



Children's Mental Health

An update report, March 2023

healthwatch
York

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Acknowledgements: Cover photo cropped from an image by Katherine Chase on unsplash (child next to a tree looking out over a beach)

Background

In November 2022 we published a snapshot report detailing what people had told us about children's mental health support in the city. This included detailed feedback from a number of parents, local teachers, and VCSE partner organisations.

The report contained a number of key findings, and recommendations for Health and Wellbeing Board partner organisations. The report was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 16 November 2022.

The discussion was minuted as follows:

Members considered a report which provided a summary of what people have recently told Healthwatch York about accessing children's mental health support. The Manager of Healthwatch York detailed the report and explained that it is a discussion around the City's approach to children's mental health and how it is able to make people feel more confident to access the help and support they need. She also discussed the need to analyse how the system works to ensure children get help and support, but that they are also aware of the options available to them.

The Director of Operations and Transformation for Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust welcomed the feedback from the report before acknowledging communication issues mentioned by families in accessing support and noting that partnership working and having numerous routes of access is very important. He also explained that long waiting times continue to be an issue with young people waiting 12 weeks for a mental health assessment, 2-3 weeks for an urgent referral, and 1-2 years for a neurodevelopmental assessment.

Members discussed the report and argued that the iThrive model and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are not communicated, and not understood well by parents and that further support is necessary by

the NHS. The Director of Operations and Transformations for NHS explained to Members that there have been changes in the Trust so there will be a focus on improving the services provided alongside giving families and schools increased support. He then agreed to provide a projected timeline of when these changes would occur and when results will be seen to the Board.

The mental health of students was discussed, with Members stating that York needs to pay closer attention to them due to their vulnerability, with particular support necessary for ethnic minorities and those part of the LGBTQ+ community. Members discussed the need for the prevention of some of the causes of mental health issues too.

Resolved:

- i. That the Healthwatch York's report, Children's Mental Health: A Snapshot Report is received by the Board.
- ii. That the Board Members are reminded to respond directly to Healthwatch York within 28 days regarding the recommendations made to their organisation.
- iii. That Healthwatch York provides an updated report to the Board following the end of their consultations.

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

Resolved:

- i. That Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust provide a projected timetable for changes and results to Members of the HWBB.

Reason: To keep the Board updated with the NHS's projects and policies in relation to children's mental health.

Key findings in November's report

A summary of our findings:

- 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

Recommendations made

Healthwatch York worked with York Minds Youth Group to review the experiences gathered within this report. The group have set recommendations based on these experiences. These recommendations come from young adults who have, or who are currently, using mental health services.

Actions needed	By whom
1. 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.	TEWV and CYC
2. Hold a conversation at the first point of contact with CAMHS outlining service options and the expected journey following referral.	TEWV
3. Provide information on 'who, what, why, when' as part of their journey to receiving support. E.g. who will you see, for what and why that decision has been made.	TEWV, CYC, YH&CP
4. Improve administration processes in accordance with current GDPR.	TEWV
5. Address staff capacity in order to support staff with answering parents', child's, and professionals' questions through the referral pathway.	TEWV
6. Better signposting support. On first contact with CAMHS, direct individuals to relevant training and information workshops available.	TEWV, CYC, YH&CP

Initial responses included in the report

Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust (TEWV)

TEWV confirmed “We use all parts of the working day so appointments will be offered during school drop off and pick up as well as other times of the day. We have to maximise the use of clinical time. What works for one family will not work for another, but there also needs to be a better understanding that for a specialist service, in the same way as for other specialist appointments in acute hospital settings, outpatient clinics have to run to maximise appointment time.”

They also questioned why there would be a lack of clarity as to what triggers a CAMHS diagnosis. They clarified that a diagnosis can only be provided following the assessment and information gathering process and provided by a qualified clinician.

In response to some concerns, we made a number of changes to the report to better explain data and reflect the wider CAMHS workforce.

City of York Council, Education and Skills Directorate

CAMHS is not the only support that is available for children and young people and families where there are concerns about mental health. The School Wellbeing Worker Service, which is jointly funded by City of York Council and health is a universal service working with all primary and secondary schools in York. The service provides a wide range of support including whole school training and individual casework and group work sessions in schools. The Wellbeing in Mind team (NHS funded Mental Health Support Team) works with 8 schools (primary and secondary) to provide interventions both in school and also with families. City of York Council have commissioned additional counselling support from York Mind and also commissioned York Mind to deliver the Department for Education Wellbeing for Education return resources to schools between 2020 and

March 2023. All secondary schools in York have accessed the Department for Education Senior mental health leader training in the last year.

