

Emotional and Mental Health of Looked After Children in York – Briefing Note

January 2017

1. Introduction

In York there is a multi-faceted approach to promoting the emotional and mental health of our Looked after Children, and responding to their needs as they arise.

This approach is informed by our vision for York's children and young people in care (set out in the 2016 -2020 Childrens and Young People in Care Strategy). Specifically:

...we want our children and young people to have everything that good parents want for their children. In other words: to be happy and health, safe and protected and supported each step of the way to adult life.

We know that fear of stigma is a key issue for children and young people who need additional help to support their good mental wellbeing. Our looked after children in York tell us that they want their lives, above all, to be 'normal'. This was a key feature of our consultation with them.¹

This briefing note describes York's approach to supporting the emotional and mental health of looked after children, the range of services we offer, the numbers of children receiving these services, and the future developments that have been planned.

2. Our Approach – All Looked after Children

Our approach to supporting and responding to the emotional and mental health of our looked after children focuses on equipping those closest to our children so that they are in a position to recognise and respond to the children's needs as appropriate. A programme of continuous training, advice and support is in place for our:

- foster carers [e.g. certificate of accreditation in Trauma and Attachment]
- social workers [e.g. DDP training]
- pastoral school staff [e.g. ELSA Training]

¹ pg 11 C&YPiC York's Strategy 2016 - 2020

- wider school [e.g. VHT Delivers Developmental Trauma and Attachment training –through Pathfinder.]

To support these frontline practitioners we have created a range of specialist practitioners who work in the field and who also provide direct support to our children:

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants – There are 220 ELSAs trained in York schools. This group is alerted to the looked after children in their settings through the termly school list.
- School Cluster Well-being Workers – managed through the local authority, and supervised by Specialist CAMHS, this group of workers provides advice, support and some direct interventions to children and young people in schools. They prioritise looked after children.
- Primary Mental Health Workers – these colleagues are available to advise and assess children where there may be concerns for escalating mental health problems

3. Childrens with Emerging or complex Mental Health Needs

Of course where a child's needs are beyond the skills or experience of our frontline staff we have commissioned a range of specialist interventions that can be tailored to the individual needs of any child or young person. These arrangements sit on top of the core CAMHS offer and include:

FIRST	<p>Nationally Recognised specialist intervention for looked after children with highly complex needs – led by Dr Alex Velic, Consultant Child Psychologist.</p> <p>This service has worked with 12 Looked After Children and those on the edge of care.</p>
Dr David Lucey	<p>Dr Lucey is a specialist Consultant Clinical Psychologist; he is commissioned by CSC in York has advised on and is supporting the planning for 5 Looked After Children</p>

PTSD trauma	This specialist provision for our UASC is identified through the regional response arrangements now in place. Our Welcome Centre approach allows us to make a careful initial assessment of the possible emotional and mental health needs and use this informed view to decide on the initial appropriate pathway. Currently it is necessary to spot purchase Post Traumatic Stress Disorder support for these young people.
Forensic Panel	These arrangements include attendance by Dr Paul Tiffin . Over the past year this panel has considered and reviewed 5 children.
Ed Psych CLA	York has a Specialist Educational Psychologist for Looked After Children (0.3 fte) The role involves co-delivery of training with the Virtual Headteacher, as well as representation on strategic groups and advocacy for young people in care. The wider EP service prioritises attendance at all CLA EHCP and PEP reviews.
Prof Barry Wright	Dr Wright is a Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Hull Medical School . He provides advice and consultation in relation to the evaluation of our developing arrangements for the support and responses to the emotional and mental health of our children
Other Commissioned Services	There are 3 looked after children receiving bespoke mental health packages from the following providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspire • Integrated Families • Ebor Psychology

<p>Specialist CAMHS Services</p>	<p>There are currently no looked after children on the waiting list for specialist CAMHS in York.</p> <p>There are currently 8 looked after children are currently in receipt of Tier 3 CAMHS locally.</p> <p>There 2 Looked After Children receiving CAMHS in external placements</p>
<p>Danesgate Community York²</p>	<p>At Danesgate nurture group provision and bespoke personalised programmes are designed to meet the education needs of 5-17 year olds who have escalating social, emotional and mental health needs to the extent that they cannot access education in a supportive mainstream setting. Specialist teaching supported by a ‘reducing anxiety’, solution-focused approach allows young people to take control of their learning, focus on future progression and build their self esteem</p> <p>Pupil voice PowerPoint’s are used in reviews to allow students to put their voice into their programmes and also as a vehicle for review and reflection on what has worked and why- (examples available)</p> <p>There are currently 11 looked After Children attending this provision.</p>
<p>NSPCC [York]</p>	<p>Therapeutic provision for children who have experienced sexual abuse.</p> <p>There is currently 1 looked after child receiving this provision</p>
<p>Inpatient Psychiatric Provision</p>	<p>St Andrews Hospital – Northamptonshire 1 looked after child</p>

² The Head of Danesgate sits on the Yor-OK Board (Early Help), Schools Forum (Vice Chair), Local Safe-guarding Board (Education rep on Serious Case Review sub group), Strategic Commissioning Partnership Group and Joint Panel.

