

Recommissioning of the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services for Children and Young People
Briefing for People and Families Scrutiny Committee
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Background

The present paper covers the recommissioning of emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Greater Essex. The service is traditionally referred to as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), but the service in Essex is currently called the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS).

Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Services in Greater Essex are commissioned collaboratively by ten partners. This includes the three Local Authorities in Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) and the seven clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in Greater Essex. The lead commissioner for the service is, and will continue to be, West Essex CCG and the current contract and the future commissioning arrangements are overseen by the Collaborative Commissioning Forum (CCF), which draws in membership from across the ten partnership organisations. The current contract, which is at a value of £14.1m per annum (£1.9m of which is contributed by ECC) has recently been extended to run to the 31st March 2022. Work is underway to commission a new service, which it is intended will go live on the 1st February 2022.

Essex County Council has been a key partner in the collaborative commissioning of these services for five years. Following extensive analysis in the years preceding the launch of the current commissioned contract, design work was undertaken to develop and deliver a service with the objective of removing barriers between professionals and cross-service boundaries through the development of integrated care pathways and a seamless step-up and step-down from clinical services. Central to the service is a single point of access, which provides screening, directing and/ or signposting for all referrals, delivered by staff within a range of differing, but complementing skills and competencies. It also offers advice and guidance, consultation and support to those referring, including Education, Primary Care, Secondary Care, Social Care, the voluntary / independent sector, children and young people and their families. Since 2015, we have seen the collaborative approach address issues of equity, access, fragmentation, variability in outcomes and poor experience. Staff work across tier 2 (mental health services provided by professionals who specialised in mental health, such as counsellors) and tier 3 (specialist child and adolescent mental health services) levels of need to support children and young people, reducing the risk of leakage from the system and providing a better experience and outcomes for young people.

Requirements of Essex County Council

The re-commissioning of services considers and builds on the key successes identified through this way of working, plus seeking to further improve and develop according to the feedback received from a wide variety of stakeholders, including children, young people and families themselves. Commissioners have worked with staff within Essex County Council Social Care and Education teams, who in turn have engaged with the children and families with whom they work to develop a set of requirements that will ensure that the service works as well as possible for Essex residents.

It has been unanimously agreed with internal stakeholders that Essex County Council should remain in a collaborative arrangement with the CCGs and Unitary Authorities. This puts ECC in a unique position to mobilise with the whole system, working with Family Solutions, Children's Social Care, Education and Commissioned Services and provides better connections with schools, the community and voluntary sector, District Councils, Police and the wider community.

The key priorities for Essex County Council as agreed with the Collaborative Commissioning Forum are that the new service:

- Must emphasise outcomes for children, young people and their families
- Improved outreach and inclusion, removing perceived barriers and prejudices if children and young people need to access support
- Must ensure access to services for the most vulnerable cohorts
- Must ensure good access to more intensive provision where appropriate
- Must ensure high, continuing levels of collaboration across the system
- Must include Approved Mental Health Practitioners as part of the contract

These priorities have been developed into a set of core requirements, which are being met within the next specification as follows:

Core Requirement	Specification Response
Safeguarding concerns to be resolved	An integrated service that works in partnership and in collaboration with partner agencies to safeguard children and young people, with a comprehensive safeguarding approach, training and response
Whole family approach to be enhanced	The service will work in collaboration with families/carers during assessment, care and discharge planning where appropriate
Increase focus on wider socio-economic issues	Care planning is done in conjunction with schools and colleges, so children and young people do not lose out on their education, training or employment
ECC to have a stronger voice over expectations	The partners aim to create a new environment of collaboration between health and social care organisations to improve services for the local population. Whilst this contracted service will be for health services, there is a clear requirement for partnership working with our social care and education teams
More flexibility and localism in the service	CCG locality-based services - the CAMHS Service will be delivered by teams working within the localities of North East Essex, Mid Essex, and West Essex, Southend, Castle Point and Rochford, Basildon and Brentwood and Thurrock
More early intervention and Tier 2	The Early mental health support will provide information, advice and consultation to the wider children's workforce, parents and young people as part of the early mental health support offer. Empower the child and parent to support mental health requirements, improving resilience and being better able to support mental health needs in the future.
Mental Health to be 'everyone's business'	Consultation, advice, support and training to the full range of Providers delivering children and young people's services

