

# In Touch

with



## Lockdown Edition!

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## WHY A NEWSLETTER?

Welcome to the first edition of our CAMHS newsletter! This first edition is all about lockdown. We have all found lockdown difficult to adjust to, as none of us have experienced anything like this in our lifetime! We hope that this newsletter will share some of the lockdown experiences of both staff and young people. We want to use this newsletter to share things that we have been doing during lockdown, and we hope that it inspires someone else to try something new.

Thank you to all those who contributed art, photographs, poetry, recipes and their lockdown experiences. Also, thanks to Oli for his amazing rainbow illustration!

We have seen pictures of rainbows drawn by children and displayed on windows throughout our communities and we thought this image would fit in well with the theme of this newsletter!

# WELCOME FROM OUR MANAGER

Hi I am Maria Sharvin, Acting Childrens Service Manager for Belfast Outpatient CAMHS and I am delighted to welcome you to our first Newsletter.

This has been put together by our service user group Impact CAMHS and our staff teams and the young people who use our services.

Covid-19, as we know, has had a major impact on all of our daily lives and especially on what CAMHS looks like right now. The staff have all been working really hard to find ways to keep offering services to children, young people and families – be it by phone or video appointments. We know how hard the last 3 months have been for everyone and we are pleased that, by working in partnership, we have managed to keep in touch with all the young people who use our service and find ways of keeping working- albeit very differently.

As always, the young people have given us many wonderful ideas and tips on how to embrace this whole new world of digital technology but we know it doesn't replace coming in to see us face to face – and we are working really hard making plans right now for how we get back to this. As always in CAMHS our priority is keeping children and young people safe and we have to keep this to the front of our minds with the current situation as well.

Our service user group Impact CAMHS have been a key part of how we think about what we do and how we improve our services for quite a while now -so it was no surprise to me when they suggested this newsletter as a way of letting everyone know what we are doing and what is working well. I hope you enjoy reading all the wonderful pieces in here and find them useful.

I want to thank all of the CAMHS staff who have worked so hard over the last 3 months by being flexible and responsive to meet young people's needs. I also want to thank all our children, young people, their families and carers for how you have adapted and managed these strange times – it is to your credit that you have done so, so well. We all cannot wait until we are back to seeing you in our buildings again face to face and are working hard on the plans for this and hope to be able to share these with you all soon.



"We all cannot wait until we are back to seeing you in our buildings again..."

# MEET SOME OF THE TEAM...

My Name is Shauneen O'Connor. I am a Senior Social Worker within CAMHS at the Young Peoples Centre. Over the past few years I have been very keen to promote the voice of young people within CAMHS and started the young people's forum where young people have been suggesting ways of improving CAMHS as a service.

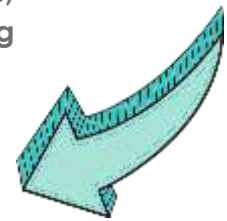
This has been a great journey to be part of over the past 3 years. The group has grown from strength to strength and the young people are a real asset to our service. Young people named the group 'Impact CAMHS' as they wanted to make an impact and improve mental health services for other young people who use our service.

We also want to congratulate Oli Mc Bride on becoming our new youth advisor. We are very excited to be working alongside Oli and IMPACT CAMHS on different projects moving forward. As Oli will mention, the group have been working hard with local musician Cormac Neeson, writing their own songs about mental health and will be producing a CD which they hope other young people will benefit from. As a group we have also started a collaboration with Queens University Belfast to evaluate our group and also to explore opportunities of future research projects (we are very excited!!)

We will be inviting other young people to join our group in the future, as young people have shared that alongside attending individual appointments in CAMHS, they learn so much from their peers and find it helpful to hear about other young people's experiences. We will keep you updated moving forward!



