

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 15

6 February 2026

Question No. 829

MR RATTENBURY MLA: To ask the Minister for Mental Health

- 1) How many referrals in total, including self/family-referrals, were received by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for children and young people living on the northside of Canberra in 2024-2025.
- 2) How many referrals in total, including self/family-referrals, were received by CAMHS for children and young people living on the southside of Canberra in 2024-2025.
- 3) What is the waiting time between the initial contact/referral to CAMHS and the first Partnership appointment for children and young people who are deemed eligible for CAMHS.
- 4) How does the waiting time referred to in part (3) vary between the North and South Community Teams.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Total referrals received by CAMHS in 2024-25	
1) Children and young people living on the northside of Canberra	1,456
2) Children and young people living on the southside of Canberra	1,177
Total	2,633*

**This figure includes all referrals to CAMHS services, which can include the duplication of young people who are referred to multiple CAMHS services. This figure also reflects referrals to those CAMHS services that can be provided to consumers over the age of 18 (such as the Eating Disorders Program).*

- 3) Under the Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA), CAMHS aim to make contact within 48-hours of receiving a referral.

Following the initial referral, if a Choice appointment is indicated, it will be provided within a week. For urgent requests, a Choice appointment may be provided within one business day. A Choice appointment is the first face to face appointment with CAMHS and is a collaborative session between a young person, a supportive adult who attends with them, and a CAMHS clinician to understand a young person's current needs. The purpose of a Choice appointment is to identify the most

appropriate supports to meet their needs. This may be through referral to a more suitable service in the community, or through a Partnership with CAMHS.

The child or young person will be referred to the Active Hold service with MindMap while they are waiting for their first Partnership appointment.

Further, young people who are unable to be referred to MindMap or require additional support, will receive ongoing contact through CAMHS whilst awaiting their first Partnership appointment.

- 4) Canberra Health Services is unable to report on any variance in wait times between the North and South Community Teams. However, as of 19 February 2026, there was similar demand for children and young people awaiting their partnership appointment with the North and South teams.

As part of a comprehensive review of CAMHS currently underway, consumer journeys and referral pathways are being mapped to help identify barriers to access, engagement and continuity of care as children and young people, along with their families, move through the service continuum. Any findings from the CAMHS review will help inform future service planning and reform and help to support the ACT Governments Commitment to reduce waiting times for CAMHS more broadly.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



**Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Mental Health**

Date: 15 | 3 | 26

This response required 2 hrs 55 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$359.71.