

Lancashire County Council

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th December, 2021 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'A' - The Tudor Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

J Berry	N Khan
S Barnes	J Mein
A Cheetham	Rigby
S Clarke	M Salter
S Hind	J R Singleton JP
T Hurn	R Woollam
S Jones	

Co-opted members

Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

County Councillors Steve Rigby and John Singleton JP replaced County Councillors Barrie Yates and Ash Sutcliffe respectively for this meeting.

County Councillor Sobia Malik also attended virtually for this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick, and Simon Smith.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

County Councillor Samara Barnes declared a Non-Pecuniary interest on Agenda Item 4 as she runs a National Mental Health Program within schools.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 9 November 2021, be confirmed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chair.

4. Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services - Children and Young People

Dave Carr, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council, Marie Demaine, Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, Lancashire County Council, Fleur Carney, Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria, Helen Rimmer, Service Redesign Manager, NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit and David Keegan, Counselling Psychotherapist, Supervisor and Trainer MBACP presented a report to members of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, giving an overview of the current demand in services such as Mental Health, Early Help and Eating Disorders. Also in attendance were Mairead, Mariam, Georgia, Braeden, and Amba representing the Lancashire Youth Council.

The presentation covered the following topics:

- The demand on services such as Mental Health, Early Help and Eating Disorder Services.
- The response provided during COVID-19.
- The Mental Health support teams.
- The transformation phase.
- The plans moving forward.

The committee was taken through each of the topics in turn during the presentation and members of the committee were invited to ask questions at the end of the presentation. The Youth Council representatives in attendance at the meeting also provided a presentation to members of the committee on a 'Study of Mental Health from the Viewpoint of Young People'. It was noted that a copy of both presentations was attached to the agenda.

In terms of the questions raised by the committee, the following points were clarified:

- Concerns around lack of capacity was raised and members questioned what can be done to prevent this from happening again. It was noted that the capacity is reviewed throughout the year, and if some districts received more referrals than others, capacity will be offset and shared out accordingly. It was recognised that lack of capacity was an issue last year (2020/21) and are actively looking into preventing this from happening again.
- In terms of reasons why the number of referrals would differ by district, it was noted that the difference remained unclear, but a potential reason was that there were different early help offers based in different communities outside the offer provided by the county council and the NHS. Therefore, it was possible that the community-based offers were being taken up in some areas as an alternative.

- Members highlighted that the figures for Eating Disorders provided in the presentation were only provided in binary genders and asked if there was a reason behind this. It was clarified that there was no specific reason for why the information was provided in only binary genders and it was stated that the information could be provided in different ways if requested.
- Members asked a question to the young people in attendance at the meeting from the Lancashire Youth Council on where they would normally obtain information to receive support, and it was noted that there were a number of different ways such as approaching their form tutors or to the dedicated person in the school with responsibility of care, who can ascertain the right pathway for support that they required. However, it was also noted that although the support being provided was improving, more support was still needed, such as improving awareness on the different services available, that young people could access. From this information, members asked what they could do better to improve the availability of information for young people. It was identified that bright, colourful posters may be appealing without too much text to read and information could be reviewed during form-time. Members queried if information on the school's websites would be useful. It was also noted that a simple tool could be a box available within a school to post slips of paper at the student's ease, which would be picked up by the staff and the student approached and offered support.
- Members requested if more targeted work could be undertaken on improving self-care for young people in deprived areas and to integrate this into the existing services. The NHS noted this is a challenge as services are more reactive, however changes could be made to provide a more proactive and preventative service. Members requested feedback on what the targeted work looks like.
- It was noted that the figures relating to the longest waiting times for accessing Mental Health Services wasn't available to be given to the committee at the meeting but could be circulated to members. It was clarified that in the presentation, there were no start and completion dates shown on the Mental Health School Teams timeline due to the training being provided at different times, but it was stated that the training was on track.
- Members requested if more information could be circulated to members of the committee in relation to the training that was provided to the Mental Health Support teams at Blackburn with Darwin, Morecambe, and East Lancashire on what the outcomes were following the first year of training.
- In terms of waiting times for Crisis line responses and how many of those staff members answering the phones were trained on using British Sign Language, it was noted that the number of calls made to the Crisis line, including how quickly the calls were answered were extracted in a report that was produce monthly. The report also contained information on how many calls never received a response.
In terms of how many staff members were trained on using the British Sign Language, it was noted that this was not currently known, and it would be something that would need to be requested from the various of providers.

