership with ADHD group which has coach 'marketplace')	No specific accreditation visible
Provider C	Coaching	No specific ADHD coach training	None visible
Provider D	Diagnosis + Coaching	No specific ADHD training	None visible
Provider E	Diagnosis + Coaching	No specific ADHD training	None visible

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5.6 Directory Listings vs Accredited ADHD Coaches

A search of the Counselling Directory (August 2025) for “ADHD coaching” returned **1,269 results** across the UK.

The Directory has no requirement for ADHD-specific coach training; counsellors, therapists or other practitioners may add “ADHD coaching” as a service regardless of background or qualifications.

While directories such as Counselling Directory and their related Life Coach Directory display a *Verified* seal for practitioners, this verification only confirms that the coach has *some* form of credential or membership - not that they are trained to work with ADHD. In practice, this means that a practitioner with a generic life coaching certificate can advertise “ADHD coaching” and appear to be “verified.”²⁰

This creates a misleading sense of reassurance for clients who may assume “verified” equates to ADHD-specific competence. By contrast, internationally recognised ADHD coaching programmes (e.g., ADDCA, PAAC-approved courses) require 80+ hours of ADHD-specific training, supervised practice, and formal assessment.

As of July 2025, the **ADD Coach Academy (ADDCA)** lists only **39 UK-based ADHD coaches** in its international directory, and the **ADHD Coaches Organisation (ACO)** lists **36 UK members**.²¹ These are the only two publicly verifiable directories of accredited ADHD coaches with ADHD-specific training requirements.

²⁰ <https://www.lifecoach-directory.org.uk/content/verifiedseal.html#arecoachesregulated>

²¹ <https://addca.com/adhd-coach-directory/> <https://www.adhdcoaches.org/find-your-coach>

This stark contrast illustrates the scale of consumer confusion: **hundreds of UK practitioners advertise ADHD coaching**, while fewer than 100 appear in accredited ADHD-specific directories.

5.7 - ADHD Business Coaches or Coaches with ADHD?

When Personal Branding Outpaces Professional Standards

A concerning trend has emerged alongside formal training exploitation: business strategists with ADHD positioning their lived experience as adequate replacements for professional coaching credentials. These coaches can lead group courses, masterminds, and "neurodivergent entrepreneur" communities without ADHD-specific coaching training or ethical oversight.

Examples include a business strategist charging £900 for 90-minute sessions targeting 'ADHD founders' with no visible ADHD-specific training or supervision requirements but very successful positioning and marketing.

The practice creates additional consumer confusion when individuals seeking "ADHD coaching" may not distinguish between lived experience and professional competence. Unlike the training courses analyzed above, these coaches bypass formal certification entirely, relying instead on personal narratives and business success stories.

5.6.1 Typical Characteristics

- No evidence of ICF, PAAC, or clinical credentials
- Marketing emphasizes personal insight and relatability over professional training
- Services include masterminds, business strategy, and mindset courses

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- Language frequently uses clinical terms ("ADHD brain," "dopamine hacks") without scientific framework

5.6.2 Ethical Concerns for Neurodivergent Client Groups:

Clients often assume coaching expertise that may not exist, especially when marketing uses "ADHD business/marketing/sales coach" terminology. Personal success stories, while inspiring, do not replace structured training in ethics, boundaries, or trauma-informed practice required when serving neurodivergent and particularly ADHD and Autistic clients.

Without professional oversight, there are no transparency requirements around scope of practice, data protection, or referral protocols when deeper mental health needs arise - gaps that particularly disadvantage clients with executive function difficulties.

This model represents another form of certification bypass that exploits the same information asymmetries identified in formal training courses, while avoiding even minimal educational requirements.

5.7 Professional Migration Without Training

A concerning trend to note involves licensed mental health professionals transitioning to 'coaching' without acquiring appropriate coaching credentials or understanding coaching scope. Industry publications explicitly advise therapists that they 'don't need more training to offer life coaching' while promoting coaching as a 'cash injection' strategy for struggling therapy practices.²²

²² For example - <https://www.thebadtherapist.coach/blog/difference-between-therapy-and-coaching> accessed 14 July 2025.

This guidance fundamentally misunderstands professional coaching competencies and creates multiple risks:

- Therapeutic professionals may assume coaching skills transfer without specialised training
- Financial motivations ('selling high-end coaching packages before you provide the service') prioritize revenue over competence
- Confusion between coaching and therapy approaches ('if you love teaching, mentoring, and guiding') contradicts coaching's non-directive methodology
- Regulatory arbitrage ('coaches don't have a license to lose') attracts coaches seeking reduced accountability

Such 'migration patterns' explain why some clients encounter coaches who blend therapeutic and coaching approaches without appropriate oversight for either modality.

5.8 High-Cost "Transformation" courses Targeting ADHD Clients

A concerning trend has emerged in ADHD coaching: courses costing £4,000-£8,000 for 8-12 weeks that blend coaching with unproven methods like breathwork, "energy alignment," and trauma processing techniques.

Common characteristics:

- Premium pricing framed as "transformation investments"
- Mix coaching with spiritual practices and wellness marketing
- Promise rapid results like "identity rewiring" or complete life transformation
- Use therapeutic language despite lacking clinical qualifications

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Why this matters: These courses exploit ADHD clients' desire for fundamental change while potentially exceeding professional boundaries. Claims about "brain rewiring" or "nervous system regulation" suggest medical expertise without appropriate qualifications.

5.9 Social Media Influencers Becoming "Coaches"

Social media creators with large ADHD followings increasingly launch high-cost coaching courses without corresponding training. They leverage audience trust built through relatable content to sell services priced like professional coaching.

The problem: Followers may assume social media popularity equals coaching competence. These creators bypass training requirements entirely, creating a parallel coaching economy without professional oversight.

Financial risk: Executive function challenges common in ADHD may impair clients' ability to evaluate complex contracts or recognise when services exceed evidence-based boundaries.

Industry Impact

While these approaches demonstrate unmet demand for holistic ADHD support, they combine the highest financial risk with the greatest potential for inappropriate therapeutic claims. The solution requires elevating professional standards rather than abandoning evidence-based practice.

5.10 Anonymised Case Example: Popular Media Host-Turned-ADHD Coach

This presents a composite, anonymised case in the ADHD coaching marketplace. Our example presents a female, America.-based coach (*here named as Coach A*)

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who moved into ADHD coaching after several years running an unrelated business which was challenging because of their ADHD.

Several years later, Coach A launched a social media channel for adults with ADHD like them, which quickly grew in popularity and began to interview well-known ADHD clinicians and authors. The channel now functions as both an educational platform and a primary marketing funnel. The presence of respected industry leaders creates publicity for their publications and credibility for Coach A.

Background and Training

Coach A took a generalist life coaching course and also completed trauma-informed training. They speak on topics such as 'nervous system regulation, tapping and vitamin supplements'. They have no ADHD-specific coach training or credentials (such as ADDCA or PAAC) could be confirmed in public records.

However, Coach A markets themselves as a 'multi-certified ADHD expert,' even though the certifications they have completed appear to be generalist rather than ADHD-specific.

Business Model

The business model combines several overlapping elements:

- Membership program: Their monthly group coaching membership priced around \$150 offers group sessions, replay access, a self-guided course library, and an online peer community.
- Coach training program: A proprietary ADHD coach training course launched in 2023, priced at around \$10,000 USD. This program is promoted as designed for "neurodivergent brains," but is not externally accredited. Students are described as 'Certified ADHD Coaches'.

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- Podcast platform: The podcast features high-profile ADHD experts, authors and attracts sponsorships. The presence of respected ADHD clinicians and authors adds visibility and credibility to the coach's brand.

Training and Certification Issues

Graduates of Coach A's training program are listed publicly and described as "certified ADHD coaches." However, because the certification is proprietary and not connected to external accrediting bodies, there is significant potential for consumer confusion about what level of training this represents compared with recognised standards (e.g., PAAC, ADDCA).

The Wider Influence of 'Life Coach School' Coaching and Business Model

The structure of the membership program reflects generalist life coaching frameworks, especially those associated with The Life Coach School. These include:

- Group 'hot seat' coaching (where members volunteer to be coached live in front of the group).
- Self-coaching tools such as thought download journaling, "future self" visualisation, and use of a cognitive-behavioural based "thought model."
- A pre-recorded course library where members work through self-paced materials at their own pace.

Adaptations are made to fit ADHD challenges, such as adding modules on procrastination, emotional regulation, body doubling sessions, and community-based accountability.

Observed Trends

This case is representative of a wider trend in the ADHD coaching sector:

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- Podcasting, video and social media influence are leveraged to build coach credibility and funnel clients. These often precede any training.
- Generalist coach training (if any) is combined with self-study rather than ADHD-specific credentials.
- Proprietary certification programs are offered without external accreditation.
- Business models replicate high-revenue life coaching structures, rebranded for an ADHD audience.²³

While this anonymised case focuses on one composite example, the patterns identified are common across multiple high-visibility ADHD coaching businesses. It is designed to illustrate the challenges that clients - both individual and corporate - face when looking for trained specialist ADHD coaching.

6 Economic Analysis

This analysis examines the economic realities facing coaches trained through different pathways, revealing how training investment correlates with sustainable practice standards and client protection measures.

6.1 Training Investment vs. Market Positioning

Analysis of UK coaching market positioning reveals significant variation in both training investment and achievable fees:

²³ The Life Coach School by Brooke Castillo has been the subject of widespread international publicity. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/worklife/article/20240206-life-coaching-industry-scams>

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Training Pathway	Typical Training Investment	Market Range (£/hr)	Training Hours	UK coaches*
ICF ACC qualified	£6,000-12,000	£80-120	60-125	Hundreds
ICF PCC qualified	£8,000-15,000	£120-180	125+	Established coaches
EMCC Senior Practitioner	£8,000-15,000	£100-135	220+	Limited data
PAAC certified (ADHD-specific)	£12,000-15,000	£100-150	85+	Very few (UK: ~3-5)
Low-cost ADHD certificates	£500-3,500	£35-60	20-40	Proliferating
Business coaching (ADHD-adjacent)	Variable	£200-600+	Often unspecified	Unknown

6.2 Professional Operating Costs Analysis

Research gaps identified: Comprehensive data on actual coaching business costs appears limited in published literature. The following framework identifies key cost categories requiring empirical research:

Fixed Professional Development Costs:

- Continuing Professional Development: £1,400-3,000 annually
- Supervision (recommended 1:20 ratio): £1,200-2,000 annually
- Professional insurance: £450-800 annually

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- Professional body memberships: £300-600 annually
- Credential maintenance: £200-500 annually

Business Operation Costs - variable depending on location and service:

- Technology/software platforms: £1,200-2,400 annually
- Professional services (accounting, legal): £1,500-3,000 annually
- Marketing and business development: £2,000-8,000+ annually

6.3 Supervision Cost as Quality Indicator

Professional supervision represents a key differentiator between training pathways:

Credential Type	Supervision Standards	Estimated Annual Cost	Impact on Practice
ICF/EMCC	1:20 ratio recommended	£1,200-2,000	Enhanced client safety
PAAC	Monthly recommended	£1,200-1,800	specialised competence
Commercial certificates	Rarely specified	£0-300	Unknown quality impact

Research opportunity: The extremely limited number of PAAC-certified coaches in the UK (estimated 3-5 coaches) suggests either market failure in accessing quality ADHD-specific training or economic barriers to completing comprehensive certification courses. This scarcity creates potential access issues for clients seeking evidence-based ADHD coaching from credentialed specialists.

