

WELCOME TO CAMHS!



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Hi there!

Specialist CAMHS (which stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) is the name given to the NHS Service for children and young people (up to the age of 18 years) who need more help with their mental health.

If a young person has been struggling with mental health difficulties for an extended period and it is affecting various aspects of their life such as education, home life, hobbies and socialising, it may be helpful to seek help from a specialist mental health service like CAMHS.

CAMHS provides a range of services to assist with various mental health issues.

CAMHS in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have created this booklet to provide you and your family with information about our service and what happens while you are under our care.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is made up of several outpatient teams. The largest team is The Community Outpatients Team (OP) and this team will see the majority of people referred to the service. The team supports young people dealing with a wide range of mental health concerns. This team will also assess for neurodevelopmental conditions, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The teams

There are 7 smaller specialist teams who work with certain groups of young people.

The Primary Mental Health Team (PMHT) - The Primary Mental Health Team work with staff / professionals from Health, Education, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector (e.g., GPs, School Nurses and teachers) who support children and young people. They also offer psychological interventions for children and young people (aged between 0-18 years) who have mild to moderate mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and low mood.

The Eating Disorders Team (EDT) - The Eating Disorders Team is a group of healthcare professionals who are specialists in assessing and treating eating disorders. The aim of the team is to work with you and your family to help you recover from your eating disorder.

The Young People's Team (YPT) - The Young People's Team, work directly with children and young people who are looked after in foster or residential care, adopted and unaccompanied young asylum seeker or who are linked with the youth offending services.

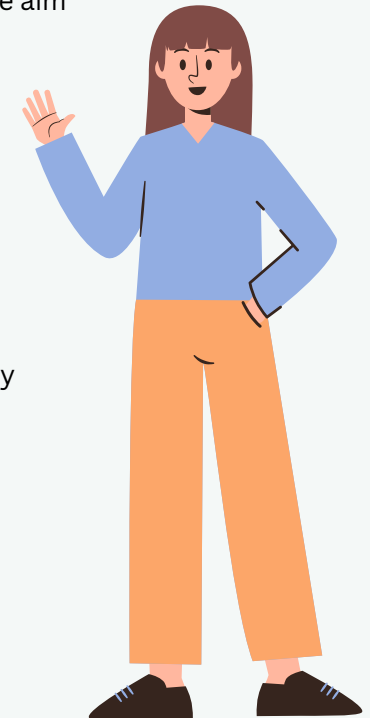
Paediatric Psychology Team (PPT) - The Paediatric Psychology Team work with children and young people who have a physical health condition and are experiencing difficulties adjusting to, or coping with living with, their condition.

The Learning Disabilities (LD) Team - This team works with young people (aged between 0-18 years) who have moderate to profound intellectual developmental disability and are struggling with their mental health as a result.

There are also teams that support people who need more urgent support and require a more rapid or intense response.

Crisis and Home Treatment Team - The team works with young people (aged between 0-18 years) who are having significant mental health problems which include acts of self-harm, or feeling that life is not worth living. A mental health crisis happens when a person feels they can't cope and they may act in a way that could hurt themselves or others. They might put themselves at risk of being unable to look after themselves or function in a healthy way. The aim of the team is to support people to remain safely in the community.

The Intensive Community Support Team (ICST) - The ICST team offer a higher level of support in the community. The team support people who are having significant difficulties with regulating their emotions effectively and as a result may be engaging in behaviours that are deemed risky or problematic to themselves or those around them. Often young people who are referred to ICST will have seen the crisis team several times or had an inpatient admission.



What is mental health?

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.

Emotional wellbeing is how we manage our emotions and cope with challenge.

Psychological wellbeing is about feeling happy or content, having a sense of meaning or purpose and being able to function day to day, for example to go to school or college.

Social wellbeing is being able to create and grow healthy relationships with others.

Our mental health can affect our thoughts, feelings and behaviour so it's important that we understand and look after our mental health as well as our physical health.

Mental health is a complex matter as every individual is unique. Life can present challenging times, such as receiving undesirable exam results, experiencing a break-up or the loss of a loved one. Each person reacts differently to such events. If you have good mental health, you have a greater capacity to deal with these experiences than someone who struggles with their mental well-being.

Experiencing sadness or anxiety during challenging times is normal.

However, if these emotions start to impact your daily life and persist, it may be necessary to seek support. It's important to recognise that many young people and adults struggle with their mental health and you're not alone in this journey.

It's important you look after your mental health. You can do this in lots of different ways including seeing friends and family, exercising regularly, having hobbies and interests, a good sleep routine and eating healthily.

What are mental health problems?

Mental health problems (sometimes referred to as mental health disorders or a mental illness) are different to the general emotional ups and downs which is a normal part of being human. Mental health problems are more severe, impact on your day-to-day functioning (for example going to school or spending time with family and friends) and last over time.

There are various approaches to mental health and mental disorders around the world. Most health professionals in the UK agree on treatments for mental health disorders. Some of the common ones which you may have heard of include depression, anxiety and eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa. You may also have heard of rarer disorders, such as psychosis and bipolar disorder, which are sometimes referred to as mental illnesses.

Mental health disorders and mental health illnesses are assessed and diagnosed by trained mental health professionals.

