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**Health and Wellbeing Board**  
Report of the Manager, Healthwatch York

16 November 2022

**Healthwatch York Report: Children's Mental Health - A snapshot report**

**Background**

1. This report is for the attention and action of Board members, sharing a report from Healthwatch York which looks at what people have recently told us about accessing children's mental health support.

**Summary**

2. Healthwatch York provide information and advice about health and care services, signposts people to support, and listens to their experiences when accessing health and care services. Recently we have received a number of case studies regarding challenges in accessing mental health support
3. We also reached out to partner organisations York Carers Centre, and York Mind, who had flagged up challenges they were experiencing around supporting people to access children's mental health services.
4. We appreciate this has been a very difficult time for everyone working in health and social care. We aimed to produce a report that highlighted the concerns being reported to us, and have shared this report to encourage further discussion of these challenges and consideration of ways we can collectively address them.

**Main/Key Issues to be considered**

5. Our report's key findings are:
  - The current process lacks the flexibility to recognise the individual needs of parents and children; for example some families struggle

with appointments being given during school drop off and pick up times.

- There is a need for better awareness of training and resources available to teachers, schools and those involved in the initial referral.
- The pathway through the referral process is unclear, and the reliance on forms prior to, or instead of, conversations can leave parents and professionals ill-informed on how best to assist moving the referral process forward.
- There is a clear need for better administration processes
- There is heavy reliance on self-advocacy or parental advocacy to make sure the child can access the care they need
- It is unclear to parents what triggers a CAMHS diagnosis and in which circumstances you should be signposted to other services
- There is a need for more effective partnership working between organisations working to support children's mental wellbeing

## **Consultation**

6. In producing this report, we did not go out to public consultation, but used the experiences people had already shared with us, alongside experiences shared with partners.

## **Options**

7. There are a number of recommendations within this report set out on page 33. These recommendations were proposed by York Mind's Youth Group, in response to the experiences detailed in the report. The recommendations are:
  - Provide teachers with support when completing referral information on behalf of a child. Giving an understanding of what information is needed, why, and how this relates to special educational needs or disabilities, and educational health and care plan.
  - Hold a conversation at the first point of contact with CAMHS outlining service options and the expected journey following referral.

- Provide information on 'who, what, why, when' as part of their journey to receiving support, for example who will you see, when, for what and why that decision has been made.
- Improve administration processes in accordance with current GDPR.
- Address staff capacity in order to support staff with answering parents', child's, and professionals' questions through the referral pathway.
- Better signposting support. On first contact with CAMHS, direct individuals to relevant training and information workshops available.

### **Implications**

8. There are no specialist implications from this report.

### **Financial**

There are no financial implications in this report.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications in this report.

### **Equalities**

There are no equalities implications in this report.

### **Legal**

There are no legal implications in this report.

### **Crime and Disorder**

There are no crime and disorder implications in this report.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no IT implications in this report.

### **Property**

There are no property implications in this report.

### **Other**

There are no other implications in this report.

### **Risk Management**

9. There are no risks associated with this report.

### **Recommendations**

10. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:
- i. Receive Healthwatch York's report, Children's Mental Health: A snapshot report.
  - ii. Remind members of the Board to respond directly to Healthwatch York within 28 days regarding the recommendations made to their organisation.

Reason: To keep up to date with the work of Healthwatch York and be aware of what members of the public are telling us

### **Contact Details**

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Siân Balsom  
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**Report  
Approved**

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**Date** 03.11.2022

**Wards Affected:** All

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Annexes:**

**Annex A** – Children's Mental Health: A snapshot report

<https://www.healthwatchyork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Nov-22-Childrens-mental-health-a-snapshot-report-FINAL-2.pdf>