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6.4 Economic Sustainability Analysis

Research methodology: Financial analysis of established coaching practices reveals concerning patterns in business sustainability when professional standards are maintained.

Industry cost structure analysis:

- Professional development represents 25-40% of operating expenses for quality coaches
- Supervision costs alone consume 8-12% of gross revenue at recommended ratios
- Combined professional obligations (CPD, supervision, insurance, memberships) typically exceed £3,500 annually

Market sustainability indicators:

- coaches charging below £80/hour may struggle to afford the recommended supervision levels
- Economic pressure creates systematic incentives to reduce professional development investment

Research limitations: Comprehensive income data for UK coaching practices remains limited. Industry-wide economic research is needed to establish baseline sustainability metrics across different qualification levels.

6.5 Market Weakness Indicators

Observations requiring further research:

1. **Supervision gap:** coaches charging below £80/hour unlikely to afford recommended supervision levels

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2. **Scope drift:** Economic pressure may incentivise coaches to exceed competence boundaries.

This pattern is exemplified by unlicensed mental health professionals transitioning to coaching without appropriate training, as documented in industry publications that explicitly advise therapists they "don't need more training to offer life coaching" while promoting coaching as a "cash injection" strategy for struggling therapy practices.

Or coaches practicing in areas that are properly reserved for therapists, counsellors or adjacent health professionals such as dieticians.

It seems likely that the market favors cost-competitive over quality-assured providers, potentially creating systematic risks for a growing client group.

6.6 Future Research Recommendations

Priority data collection needs:

1. **UK coaching income survey:** Comprehensive analysis of fees by qualification level and specialisation
2. **Business cost analysis:** Survey of actual operating expenses across different practice models
3. **Supervision utilisation study:** Correlation between training pathway and ongoing professional development investment
4. **Client outcome research:** Effectiveness comparison across different training and supervision standards

Limitation: This current analysis relies on limited data sources, collected anecdotally from an unrepresentative sample of coaches known to the author. Industry-wide economic research would strengthen the evidence base for policy recommendations.

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6.7 Policy Implications

The economic sustainability challenges documented here suggest:

- Training courses should include realistic business planning education
- Professional bodies might consider sliding-scale membership for new coaches, particularly the ICF, PAAC etc
- Insurance providers could differentiate premiums based on supervision compliance
- Regulatory frameworks should account for economic barriers to quality practice

Conclusion:

Economic pressures in the ADHD coaching market may systematically disadvantage both well-trained coaches and the clients they serve. Further empirical research is needed to quantify these effects and develop evidence-based solutions.

6.8 Credential Inflation and Scope Creep Across the ADHD Sector

6.8.1 Unqualified Assessment Practices

Private assessment provider described as having conducted tens of thousands of ADHD assessments while lacking clinical qualifications to perform diagnostic evaluations.

Concerning trends:

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- Reliance on computerised tests (e.g. QB Check) as primary diagnostic tools despite limited independent validation studies.²⁴
- Marketing assessment services without qualified clinicians conducting evaluations
- Scale of operations (50,000+ claimed assessments) amplifying potential for widespread impact

6.8.2 General Coaching Presented as ADHD Expertise

Documented pattern: Analysis of ADHD service providers reveals frequent credential inflation where general life coaching training is marketed as specialised ADHD competency.

Common characteristics:

- Business or general coaching backgrounds presented as ADHD expertise
- Premium pricing (£150-200/session) for non-specialised services
- Marketing terminology suggesting clinical expertise ("ADHD brain optimization," "dopamine strategies")
- Charity or medical clinic endorsement lending false credibility

Real Life Example (without identification): One widely-promoted provider claims "coaching training from [general coaching institute]" while marketing ADHD-specific services. Investigation reveals the referenced training contains no ADHD content, and the provider's professional qualifications are in unrelated business fields. This is more common than many would expect.

²⁴ See References. NICE guidance states that QB Check is not only to be used with standard clinical assessment by a qualified healthcare professional.

7 Legal Boundaries & Conflicts of Interest

7.1 Qualification Transparency

ADHD coaching services should clearly communicate coaches' specific training credentials.

General life coaching certification, while valuable, differs substantially from specialised ADHD competency training. Ethical practice requires transparent disclosure of:

- ADHD-specific training hours and accreditation
- Supervision experience with neurodivergent populations
- Scope of practice limitations
- Referral protocols for issues beyond coaching competence

7.2 Ethical Decision-Making Framework for ADHD Coaches

Purpose: This decision framework provides ADHD coaches with an example of a systematic approach to navigating common ethical dilemmas, maintaining professional boundaries, and protecting clients as well as themselves.

Each decision point includes specific guidance and required actions. A visual diagram of the process is available in 7.2.2 for easy recall.

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7.2.1 Ethical Decision-Making Framework for ADHD Coaches

Decision Point 1: Clinical vs. Coaching Scope

Key Question: "Does this client issue require diagnosis, medical assessment, or therapeutic intervention?"

Immediate Referral Required:

- Client reports suicidal or self-harm ideation
- Substance abuse affecting daily functioning
- Trauma symptoms requiring clinical intervention
- Requests for ADHD diagnosis or medication guidance
- Severe depression, anxiety, or eating disorder symptoms
- Relationship violence or abuse disclosures
- Workplace harassment requiring legal intervention

Coaching Appropriate (including but not limited to):

- Goal-setting and accountability for known ADHD challenges
- Developing organisational systems and routines
- Career transition planning and decision-making
- Time management and productivity strategies
- Building self-advocacy skills
- Creating structure for daily challenges

Action Protocol:

REFER: "This sounds like something better addressed with a therapist/GP/specialist. I can provide referral resources and we can revisit coaching goals once you've had that support."

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CONTINUE: Proceed with coaching while maintaining boundary awareness

Decision Point 2: Financial Conflicts of Interest

Key Question: "Do I receive financial benefit from products, services, or referrals I recommend?"

High-Risk Scenarios:

- Affiliate commissions from ADHD apps, planners, or supplements
- Kickbacks from other service providers
- Selling products during coaching sessions
- Revenue sharing with referral partners
- Dual relationships with financial benefits

Suggested Protocol:

DISCLOSURE: "I want to be transparent that I receive a commission if you purchase this product. Let me explain why I'm recommending it despite this financial relationship..."

DOCUMENTATION: Include conflict of interest policy in coaching agreement

ALTERNATIVES: Always provide non-affiliated alternatives when available

Decision Point 3: Dual Role Conflicts

Key Question: "Am I serving multiple roles that could compromise my effectiveness or client welfare?"

Problematic Relationships:

- Coaching your employee, supervisor, or business partner
- Providing coaching and therapy to the same client
- Coaching family members or close friends

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- Romantic/sexual relationships with current/former clients
- Business partnerships with active coaching clients

Suggested approach, Risk Mitigation:

SEPARATE CONTRACTS: Different agreements for different services

SEPARATE SESSIONS: Clear boundaries around which role is active

SEPARATE BILLING: Distinct invoicing and payment systems

CLEAR COMMUNICATION: Explicit discussion of active relationship

When to Decline: If role conflict cannot be adequately managed, refer to another qualified coach

Decision Point 4: Jurisdictional Compliance

Key Question: "Do legal requirements in my location or client's location affect my practice?"

Before Coaching begins, Suggested Research Requirements:

- Title protection: Legal use of "coach" designation
- Scope limitations: Activities reserved for licensed professionals
- Mandatory reporting: Required disclosures for certain situations
- Data protection: Privacy law compliance (GDPR, etc.)
- Professional liability: Insurance and professional standards

UK-Specific Considerations:

- No legal protection for "coach" title; therapeutic claims are regulated
- Advertising Standards Authority oversight for health-related marketing

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- GDPR compliance required for EU clients
- Professional indemnity insurance strongly recommended
- Equality Act implications for disability-related services

Action: Consult legal advice when uncertain about requirements and responsibilities, as well as having professional indemnity insurance at all times.

Decision Point 5: Safeguarding and Crisis Response

Key Question: "Are there immediate safety risks requiring crisis intervention?"

Crisis Indicators:

- Suicide risk: Active plans, means, intent, or ideation
- Self-harm: Cutting, disordered eating, substance abuse escalation
- Violence risk: Threats towards others, domestic/workplace violence
- Child protection: Abuse disclosures, neglect, safeguarding concerns
- Severe impairment: Inability to care for self or dependents
- Psychosis: Hallucinations, delusions, severe reality disconnection

Suggested Crisis Protocol:

- IMMEDIATE: Do not leave actively suicidal client alone; if session is online, use alternative number to contact the named person or emergency services by telephone while continuing to talk to the client.
- CONTACT: Emergency services (999/911) or crisis helplines
- SUPPORT: Stay with client until professional help arrives
- DOCUMENT: Record actions taken and timeline
- FOLLOW-UP: Coordinate with crisis team about coaching continuity
- SUPERVISION: Debrief with supervisor within 24 hours

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Crisis Resources for Referral of Clients:

- UK: Samaritans (116 123), Crisis Text Line (85258)
- Professional: Clinical supervisors, emergency consultation
- Legal: Professional liability insurer emergency line

Implementation Guidelines

Regular Review:

- Weekly: Review active cases against decision points
- Monthly: Update crisis contacts and legal requirements
- Quarterly: Assess conflict policies and relationship boundaries
- Annually: Review jurisdictional requirements and professional development

Documentation:

- Record decision-making rationale for complex situations
- Maintain current referral resource lists
- Document crisis interventions or mandatory reporting
- Keep evidence of ongoing supervision and consultation

Professional Support:

- Supervision: Regular consultation with qualified supervisor
- Peer consultation: Professional support groups
- Legal consultation: Access to advice for complex situations
- Professional development: Ongoing ethics and risk management training

Client Communication:

Proactively discuss boundaries during intake:

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"Part of ethical coaching means being clear about what I can and cannot address. If issues arise requiring therapy, medical attention, or crisis support, I'll help connect you with appropriate resources."

