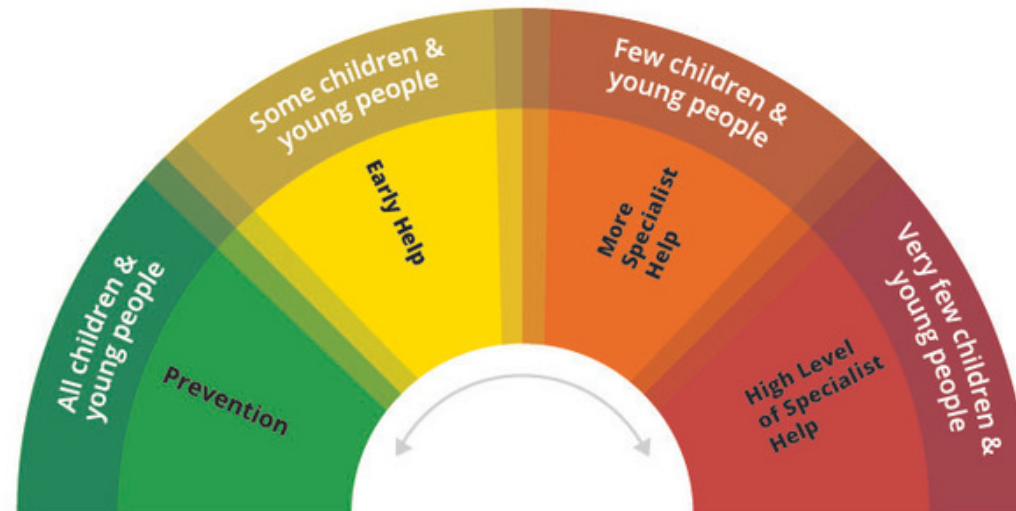


# Liverpool's Eating Disorder Support for Young People Aged 11-16

In Liverpool, mental health support for children and young people aged 0-25 and their families is delivered as a collaborative approach. A partnership of NHS providers and 3rd sector organisations work together to deliver services across *different levels of need*, from prevention - being mentally healthy - to high levels of specialist help.



## **PREVENTION: Looking after our mental health**

### **What does this mean?**

It's about promoting mental health, self-care and building resilience. Our Whole School Approach promotes positive mental health and wellbeing in education, while training is available for professionals and parents/carers to promote resilience and equip them to identify the signs that a young person may be starting to struggle with their body image or eating.

## **EARLY HELP: Getting Advice and Help**

### **What does this mean?**

If a young person struggles with their feelings around food, the Liverpool mental health support partners are here to help them and offer advice. They can also tell them about the support available and share information on getting the support they need, whether online or face-to-face.

## **MORE SPECIALIST HELP: Getting Additional Help**

### **What does this mean?**

If a young person is experiencing moderate or severe mental health and emotional difficulties in relation to body image or eating, which are having a significant impact on their daily psychological/social and educational functioning, specialist services are here to support them.

## **HIGH LEVEL OF SPECIALIST SUPPORT: Risk & Crisis Support**

### **What does this mean?**

Support, advice and guidance to young people who need specialist eating disorder support, including crisis care.



**If a young person is displaying physical signs such as fainting or vomiting, seek immediate medical help. You should either:**

- **Call the Alder Hey Crisis Care Line: 0800 145 6570; or**
- **Visit A&E at Alder Hey**

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## What's happening and what to look out for at each level of need

### **PREVENTION:**

**When you have a healthy relationship with food and a positive self-body image, you will generally:**

- Feel comfortable and happy with the way you look.
- Be happy in your own body.
- Have positive self-confidence.
- Have general good mental health: You can get to sleep okay and do things in life that make you feel happy. You have hobbies and are interested in playing games, sports, music and reading.
- Have relationships with friends and family that you enjoy.
- Feel you can learn at school.
- Use digital and social media positively, not actively searching for negative or harmful content.

*Sometimes, young people develop fussy eating habits or are less comfortable eating in social situations—this can be normal behaviour for some young people.*



# What's happening and what to look out for at each level of need

## EARLY HELP:

If you are starting to struggle with your eating and your body image, or you're worried about somebody else who is, you or they might display or see a combination of the following over a prolonged period of time:

- Show signs of changes in conversations about how you feel about your body.
- Adopt changes in your eating habits.
- Start cutting whole food groups out of your diet.
- Start going to the toilet straight after a meal.
- Have a distorted perception of your body shape and weight.
- Struggle to accept there is a problem - you're aware of an inner voice that challenges your views on eating and exercise.
- Display behaviours such as mood swings, secrecy, restlessness, irritability, and hyperactivity.
- Have difficulty sleeping.
- Want to wear baggy clothes.
- Skip some meals and say you've eaten or will eat later.
- Hide food occasionally.
- Purge after eating.
- Do lots of excessive exercise.
- Show signs of consuming online/social media content that encourages or reinforces negative body image & eating habits. You may follow influencers who endorse these negative messages (thinspiration).
- Compare yourself negatively to friends.
- Show signs of social withdrawal and isolation - not wanting to play with friends.
- Display changes in food habits, such as eating:
  - when not hungry
  - rapidly
  - slowly
  - excessively.
- Show signs of Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder, more commonly known as **ARFID**, such as:
  - Lack of hunger
  - Fussy eating - they will only eat specific shapes/textures/colours
  - Not motivated by food
  - Not wanting different foods to touch on the plate
  - Focus on a particular food or food type for every meal
  - Not being able to tolerate being at the table due to smells, noise, the social aspects or the fast-paced or busy environment
  - Getting teary at mealtimes which is out of character for you. You may feel you have to pressure your child to eat.