4. Ongoing Development Work

I. Understanding the Profile of our Looked after Population - Developing a baseline for future development

In partnership with Leeds University, Children's Specialist Services (York) surveyed over 6000 school children across years 6 to 10. This survey was conducted to get an overall baseline (heat map) of the emotional health of York's children. We are currently preparing to map the emotional and mental health of our Looked After population against this picture to gain a better understanding of their profile and to support some further investigations into the type and nature of future support needed for this group.

This work is seen as a key priority especially in the context of apparently higher than average SDQ score returns for some looked after children. We are currently exploring this issue further and in light of the City wide survey approach working with our research partners to develop the tool to ensure better benchmarking of our looked after populations emotional well being with all children in the City.

It is right to report that this year as a consequence the transition from RAISE to our new system MOSAIC we can only pull through by report those SDQs that have been entered into the workflow of the new system – while this available data reassures that since April 16 there is a high level of activity we cannot until late January 17 run the complete picture.

II. Strategic Partnership for the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People

A survey of key stakeholders across the childrens trust community of providers was undertaken in 2015 to refresh the strategic priorities for the City and to inform a refresh of the strategic partnership arrangements.³ The responses to this survey have informed the new partnership arrangements and clearly identified strong multi agency support for a Children's Looked After work strand and sub group.

This new arrangement will provide a multi agency forum to support the ongoing developments and planning in relation to the emotional and

³ Improving the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People in York

mental health of all looked after children. The sub group will be chaired by the Group Manager for Achieving Permanence who has a single line of sight across all looked after children and young people.

Key developments already under way that will be progressed under the aegis of the revised sub group include:

- a) In partnership with the Council for Disabled Children and the national DfE Innovation programme, the development of a York ***intensive therapeutic residential short breaks*** offer (incorporating FIRST and York's short breaks service). This new service will support those children and young people who have Autism/Aspergers with a dual diagnosis of LD and mental health difficulties. The development of this service is a response to recognition that several children and young people which this combination of needs have ended up in Tier 4 facilities with deteriorating mental health and associated poor outcomes.

In York we have already demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach, both in terms of preventing children and young people coming into care and in terms of creating stability and better outcomes for those in care.

- b) In partnership with higher educations settings in the region we are scoping the development of ***embedded trainee psychologists*** within our looked after and referral and assessment teams. Although at an early stage, we have identified a unique opportunity to ensure that work in both of these key areas is enhanced by the systematic inclusion of a psychological perspective in relation to key decisions and assessments.

These arrangements will be discussed with the local CAMHS provider to ensure that escalation and referral pathways are aligned where an onward referral is required.

- c) A Looked after Children's Learning and wellbeing adviser will be appointed, work with the Virtual School, CAMHS (through the wellbeing worker programme) and schools to directly support students and train staff in order to develop capacity.

5. Conclusions

We know from our work with our specialist mental health colleagues that the best way to secure our children and young people's emotional and mental health is to facilitate and secure their engagement in 'normal' life. Specifically, to support their regular school attendance (in settings where staff are trained to be attuned to their emotional and mental health needs); to support their care in settings (where possible family placements with carers trained and attuned to their emotional and mental health needs); to support their social relationships with family and friends (facilitated by social care staff who are trained to understand some of the specific attachment and related needs they may experience). In short, our looked after children do best in a whole system that is alert to and can respond to their emotional and mental health needs.

Where more serious needs emerge, we know that early identification and timely expert help is essential. In York we recognise that a clear pathway into a local specialist CAMHS service is important but not in itself a sufficient offer. Instead we offer and continue to develop a range of responses tailored to the unique need of each child and young person.

Our ambition is to directly provide or commission a full spectrum of emotional and mental health responses for our looked after population which means that no child or young person has to travel beyond the City boundary to have their needs, however serious, met. This aspiration is already in part achieved as is evident by the flexible range of responses in place. However, perhaps more significantly, we have made significant progress in the necessary culture change towards introducing a *whole system* approach to supporting and improving the emotional and mental health of our looked after population.



Eoin Rush
Assistant Director – Childrens Specialist Services
January 2017