


# mind matters

one in 10 young people will go through problems to do with their mental health

A Young Person's Guide to Child and Adolescent  
Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland.





Health and Social Care Services are committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement.

This document can be made available upon request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format.

For an alternative format, please contact:

**Western Trust**

CAMHS Team

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
CAMHS Team

Woodlea House

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## **A Young Person's Guide to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland**

This booklet is designed for anyone who wants to know more about what to expect from community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

It aims to give information about what a young person or parent can expect, provides some background information to the service and tries to answer some of the questions you might have.

**“It has kept  
me safe”**



## **The booklet covers**

What do we mean by child and adolescent mental health?

What are child and adolescent mental health problems?

What child and adolescent mental health services aim to do?

What happens once you are referred to CAMHS?

Questions young people, parents and carers ask.

**At the end of the booklet are details of your local CAMHS services and contact points.**





## **What do we mean by child and adolescent mental health?**

First of all, it is important to know what is meant by mental health. People usually know what is meant when we talk about physical health but mental health is less talked about.

Mental health is to do with how we feel inside, how in control we feel and how able to cope we are.



Everybody goes through ups and downs but sometimes our feelings, our behaviour, can start to get in the way of our day-to-day lives.

When this happens, sometimes we need extra support from people who know what might help us feel better.

So if you are feeling troubled, it is important to let someone you know and trust know how you are feeling – such as your parents or another relative, your doctor, social worker or a teacher – who may suggest that you see someone from CAMHS.



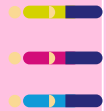


## What are child and adolescent mental health problems?

There are in fact many different kinds of problems that might mount up to such a pitch that we can reasonably call them child and adolescent mental health problems.

These problems may show up as:

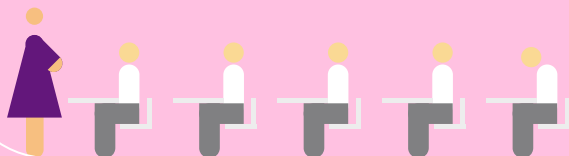
- not knowing how best to cope and feeling depressed
- feeling isolated from friends and withdrawing from everyday pursuits
- becoming overly worried about our bodies and eating habits
- becoming preoccupied with thoughts and ideas that won't go away
- misusing drugs or alcohol as a way to feel better



- feeling unhappy at school and finding it difficult to concentrate and not wanting to attend
- becoming more irritable, tough, aggressive, disruptive or anti social; or others may appear to be more outgoing
- there may be family problems due to trauma, bereavement or some other loss.



These problems vary a great deal in how serious they can be, but if they continue on they can affect a young person's confidence and their ability to achieve their full potential.





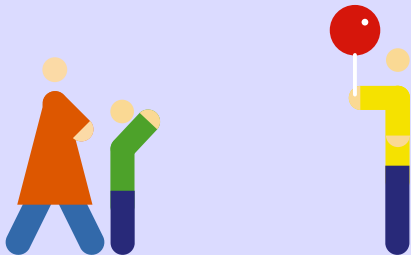
## **What child and adolescent mental health services aim to do?**

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Staff working in this service help children and young people when they are feeling so sad, anxious, scared or distressed that it begins to affect their day to day lives.

The service aims to:


- provide therapeutic help for children/ young people experiencing mental health difficulties
- promote the psychological, emotional and social development of children and young people within the context of their family and wider community.



This is achieved by providing:

- A comprehensive, highly specialised assessment and therapeutic service to children, young people and their families
- A consultancy service to other professionals/service organisations also working with children, young people and their families.





**At the heart of CAMHS, there are a number of core values that all staff working in the service aspire to. These are:**

**1. Recognition of children and young people's rights.**

**What does this mean?**

At all times your rights will be considered and respected. You will receive information about the service with an aim to help you to understand it. This should include information about the rules and giving consent to your treatment; confidentiality and the plans in place to keep you safe. If you don't feel safe, it is important to let staff, carers or another trusted adult know.

Everyone has rights, and also the responsibility to respect other people's rights.





## **2. Having a shared understanding.**

### **What does this mean?**

It is important that everybody works together and that there is agreement about the nature of the problems and what the best options are to help. This requires everyone to act in an honest and open way.

## **3. Trying what has worked before.**

### **What does this mean?**

CAMHS staff know a lot about what can help but they can't always know what will work for whom. It may be important for staff to make contact with other key people that know you well such as teachers and other professionals as well as other family members. All of this will be discussed with you so that you can make an informed choice.





