

CYMPH Evidence Based Bulletin

July 2026

This bulletin aims to keep you up to date with current evidence around children and young peoples mental health. Some articles are freely accessible, others require an Open Athens account to access. You can sign up to Open Athens here: <https://openathens.nice.org.uk/> or get in touch with the library for further support accessing the full texts. Make articles more accessible by downloading LibKey Nomad directly to your browser: [Download LibKey Nomad - Third Iron](#)

Evidence Based Summary

Young people with mental health conditions use social media differently.

The Mental Elf; 2026.

<https://www.nationalelfservice.net/treatment/digital-health/young-people-with-mental-health-conditions-use-social-media-differently/>

(Adolescents with mental health conditions spend more time on social media and engage with it differently, especially those with internalising conditions like anxiety or eating disorders. Overall, this study suggests that adolescents with mental health conditions not only spend more time on social media compared to their peers, but they also engage with social media differently, especially for those with internalising conditions.)

Freely available online

Childhood spent behind bars: the impact of immigration detention centres on children's mental health.

The Mental Elf; 2026.

<https://www.nationalelfservice.net/populations-and-settings/refugee/immigration-detention-refugee-children/>

[A new systematic review pools data from 9,620 detained children across 8 countries and finds alarming rates of depression, PTSD and self-harm. The harm rises the longer and harsher the detention, and no form of it is safe. Findings demonstrate that immigration detention has an undeniably negative effect on children's mental health.]

Freely available online

Service Improvement Case Study: Improving Patients Experience at Night, 2026.

Patient Perspective; 2026.

<https://patientperspective.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/SERVICE-IMPROVEMENT-CASE-STUDY-IMPROVING-NIGHT-TIME-ENVIRONMENT-JULY-2026-Patient-Perspective.pdf>

[This case study explores initiatives to improve the night time environment for patients, formal policies and protocols, actions to reduce non-urgent ward moves, staff training, and the measurement of impact.]

Freely available online

Report

Children's and Young People's Mental Health Services: 2024-25.

Office of the Children's Commissioner; 2026.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/childrens-and-young-peoples-mental-health-services-2024-25/>

[The number of children referred to mental health services in England has risen by 10% in a year to more than one million.]

Freely available online

Up Next: Anorexia Algorithm.

Center for Countering Digital Hate; 2026.

<https://counterhate.com/research/up-next-anorexia-algorithm>

[How YouTube still recommends eating disorder videos to young girls.]

Freely available online

State of the Nation 2026: Identifying vulnerable children and young people and supporting them to thrive.

Centre for Young Lives.

https://media.cfyl.org.uk/6a632bba366c808025df6c37_state-of-the-nation-2026.pdf

(Collates data and indicators from a range of sources to track trends in poverty, mental health, education, safeguarding, housing, SEND, youth justice, and employment in England to provide a comprehensive snapshot of childhood vulnerability and the scale of need, and where further investment in support is required.)

Freely available online

Building a preventative mental health system for children and young people: A report prepared for the Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group.

Child of the North APPG.

(This report highlights the importance of place-based and preventative approaches, of which there are already great examples in communities across the North. But importantly, this report challenges us to think differently about what supports children and young peoples' mental health. The challenge is not simply to tackle issues when they emerge, but to create the conditions in which fewer children and young people reach crisis point in the first place. Building a genuine, future-proofed preventative mental health system will require long-term investment, cross-sector collaboration, and a renewed commitment to children, families, and communities - this is the key to ensuring our young people will thrive.)



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Original Research

'It is just a prediction; it's, like, not fact': youth attitudes towards risk prediction tools and personalised preventive interventions for depression and anxiety.

Higson-Sweeney N. BMJ Mental Health 2026;29(1):1-9.

(Risk prediction tools may help identify youth who are at risk of developing depression or anxiety and allow personalised preventive interventions to be delivered. However, with concerns for implementation, it is important to directly engage with youth to understand their attitudes. Researchers should prioritise stakeholder involvement, using active collaboration to identify ways in which these concerns can be addressed, which may increase acceptability and uptake.)

Access with Open Athens

Autism in children and young people with functional tic-like behaviours: a retrospective cross-sectional study.

Liang H. Archives of Disease in Childhood 2026;111(7):606-611.

[Functional tic-like behaviours (FTLB) are characterised by multiple, complex, vocal and/or motor tics, typically with adolescent onset. This study (1) investigates the prevalence of autism in young people with FTLB, (2) compares demographic and clinical features between patients with FTLB with and without autism and (3) examines the diagnostic accuracy of the Development and Well-Being Assessment (DAWBA) in identifying autism in this patient group.]

