

	Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 7 March 2023
	Report from Corporate Director, Children and Young People
Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing, including CAMHS	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	0
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report updates members on services that support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. This report builds on the detail provided to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2023 on the Brent Borough Based Partnership priority to improve the mental health and wellbeing of adults and children in Brent. Further updates are also provided to the report from 14 March 2022 about the education and wellbeing recovery of Brent children and young people post Covid-19.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the content of this report.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Multi-agency governance boards continue to provide oversight of delivery of mental health and wellbeing services for children and families, including the Health and

Wellbeing Board, the Children's Trust, the Safer Brent Partnership, the Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board and the Brent Borough Based Partnership. The Children's Trust is actively monitoring the system wide response for children and young people who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Brent has the lowest access to mental health services for Children and Young People in North West London, despite high demand.

- 3.2 The report received by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in January 2023 noted the challenges that the Brent health and care system faces to support people's mental health and wellbeing and the need to change how system partners work together to make the most of the resources, with a focus on early intervention and prevention. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group of the Brent Borough Based Partnership is responsible for working collaboratively as a system, to co-produce and deliver support for emotional well-being and mental health at the right time and in the right settings for the young people and children of Brent. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Subgroup has a number of roles to ensure that local mental health provision meets local need:
- To drive forward priorities identified by the system which are multi-agency and more complex in nature – where we need to work together
 - As part of the wider ICP/BBBP to encourage joint working and collaboration across all services to improve outcomes for individuals,
 - To deal with issues in the wider system by acting as a point of escalation / resolution when there are multi-agency blocks or new multi-agency projects, and
 - Working with system partners to identify unmet needs and address inequalities and identifying and developing services that improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of the children and young people of Brent.

4.0 Development of mental health and wellbeing service for children and young people

- 4.1 Improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is one of the four Brent ICP priorities. A partnership operational group reports to the ICP Mental Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group and is chaired by the Children and Young People Department's Director of Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy. This focuses on work to make system changes to improve services for children and young people. The focus of the operational group has been improving the specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and developing and embedding the THRIVE model of mental health and wellbeing services in Brent.

CAMHS

- 4.2 Demand for mental health and wellbeing services from children and young people in Brent are among the highest in North West London. The Covid-19 pandemic saw an increase in demand for mental health and wellbeing support to children and young people across a range of services, including specialist CAMHS support which in Brent is provided by Central and North West London National Health Foundation Trust (CNWL). This resulted in a list of children and young people waiting for assessment. Fluctuations in waiting lists have continued, and in particular for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessment. This is despite CAMHS putting in place additional measures to reduce waiting lists or to support young people while they wait for assessment, for example through the Waiting List Initiative (which involves waiting list reviews, a waiting well check, resilience support and parenting support). Work has also been done to upskill primary care practitioners in how to support children and young people. To support families waiting for an ASD assessment, the Council has funded a

Pre-Diagnostic ASD Officer within the Inclusion Service. The service currently supports around 150 families and there was a waiting list of 250 children and young people in December 2022.

- 4.3 As more children have been assessed, this has placed more children on the treatment waiting list. Initiatives to support children waiting for treatment include additional capacity from Healios and the Brent Centre for Young People providing access to CBT and psychotherapy and maximising access to digital developments. CAMHS have expanded their staff by an additional 7 posts. Other CAMHS initiatives include development of a Brent Young Adult pathway for the 16-25 cohort and well as early intervention and support for the 0-5 population.
- 4.4 There is recognition that both additional resources as well as service redesign are essential to addressing the mental health needs of the children and young people of Brent. The Programme Director for Mental Health at NWL ICB has agreed in principle additional investment for 'levelling up' funding to increase CAMHS capacity, so that Brent has the resources to offer the same CAMHS service as other local boroughs. There has not yet been confirmation of the amount of funding nor the timing of the funding.
- 4.5 Early identification of mental health and wellbeing issues and early intervention are key to ensure that children and young people are supported and managed before they reach a crisis point that leads them to seek referral to specialist CAMHS. A number of services are available to support children and young people to get advice and help about their mental health and wellbeing, but there is a need to increase the capacity and capability of children's community services to provide emotional wellbeing support/ psychotherapy and psychological support to children and young people.