It can be confusing because words such as “depression” and “anxiety” are commonly used by people to describe feeling sad or worried. These feelings, which we all get, are different to having a significant mental health problem or disorder.

Mental health disorders affect the way people think, feel, behave and interact with others. They impact on people's ability to function and last over time. Anyone can be diagnosed with a mental illness.

It is possible to recover from or live with well a mental health disorder or mental illness.

Seeking help for mental health challenges is a sign of strength and some people may require support to manage their condition.



What CAMHS do

If you are reading this, it means that you have been referred to us for specialist support. Perhaps you have been struggling with mental health problems that have been affecting many areas of your life including education, home life, hobbies, interests and friendships and have led to you feeling anxious or depressed.

Alternatively, you may have been referred to us for investigation for something in particular such as neuro diversity (such as Autistic Spectrum disorder (ASD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Regardless of your situation, we are here to provide you with the support you need for your mental health.

Once an assessment has been completed CAMHS will agree the plan of care that is most appropriate, you will receive a copy of this agreement which is known as a care plan, this will include things that have been agreed for you, your parents / carers or CAMHS to do.

CAMHS can help with a range of mental health difficulties, including:

- **Moderate to severe depression**
- **Moderate to severe anxiety, phobias or panic disorders**
- **Obsessive compulsive disorder**
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Psychosis**
- **Self-harm associated with any of the above problems.**

This might sound a little confusing. Please don't worry, you can ask staff at CAMHS any questions you may have when you are seen. In the meantime, you can also [click here](#) for a guide to CAMHS.

CAMHS works with young people, their families and other organisations that are significant for young people (such as schools) to achieve the following:

- Assess and diagnose mental health and neurodevelopmental difficulties (Autistic Spectrum Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- Identify realistic goals or changes in your life that you would like to make and CAMHS can support you with thinking about how to do this and who else may be helpful to support you with this
- Identify and build on your individual strengths and think about what might help with things that are more challenging and why this might be.
- Learn emotional coping techniques to help manage difficult or upsetting thoughts, feelings, urges or experiences
- Support and Empower you to identify, express and communicate your needs, take responsibility for your health and wellbeing and feel confident in knowing where and how to get additional support if necessary
- Use evidence-based approaches to treat or help you better manage your difficulties. This can include approaches such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), systemic family therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) and/or medication (For more information on therapy, see section 16 on therapy.)

What CAMHS can't do

It's important to understand that CAMHS cannot always provide a cure or 'fix' for mental health problems.

However, our professionals can work with you to manage your struggles and find ways to cope. We will listen to you and work together to support your recovery. We rely on your cooperation, honesty and support throughout the process in order to achieve the best results for you. Between appointments, you'll be asked to use the techniques we provide which have been carefully thought through to suit your individual needs.

In some cases, there may be difficulties or experiences that are better supported by services other than CAMHS. If this is the case, we will work with you to access the most suitable services available, such as drug and alcohol services.

While many young people have successfully overcome their challenges, it's important to know your mental health struggles may come back or may never fully go away. However, when you are nearing the end of your treatment with CAMHS, you will have an ongoing personal care plan that we create with you before discharge.



[Artemis House, Westcotes House Site,
Westcotes Drive, Leicester LE3 0QU](#)

[Westcotes House, Westcotes
Drive, Leicester LE3 0QU](#)



[Westcotes Lodge Westcotes Drive,
Leicester LE3 0QU](#)

[The Valentine Centre,
Gorse Hill Hospital Site,
Anstey Lane, Leicester
LE7 7GX](#)



TOP TIPS

You can click the green underlined text to launch more information on each base

Where you might be seen

Rothesay,
352A London
Road, Leicester
LE2 2PL



Mawson House, 62-
68 Valence Road,
Leicester LE3 1AR



Loughborough
Hospital, Child and
Family Unit, Hospital
Way, Loughborough
LE11 5JY



What happens when I've been referred

Your referral may have been made by your local doctor (GP), school/college nurse, social worker or you may have referred yourself for support.

All referrals will be **screened by a service called Triage and Navigation who decide which is the best service to help you.** If you have been referred for an assessment for a condition such as Autism Spectrum Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, you will need to have provided additional information (such as a report from school) in order for the right decision to be made about which service is needed.

If your referral is **directed to CAMHS, it will be sent to the team that is most suitable to meet your needs.** This may depend on what you are struggling with or your personal circumstances. This decision will have been made based on the information in your referral so it is important that you have had an opportunity to say what you want to be included in this.

The team will let you know that they have received your referral and that they will be offering you an appointment. This initial appointment is sometimes called an "access appointment" or an "initial assessment appointment".

There may be a wait until your initial appointment. How long the waiting time is can vary depending on the current demand for the service and how urgently you need to be seen. Depending on what you have been referred for, we may send out some questionnaires/forms to complete and either ask you bring these to your initial appointment or send back to us. This will help the process when we meet with you.



Whilst we try to see everyone as soon as possible, the impact of COVID and subsequent increase in demand for services may mean that you have a long wait. For this reason, we have compiled a self-help guide for whilst you are waiting.

A personal journey from a young person who has used CAMHS

"My experience with CAMHS began around 18 months ago. I was very depressed. I felt as though I had been completely submerged into sadness. I was also struggling with anxiety.

