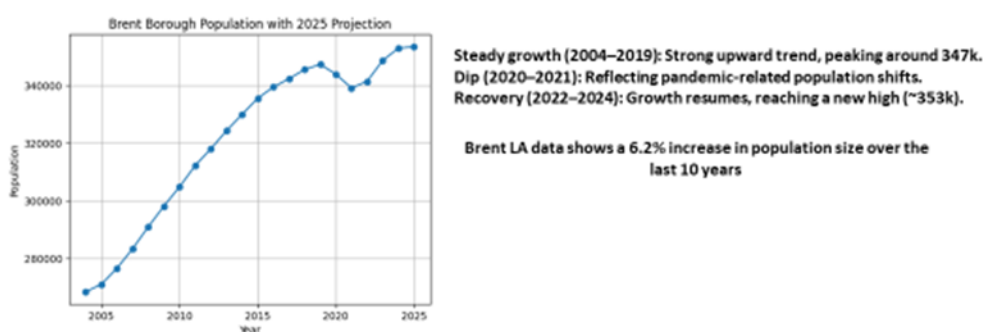
 <p>Brent NHS West and North London</p>	<p>Brent Health and Wellbeing Board 16 April 2026</p>
	<p>Report from Brent ICP Mental Health & Wellbeing Executive Group</p>
	<p>Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure – Cllr Neil Nerva</p>
<p>Brent ICP Mental Health & Wellbeing Executive Group Progress Update – Children & Young People Transformation</p>	

Wards Affected:	All wards
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key Decision – for noting
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Sarah Nyandoro Head of Place, Mental Health & Wellbeing (All Age) Brent ICP Sarah.Nyandoro@nhs.net

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on specialist CAMHS arrangements, planned neurodiversity profiling tool, planned children and young people's crisis safe hub and information on a newly designed and commissioned emotional wellbeing and mental health support offer for Brent's Children and Young People (LYRA). The new Brent Partnership Local Young People Resources and Advice Service (LYRA) was launched in early March of this year. This offer has been commissioned as a prototype care model to deliver early intervention and prevention support for children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health in Brent.
- 1.2. LYRA has been established in response to the acute and increased mental health needs of Brent children and young people. It represents Phase 1 of a new way of working that is in line with the Mental Health THRIVE approach for Children and Young People in providing a community-based model of care designed to support early identification and timely access to appropriate information, guidance and interventions, before mental health needs escalate.
- 1.3. Brent's children and young people have the highest presenting mental health and wellbeing needs of all boroughs in North-West London. The current Brent system is under exceptional and unsustainable strain with:
 - 1 in 6 children presenting with a probable mental health disorder,
 - 13 referrals per day to Brent CAMHS
 - 19% increase to CAMHS caseload in the last 12 months.

- 1.4. LYRA has been designed and developed to directly address some of these challenges by bridging the gap between community and specialist mental health services through a single front door and a collaborative approach to early intervention and prevention.
- 1.5. LYRA is aligned to the Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 Priorities – *Thriving Communities, Best Start in Life and A Healthier Brent*. LYRA is also directly aligned to *NHS West and North London ICB's Children & Young People's Mental Health Strategy* and the *NHS 10-Year Plan* ambitions for shifting care from acute to community-based care and prioritising early intervention and prevention.
- 1.6. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the new Phase 1 development, aimed at testing the LYRA arrangements to inform a longer-term much broader, system-wide Phase 2 service offer that would be launched in April 2027. It will align with further investment from the ICB into children's mental health and wellbeing through the Brent Circle Safe Hub that is expected to come online in late summer (to be known as the Brent LYRA Hub). This will be an emergency out-of-hours drop-in centre for children and young people who will be able to access advice, guidance and clinical support.
- 1.7. Demand for Brent specialist CAMHS continues to increase.



