












Saint John of God Community Services  
Lucena Clinic  
Child & Adolescent Mental Health  
Services

## CAMHS Made Simple



## About this booklet

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, pronounced “cams”. This booklet has information on:

-  What CAMHS is
-  Who is CAMHS for
-  How you can access CAMHS
-  The pathway(s) through CAMHS
-  The people working in CAMHS
-  Information on day hospitals and in-patient units
-  Contact details for each of our clinics
-  Useful additional information
-  Other supports available

## What is CAMHS?

CAMHS is a free specialist service for young people up to 18 years of age who are experiencing **moderate to severe** mental health difficulties and need treatment from a team of mental health professionals.

The term moderate to severe means that the mental health concern is severe enough to cause substantial distress to the child, their family and/or others. The child or adolescent would have significant impairment in many areas of their life including development, family and peer relationships, school, self-care, and play or leisure activities. Other supports may not have worked.



## Who is CAMHS for?

Some moderate to severe mental health needs suitable for CAMHS include:

- ✚ Moderate/severe anxiety disorders
- ✚ Moderate/severe depression
- ✚ Moderate/severe eating disorders
- ✚ Thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm in the context of a mental health concern
- ✚ Psychosis
- ✚ Moderate/severe Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

## How can I use CAMHS?

To use CAMHS, talk to your G.P. (doctor) about any problems that are making everyday life difficult. If your G.P. thinks a CAMHS can currently best meet your needs, they will refer (send) you to CAMHS. They will do this by writing to your local CAMHS team using a referral form (available on [www.lucenaclinic.ie](http://www.lucenaclinic.ie)).

The CAMHS team will look at the information provided and make a decision on whether CAMHS is the right service for the child or adolescent. If CAMHS is the right service, a decision is made on whether it is 'urgent' or 'routine'. Urgent referrals are prioritised for appointment. A member of our staff will contact you and your G.P. by letter to let you know about these decisions.

## Your pathway through CAMHS – 3 steps

### 1. Meet with CAMHS

After being accepted to CAMHS you will have to wait for a triage initial appointment. If the young person has been involved with other services in the past, please send any reports to your CAMHS team. The team will ask you to complete and return consent forms. They might also ask you to complete and return some questionnaires before your appointment which will help with decision making.

The aim of a triage appointment is to decide if CAMHS is the service that can best meet the young person's needs. The young person and their parent(s) will meet one or two members of the team who will listen to all concerns. The team will use a form to gather information. It is important to say exactly what's been happening so you get the right help including:

- ✚ When the difficulties started and how it has negatively impacted on life
- ✚ What could have caused the difficulties or keeps them going (keeping a diary of difficulties before your appointment could be helpful)
- ✚ What you have found helps and does not help
- ✚ What you would like to change
- ✚ What has been going well and your strengths



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## **2. Work with CAMHS**

The team will meet to discuss all the information gathered. Your family will be assigned a 'key worker' who will talk you through your Individual Care Plan (ICP). This plan will tell you who you will work with and lists the areas you want to work on – and how. You have a big part in developing this plan and making it work. CAMHS aim to provide support and tools to improve your difficulties, and the whole family have an important role to play to achieve this. Your ICP can also involve some work with organisations outside of CAMHS.

The supports available in CAMHS can help understand your difficulties better, deal with your feelings and cope with the challenges in your life such as school, family, and friends. Part of your ICP may involve taking medication. Some people work with us for a few months – and some work with us longer.

## **3. Review progress and move on**

Your key worker will check in to make sure you are reaching your care plan goals. When you are finished your work in CAMHS, you will be discharged back to your GP. Your key worker will put you in contact with further community supports if you need it at that time. If you need further support from adult mental health services when you reach 18 years or a disability service, we will make that referral for you.

## Who works at CAMHS?

You may meet some of the following professionals depending on your care plan.

**An administrator** – answers the main telephone line and can connect you to the right people to speak to.

**A child and adolescent psychiatrist** – is a specialist doctor who leads the team and coordinates your overall treatment plan. They may meet with you to see how much the difficulties are impacting on life, provide therapy and/or assess for medication needs.

**A registrar** – is a medically trained doctor. Most registrars are training to become psychiatrists.

**A psychologist** – usually has doctoral training and works with you to find ways to better manage feelings of distress and negative thoughts by developing new ways of thinking and healthier ways of coping.

