

Children's Scrutiny Panel

10th February 2021

Meeting commenced: 6.00pm

Meeting ended: 7:15pm

Present:

Councillor Brocklehurst (in the chair)

Councillors:

Joshua Brooks, Jillian Collinson, Laura Edwards, Ari Leitner, Lewis Nelson, Mike Pevitt, Neil Reynolds, Madeline Wade, Joan Walsh, Collette Weir, Ronnie Wilson.

Co-opted Members:

Dr Keith Archer, Jacqui Morrissey, Judith Elderkin.

Also, in attendance:

Councillor John Walsh (Executive Support Member for Children's and Young People's Services).

Officers:

Debbie Blackburn –

Liz Wright – Democratic Services (Clerk)

Members of the public:

- One
- Streamed as an audio meeting via Microsoft Team via [Watch Live Council Meetings](#) page on the city council website.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence as all members were in attendance.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved: That, the minutes of the meeting held on 13.01.20 were approved as a correct record.

3. Declarations of interest

Councillor Edwards declared an interest for herself and her partner in Place 2 Be.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. The report on the review of access to children and young people's mental health services (including bereavement services)

The Assistant Director Education, Public Health Nursing and Wellbeing (Debbie Blackburn)

- National research had shown that the rates of probable mental health disorders had increased from the rate of 1 in 9 young person (5-16 years) in 2017 to 1 in 6 in 2020.
- The impact of the Covid19 pandemic had made the rates worse. Children's friendship and relationship groups had been disrupted because of the school closures and lockdown, which had also impacted on the social activities that were often important coping mechanisms for young people. School often also offered a respite from Domestic Abuse cases.
- Services had worked together in partnership to deal with the impact of the pandemic and the following summary was given of the key developments and challenges during the past 12 months:
 - Mental Health in Education – Mental Health Support teams (MHST): Salford was selected as a Greater Manchester (GM) trailblazer site to implement MHSTs, that was called 'Thrive in Education' team.
 - Gaddum: increased CCG funding to extend capacity of their bereavement counselling service for young people aged 11-18 in response to existing capacity issues and anticipated COVID pressures.
 - Kooth online emotional health and wellbeing service.
 - Salford strategic review of children's and young people's counselling.
 - Neuro Development needs-led pathway: significant progress on developing pathway in preparation for launch in January. Communications already shared with GPs in December and planned across the wider system January - March 2021.
 - Transitions Policy & pathways guidance documents in final draft and are subject to partner governance and sign off.
 - COVID impact, recovery & surge planning ongoing and subject to regular review.
 - A proposal for additional capacity in 42nd street had been submitted to address COVID related service pressures, capacity and sustainability.
 - A Thrive Partnership engagement meeting was held on 8th December, to identify challenges and priorities for 2021 and to inform the Thrive Plan update report 2021.
 - MSEDs: business case for recurrent additional investment in eating disorder service approved.
 - Ongoing delivery of Thrive and Trauma Training programmes, evaluation reports and recommendations provided in December to inform future commissioning plans. 238 people attended 9 Thrive related training and staff briefing sessions between April 2020 – Jan 2021. 914 people attended 10 trauma training workshops between July-November 2020
 - Ongoing: Thrive Network: email bulletins sent out on a weekly basis providing service updates, information and resources alongside the EHWP webpages being kept updated, online directory format revised and updated
 - In December, Salford Thrive Partnership met to review progress against the Plan and to identify key challenges and priorities for 2021-22.
- The impact of Covid19 and a summary of the key challenges were outlined as follows:
 - COVID 19 – lockdown restrictions, access and pathways, health and safety, shift to digital access/remote working, re-introduction of face to face services, the difficulties for children and young people in engaging in services from home (privacy, other priorities/family issues, technology).
 - Surge pressures, service planning and assurance, frequency of communication across the system to keep children's workforce, parents/carers and young people informed of changes.
 - Impacts on waiting times and pace/scale of development in online/digital offer.

- Staff, service and commissioning capacity to deliver on priorities, develop, implement and monitor new projects services. Staff shortages, vacancies, sickness and self-isolation.
- Maintaining service staff wellbeing and motivation.
- The Children and Mental Health Services had also been responding to the needs of staff during the pandemic and had also involved children in the co-production of how services would be delivered and staff had reported feeling more empowered.

The Chair of the panel invited questions and comments from members at this point.

- A member asked about the number of schools that had signed up to the Thrive Programme, as it was reported that 38 had signed up at this current time. The member also asked about the concern that children would be labelled as having mental health issues. The members were advised that the language used had been changed in Salford to try and avoid labelling children, for example behaviour would be described as distressed rather than challenging. Processes had been changed to avoid traumatising children and families and a clear distinction was being made between mental health support and mental health diagnosis. Where Thrive was not yet in a school they would buy in early support to bolster their pastoral care.
- A member asked if more CAMHS staff could be employed and if the money was available to do this. It was confirmed that investment had increased in CAMHS over the last five years. Staffing was challenging as appropriately qualified people were in high demand, so the development of a pipeline was an important feature of the workforce strategy to develop people to fill the posts.
- A member asked about the support for Early Years (EY) children and if preventative initiatives had been put in place. It was confirmed that this was a key priority for next year, which early identification and intervention a key focus. Children's Services and Adult Services were working together so that services were being provided to support parents, as supporting parents could often be the most effective way to help very young children. Emotionally Friendly settings initiative was being rolled out to EY setting.
- A member asked about the impact of Covid19 on staff resources and the practicalities of providing cover and filling vacancies. It was reported that there were robust risk assessments in place to protect staff to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace in the first instance. There had not been a significant impact on staffing levels. Staff had been able to work away from home if unwell or have been redeployed to different duties if necessary.
- A member asked how private and discreet conversations could be held with young people during Covid19 when practices were having to be changed due to the pandemic. It was reported that services had been planning their work on an individual basis and so have been able to offer face to face meetings in clinical Covid safe settings and many young people had embraced talking /meeting remotely by phone or IT device. CAMHS had adapted services based on what the young person would say worked for them.
- The national target for access to NHS funded services for children with diagnosable mental health conditions was 35% and Salford was shown to be at 51% over the last 12 months, higher than the North West, GM and the national (England) rates.
- GM was also on target for exceeding accessing eating disorder services. There had been 100% access for eating disorder referrals and the % of children and young people accessing the service within a week was above the North West and national (England) levels.
- Services such as 42nd Street had continued to provide flexible support tailored to the needs of young people, with more accessing the service more quickly via the online offer.

