

Item 5 CHESHIRE EAST PLACE MENTAL HEALTH PLAN (2024-2029) UPDATE

Written Response to questions

Responses provide by - Martyn Baggaley – Head of Integrated Commissioning, Children, Families & Adults with Complex Needs

Q1) What are we doing in addition to the elements listed on slide 10 in our presentation to support early Intervention and prevention?

We are just about to release a press release about the Healthy Young Minds programme (attached, approved by me this morning). In addition, the Service Development and Improvement Plan for CWP includes a commitment – amongst others – to implement the iTHRIVE model in children and young people’s mental health and the work commencing across C&M on neurodevelopmental services; working collaboratively with community sector providers to jointly support children and young people with increasing and complex mental health needs and share risks (embedding the i-Thrive principles/approach through cross sector engagement, training and implementation facilitated through the Family Hub Early Help and Prevention workstream).

For parents who are on the waiting list for neurodevelopmental assessments (current max wait time 20 weeks), Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust has set up drop-in clinics at Oakenclough Children’s Centre (alongside LA education services Quality Inclusion, Education Psychology and Attendance) so that they can access advice and support while they wait. The children’s service is also working with the ADHD Foundation to develop further on-line resources for parents/ families and young people, including a webinar resource. A multi-agency referral panel for neurodevelopmental assessments commenced in April 2024 to look at the most appropriate resource based on presenting need.

Q2) Could we provide further information in relation to the schools programme, and will the Mental Health Leads offer would be extended to academies, and what steps were being taken to support small/rural schools across the borough?

Senior Mental Health Leads in schools programme

Senior Mental Health Lead training is available to all schools and colleges in Cheshire East including academies. The Department for Education (DfE) is offering a grant of £1,200 in the 2024 to 2025 financial year for eligible state-funded schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead. We encourage eligible settings that want to develop, or introduce, their whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing to apply for a grant. The government remains committed to offering senior mental health lead training to all eligible state-funded schools and colleges by 2025. Eligibility for grant is as follows:

- mainstream academies and local authority maintained schools

- special academies and local authority maintained special schools (including alternative provision)
- independent special schools whose pupils' education is funded by their local authority
- further education (FE) colleges attended by under-18-year-olds (one claim per campus ID)
- sixth-form colleges
- special post-16 institutions
- non-maintained special schools
- local authorities
- independent training providers

In Cheshire East (since December 2023 reporting) DfE data shows uptake of SMHL training at **77% of schools or 123 of 160 schools, putting us equal 4th of all North West LA's for take up**. These are compared to 67% across the Northwest, and approximately 67% of state-funded schools and colleges nationally. Our own data shows uptake is slightly higher in Cheshire East, with a break down as follows:

- Phase of education post 16
3/3 college settings completed the grant and training
 We have not monitored uptake with 6th form colleges but this will be targeted under the WAVE 11 Mental Health Support Team plan.
- Phase of education – secondary
21 / 23 secondary schools completed training (From the remaining 2 secondary schools 1 secondary school feels they do not have capacity to appoint a SMHL due to pre-existing statutory responsibilities and 1 secondary school had recent staff changes. The new senior mental health lead completed training whilst based at a different setting.)
- Phase of education - primary
106 / 124 primary schools completed the grant and training or reported this as in progress. (The remaining 9 primary schools feel they are currently unable to do so. A range of factors play into this such as staff changes and limited capacity.)
- Phase of education – **mixed age range Special and AP**
7 / 10 settings within this criterion completed the grant and training.
 Initial meeting with isolated and rural schools took place. PH have agreed to support a bespoke piece of work with these schools to identify barriers and enablers and resources to enable young people to access support irrespective of post code lottery.

Information has been shared with all schools who have not yet been able to access the grant and training and support to access the wider offer is ongoing. Some schools have also accessed funding to train a second mental health lead. The table below shows performance across the NW region, with the best performing LA's at the bottom of the table.

Expectations

It is important to have realistic expectations about outcomes in terms of what this newly skilled workforce can achieve. Whilst the training is funded the role is not funded and is not statutory. Competency and capacity to implement after completing SMHL training varies. Wellbeing for Education (under Early Help and Prevention) provide support to all schools. Through these visits we identified that small rural isolated schools often face different barriers and enablers. Work is underway with Public Health to understand this further and develop an accessible offer. We also provide a termly Senior Mental Health Lead Network. This provides support to settings who opt in (no cost) to strengthen and embed trauma and mental-health informed whole school approaches through improved access to advice, training, resources and services who can help. Part of this delivery model includes a Senior Mental Health Lead Network which is well attended and runs termly.