The case studies in the report do highlight a need to ensure that there is better communication about the different ways that children, young people and families and teachers can access support in York. In the case of teachers this is important as very often SENCos and pastoral leaders are aware of the support available but this information may not be as accessible for class teachers and subject staff in secondary schools.

York Health and Care Partnership

The comments in the report appear to relate solely to specialist CAMHS services, which are commissioned to treat children and young people with moderate to severe mental health difficulties. The report does not reference the wider and long standing CAMHS offer in York which is commissioned across the NHS and City of York Council. This includes

- School Well-Being Service
- Wellbeing in Mind Team
- The support service working with children with complex needs arising from autism
- The embedded mental health nurse working with the Youth Justice Service
- York Mind's counselling service.

The report should also reference within the definition of CAMHS the work of third sector organisations who support the emotional and mental well-being of children and young people, such as The Island or IDAS.

All the above have an important preventative as well as therapeutic role: the delivery model in York is iThrive, which focuses on what enables children and young people to manage their emotional ups and downs and know and be confident in seeking advice and help when they need it. Thus the approach, particularly in schools and fostered by the School Well-Being Service, is focused on what makes for a thriving and nurturing environment. Resource is put into other support, all with a role in

prevention and early intervention: this includes the All About Autism Hub run by York Inspirational Kids, an autism social prescriber, and a mental health social prescriber due to work in primary care in an early advice and intervention role.

The Integrated Care Board, as successor to Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group, has a firm commitment to children and young people's mental health and well-being, alongside the City of York Partnership of statutory and third sector agencies in the City.

Responses for the Health and Wellbeing Board



Humber and North Yorkshire
Health and Care Partnership

Update March 2023

Since the report to the Health and Well-Being Board, Healthwatch York have had discussion with CYC, ICB and TEWV to consider the recommendations made. The following are key points from those discussions, which indicate progress to date and where further progress will be made:

Helping deliver the iThrive model

We acknowledge that there is work to do on helping make sure children's mental health is everybody's business. Although there is a lot of support already available in schools, the whole schools workforce may not be fully aware of the most appropriate support for each child. The SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice Support Service) role can play an important part in providing impartial, confidential advice to children, young people and their families. There is a need to improve awareness of the potential role SENDIASS can play in providing support to schools to understand their legal responsibilities towards children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities.

Waiting times at CAMHS: we acknowledge there is still work to do to improve this further but waiting times are heading in the right direction:

- Significant improvement in autism assessment waiting times over 2019: average wait is now 150 days, down from 315 days

- Improvement in waiting times for initial assessment across all referrals, currently average 25 days, down from 90 days.
- Positive feedback about all Children’s Mental Health services – CAMHS, School Wellbeing Service, Wellbeing in Mind – has been received, through the friends and family test, and service feedback forms. couple of examples

New Things in place

Well-Being in Mind Team: we have approval for a second team in York, which include a focus on children electively home educated or struggling to get into school.

Yorminds website: a co-produced offer for children and young people aged 12 and above, with advice, signposting and articles.

Broadened York Mind counselling offer for children and young people, now from age 12.

Autism social prescriber in post, working with children and families awaiting assessment or in receipt of a positive diagnosis.

Autism mythbusting

FAQs which show what the facts are for children and families in York
<https://www.yor-ok.org.uk/families/Local%20Offer/autism-mythbusting.htm>

Improved CAMHS assessment waiting paperwork and signposting – please see the appendices for details

The ICB Children and Young People Mental Health Plan sets out the actions across the ICB: in York we are setting up a multi-agency delivery group to prioritise and move the plan. Some of the actions in the plan are reflected below.

Things planned

There is no lack of ambition for the emotional and mental well-being of children and young people in York. The inception of the ICB is now bringing the commissioning resources closer together in the Place Board, and the York Place Prospectus emphasises children's health and well-being, and the challenges facing the 'Covid Generation'. It focuses on preventative and early support.