#### **4. Involving young people and their families in decision making.**

##### **What does this mean?**

Listening to your views, giving information so that you can make an informed choice, encouraging your views and feedback on the service you are receiving and how we might improve.

#### **5. A flexible approach for everyone.**

##### **What does this mean?**

Everybody is different so regardless of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or ability, you should be able to get the right sort of help in response to your individual needs when you are having problems.



## 6. The right help when you need it.

### What does this mean?

CAMHS is available locally and has links with other services that might be able to help you, for example, schools, social services, family centres and other community based/youth services. CAMHS works with these services to make sure you receive the care that you need.

**“The staff could not do enough for us.”**



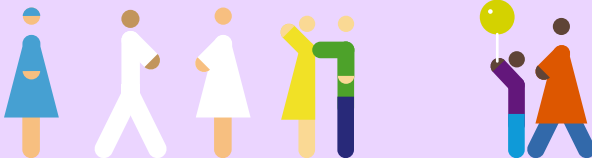


## **What happens when you are referred to CAMHS?**

### **Who's who....?**

There are lots of different staff - including doctors, psychiatrists, nurses, clinical psychologists, social workers, primary mental health workers and other family therapists in the team.

When a referral is made, the professionals within the CAMHS team discuss the information provided by the person who has referred you. They decide who is best placed to help you and how soon you may be seen. Sometimes the team might decide another service is more appropriate to provide you with help and support. If this happens they will let the referrer know (that is the person who asked CAMHS to see you) so that they can discuss this with you.






## Getting an appointment....?

You will be contacted either by telephone or letter offering you the date and time of an appointment. You will be asked to confirm that the appointment is suitable. Don't worry if it isn't convenient because an alternative time and date can be arranged.

If for any reason you cannot make your appointment, it is important that you let the CAMHS office know as soon as possible. This means that the appointment can be given to someone else rather than being lost. Phone or get your parents/carers to phone the number on the appointment letter as soon as possible.



If you missed your appointment because you decided not to go as you were not feeling well enough, or were unsure about going, or for any other reason, do not worry. It is important however, that you phone as soon as possible to cancel and make another appointment. If you do not phone this may lead to discharge from the service.





## What do I do while I'm waiting?

Your appointment may be in a few weeks time so it is important you keep as well as possible in the meantime. While you are waiting it is important to try and avoid any situation that might make you feel stressed or upset. Maybe you can talk to a close friend about how you feel or speak to your parent or carer or another adult that you trust.

If you feel you have no one to talk to, try phoning Childline on **0800 1111** which is available 24 hours every day, or by going onto **[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**. You can also phone the Samaritans on **08457 909090** or email **[jo@Samaritans.org](mailto:jo@Samaritans.org)**. Another option to consider is contacting the Lifeline helpline on **0808 808 8000**.



It is important that you let helpline workers know that you have an appointment for CAMHS but that in the meantime you could do with someone to talk to.





**If you need immediate medical help** you should contact your GP surgery. If it is outside normal hours the GP answering machine will give you an emergency contact number or go to the A&E department at your local hospital.

Finally you can also phone the out of hours emergency duty team to contact a social worker.

The relevant number for your Trust area can be found towards the back of the booklet.



*“he has kept our family together, he is our rock, CAMHS have been there for us to lean on”*





## **Attending for your appointment.**

You will receive an appointment letter which should include a page with information on the particular CAMHS office you will be attending. This information will also include a location map and directions for travel by car or public transport. Also, feel free to phone the CAMHS office if you need further instruction on how to get there. Remember to leave yourself plenty of time to figure out how you are going to get to the office and to travel there.

When you arrive you should give your name and time of your appointment to the receptionist. You and your parents/carers, if they came along, will be asked to take a seat in the waiting area.

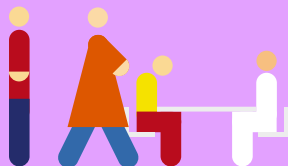



## What happens at my appointment?

Your first appointment is called an initial assessment and will last anything from 1½ to 2 hours. This means that the staff member you meet will need to take time to gather as much information as possible. He/she will ask you a number of questions to find out what help will be best for you.


First of all, they will explain who they are, what their job is and what will happen. Some of the information included in this booklet might be repeated but that can be useful in that it might help you to remember. The kind of information staff will want to know is:

- your general health now and in the past
- how you are getting on in school, training or work
- any difficulties you may have at school, college, work or with family or friends.