*This is our IMPACT CAMHS logo, designed by the group!*



Hi, I'm Sarah, one of the therapists on the team at YPC. I'm also from a Social Work background. I've worked in CAMHS for a few years now, and it has been really great being a member of the IMPACT CAMHS group alongside young people who attend CAMHS. The young people have had so much fun and achieved so much, and we have learnt so much from them.

As well as the current CD project we have also held an event at Stormont for World Mental Health Day, decorated therapy rooms, performed original pieces of music about mental health and recovery to professionals, academics and members of the public.

At CAMHS we really do believe that one-to-one therapy should be only part of your experience in CAMHS- and that building relationships with other young people in a supportive environment to explore your skills and interests and to improve mental health services is so important. In our experience young people are full of great ideas and know what is/ is not helpful to them, it really helps us to make improvements.

I hope you enjoy reading this - hopefully you will send something in for the next edition!



# MEET OUR NEW YOUTH ADVISOR!!

Hey! I'm Oli, and I'm an artist, musician and youth advisor in CAMHS.

I attended CAMHS for 4 years, and for the past year or so I've been doing work with the IMPACT CAMHS group, creating art and music to spread a message of hope and recovery, and raise awareness for mental health in young people.

Right now we're working on making music for a CD to promote an understanding of mental health, so a lot of my time in lockdown has been spent writing and recording guitar parts, which has definitely been keeping me occupied.

Aside from playing guitar, I've been keeping busy writing comics and reading horror stories. I've always found that creativity is a great outlet for my feelings, and with everything as weird as it is right now, it's more important than ever.



If you want to send something in for our next newsletter, let your therapist know, or speak to Shauneen or Sarah!

**P.S...**  
Our Newsletter was named "In Touch" by Oli's Mum! In touch can mean keeping in touch with all that is going on at CAMHS, but also being in touch with your feelings and mental health!

# CLOSE TO NATURE!

During lockdown, it has been difficult for us to go outside to lovely parks and nature walks. Some young people have been spending time in their own gardens instead, enjoying being close to nature.

Gardening has many benefits for mental health and research shows that it helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

One of the young people at CAMHS has spent time during lockdown doing some gardening. Check out these photos and what they said about how this project has helped...



“Out of all the horrible things Covid has caused, I’m glad something good has come from it; the opportunity to not only bring my garden back to life but- myself as well.

This isn’t just my garden, it is my safe place”.



# AMAZING ART!

Some young people like to use art as a way of expressing their feelings and emotions. Art can be really powerful and can sometimes say a lot more than words can.

Check out some art pieces sent in by a young person. So talented!!







# LOCKDOWN THROUGH A LENS

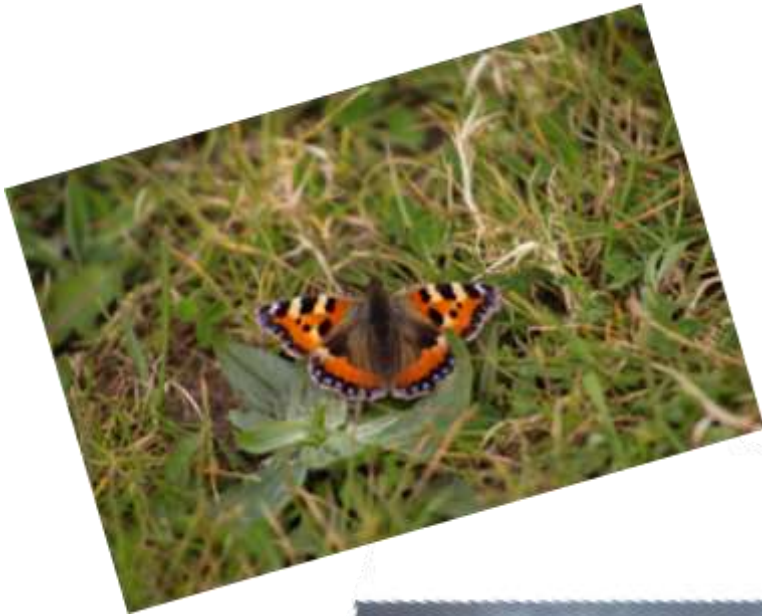
As well as art, photography can be another way to express yourself. A photograph might capture your mood or feelings in a way that words might not. Research has shown that photography helps to bring focus to positive life experiences and offers you new perspectives on things.