- Bereavement support was provided by The Gaddum Centre (providing need-led therapeutic) for Salford and Manchester. Support was also provided for the adults who were caring for a bereaved child, as they were often bereaved themselves.
- Specialist palliative care counselling was also provided for children and families needing extra support for children with life limiting illnesses. This support was available to the child, the whole family or specific member of the family and their friends and carers.
- Support was also available from Cruse Bereavement Care in Salford and in GM an interactive map was provided so that families could see what services were available in their area.
- An update was given on the Salford Thrive Plan that would be published before the end of March and included details of the review of the impact of the Covid19 on the mental health services.
- A Children's Panel would be set up as an online forum for children to hold the Assistant Director to account for the services provided.
- There was an update on Thrive in Education and the mental health support services in schools. Salford's 'blended' model brought together an integrated delivery team involving CAMHS, 42nd Street, Place2Be, and Salford City Council's Educational Psychology Service and Early Help Schools Co-ordinator's. The wider team around the school approach also involved our 0-19 School Health Service, Youth Service, Salford Community Leisure, Salford Schools Sports Partnership and wider Council education support services and children's health services.
- The work of the Thrive in Education Team was explained and it was reported that between October and December 2020 the team had engaged with 38 schools (28 primary and 10 secondary) and supported 187 young people. The feedback from the schools had been very positive.
- Young people were being supported to become mental health champions and peer supporters and this had worked well in other areas.
- Staff training and development had been a key focus and large numbers of staff had been trained. The *Salford Way* training had been developed to align to the Thrive model and 914 people had attended from a range of services and partners.
- Child Bereavement UK (a national bereavement charity) had provided a 90 minute webinar in Salford that covered bereavement on children and young people, drawing on both theoretical background and practical interventions. The session took place in October 2020 and was attended by 58 people.
- Other training had been provided by Kooth, Gaddum and Wellbeing for Education Return.

The Chair of the panel invited further questions and comments from members at this point.

- A member welcomed the investment in bereavement services and asked if it had been difficult to get young people to engage with the services. It was confirmed that *Do Not Access* (DNA) rates were monitored and the online offer had increased the access as there were less barriers for young people, such as travel, and there was more flexibility about when services could be accessed.
- A member commented that the training offer was extensive and the take up of training was very positive.
- A member asked if there was a danger that parents could get confused by all the services on offer. It was explained that the joined up approach in Salford helped overcome this and where there was any confusion this was usually easily overcome. The Thrive website was designed to help parents understand and navigate the system and it had received some very good feedback. Feedback was encouraged as the website was to be adapted to ensure it met parents' needs.

- A member commented that a lot of the training seemed to be aimed at schools and asked if it could be opened up to parents and families. It was confirmed that the webinars (e.g. on suicide awareness) had been well publicised and had been open to anyone to apply to attend. Training had been targeted at certain sectors of the community as well, for example hairdressers and barbers had been trained in suicide prevention, as this had seemed appropriate because of the particular had contact with the public.

The Chair thanked Assistant Director Education, Public Health Nursing and Wellbeing for her comprehensive report and presentation.

Resolved: That, the panel noted the report.

Work Programme and Membership

a. The work programme

- A first draft of the work programme showing proposals for the first few meetings of the municipal year had been circulated.
- The Chair commented that at his quarterly meeting with the Lead Member (LM) for Children's and Young People's Services, the challenges for officers taking on extra work during the pandemic was very challenging.
- The Assistant Director Education, Public Health Nursing and Wellbeing advised that new data would not be available for reports on childhood obesity and children's dental health as the epidemiology surveys had not been possible due the restrictions in place because of the pandemic. The data would be out of date but updates could be provided on what had been provided in these areas.
- The work programme was in draft would be further discussed at the next quarterly meeting by the Chair with the LM. In light of Covid19 and the elections the plan is likely to evolve ready for discussion at the June planning meeting.
- It was agreed that the Lead Member for Children's and Young People's Services, Councillor John Merry, would be invited to the June business planning meeting.

b. Membership

- The Chair had approached Salford SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) for a Jewish Community representative to join the panel. The clerk would follow the contacts at SACRE and keep the Chair informed.
- The clerk had received some interest in the parent governor nominations following the distribution of the election materials to all eligible parent governors. No actual nominations had yet been received. The deadline for nominations was 14th March 2021.

Resolved: That, the panel agreed to invite the Lead Member for Children's and Young People's Services to the June 2021 meeting.

7. Any Other business

a. Childhood Obesity Webinar

The Chair thanked Councillor Collison for drawing this Local Government Association (LGA) webinar to the attention of the panel. The webinar was in held as two separate sessions on 8th and 9th March 2021. The clerk would email the details of the webinar, and the link for registering for the course, to all members.

8. Date, time and business for next meeting

Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 6pm (5:30pm briefing for members).