The overall system ambition is to move to an integrated approach, with a single route into support across primary care, schools, and the wider community offer. There are a number of models for this approach which can reduce cross referrals, waiting times and ensure children and young people have more rapid access to advice and support. We have some of the building blocks in place, and some of the ideas set out below will further support this. Not all are approved and scoped, and not all are funded.

- Primary Care First Contact Worker to support children in primary care before a referral on to CAMHS and improve CAMHS/primary care liaison
- Family Hubs will roll out from June 2023 and offer advice and signposting alongside the development of access to early advice, particularly for parents of babies and young children
Improve joint working and commissioning: this is necessary, both for the health and well-being of our children and young people, and also for the best use of scarce resources we have available.
 - Operational delivery group for York Place, we aim to have 1 plan and see it through to completion with joint commitment and planning. There are limited quick wins, mainly in how we communicate across all our partners.
 - Opportunity to explore options / preferences for potential peer support and initial information and advice. This is an excellent opportunity to work more closely and directly with HWY support in engaging young people / parents in this.

- Explore enhanced offer for children whilst they are waiting for support: this is across all levels of need not just the specialist CAMHS service.
- Better explanation of pathways to help children, young people, families and professionals understand what support is available and that emotional and mental well-being is not just a matter for the NHS: also, to set expectations; for example, what happens if you pay for a private assessment but then wish to return to the NHS pathway

Challenges

There remain significant challenges:

- Resources: time to devote to analysis, planning and strategy; funding is frequently time limited, and there are multiple demands and priorities; people as staffing in frontline services may be below establishment levels and are stretched.
- Redistribution of funds where pump priming not an option: there is limited or no scope to twin track funding whilst new approaches are trialled and embedded
- Nature of transformational change; it takes time, patience and can be a rocky road

Final thoughts

We are all agreed that children, young people, families and professionals are right to be concerned when they feel that there is insufficient support available or that they are waiting people.

We are also committed to finding approaches across the whole of the system in York, not just health where a lot of children are automatically referred, but also into school and social activities.

We are also looking to focus more on preventative and early intervention work, this takes time because funding has historically been directed at specialist services.

This will translate into work that can enable us to communicate better, provide more information on how to look after emotional and mental well-being and what is the support available when things are not right, whilst we do further work on more challenging, systemic and long-lasting changes

Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust



Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust

Direct responses to the recommendations made

Recommendation 1: It was disappointing to see this recommendation as the support requested is already available. It is easier for schools who are working alongside a WiMT team as they have access to them but there is also the Wellbeing in Schools Teams. Both do a significant amount of training in schools supporting teachers. They offer direct work, signpost to other services and support, and assist with referrals. An example would be the consultation clinics WiMT offer. At the clinics a teacher can come to discuss a child in confidence (so no names) and check if it would be an appropriate referral to WiMT or if it needs to go elsewhere in the system. These also provide an opportunity for learning generally and to pick up useful strategies and information.

Recommendation 2: We currently have an on-going piece of work with our SPA team. This includes looking at how we process referrals, communication with referrers and signposting options if the referral is not right for TEWV CAMHS. This also links to the work on educating the system as we receive a lot of referrals that we would not offer a service to and should have been referred to other providers. This includes looking at our service leaflets that covers the point below as to who we are and what we provide. This is all part of a larger piece of work that is due to be completed by the end of August 2023.

Recommendation 4: This is also part of the SPA work referenced above. We can also say that all staff must complete as part of their mandatory training Information Governance training. Compliance is monitored by managers.

Recommendation 5: Staffing is a National problem in the NHS so not sure how reasonable this is as an action to increase staffing numbers. In York we have seen an improvement in our vacancy rates more recently and are successfully appointing to previous long-standing vacancies but this will remain an on-going concern as we are also seeing an increase in referrals and acuity, especially ADHD/ASD and demand is outstripping capacity. In relation to support there is a need for pre and post ASD diagnostic support for parents in York that is not something TEWV is commissioned to provide.

Recommendation 6: This is also part of the SPA work referenced above but also something for all agencies to be part of. Important to consider collectively whether this is just about better signposting or also identifying gaps in service.



Humber and North Yorkshire Specialised Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Provider Collaborative (HNYPC) response to York HWBB Report relating to Children's' Mental Health

The HNY PC are working closely with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), and local place partners to ensure that when a child or young person (CYP) requires admission to a mental health unit that this is embedded as part of a whole pathway.

