

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny board

Date: 17/11/2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support for Children and Young People - October 2025

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: N/A

Director Contact Details: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This paper has been prepared to provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the support available for children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, with a focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

2. Reason for Report

- 2.1. To provide assurance to the members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board relating to the Key Lines of Enquiry below;
- 1) Delivery of the outcomes framework for mental health in schools.
 - 2) Access to mental health services for children and young people diagnosed with autism.
 - 3) Support provided to assist families when young people are on waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or who don't meet the threshold, including how the community and voluntary sector support.
 - 4) How access to Mood, Emotion and Relationships (MERS) (previously CAMHS) has improved and updated waiting list position.
 - 5) Action being taken to reduce waiting lists to ensure young people get access to support sooner.
 - 6) How the access to the Schools Mental Health Programme has been improving outcomes for young people.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview Scrutiny Board to note the contents of the report.

4. Appendices

N/A

5. Background Documents

- 5.1 Appendix 1: NHS Devon Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy. (Attached)
- 5.2 Appendix 2: NHS Devon Neurodiversity Strategy. (Attached)

6. Supporting Information

NHS Devon's Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing and Neurodiversity strategies bring together several strategic drivers, the current context of services and gaps in need to inform the future commissioning of these services. Development of implementation plans within each local area are currently underway with each of the local authorities and partner organisations with these anticipated to be signed off in December.

Services commissioned by NHS Devon that support children and young people with their Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health needs are inclusive for all young people, including those with Autism, ADHD and other neurodiverse conditions, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

These services include; Mental Health Support Teams (MHST), MyWay (Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Service), Mood, Emotions and Relationships (MERS) (previously known as Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the PINs project, Key Workers and the Dynamic Support Register.

1) Delivery of the outcomes framework for Mental Health Support Teams.

The Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) Outcome Framework has been developed from the National Template. Devon Mental Health Support Teams report into the Mental Health Services Data Set which is compiled by NHS England. This records function and activity regarding the requirement to 'Deliver evidence-based interventions for common mental health needs.'

The outcomes framework includes measures around referral numbers, wait times, numbers of whole school approach interventions and type of activities, number of CYP, staff and parents supported with advice and guidance and where they were signposted onto. On-going work is underway between commissioners and Mental Health Support Team providers to formalise reporting against the Outcomes Framework.

The Mental Health Support Teams are overseen by the Mental Health Support Team Steering Group which is formed by representatives from the Children's Devon system including; Local authority representation, Mental Health providers, Mental Health Support Team leads, Commissioners and voluntary and community sector organisations.

This group has the oversight of the rollout of the Mental Health Support Teams Programme. Teams began being implemented in September 2019 with the NHS England National Target for all areas to reach 100% coverage by 2029/2030. A prioritisation matrix was developed and is regularly updated to inform the prioritisation of geographical rollout, taking into account the pupil population and the needs of the cohort. This is used to map the gap between current provision and predicted need to inform rollout in areas of priority using weighted prioritisation.

The prioritisation matrix considers;

- Average % of Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Number of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Number of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities whose primary need is Social Emotional and Mental Health
- Number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium
- Current Coverage: Number of Pupils with access to Mental Health Support Teams
- Estimated Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities whose primary need is Social Emotional and Mental Health

Mental Health Support Team's currently report against the access target though the Mental Health Services Data set which is submitted to NHS England. The access target is being achieved for the NHS Devon Footprint covering Torbay, Devon and Plymouth.

The teams within the Devon ICB footprint are seeing a higher number of children and young people referred within Torbay, Devon and Plymouth, than in any other area of the Southwest.