Brent	Harrow	Hillingdon	Kensington and Chelsea	Westminster
339,818	261,203	305,916	143,376	204,240
53,086	42,667	51,490	16,819	22,114

Out of the 5 CNWL CAMHS Boroughs Brent has the highest school age population

Borough	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Brent	2.3%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	3.8%

ONS Data: 3.8% of Brent children's population has been referred to CAMHS this calendar year

- 1.8. Brent CAMHS - Brent CAMHS caseload has increased by 22 % in the last 12 months. The Brent caseload is approximately 1/3 of CAMHS overall caseload of the 5 CNWL Boroughs. It is projected that the caseload will continue to increase in the coming years. Brent specialist CAMHS also introduced the use of AI (Anathem roll out) which supported the reduction of some administrative functions (mostly letters) by over 60%). There are plans to consider rolling this out to support with assessments. There has also been some non-recurrent CAMHS investment in 25/26 to support with clearing the backlog of children and young people waiting for neurodiversity assessments but as yet, there are unclear plans for getting the demand onto a sustainable footing. Brent CAMHS needs a minimum of 8 band 7 WTE to meet the increasing demand. The new LYRA service will make a contribution to supporting core CAMHS referrals, but this is unlikely to address the scale of demand in the short to medium term.
- 1.9. Neurodiversity Waiting list and Waiting times - NWL ICB provided non-recurrent funding to support children and young people's neurodiversity assessments to the end of 25/26 financial year. This was to reduce the number of children and young people waiting for assessments and the length of time they have been waiting. This funding helped to reduce the historic caseload numbers of 900 from December 2025 to 199 in March 2026. Current waiting times for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have been reduced from 34 months in December 2025 to 12 months in March 2026.
- 1.10. Neurodiversity Profiling Tool – Brent has been leading the work around developing the Neurodiversity Profiling tool. This is a needs-based profiling approach instead of a diagnosis-

led pathways. The tool identifies needs early, even without a formal diagnosis, supports schools to make reasonable adjustments, inform EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans), guides referrals to services (e.g. speech therapy, CAMHS) and helps to reduce long waiting times for diagnosis by offering support sooner. The profiling tool typically assesses communication and language, attention and concentration, sensory processing (e.g. sensitivity to noise, textures, emotional regulation, social interaction and functioning (planning, organising, and memory)). It is designed to support with creating a support plan tailored to meet the needs of children and young people on the neurodiversity spectrum focusing on emotional and social developments, strengths and difficulties. NWL ICB is working to identify funding resources to pilot the Neurodiversity profiling tool across 3 NWL Boroughs – Brent, Ealing and Hillingdon.

- 1.11. Brent Circle Safe Hub – Brent is developing a crisis intervention safe hub for children and young people. This provision will offer a safe space to access assessment, brief intervention, stabilisation and treatment support for those children and young people who have self-identified or have been identified by professionals as having a mental health crisis. It is being designed to deliver an integrated crisis prevention pathway embedded within the Brent early intervention and prevention Offer (LYRA), primary care and neighbourhood MDTs for children.

The service will support with reducing escalation of risks by supporting children and young people presenting with self-harm, suicidal thoughts without intent, anxiety, depression and emotional dysregulation through early intervention and repeated brief support where required. It will offer an alternative to urgent and emergency care attendance where needs can be safely met in a community setting, including follow-up support for children and young people seen in emergency departments who do not meet specialist CAMHS thresholds. We are creating an alternative pathway for crisis prevention similar to the Circle Safe hub commissioned in Ealing but Brent specific. This will address inequality issues and provide a service that represents and meets the needs of Brent's diverse communities. We are aiming for this new service to go live in late summer 2026.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note this progress update on LYRA Phase 1 (pilot).
- Endorse the strategic direction of LYRA Phase 2 long-term.
- Support continued cross-system collaboration to embed LYRA within the wider children and young people's mental health landscape.
- Note the plans to develop a neurodiversity profiling tool in Brent
- Note the plans to develop a crisis Circle safe hub for children and young people in Brent
- Note the lack of investment to specialist CAMHS to manage increasing demand