Building on the iThrive approach, work is focusing on improving the pathways in and out of inpatient care, with a particular focus on reducing

length of stay (as it is known that lengthy inpatient admissions are not always helpful) and keeping young people as close to home as possible so that they can maintain relationships with community CAMHS and social care professionals.

Current programs of work to meet the increasing pressures following COVID:

1. Eating disorder.

There has been an increase in the number of CYP needing inpatient admission for eating disorders, including naso-gastric tube feeding. HNYPC have worked hard to ensure CYP who require admission receive this and as such a higher number of out of area admissions have been necessary to ensure needs are met and best outcomes are achieved for CYP. HNYPC has allocated significant additional funding and is working with providers to develop the following:

- Flexible alternatives to admission to hospital including intensive home treatment for eating disorder
- A whole pathway approach to eating disorders with earlier robust prevention of naso-gastric tube feeding requirement
- Prevention of admission to hospital
- Support for early discharge and reduction in length of stay by working with community teams to level up service provision
- Developing protocols and improving communication with paediatric/medical units in managing eating disorders in CYP.

2. Develop an integrated referral hub for CYPMHS inpatient referrals

Currently the two inpatient teams in HNY PC (Mill Lodge and Inspire) assess referrals for their respective place based providers. The access assessment process involves ensuring all necessary information is gathered prior to making a decision regarding whether admission is the

appropriate next step and if further assessment is warranted (e.g., CETR information, copies of detention papers etc.) and this is done from existing capacity and can cause delays and frustration for young people, their families and referrers. All referrals are currently discussed in a weekly meeting with both units and decisions made regarding the most appropriate environment for each young person based on the young person's needs, distance to home and capacity of the units. Work is planned to develop an integrated referral hub:

- To provide a central point for all referrals for inpatient admission to be managed and responded to in a timely manner.
- Improve consistency of response and develop a clear understanding of thresholds for admission and appropriate referrals with community partners.
- Reduce the number of inappropriate referrals/admissions.
- Ensure that referred young person's needs are met in the most appropriate environment as close to home as possible.
- Provide ongoing support/guidance to community referrers whilst a young person is awaiting admission.
- Provide discharge planning support and input to the inpatient and community teams to ensure there is a clear and timely discharge plan with appropriate support available post discharge.

NHS England Regional Information Provided on any relevant policy and approaches

- The Healthwatch York Report on Children's Mental Health highlights the significant challenges experienced by many children and young people in trying to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in York. The strong presence of children and young people's voices throughout the report and the emphasis on lived experience is extremely important and very welcome.
- This report is useful in further reiterating these challenges and the difficulties faced by children and young people. Increasing timely access to high quality, evidence-based mental health services for

children and young people continues to be of the utmost priority regionally and nationally.

- Information has been provided on the national picture below and additional context but it is recognised that many challenges exist and the difficulties faced by children and young people and their parents and carers remain.

National Policy Picture

A number of Long Term Plan Ambitions and recent NHS England communications relate to the themes highlighted within the report. Key elements are shared below with NHS England's continued commitment to increasing access to mental health services for children and young people.

- Key ambitions and policy areas specifically relating to improving access to CYPMH services include:
 - Increasing access to children and young people's mental health services: By 2023/24 at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 will be able to access support via NHS funded mental health services and school or college-based Mental Health Support Teams.
 - This builds upon the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health commitment that at least 70,000 additional children and young people each year will receive evidence-based treatment – equating to 35% of those with diagnosable mental health conditions using 2004 prevalence data.
 - Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTs) offer evidence-based interventions and contribute to the attainment of the national 345,000 ambition for access.
- As highlighted in the recent 2023/24 Operational Planning Guidance, NHS England is continuing in its commitment to deliver the Long Term Plan including core commitments to improve children and young people's mental health services supported with funding.

