

Adolescent Mental Health

Mental health problems are common in young people. This is partly because adolescence is a tricky time for everyone. Young people have to cope with increasing expectations and independence, hormone levels changing, and all the while their brains are continuing to develop throughout the teenage years.

In every ten 5 - 16 year olds in the UK it's likely one will have a mental health problem. Some of the mental health problems that are associated with younger people are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism, but young people can also suffer from mental illnesses that affect adults too.

The common mental illnesses are depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety disorders, eating disorders and psychosis. A young person's developing brain can be affected by the use of alcohol or drugs; we now know that the use of cannabis in young people can increase their risk of developing psychosis more so than if it is smoked later in life.

When a young person is having difficulties with their mental health, a range of services is available to help them. Often young people can be supported without the need for more specialist services. For example support from school, family, social services, a GP or primary mental health practitioner can be all that is needed to help a young person through a difficult time.

The local authority also has parent support groups for specific needs. However some young people require a higher level of input, in which case they may be referred to a specialist team called the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), who provide support in the community.

CAMHS are a team of people who specialise in working with young people and their families/ carers. The team has a mixture of people in it, which can include psychiatrists, mental health nurses and psychotherapists who work with the young person and/or with their family, and social workers.

The team works with the young person and their family to find out what the mental health problem is, and then to provide advice, support and treatment.

If a young person is seriously unwell and they can no longer be managed by CAMHS support in the community then admission to a specialist inpatient unit may be needed.

Currently Cornwall does not have a specialist inpatient unit, so any Cornish young person requiring inpatient care has to go to a hospital out of county. This can be very disruptive for the young person, their family and carers.

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and the Invictus Trust are working together towards having a local inpatient unit for 13 - 25 year olds.

The Young Persons Mental Health Unit is still very much in the planning phases.

More Information

The **Royal College of Psychiatrists** produce a range of leaflets on mental health problems in young people:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/expertadvice/youthinfo.aspx

Young Minds promotes child and adolescent mental health services: www.youngminds.org.uk

Sources of Support

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's website provides details of local services:

www.cornwallfoundationtrust.nhs.uk

Look under Our Services / Children and Young People / CAMHS

Making Waves – Young People Cornwall have local projects and groups for young people

www.youngpeoplecornwall.org

SHARE is a service offering advice and information to young people, call **0800 181033** to find out about local services.

Helplines

Childline: If you are worried about anything, it could be something big or something small, don't bottle it up. It can really help to talk to someone. If there is something on your mind, Childline is here for you - telephone: **0800 111**

PAPYRUS HOPELineUK: PAPYRUS aims to prevent young people taking their own lives.

A professionally staffed helpline provides support, practical advice and information both to young people worried about themselves, and to anyone concerned that a young person may harm themselves.

Tel: **0800 068 41 41** (Mon to Fri 10am - 5pm and 7pm - 10pm & Weekends 2pm - 5pm).

The Samaritans: support 24 hours a day - providing confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

You can telephone **08457 90 90 90** or email jo@samaritans.org. Visit www.samaritans.org.uk