



THE CHAMELEON



The Bedfordshire and Luton CAMHS magazine, created
by service users



Art by Leah

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We have placed a number of butterflies throughout the magazine. Can you spot how many there are? This one is included. Answer is on the last page.

What is it like to be in Participation?



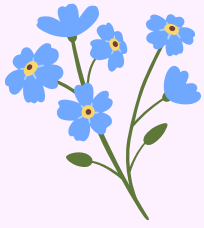
User Participation has helped me gain so much confidence and social skills. I have helped out with several interviews in person, which has gotten me used to social interaction with lots of new people and allowed me to step out of my comfort zone. Helping with interviews gives me a purpose and makes me feel like I am making a difference in the CAMHS service. I have also helped redesign the CAMHS website to make it more accessible and more helpful and informative, to improve the bridge between young people and CAMHS. I would definitely recommend others to get involved with User Participation as there is so much you can choose to be a part of and there is no pressure to do anything you are uncomfortable with. It really helps that everyone is so helpful and welcoming - it's a great community.

~Alyx

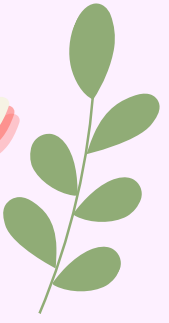
CAMHS Participation has really helped me as a great distraction from my mind and I think it can help others too. You get work experience whilst being supported by really kind and understanding other members. It's helped me get a stress free routine back into my life and it's great to get my brain engaging again. There's something for everyone with multiple projects and activities going on all the time and on interview panels.

~Aaron





What's going on in Participation?



Ongoing Projects

Anti bullying project

We are in the process of creating different resources all about anti-bullying. This includes recording a series of podcasts and creating leaflets for use in schools. If you would like to get involved in any parts of this project please contact Marianne (info on last page)

Focus groups

We regularly hold focus groups, where we discuss specific topics and get your opinions to inform the ongoing work. This can be producing and reviewing resources from different CAMHS teams, getting your feedback of your experiences of different services and lots more. These are usually held online. There is no pressure and you are welcome to communicate in whatever way is most comfortable- use the chat, keep your camera off etc. To get involved, look out for messages in our group chat or emails from us.

If you have any ideas on what projects you'd like to see, contact one of the participation team (details on last page).

Recruitment/ Interview Panels

Young people are involved in all interview panels at CAMHS to ensure the right people are employed. If you would to participate in interview panels let us know so we can schedule recruitment training to prepare you for interview panels.

CAMHS Talk

If you would like to have your voice heard on a podcast and discuss your experience and opinions of different topics, contact us to join our CAMHS Talk podcast. Have a listen to our podcast by searching 'CAMHS Talk' on any podcast platform or scan the below QR code.



People Participation Awards



In August, we attended the Trustwide People Participation Awards at Mile End Pavilion in London. Everyone has worked so hard over the past year and so it was about time we honoured all the amazing work and achievements! The awards was a perfect chance to reflect on the past year and real impact we've made on services.

There were lots of nominations across different categories. Everyone should be so proud of themselves! The CAMHS Participation team are so proud of everyone and so grateful for all your incredible contributions over this past year.

Nominations

Contribution to QI and service improvement

- Zawad Zarif
- Jawad Choudhury

Equality, Equity and inclusion

- Jawad Choudhury
- Zawad Zarif
- Az , Isma & Ocean (Autism Film)
- Ash Dalliday

Trainer of the Year

- Madie Moffatt
- Zoe Potter
- Az Kingsford

Interview Panelist of the Year

- Libbie Claxton

Creative skills & showcasing talents

- Az Kingsford

Young Person of the Year

- Zoe Potter
- Zawad Zarif
- Jawad Choudhury



What have we been up to?



EWS participation intro

Hi I'm Madie, an ex service user. 🙌 A few weeks ago, me and another young person were involved in presenting to new staff at Venue 360 in Luton. The presentation was an introduction to participation, to educate new staff on how participation works and what ways they can include young people's voices in their work. I spoke about the various participation projects I have been involved in and how beneficial the work has been to my recovery. It was amazing to be involved and I really enjoyed presenting slides to the staff and sharing my work & projects.



Participation Meetings Relaunch

We recently launched our in person monthly participation meetings. To celebrate the launch and all the hard work done this year, we did some crafting and ate pizza. We also got to know each other a bit better. Going forward, participation meetings will be a space to give your opinions on projects and resources across CAMHS. It will also be a time to meet up with people you can relate to. Look out for the Participation meetings poster to get more details.



