



investing in children

**A report by Alicia, Michaela, Kristy, Emma, and Sam**

## **The Tier Three Review**

**What children and young people think  
about Children and Adolescent Mental  
Health Services in County Durham?**

June 2006

Introduction

Investing in Children were asked by Jo Dawson a General Manager from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), to gain the views of what young people thought about the Tier 3 Service of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services . Jo is currently reviewing the specialist CAMHS strategy and wants to know what young people think of the CAMHS service.

Investing in Children agreed they would organise two Agenda days that were ran by the young people who have put this report together. One took place in the North of the County and the other took place in the South of the County.

The first agenda day was held at Abbey Sports Centre and the second took place at the Dolphin Centre in Darlington. 12 young people attended the two agenda days. Sam, Kristy and Emma did the first agenda day. Alicia, Michaela, Emma and Kristy ran the second agenda day at the Dolphin Centre. With the support of Tabitha and Brain who are Modern Apprentices from Durham County Council, and based with Investing in Children.

In this report we have stated what young people had to say about (CAMHS). We have also included what young people had to say about the specific question's we asked the young people who attended the agenda day's.

We have written a conclusion based on what the young people said about the service, and the ways we feel as young people, you could improve the service, based on what young people told us at the two agenda days held in February.

How we did it

When we facilitated the two agenda days we decided to split the day into two sessions. The first part of the agenda day was an open discussion about what young people had to say about the CAMHS service in workshop one.

The second part of agenda day was to ask the young people some specific questions about the CAMHS service.

We used flip chart paper and pens and wrote down everything that was said by the young people who attended.

The day was made up by a 30 minute session, then a break, and then another 30 minute session then finished with lunch.

**What young people said about the CAMHS service?**

## Workshop One

### This is what young people said

- I do not know what CAMHS is.
- I do not know what it stands for
- My parents sent me.
- I am seeing a Councillor is that part of the CAMHS service.
- The staff are ok.
- The staff spoke to my parents and not me.
- Did not know I was attending CAMHS
- It helps me with my behaviour
- It helps children and young people like me to cope better.

Most of the young people found it very difficult to talk about something they did not fully understand. We believe that because of this something could be done to improve and reduce the confusion some children and young people face when accessing CAMHS for the first time.

## Workshop Two.

## What young people said about the questions we asked them?

1- Were you happy with how your GP referred you to CAMHS?

- No choice ,but not bothered
- Had no say whether I wanted to be referred
- We had choice on what we worked on

1a- What did they do well?

- Asked if I wanted a drink, tried hard to get that drink

1b- What did they do badly?

- The doctor did not speak to me.
- Only spoke to my parents.
- Did not explain what was happening, where I was going.
- Explained how the referral worked to my parents.
- Did not tell me anything about where I was going.
- Made me feel nervous.

1c- How could the referral be better?

- Explained to me what was happening
- Information I can understand
- The doctor to talk to me as well as my parents
- Make it clear that young people understand what the referral is and how it works.
- Have more choice

2- Do you think an information pack would be useful?

- Do not think I need any information because I am too young
- Information about the service
- What happens at the service
- Who does what

2a- What do you think should be in an information pack?

- Stuff about what you do at CAMHS.
- What happens at CAMHS?
- What does it mean?
- What choices do I have?
- Information for different age groups

2b- How should this pack look?

- Have pictures
- Unisex pack
- Have bold colours
- Big writing
- Not too much writing
- Bullet points

**2c- Should this information be made available in other places to pick up, if so where?**

- The information should be put up in doctors, schools, leisure centres, colleges and universities.
- Bus stops, on the side of buses.
- Shop windows.
- All clubs young people access

**3-What do you think about Appropriateness of venue?**

- The venue is ok.
- The building could be bigger.
- It is in the right place.
- Closer to home, I travel from fishburn.
- It could smell better.
- Could be made friendly.

**4-What about the Time and Flexibility of appointments?**

- We can say when we are not available
- Should be able to choose times when to meet
- The worker is ok with times
- Should be able to meet on a weekend if we want

**5- What is your relationship like with workers?**

- The workers are ok for people we do not know.
- The worker is ok with times.
- Could spend more time with me on how I am feeling.
- Could talk to me about how things are going.
- Better relationship with my mum than me
- They do not always put me first
- "It's not fair if the counsellor talks to my mum and dad, I do not think it is right because the kids are going there and not the adults, kids should have the privilege" (young girl aged 13 quote)

**6- How much say did you have in your support?**

- Have some say on what we work on.
- I would like more of a choice on what support there is for me.
- Not much, everything was talked to with my mam and dad first.
- The worker told me what I should do.
- Not much at all
- Did not understand the support I was receiving.

**7- Is there anything that is particularly good about the service?**

- feel safe and protected
- School criticised my behaviour, but CAMHS helped me calm down
- Have a say on what I work
- Staff make me laugh

**8- Is there anything that could be improved in the service?**

- Talk to us and put us first
- Listen to what we have to say
- Staff should all be the same when they are working with young people
- Promote the service to young people better
- Information young people can understand
- Make the referral stage easier.

## Conclusion

**In the conclusion these are the main points that came out of the agenda day.**

One point that was made clear throughout both agenda days was that the young people didn't even know they were attending CAMHS.

This is due to a lack of user friendly information following the referral of the young person. We would suggest, as a group of young people, that a pack of information should automatically be received by the young person, as soon as the referral has been made. This pack should be written by young people for young people.

Another issue raised in the agenda days was that of the way the CAMHS staff treated the young people. Many young people felt that they were being treated like kids or just ignored, and the worker just talking to the parents instead. We suggest that this could be solved by a common standard approach to young people which all staff would have to follow.

Even though there were only a small number of young people who attended the agenda day, we managed to gather enough information to suggest ways in which these problems could be solved. The CAMHS service must look at how they can constantly make improvements by communicating with young people and understanding their views.