Freely available online

Mood instability and mental health service use in autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: a natural language processing analysis of CRIS electronic healthcare records from 21 906 children and adolescents.

Seker A. BMJ Mental Health 2026;29(1):1-10.

(Children and young people (CYP) with neurodevelopmental diagnoses such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have high child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) needs. These findings suggest the importance of assessing emotion dysregulation in care planning and pathway allocation in neurodevelopmental CAMHS.)

Open Access

Psychiatric and neurological predictors of early ADHD medication discontinuation across the lifespan: a multinational study.

Brikell I. BMJ Mental Health 2026;29(1):1-10.

(Early discontinuation of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication is common and linked to worse outcomes. Identifying clinical predictors could aid personalised treatment yet evidence is inconsistent across ages and countries/regions. Improving ADHD medication persistence will require consideration of healthcare context and age-specific strategies, including close monitoring for children with complex neuropsychiatric profiles.)

Access with Open Athens

Risk of subsequent self-harm, suicide attempts and suicide following a first hospital-treated self-harm episode among young people: a population-based cohort study.

Nguyen TD. BMJ Mental Health 2026;29(1):1-8.

(Self-harm in young people is associated with elevated risks for subsequent self-harm, suicide attempts and suicide, particularly during the first year. Yet the trajectory across sex, age and self-harm methods remains poorly understood. These findings underscore the need for both acute and sustained prevention efforts. Special attention should be given to males and children.)

Access with Open Athens

Educational attainment among primary school children with neurodisability: a population-based cohort study using linked education and health data from England.

Cant A. Archives of Disease in Childhood 2026;111(8):709-716.

(The aim of this research was to compare educational attainment between children with and without hospital-recorded neurodisability in England at ages 5, 7 and 11 using linked administrative hospital and education data in the Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data (ECHILD) database.)

Freely available online

Autism and autism features in a young adult ADHD population, gender differences and use of the RAADS-14.

Boilson, M., Roarty, A., Stanfield, A., Berney, T., Lenihan, D., Doherty, M., et al. (2026). . Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, 1-9 doi:10.1017/ipm.2026.10213

(The level of co-occurrence of autism, and overlap of features, suggests employment of neurodevelopmental rather than single condition approaches to avoid mis-diagnosis/missed diagnoses. Sensory sensitivities are suggestive of neurodevelopmental differences particularly in females regardless of diagnostic category. The RAADS-14 may be helpful as part of screening and support planning)

<https://libkey.io/10.1017/ipm.2026.10213>

(Request from the Library)

Qualitative perceptions of child and youth mental health services by caregivers in the WHO European Region: a systematic review of qualitative literature.

Cardona T., Atmore K.H., Sibilio R., Hall J., Giannaki A., Kalpaxi P., et al. (2026). European Journal of Public Health, 36(4), no pagination. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckag115

(The study outcomes highlight the need to consider the wellbeing of caregivers as well as service-users, address the mental health literacy of caregivers, the wider community, and frontline professionals, ensure sufficient resources for a competent and appropriate workforce to address stigma and support the delivery of appropriate care, engage caregivers in care provision, design responsive and holistic services that enhance smooth care transitions, and support the active participation of young people and their caregivers in care delivery.)

<https://libkey.io/10.1093/eurpub/ckag115>

(Open Access)



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Original Research

Identifying needs and challenges in transitional mental health care: A scoping review on the perspectives of health and social care professionals

De Backer, H., Martens, N., Bakker, J., Van den Broeck, K., van Amelsvoort, T., & Glazemakers, I. (2026). European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, doi:10.1007/s00787-026-03118-z (The transition from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) is often associated with disrupted continuity of care, where young people may experience a loss of support during transfer. This scoping review identifies the needs and challenges experienced by health and social care professionals navigating this boundary, a perspective often overlooked in transition research)

<https://libkey.io/10.1007/s00787-026-03118-z>

(Request from the Library)

Clinical characteristics of children and young people accessing a specialist harmful sexual behaviour service: A practice paper proposing a multi-agency pathway model

Duncan, M., & Grieve, A. (2026). doi:10.1080/13552600.2026.2680475

(This practice paper describes the development and implementation of a specialist pathway for children and young people who display Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB). This paper outlines the demographic and clinical characteristics of young people referred to an HSB service compared to a general CAMHS cohort.)

<https://libkey.io/10.1080/13552600.2026.2680475>

(Request from the Library)

Wellbeing While Waiting: Effectiveness and implementation of youth social prescribing for young people awaiting CAMHS support.

