

Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service

A Healthwatch Kent Impact Report



healthwatch
Kent

Making your voice count

January 2018

CAMHS in Kent

The story so far

You told us about your experiences of the Children & Adolescent Mental health service. Many of your stories talked about long waiting times, a confusing service and a lack of support

In 2014, we spoke indepth to 30 patients and their families. In 2016, we spoke to 302 people about the CAMHS service to see if the experiences of patients had improved.

We heard a wide range of concerns including unacceptable waiting times, complicated referral process, poor communication, lack of support for families, lack of services for people with autism, and huge challenges when moving to adult services.

Healthwatch Kent has been working to *make your voice count*

The challenge



The feedback you gave us needed to reach the ears of decision makers.

Reaching decision makers

The Commissioners

Since we published our findings, the contract for the CAMHS service has been retendered. It was vital that our findings were included in the review of the service, the tender process and the ultimate contract negotiations. We worked closely with the people who were commissioning the new service at West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group and Kent County Council. We ensured they heard and understood all the feedback we received from patients, professionals and families.

We wanted to ensure our feedback achieved the following:

- Patient experience is incorporated in the needs assessment and strategy for planning future services
- How the CAMHS service works with other parts of the system
- Better communication and engagement with patients and families as central to the new contract
- Commissioners consider the voice of patients when making a decision about the future contract

ALL the recommendations from our report have been included into the new contract for the new service provider.

The service providers

At the time of our report, much of the CAMHS service was delivered by Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust.

Many patients gave us named feedback about individual staff members. With the patients' permission, we shared this feedback directly with Sussex Partnership who then investigated. We have had written reassurance that each case has been dealt with and the appropriate action taken. We made sure the patients were also informed that their feedback had resulted in improvements.

Since our report, a new organisation now provides most of the CAMHS service. They are called North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT). We have promoted the new service to the people who were involved in our project but also to the wider public.

We plan to meet with NELFT alongside young people who have experience of the service in January 2018.

Kent County Council also commission elements of the CAMHS service particularly the early intervention services. We met with KCC on several occasions to ensure that the voice of young people has been heard.

Politicians

The CAMHS service is a high-profile service which regularly attracts media attention and political attention. Several Kent MPs are particularly interested in the CAMHS service and we made sure they had copies of our report and the detailed feedback we had received from patients. Greg Clarke, the MP for Tunbridge Wells, has been actively trying to improve the CAMHS service for many years and we worked closely with his office to ensure he was briefed about all the feedback we had heard. He has used this feedback in his own regular discussions with both the commissioners and the service providers.

We presented our report to Kent's Health Scrutiny & Oversight Committee which is made up of KCC Members. We also sent all KCC Members a copy of our report.

GP Practices

We know that GPs are seeing many patients who have struggled to get access to the CAMHS service. We made sure our report, its findings and our recommendations were shared with them.

NHS England

NHS England commission the specialist parts of the CAMHS service. Although much of our feedback didn't relate to the elements that they commission, we ensured that they were fully aware of our findings.

Patients

We've kept everyone who gave us feedback about the CAMHS service up to date with our progress. We have told them that all our recommendations have been accepted and included in the new service contract. We have informed them about the new service.

What happened?



What's changed as a result?

- A new organisation now delivers the CAMHS service in Kent
- A new Eating Disorder service has been commissioned
- Services for young people with autism are being reviewed and developed. Healthwatch have asked to be involved with this
- Our feedback about autism is now part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Individual feedback about named members of staff has been investigated and acted upon
- The voice of patients and families has been heard by decision makers

Your voice has made a difference

“Oh my word you've done it!

I'm so happy that you've managed to change things, it means people like me (but younger) will be able to be helped.”

It starts with you.....tell us your story

CAMHS: What next?

What else needs to be done

Your views: We will continue to share your experiences of the new service and to raise your voice

Commitments: Ensure the new service is meeting their contractual obligations to deliver a better service and act upon our recommendations address the issues you have raised with us

Review: work with the new provider to ensure they are listening and learning from young people and their families

Making your voice count

Sign up for our newsletter to receive regular updates

Make your voice heard ; share your experience

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