

TITLE	Children In Care CAMHS Provision Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 March 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The establishment of a children in care CAMH Service will ensure that children who are in care receive quicker access to mental health support through sharing information and knowledge, directly assessing the needs of children and young people in care and providing interventions that meet needs where that is best for the child or young person.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for information only.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The mental health of children in care is significantly poorer than that of their peers, nationally almost half of children and young people in care meet the criteria for a psychiatric disorder¹. In comparison one in ten non-looked-after children and young people suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder.²

The local transformation plan (LTP) for improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing 2021 prioritised needing a specific response to the mental health needs of children in the care of the Local Authorities in the Berkshire West area.

It is recognised that children in care and their carers and families can have specific support needs and may need access to specialist support.

A Children in Care CAMH Service has been established across Berkshire West (commissioned by Wokingham Borough Council, Brighter Futures for Children, West Berkshire Council & the ICB) to ensure that children who are in care receive quicker access to mental health support through sharing information and knowledge, directly assessing the needs of children and young people in care and providing interventions that meet needs where that is best for the child or young person. The provider of the service is Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.

The service is expected to be fully operational (fully staffed) by April 2023, however, as some of the clinicians are already in post, the service has begun to offer consultations to children in care in all of the three local authorities.

1 (Luke et al, *What works in preventing and treating poor mental health in looked-after children?* (August 2014).

2 (Office of National Statistics, *Mental health of children and young people in Great Britain, 2004* (August 2005), p xxi.)

Background

A Children in Care CAMH Service is being established across Berkshire West to ensure that children who are in care receive quicker access to mental health support through sharing information and knowledge, directly assessing the needs of children and young people in care and providing interventions that meet needs where that is best for the child or young person.

Aims of the service

The service aims to improve life chances of Children in Care, by working towards the provision of trauma informed care and increasing these resiliency factors:

- Providing guidance to the system that will streamline the support that professionals give; so that it is developmentally appropriate, coordinated and experienced by the young person as therapeutic.
- Creating stability of the child or young person's home placement
- Supporting children and young people to be able to maintain a relationship with family members and work to be re-united where that is possible.
- Fostering as strong an attachment as possible with the children and young people's foster carers or adults responsible for their care (if in a residential setting)
- Reaching as high as possible education achievements
- Creating local social networks, forming positive and meaningful relationships with peers and other adults.
- Improving awareness and understanding of the emotional and mental health needs of children in care

Specifically, the objectives of this service will be to:

- Provide evidence based mental health assessments
- Use these high-quality assessments to inform multi-disciplinary care planning and inform interventions (clinical and non-clinical) that are available to that child or young person
- Share knowledge, expertise, advice and guidance to professionals (including foster carers) that are in the life of that child or young person so better and more informed decisions (both small and significant in scale) are made with children and young people about their lives.
- Provide training to professionals (including foster carers) about the child or young person's presentation of need to enable adults to identify needs earlier, respond in a knowledgeable and empathic way and be confident that as adults they are doing the right things for that child or young person.
- Provide evidenced based interventions directly with children and young people and foster carers that support improved outcomes for Emotional wellbeing and Mental Health
- The service is being established to be embedded within Local Authority Children's services relevant and responsible Children in Care teams.

Training Offer

Any Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer or foster carer in the employment of the 3 Local Authorities (Reading, Wokingham, West Berkshire) is eligible for the training service offer. Any teacher that is teaching/caring for a Reading, Wokingham, West Berkshire child in care is also eligible for the training service offer.

The training will be planned and available regularly. Where appropriate, links to existing pathway specific support will be available (such as existing psychoeducation for supporting young people with anxiety/ depression) and complemented by specific training to increase awareness and understanding of conditions, mental health needs (focusing on building attachment and impact of trauma) and developing skills to support management of mental health issues, for example self-harm in the context of mental health.

In addition, the training programme will be further developed in partnership with professional and carers needs. This will include local, regional and national resources complemented by bespoke training from the team. A combination of online and face to face training will be available.

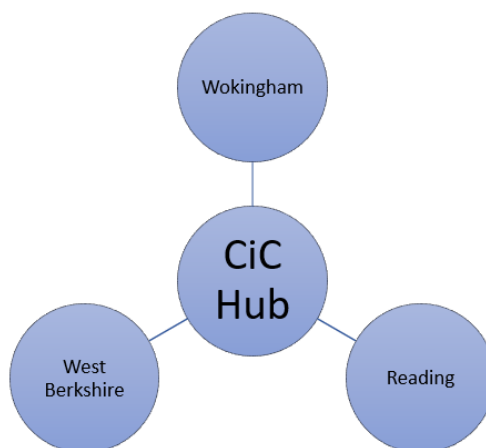
The training can be bespoke to a team or Local Authority, but it is encouraged to offer regular and cross LA opportunities to maximise the training resource from the service.

Service Description

The Children in Care (CiC) CAMHs service will offer a Hub and Spoke model of provision. The Hub will be part of the wider CAMHs services based at NHS CAMHs service with the spokes in reaching into the local authority social care teams

The Hub will allow the service to maintain professional identity, access to core CAMHs pathways, simplify reporting procedures, cover duty requirements, and reduce on-costs for the local authority.

The spokes will allow for members of staff to build links and relationships with social care teams, provide a named contact, facilitate swift referrals, access local record keeping systems while able to access supervision, consultation and cover from the Hub. This will minimise gaps in service provision due to leave, training or staff vacancies.



Service Structure

The team consists of:

- Clinical Psychologist/Specialist Clinical Lead
- Highly Specialised Mental Health Practitioners

These are important posts which interface with partner agencies and other specialist CAMHS services. A high degree of experience and clinical expertise is required for these posts given the complex needs of the children and young people this service will be providing specialist mental health services for.

The service may also offer a clinical placement opportunity for a Trainee Clinical Psychologist from September/Oct 2023.

Service Mobilisation

As some of the posts have been filled, the service has begun to offer consultations to children in care in all of the three local authorities. The service will continue to gain momentum as recruitment to the team continues over the next few weeks. During the mobilisation period staff are undergoing a period of induction as well as developing relevant processes, pathways and policies.

The service is expected to be fully operational (fully staffed) by April 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	n/a		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

n/a

Cross-Council Implications

n/a

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

Please state clearly what the impact of the decision being made would be on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

n/a

List of Background Papers

n/a

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