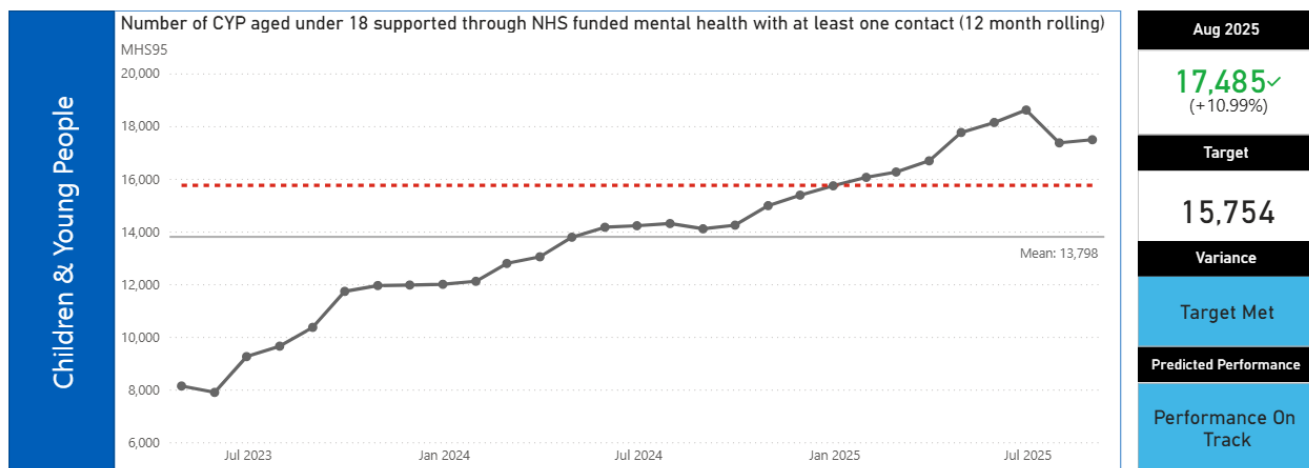
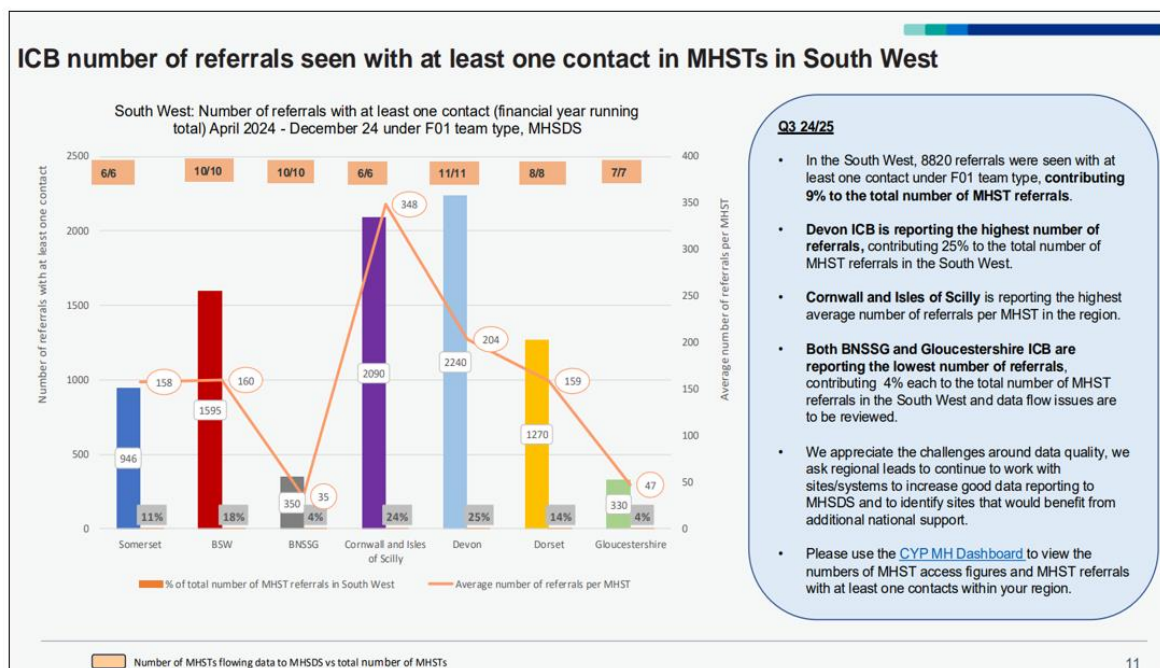


Diagram 1: CYP Access Target- Demonstration of achievement of access target at NHS Devon footprint



Picture 1: Extract from 2024-25 Q4 Devon Quarterly Check in slides report

2) Access to mental health services for children and young people diagnosed with autism.

Children and Young People diagnosed with autism can access the commissioned emotional mental health and wellbeing offers in Devon. The staff teams access training and support to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to support the individual needs of children and young people, including those with neurodiversity and other presentations that require adaptations to the service.

