

Mental Health Support Team (MHST) FAQ's

Please take a few moments to read these frequently asked questions.

Who are the MHST?

We are an NHS based team established in 2019 who aim to deliver early intervention for young people with mental health difficulties.



Is the MHST the same as CAMHS (Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service)?

The MHST is one of a number of teams that make up CAMHS as a whole. We are a schools-based project delivering short term early intervention, supporting mild to moderate mental health difficulties.

Who makes up our MHST?

Our MHST is made up of Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHP), Specialist Practitioners (SP) and Cognitive Behaviour Therapists (CBT Therapists). Each practitioner has a different set of skills and specialism and may use CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) or other appropriate therapeutic interventions.

What work do we do?

When we support young people at Primary school age we predominantly work with parents/carers and this work takes place in a group with other parents/carers. These groups are usually over Microsoft Teams and vary between daytime and evening to support the availability of parents/carers. These run regularly so there should not be a long wait until the next one. We run three groups, based on CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) informed, evidence-based interventions. Firstly, Managing Anxiety in Children (MAC) aims to support parents/carers with children where there is some avoidance or separation anxiety. Forever Families aims to support parents/carers with children who present with difficult behaviours which is not believed to be due to a neurodiversity (Autism or ADHD). Our final group is for parents/careers where there appears to be some neurodiversity which is main cause of the anxiety or behaviour. This is for those who are both diagnosed and awaiting diagnosis. Some one-to-one work with the child is considered with certain presentations.

Is CBT the same as counselling?

CBT differs from counselling in that CBT focuses on providing strategies to challenge unhelpful thoughts and behaviours. Our work is guided self-help which is goal and change focus. meaning it requires you to do homework tasks and apply the strategies between sessions to increase the chance of change.

Counselling can be used to talk about issues where CBT may not be as helpful, such as loss, bereavement, relationship, or friendship issues. We can discuss signposting to a counselling service if this may be deemed more appropriate.

When and where are the session and how many will there be?

Work with an EMHP is between 6 and 8 sessions. The groups are usually over Microsoft Teams and vary between daytime and evening to support the availability of parents/carers. These run regularly so there should not be a long wait until the next one.

What does the first session cover?

The first session is called an assessment session; this is to gain more information and to agree the most suitable support. Usually, clinicians meet with the parent(s)/carers(s) over Microsoft Teams for

the assessment sessions. Clinicians may ask for the child to there for some or all the session. Where possible the assessment will take place face to face in school or at a local health centre.

Will school know all the information discussed in sessions?

We are keen to work together with schools to support the child and family so will liaise and meet with school to suggest any reasonable adjustments, where we see fit. Any safeguarding concerns will be actioned accordingly, and this may include informing school.

What if this support doesn't work?

CBT as an approach doesn't work for everybody. Although it's likely that each family will take something from the sessions. As an early intervention we hope to equip the family with skills and knowledge to help themselves maintain being well after we have finished. When we finish working together, we will always consider any signposting to a more suitable agency if that would help the family.

What happens if you are unable to attend a session?

Please email your assessing clinician if you are unable to attend the assessment so it can be rearranged. When in a group, you can email the facilitator of the group (which will likely be different from yours assessing clinician) to let them know you are unable to attend. Our policy states that after two non-attendances you will be discharge. You can re-refer at a time in the future when you are able to access the group consistently.

Am I contactable between sessions?

Clinicians can be contacted between sessions via email. However, they have working days and hours as stated on the signature of their email so please do not expect a response from them outside of these hours. If there are any serious concerns about the child's safety and wellbeing, then please contact the CAMHS Crisis Team on 0115 844 0560 or your GP.

If this doesn't answer all your questions, please feel free to ask.