

# Parents who are left to struggle

## Support system failing families of attention deficit children – survey

By **BARRY NELSON**

Health Editor

MORE than nine out of ten North-East parents of children suffering from hyperactivity are not receiving support, according to a survey.

Adders, the national support group for parents of children suffering from attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), announced its findings after an online survey.

The survey, which involved filling in a detailed questionnaire, indicates that there is a significant unmet need among parents for more support in caring for children with ADHD.

Seventy-one per cent of people in the North-East who filled in the questionnaire said it was very difficult or impossible to receive any help.

Adders reported that 97 per cent of parents in the region who took part in the survey said they have never been offered ADHD coaching.

Another 88 per cent of par-

ents wanted specific skills courses, but only nine per cent said they had been offered help.

Carole Hensby, founder of Adders and mother of a son with ADHD said: "The results of this survey are staggering.

"They confirm that parents are desperately seeking, but not receiving, help in many

areas, including behaviour management therapy, ADHD coaching and a specific parenting skills course."

Nationally, Adders contacted 1,000 families across the UK.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder affects about five per cent of the UK's child population.

Symptoms of the disorder include an inability to sustain attention and concentration and inappropriate levels of activity.

Pat Bolton, spokeswoman for the Gateshead ADHD group, said: "If parents do not have the help and support they need, assisting their child diagnosed with ADHD

can be overwhelming. It is easy for parents to feel helpless when dealing with a child affected by ADHD.

"It is important for these parents to have additional help in coping with the effects of the disorder."

Adders said that if the disorder was untreated in childhood, it could blight the lives of young adults.

Dr Madelaine Portwood, an educational psychologist for Durham County Council, said: "We are seeing increas-

ing numbers of children who have difficulties concentrating.

"There are a number of services which are available to support parents and children, including the Positive Parenting initiative, which encourages parents to look at parenting styles."

She said parents needed to find out from their child's school how to gain access to the various support services provided by the education and health services.