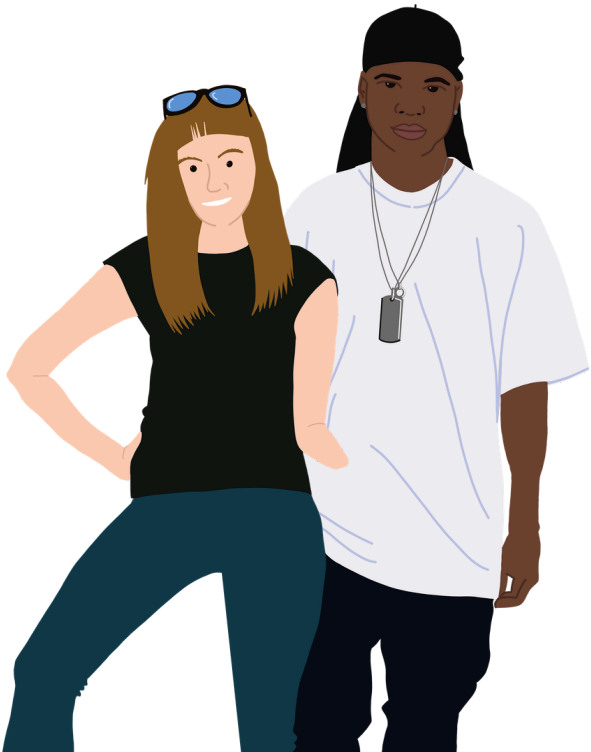
HEALTH FOR TEENS

NHS
Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust

Supporting your recovery while you are waiting

Information for young people

CAMHS
BRIGHTENING THE FUTURE



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Self-help while you're waiting booklet

This guide shares a range of ideas and resources that might help you feel better. These are not a list of things you must do**.**

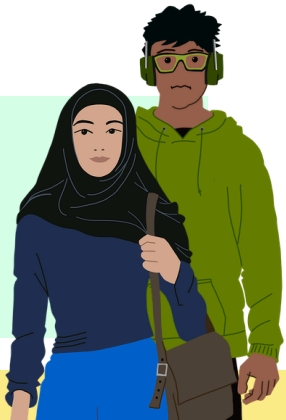
Think of this guide like a menu - you can pick the things that feel right for you and leave the rest. You do not need to read the whole booklet if you don't want to.

CAMHS and other NHS services are working hard to see everyone as soon as they can, but lots of people need support right now, so waiting times can be longer. That's why staff at CAMHS have created this guide: to give you safe, trustworthy information and simple activities you can try while you wait. Any blue, underlined text can be clicked to take you to more information from reliable places, including our websites.

The activities in this booklet (like breathing exercises, mindfulness, grounding techniques and ways to calm your body) need practice. **It's normal if they don't work straight away.**

These skills take time to learn, and sticking with them doesn't mean you're "doing it wrong"; it just means your brain and body are getting used to something new. Trying things more than once can help you figure out what actually works for you.

You're not on your own and you don't have to try everything at once. Choose what feels helpful, go at your own pace and remember that **learning new skills takes time**.



How to use this booklet

Think of this booklet like a menu. You can choose the self-care ideas that feel right for you while you wait for extra support. Some ideas might help a lot, some a little and some might not help at all. That's okay.

- Pages 5–7 help you notice and track your thoughts, feelings, actions, and triggers.
- Pages 8–23 give you tips to look after your feelings, practise helpful thinking and learn ways to cope when things feel tough.

There's no time limit and you don't have to try everything. If you want to, you can ask someone you trust to help you.

You're not on your own, and you don't have to try everything at once. Choose what feels helpful, go at your own pace, and remember that learning new skills takes time.

Remember, new skills take time and practice to make a difference. Just like building a muscle, **the more you practise something, the more it can help.**
If you're not sure where to start, pick something small and simple.

You can scan the QR code or click the link below to learn more about CAMHS, the teams who work here, and the helpful resources we have for young people.

bit.ly/CAMHSLeicester

My experiences

Thinking about your experiences can help you notice what upsets you and what helps you look after your mental health. You can use this space to add ideas over time and you can fill it in with a family member if that feels helpful.
You might want to keep this sheet somewhere you'll see it, like on the fridge or in your room, as a reminder of the things that support you.

