

PRACTITIONER GUIDE

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are a specialist NHS service that helps young people up to the age of 18 who are finding it hard to manage their emotional and psychological health, and who are suffering with acute, chronic and severe mental health problems. As a specialist service, CAMHS expect other services in the community to have been accessed before making a referral.



Who are CAMHS?

Hampshire CAMHS is an NHS specialist service provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust for young people up to the age of 18 years and their families who are experiencing difficulties with their mental and emotional health. Many young people experience difficulties with their mental health, for example, anxiety, low mood, trauma, eating difficulties, which can impact on all aspects of life including education, home life, hobbies and interests, socialising and having fun.

It is important to know that everyone has mental health and that we can all experience tough times which can sometimes cause our mental health to suffer. CAMHS work with young people, their families and other organisations to achieve the following:

- **Assess and diagnose mental health and neurodevelopmental difficulties.**
- **Identify realistic goals or changes.**
- **Identify and build on strength.**
- **Improve self-esteem and confidence to cope with difficulties.**
- **Learn emotional coping techniques to help manage difficult or upsetting thoughts, feelings, urges or experiences.**
- **Empower the young person to identify, express and communicate their needs, take responsibility for their health and well-being and feel confident in knowing where and how to get additional support if necessary.**

CAMHS cannot “cure” mental health difficulties or prevent difficulties ever coming back, but they can help a young person build skills of their own to help them achieve their potential and get the most out of their life.

There are many [services](#) that help young people with emotional and mental health needs. Most young people find these services help them to recover and better manage their emotions/mental health. **For a few young people, further specialist support from CAMHS is needed.**

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Before Making a Referral

As a specialist service, Hampshire CAMHS expect people to have accessed [self-help](#) opportunities and other services in the community before making a referral to Hampshire CAMHS. If the young person has accessed these [agencies](#) on the CAMHS website, or something similar in their local area and you think more specialist support is needed then please consider a CAMHS referral.

Any professional can request an appointment with Hampshire Specialist CAMHS; teachers, health professionals (such as a school nurses or GPs) or social workers.

Please note, if your referral is for a Child in Care then the referral MUST be completed by the child or young person's SOCIAL WORKER.

It is always recommended speaking to CAMHS for advice and guidance before making a referral to decide whether CAMHS is the right service. CAMHS may also be able to offer recommendations about other services, organisations and support that may be helpful. A professionals consultation line is available Monday to Friday, 9am - 2pm on **0300 304 0050**.

Step 1

- Have you looked at the relevant information and advice available on the website?
- Have self-help options been tried?

Step 2

- Has support from other mental health services and organisations been accessed?

Step 3

- Is the child/ young person still struggling?
- If so, it may be that speaking to a CAMHS clinician might be helpful. Please contact the Single Point of Access (SPA) number on 0300 304 0050.

Completing the Online Referral Form

If after proceeding through these steps as a professional, you conclude a referral is required, then the **preferred referral route** is to use the online [Referral form](#).

This form is likely to take **an hour** to complete. It is important that professionals ensure that they have all the information to hand prior to starting, i.e.:

- ⇒ **personal details,**
- ⇒ **education details, and**
- ⇒ **physical health details of the child or young person.**

Referral information should be detailed and include examples.

There is a 3-hour limit for the form to be completed, and it is not possible to save and return to it. Referral forms should be sent to HantsCamhsSpa@nhs.net. [Download a Referral form](#).

CAMHS are happy to receive copies of any reports you have that may provide additional and relevant information. These can be sent via email at: SPNT.HantsCamhsSpa@nhs.net. **Any additional information must be clearly identified to relate to the child you have submitted a referral for.**

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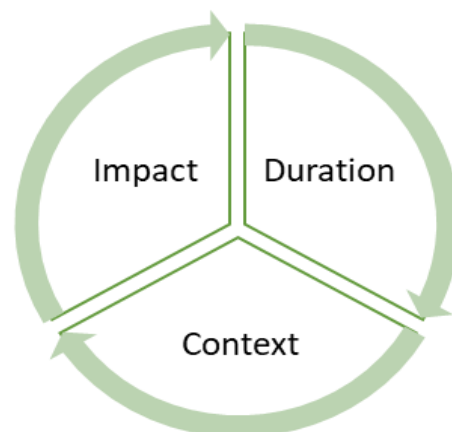
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Once received, the referral will be reviewed by a team of clinicians in the **Single Point of Access (SPA)**. The team discuss referrals together to make an informed decision as to whether a referral for assessment is accepted or whether signposting to other services and/or self-help is more appropriate.

A Quality Referral

Decisions on referrals are based on [3 key areas](#):

1. The **impact** of the symptoms/difficulties on a young person's day-to-day life must be significant.
2. The symptoms/difficulties must have been impacting the young person's life for a significant **duration**, unless a sudden change poses a risk of harm.
3. The **context** of the symptoms/difficulties - an assessment of the difficult circumstances surrounding the young person and their access to local support.



What Happens Next?

Hampshire CAMHS will triage the referral based on the information provided and make an assessment as to whether Hampshire CAMHS is the most appropriate service. It is not possible due to the current demands to provide an accurate time frame for when a young person may be seen. However, if the situation is high risk, appointments can be expedited.

The CAMHS [Thresholds document](#) can also provide useful guidance for referring professionals.



Current Service Provision

The Hampshire CAMHS Service has been experiencing a significant increase in demand since September 2020, when young people returned to school, and lockdown measures were initially eased.

If you need advice or support for the young person immediately call **111 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)** or visit www.111.nhs.uk and speak to the NHS Mental Health Triage Service. The NHS 111 mental health triage service provides advice, support and guidance, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for anyone living in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Further information

[Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS\):](#)

- [Help for professionals](#)
- [Should I make a referral?](#)