Hayes, D., Wright, J., Burton, A., Bu, F., Sticpewich, L., Stuttard, H., et al. (2026). European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, doi:10.1007/s00787-026-03074-8

(Prolonged waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) leave many young people without structured support while awaiting specialist treatment. Social prescribing has been proposed as a community-based adjunct within CAMHS pathways; however, evidence regarding its safety and clinical impact remains limited.)

<https://libkey.io/10.1007/s00787-026-03074-8>

(Open Access)

'They really want to find some kind of box they can put you in': how young people with severe mental health problems and complex needs talk about their past treatment in traditional child and adolescent mental health services - a critical discourse analysis.

Johansen M., Ness O., Stuen H.K., Brekke E., & Landheim, A. (2026). Frontiers in Psychiatry, 17(pagination), Article Number: 1759231. Date of Publication: 2026. doi:10.3389/fpsy.2026.1759231

(The findings indicate a gap between what young people see as helpful, the aims outlined in guidelines and the young participants' descriptions of CAMHS. The lack of user involvement and the unequal power balance need to be actively addressed with concrete practices that support more equal participation. The findings highlight the need for more differentiated treatment pathways for this group of young people, enabling timely, tailored support and reducing the risk of ineffective initial interventions.)

<https://libkey.io/10.3389/fpsy.2026.1759231>

(Access with Open Athens)

Temporal trends in diagnoses and mental healthcare utilisation in child and adolescent psychiatry from 2013 to 2023.

O'Hare K., Lang U., Kieseppa V., Ramsay H., Lindgren M., Kyrola A., et al. (2026). European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 35(6), 1957–1970. doi:10.1007/s00787-026-03008-4

(Our aim was to analyse trends in child and adolescent psychiatry diagnoses and service use over time. We examined administrative health record data for all child and adolescent psychiatry service appointments between 2013 and 2023 for children (aged 0–12 years) and adolescents (aged 13–17 years) living in Finland. Stratifying by diagnosis, annual rates were calculated for inpatient and outpatient service use.)

<https://libkey.io/10.1007/s00787-026-03008-4>

(Open Access)

Narrative Matters: Between hope and cynicism - competing narratives and the moral economy of child and adolescent psychiatry.

Sibeoni, J., & Revah-Levy, A. (2026). Child & Adolescent Mental Health, doi:10.1111/camh.70104

(Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are currently marked by a paradox: growing public recognition of youth mental health difficulties coincides with increasingly fragile and underresourced services. Beyond organisational strain, the field is shaped by competing narratives about its mission and limits (hopeful progressivism which emphasises innovation, early intervention and developmental plasticity; on the other, defensive pessimism which foregrounds chronicity, clinical realism and institutional constraint.)

<https://libkey.io/10.1111/camh.70104>

(Request from the Library)

Pathways into child and adolescent mental health services for anxiety and depression: The role of social and educational factors

Yoon, Y., Deighton, J., Wickersham, A., Chui, Z., Lewis, S., EdbrookeChilds, J., et al. (2026). European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, doi:10.1007/s00787-026-03084-6

(This study aimed to examine the relationships of sociodemographic and educational characteristics with CAMHS referral pathways for anxiety disorders and depression. We used routinely collected educational data linked with CAMHS records from South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, focusing on young people aged 12-17 years with clinical diagnoses of anxiety disorders and depression (N = 4,169).)

<https://libkey.io/10.1007/s00787-026-03084-6>

(Access with Open Athens)



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Therapy Articles

[Sand Tray Therapy Guide](#)

Therapist Aid

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/sand-tray-guide>

(Sand tray therapy uses a tray of sand and miniature objects to help clients express emotions, experiences, relationships, and problems through creative, non-verbal storytelling, making it particularly useful for people who struggle to communicate feelings or have experienced trauma. Therapists observe the client's sand-world creation, explore its meaning through reflections and questions, and use the discussion to build insight, process emotions, and support therapeutic goals.)

[Downward Arrow- CBT technique](#)

Therapist Aid

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/downward-arrow-technique>

(The downward arrow technique is a CBT method used to uncover the core beliefs underlying a person's automatic thoughts, emotions, and behaviours by repeatedly exploring what a thought means and why it is important. Once these deeper beliefs are identified, therapists can help clients challenge and modify them using cognitive restructuring and other CBT intervention.)

News

[Children in England face mental health "crisis" as referrals reach over a million](#)

BMJ 2026; 393 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2026-100120> (Published 30 June 2026)

(More than one million children were referred to mental health services in England last year, almost double the figure five years ago.)

[Record numbers of children with mental health support in schools](#)

Gov.uk; Press Release

(The government is on track to meet its manifesto promise that every school and college will have access to mental health support teams by the end of 2029)