What warning signs or triggers have you noticed that make you feel more out of control? For example a certain person or place.

What coping skills have you used in the past that have helped? For example, talking to friends or family.

What could other people do to help me? For example, let me have some space or keep me company.

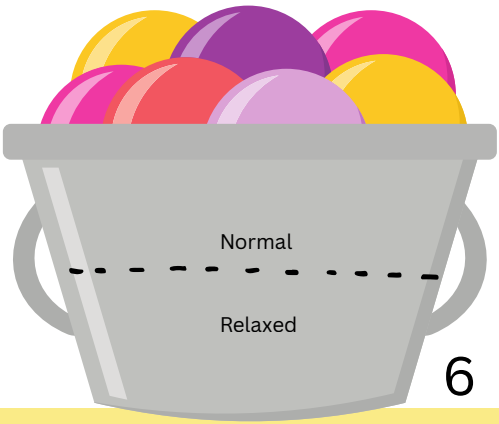
What would I tell a close friend who was currently feeling like I am?

My stress bucket

Fill the balloons with your worries or things that currently make you feel stressed. Filling in the balloons helps you spot the things that are worrying or bothering you. It also helps you notice when it feels like there are too many balloons in your basket and things are getting a bit much.

Think about

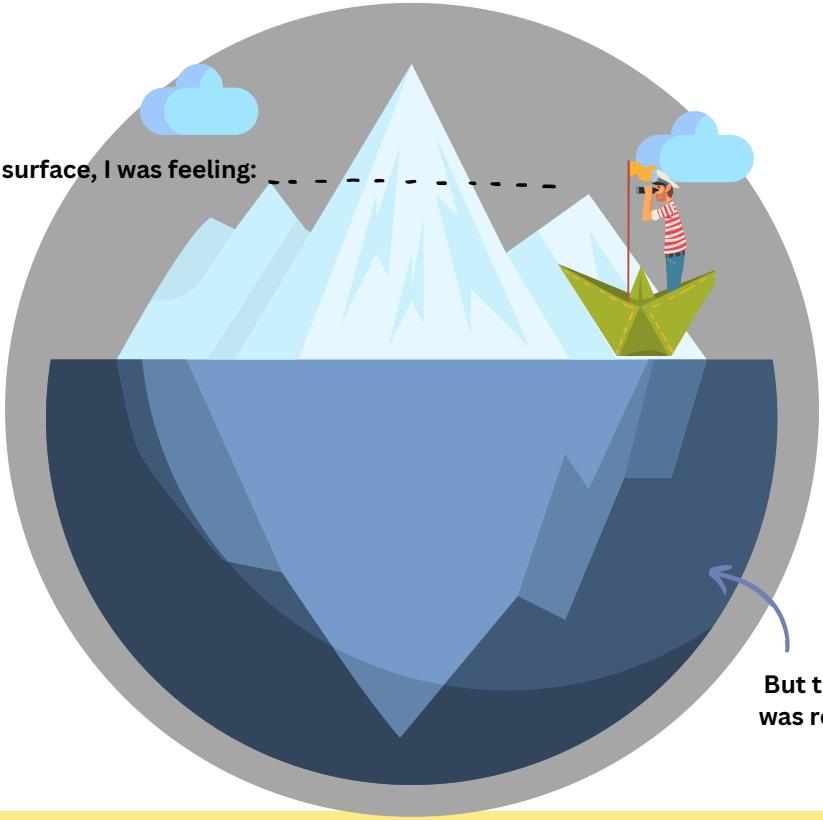
- How full is your bucket?
- Do your coping skills work?
- Do you turn to unhealthy ways to manage this?



Icebergs

We all experience difficult feelings from time to time. However there is usually more to what we're feeling than what others see on the surface. Here is an example of an iceberg when someone might be feeling angry:

Have a go at creating your own by choosing an emotion you often feel i.e. sad, angry, worried.



Distress Tolerance

Whether it's something small or something big like failing an exam, falling out with a friend or losing a loved one, everyone experiences stress at some point in their life.