This young person has sent in some photographs they have taken over lockdown and for them, these represent *"hope during lockdown"*.



hope





# 'JUST RIGHT STATE' GROUP

Just Right State (JRS) Group is a group for young people and parents/carers, which focuses on helping families develop sensory strategies to support emotional wellbeing.

The idea is that when we are either too annoyed, angry, even excited we can be overstimulated and find it hard to focus, and also when we are too low, flat or lacking in energy we struggle to do what we need to do. To get the best for each of us, and our children, there is a state in-between called the "Just Right State". This means we can concentrate, focus on what we need to do, have fun and generally feel better.



There are lots of practical strategies that help us achieve that Just Right State, using physical movements, exercise and foods. We also introduce a number of characters from 'The Scared Gang' to help us understand our emotional survival states and reactions.

Normally we run the group in the Child and Family Clinic, however that is not possible due to Covid presently so we have moved it online for parents.

Some of our top tips are...

*Build physical movement into the day. If your child has a lot of energy and needs to move, simple activities such as the trampoline or using a chin up bar can help.*

*Foods also help us - think about the things that bring you comfort when you are feeling sad or low, having a hot chocolate, or a 'sucky' sweet. When you are feeling angry or agitated crunchy and chewy foods are good - crunchy raw carrots, cereal bars, and chewing gum especially bubble gum are firm favourites.*



# TASTY RECIPES!!

Have you done any baking during lockdown?

Did you know that baking and cooking can have benefits for your mental health?

The process of baking can help with mindfulness, distract negative thinking, encourage creativity and a sense of calmness which is very important for our wellbeing.

Why not try out some recipes that have been sent in to the newsletter? What do you prefer, sweet or savoury???

## Cookies

Makes roughly 12 yummy cookies, depending on how big you make them!



### *Ingredients:*

125g butter, softened  
100g light brown soft sugar  
125g caster sugar  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
225g self-raising flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
200g chocolate chips or two big handfuls of your chosen ingredient (i.e. Rolo/ Smarties/ Sultanas)

### *Method:*

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C
2. Cream butter and sugars together. Once creamed, combine in the egg and vanilla.
3. Sift in the flour and salt, then the chocolate chips.
4. Roll into walnut size balls
5. Place on ungreased baking paper. Leave in the oven for around 7 minutes for the cookies to be doughy, or 10 minutes if you prefer them a bit crunchier!
6. Take out of the oven and leave to harden for a minute before transferring onto a wire cooling rack.

**Yummy!**

# Chicken Satay

Serves 4 people.

## Ingredients:

**4 Chicken fillets**  
**Onions**  
**Peppers**  
**Mushrooms**  
**1/2 teaspoon Cayenne Pepper**  
**1 teaspoon Garam Masala**  
**1 teaspoon Turmeric**  
**1 teaspoon Cumin**  
**1 teaspoon Garlic**  
**1 can Coconut Milk**  
**3 large tablespoons Peanut Butter**  
**1 tablespoon Fish Sauce**  
**1 tablespoon Oyster Sauce**  
**2 tablespoons Soy Sauce**  
**Powdered sweetener**  
**Rice or Noodles**



## Method:

1. Marinate chicken in the spices and sauces for 30 mins in a wok or large frying pan
2. Stir Fry Chicken and veg (add whatever veg you want or have)
3. Add coconut milk and peanut butter (add more if required)
4. Taste and add sweetener if required
5. Serve with rice or noodles

*Always remember food hygiene and safety when cooking!*

*Check for allergies if sharing your food with others.*

*Be careful when handling hot cookie trays and wok/pan.*

*Always wash your hands before and after cooking.*

*enjoy!*

# PANDEMIC POETRY

During lockdown, some people's creative minds have been opened and they have written poems about their thoughts and experiences.

