

Self Referral FAQ

◆ Who will read the referral form when I send it in?

You form will be sent to the CAMHS Single Point of Access team who receive all new referrals for CAMHS. The team is made up of administrators and clinicians from different professional backgrounds including nurses, social workers, and therapists. All of these staff are expected to uphold issues related to patient confidentiality. Often the referral will be received by the administration team who will upload it to our computer system and then one of the clinicians will take it from there. Generally speaking, it is a clinician you will speak to first. Later on, when arranging appointments etc, you might speak to one of our administrators!

◆ What will happen next?

You have taken a brave step forward to get some help and we will try to contact every young person who sends us in a form if you have given us the correct contact details! We will try and call at a time that suits you if you have stated a preference. The number comes up as an 0300 number so you might think it is an unwanted call! The reason it comes up like this is to protect your confidentiality if we dialled the wrong number (if that wrong number tried to call back they wouldn't get a "you are through to CAMHS message" – clever hey?!).

We will introduce ourselves, explain why we are calling and go from there.

◆ Can't I meet someone in person?

Yes – Sometimes the young people we speak to prefer talking to someone on the phone, but we recognise for others it is really difficult. One of the main reasons we call is we want you to know we have received your referral, and someone has read it. We may ask you some questions on the phone if you are comfortable with that.

◆ Why are you asking so many questions?

We are trying to make sure that if and when you do meet someone in person, this is the right person. We do not always get this right but there are different teams in CAMHS and we are aiming to get you to see the "right person at the right time".

◆ Can I change my mind?

Yes – you can change your mind at any time. Just because you have given consent to us once, does not mean that stays the same forever. We understand that people's circumstances change and an important person you might have been ok with being involved (e.g. a parent), well maybe that will change and you don't want that person to know something about you. That is ok, you just need to keep us updated! We make a note on your computer record so that anyone "new" that was looking at your record can see clearly who you have and haven't given your permission to share information with.

◆ Do my parents / carers have to know?

No, but there are a couple of things to consider with this. For example – how are you going to be able to attend appointments (potentially missing school/college/work) if your parents/carers don't know?

Your "primary care givers" (could be a parent/grandparent/foster carer/adopted parent) are really important people in your lives and they would probably want to know if things are tough for you right now. We can help with that conversation though – if you don't want to tell them yourself but do want them to know, we can talk about that.

◆ Do my primary care givers have to know everything?

No, they can just know "you've been referred to CAMHS" or "you've asked for more help". That is a start and we can support you with this if that's something you want.

◆ What do you mean when you say "at significant risk of harm" where you might talk to my parents without my permission?

If we believe, on the basis of something you have said or written that you are at "significant risk of harm" and we have not been able to contact you on the numbers you have given us after several attempts – we will do everything in our power to try and make sure you are alive and well. So if you have talked about having thoughts of suicide or hurting someone else for example, and then we can't contact you for further information – in these circumstances we have to do what we believe is in your "best interest" and that might mean calling your parents to see if they know where you are. That still doesn't mean we will go into lots of detail with them, but we want to try and make sure you are safe. It really doesn't happen very often. If we have spoken to you and we start to become worried you are a risk to yourself, we might then talk to you about whether a "responsible adult" knows. Again, this is to try and keep you safe, well and alive until we can arrange for the right person to see you.

◆ **Where is my information stored?**

CAMHS in Somerset uses a computer system called RIO to store all records about the people we work with. Every RIO user has their own log-on and password and everything they do on RIO can be tracked. This is to make sure the details we store about you, from your name, address and contact details is kept safe and only seen by people who are working with you. More than this, different teams will be “locked out” of forms that are not needed for them to see when they are working with you. So for example, if you have seen a physiotherapist for a knee injury, they would not be able to see the details you tell us that are stored on specific CAMHS forms – only that you have a referral open to CAMHS.

Any staff working within the NHS can be checked to make sure they are only accessing the records they should be. There are very strict rules and legislation around how data is stored and protected. If you want to know more about it, please see our consent form.

◆ **I’m under 16 – why can’t I fill in this form?**

The rules around consent are different for someone who is under 16. It might well be that in the future we can offer a self-referral route for young people under 16 but at the moment we are not able to do this unfortunately. If you are under 16 and want to be referred to CAMHS, please speak to your GP or any other professional that might be working with you at the moment (e.g. teacher, social worker, counsellor etc).

◆ **I’m over 16 but don’t really want to fill this in – can I still go and see my GP and get them to do it?**

Yes! We’re just trying to make sure there are different options for those wanting to be referred to CAMHS. Don’t forget you can always telephone us direct and we will happily take the information at that time.

◆ **What do you mean by “communication difficulties”?**

Some people have health conditions which could change their ability to communicate. This could be a range of different things such as a hearing difficulty, a problem with their eyesight, a learning difficulty, anxiety etc. It just helps us understand if there is something we can do to make it easier for you to communicate with us.

◆ What happens if my GP isn't in Somerset?

Then you need to find out which county your GP is in and ask if they will support you with a referral to the CAMHS team in that county.

◆ Any other questions?

Make a note of them and ask one of us when we call/see you!