



Government of Western Australia  
Child and Adolescent Health Service

# Community CAMHS



# About the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Community CAMHS)

Community CAMHS offers mental health assessment and multidisciplinary intervention for children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

Young people experiencing mental health difficulties may access support through friends and family and/or services, such as their GP, school nurse/psychologist/counsellor or a private psychologist (with support from their GP through a Mental Health Care Plan), headspace or other services.

Community CAMHS works with children and young people who experience **significant mental health concerns** with a **severe** impact on their functioning.

## If you need urgent help or advice

**Community CAMHS is unable to provide a mental health crisis response or after-hours services.**

Please call **CAMHS Crisis Connect** on **1800 048 636** (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) to discuss your concerns and decide what steps you may need to take.

If the situation is life threatening, call **000** or present at any hospital emergency department.

## What do we do?

Community CAMHS works with children and young people and their families from across the Perth metro area. We are a multidisciplinary team made up of psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, Aboriginal mental health workers and administrative staff. The service links schools and other services to provide a multi-agency approach to:

- Assess and diagnose mental health conditions.
- Support recovery by helping and collaborating with children, young people and their families to identify realistic goals or changes that build on their existing strengths.
- Empower children and young people to identify, express and communicate their needs, improve their health and wellbeing and feel confident in knowing where and how to get additional support if necessary.
- Assist children, young people and their families to better manage their mental health difficulties by using evidence-based approaches such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Systemic Family Therapy, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and sometimes pharmacological intervention (prescribed medication).

The range of concerns that Community CAMHS can support you with includes:

- Psychotic symptoms (you can also consider a referral to hYEPP – the [headspace Youth Early Psychosis Program](#) - which is a specialist service for early psychosis. Click on this link to see if there is a program in your area).
- Severe and complex mood related symptoms.
- Severe and complex anxiety symptoms (e.g. severe generalised social anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorders, phobias).
- Persisting suicidal ideation, recent suicide attempt, and/or serious risk of harm to self or others due to severe and complex mental health challenges.
- Eating disorders.
- Co-morbid severe and complex mental health symptoms related to substance use.
- Severe and complex symptoms resulting from trauma.

## Who do we see?

As a specialist mental health service, Community CAMHS works with children and young people up to age 18, located in the Perth metro area, who have **severe, complex and persistent mental health symptoms impacting on psychosocial functioning** (at home, school or socially), **and/or who present with significant risk** (of harm, to self and/or others). As a multi-disciplinary team we provide assessments and treatment.

### For neurodevelopmental concerns:

If you are seeking a diagnostic assessment for a neurodevelopmental condition (e.g. autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or foetal alcohol spectrum disorder), or if the child/young person is already diagnosed with one of these conditions and you are seeking management of these conditions and/or prescription of stimulant medications, please see your GP for a referral to:

- the [Child Development Services](#) or
- a private Paediatrician or a Psychiatrist.

Children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions who are also experiencing severe mental health concerns are seen at Community CAMHS.

### For mild to moderate mental health concerns:

- For 12 to 25 year olds, contact [headspace](#) or [Youthfocus](#).
- For all ages, see your GP for a referral to a private therapist under [Medicare's Better Access initiative](#).



## How do I get referred?

We accept referrals from a range of clinicians and services involved with children/young people's care. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- your GP
- medical specialist (paediatrician, psychiatrist)
- a private therapist
- another CAMHS service
- school psychologist
- Department of Communities (e.g. Child Protection).

We encourage referrers to complete our Referral Form on our website.

If you identify as Aboriginal, please ask your referrer to indicate this in the appropriate place on the referral form. This will help us to offer you the opportunity to connect with one of our Aboriginal Mental Health Workers (where one is available) to support you in accessing our service and along your treatment journey with us.

If you are unsure about how to get referred, you can call your local Community CAMHS clinic to speak to a clinician who can provide advice and support on referrals and options in your area.

