



**Children, Young People and Skills Scrutiny  
Board  
04 September 2023**

# ITEM 06

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Public Health  
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Health

## **Childrens Mental Health issues after Covid**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide the Derby Children, Young People and Skills Scrutiny Review Board with a presentation and report giving an overview of Childrens mental health after Covid.
- 1.2 Members of the Scrutiny Review Board are invited to ask any questions they may have.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 For the Scrutiny Review Board to consider the contents of this report and presentation (appendix 1)
- 2.2 To make any further comments or recommendations following discussions on the report received.

### **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 To provide the Board with an overview of Childrens mental health after Covid and actions being taken to address.
- 3.2 To allow the Board an opportunity to make any further comments or recommendations.

### **Supporting information**

## 4.1 Introduction

Our mental health is impacted by the environment we live within, our experiences, our relationships, the support we receive, and our physical health. Responding to improve the mental health of our children requires a system response; families, communities, schools, voluntary and faith sector organisations and statutory health and care services all have a role to play.

The Covid pandemic period impacted children across all age groups and backgrounds. In terms of Childrens mental health, a recent report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies highlights that half of all children suffered a setback to their emotional and social development during the first year of the pandemic, with younger children more likely to have been negatively affected than their older siblings. This was based on a survey of over 6000 parents responding to questions about their child's behaviour, including how often they appeared worried, how easily they lost confidence and had tantrums in February 2021 and, retrospectively, a year earlier.

The research found that children from all economic backgrounds in England were affected though younger children aged four to seven were significantly more likely to have suffered a deterioration in their skills than 12- to 15-year-olds. Youngsters whose parents' employment changed as a result of the pandemic, including those who were furloughed, were also far more likely to see their social and emotional skills worsen.

## 4.2 Impact of Covid on Childrens Mental Health:

The accompanying presentation highlights the impact of Covid on Children and Young People (CYP), families and services, with a sharp rise in the proportion of children experiencing a mental health disorder. The ongoing cost of living crisis will undoubtedly have an additional impact, pushing families into poverty that would have not ordinarily been affected and for those who already face challenges the impact will be significant. Covid showed us that referrals increased as did the complexities presented, the cost-of-living crisis may have the same affect.

CYP spoke to MK:2K citizen researchers in November 2021 about the psychological challenges of the pandemic. The below comments shared by CYP are reflected in the increased severity of presentations, the more intensive and ongoing amount of input required to support CYP with their mental health, and anecdotal reporting from provider workforce about the extent to which CYP have suffered due to the period of uncertainty that significantly impacted their daily lives.

Young people told us they had experienced a dramatic increase in levels of stress. This was due to several factors, which combined led to higher levels of anxiety and worry. These included the pressure of completing schoolwork from home, social isolation and a lack of peer support and the ongoing fear around Covid.

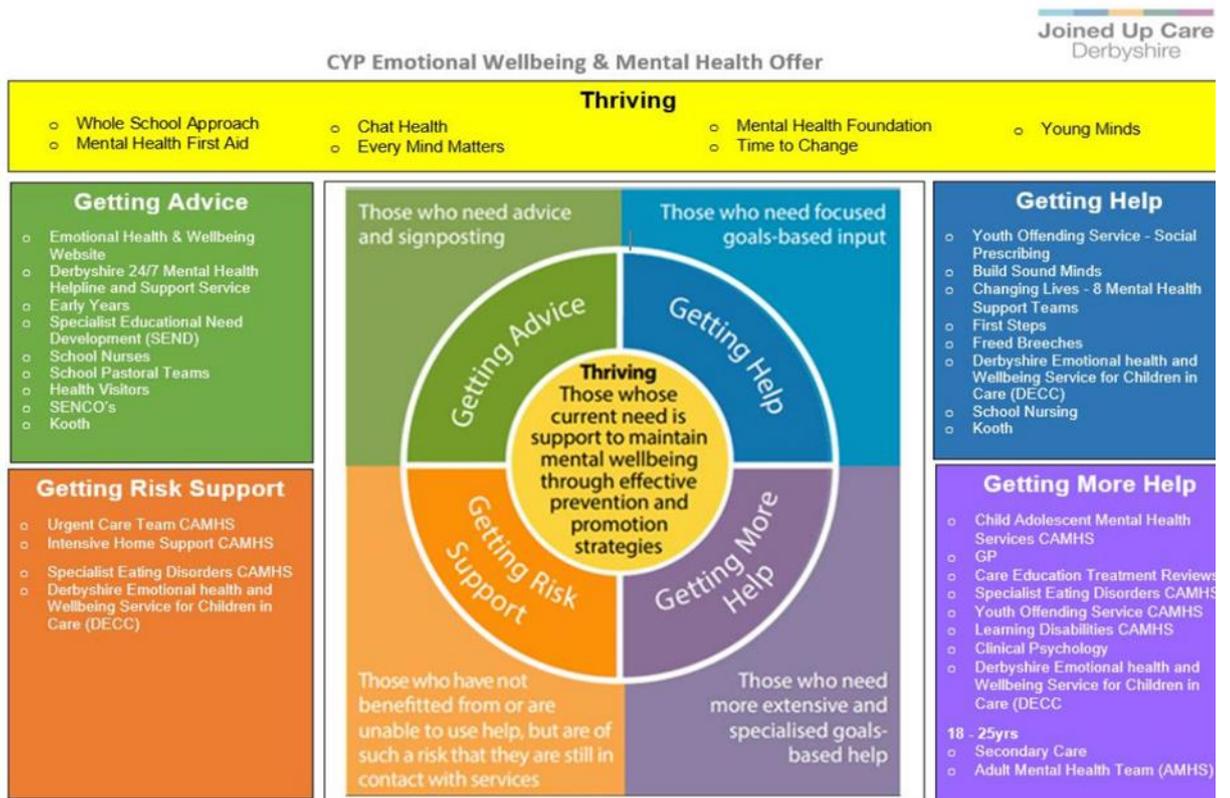
*"I was quite a confident person before the pandemic, and I would throw myself into any situation. I always wanted to be out and to socialise with people, but I have become anxious at the thought of being in social situations and being around people."  
"It was difficult to talk to people as it is a reminder of not being able to see them and there is so much uncertainty with when we can be with our loved ones"*