This framework protects both coaches and clients by providing clear, actionable guidance for navigating ethical challenges in ADHD coaching practice.

7.2.1 Coaching Decision Framework Checklist

**ADHD Coach -
Ethical Choices Checklist**

- Is this a clinical or coaching issue?
- Is there a financial benefit to me in my recommendations?
- Am I in more than one role with this person?
- What legal duties do I have in my client's location?
- Are there immediate safety risks that need urgent intervention?

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8 Suggested Recommendations

8.1 Core Principles

This report is not exhaustive and is the result of the research and dedication to ethical ADHD coaching practice of one individual coach (Katherine Sanders). However, the need for change should by now be clear. The author suggests the following as a starting point for the establishment of a professional, safe and ultimately trustworthy coaching scope of practice for ADHD clients.

8.1.2 Industry

1. Adopt the ADHD Minimum Competence Framework (Section 5.3).
2. Publish training:coaching hour ratios (hours coached : hours trained/supervised).
3. Implement AI Governance Boards overseeing bias audits and data security.

8.1.3 Consumers

- Due-Diligence Checklist - ten questions to verify coach competence (Appendix F).
- Red Flags - outcome guarantees, NDAs - please read the coaching agreement provided by the coach, ≤ 40 hrs training, hidden fees.

8.1.4 Policymakers

- Introduce licensing tiers for neurodivergent groups and coaching.
- Fund longitudinal outcome studies comparing ADHD coaching with CBT.
- Integrate coaching into national safeguarding frameworks.

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8.2 Minimum Competence Framework for ADHD Coaches

- Training - at least 80 hrs ADHD-specific coursework aligned to PAAC competencies + 10 hrs autism intersection content.
- Clinical Boundaries - explicit scope-of-practice clause distinguishing coaching from therapy/medication.
- Supervision - 1 hr of supervision per 20 client hrs with a credentialed ADHD coach-supervisor (PAAC, PCC or equivalent).
- Evidence-Based Tools - discourage unvalidated 'wellness' or alternative claims within the same service agreement as ADHD coaching.
- Transparent Pricing - ensure that prices for clients are agreed in advance and no additional charges are added. Even if they are mentioned in the coaching agreement, draw the client's attention to these BEFORE the coaching agreement is signed.
- No "Outcome Guarantees" - marketing must avoid claims of curing or removing ADHD, which will mean that coaches may find the communication of their services has to change.

8.3 Stakeholder Response Framework

Different industry members require tailored approaches to taking action and implementing ethical reforms. This framework provides specific, actionable steps for each stakeholder group.

8.3.1 Training Providers & Certification Bodies

Immediate Actions

- Audit current curricula to ensure that ADHD (and/or Autistic) coaching competency safeguards are met

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- Implement transparent fee structures showing training hours vs. certification costs
- Establish minimum supervision ratios for student coaches
- Create public complaint processes with independent review panels

Medium-term Development

- Develop trauma-informed coaching modules for all courses
- Partner with disability organisations for curriculum review
- Establish continuing education requirements for neurodivergent client work
- Create alumni outcome tracking systems

Quality Indicators

- Publish graduation rates and post-training supervision compliance
- Maintain public register of complaints and resolution outcomes
- Demonstrate measurable client outcomes through follow-up studies

8.3.2 Technology Platforms & Online Marketplaces

Platform Responsibility Standards

- Verify coaching credentials before allowing focused ADHD advertising
- Implement AI safeguards to make sure that health/therapeutic claims are avoided and harmful behaviour is flagged to the platform providers, users and/or support services.
- Require explicit disclosure of coach qualifications and limitations
- Create rapid response systems for client safety concerns

Due Diligence Requirements

- Annual credential verification for listed coaches
- Mandatory client feedback systems with harm reporting mechanisms
- Clear distinction between coaching and therapy services

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- Geographic compliance with local advertising standards

8.3.3 Insurance Companies & Risk Assessors

Enhanced Underwriting Criteria

- Differentiate premium structures based on training hours and supervision compliance
- Require specific ADHD competency documentation
- Implement claims tracking for coaching-related harm incidents
- Exclude coverage for coaches operating without appropriate credentials

Coaching Industry - Professional Risk Mitigation

- Fund research into coaching outcome effectiveness
- Support development of evidence-based practice guidelines
- Create industry-wide incident reporting systems
- Establish best practice sharing networks

8.3.4 Professional Coaching Bodies

Coaching Governance Reforms

- Establish independent ethics review panels with external oversight
- Implement mandatory reporting for serious ethical violations
- Create cross-organisation standards for neurodivergent client work
- Develop responses for emerging risks (AI, new populations)

Suggested Methods of Ethical Guideline Enforcement

- Publish detailed annual reports on complaint handling and sanctions
- Establish mutual recognition agreements for ethical violations
- Create industry-wide database of approved or verified coaches

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- Implement graduated sanctions from education to permanent exclusion

Future Research & Development Priorities

- Fund longitudinal studies on coaching effectiveness for neurodivergent coaching clients
- Create evidence-based competency frameworks for specific conditions (ADHD, autism, trauma)
- Establish outcome measurement standards across the profession

8.3.5 Individual Coaches

Develop and Use Self-Assessment Tools

- Annual competency reviews
- Peer consultation groups for complex ethical scenarios
- Regular supervision with qualified supervisors (minimum 1:20 ratio)
- Continuing education focused on emerging neurodivergent community needs

Use Professional Practice Standards

- Maintain transparent fee structures and outcome expectations
- Implement informed consent processes that clearly distinguish coaching from therapy
- Establish clear referral pathways to licensed mental health professionals
- Document supervision and continuing education compliance

8.3.6 For Policy Makers & Regulators

Legislative Considerations

- Review existing consumer protection laws for coaching service coverage

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- Consider tiered licensing requirements for specific ADHD coaching services
- Strengthen advertising standards enforcement in digital spaces
- Establish funding for coaching effectiveness research

Regulatory Framework Development

- Create clear boundaries between coaching and licensed therapy practices
- Implement mandatory reporting requirements for coaching-related harm
- Establish cross-border enforcement mechanisms for digital coaching services
- Develop rapid response capabilities for emerging industry risks

8.4 Possible Implementation Timeline

8.4.1 Phase 1: Foundation Building

- Stakeholder engagement and coaching standards development
- Initial auditing of current education, practice and gap analysis
- Pilot programme implementation with willing organisations to try any additional or revised coaching guidelines

8.4.2 Phase 2: Systematic Implementation

- Compliance for new accredited training courses
- Insurance requirement changes take effect
- Enhanced verification systems launched, with publicity to ensure that clients are aware of the changes

8.4.3 Phase 3: Industry Transformation

- Roll out of implementation across all stakeholder groups
- Outcome measurement and continuous improvements
- International standard harmonisation efforts to continue

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This framework recognises that sustainable change requires coordinated action across multiple stakeholder groups, with clear accountability mechanisms and realistic implementation timelines - and that **this is unlikely to happen** at a time when businesses and governments are reducing spending on recognised mental health services and support for disabled members of society.

9 Conclusion - A Call to Professional Conscience

The evidence presented in this white paper demands we face some uncomfortable truths.

The 'ADHD coaching' industry claims to serve clients who often have intersectional challenges.

We stand at the crossroads where the profession has to choose between ignoring exploitation (*explicit or implicit*) and the meaningful safe-guarding of neurodivergent clients along with our ethics and professional values.

The Scale of the Challenge

The numbers tell a stark story:

- multiple regulatory enforcement actions across several countries in recent years,
- billion-dollar market growth driven by growing awareness of both the benefits of ADHD,
- the failure of traditional healthcare models of support,
- the genuine positive impact of coaching,;
- and systematic erosion of professional standards masked by certification inflation, as well as the impact of 'social influencer' coaches etc.

We can no longer dismiss these as 'growing pains' but have to acknowledge the need for urgent action - and that can be led by professional, accredited coaches

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and organisations OR by governments who are still struggling to understand ADHD, never mind assess the efficacy of the diverse practice of coaching.

- When coaches with 40 hours of training charge the same fees as those with 200+ hours of supervised practice,
- when "AuDHD expertise" is marketed without a rigorous, research-backed evidence base,
- when 'wellness entrepreneurs' can legally describe themselves as ADHD coaches to huge audiences on social media and
- when clients' government disability funding becomes an expanding business opportunity,

we have moved far beyond acceptable market variation into exploitation territory.

We cannot be offended or surprised when social media is awash with service users who feel that they are being targeted, or in the worst cases, scammed by people who use the 'ADHD Coach' title.

The Human Cost

Behind every regulatory case is a real person, an ADHD adult seeking support, an autistic individual looking for understanding, a family desperate for help.

Utah's legislation was introduced because life coaches were describing their services as though they were licensed therapists. Australia's NDIS ban came after public funds were diverted from evidence-based interventions to unproven 'holistic' coaching services. These are not abstract policy debates but preventable problems born from a lack of regulatory professional oversight.

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The risks of serious depression, self-harm and even suicide are significantly higher in the ADHD population than the general population²⁵.

When unqualified or inadequately trained coaches target this client demographic, if they are promised transformation without evidence, when profit is prioritised over protection and we stay silent, we risk becoming complicit in potential harm.

The Professional Imperative

Good coaching can deliver a significant positive impact for clients. The research demonstrates meaningful improvements in executive function, quality of life, and goal attainment when delivered by coaches who have appropriate training and supervision. But these benefits require an up-front investment in competence that current market incentives actively discourage.

This white paper documents a profession at its ethical tipping point.

The Choice Before Us

We can continue the current trajectory towards regulation imposed by external authorities responding to consumer harm. Or we can take this moment to elevate coaching standards, protect those at risk of exploitation, and build sustainable professional excellence.