The Thrive Model

- 4.6 The THRIVE model in NW London is designed for children and young people aged 0-18 and their families and those aged 18-25 who need an alternative approach to 18+ services. The THRIVE model is aimed at effective pathways to support, care and treat, ensuring children and young people experiencing emotional and mental ill-health have access to preventative services, early identification and early intervention. It makes a clear distinction between getting advice, getting help and support and getting access to evidenced-based interventions based.

The THRIVE Model



- 4.7 The aim is that the THRIVE framework will apply to all professionals who seek to promote mental health awareness and help children and young people with mental health and wellbeing needs or those at risk of mental health difficulties (whether staff in educational settings, social care, voluntary or health sectors or others). Engagement and co-production with children, parents and carers are key to delivering a local Thrive model to meet local needs. The Thrive framework is centred around intensity of need which leads to the following advantages over the current system of services:
- Barriers between different treatments/intensities are reduced with referrals no longer the main way to navigate the system
 - All types of needs can be met – no case in which a patient's needs are too intense or complex for some teams, but not intense or complex enough for all the others
 - Services are more efficient and patient access is easier
 - There is professional sharing of knowledge, risk and development opportunities across the system.
- 4.8 The key principles of the Thrive Model are:
- A common language about mental health and wellbeing across professionals, children, parents and carers
 - Services are needs-led
 - Shared decision making on services
 - Proactive prevention and promotion
 - Partnership working across partners
 - Outcome-informed service development
 - Reducing stigma
 - Accessibility to the right service at the right time
- 4.9 Brent Borough Based Partnership, including CAMHS, is working with other NW London authorities that are part of the NWL ICP to deliver the THRIVE framework. System wide change needs to be done at the pace that works for Brent. A project delivery plan has been developed that identifies actions needed to take this work forward. An initial workshop is taking place on Friday 10 March with community and voluntary sector partners to start the process of understanding need and co-designing the 'Getting Advice' area of the Brent THRIVE model.
- 4.10 The THRIVE Model will ensure that young people can access the right support at the right time through easy access to services and empowering them to do so. For example, children accessing support classified as 'Getting Advice' would typically be children, young people and families adjusting to life circumstances, with mild or temporary difficulties, where the best intervention is within the community with self-help support. However, children and young people with fluctuating or ongoing severe difficulties, for which they are choosing to manage their own health and/or are on the road to recovery, may also access these services.

5.0 Emotional wellbeing and mental health support in schools.

- 5.1 Emotional wellbeing and mental health have been identified by the Department for Education (DFE) and headteachers across Brent as presenting the biggest challenge both in terms of attendance and behaviour in schools. Strengthening the offer of mental health support for children and young people whilst at school is a priority in Brent and a key part of the wider mental health and wellbeing support system.

- 5.2 Brent Children and Young People's Education Psychology Service provides oversight and coordination of the school facing offer of mental health and wellbeing support. This includes support around Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) based in schools, the Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST) and training for schools, such as the ELSA programme.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance

- 5.3 In some cases, children might not be able to attend school due to their emotional wellbeing and mental health. According to research, the percentage of children and young people who are not able to attend school or have extreme difficulties attending school due to emotional factors, is between approximately 1% and 5% of the school population, with slightly higher prevalence amongst secondary school students (Elliot, 1999; Guilliford & Miller, 2015). When children and young people are experiencing anxieties or emotional difficulties that are preventing them from attending school, this is referred to as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). In Brent EBSA has become more pronounced since the Covid-19 pandemic. The Children and Young People's Department is committed to supporting schools to identify EBSA and to put support in place for children and young people experiencing EBSA, based on the most recent research into effective practice. An EBSA toolkit has been developed to support schools in their understanding of EBSA and provides a bank of evidence-informed strategies and resources to put into practice. Schools have a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to support children and young people experiencing EBSA to fully access a suitable education within school. In cases where the EBSA is deeply entrenched and a child or young person is not able to attend school, support is provided through a team of two peripatetic clinicians and suitable short-term education via Ashley College, the medical needs PRU.