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities and Strategic Context

- 3.1. LYRA supports three of the five Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 priority areas:

- **Thriving Communities** – a defining feature of LYRA is that this is delivered in collaboration with long-standing, trusted VCSE organisations in Brent who have deep roots within local communities and a proven track record in delivering mental health care and support for children and young people. LYRA works through existing statutory and community expertise, embedding support in the places and relationships that children, young people and their families already trust. This includes organisations with specialist knowledge of Brent's diverse communities, where stigma, language barriers and previous negative experiences have historically prevented families from seeking help early. By anchoring this offer within a collaborative approach between statutory and VCSE, LYRA aims to strengthen children and young people's resilience, reduce stigma around mental health and ensure that support reaches Brent's diverse communities through traditional clinical and non-clinical routes.
- **The Best Start in Life** – LYRA will provide timely, needs-led emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children aged 5-18 and up to 25 with SEND. By intervening early through schools, community settings and through peer and family support, the service will help children and young people to remain in education, to build emotional resilience and

to develop coping skills. Preventing the developmental harm caused by prolonged untreated emotional distress and mental health needs is central to this care model.

- **A Healthier Brent** – LYRA directly addresses health inequalities that are both increasing in acuity and in demand. This community-based offer sits alongside and reduces pressure on already overstretched specialist CAMHS and A&E attendances. LYRA has been developed as a more sustainable and equitable prevention and early intervention emotional distress and mental ill health offer. Children and young people locally, including from Brent's most deprived areas and marginalised communities, who currently account for a large share of crisis presentations, will be the primary beneficiaries of this new model of care.