The solution requires courage:

- **Training providers** must prioritise competence over profit margins
- **Professional bodies** must enforce objective, meaningful standards or lose credibility

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<https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/media/109514702/suicide-in-adhd-adhd-bekrshire-health-care.pdf>

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- **Technology platforms** must verify qualifications beyond basic marketing claims
- **Individual coaches** must acknowledge the limits of their competence
- **Policymakers** must act before more preventable harm occurs

The Economic Reality

This transition will be challenging. Coaches trained in low-cost courses may need additional education. Training providers may face reduced enrollment as standards rise or even close their courses. **But the alternative of allowing the growing exploitation of all coaching clients is morally indefensible.**

The coaching profession cannot simultaneously claim almost 'therapeutic' benefits while avoiding therapeutic responsibility.

We cannot market coaching to ADHD clients while maintaining standards suitable for general life coaching.

We cannot promise transformation while providing entertainment.

The Call to Action

Those with quality training and ethical commitment have a professional obligation to act.

We must support evidence-based standards, even if it disadvantages us economically. We must report harmful practices, even when it strains professional relationships. We must advocate for client protection, even when it threatens industry growth.

The ADHD and neurodivergent communities deserve better than some current offerings. They deserve coaches with genuine competence, evidence-based interventions, and ethical oversight.

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They deserve protection from exploitation disguised as empowerment.

The Final Word

This white paper issues a challenge to every stakeholder in the ADHD support ecosystem: **Decide what and who you stand for.**

Choose competence over convenience, protection over profit, evidence over anecdote or accept that you may unwittingly cause someone harm if you are coaching outside your professional competence.

The 'at risk' group among the widely varied clients we partner with are watching. Regulators are taking notice. The media is investigating. History will judge whether we rose to meet this moment with courage and conscience, or whether we allowed commercial interests to override moral imperatives.

The time for half-measures and voluntary compliance has passed. The coaching profession must professionalise, or face imposed regulation designed by those who understand neither coaching nor the populations we serve.

The choice is ours and the stakes could not be higher.

The quality of our professional conscience will determine whether coaching becomes a force for genuine empowerment or remains a mechanism for systematic exploitation of those least able to protect themselves.

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Appendix A - Autism Coaching Studies

Smaller, non-RCT studies that highlight why autism-specific coaching demands a different skill-set

Focus & Key Take-away	Design / N	Core finding (coaching-relevant)	APA Reference
Individualised life-skills coaching for autistic adults	Mixed-methods feasibility; N = 12	Coaches had to co-design visual routines and accommodate sensory fatigue - skills not covered in generic ADHD programme.	Baker-Ericzén, M. J., Fitch, M. A., Kinnear, M., Jenkins, M. M., Twamley, E. W., Smith, L., Montano, G., Feder, J., Crooke, P. J., Winner, M. G., & Leon, J. (2017). Development of the Supported Employment, Comprehensive Cognitive Enhancement, and Social Skills programme for adults on the autism spectrum: Results of initial study. <i>Autism</i> , 22(1), 6-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361317724294 (Original work published 2018)
PEERS®-for-Careers employment coaching	Pilot; N = 27	Structured social-communication rehearsal doubled job-offer rate vs wait-list. Requires explicit teaching of "hidden curriculum."	Moody, Christine & Factor, Reina & Gulsrud, Amanda & Grantz, Caroline & Tsai, Katherine & Jolliffe, Morgan & Rosen, Nicole & Mccracken, James & Laugeson, Elizabeth. (2022). A pilot study of PEERS® for Careers: A comprehensive employment-focused social skills intervention for autistic young adults in the United States. <i>Research in</i>

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			Developmental Disabilities. 128. 104287. 10.1016/j.ridd.2022.104287. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35772303/
Smart-watch-prompted self-management on campus	Single-case multiple-baseline; N= 4	Visual/tactile prompts boosted on-task study time 40-66 %; coaches had to programme and personalise tech.	O'Neill, S. J., & Smyth, S. (2023). Using off-the-shelf solutions as assistive technology to support the self-management of academic tasks for autistic university students. <i>Assistive Technology</i> , 36(2), 173-187. https://doi.org/10.1080/10400435.2023.2230480
Design-Your-Life co-coaching for independent living	Research-through-design case series; N = 10	Success hinged on coaches respecting autistic adults as co-designers - a stance shift from directive ADHD coaching.	Waardenburg, Thijs & Huizen, Niels & Dijk, Jelle & Magnee, Maurice & Staal, Wouter & Teunisse, Jan-Pieter & Van der Voort, Mascha. (2021). Design Your Life: User-Initiated Design of Technology to Support Independent Living of Young Autistic Adults. 10.48550/arXiv.2105.12370. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352935213_Design_Your_Life_User-Initiated_Design_of_Technology_to_Support_Independent_Living_of_Young_Autistic_Adults

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Women-in-work place coaching	Qualitative; N = 11	Autistic women cited sensory overload and masking; effective coaching used pacing, scripts, and advocacy planning.	Langford Watts, C. (2024). Shattering silence: Autistic women redefining coaching and inclusion in the workplace. <i>International Journal of evidence-based Coaching and Mentoring</i> , S18, 46-56. https://doi.org/10.24384/ea33-fk24
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Why this matters for “AuDHD” coaching

These small-scale studies show that autism-informed coaching requires additional competencies -sensory-environment adjustments, visual supports, co-design, explicit social-communication scaffolding - that are *not* standard in ADHD-only coaching curricula.

Coupling that with the still-emerging evidence base (there are no larger studies of a unified “AuDHD” coaching model) underscores the risk of overselling “dual-diagnosis expertise” without the requisite skill-set.

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Appendix B: Diagnostic Complexity of Co-occurring Autism and ADHD

Clinical Recognition and Prevalence

The informal term "AuDHD" describes individuals meeting full diagnostic criteria for both Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

While not an official diagnostic category, this co-occurrence represents a significant clinical reality with important implications for coaching practice.

Modern diagnostic systems explicitly permit dual diagnosis. The DSM-5 (2013) removed historical exclusions that prevented concurrent ASD and ADHD diagnoses, acknowledging substantial research evidence for co-occurrence. ICD-11 similarly allows both diagnoses when criteria are met independently.

Co-occurrence rates are substantial across populations:

- 30-50% of autistic individuals exhibit clinically significant ADHD symptoms
- Individuals with ADHD show 20-fold increased likelihood of ASD diagnosis
- Canadian surveillance data indicates ADHD affects 36.5% of youth with autism, making it the most common co-occurring condition

Professional Assessment Requirements

Differential diagnosis requires specialised expertise. Co-occurring presentations create complex symptom overlap where autism-related difficulties (sensory overwhelm, routine disruption) may mimic ADHD inattention, while ADHD impulsivity can exacerbate autistic social challenges.

UK consensus guidelines (2020) emphasize that dual diagnosis typically requires:

- Multidisciplinary assessment teams
- Multiple observation sessions across settings

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- Collateral information from family, educational, or workplace sources
- specialised diagnostic instruments for each condition

Historical under-diagnosis affects current practice. Many adults seek coaching after decades of incomplete understanding of their neurodivergent profile, having received only single diagnoses due to previous exclusion rules.

Treatment Complexity and Implications

Evidence-based interventions differ significantly between conditions. NICE guidelines specify that co-occurring ASD and ADHD requires individualized treatment approaches:

- ADHD medications remain first-line treatment with careful monitoring
- Autism-specific supports (social communication, sensory accommodations) address distinct needs
- Behavioral interventions must account for interaction between conditions

This complexity challenges coaching competency claims. The nuanced presentation of co-occurring conditions requires understanding of:

- Neurobiological differences between autism and ADHD
- Medication interactions and contraindications
- Sensory processing variations affecting intervention selection
- Executive function profiles that may conflict (need for structure vs. ADHD restlessness)

Implications for Coaching

No unified "AuDHD coaching" methodology exists in peer-reviewed literature.

While autism coaching and ADHD coaching have distinct evidence bases, interventions targeting dual diagnosis remain in developmental stages without established protocols.

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Marketing "AuDHD expertise" therefore risks:

- Overselling competence in complex presentations requiring medical oversight
- Providing one-size-fits-all interventions inappropriate for heterogeneous profiles
- Substituting coaching relationships for proper diagnostic assessment
- Encouraging clients to delay evidence-based medical or therapeutic interventions

Professional boundaries become critical when serving individuals with complex neurodevelopmental presentations that may require coordinated medical, psychological, and educational support beyond coaching scope

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Appendix C - Coaching: Life and Work Sustainability

The idea of “coaching part-time” and having an ideal work-life balance is a motivation many trainees mention when talking about their decision to pursue self-employed coaching. To help explain what that might look like, this table offers the impact of working for 700 billable client-contact hours per year.

It assumes that a coach is working 5 days per week and hopes to take 4 or 5 weeks completely off (public holidays already folded into that “off” time).

Scenario	Working weeks	Billable (client coaching) hrs per week	Billable hrs per day*
4 weeks off (48 weeks on)	48	≈ 14.6 h	≈ 2.9 h
5 weeks off (47 weeks on)	47	≈ 14.9 h	≈ 3.0 h

*Assumes a 5-day working week of client-facing time. If coaching only 4 days/week, bump the daily figure by 25 % (≈ 3.6-3.8 h).

- Client-facing: roughly 3 one-hour sessions per day (or six 50-minute sessions on two long “client days” if sessions are batched - but this is NOT recommended in terms of quality of coaching presence, follow-up etc).
- Everything else (administrative work, marketing, supervision, CPD, prep) typically consumes another 50-100 % of those hours, so plan on a 28-30 h total workweek to hit 700 billable hours sustainably. New coaches establishing their business will quickly discover that marketing alone could take more than that to make an impact in a saturated coaching niche.
- Capacity buffer: running at ~15 client hours/week leaves a small amount of room for peak periods or programme launches without hitting burnout thresholds (remember that a cap of 25 active clients is unlikely to be sustainable or offer high quality coaching experiences for clients).

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Appendix D: Sources, Framework, Limitations and Scope

Primary Data Sources

Regulatory Database Analysis: Systematic review of advertising standards rulings (ASA, ASAI), professional licensing actions, and legislative records from 2013-2025. Sources included official government databases, legal filing systems, and published regulatory decisions across the UK, US (Utah, Tennessee), Ireland, and Australia.

Industry Standards Comparison: Direct analysis of publicly available ethical frameworks, training requirements, and complaint procedures from six major coaching bodies (ICF, EMCC, Association for Coaching, IAC, WABC, NBHWC). Data collected from official websites, published standards documents, and credential requirements as of July 2025.