University of Reading Coproduction Training

We went to the University of Reading in April to give a presentation to training child wellbeing practitioners on co-production. I really enjoyed the day. It was nice that we all travelled together and chatted on the way about any nerves we had. When we presented, it boosted my confidence as I felt listened to and everybody wanted to learn! We had a few breaks to recharge and get ready for the next part of the delivery. It was all very relaxed and would love to go again next year. It was nice to deliver about a topic so important as co-production should be in everything we do. ッ



South Asian Peer Support Group

As the child of Bangladeshi Immigrants and someone who was born and raised in Luton, I understand the struggles and stigmas that are associated with South Asians populations and mental health services. However, I recently had the opportunity to participate in a discussion on the unique mental health challenges faced by people from South Asian backgrounds. The peer group, hosted by CAMHS and Discovery College brought together a diverse group of individuals to share their personal stories and perspectives on this important issue and as well propose some methods to tackle the obstacles which come associated with it.

One of the key themes that emerged was the cultural stigma surrounding mental health that is all too common in many South Asian households. We described the pressure to maintain a façade of perfection and to avoid discussing any struggles with mental wellness. One person recounted how their parents refused to acknowledge their depression, urging them to ‘just pray more’ instead of seeking professional help. These ideas stem from an importance of faith within South Asian culture, however it shouldn’t be weaponised to shame a person for struggling, so instead we discussed how faith can be used alongside treatment. A way to explain how mental health can be linked to faith so it’s easier to understand to the South Asian community. One person even shared information, even I didn’t know, of how important religious figures such as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) even struggled with depression and mental health and how faith also reunited him with his identity and mental well being.

A large emphasis on what we discussed was this idea of “reputation”, and this idea is the stem of other themes we’ve seen. Another person spoke about the challenges of navigating the expectations of his traditional South Asian family while also dealing with anxiety. ‘There’s this idea that we have to be these high-achieving, model minority successes,’ they shared. ‘Admitting to any kind of mental health issue is seen as weak or shameful.’ As children of immigrants, we’ve seen the hardships our parents and grandparents faced and fought for, so it’s instilled this idea of stoicism from when we’re young, and this idea of perfection. Not only do we not have to be good at what we do, but also the best. This can be quite damaging to just bottle up our feelings and can cause certain issues in the future and to always strive for perfection can lead to maybe forgetting about a persons own mental health struggles.

The group also explored how gender norms in South Asian cultures can exacerbate mental health stigma, with men often facing even greater pressure to maintain a perfect facade. Masculinity is a topic which has had a lot of discourse over the years especially within the South Asian community. Discussing this with my peers in the group we established the idea of how it means to be a man within the South Asian community, men are seen as the pillar stone of within the commit, they are supposed to provide and protect, an obelisk of forbearance. Things like mental health and wellbeing are seen as silly and unimportant and shouldn't even be within the same sentence as men. With the added pressures of being a minority as well as family, academic and religious, it can take its toll, however we don't see many South Asian males in therapy, even I have to admit I felt quite isolated when I entered CAMHS because of the stigma of being perceived as weak and being different. The group though however allowed me to be introduced to others who were like me, who looked like me, and had an idea of what I felt like, within the therapy space it was one of the only times in which I felt like I was truly understood and I wasn't alone.

Language was also another issue we felt, as there wasn't any term for mental health translated into languages such as Hindi, Urdu or Bengali etc. The closest term we found was "Pargul" which meant crazy, and these negative connotations can lead to people associating mental health with negative ideas. This leads to less people wanting to access mental health resources or even having a conversation about their wellbeing.

Many in the room emphasised the importance of open conversations like this one in chipping away at the stigma. Others shared information about culturally-sensitive mental health resources and advocacy efforts within the South Asian community I believe discussing in an open dialogue, no topic disbarred, it allows more judgment free zone, which a lot of South Asians are afraid of happening to them. By doing this we're allowing people to discuss their feelings and emotions, some who have never even heard about people talking about them before, will be reinforced and that their voices are heard.

Overall, the peer group, although a pilot programme, was an overwhelming success. I was able to meet a range of different people who I wouldn't have encountered before, and allowing me to be exposed to their perspectives and past experiences and having a greater understanding of the struggles from the community as a whole. Mental health Services and South Asian community will always have an underlying strain on their relationship, but groups like these allow people to have an opportunity to be understood and talk when they may not have that before. This programme underscored the vital need for more dialogue, education, and support systems when it comes to mental health in South Asian populations. By sharing our stories and lifting the veil of silence, we can work towards a future where seeking help for psychological struggles is not only accepted, but encouraged.



Top tips to cope in summer

1. Usually I try to keep routine getting up around the same time most days and keeping meal times the same to give me a bit of familiarity (making exceptions if you're super tired or want to have a relaxed day or if going out for a meal with friends/family).

