

**Name of meeting:** Corporate Parenting Board  
**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021  
**Title of report:** Thriving Kirklees and CAMHS update

### Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Thriving Kirklees Partnership, including the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and emotional wellbeing support provided for Children in Care.

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|--|---|
| Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? | NA  |
| Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a>                                    | NA  |
| The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?   | NA  |
| Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name  | Tom Brailsford – 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 |
| Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?   | NA  |
| Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?  | NA  |
| Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>   | Cllr V Kendrick Childrens Portfolio             |

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** None

**Public or private:** Public

**(Have you considered GDPR?)**

Yes GDPR has been considered. The information in this report does not identify any individuals.

## **1. Summary**

### **Thriving Kirklees Partnership**

The Thriving Kirklees Partnership was developed as an innovative way to bring together a range of children's service providers together in order to deliver integrated holistic services that are designed with children and families to make their experience more seamless and to have a focus on positive outcomes.

The Thriving Kirklees contract was awarded in 2017 as an ambitious 10 year transformation programme. As we reached the mid-point of the contract, we commissioned an independent review of the service to evaluate how the partnership and integration had progressed, whether the outcomes of the specifications were being met, and to make any recommendations for future developments. The authors of the report spoke with a wide range of stakeholders, including families and health and social care professionals. The report concluded that significant progress had been made and provided a number of recommendations for further improvements.

Following the review an action plan has been created to implement the recommendations to be implemented by commissioners and partners. This includes an update of the service specifications, which are being reviewed with stakeholders to reflect changing needs and to drive improvements during the second five years of the contract.

A key recommendation of the review was for closer co-operation and integration with our Early Support offer. Teams are working together to improve pathways, reduce duplication and develop appropriate early intervention services.

### **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support for Children & Young People**

Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing activity in Kirklees is provided through the Thriving Kirklees contract. Lead contractor for Thriving Kirklees is Locala, in partnership with South West Yorkshire Foundation Trust (SWYFT), Northorpe Hall, Yorkshire Children's Centre and Homestart.

Referrals into the service are made through the Thriving Kirklees Single Point of Access (SPA). SWYFT provide the clinical mental health service (formerly known as tier 3) whereas Northorpe Hall provide the Children's Emotional Wellbeing Service (CHEWS – formerly tier 2). In-patient mental health beds (tier 4) are commissioned by NHS England.

Autism and ADHD assessment is provided as part of the Thriving Kirklees contract as a combined neurodevelopmental pathway.

This report describes the current demand pressures on the service and waiting times. It also provides an overview of the plans in development to improve the quality and responsiveness of support provided.

Whilst Children in Care can access the range Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support, specific additional support for Children in Care is also commissioned from SWYFT and Northorpe Hall.

## **CAMHS service**

The CAMHS service provides a range of clinical services to meet the range of mental health needs, including crisis support.

The Core CAMHS service is the general mental health provision for young people in Kirklees providing ongoing psychosocial interventions such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or Counselling, as well as providing coping strategies and self-management techniques. It consists of a range of mental health practitioners, including nurses, occupational therapists and psychologists.

In line with national trends demand for CAMHS services in Kirklees has been rising steadily in recent years. Significant investments have been made to increase capacity and reduce waiting times during the life of the Thriving Kirklees contract, but the rise in demand means that people still often wait longer than they should for assessment and treatment. The number of Children & Young People on the waiting list for core CAMHS is beginning to gradually reduce. New support requests are currently below the 12 month rolling average. Following a spike in August, due to staff annual leave, waiting times for core CAMHS are steady and are below the annual average at 7.9 weeks. (see appendix One).

There is currently a national shortage of suitably qualified mental health staff so it has been difficult to recruit and retain enough of the right staff to provide the level of service we expect.

We have recently carried out a CAMHS survey which has told us that generally, children, young people and their families benefit from the clinical input when they receive it but they also value a rapid response when they seek help.

In 2020 an independent review of the CAMHS service was carried out which made a number of recommendations, including:

- Increase clinical leadership in the SPA to aid triage
- Improve SPA processes to reduce hand-offs and waiting times
- Clarify the role of the SPA in 'Getting advice'
- Closer working with Early Support and Family Hubs
- Improved digital and online offer

An action plan has been developed and these recommendations are being taken forward by the partnership, supported by commissioners.

In addition to this, recent development activity to support CAMHS services includes;

- Mental Health in Schools teams
- Place Partnership mental health schemes
- Silver Cloud online support
- Night Owls overnight MH support line

The MHST should play a significant role in providing rapid support to young people, working closely with schools. It has provided a significant investment in extra staff and training. The MHST pilot currently covers approximately 40% of Kirklees schools. From January 2022 this will increase to 50%.