Check out two poems submitted to the newsletter, that captures the authors take on lockdown.



Lockdown is a burden an  
“anchor around one’s neck”

What happened to our once happy nation,  
God bless all those unlucky patients.  
For many this time will be spent fixating on  
negative behaviours please don't feel no  
shame there.

This forced exposure is happening from  
North Dakota to Barcelona, we must stay  
united against Corona.  
This situation is wrong please stay strong.

*(Anonymous)*



**Covid-19**

**Some people asking  
what it means...**

**Social distancing and queues,  
Spending time without you**

**Fear the enemy comes to my door,  
But community comes to the fore.  
Peace and harmony shining through,  
Together, apart will see us through.**

**Division before the storm  
But we come out arm in arm.  
In history we were divided,  
But today we stand united.**

**The enemy no-one can see,  
Makes us want to get up and flee.  
Joining forces and taking a stand,  
We can unite our dear land.**

**We all clap for our carers,  
Keyworkers too...  
All children drawing rainbows  
We are all thinking of you.**

*(Shauneen O'Connor)*



# KATE'S LOCKDOWN TIPS

Hi! I am Dr. Kate Latimer. For those of you who don't know me, I am one of the consultants at the YPC. I trained in Scotland and moved back home to Belfast to work in the YPC in 2012. I love horses, rugby and gardening.

I am currently surviving lockdown at home with my husband and two kids.



My tips for coping during lockdown!

1

It is good to day dream about all the things you want to do once lockdown is over. Hold on to the hope that things will get better and think of things you are really going to enjoy once you are able.

→ dream →

Take control now of the things you are allowed to do. Some things are enjoyable, like even though I can't ride right now, I am allowed to go see my horse to feed and look after her. I am enjoying getting to bond with her a bit more instead of always rushing to ride after work. Some things are less enjoyable. I know I feel better when I exercise but it can be really hard to motivate myself. If I really can't face Joe Wicks, I often look up yoga videos and do them instead as it feels less exhausting but does help me feel energised.

2



3

Managing how much I learn about the situation can be very hard. As a doctor I like to be informed about what is happening, but I try to be aware when it is becoming overwhelming and when I need to turn the news off.



Switch off!

Asking for help is one of my weaknesses, but I know I have good friends and family and it is ok to ring them and say I need to talk or I need to be distracted or mostly that I need to moan about something!

4



Connect!

This final tip is sort of the same as above, but it is so important I have put it twice! When someone offers me help, I need to take it and not say I am ok because I don't want to worry them or burden others. I have to say to myself if you want to help others then you have to let people help you.

5

Be kind to yourself!



# PETS AT HOME!

To all you animal lovers out there, we think you will enjoy this section of the newsletter!

Animals can be great companions for us, but also can help reduce anxiety and improve our mental health. Whether this is taking your dog for a walk, enjoying cuddles with your dog on the sofa or playing with your kitten or cat at home.

Although lockdown has been a very strange time for us all, these furry friends and animals have definitely helped keep their owners company. Check out these photographs sent in to the newsletter by some pet owners within CAMHS.

*"Marley is 8 weeks old, she is playful and crazy at times. Marley has helped my mental health, she has made me feel like I'm not alone and having something to look after like a priority gives you a meaning it makes you feel wanted. She has made these past few days not so boring because I always have something to do if I'm not out."*

*Meet Marley, a kitten adopted during lockdown.*



This is Bella. She looks like she is enjoying a weesnooze!!

love →



Look at this wee pup! Cuteness overload!!!



Meet Eve at the beginning of lockdown on the left and now near the end of lockdown on the right. She has grown into a big girl and enjoys loads of cuddles and headbutts, which she does to show affection.