It was also highlighted that the Crisis lines were operated by fully trained staff and the staff members could either support the person directly on the phone or direct them to receive further support, if required.

- Members requested if further information could be provided to the committee on what support was being given to schools to develop their own programs to help in supporting children with mental health issues. It was noted that some schools had set up their own peer support groups where students would speak to other students, instead of speaking to a teacher. It was also noted that ensuring support networks were set up locally within a school was beneficial and that the authority and the NHS were willing to support the schools when the support was needed.
- Members enquired on what work was being done to ensure that the target set for the Mental Health service demand was achievable and was continued to be delivered, and it was noted there was a constant review of pathways to ensure that the right service was continued to be delivered for that person and regular meetings were being held with the providers to make sure that the outcomes were continuing to be delivered and not just achieving the targets that had been set.
- It was clarified that the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) partners were community-based organisations that worked locally in each district and that they were supporting the delivery of the services. It was also noted that work was in progress to contact the voluntary care sector to determine their ability in providing support for the next year.
- Members raised concerns that the same issues experienced over many years were still being experienced, and what assurances could be given to addressing those issues. It was noted that lessons had been learnt from previous years and were acted upon. Work was being done on different ways of working to help address those core issues, but it was noted that more work was still needed.
- Members asked what was being done to address the stigma surrounding mental health issues and to prevent mental health issues from beginning to develop. It was noted that nationally work was being done, such as the appointment of Dr Alex George, as the Youth Mental Health Ambassador by the Government. However, it was recognised that there was still a stigma attached and people in certain age groups, certain sexes, and certain ethnicity, still don't talk about the issues.
- It was suggested that the Corporate Parenting Board could consider conducting a review for children in care to understand the variety of pathways available for mental health support.
- It was challenged that the process of diagnosing anorexia was perceived to be out of date (service users need to reach a specific BMI before being referred for treatment). It was acknowledged by the NHS that this is being challenged internally.
- Members requested if updated posters could be provided to all schools and colleges, listing who to contact for advice and support.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending especially the guests and presenters and the youth council for their participation.

The following actions were agreed:

- Conversations have begun regarding Crisis line posters in schools, and feedback to be provided to members as an update.
- Feedback to be provided to the committee on targeted intervention work in deprived areas.
- Data to be provided from the routine Eating Disorder referrals to include information on the longest waiting time not seen within the four-week period.
- Information to be circulated to the committee in relation to the training that was provided to the Mental Health Support teams at Blackburn with Darwin, Morecambe, and East Lancashire on what the outcomes were following the first year of training.
- Feedback to be provided on how many NHS staff within the Mental Health teams are trained in British Sign Language.
- The Corporate Parenting Board (with agreement from the Corporate Parenting Board Chair) to consider exploring tools available so children and young people in care have access to the relevant information on various mental health support services.

Resolved: That, following consideration of the information presented on emotional wellbeing and mental health services, the following recommendations be made:

- i. The implementation of contact cards for children and young people's mental health services for all councillors.
- ii. Information on local support for children and young people identified and provided to all schools.
- iii. Request to schools to place referral information and guidance on their websites.
- iv. A Bite Size Briefing for all councillors on pathways into children and young people's mental health services be arranged.
- v. A report provided to a future meeting of the committee, to include information on impact and outcomes.
- vi. Consideration for a future scrutiny inquiry day to:
 - a. Review with youth services the youth council groups in all districts with a view to understanding how to increase participation, more effective utilisation, and better communication with schools.
 - b. Review the availability and accessibility of information to schools on resources available to support early intervention.

5. Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22

The committee received a report which provided information on the work programme for the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The topics included in the work programme were identified at the work planning workshop held on 5 July 2021 and at subsequent meetings.

Resolved: That, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 be noted.

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee would take place on Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 10.30am.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston