

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is here to *demonstrably influence commissioning, service provision or strategic decision making...* This impact report outlines our findings across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset (BNSSG Clinical Commissioning Group) with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



The Quality Surveillance Group (QSG) for Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset and South Gloucestershire identified CAMHS as needing further investigation. This followed on from feedback received from the public about early discharge, long waiting times for appointments, or having a high level “bar” to access services. Healthwatch Bristol has been part of a national consultation on how CAMHS is delivered and how it could be improved. Mental health has been the focus for Healthwatch Bristol this year, and as part of this project we

have been listening to the views of children and young people.

What did we do?

Healthwatch produced an online survey to capture the views of residents in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire who have used CAMHS in the last 12 months. The feedback received informed Healthwatch on how the service supports its service users and which areas and provisions which could be improved upon.

“Service is a shambles. Once waited over 48hrs for a reply to a desperate phone call seeking advice about seriously distressed child. The service causes distress and anxiety far outweighing any benefit!”

Parent Carer

“There needs to be a crisis service for children - out of hours. More support for parents - particularly when they are doing the best they can under difficult circumstances!”

Parent Carer

“Inaccessible - if this was for physical problems there would be a national outcry - the waiting times are shocking!”

Parent Carer

Healthwatch Bristol produced an online survey to gather feedback from service users, carers and parents who had used CAMHS in the past 12 months.

Follow up

The aim of this report is for Healthwatch Bristol to amplify the voice of children, adolescents, parents and carers. We collated our findings from feedback we had gathered from the experiences of 133 participants of our survey.

They told us several valuable pieces of information about CAMHS, including how support could work better for them. There was some good feedback about staff but it also highlighted issues around waiting times, patient discharge and treatment for children and young people with mental health conditions. This will help identify what is working well and which areas need to be improved to help support children and young people. Here is an extract of some of our findings from the survey.

What did we hear?

Q1. Are you completing this form about yourself or someone you care for?

The majority 90 % of participants said that they were parent carers who were supporting a child or young person accessing the service. The remaining 10 % were

completed by children or young people themselves.

Q2. How old are you (if you are a CAMHS service user) or the person you are caring for?

- 11-14 years - 38%
- 0-10 years - 27%
- 15-17 years - 21%
- 18+ - 15%

Q3. Have you used CAMHS in the last 12 months?

74 % said that they had used CAMHS within the last 12 months. 26 % said that they had not used CAMHS within the last 12 months.

Q4. If you are still on the waiting list for CAMHS how long have you been waiting?

From the 86 who responded to this question an astonishing 37 % said that they had been waiting over 12 months to be seen, 31 % whom had waited 6-12 months. 14 % responded that they had waited 3-6 months and only 17 % were seen in less than 3 months.

Q5. If you have accessed CAMHS in the last 12 months or are currently receiving support, how do

you feel about the length of time you were waiting?

Out of the 119 people who answered this question, only 8 % said that they were Very Happy as they were seen quickly compared to 53 % who were Very Unhappy as they had to wait a long time. 12 % said that they were Happy with the waiting times and 28% commented that they were Unhappy with the wait.



Follow up

Q6. If you have accessed CAMHS in the last 12 months, how effective has the support been?

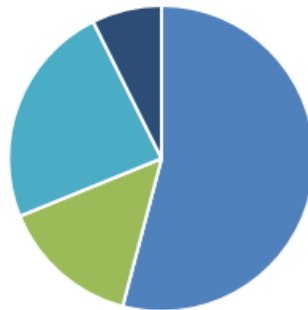
Out of the 120 people who answered this question, 14% commented that they were treated very well, 27% said they were treated well, with 29 % saying they were treated poorly and 30% saying that the support was unacceptable.

Q7. Do you feel you have been listened to and your concerns taken seriously?

23% said that that they felt listened to and their problem was taken seriously. However, just under half of the survey responses (46 %) said no, they didn't feel they had been listened to or that their problem had been taken seriously. 56 % said no and 27 % said sometimes, with 4%, stating not sure.

Q8. Do you feel that CAMHS staff have treated you with respect?

- Yes - 54%
- No - 14%
- Sometimes - 24%
- Not sure - 7%



■ Yes ■ No ■ Sometimes ■ Not Sure

Q9. Do you feel that CAMHS staff are kind and compassionate?

