

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS)

A team of people with different jobs who have experience of working with children and young people who have mental health difficulties. The team would include psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, counsellors, family therapists, arts therapists, primary mental health worker and outreach workers. This guide is designed to help you to understand the terminology used by CAMHS.

Counsellors

Use talking therapies to help people cope.

Family Doctor or General Practitioner (GP)

Contact your GP if you are worried about your health in any way. Your GP can help with

- Talking through problems
- Prescribing medication
- Making referrals to specialists

Health Visitors

Specialised nurses who work in the community

Mental Health Act Commissioner (MHAC)

Visit and privately interview patients in hospital or mental health nursing homes. They have limited powers to investigate a complaint and appoint panels to give second opinions on treatment.

Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)

PALS help NHS users and their carers resolve issues with their care and treatment. Can refer to the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) if the problem is not solved.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)

Free to use and not linked to the NHS. Deals with complaints about NHS treatment.

Paediatricians

Doctors who specialise in child health.

Psychologists

A group of professionals who help you understand the way you behave, feel and think about things. Includes Clinical Psychologists and Educational Psychologists.

Psychotherapists

More in-depth than counsellors, they aim to help you understand why you feel the way you do, what's behind the way you act towards other people and why some things happen to you.

Researchers

Perform tests to make sure treatment is working.

Self-help and Support Groups

Groups where you meet up with people in a similar situation to you. They help you realise you are not alone and you can end up feeling better by being able to support someone else.

Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO)

Organises help in school for children with special educational needs such as learning difficulties.

Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists

Help develop skills in communication, physical ability and coordination. Other therapists include Art Therapists, Drama Therapists, Education Therapists and Music Therapists.

Youth Offending Workers

Work individually with young offenders to assess and find suitable programmes to help them and prevent future offending.

Inpatient Care

You will meet many different staff while on the unit who will do their best to support you and help you recover. Below is a summary of some of the staff you can expect to meet:

Psychiatrists

Specialise in mental health including in children and young people.

Your Psychiatrist (often referred to as your 'consultant') will hold responsibility for your overall care. They will work with you to decide which treatments will help you, including medication, therapeutic interventions and assessments. These are also the people who will decide on your section 17 leave.

Occupational Therapist

Help people who have been unwell or had problems to build the confidence and skills to lead a normal life.

In an inpatient unit, occupational therapists are generally responsible for creating and implementing the timetable for the unit, this might include therapy groups, exercise groups and educational time. They may also do individual work with you to look at what support would be most helpful for you, either individually or in a group.

Nurses (Registered Mental Health Nurses or RMN's)

Trained to care for and support young people and may also prescribe medicine.

Nurses are the backbone of an inpatient care unit. They are involved in the general day-to-day running of the unit as well as delivering clinical and therapeutic support in the form of giving you your medication and making sure your basic health care needs are met.

Social Workers

In an inpatient unit, social workers help facilitate and plan your discharge from the unit, and help you with things that might make going home easier for you.

Some social workers help you if you are at risk of abuse or if you are in care while others are trained in mental health and can offer counselling. Psychiatric social workers are specialists who work with people during crises or over a long period of time.

Health Care Assistants

They support the nurses in the day-to-day running of the unit. They will often support patients with their day-to-day routine and may help to facilitate groups on the unit.

Bank Staff/Agency Staff

When units need more staff support, they hire temporary agency staff or 'bank staff'. This means you will not always see the same faces on your ward, and you are likely to see more bank staff during holiday periods like Easter and Christmas.

Advocate

Someone who will represent you and speak on your behalf.

If you are in inpatient care, you will be entitled to an Independent Mental Health Advocate. An Advocate can help advise you on your rights and help you to communicate your needs to your care team.

Therapeutic Staff

Whilst on the unit you may be offered one to one or group therapeutic support. Most units provide many different types of therapy. What you will be able to access will depend on what is decided with your care team and you.