

# Response to Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum survey on Oxfordshire CAMHS

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust was disappointed to read the results of the survey into Oxfordshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

We do not believe the Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum (OxPCF) survey is an accurate reflection of today's modern and responsive CAMHS operation.

The relatively small number (606) of young people, parent and carers and professionals surveyed, combined with feedback dating back to 2017, means the Trust views it as limited in scope and outdated.

To put things in context, Oxfordshire CAMHS received 12,397 referrals in 2019.

Debbie Richards, Managing Director for Mental Health & Learning Disabilities said: "We would like to assure all young people and their families who need to be seen urgently, that they can continue to be seen within four hours as an emergency; within 24 hours for urgent crisis or within seven days for our urgent access to our community teams. We maintained our services during COVID; we remain there for you and are dedicated in supporting you.

"Oxford Health regrets if we have let down any young person at any time, and we will still take on board the feedback to improve any aspect of our service.

"We will work closely with the OxPCF to focus on the results of the survey and to ensure that young people feel their voices are being heard.

"We are aware of the increased numbers of young people waiting for assessment for a diagnosis from the Neuro Developmental Pathway for conditions such as autism. Many of the respondents in the OxPCF survey are in this category.

"Oxfordshire Neuro Developmental Pathway is commissioned to carry out 60 assessments per month. Unfortunately, we are getting almost double that number and waits are approximately two years.

“This is not just an Oxfordshire issue but a national one with wait times for Autism diagnosis nationally averaging two years. This is known nationally and acknowledged that there is a need for further funding to meet the needs of young people with neuro developmental issues.

“Referrals have increased significantly over the past four years as parents seeks to get formal diagnosis. The Neuro Developmental Pathway is not commissioned to offer ongoing support for children with autism, only diagnosis unless they have a co-morbid mental health problem. We have made proposals to the Clinical Commissioning Group and County Council to begin to address this lack of capacity “

## How CAMHS has transformed

Oxfordshire CAMHS has significantly changed since 2017. It has been rated as good by the CQC and has successfully implemented a Single Point of Access (SPA) so that parents and young people can now self-refer to the service.

In addition:

- We have implemented a 24/7 mental health advice line during lockdown, so that trained advisers can help day or night. The freephone number to call is 0800 783 0121.
- Oxfordshire CAMHS has specially trained Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) who supported schools that remained open during lockdown and are now ready to support schools and young people’s mental health when they return to the classroom next month.
- Our own monthly surveys from service users indicate a 4.48 rating out of 5 and 82% would recommend CAMHS
- Overall numbers waiting for assessment are decreasing. In May there was a 24% drop in waits compared to the same month in 2019.
- We are doing more assessments this year compared to same time last year – a 5% increase
- There has been a significant increase in follow-up appointments compared to last year. In June we carried out 5,216 appointments, representing a 33% increase on June 2019.

Despite the impact of Covid-19, Oxfordshire CAMHS has remained open, providing care and support for young people and their families, during the traumatic past few months.

Oxfordshire CAMHS has been at the forefront of embracing digital technology so that the support and care needed by young people is still available.

Digital consultations have rocketed by 90% since the service launched a pilot in January.

In July, 2,325 digital consultations took place, making up 44% of contacts. The adoption of video conferencing calls has been positively received by both young people and their families.