

Healthwatch in Greater Manchester – Pathways to CAMHS Report 2024

Synopsis of Rochdale feedback

The "Pathway to CAMHS" report by Healthwatch Greater Manchester includes specific feedback from Rochdale, highlighting several key issues and recommendations.

Key Findings:

- **Lack of Communication:** 95% of parents and carers reported not being kept informed about the progress of their child's referral, leading to increased anxiety and uncertainty.
- **Parental Advocacy:** Parents often served as the primary advocates for their children's care, which significantly impacted family well-being, finances, and employment.
- **Information Accessibility:** Both parents/carers and children/young people found it challenging to locate information on available support services and understand the expectations at each stage of the CAMHS pathway.

Recommendations:

1. **Establish a Single Point of Access:** Creating a unified access point for families and professionals would streamline processes, reduce confusion, and improve service coordination.
2. **Improve Communication During Waiting Periods:** Regular updates and support should be provided to families during waiting times to prevent health deterioration and manage expectations.
3. **Recognize Parents and Carers as Partners:** Involving parents and carers in decision-making processes acknowledges their crucial role and can positively impact outcomes for children and young people.

These findings and recommendations aim to enhance the experience of families accessing CAMHS in Rochdale by addressing communication gaps, providing clear information, and involving parents and carers as equal partners in the care process.

What five things do parents/carers need to know from this report

The "Pathways to CAMHS" report by Healthwatch Greater Manchester provides crucial insights for parents and carers regarding access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):

1. **Barriers to Access:** Families often face challenges such as long waiting times, uncertainty about contact points, limited appointment availability, and communication issues among staff.
2. **Information Gaps:** Many parents, carers, and young people find it difficult to identify available support services and understand how to access them.
3. **Parental Role:** Parents often serve as the primary advocates for their children's care, facing significant impacts on family well-being, finances, and employment.
4. **Extended Waiting Periods:** A significant number of families experience waits exceeding one year between assessment and intervention, leading to deteriorating health and missed schooling for children.
5. **Consideration of Private Care:** Nearly 80% of parents and carers consider or pursue private care options due to challenges in the public system.

Understanding these points can help parents and carers navigate the CAMHS pathway more effectively and advocate for necessary improvements in the system.

What do people in Rochdale need to know

The "Pathways to CAMHS" report by Healthwatch Greater Manchester identifies systemic issues affecting access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):

1. **Complex Referral Processes:** The system's complexity and lack of clear communication between professionals create confusion for families seeking support.
2. **Limited Service Availability:** Families often struggle to find information on available support services and how to access them, indicating a need for better awareness and clarity.

3. **Parental Advocacy Burden:** Parents frequently act as the primary advocates for their children's care, which can significantly impact family well-being, finances, and employment.
4. **Consideration of Private Care:** Due to challenges in the public system, nearly 80% of parents and carers consider or pursue private care options.

These issues highlight the need for systemic improvements to make CAMHS more accessible and effective for children, young people, and their families.

Overview

The "Pathways to CAMHS" report by Healthwatch Greater Manchester offers key recommendations to improve access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

1. **Make Information Easy to Find:** Families should be able to quickly learn about the mental health services available and how to use them.
2. **Explain the Steps Clearly:** It's important to know what will happen at each stage when getting help, so there are no surprises.
3. **Fair Access for Everyone:** All children and their parents should have the same chance to get help, with appointments that fit their schedules.
4. **One Place to Start:** Having a single point of contact makes it easier for families to begin the process of getting help.
5. **Stay in Touch While Waiting:** Families should receive regular updates while they wait for services, so they don't feel forgotten.
6. **Work Together with Parents:** Parents should be included in decisions about their child's care, as they know their child best.

These steps aim to make it simpler and fairer for families to get the mental health and wellbeing support they need.