- NHS England's Quality Improvement Taskforce has launched a resource pack that aims to improve understanding of the current care and treatment offer for children and young people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and/or who are autistic, with a specific focus on pathways of care into hospital beds, as well as the experience of inpatient care. The resource pack aims to support professionals to develop their local case for change around pathways of care to increase and improve community provision and reducing unnecessary inpatient admissions and can be found on the FutureNHS Platform.
- As part of the increasing access ambition, the importance of expanding the CYPMH workforce remains. NHS England were pleased to recently announce the publication of the Children and Young People's Mental Health (CYPMH) Workforce Census 2022, which highlights a 5% increase nationally in whole time equivalent (WTE) staff across CYPMH services between 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Additional Context

We would also suggest that the refreshed Humber and North Yorkshire CYPMH Strategic Plan would be a useful resource to view in order to further understand the ICB's commitments and priorities within this area. [Mental Health - Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: TEWV Yes letter

Appendix 2: TEWV list of support options for York sent to parents / children to assist with waiting well

Appendix 3: Cocreation leaflet

Appendix 4: Examples of positive feedback about Children's Mental Health Support Services

Appendix 5: Further useful links

Appendix 1: TEWV Yes letter

Orca House
Child and Adolescent Mental Health
Link Business Park
Osbalwick Link Road
York
YO10 3JB

Main Reception: 01904 420950

East Team: 01904 420970

West Team: 01904 420980

EDT: 01904 615343

SPA: 01904 615345

Email address: tewv.orcahouse@nhs.net

Ref: FG/

Date:

Parent(s) of

Dear Parent(s)

Name:		DOB:	
Address:	As above		
PARIS ID:		NHS No:	

Further to the recent referral of Child's name, we are writing to inform you that we have now received the completed Autism screening forms and they have been reviewed by our Neurodevelopmental Screening Panel.

Following the information which has been provided, we have agreed to place Child's name on our waiting list for a full specialist Autism assessment.

Unfortunately, there will be a significant wait for this assessment due to the high demand on service.

Once your child reaches the top of the waiting list you will receive a letter inviting you to attend for the diagnostic assessment appointment, and included will be details of what this will entail.

Once the autism assessment has been completed, you will be signposted to further appropriate support in your area and discharged from the CAMHS service, unless there are additional concerns regarding mental health, which are felt to reach the threshold for ongoing CAMHS involvement.

We have enclosed a leaflet which details all the support options available to you whilst you are waiting for the assessment. This support is available both pre and post diagnosis therefore we would recommend familiarising yourself with this whilst your child is awaiting the assessment.

In the meantime, while you are waiting for an appointment to be sent to you, should you have any increased concerns regarding your child please do not hesitate to contact CAMHS directly within office hours – 09104 420950 – or outside of office hours, and if you have increased concerns regarding your child’s mental health/risk and feel your query is urgent, please call 08000 516171 to speak to the CAMHS Crisis Team who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Alternatively, if you feel your concerns require an urgent response, please go to the Accident and Emergency Department at York Hospital.

Yours sincerely

Dr Fiona Gospel
Consultant Clinical Psychologist,
On behalf of CAMHS Neurodevelopmental Panel

Copy:
GP –

Appendix 2: TEWV list of support options for York sent to parents / children to assist with waiting well

Support options available in York

Please find below a list of support options available to you both pre and post diagnosis whilst you are awaiting your child's assessment of Autism.

1) **Courses and information to help you understand your child's difficulties**

This is an important first step to help you understand and know how to support your child who is possibly on the Autistic spectrum:

- ✓ **ADAPT course** – See poster for details
- ✓ **Open University** – They provide a free online course to help people understand Autism
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/science-maths-technology/understanding-autism/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab>
- ✓ **York Inspirational Kids** – (see below), they sometimes run training courses and the specialist teaching team for Autism running specific modules every month to learn more about Autism and how to support this.
- ✓ **National Autistic Society** – They offer a wealth of information, videos and articles on their website to help parents and young people learn what is Autism and how to support this.
- ✓ **Family matters** – time out for parents of children with additional needs. Parents can sign up to this course and it will help to support families to understand how to adapt parenting for children with additional needs
<https://fmy.org.uk/course-we-offer/>
- ✓ **Books** can also be an excellent way to learn about Autism, some recommendations include:

“The Autism Discussion Pages” by Bill Nason (you can also follow their social media pages)

“The girl with the curly hair” – she has a range of publications and helps to explain Autism in a very easy to understand way

“How to live with Autism and Asperger Syndrome: Practical strategies for parents and professionals” by Chris Williams and Barry Wright

“The parents guide to managing anxiety in children with autism” by Raelene Dundon – this is an excellent book for helping parents manage anxiety in their ASC child