## **Children's Emotional Wellbeing Service**

The Children's Emotional Wellbeing Service (CHEWS) is provided by Northorpe Hall Child and Family Trust. This service provides emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people by offering face to face support, including counselling, group work, telephone support and family support.

The Covid 19 pandemic has impacted the service in two ways – demand for the service has increased and the capacity to deliver the service has been reduced, either through restricted face to face contact or staff sickness/isolation. This resulted in the increase in expected waiting times from under 12 weeks in October 2020 to 24 weeks in July 2021.

We are working closely with Thriving Kirklees to find ways to improve the service offer and to reduce waiting times. This includes improvements to the Single Point of Access, such as better clinical triage and closer working with Early Support services. There is a range of support options available while children are waiting. This includes information and advice on the Thriving Kirklees and Local Offer websites, online support and counselling from the Kooth and Chat Health apps. As our Mental Health in Schools teams continue to develop, schools are able to refer directly to the teams to support children quickly and effectively.

## **Neurodevelopmental assessment**

In line with national and regional trends demand for autism and ADHD assessment in Kirklees has increased in recent years. Waiting times have been a long term issue for the service and significant investment reduced waiting times to 7 months in September 2020. Requests for assessment rose from approximately 30 per month in 2017 to approx. 75 per month by 2020.

The assessment service was significantly impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. Assessment clinics were halted as face to face contact was not possible and clinicians were redeployed to carry out other tasks. As a result waiting times rose to 92.4 weeks in September 2021, with 789 children and young people on the waiting list.

An action plan has been created to reduce waiting times and improve support to children and families waiting for assessment. This includes short term funding for extra assessments to address the people who have been waiting longest on the waiting list and additional long term funding to increase the number of assessments that can be carried out in future to match demand. The aim is to reduce longest waiting times to under 12 months within a year.

In addition to this, work is ongoing with Thriving Kirklees and Early Support to provide earlier help and advice to families pre-diagnosis or while they are on the waiting list.

Where an urgent diagnosis has been required to facilitate the appropriate placement or support for a child in care, assessments have been commissioned from independent providers.

## **Support for Children with Autism and Learning Disabilities**

We have introduced a new Intensive Support Team (IST) to provide specialist, multidisciplinary input to young people who have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and who present with behaviours that increase the risk of:

- contact with the criminal justice system;
- or a specialist hospital admission;

- or a breakdown of a placement (that results in an out of area or specialist residential placement).

This is a new team which is intended to work intensively with the families most in need. The team carry out specialist assessments, including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Functional Behaviour assessments to inform treatment and advice.

Between October 2020 and September 2021 they have provided support to 16 young people presenting with significant risks, such as a young person with a diagnosis of autism, learning disability and pica (eating inedible objects) to prevent a family placement breakdown.

We provide the Cygnet parenting support programme through Northorpe Hall for parents of children with a diagnosis of autism. This consists of 6 weekly sessions of 2 to 3 hours where families can learn how to support their child effectively.

We are currently redesigning our support offer for children and families on the waiting list for autism assessment in conjunction with our Early Support service to provide greater access to support and advice.

We also commission a Specialist Learning Disability service for children & young people from SWYFT. This team often work with our Children's Homes to support staff when looking after young people with challenging behaviours, to understand their behaviours and provide techniques and strategies to help respond to them.

## **Eating disorders**

Demand for support with eating disorders has risen sharply throughout the pandemic with the caseload rising from 39 in September 2020 to 81 in August 2021. Eating disorder referrals are on a downward trajectory currently. 100% response time targets achieved in September 21.

Additional funding has been made available to support and develop an increased community eating disorder provision, with an emphasis on early intervention and hospital admission avoidance.

## **Emotional Wellbeing support for Children in Care (Vulnerable Young People team)**

Children in Care can access any of the mental health and Emotional wellbeing services in our mainstream offer, such as crisis support, eating disorder service or neurodevelopmental pathway. However, we recognise that due to their circumstances and increased level of need, Children in Care often require an additional level of support.

Emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children in care, their carers and care leavers in Kirklees is provided by a multi-disciplinary team which comprises Clinicians employed by CAMHS working alongside social workers. This includes psychologist, psychotherapist and mental health practitioners with a wide variety of professional skills.

The team use a varied range of interventions dependent upon the needs identified and actions agreed during the consultation process. The team can also commission recommended therapeutic intervention for looked after children who live outside of the Kirklees boundary in another Local Authority.

The team has an emphasis on supporting foster carers and families to maintain and support stable and emotionally nurturing placements for our looked after children.

Regular Emotional Well-being Clinics are held where a multi-disciplinary team meet to provide consultation and advice to social workers working with children and young people who have or are experiencing difficulties with emotional well-being resulting from Early Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). A bespoke support plan is created for each young person and/or family. The EWB provides support and guidance for foster carers to help them support the children in their care and to maintain the family environment.