How well you're able to manage these stressful situations is, in part, determined by your level of distress tolerance. By learning effective distress tolerance skills, you can significantly improve your ability to deal with difficult emotions and challenging circumstances.

This booklet will go through some epic tips and tricks to keep your cool, even when things get chaotic.

It's common to turn to unhealthy or even destructive ways of coping with difficult emotions but these strategies will help you deal with them in a healthier way.

If you, or someone you care about, need urgent advice or support for your mental health, help is available over the phone. **Call NHS 111, mental health option**. This number is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week free of charge and in confidence. Please note, this service can be busy at certain times and you may have to wait for your call to be answered. You can also text **0748 063 5199**

In an emergency - If you are concerned about an immediate risk of harm (either to yourself or someone else) phone 999.

You can also call NHS 111 for physical, medical and mental health issues.

www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs111

TIPP

TIPP is an acronym for Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, and Progressive muscle relaxation. It's a distress tolerance trick that'll help you stay cool in tough times.

T

Temperature

Change your body temperature. Splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube to your temple, take a cold shower.

I

Intense Exercise

Intense exercise can release some of the stress you are experiencing. Aim to get your heart rate up and out of breath for 20 mins.

P

Paced Breathing

Try box breathing: breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds and hold for 4 seconds. Start again until you feel more calm.

P

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Focus on 1 muscle group at a time. Tighten your muscles as much as possible for 5 seconds. Then release & relax. Repeat with other muscle groups.

Self-soothing

When emotions are running high or life gets overwhelming, it can help to practice self-soothing. These strategies are all about tapping into your senses for some much-needed comfort and relief. Instead of harmful habits, you can try out these physical techniques to calm your mind and body. Don't forget to practice them regularly even when you're not stressed!

Sight Sense

- Take a break and explore nature whether it's a local park or a scenic trail. Embrace the vibrant colours of the sky, trees, grass and people around you.
- Collect a series of pictures that relax you and use them as a visual escape whenever you need them.

Hearing Sense

- Enjoy a conversation with someone who has a voice that soothes your soul.
- Listen to a podcast, audiobook or TV show that you find entertaining

Smell Sense

- Spritz on a perfume or cologne that brings you joy.
- Light up a scented candle in your room and let the aroma whisk you away.

Taste Sense

- Treat yourself to a small serving of your favourite snack or comfort food
  like chocolate, ice cream, or chips (but don't go overboard!).
- Sip on a cup of coffee, tea, cocoa or any other beverage that you enjoy (avoid alcohol).

Touch Sense

- Wrap yourself in your favourite cosy blanket and let the soft texture soothe your skin.
- Enjoy a warm shower or bubble bath to relax your muscles.
- If you're feeling daring, try a refreshing cold shower instead!

Radical Acceptance

Radical acceptance is all about embracing our present reality and freeing ourselves from any gloomy emotions that may be weighing us down. Instead of fighting against what is already happening, it's better to accept things for what they are.

Think of an important event in your life that you have a hard time accepting:

What caused the event? Try to stick to facts

What emotions did you feel?

How can you tackle the situation head-on now if it happens again?

Helpful vs unhelpful

When it's time to make a choice, weighing up the good and the bad is a classic move we all use, no matter your age. It's a great way to tackle the trickiest of situations and can help us make better decisions. The key is to face reality head-on and manage any distress that comes your way.

1. Start by describing the problem you're facing.
2. Weigh up the pros and cons of giving in to your urges or taking action during a crisis. You can write these down if it helps.
3. Finally, compare the advantages and disadvantages of each of your possible choices.

By mastering this smart technique, you can make better decisions!

What to do when it feels intense..

1. Take a step back and weigh the pros and cons of your actions.
2. Picture all the good things that can come from the pros.
3. Think about all the bad things that can happen too.
4. Remember the results of past moments when you followed your urges.
5. Make a decision knowing you've reviewed both the pros and cons

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is like a secret handshake between you and the present moment. It's about tuning in to your thoughts, feelings and the world around you without playing the blame game.