They will want information about your concerns and whether you are receiving help from other people or services; they will also want to know how you are feeling now and how things have been in the past.



Finally and most importantly they will want to know about things you are good at, things that you enjoy and other interests that you want to pursue in the future.

All this information will help staff to help you find a way to address your feelings and problems. Feel free to add anything you think might be important but are not asked about. You can of course ask questions at any stage.

**Remember, do not worry if you get angry or upset during your appointment. Also try not to feel embarrassed about anything you are telling, experiencing, questioning or are worried about – all the staff are there to help you, not judge you, and they are all very familiar with concerns that can arise for many young people.**

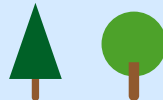
## What happens next?

At the end of the initial assessment the staff will discuss possible options with you which may include treatment options, further additional assessment, discussion with other services and/or other colleagues within the CAMHS service, or redirect you to a more appropriate service.

The possible treatment options that are usually considered include:

- Individual Psychotherapy
- Behavioural & Cognitive Therapies
- Drug Therapy
- Family Therapy
- Psycho Education
- Counselling

There may be other therapies also available and these treatment options will also be discussed with you if they are available.





## Some Questions and Answers

Hopefully the information you have just read provides answers to many of the questions you may have had or wondered about. Here are some more examples of questions you might have with some answers.

### **Q. Will people think I'm mad if I go to CAMHS?**

A. Some young people feel uncomfortable going to CAMHS because they are worried that people might think they are mad. If your feelings or behaviour have started to get in the way of your day-to-day life you are not alone! **1 in every 10 young people will go through problems to do with their mental health and well-being.** Many of these young people will be seeing CAMHS to help them understand and cope with their feelings.

There is still a lot of misunderstanding around about mental health so there are people who think having a mental health problem equals 'madness' – but they are quite wrong and it's important that you know and believe that.



**Q. Who will come with me to my appointment?**

A. It's often important for your family or carers to be involved in the process. You can talk to staff about who you would like to come to appointments with you, and whether you would like to speak to staff on your own.

**Q. Who will I see?**

A. There are lots of different staff in CAMHS. Each service is different but staff might include doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers and therapists such as family therapists, psychotherapists and art therapists. When your first appointment is arranged you can ask who will be seeing you and what their job is.





**Q. Will people find out I'm seeing CAMHS? Who will know what I say?**



A. All CAMHS services will work to a confidentiality policy. Generally the only people that will know will be the person that referred you (such as your doctor) and in most cases your family or carers. CAMHS will ask your permission to speak to any other professionals if that will help, for example, your school. Very occasionally if staff are concerned about your safety or someone else's safety, they may have to speak to other professionals with or without your permission. They will discuss this with you.

**Q. How long will I be with CAMHS?**

A. This will depend on the kind of problems you are experiencing. Some people only need to see CAMHS a few times. Others will use the service for several months and some may need to see CAMHS for a year or more.



**Finally.....**

### **Expressing your Views**

Your views are important. Staff working in CAMHS want to deliver a good service so they will want to know your opinion about your experience of the service.

They will be keen to know what you have found helpful and also what has not been so helpful. If they haven't asked or don't ask it's important to tell them anyway. Giving information about this helps everyone to make sure they get things right for you and to make improvements to the service.

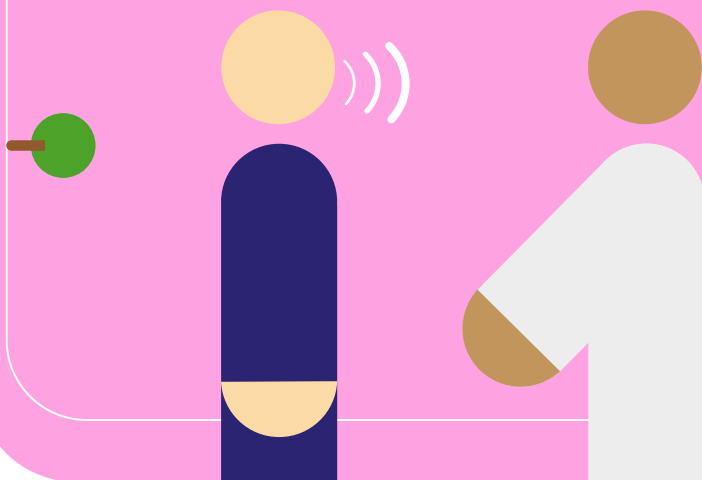
There may be different ways for doing this: for example, a suggestion box; asking you during your appointments and sometimes by filling in a questionnaire.



