

## Response to a Scrutiny Report

### Summary of Report details:

**Title of Scrutiny Report:** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**Lead Member of the Task Group:** Councillor Steve Mackay

**Response required from:** County Council Cabinet Members  
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board

**Date of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board approval:** 27 February 2023

**Date of Cabinet:** 30 March 2023

### Purpose of the Scrutiny Task Group

To investigate access to and the availability of appropriate mental health services for children and adolescents.

### Any general comments on the Report:

The breadth of the engagement and review of the data should be commended although it should be noted that the number of people involved in this consultation were small.

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust support the need for children and young people in Worcestershire to develop an understanding of their own emotional wellbeing and response strategies when they experience mental distress. This approach should involve the children and young people themselves, their parent carers, their local communities and schools, alongside the voluntary and community sector (VCS), as well as statutory health and social care partners.

The report recognised the confusion that can arise from the use of CAMHS as a generic term, rather than it referencing a specific health service. In responding to the recommendations of the Task Group, this differentiation has been used to be clear on the role of partners in meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people.

### Understanding the range of support available

**Recommendation 1:** The Task Group recommends that all service providers work together to create a clear 'road map' of all services to assist navigation through the system, possibly via the NHS CAMHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire website, including the development of a central online resource to allow parents and non-specialist professionals to clearly identify all available mental health services.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full

2. Accept recommendation in part\*

**3. Decline recommendation\***

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

The report reflected the current plethora of information available for those wishing to access support for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health needs.

Whilst the NHS CAMHS website provides information about a number of clinical services, learning from other local work highlights that any central on-line resource would need to be broader but include the specialist health provision to enable early intervention when needs arise.

Service providers will need to work together to ensure this broad offer is clear, easy to navigate including agreement on where best to “host” a central online resource. This could build on the system wide Now We’re Talking approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing support services for adults.

**Bringing services together under one name**

**Recommendation 2:** The Task Group recommends that all services to support children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing in Worcestershire should be badged under a common name. This may be Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or an alternative name, as appropriate.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full

2. Accept recommendation in part\*

3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

**Recommendation accepted in part**

The development of the roadmap (Recommendation 1) will enable partners to understand the breadth of provision to support the wellbeing and mental health of our children and young people in Worcestershire. Any change of name should capture this breadth of provision and will need careful consideration by partners and our children and young people.

It would be helpful to move away from the term specialist CAMHS as children, young people, parent carers and referrers appear to view access to specialist provision as the preferred option to aspire to irrespective of the level of need. Reinforcing a stepped approach to services across agencies and interventions will be supported by the roadmap.

## The Referral System and a Single Point of Initial Contact

**Recommendation 3:** The Task Group recommends that all partners engage in a review of the current method of access to services for children and young people with emotional and mental health needs, seeking to simplify and streamline the process. As part of this, specific consideration should be given to:

- The establishment of a single point of initial contact to provide effective signposting/triaging to appropriate services at an early stage.
- Supporting direct referral to an appropriate alternative service in cases where a referral to Tier 3 CAMHS does not meet the threshold.
- Improving communication so that the expectations of those referring are managed more effectively, and advice is offered on support available whilst waiting for a service.
- Ensuring that a child's journey through the CAMHS system is recorded, whether it is completed or not, including all requests for support and the outcome of those requests.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

There are several elements to this recommendation, therefore it is partially accepted.

Development of a roadmap (Recommendation 1) should assist in identification of the most appropriate support available to meet the needs of the young person experiencing distress and enable access to earlier intervention.

Specifically, HWHCT CAMHS service currently provides a single point of access (SPA) for professionals. The SPA clinically triages all health referrals with the exception of the wellbeing and emotional support service (WEST) working within specific education settings.

Where the referral does not identify the needs for CAMHS the senior mental health practitioner will provide details of other support that can be considered. These options are often numerous, and the service accepts may not be sufficiently targeted to the needs of the individual child or young person.

The SPA is able to directly refer to some clinical services eg Eating Disorders, Reach for Wellbeing, CAMHS Learning Disability service. For services outside of the HWHCT provision the ongoing responsibility for the child or young person remains with the referrer who will have assessed the child or young person and have a full understanding their needs.

The Trust accepts that improving communication to support children, young people, parent carers and referrers is a positive recommendation and that the roadmap of services available in Worcestershire should in part address the issues relating managing expectations and providing support if the child or young person needs to wait for a clinical service.

The Trust updated the website in 2022 but will continue to refresh the content with the support of children, young people and parent carers whilst also ensuring this information to be available in a variety of formats as appropriate.

On referral and acceptance for a CAMHS Assessment we will inform the child or young person and parent carer of the number of weeks they can expect to wait before the appointment and the request where possible to attend the appointment to prevent further delay. The website will also include the expected wait time.