The main goals of mindfulness are:

- Raising self-awareness
- Kicking stress to the curb and welcoming tranquillity
- Choosing how to respond to your thoughts and emotions
- Handling negative or unhelpful thoughts
- Growing self-love

Lots of people say mindfulness helps keep their spirits high and their minds sharp. It takes a bit of commitment and may not suit with everyone's routine. Plus, with lots of mindfulness tips floating online, it's easy to get confused.

To make things more straight forward, we've got easier mindfulness exercises on the following pages you can use while waiting.

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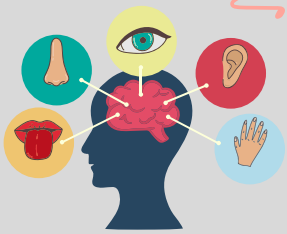
You can **click here** or scan the QR code to learn more about practicing mindfulness.
www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/anxiety/how-to-practice-mindfulness/

Mindfulness cards

Place your hand on your belly. Take 10 deep breaths and notice your hand moving up and down as you breathe.

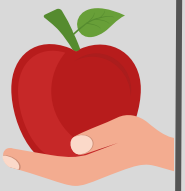


Sit very still and notice one thing that you can see, hear, feel taste and smell.

Close your eyes and spend one minute thinking about the happiest day of your life. Try to remember as much about the day as possible.

Close your eyes and think about how you are feeling. Happy? Sad? Mad? Think about how you know you are feeling that way.

Sit quietly and place a small object in your hand. Notice how heavy the object feels. Think about what it feels like in your hands. Notice one new thing about this object.



Close your eyes and sit quietly. Notice the way your clothes feel on your body. Notice your top, trousers and shoes. Did you notice anything you didn't notice before?

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You can **click here** or scan the QR code to learn more mindfulness activities.
www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/mindfulness-activities/

Self-care

Self-care means making time to look after yourself and your wellbeing, both physically and emotionally. Sometimes self-care can look like brushing your teeth, having a shower, leaving the house or it can be about doing things that make you feel better such as listening to music that makes you feel good, taking a nap or doing a doodle!

Get dressed	Do one thing you've been putting off	Have a bubble bath	Do some yoga	Spend time with family
Do something you enjoy	Listen to music	Eat something you enjoy	Make a list of life goals	Do some exercise
Go to bed at a healthy time	Spend some time outside	Read a book	Meditate	Learn something new
Listen to a podcast	Go for a walk	Take a nap or have a rest	Drink some water	Tidy your room/ space
Treat yourself to something	Make a list of things you're grateful for	Spend time with friends	Put on a facemask	Have a shower

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You can **click here** or scan the QR code to learn more about practicing mindfulness.
www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/anxiety/how-to-practice-mindfulness/

The "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" Grounding Technique

Worrying thoughts taking over? Take a breather and give the "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" mindfulness technique a try! Here's how to ground yourself in the present moment:

- Locate **five** things you can **see** around you. Get specific and pay attention to the tiniest details.
- Tune out the noise in your head and focus on **four sounds** you can hear. Let the sounds of the world around you take centre stage.
- Check-in with your sense of touch and identify **three** things you can **feel**. Think textures, temperatures and sensations.
- Breathe in **two** different scents. Savour the **smells** around you and let them anchor you to the present.
- Finally, focus on your sense of **taste** and identify **one** thing you can taste. Let the flavour bring you back to the here and now.

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You can **click here** or scan the QR code to learn more about this technique.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114

Relaxation techniques

Thought Bubbles! For Anxiety & Worry video.

You can click here or visit the link below to learn more about thought bubbles.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=70j3xyu7OGw&t=192s

Belly Breathing: Mindfulness for Children video.

You can click here or visit the link below to learn more about belly breathing.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiMb2Bw4Ae8

How to cope with anxiety - a relaxation technique video.

You can click here or visit the link below to learn more about thought bubbles.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cXGt2d1RyQ

Self-help for low mood and depression video.

You can click here or visit the link below to learn more about thought bubbles.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKcRUOWYQ9w

Emotional Regulation

Emotion regulation is the ability to manage our emotions. Facts are truths that we can prove and verify through science and research such as grass is green or the sky is blue. Opinions are unique and individual. They're personal thoughts and ideas that can differ from person to person, even when we're looking at the same facts. So, while it's a fact that the sky is blue, some might think it's a lovely day while others might think it's not.

