

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Trafford Pandemic Scrutiny Committee
Date: 23/07/2020
Report for: Information/Discussion
Report of: Trafford Integrated Commissioning

Report Title

Children's Mental Health: response to COVID 19

Summary

This paper provides an overview of Trafford CAMHS performance and response during COVID19.

Due to COVID referral numbers were initially reduced into the service but have started to increase again. Under COVID, the service opened up to accept self-referrals and will continue to do so.

A Virtual Mental Wealth Hub (VMWH) has been formed bringing together many partners to ensure all children, families and schools had early access to a range of support at a universal and targeted level. Education, commissioners and CAMHS are playing a key role in driving this work.

The VMWH is developing a Trafford Toolkit for schools and a 'Welcome Back' video will be ready for the start of term, with all key partner agencies contributing by providing an introduction to their service and resources available.

Recommendation(s)

The committee is asked to note the content of this paper and advise of any further action required.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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1. Background

Children’s Mental Health: The Committee welcome the news of reduced waiting lists for the Healthy Young Minds Service during COVID-19. Members had concerns regarding how referral pathways were functioning during COVID-19 and that an increase in referrals could happen once the restrictions were lifted. The Committee would like to be kept informed if there are any spikes in referrals and if the waiting list for the service started to increase again.

2. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

2.1 COVID response

Trafford CAMHS provided by Manchester Foundation Trust (MFT) has continued to provide support to all open cases, accept new referrals and offer a duty system to respond to emergency and urgent cases. To ensure access during COVID the service opened up to self-referrals, meaning that parents could refer their child into the service directly. It has been agreed that this will continue beyond COVID. The service has continued to offer face to face assessments if there is risk or it is clinically indicated. Duty workers have made contact with all young people/families following their referral to triage/assess and offer advice and guidance over the telephone.

The service has set up digital offers through webinars and virtual support groups and has worked with the Virtual School to offer training to designated teachers in schools.

2.2 Referrals

The service has continued to receive urgent and non-urgent referrals, overall referral numbers were reduced in quarter 1, in line with the national picture. This is clear, when looking at the same period from the previous year.

In 2019/20 quarter 1 there were 443 referrals into CAMHS, in 2020/21 there were 233. The lower than usual referral rates have been attributed to the pandemic and lock down. It is important to note that whilst the service was receiving fewer referrals, its activity was significantly increased during this period by the additional contacts and measures put in place around the duty system. Activity data from quarter 1 of 2019/20 shows that the service had 2988 contacts, in the same period for 2020/21 there were 4822 contacts.

2.3 Waiting times

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	2019			2020		
	April	May	June	April	May	June
Avg. Wait For First Assessment (Weeks)	10.4	6.5	11.4	10.3	4.1	3.9
Percent Target 12 week	71%	87%	65%	65%	88%	88%

□

The above table provides waiting times for quarter 1 in both 19/20 and 20/21. As of the end of July, there were 13 children/young people waiting to have a ‘booked appointment’, no referral has waited more than 5 weeks for an appointment. CAMHS are represented at the Children’s Health group by the Assistant

Director and at the Mental Health sub-group by the service manager. Commissioners are in regular contact with the service and continue to monitor referral and waiting times.

2.4 COVID response

The CAMHS directorate at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital has established 2 working groups in response to COVID. These are:

- **Reintegration and Recovery** objectives are to offer support, clear guidance, reassurance and welfare considerations on resuming and providing care. It will share and build on the good practice to date and within this establish consistency, reduce unwarranted variation to produce a safe and effective CAMHS offer. In moving to new ways of working it will reflect on what elements prior to COVID did not serve in best meeting the needs of children and young people and those who care for them, i.e. what we don't want to go back to.
- **Surge Planning** will look at how the CAMHS directorate can increase support to the wider system - applying THRIVE principals - that enables wider partners to support and manage, where possible to hold Children and Young People effectively. Within this developing a clear offer that aims to manage the potential surge and demand expected - dispersing need and improving choice where possible.

The service will be further developing and increasing its advice and consultation offer to schools and has employed a THRIVE subject matter expert in order to support this work with schools around the advice and signposting element of the THRIVE model. A training session has been organised for schools in the Autumn term on 'Getting Advice and Signposting' that will be jointly delivered by the GM iTHRIVE hub, commissioning and Education Psychology service to ensure that schools understand the offers available.

3. Virtual Mental Wealth Hub

In order to support planning for the return to school and a possible surge in mental health referrals, a Virtual Mental Wealth Hub (VMWH) has been formed. It was recognised that there was a need to bring together the many partners working in this area, especially in response to COVID and the issues which could arise, to ensure that all children, families and schools had early access to a range of support at a universal and targeted level. There is a wealth of support available in Trafford, but we needed to ensure that it is cohesive and identify any gaps in support for early intervention to try to ensure that any specialist capacity was available to those most in need.

The Hub involves key personnel from Education, Health and Social Care along with schools, partner agencies, Communications & Marketing, commissioned services and voluntary and community sector services. The education service, commissioners and CAMHS are playing a key role in driving this work. The response from all partners has been really positive and there is a strong will to ensure that we can all work together to support children, schools and families.

Actions in the first phase have been to draw together a Trafford Toolkit in response to requests from schools to support them in navigating the overwhelming range of resources available to support them and their pupils in emotional and mental wellbeing. The first draft has gone to schools with some very positive feedback and the first edition will be available for September 1st. It will sit on the Family Information service website on a Virtual Mental Wealth Hub page and will be updated as and when required.

We are also producing a 'Welcome Back' video for schools, again for September 1st, with many key agencies and providers giving a brief introduction of their service and links to favourite resources. Again, feedback from schools was very positive around this plan.

Second phase plans will be confirmed in September when we will have more clarity on the issues emerging from the return to school. There is a lot of interest in exploring how this can support the Early Help Hubs and this may form some of the work done by the sub groups at that point.

The committee will be kept informed of the developments around children's mental health and emotional wellbeing work, including referral rates and waiting times.

Information provided by Karen McCallum