MyWay, Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Service provides a range of interventions to support children and young people with their wellbeing, their way. The service offers include; community based advice and guidance, community based therapeutic interventions, digital based advice and guidance and digital therapeutic interventions. The service is self-referral and accessible to all 11-17 year olds, with extended access for 8-25 year olds who are care experienced or who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The service has been commissioned with flexibility within the model to ensure it is accessible to a wide range of cohorts. The providers have focused on co-production within mobilisation to ensure that young people have been involved in the development of the service to help shape it to meet the needs of children and young people with a variety of needs, including Autism and other neurodiversity.

Mental Health Support Teams offer individual and group Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Li-CBT) evidence-based interventions. Access to the teams is through self-referral. The emotional wellbeing mental health practitioners working in mental health support teams complete a unit focused on neurodiversity within their training and have specific resources available for various cohorts of young people including those who are neurodiverse, have special educational needs or who are care experienced.

NHS England have announced a 'MHST enhancement' to have teams focused on specific cohorts such as neurodiversity and trauma. Devon ICB has expressed an interest in being a pilot site. This will be an effective way of combining current work within the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) Programme and whole school approaches to supporting young people's social emotional and mental health needs, including those with neurodiversity, including Autism, ADHD and other conditions.

The offer can be found here: [The Mental Health Support Team in Schools \(MHST\) - Children and Family Health Devon](#) and includes; Mental health workshops for children and young people, parents, carers and education staff, mental health audits of schools, consultations for school staff and time to reflect/supervision spaces, mental health ambassador programme, Personal Social and Health Education lessons, parenting support and groups, including coffee mornings and training.

Mood, Emotion and Relationships (MERS) (previously Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS)

Children and young people referred to Children Family Health Devon with a diagnosis of autism can access all pathways including those addressing mental health needs.

Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD) deliver specialist mental health services in Torbay. The Mood, Emotion and Relationships (MERS) Pathway (previously known as CAHMS) includes Children's Wellbeing Practitioners who provide low-intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy support, both on an individual and group basis within the community. These practitioners provide a specific offer to children and young people who are electively home educated. This service can be

accessed via referral from schools, primary care and also by self-referral from the young person or their parent/ carer.

In addition, if Children and Family Health Devon are assessing a young person for autism and recognise additional mental health needs, support for this will be provided in a number of ways including;

- Support from within other specialist Children and Family Health Devon pathways, including the Key Worker Team.
- Signposting to other relevant providers of support such as Mental Health Support Teams, Parental Minds, Young Devon etc.

3) Support provided to assist families when young people are on waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or who don't meet the threshold, including how the community and voluntary sector support.

There are a variety of emotional wellbeing and mental health support services available to children, young people and their families from both the NHS and community and voluntary sector organisations. These can be accessed before being referred or accepted to specialist health services, while waiting to be seen and after having received specialist treatment.

The MyWay (Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing) service has recently been commissioned to improve access to timely support, with the aim of reducing demand on acute mental health services and improving access to support.

[MyWay](#) is commissioned to provide support to 5000 young people a year with the aim to improve their mental health and wellbeing through timely access to preventative care and tailored support.

Children and Young People aged 11-18 are eligible to access the service with those who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities or who are care experienced being able to access the service between the extended age range of 8-25.

The service is provided by the Young Devon Partnership bringing organisations together to ensure the best possible support is available for young people within their area.

Organisations that form the partnership are;

- **Young Devon**- delivering wellbeing support in local communities for three decades
- **Kooth**- years of experience in digital wellbeing nationally and internationally.
- **Space**- delivering open access youth services across Devon.
- **Encompass**- providing the right support and advice to local people
- **Plymouth City Council**- developing wellbeing in youth groups

The service is made up of four main offers;

1. **Community-Based Advice and Guidance:** Providing face-to-face support to increase hope, resilience, and engagement in education and community life.
2. **Community Based Therapeutic Interventions:** Delivering evidence-based counselling and cognitive-behavioural therapy to support recovery from mental health issues.
3. **Digital Based Advice and Guidance:** Offering online resources, self help tools, and peer support forums accessible 24/7 to promote emotional wellbeing.
4. **Digital Therapeutic Interventions:** Digital delivery of therapeutic treatments with rapid response times to referrals, emphasising flexible and accessible support.

The service can be accessed via self-referral, and there is an online booking system available through the Young Devon website.

Mental Health Support Teams are based within education settings providing support to children and young people with mild to moderate mental health needs. They are accessible by self-referral and provide a range of interventions, with support tailored to the needs of the individual young person seeking support.