Market Analysis: Examination of ADHD/autism coaching training courses advertised in the UK market (June-July 2025), including pricing structures, training hours, supervision requirements, and marketing claims. Sources included provider websites, social media advertising, and publicly available course materials.

Literature Review: Systematic search of peer-reviewed research on ADHD coaching efficacy using PubMed, PsycINFO, and coaching-specific journals (2015-2025). Selection criteria prioritised randomized controlled trials and meta-analyses.

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Analytical Framework

The research employs a risk-based assessment model, evaluating coaching practices against three key criteria:

1. Vulnerability of client population (power imbalances, cognitive/emotional factors)
2. Potential for harm (financial, psychological, medical)
3. Regulatory oversight gaps (enforcement mechanisms, accountability measures)

Limitations & Scope

This analysis focuses primarily on English-language markets and may not capture cultural variations in coaching practice globally.

Economic data reflects publicly available information about UK market conditions and may require adjustment for other areas. The study examines only widely available information and does not include any proprietary internal data from coaching organisations, training providers, service providers or coaches.

As a practicing ADHD coach with certifications from ADDCA, PEERS, and CEFIO, the author brings both insider knowledge and potential bias to this analysis.

This dual perspective - informed by practical experience yet committed to industry accountability - shapes the recommendations while maintaining focus on client protection as the primary ethical imperative. At the same time, by being a member of the coaching profession there will be an inbuilt bias which she has tried to remain aware of.

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Appendix E: Detailed Coach Training programme Information

Information on each course was taken from publicly available websites for each provider in May 2025 and checked before publication in July 2025. No private information or details were used to obtain or assess these courses and the author has no paid connection to any courses mentioned. The author trained at ADDCA (Simply, Basic, Advanced and Family Coach training from 2020-2022).

Sources:

- ADHD Works - Course page and Thinkific FAQ
- Barrett Coaching - programme description
- Conner & Cater “ADHD Coaching Course” - NewZenler site
- ADD Coach Academy - ADDCA site/announcements (ICF Level 1 & 2 and PAAC accreditation);
- Gold Mind Academy - “*Become a Certified ADHD Coach*” (programme overview, hours, cost, ICF CCE status);
- ADHD Foundation Coaching Diploma - Course Details Handbook 2024; website July 2025.
- Coach Approach Training Institute - Website (ICF accreditation, integrated ADHD/productivity approach, credentials offered);
- CReW Coaching Institute - About page (hours of training, ICF standards, neurodevelopment content); LinkedIn post (ICF Level 1 accreditation)
- ADHD Coaches Organization - “*ADHD Coach Training courses*”
- Certified Excellence “ADHD Coach” course - Web page (example of IPHM, CMA accreditation and promises; modules and exam)
- Evidence of pay-to-play accreditation: IAOTH site snippet (accreditation for \$199/year); Reddit discussion of a 2.5h course with IAOTH stamp.
- PASSHE new ADHD Coach training course (August 2025), provider website;

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All sources are linked to in detailed information below

ADHD-specific Coach Training or CCE - training for coaches with previous qualifications.

(presented in Training Provider Name alphabetical order)

ADD Coach Academy (ADDCA, USA) - Comprehensive ADHD Coach Certification

Note: ADDCA is a longstanding programme and a benchmark for ADHD coach training quality in the U.S.

- Training Hours: 200+ hours across two programme levels. ADDCA offers a Foundational course (~4 months) followed by an Advanced Certification course (~9 months). Together these span roughly 12-13 months of training. The curriculum is extensive: classes meet weekly via live teleclass/webinar, typically in small groups of ~10-15. The foundational (Basic) course alone is estimated at 60-80 hours; the advanced course adds roughly 125-140 hours, bringing total coach-specific training to well over 180 hours (far exceeding minimum requirements), plus additional mentor coaching hours required and peer group meetings. ADDCA places a heavy emphasis on ADHD knowledge (neuroscience, brain biology, executive function) alongside coaching skills.
- Practice Requirements: Yes - very extensive. Trainees must log significant coaching practice. Throughout the programme, students practice with peers and with actual clients under supervision. ADDCA requires each student work with a mentor coach; trainees must complete observed coaching sessions and a substantial number of practice hours (often 100+ hours of coaching by graduation, aligning with ICF/PAAC standards). This supervised practicum ensures graduates have extensive real-world

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experience. Additionally, ADDCA students have to submit recordings of their coaching for review multiple times during training.

- Supervision/Mentoring: Yes - intensive. ADDCA's programme requires individual mentor coaching and feedback. Each student must find an experienced approved mentor coach who observes their recorded sessions and provides detailed feedback. This mentoring is mandatory and integral - it not only prepares students for certification but also instills high coaching standards.
- Exams/Assessments: Yes. To become certified, students undergo both written and practical evaluations. The Advanced course requires passing a final performance evaluation (e.g. submitting recorded coaching sessions that demonstrate mastery of ADHD coaching competencies) and a knowledge exam on key ADHD concepts and coaching ethics. The rigorous assessment process aligns with PAAC's credentialing - graduates often earn the designation "Professional Certified ADHD Coach (PCAC)" by passing ADDCA's Advanced Coach requirements, which include demonstrating coaching skill at or above ICF ACC level. In short, ADDCA's certification is not automatic upon attendance; students must repeatedly meet proficiency standards and complete all assignments in a time frame to graduate.
- Accreditation: Fully accredited (ICF & PAAC). ADDCA is the first ADHD coach training programme to be fully accredited by both the International Coach Federation *and* the Professional Association of ADHD Coaches. It holds ICF Level 1 *and* Level 2 accreditation, meaning its curriculum is approved to train students to the ACC and PCC credential levels. It is also recognised as an AACTP by PAAC, signifying that graduates are eligible for PAAC's Certified ADHD Coach credentials. This dual accreditation is a gold-standard in the field - ADDCA's programme meets rigorous global coaching standards and ADHD-specific competencies.
- Pricing: The Basic (Foundations) course is about \$7,071 or the Advanced Level course, which includes Basic about \$13,252. (Payment plans are

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available, and this excludes mentor coaching fees.) While costly, the programme spans over a year of training if taken to Advanced Level ADDCA also offer a 'Fundamentals of Family Coaching' Course which is only available to those who have completed Basic training; it is 30 weeks long, 3 hours of class time per week (99 hours in total) plus peer group and mentor coaching; . \$5,890 in total, excluding mentor coaching costs.

- Graduate Outcomes: Graduates emerge with highly respected credentials. Completing the full programme certifies one as an *ADDCA Certified ADHD Coach* (and confers the ACCG credential). Alumni can also apply for ICF credentials (ACC/PCC) using the ACSTH/Level 2 path thanks to the ICF-approved hours. ADDCA-trained coaches are often viewed as “gold standard” ADHD coaches in the market. The academy highlights its evidence-based approach and the fact that it has trained over 1,500 coaches worldwide since 1999.
- Graduates have a deep grounding in ADHD neuroscience and coaching techniques, plus supervised experience - enabling them to confidently market themselves as specialist ADHD coaches for any client population (youth, adults, etc.). ADDCA's reputation and network (including its listing on the ADHD Coaches Organisation's recognised courses) also bolster a graduate's credibility when attracting clients.
- For all details see:
<https://addca.com/adhd-coach-training/ADHD-Coach-Training-courses-Overview/>

ADHD Foundation - Coaching Diploma

The details for this Diploma are taken from the July 2024 Course Handbook (Linked below);

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UPDATE: On 30 August 2025, The ADHD Foundation announced that it had entered a formal insolvency process which would lead to liquidation.²⁶ It is unlikely that the course will be taught in 2026. This follows confidential feedback on training which had raised questions about the future of the course.

- Training Hours: Two-year programme structure with unspecified contact hours
- Practice Requirements: Not detailed in course handbook
- Supervision/Mentoring: Supervision arrangements not outlined in available materials
- Exams/Assessments: Assessment methodology not specified in public documentation
- Accreditation: CPD course only - no external coaching body accreditation (ICF, EMCC, PAAC, or AC). programme handbook confirms Continuing Professional Development status rather than initial coaching certification pathway but states that graduates will be able to work as ADHD coaches.
- Pricing: £5,400 for two-year programme (based on handbook materials)
- Graduate Outcomes: CPD certificate awarded; does not qualify graduates for professional coaching credentials without prior qualifications

Course positioning: Website emphasises "coaching diploma" terminology while programme handbook reveals materials accredited by CPD,, creating potential confusion about qualification level and professional recognition.

<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Handbook-July-24-1-compressed.pdf>

<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/training/coaching-diploma>

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<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/news/adhd-foundation-closure#:~:text=It%20is%20with%20great%20sadness,28%2C000%20children%20and%20young%20people.>

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ADHD Works (UK) - ADHD Coach Course (Internal Certification)

- Training Hours: ~6-week hybrid course with self-paced content and weekly live sessions. The curriculum comprises *74 bite-sized lessons* (recorded videos, worksheets, etc.) and *6 live group coaching sessions* (one per week). Live sessions are approximately 1 ninety minutes each, totaling ~9 hours of live interaction; self-study lesson content is flexible (designed for ~30 days of daily micro-learning).
- Practice Requirements: Minimal. The course does not mandate logging external client hours during training. Instead, trainees practice skills during the weekly group sessions and through an online community of peers. The programme offers “a friendly community...for asking questions, sharing ideas, and getting support” rather than formal practicum with outside clients. (No structured in-field client coaching is required to earn the certificate.)
- Supervision/Mentoring: Limited. There is no structured mentor coaching component. However, the company founder (Leanne Maskell, a graduate of ADDCA's Basic Course) provides personalised feedback during the final skills assessment. Ongoing peer support is available via the lifetime community membership, but one-on-one supervision is not a formal part of the course.
- Exams/Assessments: Yes - a post-course skills assessment. After completing all lessons, students must coach in a mock session (or equivalent evaluation) to demonstrate their ADHD coaching skills. The instructor reviews performance and provides feedback to ensure the new coach is “fully equipped” before certification. There is no written or closed-book exam; the emphasis is on practical coaching ability.
- Accreditation: None (self-certification). ADHD Works does not offer ICF/EMCC accreditation. The course is an internal certification - as the FAQ notes, “you don't need any [external] qualifications to be a coach in the UK,”

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so ADHD Works created its own credential. Graduates are not ICF- or EMCC-credentialed, nor is the programme endorsed by a major coaching body. Importantly, it also does *not* rely on pseudo-accreditations; ADHD Works' certificate is recognised only by their own organization (they maintain a directory of "ADHD Works certified" coaches). The programme asserts that this is sufficient for coaches to, for example, provide services under the UK's *Access to Work* disability support scheme - a claim indicating that graduates can coach clients with government funding despite lacking a regulated credential.