The child or young person's journey is recorded in the Trust's electronic patient record when they are accepted for CAMHS and noted when the CYP is signposted. If the Trust is unable to provide the correct support for the child or young person, the referral is not accepted and this recorded on the child or young person's record with the subsequent decline letter also uploaded. Letters are sent to the referrer to include the outcome and advice and guidance on support that may be helpful.

The Trust does not record other interventions after this for the child or young person that are not accepted for assessment by the service. It is not possible to follow up all of the referrals not accepted for CAMHS as the choice of other support is determined by the child or young person and/or their parent carers therefore the service does not know what might have been accessed.

Children, young people and families can access a range of options to support them across the system that will help to improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This Includes services commissioned and/or delivered by the NHS, Local Authority, Voluntary and Community Sector, Independent Sector and Primary Care Networks. A single record across all agencies would be ambitious and would need investment to provide an electronic system and administrative capacity to be able to do so.

## A collaborative approach

**Recommendation 4:** The Task Group recommends that all partners continue to work towards a system-wide collaborative approach with effective working relationships and improved communication between organisations. To support this approach, the Task Group would suggest regular network meetings, of no less than twice a year, take place with all partners, to develop communications and ensure learning and best practice are shared.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

All partners are engaged in collaborative commissioning and service delivery. Joint collaborative meetings and committees are established across the system to further develop pathways, monitor and evaluate interventions. This work will continue and mature.

**Recommendation 5:** The Task Group recommends that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Mental Health Collaborative (HWMHC) (on behalf of the HWICB) consider alternative approaches to the organisation of services, including those which appear to be successful in other local authority areas.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Mental Health Collaborative is committed to developing evidence-based services and interventions to a high standard and this includes learning from other approaches, systems, and other areas where evaluation, outcomes and audit demonstrates high standards are achieved.

**Recommendation 6:** The Task Group recommends that all partner organisations look into the possibility of developing a system of shared access to information.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

It is recognised that telling their story repeatedly is frustrating and distressing for children, young people and families. Despite the obvious benefits for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental illness needs, this recommendation is unrealistic in the near future due to the range of electronic systems that partners have to manage service delivery and provide support. However with the introduction of the Shared Care Record we can consider how best we further develop this to support the needs of children, young people and parent carers.

Significant investment would be required to develop a single system that meets the needs of the children and young people as well maintain or enhance the existing infrastructure and governance requirements within the respective organisations.

## Gaps in provision and the definition of Tiers

**Recommendation 7:** The Task Group recommends that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust look again at support for higher Tier 2 to address the gap in provision identified by schools.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

To clarify that this recommendation is the responsibility of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Mental Health Collaborative not solely the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and is therefore partially accepted.

The Mental Health Collaborative considers the options available for future provision aligned to the priorities for investment 2024/25 and has identified enhancing support for children and young people as a priority.

Currently a number of services are commissioned from a range of agencies and work has commenced in improving the transition from CAMHS to Adult service, through a 0-25yrs pathway.

The Multi Agency Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health in School Board develop and monitor interventions that meet needs from an education perspective. The Inclusion website is being refreshed at present to include access to universal and targeted training, support and also direct interventions for schools to access from the range of partners. This work reports into the Children and Young People Partnership Board, which oversees delivery of the Integrated Care Board Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Transformation Plan which is developed through a multi-agency approach.

This recommendation is around addressing the gap in provision however depending on the level of unmet need this may require additional investment.

**Recommendation 8: The Task Group recommends that guidance is produced to clarify the thresholds for each Tier.**

**Response to recommendation:** *Please tick ✓ as appropriate*

1. **Accept recommendation in full**
2. **Accept recommendation in part\***
3. **Decline recommendation\***

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

This recommendation is accepted and will be delivered through development of the roadmap.

As a system we will review the national guidance describing the tiers of provision aligned to iThrive terminology and needs led provision. The roadmap will bring clarity to the stepped approach and what help and support is available at the different steps and should also indicate what is available for specific localities that the Primary Care Network's have commissioned for their populations.



## The importance of sources of support at lower levels of need

**Recommendation 9:** The Task Group recommends that partners should consider increasing the provision of services supporting young people with a lower level of need in order to provide timely support and reduce demand for specialist services.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

Both the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Mental Health Collaborative and Worcestershire Children and Young People Partnership are committed to the early intervention and prevention agenda. These forums need to continue to work together to increase provision as appropriate noting the need for available resource to do so.

There are a number of services already available for young people with a lower level of need (ie the Tier 2 targeted level of the stepped approach) but often operate separate so could be better coordinated and supported by more joined up communications. These services include:

- WEST - wellbeing and emotional support service delivered by the HWHCT (albeit not in every school)
- Act on It and the Blues Programme delivered by Onside Advocacy.
- Reach4Wellbeing (HWHCT)
- Starting Well deliver targeted interventions (HWHCT)
- Early Help from WCF if the family are referred

The Primary Care Network's are also developing services that will support children and young people and these will be referenced in the roadmap.