**If you are concerned about ARFID, you may be worried about yourself or someone else in a number of ways, such as not growing. Some may look unwell, small, or thin. The young person may also be very tired due to a lack of iron.**

### Parents/carers may see:

- Large amounts of food disappearing from the cupboard.
- Lunchboxes coming back full/no lunch being bought on school cards.



# What's happening and what to look out for at each level of need

## MORE SPECIALIST HELP:

If you're struggling with your eating and body image, or you're worried about somebody else who is, you or they might:

- Experience substantial weight loss and a drop in clothes size.
- Persistently skip meals.
- Regularly vomit after meals.
- Exercise to the point where you can't stop.
- Struggle to eat around others, eat large amounts, and feel you cannot stop.
- Take laxatives or other supplements that may aid weight loss.
- Have social withdrawal - not want to go out/mix with friends.
- Have a severely distorted perception of your body shape and weight.
- Be unable to accept that there is a problem, and be aware of an inner voice that challenges your views on eating and exercise.
- Have low mood.
- Organise your life around bingeing episodes.
- Excessively talk about eating habits and body image in a negative way, which may also be reflected in your behaviour in terms of your choice of foods and eating habits.
- Often eat until uncomfortably full.
- Experience or display physical signs:
  - Dehydration
  - Constipation
  - Abdominal pains
  - Dizzy spells, feel faint or fainting
  - Poor blood circulation may make you feel cold
  - Dry skin and damage to teeth
  - Swollen salivary glands and smelly breath
  - Calluses can form on the backs of your hands if fingers are used to induce vomiting
  - Delayed puberty can also be a sign.
  - Lethargy
  - Low blood pressure
  - Bloating stomach

## HIGH LEVEL OF SPECIALIST SUPPORT:

If you or a young person you know is at a crisis point in relation to eating, you or they might:

- Experience persistent fainting.
- Eat very little each day over a consecutive number of days
- Vomit a few times each day after every meal - for a consecutive number of days.
- Binge eat and gain weight consistently.



# What could help?

## PREVENTION:

### Building resilience

Resilience is important for children's mental health. Having resilience enables people to manage stress, which is a natural response to difficulties in life. Stress is a risk factor for mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

[Resilience Framework](#)

### Funded Training

[Liverpool Training](#)

Educate and empowers professionals, parents and carers to improve the knowledge and understanding of mental health among children.

### Self-care

On the [website](#) there's Information and support to look after children's mental health.

### Open conversations

Talking to young people about eating and body image to encourage healthy habits, positive self-esteem and resilience against societal pressures.

### Awareness & education

PHSE and citizenship conversations promoting positive body image and the importance of staying healthy.

## EARLY HELP:

### Speak to someone

The [YPAS Walk-in Support Hubs](#) offer drop-in and support groups that offer information, advice, guidance, and social prescribing, including parent and family support.

**Visit your GP**, they can introduce you to the right service for your child's needs.

In school, talk to:

- The school Mental Health Lead, Pastoral Team or a member of staff that the young person feels comfortable with. School-based Education Mental Health Teams offer a range of support around emerging fears, worries and self-esteem.
- A school nurse.

### The Eating Disorder Young People Service (EDYS) at Alder Hey

[This page](#) provides information about EDYS and some useful videos:

- What is an eating disorder?
- How best to help if you are worried someone you know may have an eating disorder.
- Therapeutic approaches are used in the EDYS Team.

### ADDvanced Solutions Community Network

supports and empowers the families of neurodiverse children and young people who may also have sensory processing and eating difficulties or associated mental health needs pre, during and post-diagnosis - or no diagnosis. This includes learning opportunities, information advice and guidance.

[Support for families in Liverpool.](#)

### Online

The Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) [Eating Disorders Pathway](#) animation explains the journey a young person experiences when receiving CAMHS support.

There is information, advice and support available on the [BEAT Website](#)

[Kooth](#) provides anonymous and personalised digital mental health support, including live chat sessions, forums, magazines and activities. Qualified professionals can support you if you have any concerns about body image, food, eating and exercise.



# What could help?

## MORE SPECIALIST HELP:

### Speak to someone

**Eating Disorders Support Team (EDYS)** at Alder Hey provides treatment for young people with an eating disorder.

To access EDYS, you can make a [referral online](#).

In school, talk to:

- The school Mental Health Lead, Pastoral Team or a member of staff that the young person feels comfortable with.
- Education Mental Health Teams can provide consultation support to school staff.
- A school nurse.

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## HIGH LEVEL OF SPECIALIST SUPPORT:

### Speak to someone

**Eating Disorders Support Team (EDYS)** at Alder Hey provides treatment for young people with an eating disorder.

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### Crisis Care

**Alder Hey 24/7** Crisis Care Line: 0808 196 3550  
The Crisis Care Team provide support for young people who are experiencing mental health crisis.

**The YPAS Walk-In Support Hubs** provide a safe space for young people to come to. Trained professional staff will listen and support them through difficult times.

### CHEDS

Cheshire and Merseyside Adolescent Eating Disorder Service (CHEDS) is a specialist regional service team that Alder Hey EDYS service can refer to if the young person (aged 13-18) needs more support than EDYS can offer or might need a stay in a mental health hospital. CHEDS will also meet with EDYS to help to think about a young person to give advice or guidance if needed.

