

# Frequently Asked Questions about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

## Information for parents, carers and young people



### Key points



We see children and young people from 0-18 years old.



If you want to see us you can ask your GP or school or college to contact us.

### How long does it take to be seen by CAMHS?

Once we receive a referral, we will try to contact you by telephone within a couple of days. We will talk to you about your concerns and if we agree that CAMHS is the right service for you, we will book a time for an initial appointment. This usually takes about three to four weeks but can be sooner if needed. After your initial appointment there may be a waiting list but we will give you some suggestions of what you can do in the meantime.

### What age children do CAMHS see?

CAMHS accepts referrals for children 0-18 years of age. When you turn 18 we will normally support you with a transition to adult services if you still need help.

### Are CAMHS available out of hours?

It is not possible to talk to your local CAMHS team outside the hours of 9am-5pm (though some clinics open earlier). If you urgently need to speak to someone, your GP usually has an out of hours emergency number, and they will be able to

refer you to CAMHS if that is the most appropriate course of action.

### How can I get a referral to CAMHS?

Referrals are accepted from any professional in health, education, social services and the voluntary sector. In the case of school/college based problems, help should have been sought from the appropriate professionals such as schools, colleges, education psychologists, school nurses or the multi-agency behaviour support team (MABS) before the referral is made.

### Who will I see at CAMHS?

There are lots of different staff at CAMHS, such as mental health workers, clinical psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists and therapists.

### What can I do while I wait?

The "What you need help with" pages on our website [www.solentcamhs.nhs.uk](http://www.solentcamhs.nhs.uk) have information about the difficulties that young people coming to CAMHS show us. Each page has links to other websites that can provide more information and support.



## Key points



We are a team made up of lots of different staff who can all help in different ways.

## What do the tiers mean?

Some services are set up in tiers, with each one addressing a different level of need.

Portsmouth offers CAMHS services at tier two and three while Southampton offers an integrated service across the clinics.

### In Portsmouth

Tier one is made up of primary care workers such as school nurses or health visitors. They deal with common childhood problems such as feeding and sleeping difficulties.

The Single Point of Access Team (SPA), previously tier two, are a team of mental health professionals who work with children and young people aged 0-18 years and their families/support networks. They help treat people in this group who have moderate mental health problems that cannot be managed by the school nurses or health visitors.

The Extended CAMHS Team, previously tier three, is a team of mental health professionals including nurses, therapists and psychologists. They offer assessment and help for children and young people aged 0-18 years and their families/support networks who have serious to severe mental health disorders. They see young people with moderate to severe mental health issues that are usually more complex than the SPA team see. The Extended Team also provide assessments.

Tier four consists of specialist day and inpatient units where young people with more severe mental health issues can be assessed and treated.

### In Southampton

- Universal services are the services which all families can access as problems emerge. They include GPs, health visitors, schools, school nurses and other services such as voluntary organisations, police and housing who have an important role in Early Intervention for children and families. Professionals within these services can help you to decide whether a referral to CAMHS is needed.
- Our integrated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are provided in two clinics across the city, one for 0 - 14 year olds and one for 14 - 18 year olds.
- There are also specialist day and inpatient units where young people with more severe mental health conditions can be treated.


Please tell us how you feel about the services we provide.

If you have a compliment, concern or complaint please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) and Complaints Services on **0800 013 2319** or **[Snhs.solentfeedback@nhs.net](mailto:Snhs.solentfeedback@nhs.net)**  
Alternatively, visit: **[www.solent.nhs.uk/contact-us](http://www.solent.nhs.uk/contact-us)**

**[www.solent.nhs.uk](http://www.solent.nhs.uk)**

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