“How to make and keep friends, tips for kids to overcome 50 common social challenges” by Nadine Briggs and Donna Shea and “How to find your groove (conversation skills and other tips for surviving in the social world) by Laura K.Cornish

2) Link in with York Inspirational kids parent support

This is a parent led service which offers a range of parental support across the city and supports the development of services for disabled children. It brings together all parents and families across the city who care for a child with a disability and provide online peer support along with days out and a Saturday club. They can be accessed by searching “York Inspirational Kids” on Facebook. You can also search “York Ausome kids” which is a subgroup of York Inspirational Kids and aimed at parents/carers of a child with a diagnosis of Autism and “YIKs all about Autism” page which has details of the ASC hub. Information can also be found on the website www.keyworking.co.uk

Specific support which YIK can provide:

- ✓ **Coffee mornings for parents** to help support each other and gain peer advice. This can also be done via the Facebook threads where parents ask questions and other parents provide guidance and advice.
- ✓ YIK work closely with other organisations such the **specialist teaching team for Autism and the Educational psychologists**. They offer telephone and in person drop ins on a monthly basis where

parents can ask advice on how to manage a multitude of behaviours and difficulties. The specialist teaching team also run workshops for parents once a month about specific topics (eg: friendships, coping with holidays). Details can be found on the Facebook page.

- ✓ **The Autism Hub** provides groups for autistic young people to come together and socialise and engage in activities. They are run in person by volunteers and provides a good opportunity for young people to socialise and engage with peers. Groups are run from primary age up to 25 years. More details can be found on the YIK Facebook page.

3) Have a look at the SEND Local offer

All local authorities have a responsibility to outline a plan of how they intend to support young people in their area with additional needs. This plan is often referred to as the “local offer” the York local offer webpages has a wealth of information relating to health, education, social care and support for families. They also have a Facebook page which is helpful to follow (“York Local offer”). It is advisable that you familiarise yourself with this offer of support. You can google “York disability local offer” or go to website: <https://www.yor-ok.org.uk/families/Local%20Offer/sendlocaloffer> You can also refer yourself to the family information hub if you are struggling with understanding what support can be accessed. You can call 01904 554444 and speak to someone about what to do to get more support and guidance.

Please note, the SEND local offer goes up to the age of 25 so is particularly useful for young people about to transition into adult services.

4) Are you struggling to manage some behaviours which challenge in the home?

We would recommend first completing the courses recommended above around understanding Autism, in particular the ADAPT course and putting

in place the adaptations recommended. We would also recommend linking in with the local offer and familiarising yourself with the support offered by the local authority.

We would also highly recommend linking in with York Inspirational kids and attending the drop in sessions offer by the specialist teaching team for autism and the educational psychologist. We would also recommend attending the monthly training sessions provided by the specialist teaching team. The training session offered by Family Matters may also be helpful in understanding how to parent a child with additional needs (see above in courses). You can also self-refer to the Autism Community Connector and Engagement Team (ACCET) who can help connect you with support in the local area (see poster below)

If you have done all the above but you are still struggling, then it may be helpful to go back to the SENCO and further discuss the difficulties at home. The SENCO then may be able to request a family early help assessment to look at what other support may be helpful for your family.

Alternatively you can self-refer to the early help team for more support by calling the multi-agency safety hub (MASH team) on 01904 551900 or the family information service on 01904 554444

5) Is your young person struggling with sleep and needing more help with this?

Please note: The CAMHS Service cannot provide sleeping medication (such as Melatonin) where sleep is the main difficulty.

Alternatively you can access further support for sleep difficulties from the Sleep Charity. They have a wealth of resources, videos and information leaflets on their website to help you put in place a robust sleeping routine and a dedicated national helpline which can give further advice and guidance: <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/>

6) Is your young person struggling with social isolation and loneliness?