LA name	Government office region	Total settings eligible	Total Number of settings claimed grant	Total Percentage of eligible settings claimed grant	Total Number of settings not claimed grant
Bury	NORTH WEST	83	43	52%	40
Salford	NORTH WEST	108	58	54%	50
Knowsley	NORTH WEST	63	34	54%	29
Oldham	NORTH WEST	110	60	55%	50
Manchester	NORTH WEST	189	109	58%	80
Cheshire West and Chester	NORTH WEST	163	95	58%	68
Westmorland and Furness	NORTH WEST	149	89	60%	60
Cumberland	NORTH WEST	171	104	61%	67
Halton	NORTH WEST	64	40	63%	24
Blackburn with Darwen	NORTH WEST	73	46	63%	27
Tameside	NORTH WEST	102	66	65%	36
Rochdale	NORTH WEST	89	58	65%	31
Lancashire	NORTH WEST	616	408	66%	208
Sefton	NORTH WEST	103	73	71%	30
Wigan	NORTH WEST	134	97	72%	37
Bolton	NORTH WEST	131	97	74%	34
Stockport	NORTH WEST	115	86	75%	29
Trafford	NORTH WEST	92	70	76%	22
Liverpool	NORTH WEST	169	130	77%	39
Cheshire East	NORTH WEST	160	123	77%	37
Wirral	NORTH WEST	123	95	77%	28
Warrington	NORTH WEST	89	71	80%	18

Blackpool	NORTH WEST	46	37	80%	9
St. Helens	NORTH WEST	72	59	82%	13

For information about Wellbeing for Education offer and Cheshire East Senior Mental Health Lead Network go to [Wellbeing for Education - All resources | Chess Hub](#)

For urgent mental health advice and support the local 24/7 Mental Health Helpline number is - Cheshire 0800 145 6485 <https://www.mymind.org.uk/crisis-support/>

Q3) What are we doing to turn the curve in the medium to long term to address waiting times for neurodiverse diagnosis and assessments more broadly?

Access to neurodevelopmental assessment is a national problem – with high waiting times and demand reported across the UK. To illustrate, NHS Digital recorded 39,145 adults and children with an open referral for an autism diagnosis waiting in the NW region in December 2023. Of these, 18,055 had been waiting 13 weeks or more for a first appointment.

At ICS level work is being progressed across the Cheshire & Merseyside footprint across all 9 place areas under the governance of the **Children and Young People’s Neurodevelopment Pathway work stream**, led by Laura Marsh (Place Director, Cheshire West ICB), which is intended to better manage demand and associated waiting lists in due course.

For Adult ADHD assessments:

Current position:

- Demand for ADHD services significantly outweighs the capacity as it is currently commissioned. In Cheshire, the wait list for new referrals has been closed since 2019 due to high demand. However, the service has continued to accept referrals for residents already on ADHD treatment who have been assessed either in children’s services or in the independent sector and this work is significant resulting in a high ongoing caseload which uses up the commissioned resource. The ability to discharge from the service is dependent on the take-up of shared care in Primary Care.
- There are currently 974 people on the waiting list to access ADHD services across Cheshire, of which 464 are from Cheshire East. Of the 464, only 173 are awaiting assessment, the others will have been assessed elsewhere (for example as children or in the independent sector) and are transitioning to the adult service to receive ongoing treatment.

Support while people are waiting for assessment:

- A range of options are available for people who are waiting for assessment, including resources developed jointly with the ADHD Foundation and access to a group session around coping strategies.
- To best ensure that people waiting for an assessment are seen in order of need (not referral), the adult ADHD service has developed a needs stratification assessment which identifies who should be prioritised for assessment. After their first needs assessment, people who remain on the wait list have their

needs assessment repeated at regular intervals (and on request) to determine whether any needs have changed.

Developing the model to better meet demand

- Across Cheshire East (and West), the service is working with GP Clinical leads to implement a primary care (Leap) model which enables people with lower level needs to be assessed, commence and continue treatment in primary care. This model has been effective in reducing the waiting times for ADHD services in Wirral and Liverpool (areas CWP also serves).

Adult Autism Assessments:

Current position

- The waiting list has closed to new adult referrals from March, with a pathway in place for urgent cases. The service is contracted to provide 275 assessments across Cheshire each year. There are currently 1,343 adults waiting across Cheshire, of these, 523 adults are from Cheshire East. A waiting list initiative has been funded by the ICB which will provide assessments for about 150 additional individuals across Cheshire and Wirral.

Support while people are waiting for assessment:

- An autism needs stratification assessment has been piloted successfully and will be rolled out over the summer of 2024 to support prioritisation of the wait list to those with the greatest impact of undiagnosed autism. This has indicated that approximately 2/3 of the waiting list have lower-level needs that could be supported through a community-based assessment.
- There are a range of resources available to support people on the wait list and the CWP service is currently recruiting peer support workers to better support people while they wait, during the assessment process and following a diagnosis. CWP and the ICB are working closely with Space 4 Autism to develop this offer.

Developing the model to better meet demand

- Following development of the needs stratification assessment for autism, CWP is hoping to work with the ICB to develop a new model of adult autism assessment where people with lower-level needs could be assessed in a community pathway, whilst people with higher level needs access the secondary care service. This builds on the approach developed in ADHD in Wirral and Liverpool which is seeing a reduction in waiting times, and positive feedback from patients.
- The service is also looking at the potential for a joint ADHD/ ASD assessment pathway for people who are referred to both services, thereby streamlining the assessment pathway for these individuals.