

BASW Social Work in Health (SWiH) Thematic Group



ROLE OUTLINE FOR A PRIMARY MENTAL HEALTH WORKER in CHILD and ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Who we are:

Social workers working as Primary Mental Health Workers (PMHWs) in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are employed by NHS Trusts within the Early Help Teams. We work within multi-disciplinary teams, alongside nurses, psychiatrists, and other health professionals, ensuring holistic care for those navigating mental health challenges. Our role bridges social care and mental health, focusing on both early identification and ongoing support for young people and their families.

What we do:

PMHWs conduct detailed assessments to understand the mental, emotional, and social needs of children and young people. A vital part of our role involves managing waiting lists for those awaiting assessments, ensuring that risk levels are monitored, and intervention is provided when necessary. In addition to assessments, we handle duty work, responding to daily queries from young people, families, and professionals, ensuring immediate support is available. We deliver a variety of workshops for parents and children some of which bring both together, for example trauma workshops equipping parents with the knowledge to understand how trauma affects their children and what they can do to support them. We facilitate school-based forums to promote joint working between education and health professionals, enabling early identification and support for mental health issues within schools. Safeguarding remains a central focus, and we work closely with other agencies to ensure the safety of vulnerable children.

How we work:

We adopt a strengths-based, person-centred approach, placing the young person and their family at the heart of our work. Our practice emphasizes the strengths and resilience of each child, and we collaborate with a wide network of professionals, including school staff and healthcare teams. By building strong relationships with families, we ensure their voices are central in decision-making and that they feel supported throughout their child's mental health journey.

What we know:

This role is open to people with a core qualification in Social Work, Nursing and occupational health. PMHWs operate within the legal frameworks of the Children Act 1989 and the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007), ensuring the protection and welfare of children and young people. The SEND Code of Practice also guides our work with those who have additional needs. Our role requires specialist knowledge in child development, trauma, and mental health interventions. We are trained in risk management and escalation processes, ensuring that young people receive timely and appropriate care when their needs change.