Mental Health Support Teams

- 5.4 The Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) programme in Brent led by CNWL was initiated in 2020, as part of a national programme. There are 21 emotional wellbeing practitioners working across 26 Schools, (8 Secondary Schools, 17 Primary Schools and 1 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)) as part of the programme. Practitioners work with groups and individual pupils. The two main areas of work that have emerged are an increase in Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and emotional dysregulation. For 2022/23 a cognitive behavioural therapy skills project for secondary schools is being developed and trialled in 2 schools. This includes training on dialectical behaviour therapy, which is a form of cognitive behavioural therapy for children and young people who demonstrate intense emotional responses. Working with the Education Psychology Service, a whole school audit tool is being piloted in 3 MHST primary schools. The MHST programme is expected to increase to 40 schools in 2023/4.

Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST)

- 5.5 The Local Authority commissions a mental health and wellbeing service for children and young people in targeted vulnerable groups from the Anna Freud Centre, known as WEST. The service supports vulnerable children, including Looked After Children, children with disabilities aged 0-25, children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs, children and young people at risk of exclusion from school or alternative provisions and children and young people who are at risk of multiple vulnerabilities including child sexual exploitation, gang affiliation and domestic abuse. The service is aimed at supporting children and young people with mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing needs. However, pressures on CAMHS means that the

service often supports children with more complex needs. The contract provides a range of different services, including:

- A clear gateway/triage process to ensure timely access and prioritisation of targeted vulnerable children and young people
- Rapid advice and support and signposting to appropriate services
- A focus on early identification, intervention and prevention, including evidenced based therapies, training continuum, consultation and advice to professionals and carers, including a contact helpline.

5.6 At the beginning of the academic year 2022/23, a total of 151 children and young people receiving an intervention. In the autumn term of 2022/23, the service received 128 new referrals. Therefore, in total, 279 children and young people were accessing the service during autumn 2022/23. Young people's satisfaction with the interventions on average score 8.41 out of a maximum score of 10. There is a measurable improvement in 90% of children and young people who access interventions through WEST (improvement in Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scores).

5.7 WEST has worked with 36 looked after children this academic year and 26 young people known to children's social care. In terms of demographics, 70% of referrals were from mixed and non-white ethnic groups and 30% were white groups. The most frequently referred ages were 12 and 13 years old. Reflecting the national and local picture, WEST has seen increasing referrals for EBSA with approximately 29% of cases in the autumn term 2022-23 presenting with difficulties around attending school. Additionally WEST delivers reflective parenting group sessions and sessions for teachers and social workers. 94% of delegates strongly agreed that the training gave them ideas which they could use in their practice. Feedback from a parent highlights the impact of these sessions:

'I'm so grateful to have had this opportunity. The strategies I have learnt have already made changes in our family.'

5.8 During 2021/22 WEST delivered a six-hour specialist training workshop on Understanding Trauma to over 80 Brent professionals, funded through the Council's Covid-19 recovery initiative funding. The course covered exam anxieties, self-harming, eating disorders, sexual abuse and suicide prevention. The training will be repeated this academic year. Feedback was very positive with school staff finding the content beneficial to their role.

5.9 A tendering exercise was recently undertaken for the WEST contract, which resulted in the award of the contract to the Anna Freud Centre, jointly commissioned with CAMHS (CNWL). As part of the new contract, clinical input will be provided for a period of 18 months to a peripatetic delivery model alongside tutors, which will provide targeted support for schools and individual children, which will include; a holistic assessment of young people's mental health and behavioural and emotional needs, with relevant actions, such as support plans or referrals identified; screening for developmental disorders such as ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or post diagnosis liaising with Education Psychologist to enable effective in school support and screening for CMAHS fast-track support; work with the child and family on the most appropriate intervention and support plan and identifying where absence from school is due to wellbeing/health needs, so that tutors can be a bridge for children from home to school to support their regular attendance.