There were multiple reasons for this: the uncertainty about whether GCSE's would go ahead, COVID, leaving secondary school and starting college. I kept everything to myself because I was ashamed to admit I was struggling; I was scared of what people would think. It got to a point where I was losing consciousness and utterly hopeless. That's when I was referred to CAMHS.

The day of my first appointment, I remember being nervous and a bit apprehensive. I wasn't sure what to expect. My mum went in with me for the first few appointments. At first it was strange, I found it difficult to open up to a complete stranger but as time went on, I felt as though I could speak about my problems, it felt like a safe place. I learnt how to become more open and speak up about how I was feeling. My nurse helped me get a diagnosis for my seizures and also spoke to the college to provide me with a counsellor. A few months later, I met my psychiatrist for the first time and he helped me understand the reasons why I was feeling and reacting the way I was. He also prescribed for me some medication.

Looking back now, CAMHS definitely isn't as scary as I thought it would be. The clinicians are supportive and I feel that I'm involved and can give input into the decision making. They also help highlight the positive aspects of my life even when I can't see them myself. I still have moments where I feel like I'm back at the start but, in reality, life is like a roller coaster and it has highs and lows along the way. I also like the fact it isn't always about the serious topics there is some laughs and smiles involved as well.

Probably the biggest thing I've learnt is that everyone's journey is different. To reach your destination in life you have to conquer the extra obstacles that lie ahead. CAMHS will help and support you to do that if you are honest and reach out for help"

A personal journey from a someone who has used CAMHS

"I found the waiting period before CAMHS so scary.

I felt really anxious that I was going to have to open up to a complete stranger about all my problems. I suffered with a lot of anxiety around school, relationships and my health.

At my first appointment, the clinician asked if there was anything she could do to make me feel more comfortable – my mum was allowed in the room with me to support me and I was given fidget toys and water.

It didn't end up being as scary as I had created it to be in my mind – the clinician had found out that we both loved reading books so we talked about books for a little bit before starting the assessment which helped to calm my nerves down.

I have had support from CAMHS for five years now and I wouldn't be where I am now without them."

What happens at a camhs appointment?

What happens at my first appointment?

When you attend your first appointment we will start with some introductions and let you know what is going to happen during your time together. We may ask you to complete some forms either before or during the appointment. It seems like a lot of work but it is really important to us that we understand what is happening in your life and this is another way to find out that information.

We will also talk to you about important information such as confidentiality and consent to share your information with other professionals involved in your care, such as your GP.

Where will my appointment be?

Your appointment could be over the phone, via a video platform or face-to-face at one of our bases. You will be told which one in your invitation.

Who will my appointment be with?

This appointment will be with one or two clinicians and the appointment lasts between one and one and a half hours. The appointment is this length of time because we need to collect lots of information to be able to make a good assessment so we can make sure you are being offered the best and most appropriate care.

Can my family come?

Depending on your age, some of the assessment may be done with you and your parent / carer together and part of it with you on your own

If you would feel more comfortable having a parent or carer in the room with you during your assessment, that's fine. You can also see the team by yourself if you would prefer, however staff may expect your parent or carer to be present for part of the meeting. This is so we can understand everyone's point of view to better work with you in planning any further care.

What will you ask me?

Here are some common questions the CAMHS team may ask in an assessment:

- What has brought you to CAMHS?
- How long have you experienced the problem that has brought you to CAMHS?
- What would you like to change in your life?
- What might help tackle the problems you are experiencing?
- How have you been feeling recently?

What will we talk about?

We will talk about what your goals are and what you would like to be different in your life. Together, we can determine the most effective treatment to help you achieve these objectives. Also, if you or your parent/carer is not confident speaking English, CAMHS can provide an interpreter to help. Just let them know if this is the case.

If you have any worries about coming to your appointment, please contact the team on the number on your appointment letter. We are here to help you and your first appointment can be the start of your recovery.

What happens after my appointment?

After the first appointment, the clinicians will talk to you about what happens next, there may be one of several outcomes:

- **No further assessment or treatment by CAMHS** is required and you will be discharged from the service. You may be given details of other services who can help you
- **Further assessment by CAMHS is required** and more appointments will be made There may be a wait for further assessment and we will advise you of how you will be supported during this time and other resources that may be of help while you wait.
- **It is agreed that CAMHS is the best service to offer treatment and a plan will be made with you.** This will include what CAMHS can offer and will also include what you can do and what other people can do to support you. Treatment may be offered immediately or you may be placed on a treatment waiting list dependent on the issues.

How long will I see CAMHS for?

It is hard to say how long you will be under the care of CAMHS as every person is different and requires different care. You may only need CAMHS involvement for a short period of time. You may need to continue receiving treatment into adulthood. Until we've met you and understood your needs, we can't really predict what support will be right for you and how long you might need it for.

Whatever the outcome, the clinicians will discuss this with you and your family to ensure that your views have been considered. The clinician will write to the person who asked you to come and see us and you will get a copy of the assessment letter. They normally also include your GP and school nurse.

Before your appointment, it could help to:



Talk to someone

Talk to someone you trust (like a friend, parent or trusted grown up) about how you're feeling about coming to CAMHS

Think about what you want to tell us



Have a think about what things we need to know. You can talk to us about this on the day, write them down in advance or maybe both? It's important at your CAMHS assessment to try and be as honest as possible, as this will help us to understand you and your family and what might help.

Be prepared

Consider the practical things about your appointment for example where it is, who you are seeing, you might want to bring some things along such as a drink, notepad and pen or something you find comforting.



Here are some things that are helpful for you to tell us:

- When your difficulties started
- What you'd like to change
- If there's a pattern in the problems (keeping a diary or log book before your assessment can be really helpful to show this)
- Any difficulties in school or with friends or with out of school activities.
- Any general health problems, either now or in the past
- Any big family events or issues like divorce or bereavement
- Any recent or past trauma, e.g., emotional, sexual or physical abuse
- Other services you've had help from, like social care, hospital or private assessments, therapy or treatment



Have fun

Think about what you will do before and after your appointment with us. Will you play a video game? Go for a walk? Meet a friend? It is good to try and do something that may take your mind of things.

Frequently asked questions

Can a parent / carer come with me?

Yes. Your parents / carers are encouraged to attend this appointment with you. We'll want to know your developmental history which means things you did as a baby and young child to build a rounded picture of you. You might want your parents / carers to only be in for part of the appointment and that's ok too. We will discuss with you what information is shared with them and how this will be done.

Are all appointments at CAMHS bases?

No, some appointments are by telephone, virtual (via Attend Anywhere or Airmid) and some are face to face. You will be told when you receive your appointment details what type of appointment you have.

What if I can't get to my appointment?

If you cannot attend your appointment, please contact CAMHS as soon as possible on the contact number on your letter to discuss this. We will do our best to understand what is making this hard and find a way to help you to attend.

Does it matter if I can't come to my appointment?

Yes it does. Any appointments that you miss slow the process down, potentially delaying your treatment. Also, another young person who needs help could have had your appointment so if you can't attend your appointment (which is okay – sometimes things happen), please let us know as soon as possible by contacting the number on your appointment letter so we can reschedule your appointment and offer your cancelled appointment to another young person. If you miss multiple appointments without contacting us, we will close your case and remove you from CAMHS care so it's really important to keep in contact with us.

How long do appointments last?

Your first appointment may be longer but usually appointments are around an hour long. Some appointments may be longer depending on treatment and service but we will let you know how long your appointment will be for. You do not need to stay for the whole appointment if you don't want to but if you can this will help us with your treatment.

Will I be given medication?

Not necessarily. Not everyone requires medication but for some conditions it is helpful to take medication. If you have any questions regarding medication, you will be able to ask your CAMHS clinician about this.

What do I tell school if I need to attend an appointment in school time?

If you need to come out of school for a CAMHS appointment it's very important you tell someone at school. This is so your school can make a note as to why you aren't there. We see lots of young people who need to take time out of their school day to come and see us. Your school will be understanding and may also be able to offer you further support. They may ask to see a copy of your appointment letter so they can keep a record of why you weren't able to attend on that date or time.

We know waiting for help can feel really upsetting and worrying, especially if you're finding it difficult to cope with your mental health. This booklet has been designed (with the help of CAMHS clinicians and young people receiving care from CAMHS) to support you during this waiting period.

Will I be kept in at CAMHS overnight?

Going to an appointment at a CAMHS outpatient clinic, is a bit like going to see your GP. The clinics do not have bedrooms and people do not stay overnight at these clinics. You can return home after your appointment. There are some occasions when young people do need a hospital admission because they have become so unwell they need extra care to look after them. This would always be discussed with you and your parents/carers and would only be considered if treatment in the community wasn't an option at that time.

Why is there a wait for me to see someone at CAMHS?

CAMHS supports thousands of young people each year with their mental health. Did you know, according to Young Minds, 1 in 6 children (aged between 5 to 16) had a mental health problem in July 2021. That's five children in every classroom! 83% of young people with mental health needs agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse.

Do I need to tell my friends I am coming to CAMHS?

That is completely up to you. It is very brave to accept support with your mental health and your courage may help encourage others to ask for help if they are struggling with their mental health too. But it's also okay if you would prefer to keep it to yourself. You could tell your friends you have a dentist appointment or simply say you'd rather not talk about it.

Who will I see at CAMHS?

You may see a range of specialists who work at CAMHS depending on your individual needs. Turn over to find out more about the roles at CAMHS.

Do I need to do anything before my appointment?

No but you should think about preparing to work with CAMHS. The thought of coming to see us may be a worry, but you have made the step of asking for help with your mental health which is great.

Who works at CAMHS?

There are a wide range of specialist staff who work at CAMHS who are all experienced in supporting children and young people experiencing mental health struggles. Some of our staff are clinical (who treat patients) and some aren't. You may speak to a mixture of staff. It all depends on your individual needs. You may speak to some of the following people:

Child and adolescent psychiatrists

They are medical doctors who have trained to diagnose and treat young people with mental health difficulties. This may include prescribing medication.

Community Psychiatric Nurses

Nurses in CAMHS work with young people to understand your mental health difficulties, through assessment and intervention as well as working with you to think about how to manage things that might keep difficulties going to build your resilience.

Mental health Practitioners

These are qualified professionals from different professional backgrounds such as Social worker, Occupational Therapy or Nursing and provide assessment and interventions to understand and improve your mental health.

Clinical Psychologists

They are trained to assess and treat young people with mental health difficulties by using a range of approaches.