**Find out more about referrals by clicking the link below.**

[www.caahs.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Mental-Health](http://www.caahs.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Mental-Health)

## What happens once you are referred?

Following referral, we will process your referral and may contact you and/or your referrer to obtain further information about your mental health challenges and to assess the urgency of the referral.

We will contact you to offer you an appointment or give you information about alternative services if Community CAMHS is not the appropriate service. If we assess your referral as urgent, we will attempt to contact you via telephone within 2 business days.

We will invite you (by letter or telephone) to book a **Choice appointment**. If you would like to accept this appointment, we'll forward you a confirmation letter with further information, including:

- the date and time of the appointment
- a map of how to get to the clinic
- who you might see at the appointment
- what you might need to bring.



## How long do you stay in the service?

The length of your involvement with Community CAMHS will be influenced by a range of factors, including recovery, and your response to treatment. The availability of community supports, “step down services” and more appropriate specialist services may also determine discharge from the service.

If severe mental health difficulties occur again, children/young people and their families and carers are welcomed back to the service.

## Your Choice appointment

It usually lasts 1 to 2 hours. The aim is for us to better understand your mental health concerns, what has worked or not worked in the past, who you might be working with now, and what support you feel that you need.

At the Choice appointment you might meet a social worker, occupational therapist, psychologist or nurse. All CAMHS clinical staff have professional qualifications and are trained in mental health assessment for children, young people and their families.

At the end of the Choice appointment, we will let you know whether our service is appropriate for your child/young person’s needs. If our service is appropriate, we will offer you a **Partnership appointment** (first treatment appointment) at the earliest available day and time. There might be a delay between your Choice and Partnership appointments.

**At any time, if you have any urgent or acute mental health concerns, you are advised to contact CAMHS Crisis Connect, your GP or present to your nearest hospital emergency department.**

If our service is not appropriate, we will provide you and your referrer with information on alternative services that may better meet your needs. A written summary of the appointment and the plan for what happens next will be given to you and your referrer.

## When will you be offered a Choice appointment?

We receive a significant number of referrals and try to see all appropriate referrals face-to-face as soon as practicable. All referrals are reviewed and prioritised based on clinical need and risk in relation to mental health concerns.

For children and young people who are at high risk, we will attempt to contact you within 2 business days. We will discuss with you how to keep your child/ young person safe and provide information on access to emergency services if required.

If things have changed since your referral and you need to see someone sooner, you can call your Community CAMHS clinic to talk about making an earlier time to meet.

## Further opinion

All consumers have a right to request a further opinion regarding the care they are receiving. Requests can also be made by family, nominated persons or carers on your behalf. Requests should be directed to your treating psychiatrist or the Chief Psychiatrist of WA however, you may speak with any member of your care team for further information.



## Where are Community CAMHS clinics?

There are 10 Community CAMHS clinics across the Perth metro area. These clinics are open **Monday to Friday during business hours**.

- Armadale
- Bentley
- Clarkson (2 locations: Renshaw Boulevard and Ainsbury Parade)
- Fremantle
- Hillarys
- Peel
- Rockingham
- Shenton Park
- Swan
- Warwick

### Contact a clinic

Click the link to find your nearest clinic.

[www.caHS.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Mental-Health/Community-CAMHS/Clinic-locations](http://www.caHS.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Mental-Health/Community-CAMHS/Clinic-locations)

### Download the catchment area map

Click the link to see the catchment area map online.

The map can help you to find your local clinic.

[www.caHS.health.wa.gov.au/~media/HSPs/CAHS/Documents/Mental-Health/CAMHS\\_Community\\_Areas\\_Facilities\\_Postcodes\\_Suburbs.pdf](http://www.caHS.health.wa.gov.au/~media/HSPs/CAHS/Documents/Mental-Health/CAMHS_Community_Areas_Facilities_Postcodes_Suburbs.pdf)



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