

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB_277_22

You asked:

Please treat this request as that of Freedom of Information.

Could I please ask for how many weeks / months it takes for a child to be assessed by CAMHS (e.g. in Princess of Wales Hospital) as compared to the target set by the Welsh Government?

Our response:

The SPOA (Single Point of Access) service is the referral gateway into our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). CAMHS provides assessment and treatment to children and young people (CYP) with highly complex presentations or specific problems that require the skills of a multi-disciplinary team in providing a mental health assessment and treatment.

The SPOA service aims to ensure that CAMHS accept only children and young people for whom a specialist service is appropriate, whilst also providing high quality advice and signposting, self-management support and psycho education for all those whose needs could be met in this way. SPOA provide an initial assessment, triage service and brief intervention that allows children, young people, and their parents/carers to be signposted to the most appropriate service and help reduce the waiting time for access to treatment.

The aim of the SPOA service is to provide a triage of all referrals:

- To determine whether the information in the referral is of sufficient quality and content and meets the criteria of the CAMHS service. Where a person is not eligible for the service advice and signposting will be given and, where appropriate, a referral may be made to another service
- To determine the urgency of the referral
- To enable a prompt and accurate identification of the needs of children, young people and their parents/carers
- To conduct a preliminary assessment of risk
- To determine the most appropriate service to meet the needs of the young person
- To provide signposting and brief interventions to those young people and their parents/carers presenting with difficulties that would not meet the referral criteria for the CAMH service e.g. mild anxiety.

The current CAMHS average routine wait is 5 weeks in CTM UHB, although the urgent average wait is 2 weeks.

Due to the current demand on the service, the service has put in place additional clinics to help improve and reduce the waiting times for accessing the service.

The service has also identified some other actions aimed to improve access into the service. These include establishing initiatives with primary care to support and manage demand on the service. It's anticipated this would result in a reduction in referrals, and the number of referrals not accepted, so enabling CYP who require a specialist service earlier access. Implementation of the schools in-reach pilot, via the Welsh Government Whole Schools Approach, to provide a 'nip in bud' service will also be in place next term. This initiative is expected to reduce the number of patients referred to CAMHS by providing more wellbeing support and advice within Schools.