## Making a complaint

If something hasn't gone well and you are unhappy, you do have the right to make a complaint. All Trusts have arrangements in place for dealing with complaints.

When you come to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) you will be given information about how to make a complaint if you need to.





## USEFUL LINKS

### Childline

A free and confidential telephone support service for children and young people

**0800 1111**

**[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**



### Connexions

Information and advice for young people aged 13-19 years

**[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)**



### Young Minds

Information about emotional well being and mental health for young people

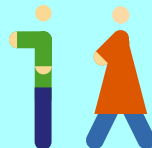
**[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)**



### QINMAC (Quality Improvement Network for Multi Agency CAMHS)

Information about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) produced by the Royal College of Psychiatrists

**[www.qinmac.org.uk](http://www.qinmac.org.uk)**




## **British Psychological Society**

Information about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) from the professional body that represents psychologists

 [\*\*www.bps.org.uk\*\*](http://www.bps.org.uk)

## **MindWise**

Works to support those at risk of, and affected by, severe mental illness and mental health difficulties

 [\*\*www.mindwisenv.org\*\*](http://www.mindwisenv.org)

## **Mind Your Head**

A charity that aims to provide information and organise awareness raising events about mental health needs


 [\*\*www.mindyourhead.org.uk\*\*](http://www.mindyourhead.org.uk)

## **Other useful Contacts:**

The Samaritans on **08457 909090**

Lifeline Helpline on **0808 808 8000**







## **WHSCT Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Service**

The Child and Adolescent Service is community based and provides specialist high quality mental health care to children and adolescents, who reside within the Western Health and Social Care Trust area, currently up to their 18th Birthday.

Child and Adolescent Problems include:

- Emotional disorder
  - Phobia disorder
  - School refusal
  - Adolescent difficulties
  - Bereavement
  - Eating disorders
  - Major psychiatric disorders
  - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - Oppositional behaviour
  - Anxiety disorder
  - Conduct disorder
  - Relationship difficulties
  - Enuresis and encopresis
  - Post traumatic stress
  - Depression
  - Obsessive compulsive disorder.
- 




The WHSCT CAMHS provides a range of clinical and therapeutic services Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm based in:

**Derry Team**

Child and Family Team  
Woodlea House  
Gransha Park  
Derry BT47 6TF  
Tel: 028 7186 5238

**Omagh Team**

Rivendell  
Child and Adolescent Service  
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital  
Omagh BT79 0NS  
Tel: 028 8283 5990 / 5991





## My Notes

You can use the following pages to record names, other contact information or even your next appointment.









## **Getting Involved – Your Views Matter**

Health & Social Care welcomes the participation of children and young people who use CAMHS and their parents/carers. If you wish to get involved to share your views and help shape services there are 3 separate forums and more detail and information is available from their websites:

The Patient Client Council Mental Health Reference Group or by joining the Patient Client Council Membership scheme.



**[www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/get-involved](http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/get-involved)**

Mindwise Youth forum



**[www.mindwisenv.org](http://www.mindwisenv.org)**

Trust Users Forums - for information see Trust website:



**[www.westerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net)**





**This booklet was produced by the  
Northern Ireland Bamford CAMHS  
Review Group in partnership with  
MindWise**

Please let us know what you think of this  
booklet and how it could be improved by:

Joining:



**[www.facebook.com/challengeyouth](http://www.facebook.com/challengeyouth)**

E-mailing:

**[challengeyouth@mindwisenv.org](mailto:challengeyouth@mindwisenv.org)**

Phoning or texting:

**07587 659747**


Writing to:

Challenge Youth Manager

MindWise/Wyndhurst

Knockbracken Health Park

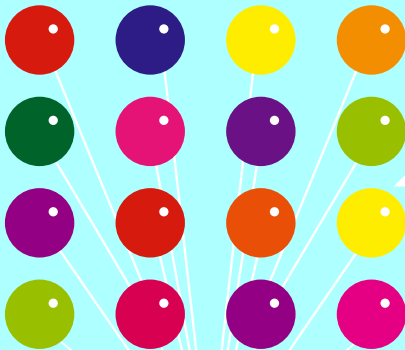
Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8BH



*MindWise New Visions is an independent  
charity which aims to develop new visions  
for mental health by challenging stigma  
and discrimination and providing quality  
services and support.*



Western Health  
and Social Care Trust



*Mind  
Wise*

A NEW VISION  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Health and Social  
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Public Health  
Agency