

**Family therapy:** this involves encouraging families to see each other's points of view, experiences and beliefs to find opportunities to make positive changes.

**Art therapy:** this gives people the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings through art.

### How can I support my child?

It's important that you are involved in your child's treatment; however, depending on their treatment, your involvement level may vary.

You can support your child by:

- Making sure they know you love them and are proud of them.
- Letting them know you are concerned about them and are there to support them.
- Talking to your child and being honest about your own feelings, as well as theirs.
- Apologising if you wrongfully shout at them or are unkind – they will learn that it's ok to make mistakes.
- Making clear what is and isn't acceptable behaviour.
- Making sure they know you are there to keep them safe.

- Discussing your concerns with your child's other parent, if you can.
- Asking your child how they would like you to help them.
- Talking to school staff to ensure your child is appropriately supported.

### Remember to look after yourself!

It can be upsetting, worrying and stressful when your child is having a difficult time, so it's important that you look after your own wellbeing as well as your child's. You can't support your child to the best of your ability if you don't also look after yourself.

If you are feeling down or unable to cope:

- Talk to someone you trust.
- See if friends or family can look after your child for enough time for you to sort out your other responsibilities.
- Try to take some time for yourself, even if this is just watching a DVD or making a nice meal.
- Speak to your GP or a counselling service if you think you could benefit from this type of support yourself.



### Useful websites

The websites below provide useful information for you and your child:

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/>
- <https://www.rethink.org/>
- [http://www.choosing.org.uk/English\\_Home.aspx](http://www.choosing.org.uk/English_Home.aspx)

# What to expect

when your child has  
been referred to CAMHS



## What is CAMHS?

CAMHS stands for 'Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services'. These services are provided by the NHS for children and young people who are experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

## Why has my child been referred?

A child will be referred to CAMHS if a GP, teacher or social worker believes that they would benefit from a professional assessment of their mental health.

In our school, no individual staff member will decide whether a referral is necessary – it will be discussed as a team, in line with our school policy.

## What happens now?

Following referral, you will be contacted by the CAMHS team if they believe they can offer useful support to your family.

At the first appointment, CAMHS professionals will make an assessment of your child's mental health needs – if necessary, additional appointments may be made to complete the assessment.

Your child will be seen both individually and with you or other family members, and the CAMHS staff will ask a number of questions to help them understand your child's current situation.

This also gives you the opportunity to ask the professionals any questions that you may have.



## What will they ask?

During the assessment, the CAMHS professionals will ask questions similar to the following:

- What difficulties is your child experiencing?
- When did you first notice this?
- Who is around the family home and what is the family structure?
- How does your child find school? Do they have good or difficult relationships with friends and teachers?
- How would you describe your child's mood/stress levels?
- What was your child like as a baby and growing up?
- What notable things have happened in your child's life so far?
- What does your child enjoy to do?
- What is your child good at?
- What would you like your child to achieve by attending CAMHS?
- What type of help do you need while your child is attending CAMHS?
- Do you know of any risks to your child's wellbeing or safety?

You may wish to think about your answers to the questions above before attending your child's first appointment.



## Diagnosis

Following the assessment, CAMHS professionals may provide a diagnosis – this is a description of the problems and symptoms your child is experiencing.

This helps children and their families understand the problems better, so that you can discuss the most appropriate treatment with CAMHS professionals.

It's important to remember that not all problems will fit neatly into one diagnosis.



## Types of treatment

The type of treatment your child will receive will depend on their diagnosis – there are a variety of different types of treatment that work differently for different people, including:

**Cognitive behavioural therapy:** a talking therapy focussing on the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

**Child and adolescent psychotherapy:** meeting with a psychotherapist to explore thoughts and feelings and how these are connected to relationships, behaviour and past experiences.

**Medication:** If CAMHS professionals think this is the best option, they will discuss how to take the medication, possible side effects and other medical options available.