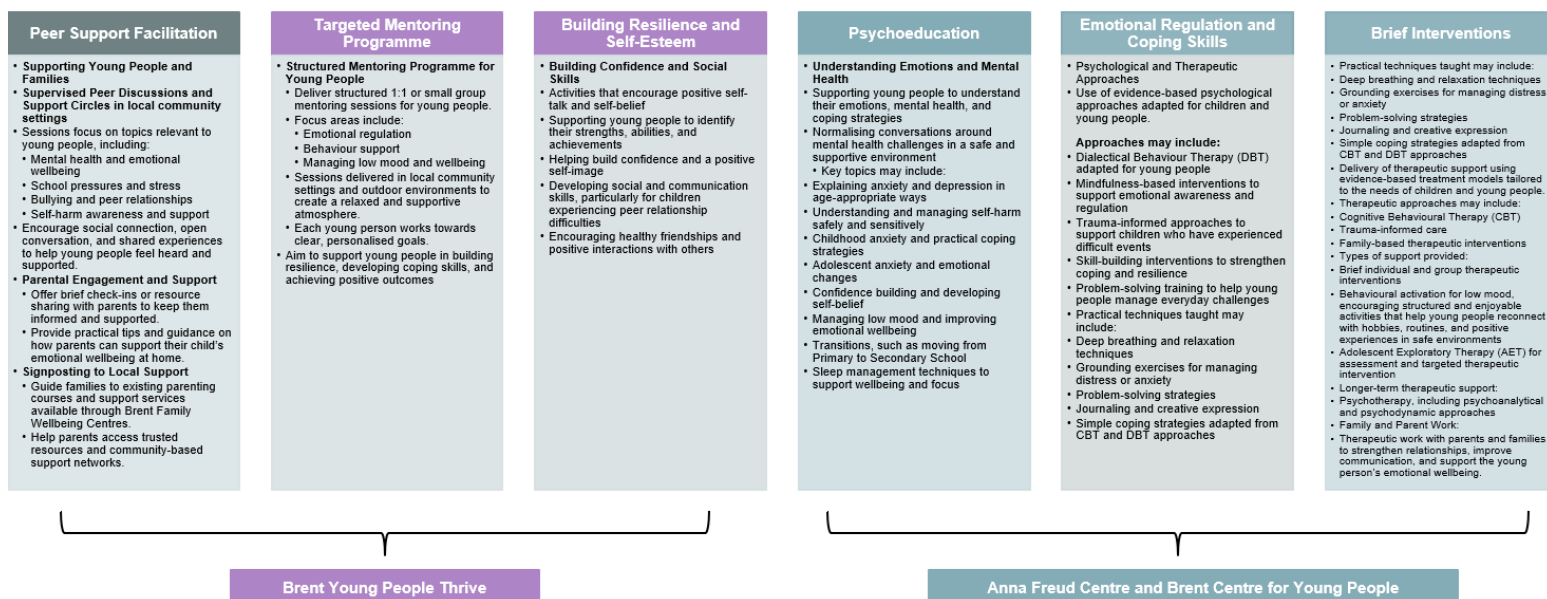
Background

- 3.2. Brent faces the greatest pressures on children and young people's mental health in North-West London, driven by high levels of deprivation, diversity and rising demand. Brent has the highest school-age population of the five CNWL CAMHS borough (53,086), with 1 in 6 children with a probable mental health disorder. Brent CAMHS receives approximately 13 new referrals daily, a caseload that has grown by 19% in the last 12 months. GP referrals have almost doubled since 2021 and in 2024 alone, there were 2,395 GP visits by Brent children and young people for anxiety and depression and 403 for self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Brent accounts for 45% of all CNWL CAMHS referrals and 40% of children and young people mental health A&E presentations across the eight NWL boroughs.
- 3.3. One of the root causes of this pressure is a significant gap in Tier 1 and Tier 2 / Getting Advice and Getting Help (THRIVE) services. Without accessible, culturally competent, early intervention in the community, children and young people have nowhere to turn before they reach crisis point. Without preventative and early support more and more of our children are directly referred into specialist CAMHS. This is compounded by Brent's deprivation levels, being the 2nd most deprived borough in London, and poverty that impacts on children and young people's wellbeing.
- 3.4. It is essential that children, young people and families get the right support, in the right place early to prevent escalation of mental health and wellbeing issues. That this has not been accessible across the borough is a key driver for working differently to redesign a children and young people's Getting Help mental health offer. The new service was developed jointly with children, young people, families and carers and professionals as a collaborative, consortium-led early intervention and prevention model directly addressing these challenges.

Brent Partnership LYRA

- 3.5. LYRA is a needs-led THRIVE informed emotional wellbeing offer for children and young people. We are testing a new way of working via a one front door approach through the CNWL Single Point of Access for all children and young people's emotional and mental health concerns. The aim is to reduce system fragmentation and support earlier access through a multidisciplinary team that ensures that a child or young person is connected to the most appropriate support to meet their needs. The aim is to ensure:
 - **Provision of support earlier and closer to home:** children, young people and families will have access to timely evidence-based interventions in trusted community settings reducing reliance on overstretched system partners such as CAMHS and avoid escalation into crisis
 - **Streamlined access to services, reducing fragmentation:** A single co-ordinated pathway with clear referrals routes and strong local partnerships, ensuring children and young people are assessed and connected to the right level of support.
 - **An offer of blended clinical and non-clinical care:** from low-level advice, guidance and peer support facilitations through to structured evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health needs at the right time and in the right settings.
 - **Targeting inequalities through reaching underserved groups:** working with schools, families and community organisations, the model is built on trust, addresses cultural barriers to seeking help and ensures equity of access across Brent's diverse communities
 - **Building resilience to prevent future crises** – early identification and support will reduce the risk of hospital attendances, self-harm, and acute interventions whilst equipping children and young people with coping skills for long-term wellbeing and continuity

Support offered through LYRA includes:



4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1. LYRA has been developed through engagement and co-production with children, young people, parents, carers and professionals that included:

- Consultations with children, young people and families across Brent to understand the challenges and barriers to accessing support to inform and shape the design of the service model, eligibility criteria and access routes
- Engagement with Brent Youth Parliament, Family Wellbeing Centres, schools, GPs and system partners to ensure robust and accessible care pathways and joined up working
- Partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations to embed the model in trusted local settings
- Strategic oversight and support of this development from the Brent ICP Mental Health and Wellbeing Executive Group (and CYP sub-group) and Brent Children's Trust.