Occupational Therapists

They will help you do things you used to but struggle to do now or help you with practical things that you have always found tricky - this could be going back to school or getting on public transport.

Family Therapists

They work with you and your family to help you with any difficulties you may be experiencing.

Dieticians

They help provide you with individual information around food. These will usually help people with specific dietary requirements or difficulties with eating food.

Child and adolescent psychotherapists

They help young people to make sense of and process difficult or confusing feelings, thoughts, memories and experiences in a safe and calm space.

Children Wellbeing Practitioner's

They offer intervention to young people with common mental health difficulties, which are impacting on their daily life and stopping them from doing things they enjoy or things they need to do.

Administrative Staff

These work in our office areas and do not directly treat children and young people. They organise appointments, send young people and their family letters and answer any queries over the telephone.

Trainee/assistant staff

You may speak to staff who are helping other staff whilst learning new skills themselves.

Peer Support workers

Peer support workers are people who have struggled with mental health themselves. They are now trained to support other people with their mental health so if you speak to a Peer Support worker, they've been under the care of CAMHS too.



Confidentiality, consent and Routine Outcome Measures



Confidentiality

1. the state of respecting the privacy of information.

Confidentiality is an important legal and ethical duty for the NHS. Everyone who works within the NHS (this includes staff in CAMHS who don't meet directly with children and young people) have a duty to keep your information confidential. This means that they will respect your privacy and will only share necessary information with other professionals involved in your life. When you have an appointment at CAMHS, the clinician you are seeing will discuss confidentiality with you. They will talk to you about who you are happy for us to share information with, and what information. They will also talk to you about circumstances in which they may have to share information without your agreement and the reasons for this.

Consent

1. permission for something to happen or agreement to do something

Consent is an important legal and ethical duty for the NHS. Clinicians who work within the NHS have training in how to support you to make decisions about the care and treatment that you are receiving. Your CAMHS worker will discuss consent with you and let you know the importance of understanding what you are agreeing to when we are working with you. If you are over the age of 16 years of age, you are legally able to consent to your own treatment. It will still be important to work with your parents and carers and we will talk to you about how to do this.

Safeguarding

1. protect from harm or damage with an appropriate measure.

Safeguarding is an important legal and ethical duty for the NHS. At CAMHS, our main priority is to keep you safe. If you tell us something which suggests you or someone else is being harmed, may be at risk of harm, or has been harmed in the past, we have a duty to let people know in order to keep you and other people safe. If we need to do this, we will discuss this with you first and will seek your views about how we can best keep everyone safe.

GDPR

1. General Data Protection Regulation, a set of European Union rules on data protection and privacy.

We ask for some personal information from you such as your age, gender, race and sexuality. The information you give us is important for us to be sure that we are providing services that meets everyone's needs. Anonymised data can be seen by the NHS England staff and is used to improve services. We will keep your personal information safe and we will not share your information without your permission (except for if we need to for safeguarding reasons)



What is Therapeutic work

“Talking therapy” is the treatment of mental health conditions through talking to a trained mental health clinician and working together to gain an understanding of the difficulties you are experiencing and developing skills and techniques to help you manage and hopefully overcome these difficulties. Therapy can be delivered individually or in a group and it may involve your family. The aim of all therapy in CAMHS is to help you understand your thoughts, feelings and behaviour and to support you to develop skills you need to get unstuck and live your life the way you want to. There are many types of therapy offered at CAMHS, including:

Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

A therapy to increase self-awareness and understand the influence of the past on current behaviours.

Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is used to help people process distressing memories and reduce their emotional impact.

Groupwork therapy

CAMHS Groupwork is the first line offer of treatment available to most young people who are accepted into the CAMHS Outpatient Team. The aim is to help you to improve your mental health by offering you the opportunity to improve confidence in social and group situations, develop new skills and coping strategies that you can then transfer into your daily life

Interpersonal therapy

Focuses on helping you address problems in your relationships with important people in your life.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think about them and behave when you are facing challenges, in order to help with difficult feelings.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy

Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) is a type of talking therapy. It's based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) but it's specially adapted for people who feel emotions very intensely.

Family Therapy

Also known as Family and Systemic Psychotherapy can help those in close relationships to better understand and support each other.



We may not be able to provide every type of therapy. Staff at CAMHS will help clarify which treatments are available to you.

Looking after yourself

Using these tips to help you feel better is sometimes known as “self-care”. All this means is making time to look after yourself and your wellbeing, both physically and emotionally.

It’s about doing things that make you feel better such as listening to music that makes you feel good, taking a nap or doing a doodle! The important thing to remember is that self-care will look different for everyone, as one person might feel better after a walk whereas for someone else it’s about giving yourself permission to chill and do nothing at all and knowing that’s ok.

Relaxation strategies are really helpful ways of calming your distress and are good to practice even when you are feeling calm. You might also have an activity that you find relaxing such as art or listening to music. It can be helpful to make playlists of your favourite songs, including happy, comforting music to listen to when you are feeling down or a mix of music you find inspiring when you are feeling challenged.

Mindfulness is a helpful coping strategy which can help you focus your attention on the here-and-now, connect you with your immediate surroundings, notice how you are feeling and help you to feel more in control. It is a simple, effective exercise but does need regular practice. You can go for a walk or try mindful colouring!