“Eve has been great company during lockdown and rules the house now!”



Meet Patch, a lockdown arrival. As you can see from the pictures, he looks very settled in his new home!



“Patch is 3 months old. He’s very hyperactive, playful and always hungry is the best way to describe him. Patch has helped me during lockdown as he’s like a support system. Having a dog who’s so innocent and cute is reassuring when I’m not feeling myself or when I’m in a bad way”.

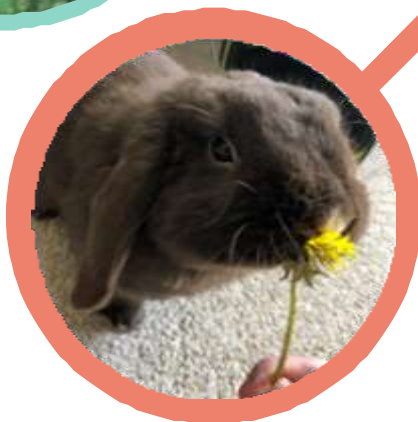
love

This is Jace! He has played an important role in supporting this young person's mental health.



"I've had Jace for just a year and he's little over a year old. He's really important when it comes to my mental health. If I'm ever experiencing high anxiety, like being unable to breathe, he barks until someone can help me. Even then, he'll stay by my side until I am feeling better. It's a real cliché to say he's my best friend, but it's true. Taking him on walks, petting him, teaching him new things - they all help me in many ways."

This young person has several pets at home! Looks like they are very happy and loved.



“The pets all have their own routines that they need to stick with in order to feel safe. I also like routine. Lockdown has obviously changed my routine a lot. I’m trying my best to keep the pets happy and safe which is occupying my time therefore I’m not thinking about quarantine”.

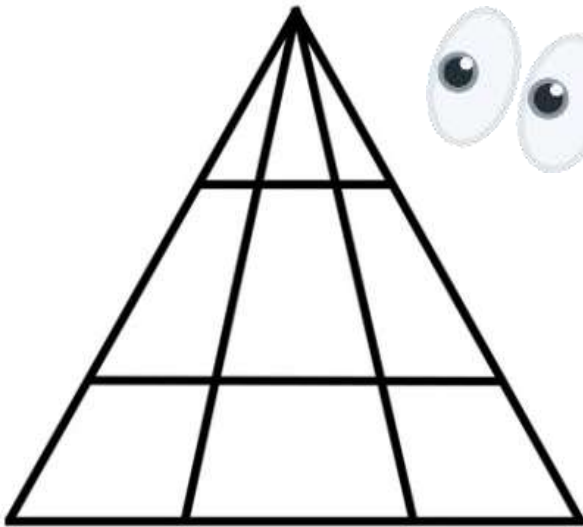
# Time Out!

Here are some brain teasers and puzzles for you to try! Doing activities like these are a good distraction from negative thoughts and anxiety, as our focus is on the task we are doing.

Give them a go!

Say the colour of each word!(don't read the word)  
How fast can you say it?

black white yellow green red blue  
yellow red black green white red  
white green red black yellow green  
black white yellow green red blue  
white green red black yellow green  
yellow red black green white red  
white green red black yellow green



How many triangles do you see?



Jimmy's mother had four children. She named the first Monday. She named the second Tuesday, and she named the third Wednesday. What is the name of the fourth child?



# AND FINALLY...

We asked young people to sum up lockdown for them in one word. The word cloud below shows their thoughts and feelings. Many people have felt the same way, so always remember that you are not alone. The word cloud is in the shape of a house, representing the thoughts and feelings people have had, while we have all been at home during lockdown.

Although lockdown is now easing and we are getting back to some normality, we will never forget our lockdown experiences.

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the CAMHS newsletter and would encourage you to contribute to the next one!



**PUZZLE ANSWERS:** 18 triangles are in the image. The fourth child is called Jimmy, because Jimmy's mother had four children!