

14th October 2019

Agenda Item: 12

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK

IMPROVING THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on the progress in responding to the recommendation of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Looked After Children Service review, incorporating a staffing update.

Information

2. A dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) supports the mental health needs of children in care. It is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team comprising social workers and health professionals whose purpose is to assess mental health needs and promote the psychological wellbeing and placement stability of children and young people who are in care or adopted.
3. The model of intervention is tailored to meet the individual needs of the child or young person and their network, based on the evidence base, the views and skills of the client and their family/foster carers. Care may be delivered via a consultation model or through a range of integrative interventions: fostering attachments group; therapeutic parenting or attachment focused family based interventions such as Theraplay; Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Systemic Psychotherapy or Distress Tolerance Groups. The team can also provide specific diagnostic assessment, as well as the prescribing and reviewing of medication.
4. Children and Young People's Committee received a report in December 2018 outlining some of the challenges associated with a change in commissioning responsibilities and a subsequent temporary reduction in specialist mental health support available for children and young people. Funding issues have now been resolved and clinical commissioning groups have further increased the funding they are contributing to the service. The current staffing position in the team is as follows:

Posts employed by Nottinghamshire County Council:

- 1 FTE Team Manager

- 2.5 FTE Specialist Social Workers

Posts employed by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:

- 0.5 FTE Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
- 2 FTE Nurses
- 2 FTE Psychologists (vacant posts – currently out to advert)
- 1 FTE Art Therapist (maternity leave – temporarily being covered by 0.5 FTE Drama Therapist)
- 0.8 FTE Systemic Psychotherapist.

5. Whilst capacity in the team has increased since the report to Committee in December 2018, the team is not yet at full capacity but a plan is in place to ensure vacant posts are filled by January 2020.

6. An independent review of the service was commissioned by the clinical commissioning groups and the findings reported to Children and Young People’s Committee in December 2018. The review highlighted a number of areas working well and a number requiring improvement:

- to improve parity of access for looked after children placed in and out of the County, children with similar life experiences but different legal statuses (e.g. special guardianship or kinship) and looked after children in different placement types (e.g. internal or external fostering or residential care)
- to improve data collection regarding the service’s work and impact on children and young people
- to further involve young people in service developments moving forwards
- to further clarify the framework to effectively support children in care with mental health needs, including the role of different professionals and the balance between consultation and direct therapeutic intervention within the service model.

7. Progress in responding to the areas for improvement are as follows:

- a piece of project work has been initiated as part of the Department’s Remodelling Practice Programme, outlining the differing range of emotional health support that can be accessed by children with similar life experiences but different legal statuses or placement types. This project is expected to make recommendations for improving the equity of access to support for emotional health in January 2020.
- improving data collection continues to be an area for improvement with the service working with NHS commissioners to provide contracted information requirements such as caseload information, waiting times and outcomes achieved.
- in order to involve young people in service design, the Team Manager for the CAMHS Service for Children in Care and Adopted Children is working with the Project Team for *You Know Your Mind* (integrated personal commissioning project), to ensure that the

learning from the project informs the way the CAMHS service is provided. This includes considering how personal health budgets may facilitate long-term mental health improvements following CAMHS involvement.

- in response to the review findings, the team is developing its service model, maintaining a core focus on attachment and trauma, whilst also offering a more flexible approach to support children and young people and their carers, with more of an outreach approach to older young people, for example those living in semi-supported accommodation.
8. A further area for improvement the service and commissioners are considering is how to support young people in care with mental health needs as they transition to adulthood. The team now has a named transition lead whose role is to facilitate transfer to adult services. In addition to this commissioners and Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust are currently exploring flexible approaches to transitions across mental health services, in order to ensure transition is young person centred. The CAMHS LAC team has been identified as a service which would be best placed to trial this approach, an example of this approach could be by a model where young people have a choice of whether they want to retain a worker from CAMHS into adulthood, this approach would also ensure close working with adult mental health teams and the Council's Leaving Care Service.
 9. A subgroup of the Service Improvement Forum has been established to explore how improvements can be made to the pathways to emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people. This includes arrangements for when placements are out of the Nottinghamshire area. This focus is in recognition of the challenges to timely support for children, due to the complex and variable commissioning arrangements.
 10. The areas identified above reflect the priorities for improvement for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for children in care and adopted children next year and will be driven and monitored via the multi-agency Health Service Improvement Forum and through NHS Contract management processes.

Other Options Considered

11. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. To improve the emotional and mental health of children in care wherever they are placed, and positively influence their life chances.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

14. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That Committee considers whether there are any further actions it requires in relation to progress in promoting and improving the emotional and mental health of children in care.

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Constitutional Comments (AK 30/09/19)

15. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference

Financial Comments (SAS 27/09/19)

16. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Additional Staffing to Support Children's Mental Health Pilot](#) - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 16th July 2018

[Promoting and improving the health of looked after children](#) - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17th December 2018

[Improving the health outcomes for children and young people in the care of the local authority](#) - report to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on 12th September 2016

[County CAMHS Looked After and Adoption Team – service provision and developments 2016-17](#) - report to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on 12th September 2016

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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