Just under half (48 %) of those surveyed said yes CAMHS staff had treated them with kindness and compassion. With 13 % said no and 28% felt they were sometimes treated kindly and compassionately. 11% said not sure.

"When I got in to the see the service I was happy with the level of care. The difficult thing is when you child wont engage luckily they didn't give up on my son."

Parent Carer

"Waiting times are unacceptable my niece and son have severe problems, my niece self-harms and something serious is going to happen if no support given very soon!"

Parent Carer

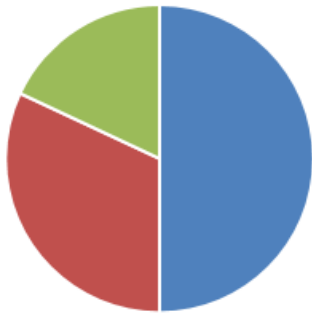
"Because I was told that I was perfectly fine because I looked fine and that my problems were only real to me. Which isn't true as I was hurting myself and a danger to myself and triggered by a family member dying."

CAMHS Patient

Healthwatch Bristol produced an online survey to gather feedback from service users, parents and carers who had used CAMHS in the past 12 months.

Follow up

Q10. Are you always able to see the same person at appointments?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Q11. What else would you like to tell us about CAMHS?

“Multidisciplinary approach is good. Early advice for other avenues of support after referral, while awaiting support is also valuable for parents. I speak as a GP: service appears to be generally under-resourced.”

“My doctor referred my little boy last year and asked if he could be prioritised as he was talking about how he should be dead (he's aged 7 was 6 at the time) and he hits himself and us and we still haven't been given an appointment.”

“Too much time wasted going over previous clinicians work with my child. Loss of clinician part way through therapy. Inappropriate

subjects raised without my consent.”

“We first accessed CAMHS more than four years ago and found the service very slow off the mark in their dealings with our son, who has always struggled with anxiety and had begun refusing to go to school. There was a distinct lack of urgency in our initial meetings and we felt that this was a huge contributing factor in him not attending school for the next two years. While we realise that there are procedures that need to be followed, we thought that the staff spent far too much time talking to us about our personal histories, our parenting methods and so on. By the time the team at CAMHS turned their attention to our child, three years had passed and all urgency had been lost. The service since then has been excellent, especially the input of the psychiatric team.”

Summary

This report articulates well that the waiting times to be seen are far too lengthy and could have very detrimental

effects on the young people accessing the service.

The feedback gained represents that just over half of the people who used CAMHS felt that they were treated with respect.

However, scope for further improvement remains. More should be done by staff to improve this and efforts made to make service users feel that they are heard, particularly in relation to how patients are listened to and their concerns addressed.

Parents and carers expressed misgivings at their parenting skills being called into question, rather than the focus being on the treatment of their child, creating a negative professional-carer relationship.

Recommendations

- Reduce the waiting times so that children and young people can access CAMHS services as quickly as possible.
- Improvement of staff understanding and attitude, so that they provide holistic care and make patients feel

Healthwatch Bristol produced an online survey to gather feedback from service users, parents and carers who had used CAMHS in the past 12 months.

Follow up

that their problems are heard.

- Better measures in place to make patients feel that they are treated with respect kindness and compassion.

Healthwatch will....

All the feedback Healthwatch Bristol gathers is analysed and used to inform the Healthwatch Bristol quarterly reports. These are shared with Healthwatch Bristol partners including Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group, the Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board, Bristol City

Council, the Care Quality Commission, NHS England and Healthwatch England. The quarterly report is also presented to the Healthwatch Bristol Advisory Group to propose further uptake of the issues identified in the report. The report will be available on the Healthwatch Bristol website:

www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk

We're asking the same questions of a range of stakeholders as part of our mission to

Demonstrate breadth of community reach by

developing relationships with stakeholders

HWB will continue to work with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services on joint outcomes related to Mental Health.



Call: 0303 303 0023

Text: 07592 787 533

healthwatchbristol.co.uk



Healthwatch Bristol produced an online survey to gather feedback from service users, parents and carers who had used CAMHS in the past 12 months.