

Mental Health Support Teams Briefing Paper

In 2017, the Government published its Green Paper for Transforming children and young people's mental health, which detailed proposals for expanding access to mental health care for children and young people, building on the national NHS transformation programme already underway.

In July 2018, the Government response to the Green Paper consultation set out a commitment to implement three core proposals immediately. These proposals are being delivered through a joint and collaborative programme led by the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Health Education England and NHS England:

- New Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges
- Support and comprehensive training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges
- Pilots for a four-week waiting time for children and young people's mental health services.

In December 2018, 59 MHSTs, across 25 trailblazer sites were announced. These trailblazers, or a trailblazer site, were the first places in the country to develop and introduce MHSTs. Berkshire West CCG were selected as one of 25 trailblazer sites across the UK to introduce the MHST service.

In July 2019, Wokingham was successful in securing funding to set up one MHST.

MHSTs are a new service designed to help meet the mental health needs of children and young people in primary, secondary and further education (ages 5 to 18), by providing mental health support in schools, colleges and other education settings.

MHSTs teams are designed to work with schools to improve mental health and wellbeing among pupils as well as helping staff within a school or college setting to provide a 'whole school approach' to mental health and wellbeing. MHSTs will support the school and college to build resilience and wellbeing, support earlier intervention, enable appropriate signposting and deliver evidence-based support, care and intervention.

MSHT teams will also work alongside and integrate with the mental health and wellbeing support that already exists locally, such as counselling, educational psychology and school nursing. Teams will also provide a key link with local children and young people's specialist mental health services (CAMHS).

Each MHST will cover several schools and colleges. Locally our MHST team will provide brief interventions to 12 schools (primary and secondary) to support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. Each team is expected to cover a population of around 8,000 children.

The Wokingham MHST team will focus on:

- Providing support for cases of mild to moderate mental health issues, basing their approach on evidence of what works best for children, young people and their parents (or other carers). This may be, for example, brief, low-intensity interventions for children, young people and families experiencing anxiety, low mood, friendship difficulties and behavioural difficulties.
- Supporting and working with the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop and co-design their whole-school or college approach. This will include identifying what support is already available and what is missing as well as providing targeted help by agreement, such as training parents, other carers and staff, or monitoring wellbeing.
- Giving timely advice to school and college staff, and liaising with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education.
- The service will take referrals from Participating Schools, GP's, Self-referrals, Parents/carers and other professionals.

In Wokingham, as in other MHSTs, newly-trained Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) will form part of the MHST team. The EMHPs are a brand-new addition to the Children and Young People's Mental Health workforce. The graduate level training programme for these new practitioners began in early 2019. Locally, Reading University is one of the Universities providing the graduate level training programme and four EMHPs are undertaking training in order to support participating schools in the Borough to identify and manage issues relating to mental health and wellbeing, as well as deliver interventions for mild and moderate needs.

The EMHPs will be supported in the Wokingham MHST Team by a Senior Educational Psychologist and senior Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) workers.

We are currently in the mobilisation phase of setting up Wokingham's MHST, and it is expected that the team will 'go live' in September 2020.

There is an ambitious programme of work that needs to take place between now and September 2020 to ensure the team is ready, which includes:

- Recruitment of staff for the MHST.
- Service model and specification development
- Putting arrangements in place to ensure that the local authority is able to flow data to NHS England in line with reporting requirements
- Further communication and engagement activity with relevant partners, colleagues and schools.
- Adhering to a robust monitoring and reporting schedule as a condition of the funding.

More broadly, the Council and partners have been considering how the MHST will sit within our local emotional wellbeing offer and the way in which we currently deliver emotional health and wellbeing support to children and young people across the Borough. We believe that every child and young person has the right to good mental and emotional wellbeing and continue to be committed to supporting every child and young person with their emotional and mental health needs at the right time and place.