- Pricing: £3,450 (one-time) for the Level 1 course. A 3-month installment plan is offered, and employers can be approached to fund it (ADHD Works provides a sponsorship request template). The price includes lifetime access to course materials and the community.
- Graduate Outcomes: Graduates receive a "*Certified Level 1 ADHD Works Coach*" certificate and are featured on the ADHD Works website as approved coaches. They are licensed to use the "ADHD Works Certified" logo in their marketing. The programme offers this as building trust and credibility with clients, despite being a proprietary credential. ADHD Works explicitly notes that coaches will be able to work with clients *via official channels* - for example, they state graduates "*will be able to coach people through Access to Work (the UK's government funding scheme for ADHD coaching)*". In practice, this means the training is positioned as sufficient qualification for those publicly funded coaching courses, even without ICF/EMCC credentials. Graduates primarily operate independent coaching businesses or integrate these skills into related professions; a few may be invited to contract under ADHD Works itself to meet client demand.

Advanced AuDHD Expansion (2025): ADHD Works now offers a separate "Advanced AuDHD Coach" certification (£3,540) for coaches who want to work with clients having both autism and ADHD diagnoses. This highlights the "dual-diagnosis" marketing identified earlier in this research, with no published evidence base for

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unified AuDHD interventions.²⁷

<https://adhdworks.thinkific.com/courses/become-an-adhd-coach-in-sept-2025>

<https://adhdworks.thinkific.com/courses/become-an-advanced-audhd-coach-june-2025>

Barrett Coaching & Training - Accredited Award in ADHD Coaching (UK)

- Training Hours: 60 hours total. Delivered as 36 hours live (12 weekly classes × 3 hours) via Zoom, plus 24 hours self-directed study on their e-learning platform. The live sessions run in small cohorts (max 12 learners) and are highly interactive and practice-based.
- Practice Requirements: Yes - substantial. Outside class, each trainee must complete 12 hours of coaching with real clients (two volunteer clients, 6 sessions each) and submit reflective logs for each session. This hands-on practicum ensures graduates have real-world coaching experience.
- Supervision/Mentoring: Yes. The course includes 1 hour of one-to-one supervision with the tutor during training, to discuss the student's coaching and development. Additionally, graduates get free ongoing supervision: 3 group supervision sessions per year for two years post-course are provided at no extra cost. This extended supervision support is a notable benefit, helping new coaches continue to grow in practice.
- Exams/Assessments: No formal exam. There is no sit-down test or graded exam; assessment is competency-based. To earn the *Accredited Award*, trainees must attend at least 11 of 12 live classes, complete all self-study modules, and fulfill the practice and reflection requirements (the final class includes a group supervision and wrap-up/celebration session). Successful completion is based on participation and satisfactory reflective logs rather

²⁷ See Appendix A and B

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than a standard exam. (In other words, evaluation is through continuous assessment and supervision sign-off, not a pass/fail test.)

- Accreditation: This course has dual accreditation from the Association for Coaching (AC) *and* the Universal Coaching Alliance (UCA). The AC is a well-established professional coaching body in Europe, and its approval signifies that the programme meets robust coaching standards. UCA provides an additional accreditation - though less known globally, UCA membership offers resources and a code of ethics aligned with professional practice. Graduates receive one-year free membership in both AC (Associate level) and UCA. *Barrett's programme does not use IAOTH, IPHM, or similar certifications*, relying instead on these peer-reviewed accreditations.
- Pricing: £1,500 + VAT (~£1,800). This tuition is relatively accessible given the live hours and post-certification support. It includes all course materials, supervision sessions, and first-year membership in AC and UCA.
- Graduate Outcomes: Trainees earn an “*Accredited Award in ADHD Coaching*”, allowing them to market themselves as certified ADHD coaches with AC’s recognition. Graduates are listed in Barrett’s online directory of ADHD coaches and join a LinkedIn community of alumni for networking. The programme emphasizes building a professional identity: students learn to develop their marketing and referral network as part of the curriculum. With AC accreditation, graduates can also pursue individual AC credentials in the future. In sum, Barrett-trained coaches emerge with a credible UK accreditation, practical experience coaching ADHD clients, and ongoing supervision - a strong foundation for a professional ADHD coaching practice.

<https://barrettcoachingandtraining.com/accredited-award-in-adhd-coaching-barrett-coaching-and-training/>

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“The ADHD Coaching Course” by ‘The ADHD Coaching Academy’ - Alex Conner & Sally Cater (UK/EU) - Essential ADHD Foundations for Coaches

- Training Hours: This course offers 24 hours of live online classes, meeting every second week for a 4-hour facilitated session. The class size is reported to be kept small, promoting interactive discussions. (There is no separate library of pre-recorded lectures; the emphasis is on live, *evidence-based* instruction and group learning.)
- Practice Requirements: Moderate (in-session). Trainees get “invaluable practice” during the live classes by engaging in role-plays and coaching exercises with peers. The programme is designed for anyone interested in non-directive coaching.
- Supervision/Mentoring: Informal. There is no dedicated mentor coaching component or one-on-one supervision in this short programme. However, the two course leaders (Dr. Alex Conner and Sally Cater) provide feedback and guidance throughout the live sessions.
- Exams/Assessments: None formal. Completion is likely based on attendance and participation. There is no mention of a final exam or assessment; the last module is a reflection and summary session rather than a test.
- Accreditation: Independent (no ICF/EMCC accreditation). The course itself is not formally accredited by ICF, EMCC or other coaching bodies. It is offered through a private platform (NewZenler) under the banner “ADHD Coach Training” but does not claim an official credential. The content is described as evidence-based and aligned with professional coaching principles. However, participants do not earn an externally recognised credential from this course alone. The programme also does not use any “alternative” accreditation like IPHM/IAOTH - it stands on the instructors’ reputations.

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- Pricing: £2,995. Payment plans may be available (the site mentions options of six installments). The fee covers all live sessions and materials.
- Graduate Outcomes: The providers state that the course “equips you with everything you need to start working as a coach with clients or colleagues” dealing with ADHD. In practical terms, it is an introduction to coaching. The available information highlights that the training is evidence-based (grounded in current ADHD research).

<https://adhdcoaching.newzenler.com/courses/the-adhd-coaching-course>

Gold Mind Academy (UK)

- Training Hours: 85 total hours (ICF - CCE hours - Continuing Coach Education). Training is delivered live-online in small cohorts (max 16) over ~6-8 months. Includes ~10 hours of mentor coaching and observed practice (coaching triads with feedback) to build ICF-ready skills.
- Practice Requirements: In-programme peer coaching exercises and triads are used to log coaching hours. No separate external client quota is stated beyond these peer practice hours. The academy facilitates a coaching exchange network to help students gain practice experience quickly.
- Supervision/Mentoring: Yes. Mentor coaching (10 hours) is built into the programme to meet ICF requirements. Students receive real-time feedback on their coaching in every session, and live sessions are observed by faculty for developmental feedback.
- Exams/Assessments: Yes. Trainees must submit recorded coaching sessions for evaluation against ICF competency markers. After the advanced modules, students prepare a recording aligned with ACC standards (and later PCC-level with PAAC’s “5 Essentials”) for assessment. The assessment process is designed to be supportive (open-book style) with detailed feedback; ~99% pass on first attempt.

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- Accreditation: The programme is ICF-CCE accredited (85 hours) and marketed as meeting “the highest international standards for professional coaching education.” Gold Mind is not yet listed by PAAC or EMCC, but its *ADHD Specialist Coaching Diploma* (full 4-module course) offers a total of 125.5 hours of coach-specific education. The advanced curriculum integrates ICF PCC and PAAC competencies, signaling alignment with those bodies’ standards. No use of pay-to-play accreditors.
- Pricing: £4,600 + VAT for the basic programme; £8,300 + VAT for the ‘diploma’ (186 hours of training) or full certification programme. Installment plans are available. In-person intensive modules (optional) cost an additional £750 + VAT each. Mentor coaching, re-submission of assessments and retaking a third live session are all additional costs (£160 + VAT).
- Graduate Outcomes: Graduates earn a Certificate in ADHD Coaching , lending credibility to market themselves as professional ADHD coaches. The training explicitly emphasizes that it “establishes your coaching credibility” with a globally recognised certification.

However, it is NOT an ICF Level 1 course - “This course is ICF (International Coach Federation) accredited at CCE level”. Students are positioned to pursue an ICF ACC credential upon completion using the ‘Portfolio’ track.²⁸

Potential students must be made aware that ‘CCE’ hours are not the same as Level 1 or Level 2 training hours.

<https://goldmindacademy.com/adhd-informed-coaching-certificate>
<https://goldmindacademy.com/icf-accreditation> (broken)

(Other ADHD-specialist courses in the US include JST Coaching & Training (focused on youth/student coaching), the iACT Center (Laurie Dupar’s

²⁸ <https://coachingfederation.org/credentialing/apply-for-credential/>

ICF-accredited ADHD training), MentorCoach's ADHD training, and others. For brevity, we focused on ADDCA as a representative example of established comprehensive US programme.)

General Life Coaching Courses

Animas Coaching (UK) - ICF-, EMCC- and AC-Accredited Transformational Coach Training

- **Overview:** Animas Coaching is a long-established UK-based life coaching school offering a comprehensive diploma in Transformational Coaching. The programme is globally accredited by ICF, EMCC, and the Association for Coaching (AC), and is widely recognised for blending personal development, psychological insight, and social impact into coach education. While not explicitly marketed as an ADHD training provider, Animas integrates neurodiversity awareness throughout its curriculum and has multiple graduates and faculty members who specialise in ADHD and executive function coaching.
- **Structure & Hours:** The diploma runs over approximately 9 months and combines live training modules with practice, mentoring, and assessment. While precise contact hour numbers are not publicly disclosed, the programme fulfills all ICF Level 1 criteria, which includes a minimum of 60 hours of coach-specific training and 10 hours of mentor coaching. Students take part in weekly interactive sessions and engage in supervised practice, reflective assignments, and observed coaching sessions. Animas also offers continuing professional development workshops and themed events, many of which include content on coaching neurodivergent clients.
- **ADHD Content:** ADHD and neurodiversity are not formal modules within the diploma, but are strongly represented through the interests and specialisations of Animas faculty and alumni. The school regularly publishes blog posts and hosts events on topics such as “The Ethical Imperative of

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Neurodiversity Awareness in Coaching” and “7 Strengths Coaches Can Draw Upon When Working with Neurodiverse Clients.” Several Animas-trained coaches - including faculty members - actively market themselves as ADHD or executive function coaches. As such, neurodiversity is an embedded theme, even if not formally certified.