2. Making a summer bucket list of things you want to do! I'd recommend about 10 things, some you can do at home and some that's an activity eg. Bowling, clothes shopping (finance dependant). This may give you something to be excited about and if you don't do them all this year you could carry over to next year.

3. Staying in contact with friends/family over phone or email if you're not able to see them. I've started sending letters to friends as a fun activity and sometimes receive them so you guys can be pen pals and look forward to having a less instant and personal form of communication.

4. With clothing it's something I still find quite difficult; if you don't like having arms/legs exposed, perhaps having some lightweight/thin clothing to wear would be helpful so you don't get overheated.

5. Remember to stay hydrated!



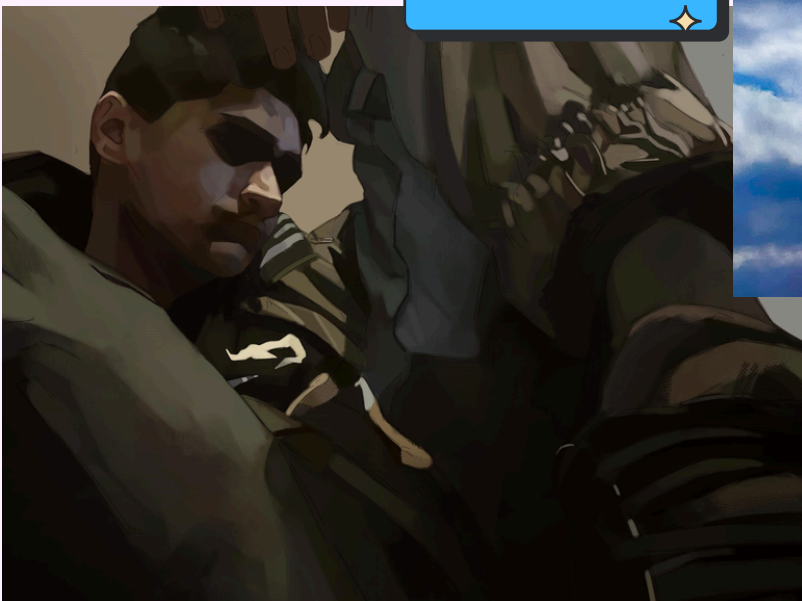
Artwork by Young People



✦
Digital art by
Jawad
✦



✦
Photography
by Matthew
✦



Artwork by Young People

Photography
by Zoe



Pansexual Triple Stryke

Inspired by pride month, Zoe used different pride flags to draw dragons from How to train your dragon.

Aromantic Speed Stinger

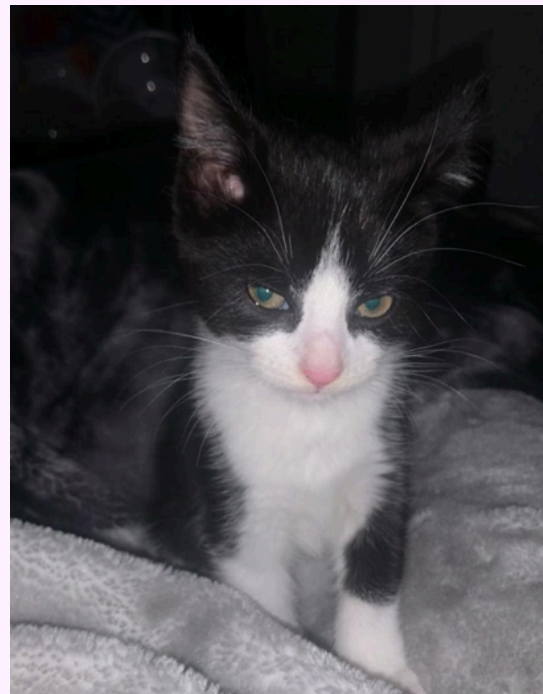
Pets Page



My therapy dog just gave birth to seven very healthy puppies last night! We have 4 girls and 3 boys . She got me through school and is amazing. So we thought we would let her have one litter. We would love her puppies to help people as she truly got me through my hard time and back into society. Her name is Nellie and she is a mini golden doodle.