Each team supports between 8000-8500 CYP and provides three functions;

1. Deliver evidence-based interventions for common mental health needs.
2. Support senior mental health leads in education settings to develop and introduce their whole-school or whole-college approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.
3. Provide timely advice to staff and liaise with external specialist services so that children and young people can get the right support and remain in education.

Within Torbay there are two Mental Health Support Teams providing support to 20 education settings with Primary, Secondary and Special Schools being supported by teams.

[Lumi Nova, Tales of Courage](#) can be accessed by children and young people in Torbay and Devon as part of the Mental Health Support Team offer.

Lumi Nova is an engaging child-led, parent/guardian supported therapeutic intervention (game) that can be used on most smartphones or tablets. It is designed for 7-12 year olds facing difficulties with anxiety and is free and immediate to access (no waiting list). It is evidence based with built-in safeguarding feature and was co-created with young people, guardians, teachers, clinicians and gaming experts.

Since its launch in Torbay and Devon Lumi Nova has been used by more than 1,100 children. Over three-quarters (79%) of users demonstrated clinical need when first accessing the service and more than 90% saw their condition reliably improve or stabilise after engaging with the service.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have seen significant outcomes after accessing the service, with 97% of children with SEND showing reliable improvement or stabilisation of their condition.

4) How access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – known as Mood, Emotions and Relationships Team (MERS) in Devon and Torbay, has improved and updated waiting list positions.

Waiting times for children and young people requiring specialist mental health support from the Mood, Emotions and Relationships team (MERS), previously known as CAMHS, have reduced in Torbay. Trajectories indicate that no young person will be waiting over 18 weeks for an initial assessment contact by January 2026.

Children and Family Health Devon operates a Single Point of Access for all referrals with all referrals undergoing a multi-professional screening. This screening process ensures that any young person referred who may have a need for mental health support will be identified and offered support from the right pathway from the beginning.

5) Action being taken to reduce waiting lists to ensure young people get access to support sooner.

The waiting list for children and young people requiring mental health support in Torbay has reduced significantly during 2025. This is due to several initiatives, including increasing initial contact sessions available to patients. There are no children waiting over 52 weeks in any area and trajectories indicate that no young person will be waiting over 18 weeks by the end of January 2026.

Commissioning of services that provide easily accessible intervention earlier to children and young people, such as MyWay and Mental Health Support Teams, is anticipated to reduce the demand for more specialist services. By providing accessible support earlier we aim to meet the needs of children and young people and their families sooner, reducing deterioration of their mental health and therefore the need to refer on to specialist services.

6) How the access to the Schools Mental Health Programme has been improving outcomes for young people.

Data and feedback evidencing the reach of the Mental Health Support Team's provided by Children and Families Health Devon (CFHD) is included below. To note this is Devon and Torbay Teams.

**Devon and Torbay Sept
2022- Sept 2025:**

	Number of workshops:	Parent/Carers who have attended the workshops:
Parents and Carer workshops/training:	253	4,211
	Number of workshops:	Education staff who have attended the workshops:
Education staff Workshops/training:	2,191	14,050
	Number of consultations:	
Consultations:	1,974	
	Number of workshops:	Children/Young People who have attended the workshops:
Children/Young People workshops/training:	1,962	52,545
		Total:
Referral led interventions:		13,397

An additional 13,035 children and young people have also been seen for 1-1 or group work by the teams in this same period across Torbay and Devon.

This demonstrates a huge reach of the service, and over 70% of school aged children now have access to a Mental Health Support Team practitioner in their school.

The average wait for children accessing Mental Health Support Teams for referral-led Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is 7 weeks.

Mental Health Support Team testimonials.

The names below have been changed.

Feedback from a family:

- The support that Terry has had at school has been extremely helpful and we as his parents and, more importantly, Terry himself feel that it has been very helpful
- He is now a lot more comfortable at school and enjoys most days
- His resilience and self-esteem have definitely been boosted and he is able to deal with life's problems and people with more confidence
- The request for help and subsequent communication with your service and the school in general has been dealt with very sensitively
- I know that lots of young people are struggling and would benefit from support
- I think your service is extremely important and I hope that it can continue to be there for other children indefinitely
- If I was asked to consider recommending the school, it would definitely be a factor

Feedback from a child:

'Hi Sarah, I hope you are well. I don't know if this is a bit odd but I just wanted to let you know how well I'm doing. Once we had our last chat I worked really hard in the summer holidays and recovered from my eating problems and my depression and anxiety is so so so much better. I am so happy and only anxious about what I consider "normal" like exams. I have been happy and healthy for about a year and I just wanted to thank you for your kindness and help. I am getting a bit emotional about how far I've got and looking back it so so so awful. I appreciate your work thank you so much.'