System wide partners need to review of how all these can work in a more coordinated way and also review where the information is for everyone to find. The Inclusion Team of WCF have made real strides in developing the Inclusion Website and so this and the NHS CAMHS website being linked would be an early action to further integration.

## Support for Schools

**Recommendation 10:** The Task Group recommends that all partners undertake a review of the range of advice and support available to schools, ensuring that early help and support for mental health issues (from whichever source) is made available to ALL schools. In addition, there should be improved publicity to encourage access to available services.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

The Mental Health Collaborative will undertake a review of the range of advice and support available in schools. The Wellbeing and Emotional Support Service provision in schools is a nationally designed/funded and is not currently planned to be available in all schools. There is a national rapid evaluation of this service to identify the impact in which this support service has been implemented.

Other support such as Act on It is commissioned by Public Health, in addition to any support commissioned/provided by schools themselves.

Expansion of the support available to schools, however provided, will need additional investment.

## Relationships with GPs

**Recommendation 11:** The Task Group recommends that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust:

- Seeks to improve the information and guidance available to GPs to help them in navigating the system of support for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing including CAMHS and other lower-level sources of support
- Considers how a closer working relationship between CAMHS and GPs can be developed.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

Support will be achieved with the roadmap in Recommendation 1. The refresh of the HWHCT CAMHS website will help ease of access to supportive information for GP's and the wider Primary Care Networks in addition to services the PCN's may commission directly to support their specific populations.

Further training can be provided for Primary Care Networks noting that take up has previously been low.

## Data and Performance Information

**Recommendation 12:** The Task Group recommends that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust reviews its approach to collection and publication of performance information relating to CAMHS including referrals which did not meet the threshold for support, to ensure that the data collected allows trends to be identified and service improvements to be supported.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

CAMHS SPA does record the number of referrals accepted/declined for CAMHS Choice although we do not routinely report this data. In addition we do not routinely report the number of children and young people accepted/declined for Partnership (treatment). The service reports waiting times for both Choice (18 weeks from referral to assessment) and Partnership (25 weeks from referral to treatment), Eating Disorders, Children and Young People Access, Routine Outcome Measures. A range of these are reported through the Trust Performance reports and onward reporting to the Integrated Care Board and the Mental Health Collaborative.

The Trust will work with the Mental Health Collaborative to develop external reporting of information beyond the current statutory requirements.

## Children who are looked after by the County Council

**Recommendation 13:** The Task Group recommends that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families and Worcestershire Children First continue to focus on ensuring that all children coming into the care of the local authority receive a mental health assessment as a matter of course.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

MH/EWB is included in the LAC Health Assessment received by all CYP under the care of the local authority. WCF and HWHCT are working to develop access to specialist mental health assessments where indicated, with consideration of the additional vulnerability of a child who is looked after.

Offering a specialist assessment to all children irrespective of presenting clinical need is not currently available and would need careful consideration and additional resourcing.

**Recommendation 14:** The Task Group recommends that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust reviews its referral criteria, to ensure that children who are in the care of the local authority are not prevented from accessing CAMHS support due to the lack of a settled placement.

**Response to recommendation:** Please tick ✓ as appropriate

1. Accept recommendation in full
2. Accept recommendation in part\*
3. Decline recommendation\*

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

The CAMHS clinicians have explained the reason for not starting treatment prior to the CYP is in a settled placement for a number of reasons:

- Children in care have often experienced trauma in their lives hence requiring such a significant action to remove them from their usual environment. These CYP may often struggle to trust and build relationships with adults. As such if a CYP starts to 'open up' to a mental health practitioner in an assessment and subsequently treatment and part way through move to a settled placement often in a different area with a different practitioner this will not be of benefit to the CYP.

- There is good evidence to suggest that it is important for the CYP to be in a settled placement to be able to effectively review their needs and lift the lid on their trauma at the right time for them. Some of the trauma can be 'dealt with' via life story work and readjustment.

Understanding the range of provision available to the carers, other professionals and the young person themselves will enable support to be provided and enable the young person to prepare for a period of psychological interventions to help them manage the trauma experienced in their lives.

### **Children and Young People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

**Recommendation 15:** The Task Group recommends that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Mental Health Collaborative (HWMHC) (on behalf of the HWICB) reviews the way in which children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder are able to access appropriate mental health support and reports back to the Scrutiny Task Group.

**Response to recommendation:** *Please tick ✓ as appropriate*

1. **Accept recommendation in full**
2. **Accept recommendation in part\***
3. **Decline recommendation\***

\*Where the recommendation has been accepted in part (number 2 above) or declined (number 3 above) an explanation of the reasons why and alternative wording should be provided below:

Work is in progress across the Collaborative to consider Targeted interventions at Tier 2 to support CYP's and families who are waiting for a diagnostic assessment and where a diagnosis has been made and support and interventions are required.

There has been some work done to review what is delivered locally and in other geographical areas that is needs lead and to consider if any work already established in the system could also include Autistic CYP.