Grounding strategies are helpful ways of feeling more in control if you feel over-whelmed, disconnected or are experiencing flashbacks or distressing memories. Distraction activities can be a helpful way of giving you a break from your distress if you are feeling stuck and overwhelmed. This will occupy your brain for a brief while which can sometimes be enough to start feeling more in control.

Staying connected is really important to stay connected with what is most important to you. Spend time with your friends and family or you might want to write letters, keep a diary or create a memory box.

TOP TIPS

You can click the green underlined text to launch more information



Managing your emotions

for when I am
struggling to control
my emotions



Paying Attention to Positive Events

Acknowledge and enjoy positive life events, such as a good exam result or making a new friend.



Sleeping well

A healthy sleep routine is really important for our physical and mental health. [Click here](#) to learn more about the important of sleep



Try not to worry

There are certain aspects of life that we have no control over, like disappointment, pain, and grief. You can't avoid these but accepting them is crucial to maintaining good mental health.

Avoid mood altering substances

such as excessive caffeine including [energy drinks](#), [nicotine](#), [illegal drugs](#) and [alcohol](#). These substances can have unhealthy neuropsychiatric effects which may alter your mood.



Share your feelings

While not everyone is a social butterfly, meaningful relationships with our loved ones can greatly enhance our overall well-being. So, even if you only have a small, trusted circle, it's important to share your life and feelings with others.

Eating Healthily

Food can have an effect on how you are feeling. Serotonin is a feel good chemical produced by your brain. For this chemical to be produced, you need to provide your brain with the correct fuel. [Click here](#) to learn more about the importance of nutrition and diet.



Regular exercise

Exercise helps you sleep better, reduces stress levels, makes you physically and mentally stronger, gives you more energy, improves coordination and more! [Click here](#) to learn more about the benefits of exercise!



Personal Coping Plan Template

for when I feel
stressed out

I feel stressed out when:

-
-
-
-
-
-

I know I feel stressed because:

- I can't sleep
- It's hard to focus
- I get a headache
-
-
-

When I feel stressed, I also feel:

- | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|--------|
| Sad | Tired | Angry | Anxious | Overwhelmed | Tense | Scared |
| Worried | Restless | Confused | Fearful | Aggressive | Drained | |



When I am stressed, I can talk to:



If stress could talk, it would tell me I need to:

When I feel stressed out, I like to:



Go outside



Exercise



Organise / Breakdown tasks



Take a break from technology

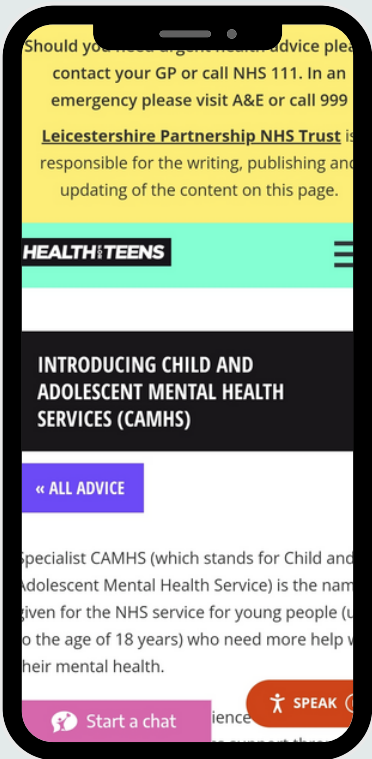


Practice Mindfulness



See my friends and family

A quick guide to what you can find on the Health for Teens



Health for Teens is a website that offers a great choice of content and quizzes across all areas of your health, from sexual health to your feelings, growing up, lifestyle and much more. Our Doctor's, Psychologist's, Nurses and other clinician's at CAMHS create lots of content for this website, such as information on [Tics](#), [Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder](#), a

'*Safety Support Plan*' more!

DID YOU KNOW?
CAMHS has its own section on Health for Teens?
[Click here to have a look!](#)

Should you need urgent health advice please contact your GP or call NHS 111. In an emergency please visit A&E or call 999

HEALTH FOR TEENS FEELINGS GROWING UP HEALTH LIFESTYLE RELATIONSHIPS SEXUAL HEALTH YOUR AREA



Resources that may be useful



By clicking on the [green text](#), you'll be directed to their webpage!

YOUNGMINDS

[Young minds](#) is a mental health charity for younger people. You can also text YM to 85258.



[Tellmi](#) allows an online safe and anonymous space for young people to discuss their feelings, seek support and receive counselling when necessary.

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
[Childline](#) is there to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. You can talk to them by calling 0800 1111 or by visiting their [website](#).



Anyone needing mental health support for themselves or others can call the [Mental Health Central Access Point](#) on 0808 800 3302, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

THE MIX

[The Mix](#) offers online counselling and has a crisis messenger for young people under the age of 25. They have a free, confidential helpline (0808 808 4994).



[First Steps](#) can provide help to anyone who is facing difficulty with mood, anxiety or depression, or anyone who's relationship with their body or food is impacting their life. You can refer yourself to this service.

CORAM

better chances for children since 1739

[Coram](#) supports children either currently in or been in the care system.



[The Decider Skills](#) use Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to teach children, young people and adults the skills to recognise their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, enabling them to monitor and manage their own emotions and mental health.