- Practice & Supervision: Yes - substantial. The programme includes structured practice with peer and real clients, live feedback, and observed sessions. Mentor coaching (minimum 10 hours) is integrated into the training to meet ICF standards. Students are supported in logging coaching hours during the programme and receive continuous developmental feedback from accredited supervisors and faculty. Additional support is available through peer coaching communities and supervision networks.
- Accreditation: Fully accredited by ICF (Level 1), EMCC, and the Association for Coaching. Graduates meet the requirements to apply for the ICF Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential and have pathways to further accreditation through EMCC and AC. The course is not accredited by PAAC but satisfies ICF training and mentoring standards. It does not use alternative or “pay-to-play” accreditors like IPHM or IAOTH.
- Cost: Pricing is not listed publicly, but comparable ICF-accredited diploma courses in the UK typically range from £6,000 to £10,000. This includes training, mentoring, supervision, assessment, and access to alumni events. Interest-free installment plans are offered. Animas offers a free introductory session for prospective students to assess fit before enrolling.
- Graduate Outcomes: Graduates earn a diploma that qualifies them for ICF, EMCC, and AC credentials and are eligible to join professional directories. Many alumni specialise in neurodiversity and ADHD coaching, and some faculty (e.g., Sue Hart, Rosie Arthey) have established practices focused on executive function and ADHD clients. While the diploma is not marketed as an ADHD-specific programme, it provides a strong foundation for coaches who wish to serve neurodivergent clients ethically and confidently.

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Graduates often go on to develop niche specialisations and are supported by Animas' alumni community and professional development resources.

- In summary, Animas offers a rigorous, fully accredited transformational coaching diploma that provides a strong foundation for working with ADHD clients, particularly for those who proactively focus on neurodivergence. While not a formal ADHD certification, the programme's structure, faculty, and philosophy are supportive of ethical, inclusive ADHD coaching practice.

Coach Approach Training Institute (USA) - ICF-Accredited Coach Training with ADHD Specialty

Overview: Coach Approach is a globally recognised, ICF-accredited coaching institute that uniquely integrates productivity, organizing, and ADHD coaching into its training courses. Rather than a single "ADHD course," CATI offers a full coach training pathway where ADHD/neurodiversity is a core theme. Key details:

- **Structure & Hours:** The programme is divided into a Level 1 curriculum (for initial certification) and Level 2 advanced training. Students begin with comprehensive foundation courses covering coaching essentials *and* an introduction to ADHD coaching ("Life & ADHD Coaching" is one of the foundation modules).
- This is followed by advanced electives specifically on ADHD, neurodiversity, and related niches (e.g. courses like "Coaching the ADHD Client," "Distinguishing ADHD Coaching," "Neurodiversity Support & Advocacy"). In total, Level 1 entails at least 60-80+ hours of training (meeting ICF's Level 1 standards), and Level 2 brings the total to 125+ hours (PCC level) of coach-specific education.
- Notably, CATI's graduates can earn multiple certifications: e.g. *Certified Neurodiversity Coach™ (CNC)* at Level 1, and *Advanced ADHD &*

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Neurodiversity Coach at Level 2. These titles reflect a blend of general coaching competency and specialised ADHD/ND expertise.

- ADHD Content: ADHD and executive-function challenges are woven throughout the curriculum. The institute prides itself on being “*the only ICF-accredited programme blending...professional organizing, productivity consulting, and coaching*” - producing coaches who can “support not just temporary fixes, but comprehensive life management strategies” for clients with ADHD or autism. In practice, trainees learn mainstream coaching skills and ethics alongside specific techniques for neurodivergent clients (time management systems, physical organization methods, ADHD-friendly habit design, etc.). This dual focus ensures coaches don’t just understand ADHD in theory, but can tackle the daily functional issues their clients face.
- Practice & Supervision: Yes - extensive. As an ICF-accredited programme, Coach Approach requires practical coaching experience and mentoring. Students participate in live practicums (“Coaching Skills Lab”) and must complete supervised coaching sessions. There are designated Mentor Coaching labs, including a *Core Competency Intensive: ADHD* module for deep feedback on using ICF competencies with ADHD clients.
- All Level 1 trainees receive at least 10 hours of mentor coaching (an ICF requirement), and must coach practice clients and classmates to accumulate experience. In line with ICF and PAAC guidelines, at least 100 hours of coaching practice and a performance evaluation are required for initial credentialing. The programme’s faculty includes veteran ADHD coaches (e.g. PCCs like Cameron Gott), so trainees get expert supervision.
- Accreditation: ICF Level 1 & 2 - fully accredited coach training. Coach Approach is listed by the ADHD Coaches Org as a “*fully integrated ADHD Coach Training programme,*” meaning it satisfies the standard of combining at least 60 hours of life coach training with 35+ hours of ADHD-specific training in one programme. It is not explicitly PAAC-accredited, but its graduates meet PAAC’s training hour criteria and can sit for PAAC certification exams if desired. The key is that this institute provides

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credible, rigorous training - far from any quick or pay-to-play certification. (No IPHM/IAOTH involvement; only ICF oversight.)

- Cost: The tuition depends on how many courses or credential levels one pursues. The entire Level 1+2 pathway can cost in the range of \$7,000-\$9,000+ USD. (For example, one might pay per module; an elective course might be a few hundred dollars, while the full Level 1 programme package is a few thousand. Precise figures aren't publicly listed, but the investment is comparable to other ICF courses of similar length.)
- Graduate Outcomes: Graduates earn ICF-certified coach status plus a specialty certification from CATI (like *Certified Neurodiversity Coach* at ACC level, and *Advanced ADHD & Neurodiversity Coach* at PCC level). This means they can market themselves as *ICF Credentialed Coaches* with recognised expertise in ADHD. According to Coach Approach, their alumni "*emerge uniquely qualified to transform the lives of clients with ADHD, autism, and executive function challenges*". The combination of an ICF credential and specialised training lends significant credibility. Graduates are also plugged into CATI's network - including directories for certified organiser coaches and neurodiversity coaches - and can attract referrals through multiple niches. In summary, Coach Approach provides the best of both worlds: a full professional coaching qualification plus deep-diving ADHD specialisation.

CReW Coaching Institute (USA) - Neurodiversity-Affirming ICF Coach Training

Overview: CReW (Creative, Resourceful, and Whole) is a newer coaching institute specifically aimed at neurodiversity family coaching. It offers an ICF-Accredited Level 1 programme that covers core coaching competencies *and* neurodivergence-specific training in one package. Key features:

- Structure & Hours: The CReW coach training entails ~110 hours of coach-specific training aligned with ICF standards, plus an additional 20 hours of concentrated neurodevelopmental disorder education. Total ~130

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hours. The format includes live online classes and likely small-group work, completed over a number of months (often ~6-8 months for ~130 hours). The curriculum was designed with input from academics at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UCLA, etc., ensuring up-to-date developmental science is taught alongside coaching skills. All graduates qualify for ICF's ACC credential (Level 1).

- **ADHD/ND Content:** CReW's niche is Family coaching for neurodivergent clients (ADHD, autism, and related conditions). Thus, trainees learn not only general life coaching but also how to coach parents and families of ND individuals, and how to coach ND clients directly with appropriate techniques. The programme covers neurodevelopmental basics (from 54 leading research centers) - for example, understanding autism/ADHD traits, executive function impairments, and common co-occurring challenges. This knowledge is tied into coaching scenarios (e.g. helping a family build routines for an ADHD child, or empowering a neurodivergent young adult). By graduation, CReW coaches have a solid grounding in tailoring the coaching process to neurodiverse needs while staying within a non-directive, client-centered approach.
- **Practice & Supervision:** Yes. Being ICF-accredited, the programme includes at least 10 hours of mentor coaching and a performance evaluation. CReW coaches practice in class and often must coach practice clients (possibly within their community or family context) as part of the programme. The snippet indicates all CReW coaches are "*Certified Neurodiversity Family Coaches*" who have completed the rigorous training and presumably any required practicum. While specific practicum hours aren't listed publicly, one can infer from the 110 hours of training that a mix of instruction, discussion, and practice coaching is involved. CReW likely requires a coaching log (as ICF ACC path does) - typically 100 hours of coaching experience - though some of that may be accumulated post-programme for the credential application.

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- Accreditation: ICF Level 1 (ACC). According to a job posting from CReW, “CReW is an ICF-Accredited Level 1 coach training organization.” This means the curriculum has passed ICF’s quality review for foundational coach training. The programme’s emphasis on ethics and coaching standards is explicit. It is not listed under PAAC, but it does meet the ACO’s criteria of 60+35 hours (indeed, ~130 total) of integrated training. CReW does *not* use any of the fringe accreditors; it leans entirely on ICF’s internationally recognised credentialing.
- Cost: We did not find an official price published. Similar courses in the U.S. cost around \$5,000-\$6,000 for ~125 hours of training. CReW’s marketing is often towards professionals (educators, advocates) and they may offer scholarships or payment plans to attract a diverse cohort. For an estimate, likely mid-four-figures USD for the complete certification.
- Graduate Outcomes: Graduates earn the title “Certified Neurodiversity Family Coach” through CReW. They also have completed the requirements to apply for an ICF Associate Certified Coach credential (having done an ICF-approved programme and the mentor coaching and assessment). In practical terms, a CReW graduate can present themselves as a life coach with a specialisation in neurodiversity/ADHD. The training’s credibility is high due to ICF backing and the evidence-based curriculum. Moreover, CReW is building an affiliation of coaches, so alumni may get referrals for clients seeking family-oriented ADHD/autism coaching. This programme is an example of how general coach training and ADHD specialisation are merged from the ground up, producing coaches who are fully qualified in core coaching and specifically trained for neurodivergent populations. As CReW puts it, their mission is to “*uplift the lives of neurodiverse people and their families through person-centered, evidence-based practice*” - their coaches embody that mission with solid credentials.