### 4.3 Actions being taken in Derby to address Childrens mental health post Covid

As with adult mental health services, there has been a similar shift towards broadening the CYP mental health support offer with an increasing focus on early help and intervention. In collaboration with the Integrated Care System, local authority and our voluntary and community sector partners, a transformation plan has been in place to expand the CYP mental health pathway to provide a graduated offer able to offer advice, support and treatment to children and young people at the time they need it most, the key aim being to support CYP at earliest opportunity to stem escalation and prevent deterioration in their mental health and wellbeing. Across Derby and Derbyshire ICS, the Thrive model is widely accepted by partners and stakeholders working across our emotional wellbeing and mental health CYP services.

The Thrive framework inform collaborative working within the community to ensure that the offer underpins a whole system approach that links education, health and social care to improve outcomes by intervening earlier, preventing needs from escalating and reducing demand for high-cost support.

The Thrive framework diagram below shows the services available across the CYP mental health pathway. They have been mapped to the Thrive framework to support CYP, parents', carers and professionals to navigate children and young people to the right place, at the right time, to meet children and young people's needs.



[www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)

In relation to the Early Help offer for Childrens mental health, the initiatives representing increasing levels of support services listed under the 'Thriving', 'Getting Advice' and 'Getting Help' are relevant.

#### 4.4 Targeted early help including working in educational settings:

The vast majority of CYP aged between 5 to 16 in Derby and Derbyshire attend schools. This means that those working in school settings are best placed to identify and intervene when CYP need extra support with their emotional health, wellbeing, or mental health. Children also live in the context of their family and community situations which has a strong relationship to meeting CYP needs in education settings.

Evidence would suggest that after covid, on average, between 1 in 5 and 1 in 6 (18%) of school-aged children experience mental illness. In Derby there is evidence of a greater level of vulnerability to mental illness in children and young people than seen nationally. This is highlighted in an array of risk factors that range from poverty to obesity and recent moves to the area, and many more families will be facing pressures and at risk of poverty due to the cost of living crisis so these figures are likely to increase

Because schools play such a significant role in CYP lives all Derby schools have access to early intervention and targeted support mental health and wellbeing services which work specifically with schools, namely Changing Lives (Mental Health Support Team) and Build Sound Minds. In addition to this, work is undertaken to ensure that schools understand what the mental health system has to offer in its entirety (websites / Kooth / Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for example) CAMHS Specialist Community Advisors (SCA) are linked to all schools and offer advice, consultation and training to assist and identify those children in need of support at an early stage, and help direct them to the most appropriate sources of support. The Integrated Care System has designed an Education Mental Health Pathway for Schools which allows schools to map their own community provision and gives guidance regarding the mental health services.

The Derby and Derbyshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing signposting website for Derby and Derbyshire contains local and national links and resources updated regularly, providing information on the whole system of care which is in place for meeting CYP mental health needs.

