

Mental health support for children under 10

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

Reference: RS25/11930-6

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1518

Petition title: Provide more timely and accessible mental health support for children under 10, including by referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Text of petition:

“No further support available”

A term many parents of children with mental health problems under the age of 10 will have heard multiple times when trying to get help for their children.

A term I have heard many times, as the only support available to children is parents doing workshops, and parental wellbeing groups. What is there for the children themselves? Nothing.

I have a 5 year old son who has lived with anxiety since he was 2. It has made him unable to attend pre-school, nursery and more recently school, he has been referred to multiple agencies, he is under a community paediatrician, but even so, still no support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



This has left both me and him with nowhere to turn, no plan to help him, no support at all.

I'm writing this petition as the government need to rethink the children's mental health services in Wales. They need to make sure better early intervention is available for younger children. They shouldn't have to suffer for years until they hit breaking point at 10/11 years old before they can get all the help they need. They shouldn't have to miss out on education and socialisation. Parents shouldn't have to see their children suffer the way they are for years, fighting a broken system to make sure their children are heard.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

1. Background

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Wales provide a mix of primary and secondary care specialist NHS services for children and young people with mental health problems as defined by the [Mental Health \(Wales\) Measure 2010](#). The service offers assessment and treatment when children and young people have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties as well as promoting emotional wellbeing and preventative mental health services and treatment to children and young people.

2. Welsh Government action

The letter from the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing to the Committee on 27 August 2025 sets out the action the Welsh Government is taking in relation to supporting children and young people with their mental health, including:

- The all-age [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#).
- The [NYTH/NEST framework](#) for mental health and wellbeing for babies, children and young people.
- The [Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care \(ECPLC\)](#) approach, supported by a number of early years policies and programmes, including Families First, and Flying Start.
- The [Healthy Child Wales Programme](#) and the [Healthy Child Wales Programme for school aged children](#).
- The [Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing](#), published in March 2021.
- Funding to support implementation of the Whole School Approach framework and programme of work through schools, local authorities, and other education settings.
- Funding to support delivery of universal and targeted well-being interventions, staff training, and provision of school and community-based counselling.

School and community-based counselling is a statutory duty on all local authorities in Wales to support children and young people in schools from Year 6. However, the letter states that Welsh Government funding

is giving authorities the ability to **voluntarily extend this support to below Year 6**.

- The health and well-being area of learning and experience of the new Curriculum for Wales, which is mandatory for all learners.

Further details on the above are provided in the Minister's letter.

There is also a [CAMHS In-Reach to Schools service](#), launched in 2021. The service aims to build capacity in schools to better support the mental health and wellbeing needs of children, young people and staff.

Joint inspectorate review

A joint inspectorate review, led by Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) alongside Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn, took an in-depth look at how healthcare, education, and children's services are working to meet the mental health needs of children and young people across Wales. [The report was published in November 2024.](#)

The Minister's letter states that the review shows the progress the Welsh Government has made to reduce waiting times and positive developments in schools to support young people, and single points of access for CAMHS. However, it also identified areas where further work is required and the Welsh Government is said to have taken this on board.

The letter goes on to say that the Welsh Government has developed a CAMHS service specification to reduce variation across Wales. This includes an **expectation that CAMHS can accept referrals from the age of five**. Health boards are said to have undertaken baseline assessments against the specification and are working towards implementation. The Welsh Government will be providing annual updates on this work.

3. Welsh Parliament action

Children, Young People and Education Committee

The Fifth Senedd's [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) undertook a detailed inquiry on improving the emotional and mental health of children and young people in Wales between July 2017 and September 2018. Its '[Mind over Matter](#)' report was published in April 2018.

Following the publication of the Mind Over Matter report, the Committee kept a close eye on the implementation of the report's recommendations and published the Mind over Matter: Two years on follow-up report in October 2020.

Welsh Youth Parliament

The Second Welsh Youth Parliament's Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee published its report, Young minds matter, in November 2022.

Health and Social Care Committee

The Sixth Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee held an inquiry into mental health inequalities and published its report in December 2022.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.