Social isolation is very difficult for children on the spectrum as they struggle to fit into more mainstream activities due to their needs. There is however a wealth of opportunities which are adapted for young people with Autism which may provide opportunities for socialisation

- ✓ **The ASC hub** – YIK provide social groups from primary school up to the age of 25 on a weekly basis. The groups are an opportunity to meet other young people who have similar needs and opportunities to socialise, make friends and participate in outings. Please see their Facebook page for more information.
- ✓ **Choose2Youth** – they are an organisation which provides opportunities for training and socialisation for all young people who have a disability in the city. They cater for children between the ages of 9-25 and have a wealth of activities they can join in with:
<https://choose2.co.uk/>
- ✓ Many **mainstream organisations** in the city now provide disability friendly options for engaging with the activities. Ask about sensory friendly hours and additional needs sessions they may provide. For example: Point zero have an autism friendly hour between 5-6pm on a Thursday and many cinemas have autism friendly screenings. More information can be found through the York Inspirational Kids parent thread.
- ✓ **Speak to your SENCO** at school around opportunities for engaging in clubs or further support sessions to develop social skills

7) Is your young person struggling with sensory difficulties which are impacting on day-to-day life?

Sensory difficulties are a part of everyday life for children on the spectrum and can be quite disabling in many ways. Sensory difficulties are often covered in the teaching resources about Autism so there is a

wealth of information which can be accessed (see ADAPT course, national autistic society and book recommendations)

If you are wanting more support, we would recommend accessing the Sensory integration network for more specialist advice. They provide a wealth of courses and information for parents. Click on the website and go to the parents/ carers section at the top. They provide a free course in understand sensory needs in children and how to understand/ support these -

<https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/collections/courses-for-parents-and-carers2>

8) Is your young person struggling at school?

School difficulties are very common in children with Autism. The mainstream environment can be very difficult for some children to cope with and may need extra support to cope with the demands of this environment.

If you are worried about schooling and there are significant difficulties, the following can be advised:

- a) You can make an appointment to speak with the SENCO and discuss your concerns in more detail
- b) If you would like further independent advice, you can contact the SENDIASS service who can provide independent advice and support around education and special needs. They also have a very robust and informative website with a wealth of information which parents can access: <https://www.yorksendiass.org.uk/>
- c) You can also access the specialist teaching team for Autism directly via one of the drop in sessions provided through York Inspirational Kids.

What is the Autism Community Connector and Engagement Team (ACCET)?

The Autism Community Connector and Engagement Team in North Yorkshire and York aims to improve the health; well-being and independence of families with children and young people who are awaiting or have recently received an Autistic diagnosis to strengthen pathways of support. The core principles of the service are:

- ☒ To provide free, time limited, targeted, support
- ☒ To promote independence and facilitate self-help
- ☒ To work alongside families to build their confidence and skills
- ☒ To facilitate self-assessments and make referrals where appropriate.
- ☒ To complement existing services
- ☒ To provide practical advice, information and support

Social Prescribers spend time with families on a one-to-one basis to identify what is important to them, what potential networks of support they have and what their priorities are. They will work with families to achieve positive outcomes that are important to them. There isn't a definitive list of 'things' that the Social Prescriber will do because it is a personalised service and it will vary as to what the individual wants to achieve. Some examples of support are:

- ☒ Support to build self-confidence
- ☒ Support with practical advice and skills
- ☒ Helping a family to be connected to, linked with or signposted to services and networks in their area.

Who can access support from the Autism Community Connector and Engagement Team? This service is currently available to families who have a child and young people with autism diagnosis or those who are currently going through the diagnostic process. As this service is currently a pilot, it

is available only to families based in Harrogate, Hambleton/Richmondshire and City of York localities.

For further details about the project please contact: Ruth Little
ruth.little@northyorks.gov.uk



ADAPT
After Diagnosis of Autism
Parent support Training


www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk

FREE Online course

A new course co-developed for parents following their child's diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) by York CAMHS & CYC Specialist Teaching Team for Autism.

The course aims to increase parents' understanding of the diagnosis and how it can impact on family and school life.

Topics include:

- Receiving a diagnosis
- Autism at a Brain level
- Mindblindness
- Language & communication
- Visual supports
- Sensory differences
- Special Interests
- Understanding & managing behaviour
- Social & emotional needs
- Anxiety
- Sensitive presentation & masking
- Sleep
- Playing detective
- The stages of a crisis
- The needs & feelings behind behaviours


www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk

Appendix 3: Cocreation leaflet

WORKING TOGETHER TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CAMHS: CO – CREATION/PARTICIPATION

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Improves and shapes the services
- Increases self-esteem
- Meet new people and build confidence
- Develop personal skills and experience
- Paid Opportunity – in vouchers or bank transfer
- Add to your CV or personal statement
- Improve wellbeing

WE NEED YOU!

