

# Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

## What are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)?

Multi-disciplinary mental health services for children and young persons.

## What rules govern CAMHS?

There is no specific statutory framework for CAMHS and so services are provided under the general obligations created by the NHS Act 2006, the Mental Health Act ("MHA") 1983 and other associated legislation.

Provisions in relation to detention in hospital and compulsory treatment are found in the MHA 1983 for children and for adults.

## Key Safeguards

- 16 and 17 year olds with capacity cannot have their consent or refusal to informal admission to hospital or registered establishment for treatment of a mental disorder, overridden by those with parental responsibility.
- At least one of the people involved in the assessment on admission and treatment under the Act should be a clinician specialising in CAMHS. Where this is not possible, a CAMHS clinician should be consulted as soon as possible.
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) cannot be given without the approval of a second opinion appointed doctor even if the child or young person consents to it, unless it is an emergency.
- Children and young people detained under the MHA 1983 must be referred after one year for a Tribunal hearing.

## How is CAMHS organised?

CAMHS is provided through a network of services, which include universal, targeted and specialist services, organised into four tiers:

- Universal services (Tier 1 CAMHS). This includes universal services such as early years services and primary care.
- Targeted services (Tier 2 CAMHS). This includes services such as youth offending teams, primary mental health works, and school and youth counselling.
- Specialist community CAMHS (Tier 3 CAMHS). This includes specialist community CAMHS.
- Highly specialist services (Tier 4 CAMHS). This includes highly specialised inpatient and outpatient services.

## Who is responsible for providing CAMHS?

A range of organisations including NHS mental health and community trusts, local authorities, private and voluntary sectors. In England, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England commission services.

## How is CAMHS accessed?

Most CAMHS will have their own website which details how you can access the service. Often it is best to speak to:

- Your GP
- Someone from the child or young person's school or college, for example a teacher, school nurse or SENCO.
- Health visitor.
- Children's centre.

## How can Lester Aldridge assist?

At Lester Aldridge we have significant experience in acting for clients in relation to all aspects of NHS-funded care.

We can provide:

- An initial, free assessment to discuss your circumstances.
- Support to access CAMHS.
- Advice & representation in relation to the Hospital Discharge process when a child or young person has been detained under Section 3 MHA 1983 to ensure that Section 117 Aftercare is provided.
- Detailed written submissions, which forensically analyse all of the evidence to demonstrate a child or young person's aftercare needs and facilitate the presentation of evidence-based reasons why aftercare services are required. This can be updated in advance of each key review.
- Advice regarding the interaction between the mental health and mental capacity legislation.
- Advocacy on behalf of parents at Section 117 aftercare or CPA reviews.
- On-going support to negotiate with the authorities throughout the process.