



NEW feedback tools under development to assess and improve experiences of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

[Picker Institute Europe](#), the not-for-profit charity which uses people's experiences to improve the quality of health and social care for all, have announced the development of NEW tools to gather feedback about the experiences of those using [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#).

CAMHS covers a wide range of services for young people with mental health difficulties (as well as their families/ carers), and operates within locally defined commissioning and delivery models. The insights gained using the feedback tool will support the improvement of these services.

A steering group for the project has been set up, comprising members from a number of influential mental health focussed organisations, including Young Minds and the Anna Freud Centre. The group also includes CAMHS service users themselves, to help ensure that the resulting tool is truly patient centred. It is hoped that the tools will be ready for piloting from summer 2015.

The timely news comes soon after **Deputy Prime Minister and Liberal Democrat Leader Nick Clegg** announced his commitment to mental health service improvements, and that he will be chairing a Mental Health Taskforce. It also comes as CAMHS care provision sits in the media spotlight for all the wrong reasons, with criticisms ranging from services being both "severely underfunded" and having "serious, deeply ingrained problems" (Health Select Committee report, 5th November 2015).

While there are existing tools for understanding some aspects of CAMHS user experience, these are focused on providing an overview of satisfaction levels, rather than actionable insight about specific aspects of people's experiences. Crucially, they also exclude important elements of the NHS Patient Experience Framework, such as privacy and dignity, integrated care, and the level of involvement of friends and family – a particularly sensitive issue within mental health provision.

Speaking on the need for service developments, Christopher Leaman, Policy and Public Relations Manager at [YoungMinds](#) said; "It is vital that services listen to the views of young people. Far too often it is too difficult for young people to report whether they have had a positive or negative experience. Tools are needed that empower young people and let them have their voice heard and acted on. We need feedback tools that are endorsed by young people themselves recognising that they are experts in how young people want to communicate."

As an organisation committed to improving children and young people's experiences of health and social care, the Picker Institute has worked closely with leading children's NHS hospitals and organisations such as the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. This work has resulted in the development of a dedicated set of tools designed to effectively and

accurately collect the experiences of children and young people across a broad range of service areas.

In addition to working with the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** on national survey programmes, such as the NHS Children's Inpatient & Day Case Survey (currently in field), the Picker Institute conducts bespoke research into key areas of health and social care. The needs of lesser heard groups are a particular focus within the Picker Institute, which has prompted the development of the CAMHS feedback tools.

The Picker Institute's recognition of the importance of gaining feedback from children directly, combined with a wealth of knowledge and experience in this area, makes them well placed to lead the CAMHS work, which, in terms of the patient journey/pathway and target group, is more complex than most other healthcare areas.

The Picker Institute's CAMHS tool will be designed using the same robust techniques as their existing tools, incorporating feedback from children with mental health conditions to ensure that it is completely suitable for its intended audience.

Speaking of the tool's purpose and value, Bridget Hopwood, Director of Health Experiences at the Picker Institute said "We are very excited about launching this tool, which is designed by and for children and young people themselves. From our work and experience we know that understanding CYP mental health experiences is crucial, if we are to gather evidence that is reliable, robust and effective enough to raise care quality. Therefore developing this tool with feedback from children isn't just necessary, it is essential if we are to achieve realistic improvements."

Notes to editors:

For all **Picker Institute Europe** media enquiries, speaker opportunities and recent news please contact:

Lanisha Butterfield on Lanisha.butterfield@pickereurope.ac.uk or 01865 208166

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