Wokingham's Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy has set out how Wokingham Borough Council, alongside health and the voluntary sector, will improve early help for children and young people's emotional and mental health. This strategy sits alongside the Local Transformation Plan (LTP) for Berkshire West and the wider agenda of transforming mental health services.

As well as the developing MHST, Wokingham currently has a range of services in place to support children's emotional health and wellbeing, including Primary CAMHS, School Link, Educational Psychology, Early Help, School Nursing and Youth Counselling (a summary of local services is given in Appendix A), however there is still more we want to do to make our local services the best they can be. In particular we want to make it easier for children, young people and parents to get information and early support about emotional and mental health.

We believe it is helpful and timely to review current arrangements for the provision of emotional health and wellbeing support in order:

- ✓ To improve the emotional health and wellbeing offer to children and young people.
- ✓ To take account of the changing landscape of local emotional health and wellbeing service offer in the context of the development of MHSTs.
- ✓ To provide an opportunity to review how well current needs of vulnerable children and young people (i.e. children in Care) are met by existing provision
- ✓ To seek to co –produce and design a local approach and service offer that will support and embed learning and respond to what children and young people have told us is important.
- ✓ To ensure a more integrated and coordinated approach across partners
- ✓ To improve access and simplify pathways so that support can be accessed at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ To improve our understanding of need and the impact of locally commissioned services
- ✓ To effectively utilise local funding to improve service provision and timely access to support

The review will consider how quickly and easily local services providing emotional support and wellbeing can be accessed when they are needed and whether there are opportunities to simplify this. The review will also consider whether there are opportunities to improve co-ordination between local services. Learning set out in the LTP highlights that multiagency emotional health “triage” at an earlier stage to be a particularly effective way of harnessing a swift community response before needs escalate. We will therefore give particular consideration to a service model based on and underpinned by a single/multidisciplinary team model of support, alongside our local service delivery in schools. Multidisciplinary teams convey many benefits to

both children/young people and the mental health professionals working on the team, such as continuity of care, the ability to take a comprehensive, holistic view of needs, the availability of a range of skills, and mutual support and education.

We will seek identify opportunities to work alongside children and young people during the review to jointly develop and shape future proposals. We fully recognise that those who use or may wish to use a service are best placed to help design it. Our young people have already said they are concerned about:

- Timely help and to be listened to without judgement.
- Mental health difficulties to be seen as a normal part of growing up.
- The right information about rights and entitlements
- Knowing where and how to get help
- Opportunities and access to self-help resources
- Good model of access to support in schools and opportunities to learn about mental ill health and wellbeing
- Help with exam stress/academic anxiety, friendship difficulties, problems at home, and pressure to fit in.

The review will lead to the development of an options appraisal for the future design and delivery of emotional wellbeing support. Expected benefits of any future agreed option would include:

- Improved user experience - reduced confusion for families, young people, schools and professionals
- Reduction in likelihood of children, young people and families being bounced around the system until they find the right support – improved “system navigation” around the complex network of support available for children and young people with emotional and mental health needs by timely directing of referrals to the most appropriate support/agency.
- Improved integration and joint working between multi-disciplinary professionals
- More coordinated and young people focused approach to supporting children and young people’s emotional and mental health
- Front-loading support and expertise early in the pathways.
- Reduction in waiting times from assessment to intervention by offering clinical support to those that most need it.
- Reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals to services
- Reduced demand on Specialist CAMHS
- Improved understanding and knowledge about local services and support available and where there is capacity within the wider system.
- Improved placement stability
- Improved educational outcomes/engagement

The Council has established a multi- agency Wokingham Emotional Wellbeing Task and Finish Group to drive and oversee the review. It is envisaged that proposals following the completion of the review will be developed by summer 2020.

Within the Council, Governance of both the MHST project and emotional wellbeing project will sit under the Council's Children's Improvement Programme in order to align the projects and ensure strategic direction and linkage between the two.

Officers will ensure that there are appropriate links to governance arrangements and requirements from partners.

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