Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Scotland: Waiting Times

Glossary

CAMHS  Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services provided by NHSScotland. Services are provided by teams of clinicians including psychiatrists, mental health nurses, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists and other allied health professionals. These services are based mainly in outpatient clinics and in the community.

Children and young people  The people served by CAMHS. Some areas provide services for all those under 18, while others offer services to those over 16 only if they are in full time education.

Did Not Attend (DNA)  A patient may be categorised as did not attend (DNA) when the hospital is not notified in advance of the patient's unavailability to attend on the offered admission date, or for any appointment.

ISD  Information Service Division.

Median  This is the time period (number of weeks) that half of the patients seen started treatment within.

90th Percentile  This is the time period (number of weeks) that 90% of the patients seen started treatment within.

Rejected Referral  Where a request to a healthcare professional or to an organisation to provide appropriate healthcare to a patient is deemed as not appropriate and the young person may be sign posted to another service or back to their GP.

Start of treatment  This is when a patient’s treatment starts. Not all people who are referred to CAMHS go on to have treatment. Some people attend an assessment appointment, need no further treatment, and so are removed from the waiting list. Some people are offered treatment, but decide not to go ahead.

Standard  A set of standards agreed between the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland relating to Health Improvement, Efficiency, Access or Treatment (HEAT).
Tiers of service provision

Tier 1 - Child and adolescent mental health services at this level are provided by practitioners working in universal services who are not mental health specialists. This includes: GPs, health visitors, school nurses, teachers, social workers, youth justice and voluntary agencies. Tier 1 practitioners are able to offer general advice and treatment for less severe problems. They contribute towards mental health promotion, identify problems early in the child or young person’s development and refer to more specialist services.

Tier 2 – Mental Health Practitioners at this level tend to be CAMHS specialists working in community and primary care settings, in multi-disciplinary teams (although many will also work as part of tier 3 services). They can include, mental health professionals employed to deliver primary mental health work, psychologists and counsellors working in GP practices, paediatric clinics, schools and youth services. Practitioners offer consultation to families and other practitioners, outreach to identify severe or complex needs requiring specialist intervention.

Tier 3 – This is usually a multi-disciplinary team or service working in a community mental health clinic or child psychiatry outpatient service, providing a specialised service for children and young people with more severe, complex and persistent disorders. Team members are likely to include child and adolescent psychiatrists, social workers, clinical psychologists, community psychiatric nurses, child psychotherapists, occupational therapists and art, music and drama therapists.

Tier 4 – Essential tertiary level services such as intensive outreach services, day units and inpatient units. These are generally services for the small number of patients who are deemed to be at the greatest risk (of rapidly declining mental health or serious self injury) and/or who require a period of intensive input for the purpose of assessment and/or treatment. Team members will come from the same professional groups as listed for tier 3. The clinical responsibility for overseeing the assessment, treatment and care for each tier 4 patient is likely to lie with a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist or clinical psychologist. See the CAMHS tier model for further information.
Waiting time

**Adjusted**  This is how long a person waited after taking into account any periods they were unavailable and any appointments that they missed or rearranged. The adjustments are described in the data quality section. If a person has no periods of unavailability and attends on the first date that they accept, then no adjustments are made and their adjusted waiting time is the same as their unadjusted waiting time.

**Unadjusted**  The total time from the date the referral was received by the CAMH service to the date treatment commenced.