



# Mental Health Resources

## RANi Need to Know Guides | Mental Health Advisory sheet 2

*Support for Parents, Carers and Young Persons*

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### Introduction

Mental health is just as important as physical health — especially for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This guide explains the different **types of mental health support** available, how to **access help**, and where to go if you're worried about your own or your child's mental well being.

This guide covers:

- Early support and wellbeing services
- NHS mental health services (CAMHS and others)
- Help through school or college
- Support for parents and carers
- Helplines, charities and local offers

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## When to Seek Help

You may want to seek mental health support if you or your child is experiencing:

- Low mood or depression
- Anxiety, panic, or phobias
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- Behavioural difficulties or emotional distress
- Sleep problems or withdrawal
- Sudden changes in mood, appetite, or interest
- Struggles with transitions, trauma, or bullying

If you're unsure, it's okay to ask for advice — **early help can make a big difference.**

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## Types of Support Available

### 1. NHS Services (CAMHS and Specialist Support)

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** provide NHS mental health support for children and young people with moderate to severe mental health needs.

They offer:

- Assessments and diagnosis
- Therapy (CBT, DBT, family therapy)
- Psychiatry

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- Support for ADHD, autism, anxiety, depression, eating disorders
- Medication where appropriate

**How to access:**

- Speak to your GP
- Ask your school SENCO or pastoral lead
- Self-referral is possible in some areas
- In emergencies, call NHS 111 or go to A&E

Note: Some areas now call CAMHS by new names like “Healthy Young Minds” or “Children’s Wellbeing Services”.

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## **2. Support in Schools and Colleges**

Schools and post-16 settings can play a key role in supporting mental health:

- Mental Health Leads and Pastoral Staff
- School Counsellors or Therapy Dogs
- Educational Psychologist involvement
- Nurture groups or emotional literacy programmes
- Mental health workshops (e.g. Zones of Regulation, mindfulness)
- Referrals to external services like CAMHS or charities

Ask the school what support is available and how your child can access it.

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### 3. Local Authority and Early Help Services

Every local authority must publish a **Local Offer**, which includes details of:

- Mental health support
- Short breaks and respite services
- Family support and parenting programmes
- Social care and early help teams

You can find your Local Offer by searching “[your area] SEND Local Offer” online.

Some families can get an **Early Help Assessment** or a **Social Care assessment** if mental health needs are impacting family life or safety.

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### 4. Support for Parents and Carers

Caring for a child with mental health difficulties can be emotionally exhausting. Help for parents includes:

- Parent support groups (local or online)
- Counselling and therapy for parents
- Helplines for advice and listening support
- Training (e.g., Managing Anxiety, Sleep, Behaviour)
- Social care support (assessments and respite)

Many local charities offer free or low-cost support specifically for families of children with SEND.

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## 5. Helplines, Apps, and Online Support

### For Young People:

- **Childline** (0800 1111) – Free, confidential support for under 19s
- **The Mix** (0808 808 4994) – For ages 11–25
- **Kooth** – Free, online counselling and peer forums
- **YoungMinds Textline** – Text YM to 85258 for 24/7 crisis support
- **Shout** – Text SHOUT to 85258 for 24/7 mental health support

### For Parents/Carers:

- **YoungMinds Parents Helpline** – 0808 802 5544
- **Samaritans** – 116 123 (24/7 free listening service)
- **NSPCC** – Support and protection services for children
- **Mind Infoline** – 0300 123 3393

### Apps and Digital Tools:

- **Calm Harm** – For managing self-harm urges
- **Clear Fear** – For managing anxiety
- **MindShift** – Anxiety coping strategies
- **Headspace / Smiling Mind** – Guided meditation and mindfulness

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# Accessing Mental Health Support Through an EHC Plan

If your child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan:

- **Mental health needs** should be clearly described in Section C (health needs)
- **Therapies or CAMHS input** should be specified in Section G (health provision)
- If mental health needs are educational in nature (e.g. anxiety affecting attendance), support must also appear in Section B (needs) and Section F (provision)

You can ask for:

- **Assessments by educational psychologists or mental health professionals**
- **Therapeutic provision (e.g. CBT, therapy, anxiety support)** to be added to the EHCP
- **An early review** if mental health has worsened

If provision is missing or not arranged, you can **challenge the local authority**.

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## Crisis Support

If you or your child is in urgent need:

- Call **NHS 111** for urgent advice
- Contact your GP and ask for an emergency appointment
- Go to **A&E** if someone is at immediate risk

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- Contact your area's **24/7 mental health crisis team** (check NHS website or local CAMHS)

You can also call:

- **Samaritans (116 123) – 24/7**
  - **Childline (0800 1111) – 24/7** for under 19s
  - **YoungMinds Crisis Textline (text YM to 85258) – 24/7**
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## **Intersection with SEND**

Many children and young people with SEND experience mental health needs, particularly those with:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Sensory processing difficulties
- Speech and language needs
- Learning disabilities
- Trauma or attachment issues

Mental health support must be adapted for each child's communication style, cognitive level, and preferences. If services don't understand your child's needs, ask for reasonable adjustments or specialist referral.

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## Summary

Type of Help	Where to Access It
CAMHS or NHS therapy	GP, school referral, or NHS 111
School-based support	SENCO, teacher, mental health lead
Early Help or Social Care	Local Authority's SEND or family services
Online or crisis help	Childline, Kooth, YoungMinds, Shout
EHC Plan support	Request via annual review or reassessment

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## Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – For help with understanding your rights and the process
- **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people [www.iasmanchester.org](http://www.iasmanchester.org)
- **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice: [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)
- **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children: [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

If you'd like help preparing your request or understanding your appeal options, RANi can provide guidance and templates.

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## Further Resources

- [YoungMinds](#)
  - [Mind](#)
  - [Place2Be](#)
  - [Kooth](#)
  - [Anna Freud Centre](#)
  - [NHS CAMHS Info](#) – search “CAMHS near me”
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### Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

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## Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

**Email us:** [info@rani.org.uk](mailto:info@rani.org.uk)

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query

Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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