

SAMH'S VIEW:

EXTENDING CAMHS PROVISION TO AGE 25

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ABOUT THE SAMH'S VIEW SERIES

SAMH's View statements set out SAMH's position on a particular policy topic. They are produced by the Public Affairs team.

Context

Despite a HEAT target to be met from December 2014¹, over a quarter of children and young people who are referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) wait more than 18 weeks to be seen.² Most NHS Boards provide CAMHS services up to the age of 18, though in some the cut-off is 16 unless the young person is in full-time education.³

Key points

- Half of all adults who are mentally ill experienced the onset of their mental health problems by the age of 14.⁴
- By the time they're 16, roughly 3 children in every class will have experienced mental health problems.⁵
- Despite guidance⁶ on managing transitional support between child and adolescent and adult mental health services, studies have shown this is patchy and often not prioritised by mental health services.⁷
- The Scottish Youth Parliament reports that young people find the transition from CAMHS to adult services difficult, because neither service feels right.⁸
- In a few cases, the waiting time between referral to CAMHS and being seen means that the young person becomes ineligible for CAMHS during the process.⁹
- The Scottish Parliament's Health Committee has heard that the criteria for accessing CAMHS are significantly different to those for adult services.¹⁰
- The Committee urged the Scottish Government to consider establishing a transition service straddling the older adolescent and younger adult age groups.¹¹ Other such services exist in the UK.¹²

- Some areas in England have adopted a mental health service providing support from ages 0-25.¹³
- Care-experienced young people may now continue to receive support from children's services until the age of 25.¹⁴
- Following the launch of SAMH's Going to Be campaign and our call to extend CAMHS provision to age 25, the Scottish Government has committed to considering this option as part of improving transitions from CAMHS to adult mental health services.¹⁵
- Based on existing costs, SAMH estimates that letting young people choose to remain in CAMHS until age 25 would require an initial investment of £19m.

SAMH calls for:

- By 2020, young people using mental health services should be able to stay until age 25, if they choose.
- In the medium term, SIGN guidance and commissioning advice on transitional support for children and young people into adult mental health services should be developed
- In the long term, a specialist service for 16-25 year olds should be developed.

Further detail:

OFFICIAL GUIDANCE

- Scottish Government, [Mental Health Strategy](#) 2017-2027
- Scottish Government, [The Mental Health of Children and Young People](#), 2005

SAMH RESEARCH

- [Rejected Referrals Audit](#) (2018) (commissioned by Scottish Government, conducted with ISD)
- [In Their Own Words](#): the mental health of children and young people in Scotland (2016)

Notes

¹ ISD, [CAMHS in Scotland](#)

² ISD, [CAMHS in Scotland: Waiting Times, Service Demand and Workforce](#), March 2018

³ Scottish Government, [Rejected Referrals CAMHS](#), 2018

⁴ Kim-Cohen et al., 2003; Kessler et al., 2005

⁵ Green et al 2005, Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain 2004, cited in [Young Minds key statistics](#)

⁶ NICE guidance, [Transition from children's to adults' services](#), February 2016

⁷ Paul et al, [Transition to adult services for young people with mental health needs: a systematic review](#), 2014

⁸ Scottish Youth Parliament, [Our Generation's Epidemic](#), 2016

⁹ Scottish Government, [Rejected Referrals CAMHS](#), 2018

¹⁰ Scottish Parliament Health Committee [Inquiry into Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing](#), 2009

¹¹ Scottish Parliament Health Committee [Inquiry into Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing](#), 2009

¹² NHS Camden and Islington Foundation Trust [18-24 transitions service](#)

¹³ UK Departments of Health and Education, [Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper](#), 2017

¹⁴ [Children and Young People's \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

¹⁵ Scottish Government, [Programme for Government 2017-18](#), September 2017