

## TAKE-HOME NOTES:

**How to evaluate your CAMH service**

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Audit, research and evaluation are separate entities, with different although overlapping methodologies. Evaluation is a formal assessment of service effectiveness, relevance and cost effectiveness (value for money).

The need to evaluate your CAMHS comes from two sources, national drivers and local needs. 'Standards for Better Health' is one key framework for understanding this (DoH, 2005).

CAMH services will often have targets set within their service level agreement and will rely on data collection and evaluation to demonstrate that they have met these targets. Local needs will dictate which areas of your CAMHS you evaluate and in what way.

Don't try to undertake service evaluation alone. You will need to involve other clinicians, administrative staff and your managers in routine evaluation. Help is at hand. There are also some excellent national resources available (see Useful resources below).

CAMHS evaluation can be thought of as primarily focusing on the child in the service or on components of the service.

1. Child-focused evaluation is useful for measuring outcomes, and fits with the 'evidence-based approach' to commissioning.
2. Component-focused evaluation in CAMHS is useful for assessing new models, or changes to services, and care pathways.

Get familiar with your electronic patient record system if you are not already.

Set up your evaluation action plan:

- Set up a group of interested clinicians with an administrator.
- Develop a service-wide strategy for ensuring completion of surveys and tools.
- Plan your evaluations into a strategic action plan early on.
- Think about resources early on too and get them built into service costs.
- Look pro-actively for 'free' resources such as trainees.
- Be prepared to be flexible with your action plan as local and national priorities change.

**Reflection**

(1.2) Evaluation is often used interchangeably with audit and research. Write down what you think a definition of each might be.

(1.5) Think about a particular part of your service that you are most familiar with and try to construct examples for audit, research and evaluation questions.

(2.6) Why evaluate in your local service? Think about one specific part of your CAMH service e.g. your ADHD clinic, your in-patient Unit, your triage service, or a parenting group.

Think about each of the statements in the table below and answer the following:

1. Which of these statements would persuade you to evaluate this part of your service?
2. Rate the statement in order of importance: 1 being most influential, and 10 being least influential.
3. For each of the relevant statements say how or why it would persuade you to evaluate your chosen part of your CAMH service.

National Drivers	Local Drivers
Tendering of services and potential competition means you need to justify what you provide	Altruistic wish to inform local service development
Growing culture of setting and achieving targets and demonstrating that your service meets the targets	To enable informed local reflection on how you conduct your service
Need to contribute to nationally collected data sets e.g. CAMHS mapping, CORC dataset	To contribute to the sharing of information amongst stakeholders including commissioners, providers and users
Fulfilling Standards for Better Health core and developmental standards	Wish to evaluate a pilot service in order to demonstrate its effectiveness to attract further funding

(3.2) Make a list of who you think should be involved in evaluation of the chosen area of CAMHS that you thought about in the previous reflection on [page 2.6](#).

(3.5) Have a thought shower and write down any resources you can think of that might be helpful.

(4.7) Your recent Joint Area Review rated CAMHS as 'Good' overall. However, a weakness was identified – your low percentage of BME (black and minority ethnicity) families. Think about a strategy to tackle this problem, and how you would evaluate the resulting changes.

(5.6) Think about the database for your CAMHS service and jot down the key data that it contains. Now write down what measures you would be able to obtain from these data.

(5.8) Think about what measures you might use to measure outcome.

(7.3) How could you resource an evaluation? Quickly brainstorm. How much does it cost? Have a guess.

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### Useful resources

- CORC website <http://www.corc.uk.net/>
- The Focus Email Discussion Network – Network of CAMH professionals functioning largely via email discussion forum open to all professionals working in CAMHS  
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/quality/focus/emaildiscussiongroup.aspx>
- Focus: Promoting effective practice in child and adolescent mental health  
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/crtu/focus.aspx>
- 11 million – the organisation led by the Children's Commissioner for England; a website on children's views about health <http://www.11million.org.uk/>
- Bureau J & Wolpert M (2006) Child and Adolescent Mental Health – General Care Record Action Team. [[pdf](#)] Do Once and Share Project for CAMHS.
- National CAMHS Support Service – supports service development and implementation of national policy across Child and Adolescent Mental Health services. Available at <http://www.camhs.org.uk/>

### Evaluation scales

- SDQ – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at <http://www.sdqinfo.com/>
- HoNOSCA materials and training packs are provided free at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/honosca>
- CGAS materials at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/CGAS%20Ratings%20Guide.pdf>
- CHI Experience of Service Questionnaire (CHI-ESQ) at <http://www.corc.uk.net/>
- Conners' Rating Scales – at <http://www.pearsonassessments.com/csr.aspx>
- Paddington Complexity Index – Yates P, Garralda ME and Higginson I (1999) Paddington Complexity Scale and Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents. *British Journal of Psychiatry*; **174**: 417–423. [[abstract](#)]