The team provide support to Kirklees Residential Children's Homes to meet the needs of the children who live there. The Clinical Psychologist offers guidance and advice to adapt responses to meet the individual and cumulative needs of the looked after children in residential settings. A CAMHS Learning Disability Advanced Nurse Practitioner provides specialist support and advice to residential home staff to support young people with challenging behaviours due to LD and/or autism.

The team also work directly with children and young people. This includes play therapy, support to develop skills to improve self-regulation, self-awareness and undertake therapeutic life story work.

Waiting times for Emotional Wellbeing clinics are currently 5 to 6 weeks, against a target of 28 days. This is a result of difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff. For comparison the expected waiting time for regular CAMHS/CHEWS support is currently 24 weeks

A new holistic service model for the Placement Support team (known as 'One' Placement Support) is currently being developed with a different skill mix and structure which will include dedicated clinicians, including psychologists, to work with children and staff teams. The service will have a trauma informed focus. There will be an emphasis on skills development and support for non-clinical members of the team. This will make the team more responsive and better able to meet needs of the young people. This will sit alongside our multi-systemic therapy offer, which aims to re-unite families, as well as provide more direct clinical input into our children's homes.

### **Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaire**

Every year we send out a Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) to all of our families with Children in Care. This helps social workers and health professionals to understand the emotional and mental health needs of the children. If the score is of concern, the child's social worker will contact the Emotional Well-being Team for support, alongside the Supervising Social Worker and the carer.

The most recent figures show that the rate of cause for concern has increased in the last year. This reflects an increase in emotional wellbeing concerns displayed in the general Year 9 pupil survey in Kirklees and nationally during the COVID 19 pandemic.

### **Virtual School**

The Kirklees Virtual School ensures that Health and Emotional Well Being is discussed in every Personal Education Plan (PEP) and rated Red, Amber, Green. These ratings and the SDQ scores form the basis of individual action plans for each child. The identified actions and follow up activities are identified and reviewed.

Funding from the Virtual School enables Kirklees children in care to access an enhanced service within CHEWS at Northorpe Hall. This gives priority access to services for Children

in Care. The length of time the service can work with a young person is extended from standard provision, with no fixed time limit in place.

## **Specialist Placements and Packages of Care and Support**

Our aim is for children to live in a family environment wherever possible although there are occasions when the needs of the young person are such that they require a residential placement with a package of care and support wrapped around them. In these cases the needs of the young person are presented to a multi-disciplinary panel to decide the most appropriate placement and the support required taking into account their social care and health needs, as well as their education. We ensure that the home is able to provide the mental health support from appropriate professionals before agreeing the placement.

The aim is still for children to live in, or close to Kirklees (within 20 miles) where possible. However, sometimes where a particular specialist placement is needed it may be further away. Joint funding is arranged for residential placements with contributions from social care, health and education, as required.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

We recognise that Children in Care are amongst the most vulnerable in the community and often present with greater levels of need than the general population. They have frequently experienced significant trauma which can adversely affect their behaviour and self-regulation. The need for rapid access to emotional wellbeing and mental health support is often increased to support or maintain a placement. For these reasons we have made the additional investments in specialist services as described in this report.

We are currently implementing a Kirklees wide approach to addressing trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). We are also developing an Emotional Wellbeing Strategy for Kirklees which will be supported by an action plan and strategy group.

Kirklees Children & Families services received a Focussed Visit from Ofsted inspectors in October 2021. The visit report praised the Kirklees approach to emotional wellbeing provision for Children in Care. However, we are continuously looking to improve our provision to meet the increasing demand and complexity of Children in Care and we will work with children and families to co-produce services to provide the support they need at the right time, in the right way.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

The board are asked to note the contents of this report.

## 3. Implications for the Council

**3.1 Working with People** Thriving Kirklees is committed to the principles of co-production and working with children, families and partner agencies to develop integrated, holistic services.

**3.2 Working with Partners** The Thriving Kirklees partnership is well engaged with the partnership approach and is well engaged with Early Support, Social Care and Education services.

**3.3 Place Based Working** Thriving Kirklees partners are developing place based working arrangements in conjunction with the Family Hub model.

### 3.4 Improving Outcomes for Children

Children in Care are often among the most vulnerable in the community. This report describes how we make additional provision and resources available to prioritise the emotional wellbeing of Children in Care. This in turn will impact upon achievement in education and improve life chances.

### 3.5 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

### 3.6 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

## 4. Consultees and their opinions

N/A

## 5. Next steps

N/A

## 6. Officer recommendations and reasons

- The content of the report is noted by the board
- The board agree to receive future updates in relation to the EHWP provision for our children looked after as "One" placement support is developed and Implemented

## 7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable



**8. Contact officer**

Stewart Horn, Head of Children's Integrated Commissioning

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

N/A.

**10. Service Director responsible**

Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)