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New Courses

PASSHE "ADHD Coaching" (August 2025)

- Structure and Hours: 8 weeks including 14 hours of 'core training' in online group training and 2 peer practice sessions; followed by applied (25h client coaching with 5 clients; 2h supervision; 1 recorded session)
- Cost: £880-945
- Course Leaders: Neither have explicit ADHD Coach training; one with general coaching certificate aligned to EMCC Practitioner level; no ADHD-specific credential cited
- Accreditation: States "alignment" to EMCC/Global Code of Ethics; not EMCC-EQA/ICF-accredited; no PAAC pathway included as yet
- Assessment: Described as suitable CPD for Higher Education/SpLD staff or those working with neurodivergent people; Would not qualify as stand-alone route to professional ADHD-coach credentials

This is another example of potential "credibility transfer", where doctoral qualifications in unrelated fields unintentionally lend authority to ADHD-specific training claims.

While more than 80 total hours appears substantial, only 20 hours involve live teaching content, with no external accreditation or ADHD-specific faculty expertise.

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Appendix F: Due Diligence Checklist - Evaluating ADHD Coaching Services for Clients

This is not a 'must do' list, rather a list to see as helpful suggestions.

As a coach, I was taught to believe my clients are **whole, capable and resourceful** and that they will make the right decision for them.

As a human and business owner, I know that there are people who find it hard to see past the marketing and relatable presentation to decide if this person, or this approach is the right one for them right now.

With that in mind, I offer these basic 10 questions you can ask before you begin coaching with someone.

Question 1 in particular enables starting from a place of empowered knowledge - not that you can't work with someone who has no specific ADHD coach training, but **you are aware of that before you begin**.

10 Essential Questions:

1. What specific ADHD coaching training has your coach completed?
2. How many hours of ADHD-specific (not general coaching) education?
3. What accreditation body approved their training?
4. Do they receive ongoing supervision? How often?
5. Can they clearly explain coaching vs. therapy boundaries?
6. What is their referral process for issues beyond coaching scope?
7. Are fees transparent with no hidden costs?
8. Do they guarantee specific outcomes? (*Red flag if yes*)
9. How do they handle confidentiality and data protection?
10. Can they provide references from other ADHD clients?

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Appendix G: ICF Training Levels (a Brief Explanation)

ICF Training Accreditation Levels: Understanding Quality Distinctions

The International Coach Federation's accreditation system creates important quality distinctions that consumers and employers must understand when evaluating coaching credentials. However, confusion about these levels has led to a lack of clarity around the outcome for students and training level of their coach for clients.

Level 1 Accreditation (ACC-aligned)

Level 1 programme provides foundational coaching competency suitable for new practitioners. These programme require:

- **Minimum 60 hours coach-specific training** delivered through approved curriculum
- **10 hours mentor coaching** spread over at least 3 months with qualified supervisors
- **Performance evaluation** through recorded coaching sessions assessed against ICF Core Competencies
- **Independent quality oversight** ensuring programmes meet established educational standards

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Critical distinction:

Level 1 accreditation indicates legitimate entry-level coaching education, contrasting sharply with commercial certification schemes requiring minimal or no supervised practice.

Level 2 Accreditation (PCC-aligned)

Level 2 programmes are for experienced coaches seeking advanced competency development:

- **Minimum 125 hours coach-specific training** with enhanced curriculum depth
- **10 hours mentor coaching** with qualified supervisors holding appropriate credentials
- **Advanced performance evaluation** assessing complex coaching scenarios and ethical decision-making
- **Higher competency thresholds** reflecting increased responsibility when serving challenging client populations

Quality indicator: Level 2 accreditation suggests coaches have invested substantially in professional development beyond minimal entry requirements.

Continuing Coach Education (CCE)

CCE programmes serve existing coaches rather than providing initial certification pathways:

Core Competencies track: Advanced training in ICF coaching skills and methodologies

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Resource Development track: Complementary skills including specialised populations or business development

Warning for ADHD coaching consumers: Many programmes marketed as "ADHD coaching certification" are CCE courses which require existing coaching credentials. Clients seeking ADHD-specialised coaches should verify whether the practitioner completed both foundational coaching training AND ADHD-specific education.

The "Level" Numbers: Understanding Different Credential Systems

A critical vulnerability in the ADHD coaching market involves confusion between different credentialing systems.

Coaches may advertise "Level 5" or "Level 7" credentials without clearly explaining that these represent UK academic qualifications rather than ICF coaching competency levels.

Comparing Different Credential Systems

Aspect	ICF Level 1	ICF Level 2	ILM Level 5	ILM Level 7
Training Hours	60+ contact hours	125+ contact hours	5 workshop days	5 workshop days
Practice Requirements	100+ coaching hours	500+ coaching hours	18-54 hours	20-60 supervision hours
(cont) Aspect	ICF Level 1	ICF Level 2	ILM Level 5	ILM Level 7

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Assessment	Recorded sessions	Performance evaluation	Portfolio + theory paper	Masters-level assignments
Supervision	10 hours mentor coaching	10 hours mentor coaching	3 hours included	Built into programme
Focus	Coaching competency	Advanced coaching competency	Workplace coaching	Coaching supervision
Academic Level	Professional competency	Advanced professional competency	Foundation degree equivalent	Masters degree equivalent

Understanding ILM Qualifications

ILM (Institute of Leadership & Management) qualifications are legitimate academic credentials that combine theoretical learning with practical application:

ILM Level 5 features:

- 5 workshop days over 12 months
- 18-54 hours of actual coaching practice
- Theory paper (4,000-5,500 words) plus portfolio
- 12 months tutor support and 3 hours supervision

ILM Level 7 features:

- Masters-level academic work with practical components
- 20-60 hours supervision practice (for supervision programme)
- Extensive written assessments and supervised sessions

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The Consumer Confusion Problem

The confusion arises from mixing different measurement systems, not from quality deficiencies in either pathway.

What creates the problem:

- **ICF "Level 2"** indicates assessed coaching competency through extensive supervised practice
- **ILM "Level 7"** indicates Masters-level academic achievement with practical components
- **EMCC uses descriptive levels** (Foundation → Master Practitioner) rather than numbers
- **These measure different aspects** of professional development and cannot be directly compared

Real example of confusion: A coach advertising "Level 7 Advanced Coaching Specialist" (ILM academic qualification) alongside "Certified Professional Coach" (membership organisation) may appear more qualified than an "ICF Level 2" coach, despite the ICF practitioner potentially having more assessed coaching practice hours.

Why This Particularly Affects ADHD Coaching Clients

Executive function differences common in ADHD create specific vulnerabilities:

- **Numerical bias:** Higher numbers trigger assumptions about superiority without understanding framework differences
- **Cognitive load:** Complex credential research exceeds available mental resources during decision-making
- **Information processing:** Multiple overlapping systems overwhelm comparative analysis capabilities

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- **Authority heuristics:** Academic-sounding credentials substitute for quality evaluation

Red Flags for ADHD Clients

Look out for:

- Emphasis on numerical levels without explaining accrediting body
- "Advanced Level 5/7 Coach" without context about what these academic levels represent
- Multiple credentials without transparent links to coaching practice hours
- Missing information about supervision arrangements or professional body membership

Quality indicators:

- Clear distinction between academic qualifications and coaching competency
- Transparent training hour disclosure (minimum 80 hours ADHD-specific for disclosed ADHD clients)
- Evidence of ongoing supervision with qualified professionals
- Professional body membership with independent complaint procedures

Consumer Protection Framework

When evaluating credentials, clients should ask:

1. How many hours of actual coaching training? (not academic study)
2. What supervision arrangements are in place?
3. Which professional body provides oversight and complaint resolution?
4. Can you explain the difference between your academic qualifications and coaching competency?

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Industry Impact

When credential systems are deliberately confusing, clients can't tell the difference between well-trained and poorly-trained coaches. This means unqualified coaches can charge the same rates as qualified ones, while clients unknowingly choose inferior services.

Both ICF and ILM pathways can produce competent coaches when properly completed. The problem lies not in the qualifications themselves, but in:

- Marketing that obscures rather than clarifies what different credentials represent
- Consumer inability to evaluate complex, overlapping credential systems
- The increased cognitive and executive function demand of navigating deliberately confusing frameworks, marketing and claims

Regulatory implications: Clear standards for credential disclosure could eliminate this confusion while preserving multiple legitimate qualification pathways. Current voluntary approaches prove insufficient when ADHD and other neurodivergent clients cannot effectively evaluate complex credential claims.

The bottom line:

Focus on **total coaching-specific training hours, supervision arrangements, and professional body membership** rather than numerical levels that may represent entirely different educational frameworks.

A coach's competency to serve ADHD clients is heavily influenced by their actual training content and ongoing professional development, not the academic level or numerical designation of their credentials.

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Appendix H - Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation	Abbreviation	Explanation
AC	Association for Coaching	ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management (by the City and Guilds, UK)
ACC	Associate Certified Coach (ICF level) Also ADDCA Associate Certified Coach	IPHM	International Practitioner of Holistic Medicine
ACCG	ADDCA Advanced Certified Coach Graduate	MCC	Master Certified Coach (ICF level)
ADDCA	ADD Coach Academy	NBHCW	
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme (Australia)
APANC	Association of ADHD and Neurodiversity Coaches (created by ADHD Foundation)	NHS	National Health Service (UK)
ASA	Advertising Standards Authority (UK)	NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (UK)
ASAI	Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland	PAAC	Professional Association of ADHD Coaches
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder, also referred to as ASC Autism Spectrum condition	PCC	Professional Certified Coach (ICF level)

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CCE	Continuing Coach Education	PEERS	UCLA's Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills
CEFIO	Cognitive Ergonomics from the Inside Out (DIG Coaching, Jeff Copper)	RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial (research method)
CMA	Complementary Medicine Association	TGA	Therapeutic Goods Administration
CPD	Continuing professional development (general); also a private commercial training accreditation company	UCA	Universal Coaching Alliance
EMCC	European Mentoring & Coaching Council	UK	United Kingdom (comprising Scotland, Wales, Ireland and England)
GDP	Gross domestic product	US/USA	United States (of America)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	WABC	Worldwide Association of Business Coaches
GP	General Practitioner (Doctor)		
IAC	International Association of Coaching		
IAOTH	International Association of Therapists		
ICF	International Coach Federation		

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