**A speech and language therapist** – assess for language needs, can give you advice on how to manage social interactions, and help you if you have difficulty understanding the words people use.

**A mental health nurse** – supports you to understand your mental health, provides therapy, provides medication support, and assesses your progress.

**A social worker** – offers support and explores any issues that may be causing difficulty in your family and helps solve them.



**An occupational therapist** – helps you to create healthy routines, find new interests, get back to school, learn new coping skills and get ready for big life challenges.

**Social Care Worker** – aims to build relationships with families in a flexible and needs-focused way that enables the delivery and maintenance of an individual care plan.

### **Our clinics:** Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

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<b>Rathgar</b>	01 492 3596
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<b>Dun Laoghaire</b>	01 280 9809
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<b>Tallaght</b>	01 452 6333
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<b>Bray</b>	01 286 6886
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<b>Wicklow</b>	0404 25591
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## **What are day hospitals and inpatient units?**

**A day hospital** is where you go to get extra support and treatment for your mental health difficulties. Here, you take part in a day programme of activities and therapies.

An adolescent **inpatient unit** is a hospital where you stay if you are very unwell, and the local CAMHS and day hospital cannot provide enough care and treatment for you at that time. While you are in hospital, you will take part in a range of therapies, outlined in your care plan. A teacher will also help with specific areas of your schoolwork.

## Useful additional information

### Advocacy

CAMHS is your service. If you need more information, want to make a compliment/complaint, or a freedom of information request, please go to our website ([www.lucenaclinic.ie](http://www.lucenaclinic.ie)) or ask one of our staff for help.

We encourage young people and their families attending Lucena Clinic CAMHS to take part in Engagement Forum meetings, organised through the office of HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery for Dublin South East, Dublin South and Wicklow. More details can be found on [www.hse.ie/mentalhealthengagement](http://www.hse.ie/mentalhealthengagement).

**CAMHS Videos** - Further information on CAMHS in video format created by the HSE:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services/introduction-to-camhs.html>

**CAMHS Operational Guideline** – HSE document on what can expect from your CAMHS:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/operational-guideline/camhs-operational-guideline-2019.pdf>

**Mental Health** – Further information on mental health and wellbeing advice, information, supports and rights information: [www2.hse.ie/mental-health/](http://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/)





## Words used in CAMHS

**Assessment** – this is when you, your parents and your CAMHS team have discussions to work out your mental health needs.

**Diagnosis** – this is a medical word that describes your mental health difficulties or illness, for example depression.

**Discharge** – this means you've finished your work in CAMHS.

**Individual Care Plan** – what you would like to work on to improve your mental health, how you will do this and who will help.

**Recovery** – an approach to support your personal development, build your confidence and talk about what matters to you.

**Referral** – when we ask another person on the team or a different service to see you.

**Review** – this is where we check your progress since your last appointment.

**Management** – medication, therapy or supports you are using, with the aim of helping you recover from mental health difficulties or illness.

**Key Worker** - coordinates the care provided by all other team members and provides feedback to the team on progress on the individual care plan.

## Other supports

In an emergency outside of CAMHS working hours, please contact the Emergency Department of your nearest children's hospital.

**Primary Care Psychology** – HSE service supporting psychological wellbeing for those with mild/moderate mental health needs.



**Jigsaw** – free mental health support for young people aged 12-25 with mild/moderate mental health concerns ([www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie))



**Pieta House** – suicide and self-harm support service ([www.pieta.ie/](http://www.pieta.ie/)) Text HELP to 51444. Available 24 hours. *Text line is not free.*



**Turn2Me** – Online counselling and supports for helping to cope with suicide, depression, anxiety and other mental health needs.



**ADHD Ireland** – information and management support for young people with ADHD and their families ([www.adhdireland.ie](http://www.adhdireland.ie))



**Spunout.ie** – video animations about depression, anxiety, feeling different, being bullied and loneliness.





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## **Development and design**

This booklet is based upon the DNCC CAMHS Booklet design by Geraldine Buckley, Sarah Crehan, Sinead Kennedy, Marie Fahy, Sheafra Doyle and colleagues (speech and language therapists and managers). It was edited for Lucena services by psychologists Dr Sonia Morris and Nicole Barrett and edited by Dr Maria Migone (Clinical Director DSCC CAMHS) and Ken Kilbride (ADHD Ireland). Special thanks are due to the Lucena Clinic Services Advocacy Forum for their involvement and assistance.



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