It is very important to separate facts from opinions. If you have a negative thought about yourself or a situation, it may be useful to write the thought down and note if it’s a fact or opinion, just like this:

Your thought	Fact	Opinion
“Everyone hates me”	✗	✓

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You can [click here](www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/self-care/regulating-your-emotions/) or scan the QR code to learn more regulating your emotions.
www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/self-care/regulating-your-emotions/

Thinking traps

Watch out for thinking traps also known as cognitive distortions. These can twist our thoughts into negative patterns, making us jump to the wrong conclusions and bad choices. They're like weeds in our mind making us miss the bigger picture and get tangled up in negativity. Suddenly, we're feeling glum and our view of the world is a bit...blurry. Instead of negative thoughts, try these instead:

"Not everything is black and white. It's important to see the grey in between."

"I shouldn't jump to conclusions. Just because I think it is the case, doesn't mean it is. "

"I won't label myself or others. Just because I failed one exam, that doesn't make me a failure."

"I can't predict the future. No one knows what will happen".

"Bad things happen sometimes. That doesn't mean they'll always happen".

"I won't think 'What if' often. This is just catastrophising the situation".

You're a failure

No one likes you

Behavioural Activation

Behavioural activation is the idea that things you do can have an affect on your mood. Monitoring your activities and the mood it puts you in can help you identify and prioritise activities that help your mood.

Let's get organised with a little activity! Create a list of activities. Then give each item a score on two fronts: how easy it is to do and how much of a reward you get. Remember, it's not all fun and games, such as seeing friends or playing on your xbox, so don't forget to include necessary tasks like making your bed or studying for a test.

Activity	How easy is this to do?	How rewarding is this to do?
Seeing my friends		
Going for a walk		

Break it down

When life throws you a curveball, you need to show off some problem-solving skills! Whether it's a big or small problem, the skills below will help you find a solution.

By focusing on one aspect at a time, you can help find the cause of the problem and how to solve it.
Dividing the problem into more manageable pieces will help you set realistic goals, boost your confidence, give you a sense of control and help stop you from feeling overwhelmed.

This approach will also reduce the stress and anxiety that come with facing a daunting task. So, whatever the problem, take it one step at a time by breaking it down into smaller parts.

Lets break it down!	Example problem	Your problem
Step 1: Figure out what the problem is	Me and Sam had an argument at school	
Step 2: How big is this problem?	Medium	
Step 3: What are the solutions?	• Never talk again • Talk to Sam about how I feel	
Step 4: Chose a solution to try	Talk to Sam about how I feel	
Step 5: Did it work? If not, why not?	It worked. Me and Sam both apologised and we are friends again	

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Interpersonal effectiveness is the art of achieving your goals while maintaining good relationships by having healthy conversations.

For when it feels important to get what you need.

D escribe the facts of the situation

E xpress how you feel

A ssert a specific ask related to the facts and your feelings

R einforce your feelings and why they should listen to you

M indfully ask for what can be given and only one thing at a time (ignore any attacks and repeat yourself if need be.)

A ppear effective and competent

N egotiate alternative solutions

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

For when it feels important to maintain a relationship.

G entle manner without attack or threat

I nterest in the other person

V alidate the other person without judging

E asy manner (why not try and add a little humour?)

For when it feels important to maintain your self-respect

F air to myself and others

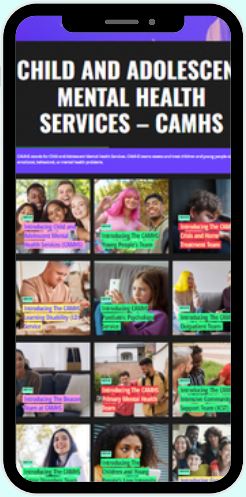
A pologies not needed

S tick to values (not do anything you'll regret later)

T ruthful without excuses or exaggeration

These acronyms are a clever way to remember communication techniques for different chats. Give them a try and see what you think!

Resources created by CAMHS



Did you know? CAMHS has its very own section on the [Health for Teens website](#)! Staff at CAMHS have put together loads of helpful content including:

- What to expect at your first appointment
- Video tours of where you might be seen at CAMHS
- Support with managing your mental health
- Introductions to all the teams at CAMHS

and so much more!