[Derby & Derbyshire - Emotional Health & Wellbeing  
\(derbyandderbyshireemotionalhealthandwellbeing.uk\)](https://derbyandderbyshireemotionalhealthandwellbeing.uk)

These services give timely advice to schools, pupils and their families for emotional support, wellbeing, and mental health. This means that all children and young people and their families who experience mental health problems have access to services, but we specifically target, via Mental Health Support Teams, those settings where there is greater risk. Virtual schools are included to ensure that children in care have access to early intervention services. Services offered include evidence-based therapies, for example systemic family therapy and Cognitive Behavioural informed talking therapies.

## 4.5 Current challenges in Childrens Mental Health

### **Unmet need:**

In 2015 25% of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition were receiving at least 2 contacts with services (meaning that 75% of those in need were not). By March 2022 partners across Derby and Derbyshire ICS had been able to provide 49% of CYP 2 contacts with services demonstrating that we are meeting the needs of many more CYP, although also showing that there remains significant unmet need.

### **Increasing demand:**

Although we are seeing more CYP, this is in the context of increasing demand too. There are several factors influencing this increase in demand. The success of the mental health programme in raising awareness amongst professionals and with CYP, parents and carers, alongside national media coverage, has helped to improve understanding about CYP emotional health and wellbeing. Providing universal availability to information and advice, promoting access to support offers, services and navigation to referral routes will be a contributory factor to raised demand. Further context of course is the impact of the pandemic which has had a detrimental impact on the emotional health of many CYP and exacerbated symptoms and increased mental health difficulties. The Young Minds 2021 survey reported that 67% of 13-25 year olds surveyed believed that the pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health. The impacts of the current cost-of-living crisis will amplify these adverse mental health impacts, particular for our more disadvantaged and vulnerable groups within Derby.

### **Waiting times:**

In parallel to the CYP mental health pathway transformation and investment in new services we have seen the referrals to all CYP mental health services increase significantly. CAMHS routine services have seen an increase in referrals for CYP requiring specialist therapeutic interventions with high levels of CYP waiting to 'Get More Help'. Additionally, the demand for specialist CAMHS has shifted in recent years with a greater presentation in the urgent care 'Getting Risk Support' element of Thrive. There has also been a rise in complex social issues and trauma impacting on CYP mental health, as well as an increase in comorbid mental health and neurodiverse presentations. High referral levels are also apparent in the Build Sound Minds Service (commissioned under the transformation programme), which delivers in the 'Getting Advice' and 'Getting Help' element of Thrive. Kooth, Derby and Derbyshire ICS's anonymous digital platform is also over performing.

### **Workforce:**

Despite investment, there is a national shortage of suitably skilled staff and Derbyshire like many areas of the England has experienced challenges in attracting, recruiting and retaining CYP mental health practitioners.

#### 4.6 **Strengths and opportunities for Children’s Mental Health in Derby after Covid**

91 schools are signed up to the Derby City Partnership Inclusion Charter. As part of the Charter work, over the last year, schools have been able to access a range of training to support them in developing a relational approach back in their schools. Embedding this approach as a school culture and ethos enables schools to understand the needs of CYP and address/manage/support these accordingly. This culture brings about better social inclusion, attendance, CYP develop resilience and are happy and healthy and in turn achieve better learning outcomes.

Following Derby’s selection to be part of a previous national CYP mental health transformation strategy in 2018, all schools in Derby now have a qualified Designated Senior Mental Health Lead (DSMHL), continuing their ongoing journey of developing a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health for CYP will have made and continue to make a positive difference to how the level of CYP’s mental health needs have been and are supported and managed post covid.

DSMHL’s continue to be supported by Derby City Council public health through:

- DSMHL network meetings - leading on the delivery of half termly network meetings that provide:
  - an opportunity for local and national updates
  - presentations and input from locally commissioned and voluntary service providers/organisations
  - dedicated time to focus on the 8 principles.
  - sharing good practice from a range of schools to support this and an opportunity to network with each other.
- Emotionally Healthy Schools website maintenance and update of information.
- Training offers that support the whole school approach work.

#### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

5.1 None directly arising from this report

#### **Other options**

6.1 None directly arising from this report

#### **Financial and value for money issues**

7.1 None directly arising from this report

#### **Legal implications**

8.1 None directly arising from this report

#### **Climate implications**

9.1 None directly arising from this report

### **Socio-Economic implications**

10.1 None directly arising from this report

### **Other significant implications**

11.1 None directly arising from this report

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
<b>Service Director(s)</b>		
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Robyn Dewis, Director of Public Health	22.08.2023
<b>Other(s)</b>		

<b>Background papers:</b>	
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Presentation Children & Young People Mental Health