Feedback from a headteacher:

'Mental Health Support Team has made the most incredible difference to our children and families. Through the Timid to Tiger and Decider skills courses and individual work, our community has benefitted from learning skills and strategies to help them feel confident and thrive. The strategic support for school leaders and the training provided to staff is invaluable in supporting us improve the support we can offer to our school community. We are really grateful to the team for everything they add to our personal development curriculum.'

Other relevant services supporting children and young across Torbay

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

The ICB has co-ordinated strategic delivery across Devon, Torbay and Plymouth, of the Department of Education funded Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools, (PINS), Programme for primary schools in 24/25 and 25/26. This has been led in nine Torbay schools by Torbay Council's Children's Commissioners and Learning and Development Hub Lead in partnership with SEND Family Voice Torbay, (SFVT).

Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools takes a whole school approach enabling better identification and meeting of needs, for neurodiverse pupils; and building sustainable relationships between schools and their families. Circa five days of individualized support, training and resources based on needs identified by schools, their families and pupils is offered. In addition a mandatory core offer from SEND Family Voice Torbay supports co-production and engagement between schools and families based on the Four Cornerstones model. Offers to schools have included a wellbeing bookshelf of resources, training on culture for senior leaders, neuroinclusive strategies for all school staff and guidance on sensory informed changes to school environments. Speech, Language and Communication Needs, (SLCN), identified as part of the programme are additionally being met through the roll out of the Balance System Speech and Language Therapy model in 25/26.

The Department of Education national Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools evaluation team are clear that impactful change will take place in the longer term as learning is embedded in schools and shared through Multi Academy Trusts, leading to reductions in suspensions and exclusions and potentially supporting a reduction in Requests for Statutory Assessment. Locally our early qualitative feedback suggests that schools are developing more open relationships with their families, and finding new ways to approach challenges for individuals e.g. those with emotional based school avoidance. A national response to the Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools learning for all schools is anticipated following the end of year two.

Dynamic Support Register (DSR)

The Dynamic Support Register identifies young people who have a learning disability and/or Autism diagnosis who are at risk of hospital admission or placement breakdown. It enables keyworkers to work with service providers to ensure children, young people and their families can access the support they need at the right time, including education.

Within Devon the Learning Disability and Autism Programme (LDAP) has oversight of the register to ensure effective collaboration between health organisations and the local authority partners.

Referrals are triaged using The Cheshire and Wirral Partnership dynamic support database clinical support tool, to support risk stratification and RAG rating and identify the risks regarding education needs.

The Dynamic Support Register identifies those young people who would benefit from a Care (Education) Treatment Review (CETR) which considers SEND/educational needs. These reviews ensure partnership working and strengthen the consideration of education in them for children and young people who may not be in school or accessing education.

Children young people with a learning disability, autism or both aged 0-25 years with the most complex needs have a designated key worker.

Keyworkers support children, young people and their families to avoid admission to a mental health hospital wherever possible. Where admission to hospital cannot be avoided, the keyworker remains as a core member of the professional network throughout the person's period of admission and be included in care and treatment reviews and support through to discharge.

The Dynamic Support Register has a single point of contact and is a self-referral process. Information can be found on the Torbay local offer page and OneDevon & CFHD websites with contact information around accessing support and self-referral.

The referral form for keyworker support includes consenting to being placed on the Dynamic Support Register.

Summary

When commissioning services to support children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing, we have ensured that a range of services are available. These services, where possible, are self-referral and are all inclusive to young people from various cohorts, with support tailored to individual needs for those with neurodiversity including Autism, ADHD and other conditions as well as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and who are care experienced. We work with providers to ensure services are co-produced with children, young people and their families, so that they meet the needs of those who require support.

7. Options under consideration

7.1. N/A

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

8.1. N/A

9. Legal Implications

9.1. N/A

10. Engagement and Consultation

10.1. N/A

11. Procurement Implications

11.1. N/A

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

12.1. N/A

13. Associated Risks

13.1. N/A

14. Equality Impact Assessment

14.1. N/A

15. Cumulative Council Impact

15.1. None

16. Cumulative Community Impacts

16.1. None

Appendix 1