

First CAMHS appointment a Re:Minds Q&A

Where will the assessment take place?

In a clinical room at the Horizon clinic in Millbrook, Southampton.



How long will the meeting take?

Initial assessments are approximately 90 minutes long, but some may be less and some may take longer.

Who can I bring with me?

Due to social distancing measures, the clinic is currently only allowing one parent / carer to attend with their child. If you need to speak to the clinician alone, or you need the support of a friend / family member for other reasons, please contact Business Support to see how this can be accommodated.

What facilities are there?

The clinic has patient toilets and a water cooler. Currently they are unable to provide toys for children during their assessment due to COVID infection control so you can bring a book or toy for your child if you think they will need one.

What should I think about before the meeting?

It is helpful if you know which other services are working with you and any names and contact numbers for these services if you are happy for CAMHS to contact and collaborate with them. It is also useful for you to have an idea of what the difficulties and concerns that you have are, when they started, what you think may have triggered them, any support that you have accessed to date and how useful this was. You will also be asked what you hope CAMHS can support you with, so it is useful if you can think about this with your child. Finally, you will be asked about your child's developmental history so it is helpful if you are able to recall when your child met any developmental milestones, any difficulties around these, and support that may have been accessed in the past.

Will there be a chance to talk without my child hearing?

CAMHS is having to limit the number of people attending assessments due to COVID. However, if you need to speak without your child present then you can tell Business Support before your appointment and request an additional adult attends so they are able to look after your child whilst you speak to the assessing clinician. Sensitive information can also be discussed in a follow-up call by the assessing clinician if needed. It is important to be mindful of what is and is not appropriate to be shared in front of your child, and to consider what they may potentially consider to be shaming, triggering, or painful to hear if discussed in front of them.

What if my child refuses to engage?

If you have concerns over whether your child will attend or engage it may be helpful to call the Business Support team to see if you are able to speak with the assessing clinician prior to the appointment. It may be possible for the assessing clinician to offer an opportunity to introduce themselves to your child on the phone first which can help alleviate their worries. It can help to advise your child that the appointment isn't a 'test' or something to be afraid of but an opportunity for them to talk to someone about things they are finding tricky or upsetting. It may help to talk to your child to gain an understanding of their view of what is challenging before the appointment in case they are not able to engage on the day. If on the day of your appointment your child refuses to attend please do still attend the assessment without them and you can discuss any next steps with the clinician on the day.

What happens after the first meeting?

The clinician will work with you and your child to agree and complete a risk assessment and first Care Plan at your appointment, which you will leave with. At this point an agreement is also made on where is best for a child/young person's needs to be met. This is not always by the Specialist CAMHS team and this will be discussed with you. If CAMHS is the best placed service then the clinician will have a conversation with you about the most suitable intervention. However, it is not unusual for the assessing clinician to advise families that the case may require further discussion with the wider CAMHS team to assess your child's difficulties and agree on the best course of action. If this is the case you will be told this at your appointment. You should receive a copy of the assessment letter and a more detailed Care Plan within four weeks of your appointment. In these documents you will be advised whether your child's case has been added to a waiting list for a specific intervention, discharged, or referred elsewhere. If things are unclear, or the Care Plan does not contain what you felt was agreed, you are able to call to speak with the assessing clinician to discuss this further.