



Child and Adolescent Creative Therapy Service



Information for Parents or Guardians

Thank you for your interest in our Child and Adolescent Creative Therapy Service (CACTus). We are looking forward to welcoming your child/adolescent into our therapy space very soon.

We would like you to know that there is no expectation for children or adolescents to have any previous skills or experience in drama, art or music. The aim of creative therapies is not about learning to paint, to act or to play an instrument. The emphasis is on gently exploring the use of the creative medium in order to support your child/adolescent to deal with the difficulties or challenges that they may be experiencing in relation to their mental health or other challenges they are facing.

We want your child/adolescent to have the best possibility of benefitting from therapy, therefore we ask that you consider the following in advance of engaging:

Is now a good time for your child/adolescent to start therapy? i.e.:

- Are you in a position that your child/adolescent may be *unable to commit* to weekly sessions, potentially over a period of time?
- Are you currently moving between accommodation?
- Is your child/adolescent currently engaged in other counselling or therapeutic groupwork?

If so, you might decide to wait until things have settled somewhat.

This leaflet explains some points to note before attending the creative therapy service:

When we have received your referral and consent forms, this is what will happen next:

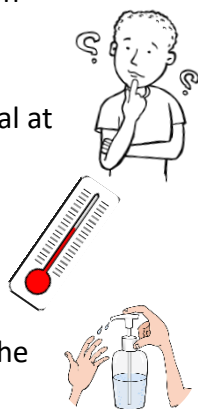
- We will contact you and the person who has referred your child/adolescent to arrange an assessment session as soon as we have an available slot.
- During the assessment session we will talk to you and your child/adolescent about the creative therapy service, how it works and what it involves. We will invite your child/adolescent to talk about the specific challenges that they would like to work on and what they hope to gain from the therapy. We may also invite your child/adolescent to carry out a simple creative task. At this point, together we will decide if creative therapy might be of benefit to your child/adolescent.



- If creative therapy is agreed your child/adolescent will be offered up to six sessions initially. At the end of these sessions, together we will review how things are going – i.e.: What worked well? What didn't work so well? Your child/adolescent will also be asked to complete the service evaluation forms. These help the therapist to assess progress and inform potential next steps for your child/adolescent.

The Therapy Sessions:

- Please note that the First Fortnight Creative Therapy Service is not a drop-in service. Therefore, sessions will be **strictly** by appointment.
- Your child's/adolescent's sessions will take place weekly usually for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Sessions will be at the same time each week. Health and safety is a priority. In the event of Government restrictions being re-introduced in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, these sessions may need to transfer to Zoom or phone contact. Should the need arise, your child's/adolescent's therapist will discuss this in terms of what works best for your child/adolescent.
- Where possible, we will try to ensure that your child/adolescent engages with the same therapist for the duration of your therapy sessions. You are encouraged to set a weekly reminder of your child's/adolescent's appointment day and time. The creative therapist will send a reminder by text at least 24 hours before the session.
- If for any reason your child/adolescent is unable to attend their appointment **it is vital that you contact us to let us know a minimum of 24 hours before the session time.**
- In cases where your child/adolescent may miss two sessions in a row, the next session will focus on reviewing the therapy provided with a view to considering if your child/adolescent is benefiting from the therapy, if now is a good time for your child/adolescent to be engaging and if further appointments are considered beneficial at this time.



With current Covid-19 restrictions in place:

- All children/adolescent's, parents/guardians and therapists are required to keep to the health and safety requirements in line with government regulations.
- Before you bring your child/adolescent to the therapy room we will check their temperature and ask you to sign in upon arrival at Berkeley Street. We will also be asking your child/adolescent to use hand sanitiser and to wear a mask, both of which we will provide. If your child/adolescent has allergies to hand sanitisers you will need to provide an appropriate alternative.
- Also due to Covid-19 restrictions, contact may be by phone or online only. We will discuss with you what might work best for your child /adolescent if this situation arises.



We look forward to meeting you soon.

The Creative Therapy Team