LYRA Feedback

4.2. Early LYRA feedback has been positive from professionals across Brent. Parents have also welcomed this development with feedback including "one parent making a referral to Brent CAMHS SPA and specifically requesting that her referral be sent to LYRA". Another parent providing feedback that "her son was assessed same day by the MDT and received immediate support from the Anna Freud Centre". A third parent fed back that "this has been a long time coming and makes it so much easier for parents to get the right support early for their children outside of CAMHS."

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 LYRA is being prototyped and funded by the Partnership. A full Business Case for financial resources has been submitted to NWL ICB as sustained investment is required to roll-out the fully embedded Phase 2 of LYRA at scale. The Local Authority (Children, Young People and Community Development Directorate) and Public Health have agreed to provide £250K funding towards the new service. Without additional longer-term investment, existing pressures on CAMHS, A&E and in schools will continue to escalate, with more children and young people continuing to face poorer health, educational and economic outcomes.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 Phase 1 of LYRA has been funded by the ICP and was commissioned in line with relevant Local Authority and NHS commissioning frameworks.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 LYRA has been designed to address and reduce inequalities in children and young people's mental health access and outcomes across Brent in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are reflected in the service design.

7.2 Other relevant equalities considerations:

- Brent's diverse communities face disproportionately higher levels of unmet mental health needs. LYRA addresses this through community co-design and co-production, culturally competent workforce and delivery in trusted local settings.
- LYRA's community-based approach has been designed to reach and support our children and young people early and prevent late seeking help.
- Self-help tools, digital and peer-support approaches are incorporated within the support offer to broaden access for children, young people and families who may not engage with traditional clinical support, pathways and settings.
- LYRA's model mitigates disparities in access and outcomes for marginalised groups including children and young people from ethnic minority communities, looked after children and care leavers.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 LYRA's community-based delivery model reduces the need for children, young people and their families to travel to centralised clinical settings and instead focuses on delivering support in local community settings, satellite and open spaces accessible to our families, contributing to reduced carbon emissions across the borough. The inclusion of virtual and blended support options further minimises the environmental footprint of service delivery. This approach supports Brent's ambition to be a carbon neutral Borough by 2030.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 LYRA is delivered through a collaborative, consortium of partners (Mental Health Support Teams in Schools, Brent Centre for Young People, Brent Young People THRIVE, CNWL CAMHS and the Anna Freud Centre). Workforce development, training and supervision arrangements are in line with contractual requirements. There are no HR implications arising from this development. Delivery is across community venues and local settings, with no new property acquisitions.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 A communications and engagement strategy is in place to support this development and ongoing delivery of LYRA. Key elements include:

- A successful and well-attended LYRA launch event delivered at Brent Civic Centre in March 2026, for system partners and professionals
- Engagement with GPs, Council, Health and Partnership forums, resident facing forums, and professional facing newsletters, school forums, SENCOS, Brent Youth Parliament, Brent/Parent Carer Forum, VCSE groups to raise awareness of the service.
- LYRA communication flyers and posters circulated digitally and in-print across family wellbeing centres, libraries, parent/carers forums, schools, newsletters
- Young People involvement in naming the service LYRA following the identified theme of 'Constellation' and shaping the outreach approach and materials, ensuring communication is accessible and destigmatising.

Report sign off:

Tom Shakespeare

Director of Brent Integrated Care Partnership