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Check it out now by scanning the QR code or visiting https://bit.ly/CAMHSLeicester

Follow our social media account **@healthforteens_leicester** on Instagram!
We share:
✨ Real advice on sleep, mental health stress, local events and support services and more
✨ Information made by clinicians at CAMHS
✨ Content that's easy to understand & made for teens
Hit that follow button and join the community today! 🚀

Resources created by Leicestershire Partnership Trust

Leicestershire Partnership Trust has a dedicated online space for young people who are receiving care from their services.

It includes a **page for young people recieving care from CAMHS** and a page sharing mental health and wellbeing advice from professionals.

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Check it out now by scanning the QR code or visit:
lptnhs.com/WhileYouWaitCAMHS

We've created a set of self-help guides on things like depression, anxiety and stress. They explain what can cause these feelings and give you practical ideas to help you cope.
All the guides are written by NHS Clinical Psychologists, with help from young people and staff who work in mental health, so the information is trustworthy and easy to understand.

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Check it out now by scanning the QR code or visit:
https://selfhelp.cntw.nhs.uk/organisation/leicestershire-partnership-nhs-trust

Additional support

There are lots of services that CAMHS works closely with. They can give you information, advice, useful links and sometimes even counselling to support your mental health. These can include schools, colleges, social care, school nurses, your GP, social workers and local community groups. Some of these include:

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Tellmi allows an online safe and anonymous space where you can discuss your feelings, seek support and receive counselling when necessary.
www.tellmi.help/what-is-tellmi

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Togetherness offers a range of accessible learning pathways to help everyone understand more about brain development and emotional wellbeing. Please use the access code: CURVE or provide your postcode.
https://togetherness.co.uk/

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Young Minds is a mental health charity for younger people. Their website has guides to common mental health conditions, medication and coping with life. You can also text YM to 85258.
www.youngminds.org.uk

SCAN ME

The Mix has a crisis messenger text service, which provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you're aged 25 or under, and are experiencing any painful emotion or are in crisis, you can text THEMIX to 85258.
www.themix.org.uk

We warmly welcome any comments and suggestions you may have. To share your feedback, speak with a member of our team, fill out our Friends and Family Test or reach out to our patient advice and liaison service (PALS). For more information about PALS, please visit **www.leicspart.nhs.uk/contact/patient-advice- and-liaison-service-pals/.**

Our PALS and complaints team is here to help you with any compliments, questions, comments, or concerns you may have relating to our services. They can also:

- provide confidential advice and support to patients and service users, their families and carers
- listen and respond to any compliments, comments or suggestions and provide information about services and local support groups
- help to resolve concerns on your behalf
- give you information on how you can get involved in helping us to develop our service

To speak with PALS, contact them by:

- calling 0116 295 0830 (Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4:30pm). You can leave a voicemail message at any time, and they will call you back.
- emailing: lpt.pals@nhs.net

If accessing this leaflet online, you can use our accessibility toolbar. The toolbar is especially useful if you have a hidden disability, such as dyslexia (or other reading difficulties), a visual impairment or have English as a second language. If you would like to access this leaflet digitally, please speak to a member of our staff. If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format such as large print, Braille, or audio, please speak to a member of our staff.

Why not follow our social media account?
Search for '**healthforteens_leicester'** on Instagram to stay up to date with our latest content.

Here are some useful resources for young people and their families or carers:

SCAN ME	Information discussed during appointments will be kept confidential (this means we will keep your information within certain limits). Visit **www.leicspart.nhs.uk/privacy-policy/** to learn more about our Trust's privacy policy.
	This space is packed with helpful information on ADHD, mental wellbeing, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). **www.leicspart.nhs.uk/while-you-wait/**
	www.nhs.uk
	Your opinion matters! Your feedback helps us shape support that actually fits the needs of young people. Fill our quick feedback form by scanning the QR code or visiting **https://bit.ly/FFTCAMHS**

Date Implemented: 12.3.2026
Last Review: 15.10.2026
Review Date: 12.3.2029
Leaflet No: CAMHSWYW
Website: www.leicspart.nhs.uk
Email: lpt.feedback@nhs.net