This is Horlicks. He is a Maltipoo- Maltese and Poodle :)



This is Layla :)

Top recommendations to help mental wellbeing

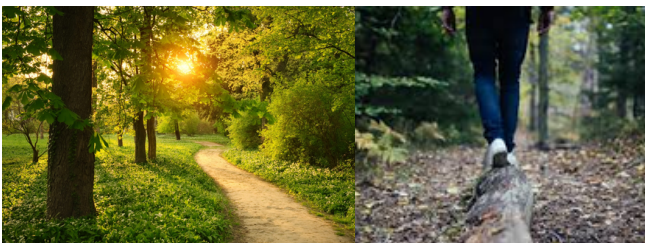
1. [Sensorydirect.com](https://www.sensorydirect.com) - they have so many fidgets and comfort items of many different ranges



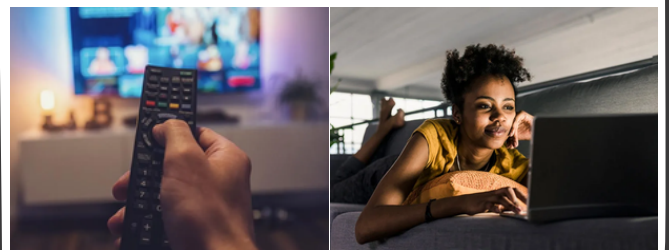
2. Scrap booking- this could be pictures/drawings of things you've done, cut outs of packets of new foods you've tried, or pictures that you liked from magazines etc...



3. Going on mindful walks- I like to do this by going to/ walking places I've been before but trying to notice things I haven't before to see them in a new light.



4. Watching old shows/comfort shows and trying new ones- when I try I new show or movie I like being part way through a comfort one so if I don't like the new one I can flit back to familiarity.



Chameleon Music Playlist


A mix of our favourite songs that we reccomend you check out!



CHANDLER BING


Chandler Bing- Shefu

Progress bar and playback controls (play, pause, skip)



Use Somebody- Kings of Leon

Progress bar and playback controls (play, pause, skip)



NOISETTES
WILD YOUNG HEARTS

Never Forget You- Noisettes

Progress bar and playback controls (play, pause, skip)



Slow It Down- Benson Boone

Progress bar and playback controls (play, pause, skip)



Birds of a feather- Billie Eilish

Progress bar and playback controls (play, pause, skip)



Stargazing- Myles Smith

Progress bar and playback controls (play, pause, skip)



Get to know CAMHS staff

There are so many wonderful people that work in CAMHS. Let's get to know some of them better with questions asked by young people.

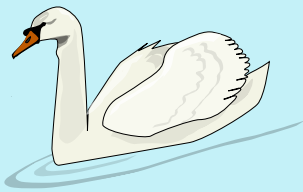
Get to know Abi Monger

Do you have a party trick?

Attempting to demonstrate two yoga poses at the same time!

What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Art Therapy!



What's your favourite bird?

Swan

What's your favourite animal?

Fluffy dogs and any cats!



What's your favourite thing about yourself?

I like that I am sensitive to other's needs as well as my own.

What's your favourite book?

The Body Keeps the Score

Why did you want to work with young people?

I enjoy giving young people the opportunity to express their voice and be heard.

What's your favourite holiday destination?

Spain due to the memories there growing up and visiting regularly.





BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON CAMHS

PEOPLE PARTICIPATION GROUP

★ **What to expect:**

- Decision making
- Service updates
- Event planning
- Meet staff
- Focused work
- Socialising and snack

For Date and Location details, please contact one of the participation team or email elft.blcamhsparticipation@nhs.net

Paid!
£20

elft.blcamhsparticipation@nhs.net

CAMHS Updates



CAMHS Talk

CAMHS Talk is produced by the staff and service users of Bedfordshire and Luton CAMHS. Listen to conversations about CAMHS, other services that support young people with their mental health and things we can do to support ourselves. Our latest episode discusses living with ARFID and Movement and mental health.



Rainbow Bedfordshire

Rainbow Bedfordshire has set up trans inclusive LGBTQ+ swimming sessions. It is a safe space where you won't be judged, where you can enjoy having a swim and meeting people. The details are in the flyer on the right, or you can get in touch with us for more information.

<https://www.rainbowbedfordshire.co.uk/>



The Discovery College

The Discovery College aims towards improving well-being and positive outcomes for all young people in Beds and Luton. The workshops and courses are educational, co-produced in a cultural sensitive way on themes like Healthy Relationships, Life Skills, Creativity, Mental Health and Well-being and Personal Growth. There are will be community workshops, the schools' wellbeing sessions and various projects with other NHS services and third-sector organisations.



Get Involved

CAMHS is changing and developing all the time, and learning from young people and their parents experience is more important than ever. You can have your say in how CAMHS develops, make new friends, take part in our podcast or write articles for future editions of the Chameleon by getting in touch using our participation inbox: elft.blcamhsparticipation@nhs.net or use the details below:



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There were...
13 butterflies!
Did you get it right??