

Berkshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Referral criteria

Our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support, advice, guidance and treatment for children and young people with severe or moderate mental health difficulties whose symptoms are having a significant impact in their day to day lives. Usually, these symptoms will have been occurring over several months and won't have responded to prevention and early intervention services, such as counselling and behaviour support, evidence based parenting or treatment from primary mental health workers.

How to access our refer a child or young person to CAMHS

The information below helps you decide whether a child or young person would be best helped by a referral to Berkshire CAMHS. If they don't meet the criteria for treatment from CAMHS, you can still find relevant help and support through your local authority. Visit [The Local Offer](#) section on this website to see what help is available in your area.

Who can make a referral

We accept referrals through our CYPFHub, from health, education and children's services colleagues, as well as parents and carers. Young people over the age of 16 can also refer themselves.

When referring, please give as much information as possible about the exact nature of the child or young person's difficulties. Please include information on family circumstances, social and educational functioning, and what interventions have already been tried. Referrals received without the required information can delay assessment.

All referrals made by professionals should be discussed with the family and young person (if they are 16 or over) in advance and consent gained before submitting.

How referrals are prioritised

Referrals are prioritised as '24 hours', 'Soon' or 'Routine'.

24 hour criteria

If you're making a referral for a young person who you feel needs to be assessed by CAMHS within 24 hours, please contact our Urgent Helpline on 0300 247 0000.

The type of situations that might be considered for a '24 hour' response include:

- People who are actively suicidal
- People showing severe psychotic symptoms
- If there is perceived to be an immediate risk of serious harm to themselves or others

'Soon' criteria

Referrals are prioritised as 'soon' if there is a high level of risk or concern that if symptoms are left unaddressed they might result in a crisis or emergency referral. Referrals prioritised as 'Soon' will be assessed within 7 days.

As with the '24 hour' criteria, please call our CYPFHub on 0300 365 1234 to discuss the referral as well as sending the referral form.

The following are likely to require a 'soon' response:

- Severe symptoms of depression with or without suicidal thoughts
- Suicide attempt and persistent suicidal thoughts or evidence of a plan
- Symptoms of anorexia such as rapid, intentional weight loss with a BMI of less than 15 – a medical response may be needed first
- Severe unexplained deterioration in emotional state and behaviour at home and/or school not thought to be due to drugs, alcohol or physical illness

'Routine' criteria

All other referrals are classified as 'Routine'. We aim to assess all routine referrals within six weeks.

Conditions not referred to CAMHS

Certain conditions should not be referred to CAMHS unless there is evidence of other severe mental health concerns at the same time. These conditions are often better dealt with via specialist clinics, your local authority's education services, family GP or [The Local Offer](#). These include:

- **Bedwetting:** if your child is experiencing bedwetting or soiling (enuresis), they should be referred to a Continence Clinic.
- **Chronic physical illness:** if your child is experiencing chronic fatigue or chronic physical illness, they should be referred to a Paediatrician.
- **Refusal to go to school or college:** if your child is refusing to attend school or college, they should be referred to your local authority's education services.
- **Obesity:** if you're concerned about your child's weight, speak to your GP.

Conditions better dealt with by The Local Offer

- Family relationship difficulties such as divorce or separation
- Challenging behaviour
- Bereavement or loss
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Attachment difficulties

CAMHS support

Berkshire CAMHS offers support for a range of conditions. Further details on these services are shown below.

Anxiety

The types of anxiety we can help with include: [generalised anxiety disorder \(GAD\)](#), [separation anxiety disorder](#), [panic disorder](#), [specific phobias](#), [social anxiety disorder](#).

You can refer to CAMHS if the anxiety disorder causes persistent and significant harm to day-to-day living.

Depression

[Read about the symptoms of depression](#)

If a child or young person has moderate to severe depression – where symptoms are having a significant impact on their daily life – you can refer to CAMHS. If the impact on their daily life isn't significant, we recommend trying increased physical activity, a healthy diet, meaningful activities and support to help them form better relationships. Support services are also available in your area and can be found via [The Local Offer](#).

Eating disorders

[Read about different eating disorders](#)

We can help anyone aged 8-18 who has an eating disorder and significant concerns about their weight and shape. If your referral is urgent, please fill out our form and then call our CYPF Hub on 0300 365 1234. If you're not sure whether you need to make a referral, you can call our duty line on 01628 640300 between 9am and 12pm, Monday to Friday, to discuss your problem.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

[Read about the symptoms of PTSD](#)

If your child is experiencing symptoms of PTSD (including associated mental health difficulties such as low mood and self-harm) you should refer them to CAMHS. If your child needs help after a traumatic experience but isn't showing signs of PTSD, please refer them into a specialist community counselling service or agency.

Psychosis

[Read about the symptoms of psychosis](#)

If your child is showing symptoms of psychosis, please make an urgent referral to CAMHS. We'll do a priority assessment for any associated illnesses or diseases.

Self-harm

[Read about self-harming](#)

If your child is showing signs of significant self-harm and experiencing other mental health or psychological difficulties, you can refer them into CAMHS. If your child is showing signs of self-harm but isn't experiencing other difficulties, you can find help with local counselling services.

Tics and Tourette's

[Read about the symptoms of Tourette's](#)

If your child is experiencing symptoms of Tourette's, you can refer them into CAMHS.

How to contact us

If you have an urgent enquiry please contact the CAMHS Urgent Helpline:
0300 247 0000

If your enquiry is not urgent please call:
0300 365 1234

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/CAMHS>

