



# Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in London

This briefing outlines the policy landscape of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), summarising some of the common features emerging from Local Transformation Plans in London.

## Overview

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are the services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. The support offered through CAMHS covers, among other areas: depression, eating disorders, self-harm, abuse, crisis care and young offending.

CAMHS are provided through a network of services, which include universal, targeted and specialist services, organised in four tiers:

- Tier 1: Universal services - services such as early years services and primary care
- Tier 2: Targeted services - services such as youth offending teams, primary mental health workers, and school and youth counselling (including social care and education)
- Tier 3: Specialist community CAMHS – services such as eating disorder, autism or learning disorder support
- Tier 4: Highly specialist services – referring to services reserved for severe mental health problems (commissioned by NHS England)

In London, nearly 40,000 children suffer with anxiety, over 10,000 experience depression and just fewer than 19,000 are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)<sup>1</sup>.

## Analysis

### National context

In September 2014, the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce was established to consider ways to make it easier for children, young people, parents and carers to access help and support when needed and to improve how children and young people's mental health services are organised, commissioned and provided. The key themes that emerged were:

<sup>1</sup>Public Health England, Improving the mental health of children and young people, Dec 2016

- Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention
- Improving access to effective support – a system without tiers
- Care for the most vulnerable
- Accountability and transparency
- Developing the workforce

The report, **Future in Mind: promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing (March 2015)** utilises these themes to set out ambitions for improving care over the next five years, including making better links between schools and specialist services.

Alongside this report, since March 2015 the government has made significant amounts of money available for CYP mental health transformation. Although £1.4 billion was committed to CAMHS transformation, it has not been ring-fenced and it has been noted that much of it is not reaching frontline providers, with significantly less funding than expected released to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) so far and only around half of CCGs using the additional funds for CAMHS provision in 2016/17<sup>2</sup>.

*Future in Mind* also proposed the development and agreement of Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing. As the transformation of children and young people’s mental health is led locally, local partners from across the health and care system need to work together to deliver the best possible services for their areas. The development of Local Transformation Plans supports this process, ensuring that proposals, as well as local leadership and accountability, are clear.

In August 2015, it was announced that £75 million would be allocated to support CCGs to work with local partners to develop local transformation plans. 123 LTPs covering all 209 CCGs were developed setting out how local agencies will work together to improve children and young people’s mental health across the full spectrum of need (agencies are expected to design services around the needs of children and young people, rather than around organisational boundaries).

## London Level

In order to better understand and share learning about how CCGs and their borough partners are planning to respond to the challenges facing CAMHS commissioners and service users, London Councils has conducted a high-level review of London’s most recently refreshed LTPs. The following section describes some of the commonalities that are shared across London.

### Common features

While the financial landscape is challenging, across London there is no shortage of innovation and effective practice and while there is great variation between CAMHS services, to reflect local needs and priorities, there are a number of common features.

### Single point of contact/access

Most CAMHS in London share a priority around transforming services to create a single point of contact for services users. For Kingston and Richmond Council’s, their Single Point of Access (SPA) is a part of the delivery of agreed shared objectives, achieved through joint commissioning, shared governance arrangements and integrated delivery models. The Kingston and Richmond SPA, which is hosted by Achieving for Children, is for both social care and CAMHS referrals.

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<sup>2</sup>Young Minds on children’s mental health funding

Achieving for Children is a social enterprise company created in 2014 by both boroughs to provide their children's services and has enabled the two councils to save money by sharing services<sup>3</sup>. Located within the SPA are social workers, police officers, education specialists, health visitors and mental health clinicians. There is one online referral form for all emerging concerns / needs and telephone advice and guidance is also available, with the team having daily multi-disciplinary meetings to triage the referrals where there are interrelated needs.

### Schools

Throughout London, there is a particular focus on involving schools in the effective delivery of CAMHS. In the London Borough of Croydon, for example, the CCG worked with the South West London Health and Care Partnership in May 2018, to consult with children, young people and parents on ways to improve support given to prevent self-harm, or children and young people that might be considering this. This exercise concluded that there was not enough consistent early and effective support. A "whole school" approach is now being developed with school clusters to support the development of Mental Health Support Teams, identify and train school leads and trial the four week wait time access to specialist NHS CYP mental health services.