Other mental health and wellbeing support for schools

- 5.10 The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) provision led by the Education Psychology Service in Brent has expanded to 42 settings with the intention of cascading further across all Brent settings and schools over the next two years. This has been funded by the Council's Wellbeing and Education Recovery Initiative Fund. In addition, 60 settings and schools attended an ELSA conference in July 2022 sharing practice on the impact of behaviour and wellbeing. The impact of the ELSA training on Schools is highlighted in the feedback provided by one Primary School Headteacher:

'Teachers and Learning Assistants were supported by the schools four ELSAs with strategies to use in the classroom to support the emotional wellbeing of pupils. This enabled all pupils to be able to access learning and the curriculum. Pupils were given the time, space and vocabulary to express their wants, needs and concerns. Pupils understood their emotions and are now able to use the right vocabulary to express themselves. All pupils that received support from the schools ELSAs made good or better progress in all areas of learning and there was a distinct reduction in persistent disruptive behaviour.'

'Parents felt supported in times of trauma and ELSAs worked together with families to ensure pupils felt safe and happy- which led them to be able to access learning again. ELSAs felt extremely supported by the supervision sessions undertaken by the Education Psychology Service where they got to share and ask for support and advice. Their knowledge enabled them to carry out whole school training for staff on a regular basis.'

- 5.11 In 2022/23 the DFE released a grant for all schools to apply for to support the training of School Mental Health leads in every school. As of December 2022, the take up of Brent schools was 48%, compared to 47% across London, and approximately 50% nationally. A Brent MH Leads network, led by the Education Psychology Service, continues to support schools.
- 5.12 The School Nursing Service provides advice on children identified to have low level mental health needs. Schools also continue to offer established support for pupils' wider well-being e.g. delivering nurture provision, commissioning access to services provided by organisations such as 'Place to Be' and referring children to the WEST service provided by The Anna Freud Centre. The Educational Psychology Service is continuing to support schools to access initiatives aimed at increasing school capacity to support the mental health and well-being of children and staff.

Community based training

- 5.13 The Council's Covid-19 recovery initiative funding has supported a range of community based mental health and wellbeing training aimed at building peer support. This includes workshops for parents in Family Wellbeing Centres between June 2022 and March 2023. Mental Health First Aid training for young people aged 16-25 and for voluntary sector youth workers working with young people in the community is being delivered from January to March 2023. Primary age and secondary age wellbeing workshops delivered through community and voluntary sector organisations and settings are being rolled out between March and June 2023. These initiatives are training over 150 young people on how to support their peers. A communication and engagement project with young people to review and design how they access information about services is being developed.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 All of the work identified above is delivered from within NHS or Council core budgets. The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were informed in January 2023 about the ongoing work to secure 'levelling up' funding for Brent CAMHS, given the identified variations in levels of overall mental health funding across NWL boroughs, including CAMHS services. As Chair of the Children's Trust, the previous Corporate Director for Children and Young People wrote to the ICP raising concerns about this disparity given high levels of demand for services from Brent children and young people. In response, the Programme Director for Mental Health at NWL ICB has agreed in principle additional investment for 'levelling up' funding to increase CAMHS capacity, but as yet it is not clear when this will be forthcoming. As noted in the January 2023 report to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, unless this is addressed for the Specialist CAMHS service in particular, demand will continue to outstrip supply. It will also prove difficult to shift the system to a THRIVE model, where additional investment in early intervention services will be required, at least during a period of transition.

6.2 The Council provided Covid-19 recovery initiative funding which has supported a number of the projects outlined above (£270K to commission services that provide mental health support in schools and £180K for community based mental health peer support).

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 Under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, local authorities are required to co-operate with others in promoting the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. Under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 the local authority is required to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children whenever it carries out any act or makes any decision. Statutory guidance for local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England, March 2015, states that the corporate parenting responsibilities of local authorities include a duty (under section 22(3) (a) of the Children Act 1989) to safeguard and promote the emotional, mental health and physical welfare of the children they look after.

8.0 Equality Implications

8.1 This report focuses on services that support the mental health and wellbeing of Brent's most vulnerable children and young people. Through system leadership, co-production and a partnership approach Brent is focused on addressing health inequalities that impact on this group of children and young people.

8.2 The council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Local Authority when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic. Protected characteristics include ethnic or national origins and colour or nationality. The Council has paid due regard to children and families' protected characteristics in providing targeted and risk assessed support as outlined above.

9.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

9.1 Stakeholders are involved in service evaluation and the development of new services through a co-production approach.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director Children and Young People