



Emotional and Mental Health Needs of Children in Care – Partnership Update

Corporate Parenting Board – June 18

1. Background

In York there is a multi-faceted approach to promoting the emotional and mental health of our children in care, 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 Children's 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.

Children and young people in care in York benefit from our approach which

- focuses on equipping those closest to our children with the necessary skills so that they are in a position to recognise and respond to the children and young people's needs as appropriate

and

- with multi agency partners provides a range of services across levels of need from the GP offer, to Counselling via Clarence Street to Specialist CAMHs as well as the School Wellbeing Service.
- We know that fear of stigma is a key concern for children and young people who need additional help to support their good mental wellbeing. Our children in care in York tell us that they want their lives to be 'normal'; that they would prefer a service from someone they know; that foster carers are key in their lives and

their training should reflect the importance of understanding and supporting emotional/mental health.

In the 2017 U Matter Survey most positive response was in answer to the question “If you didn’t feel happy is there someone you would be able to talk to?” where 97% of children and young people who answered said yes and only 3% said no. They were also asked if they knew where to get information, advice and support and 93% said that they did. One 14 year old young person commented, “I don’t really tell anyone how I feel, but I know who to talk to if needed.”

However, we know that there are barriers for our children/young people in accessing services due to long waiting lists across all tiers of provision; due to the young person not meeting the criteria for the right service or due to the right service not being commissioned.

Our partners, including CAMHS are aware of these shared challenges and we are committed to working together to find solutions. The All Age Mental Health Strategy sets the priorities for the multi-agency Strategic Partnership for Emotional Mental Health (SPEMH). SPEMH provides a vehicle for delivering key aspects of the Transformation Plan.

2. **Current Arrangements**

Health and Wellbeing Board (Overseeing progress against to the Local Transformation Plan, which is based on the All Age Mental Health Strategy)	
All Age Mental Health Strategic Partnership Board	
Children and Young People Emotional and Mental Health Strategic	Children in Care Strategic Partnership (Implementing the

Partnership (SPEMH) (Implementing the children & young people's aspects of the Local Transformation Plan)	children in care and care leavers aspects of the Local Transformation Plan)
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The Children and Young People('s) Strategic Partnership for Emotional and Mental Health provides a multi agency forum to drive the ongoing developments and planning in relation to the emotional and mental health of all looked after children.

The Partnership has recently agreed upon a new approach to move forward multi agency practice and collaborative working. This approach involves two sub groups who will focus on prevention and intervention for which terms of Reference are being drafted and membership are being agreed.

The prevention group

- It is likely that the prevention groups will focus on ensuring a sustainable set of arrangements support early intervention mental health support across different universal settings including school and colleges.

The intervention group

- It is likely that the intervention group will focus on identifying pathways for vulnerable children and young people with escalating needs who do not meet the criteria for a specialist service and for whom there is no clear pathway to a service.

These sub groups will report to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership for Emotional and Mental Health.

3. **Other Future Developments**

1. SDQ sub group – Focused on maintaining and improving SDQ practice. This is being moved forward with a task and finish group chaired by the Advanced Practitioner in the Achieving Permanence Group and includes training from CAMHs.
2. Reflective Fostering – a pilot project in partnership with NSPCC focused

*“The **Reflective Fostering programme** has a central focus on increasing the foster carers’ reflective capacities using practical, easily learned techniques. Foster carers are encouraged to practice the techniques at home, with an emphasis on increasing mentalising and emotional regulation and improve communication and carer/child interactions. This approach builds on the foster carer’s competence and confidence to understand the child’s emotional needs and behaviours”. (NSPCC)*

Partnering local authorities will have an opportunity for supervising social workers to receive high quality training and consultation from leading experts in the field of infant mental health. This will begin towards the end of the year.

3. Exploration of reviewing Service Level Agreement in order to prioritise care leavers access to the Counselling offer at Clarence Street.
4. Delivery of Mental Health First Aid to practitioners in York, including schools staff and foster carers.