Approved Mental Health Practitioner to be included in the contract	Provision for staff working within this contract to be trained as AMHP and included on the AMHP rota.
Spending to remain within SET boundaries	An integrated responsive and evidence-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service across Southend, Essex and Thurrock to all children and young people aged from 0 until their 18th birthday, or 25th birthday for service users with SEND

What has worked well?

There are a number of areas that have worked well that will be carried forwards in this re-procurement.

- A single service provider and unified service model – the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) for CYP across SET
- Integrated Tier2/Tier3 specialist Mental Health services - a departure from the traditional CAMHS tiered specialist service provision
- We have strengthened the role in education and the Education Director for Essex County Council is a member of the collaborative commissioning forum
- Service provision for CYP from 0 until their 18th birthday, or 25th birthday for those service users with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including those with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans, and who require longer term mental health support.
- A 'hub and spoke' delivery model with generic EWMHS teams based in each of the seven CCG localities enabling a flexible response tailored to local needs
- One Single Point of Access (SPA) for all EWMH service areas
- Prompt assessment of needs with access to appropriate evidence-based treatment substances
- Appropriate provision for young offenders and for CYP misusing substances
- Signposting to alternative universal and community services provision for support where a EWMHS intervention is not required
- Consultation, support, advice, and training to the wider system
- Crisis Intensive Support Service (ISS), providing prompt, flexible and intensive response for those young people who are at risk and with high levels of mental health need.
- CYP Specialist Community Eating Disorder Service (CYPEDS) offering evidence-based, high-quality care and support as soon as possible to ensure improved recovery rates, fewer relapses and reduced need for inpatient admissions.
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service for CYP with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties (EWMHS/LD), providing a specialist multi-disciplinary community mental health service for children between 5 and their 18th birthday who have a full statement of Special Educational Needs and who have a severe to profound learning disability with additional mental health problems.

Commissioning for the Future

As we develop the new service, the partners aim to create a new environment of collaboration between health and social care organisations to improve services for the local population. The partnership wants to ensure that the population's health and experience of emotional wellbeing and mental health care services continues to improve. The collaborative agreement between the ten partners to the current arrangement will be maintained, enabling us to make faster progress in transforming the way care is delivered, making tangible progress for the delivery of services,

strengthening and improving mental health provision. An integrated pathway approach across health, social care, education and the voluntary and independent sector will respond to the varying emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Commissioners are aware of the significant impact that COVID-19 has had for all residents of Essex, particularly in regard to the strain this has placed on mental health. Although the specification for the new EWMHS contract is in the final stages of completion, there is scope and flexibility to meet any increased demand and flex the operating model to assess and support children, families and other professionals in a virtual way if this remains necessary.

The emerging data is suggesting that there will be a cohort of children and young people who experience trauma as a result of the pandemic. The new service is well placed to meet this need, with trauma informed supported embedded as part of the early mental health support offer and specific interventions for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The service will act as a single point of access for all children and young people who have experienced trauma and have a presenting mental health condition. There will be close liaison with other delivery partners to ensure that the best response is being provided for the child and family and that they are supported in a holistic way.

The new service will provide a comprehensive offer to schools, building on the current contract. There will be a designated contact point for each school and college, with education, advice and guidance provided to school staff and school nurses in secondary schools. There is a fundamental focus on ensuring that the service takes a strategic lead in supporting education and other universal services to build capacity through education and training so they feel enabled and confident in supporting children and young people when they first experience mental health difficulties.