### Young Offending Services and Youth Justice

Every borough includes young offending and youth justice services within their CAMHS provision – this is especially relevant due to the increase in serious youth violence over the last year. Several boroughs have taken on particularly innovative practice in this area. In Merton, for instance, the local CAMHS Forensic Psychologist (practitioner and Parenting practitioner), received a nomination to the John Hawkins Award for good practice in youth justice. In addition, their youth justice team developed and maintains a "re-offending toolkit", which tracks re-offending within 12 months (and whether re-offending was more/less serious). This "toolkit" currently does not include CAMHS or Mental Health interventions, and this is currently being addressed by local health partners to maximise the effectiveness of the tool.

Lambeth's "Youth at Risk Strategy" focusses on gangs, county lines, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), preventing extremism, and youth violence. The CCG and health partners have been leading on a number of strands of the strategy and are looking to include prevention and early intervention within the strategy - coordinating the emotional wellbeing support offer alongside partners from YOS, the Police, Community Safety, Social Care and voluntary community organisations. There is also a data sharing aspect to the strategy, with the Borough working with the YOS team and partners to ensure they are sighted on and involved with the data collected and outcomes measured for young people in criminal justice, where they relate to health and mental health.

In the London Borough of Camden, the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) works in partnership with the police, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Community Safety, Children's Safeguarding and Social Work and other Early Help Services in order to identify and offer support to young people in all parts of the youth justice system. CAMHS support can be accessed through a range of routes, including Early Help Services (in Camden this is via the CAMHS Whole Family Team), community CAMHS, and CAMHS in schools, as well as integration with the LAC team. In addition, mental health and emotional wellbeing assessments are given as part of the assessment process for Youth Early Help, who work with young people on the edge of the Youth Justice System.

### i-Thrive

There appears to be an increasing move towards community-based models of care that focus on the needs of the child or young person and emphasise prevention and early intervention, and away from the tiered model of delivery. One such model is i-Thrive, which focuses on the

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<sup>3</sup>Details where this can be seen

needs of CYP and has prevention and early intervention at its core. Four of the 10 'accelerator' sites, where I-Thrive is currently being piloted are in London (Bexley, Camden, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest). A evaluation is due to be published in December.

In Bexley, the CCG and Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust are shaping their CAMHS through the Thrive framework, focusing on services which support children and young people who are 'Thriving', 'Getting Advice' and 'Getting Help'. Key successes have included a new website called Headscape, where children and young people can access information about mental health and get signposted to local services and other helpful websites, and the design of a new community CAMHS service which is aimed to meet the needs of children and young people in the 'Getting Advice' and 'Getting Help' needs-based groups.

## Commentary

CAMHS services have an important role in the early intervention and prevention of mental ill-health. Through effective early intervention at a young age, a good CAMHS service has the ability to radically improve the mental, as well as the physical health of children and young people, rendering them happier, healthier and more productive later in life. What is more, CAMHS is key in alleviating other issues, such as young offending and substance abuse.

Limited resources represent a barrier to London partners from making radical improvements at scale to the mental health of Londoners. The additional funding being invested in the NHS by 2020 to address mental health will undoubtedly help, yet investment in early help and prevention is important as part of a holistic and balanced response. Making long-term improvements to mental health services and outcomes is not necessarily about spending more money, but changing attitudes and working collaboratively to implement preventative measures.

As can be seen through the CAMHS services in London, there is no absence of effective practice being undertaken at borough level. The work towards a single point of access for services, for example, underlines the ongoing commitment, and the ongoing development, of more accessible and convenient services – improving not just the efficiency and speed of the service for the user, but lowering the costs shared by local partners. The increasing focus on schools is likewise not just an important part of the drive towards improving the convenience and effectiveness of services to the user, but also lowering costs through earlier intervention.

One of the most pressing issues concerning London local government is serious youth violence and CAMHS inevitably plays an important part in the ongoing work to resolve the recent crisis. It is here that some of the most innovative practices can be seen in London, with an increasing number of CAMHS services setting out to prevent youth violence through earlier or more effective intervention.

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### **This member briefing has been circulated to:**

**Portfolio holders and those members who requested policy briefings in the following categories: health, children and young people**