[CALM](#) has a helpline and a live chat that are open from 5pm to midnight everyday.



[ADHD Solutions](#) is a charitable organisation based in Leicester. They help families, and professionals anywhere, cope with the challenges of ADHD.



[Chat Autism](#) - a non-emergency text-based support service for autistic people and their families. Send a text to: 07312 277097



[Start a Conversation](#) offer advice and support to those who have been bereaved or affected by suicide.

For even more resources, [click here !](#)

Information for parents and carers



If your family have received this information, it means your child has been referred to CAMHS for assessment or is waiting for treatment.

Once CAMHS become involved they will work with your child to understand their mental health and the strategies that might help. The clinician you see will agree how you will be involved in the assessment and further intervention.

Due to the unprecedented level of demand on our service, there are long waiting lists for some assessments and treatments. We know this is often a worrying and upsetting time for everyone involved. We recognise how frustrating waiting for intervention can be for young people and their families/carers and as a service, we will do all that we can to support young people whilst they are waiting, this may be through sharing resources, which might be on-line, with other services (such as support at school or community based projects) or through contact with CAMHS.

We recognise it's not just the young people who need support whilst they are waiting for the treatment, their families do too.

Debbie, our Parent Practitioner within the Intensive Community Support Team, has personal experience with using our service and would like to share this message with you



*Dear "The most important person
/people in your child's life".
I've walked your path and I can see you're worn,
Exhausted by your teen's mental health storm,
It's not easy to watch your child suffer,
And see them in pain, with no buffer.*

*My son was battling internal strife,
Self-harm and tying ligatures around his life,
It's a tough and scary road to travel,
But don't give up, keep up the fight, don't unravel.*

*I want to validate your struggle and pain,
And acknowledge the loss of what may have been,
Your heart may be heavy with worry and fear,
But your love and support will help your teen steer.*

*Please don't forget to take care of yourself,
And reach out for support from someone else,
You need to be strong and healthy too,
To help your child, and to see this through.*

*I know it's hard to stay hopeful and strong,
But let's focus on what we can control, not what's gone wrong,
We'll work together to find a way,
To help your teen heal and start a brand new day.*

*Let's encourage them to seek help and talk,
To find coping mechanisms to help them walk,
Through the darkness, into the light,
With hope, love, and support in sight.*

*And when the journey seems too hard to bear,
And you feel like giving up is the only prayer,
Remember that you are not alone,
And we'll be here to help you hold on.*

By Debbie – (Parent Practitioner CAMHS)

Keeping your child safe

As a parent, you may be feeling lost when trying to offer support to your child. We know how worrying this time is for families so here are a few pointers about what you can do to help your young person whilst you wait:

1. Try to understand what is going on

A young person's brain is still developing and how they deal with situations can be very different to how our fully developed brain would. A problem which may seem small to us may seem huge to them. This can be difficult to understand but it is very important to try and put yourself in their shoes and be as supportive as you can be.

2. Look after yourself

As Debbie said, you are 'the most important person/people in your child's life'. It is incredibly important that during this time, you try to remain strong and supportive of your child but also look after yourself. If you don't look after yourself, you will struggle to give the care you want to give to your child. You can look after yourself by eating healthily, exercising regularly, trying to have a regular sleep pattern and socialising with family and friends.

3. Look for support

Every parent parents their child differently. It is useful to look at support that can help your family during these difficult times. You can visit the 'health for teens', 'health for kids' and 'Leicestershire Partnership Trust' website for more information on both the CAMHS service and difficulties your young person may be experiencing.



If you are struggling with your own mental health, it is very important you reach out. Speak to your GP if you have any concerns.

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

1. **PAPYRUS** has a guide for parents and carers who are concerned that a young person might be experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm. [Click here for more information on PAPYRUS.](#)
2. **Every Mind Matters** has a page dedicated to Looking after a child or young person's mental health. [Click here for more information on Every Mind Matters.](#)
3. **Place2Be** (a children's mental health charity that provides counselling and mental health support and training in UK schools) has a page dedicated to 'Supporting your child's mental health' with links to specialised support, such as bereavement and autism. [Click here for more information on Place2Be.](#)
4. **MindEd for Families** – has lots of useful resources, including support on 'Parenting The Child With Issues'. [Click here for more information on MindEd for Families.](#)
5. **Young Minds** is a charity which supports not only young people experiencing mental health difficulties but also their parents and teachers. [Click here for more information on Young Minds.](#)
6. **The Solihull Approach courses** – which are being provided by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust – cover concerns that parents often face with all children, from before they are born to early adulthood, including physical and mental health, understanding their feelings and how to build better relationships. Issues that affect children with additional needs including learning disabilities and autism – are also covered. The courses include the same content as you would receive in a typical face-to-face parenting group run by health visitors. [Click here for more information about the Solihull Approach courses,](#)

What to do if I have concerns about CAMHS?

Step 1: Contact CAMHS

Your feedback is really important to us at CAMHS.

Your opinion on the services matters to us whether it's good or bad. We will listen to your thoughts and suggestions. These will help us make changes to our services to improve the service we provide to young people. Due to the level of demand on our service, there are waits for some assessments and treatments. We recognise how frustrating this can be for young people and their families/carers.