As a service we are committed to giving young people and their parents, a voice to make a positive difference to their experience at York CAMHS.

That's why we want **YOU** to join us and meet other young people to discuss service development and brainstorm ideas in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

We want **YOU** to help us to re-design our service.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED, LET YOUR PRACTITIONER KNOW OR EMAIL:

tewv.yorkcamhsparticipation@nhs.net



Orca House
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
Link Business Park
Osbalwick Link Road
York
YO10 3JB
Tel: 01904 420950
e-mail: tewv.yorkcamhsparticipation@nhs.net

**HEY.
HEY YOU.
YEAH, YOU**

**York CAMHS
Co-Creation**

Would you like to be involved in shaping the future of CAMHS?

NHS
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust

journey to change

Appendix 4: Examples of positive feedback received about Children's Mental Health Support Services

Feedback regarding the MHSTs in York Schools

"During their time in school, the Wellbeing in Mind Team have provided our children and staff with highly effective support and input via staff training, consultations and 1:1 direct work, workshops and group intervention. The entire team has shown a commitment to improving well-being provision in our school and their knowledge and practical advice has been well-received by everyone. A strong partnership has been formed between school staff and the Team and their direct and indirect input is having a positive effect on children, staff and families"

Nicola Jones, Head Teacher, Clifton Green Primary School

"Direct work; most young people are finding it really helpful... Majority go from intense pastoral support to check-ins and universal support once they have had direct work with you."

"I think that anxiety will still happen at times, but I know now what to do and I know it does get better."

"Pastoral managers in school are more skilled and comfortable in talking about low mood and anxiety with parents".

"We really appreciate the time you spent creating the resources and the time today delivering to staff. The resources for the school website are excellent and again much appreciated."

"I would just like to take this opportunity and thank you for your work with the Wellbeing Anxiety base group you have delivered over the last 10-12 weeks for Year 7 learners".

"The work I did with you helped me get my confidence back in my parenting abilities."

"He is normally quite quiet and a bit reserved, but she really connected with him."

"I like how people don't know me as *that* person in college. I really like it here, I like my course, and my mum and dad are really proud of how I have settled in".

"And thank you so much to you and your lovely colleagues for the care you give and for making me feel at ease. You do a fantastic job"

"Thank you for the update and the plan. This is really useful. I will meet with in the next week or so and talk over it with her so is knows that we are aware of this in school."

Feedback for ASC social prescriber

"There have been lots of challenges so good to know help is on the way and I appreciate everything you have done for us. Thanks."

"Your support has been invaluable when looking for nurseries for X, thank you."

"The resources you have shared have been really useful and my child's behaviour at home has settled down, which is great as it was putting a lot of strain on the family."

Feedback for Autism Hub – All About Autism

"My son never goes anywhere, but said he would give this a go. Wow. He joined in. He actually joined in. I can't believe it. Thank you for your patience with him, he will be back."

"I like this club. It's for kids like me and that's good cos I don't have to talk to anyone."

"I like the animation session. I can't wait to get started properly."

“He never settles well and is extremely anxious, but the staff are amazing with him.”

Feedback for School Well-Being Service

“I want to say thank you. I love my strategy cards. This was my favourite thing to do. I can feel calm and ask for help in the class.”

“I have noticed a change in my pattern of distorted thoughts and can recognise both my positive thoughts and feelings and improve my negative ones.”

“It was nice for someone to talk to about my feelings. Sleeping and eating are a lot more better.”

Feedback for Specialist CAMHS Support

“The support we have received has been brilliant”

“A very good experience, the staff were all very pleasant and reassuring at all times.”

“Check in phone calls and visits were upheld over Christmas period as per plan set out by community team.”

“Really helped us through crisis, didn't just abandon us, [Staff name] is outstanding, everyone very kind and professional.”

Appendix 5: Further useful links

Autistic Girls Network is a registered charity working to support, educate and bring change. They have a number of resources on their website: <https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/>

This includes a list of reasonable adjustments possible at school:
<https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AGN-Reasonable-Adjustments-Possible-at-School-Standard.pdf>

And a student passport template:

https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/Student_Passport_Template.pdf



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