It is important to us that we do all that we can to support people whilst they are waiting. We would therefore like to hear about your experience of waiting and any suggestions you may have. You can provide us with feedback on your Access appointment. To provide feedback on a particular team, please contact them directly and request information on their feedback process.

If you have concerns about the service your child is receiving, please contact your local CAMHS team on number on the appointment letter in the first instance.

Step 2: Contact PALS

Raising a concern can be done directly with your local CAMHS Team, we would encourage you to do this, as they can work with you to resolve the issue quickly.

If you would rather not raise your concerns directly with CAMHS, you can share your concerns with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is a free and confidential service for patients, friends, carers, and family members. They can provide advice and support and ensure that you are kept fully informed whilst your concerns are being addressed.

[Click here](#) for more information on the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Step 3: Contacting NHS England.

If you're not happy with an NHS service, you can make a complaint. It is advised, by the NHS, you contact the organisation (CAMHS) in the first instance.

You are within your rights to make a complaint about service you receive.

You can complain to the commissioner of that service, either NHS England or the local integrated care board (ICB).

Signs of deterioration in your child

When to be concerned

If you are waiting for an appointment and spot further concerns in your child's behaviour, here are a list of changes you should look for:

- Your child has said they want to end their life and considered how they would achieve this
- Your child is self-harming more frequently and has increased the severity of self-harm
- Your child has stopped or dramatically reduced the amount of time they attend school/college
- Your child reports that have symptoms or can see or hear things that others cannot
- Your child becomes increasingly isolated, in their room or away from peers
- Your child reduces the amount of self-care they do ie less showers, not changing clothes
- Any significant changes for your child in their eating or sleeping habits
- If your child is no longer enjoying things they've previously always enjoyed

What to do if concerned

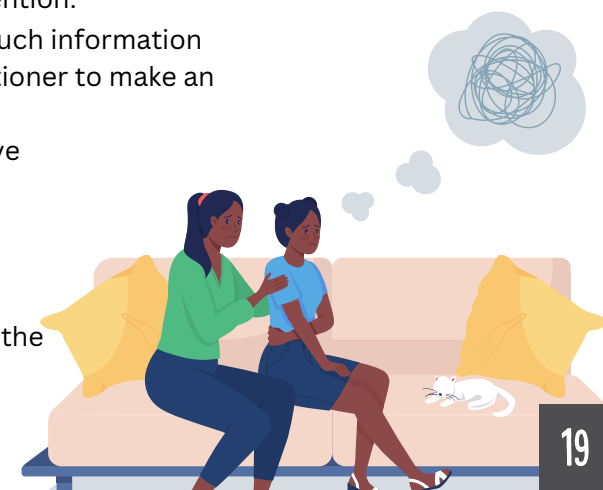
If you are concerned and require urgent mental health support:

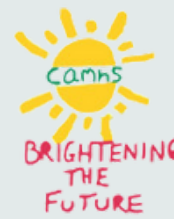
- If you need to speak to a mental health practitioner, you can call the [Central Access Point \(CAP\) on 0808 8003302](#) who have a 24-hour support line
- If you are already seen by CAMHS and it is in office hours (9-5), call your CAMHS worker
- [Call 111](#) (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- Call your GP

If your child requires **urgent medical attention, take them straight to the local Accident and Emergency Department.** In an extreme situation, it might be necessary to contact the police or ambulance service. Please only attend accident and emergency services if it is vital to do so, for emergency medical attention.

Whoever you speak to, please give them as much information as possible to allow the mental health practitioner to make an informed assessment. Make sure you are clear about the changes in behaviour that have prompted you to make contact.

If your child is already seeing someone from CAMHS, or is on a waiting list, please let the person you are speaking to know this and the names of any CAMHS workers who currently support your child.





Created by Aneeka, an incredibly talented member of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) September 2023



YAB
Youth Advisory Board

NHS
Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust

Do you want to make a difference to health services in your area?

Why not join the Youth Advisory Board (YAB)?

OPEN TO ALL 13–21 YEAR OLDS!

We meet weekly virtually on MS Teams on Tuesday evenings 5–6pm.

Some quotes from our current YAB members:

“To feel like you're part of something which is helping young people now and in the future is an incredible feeling.”
-Teri-Ann

“It's so all inclusive and loving being part of a great team.”
-Libby

“I have been a long-standing member of the board (YAB) for almost 3 years. Over this time I have met wonderful, supportive people who are caring and considerate and put your best interests first. They have provided me with opportunities to interview job applicants of all different Bands and be a part of projects that will bring a positive difference such as the ND Project and Sexual Health Assessment Project.”
-Dylann

@LPTYAB
lpt.youthadvisoryboard@nhs.net

WHAT DOES THE YAB DO?
YAB works across NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) supporting improving children and Young People's health care services through members lived experience, participation and voices in weekly meetings
We:
Influence new services for Children & Young People
Advice around new policies – e.g. LGBTQ+, mental health & children and young people related.
Helped design a new anxiety group
Booklets, leaflets and posters
How to make new workshops accessible
Have opportunities to join interview panels

HELP YAB TO HELP YOU:

- Be part of a safe online community
- Makes your CV stand out
- Build relationships & networks
- Learn new skills and gain confidence
- Occasional in person meet-ups
- Vouchers & rewards for project work