

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE31 MARCH 2022Report by Director of EducationMENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Education Committee with an overview of the range of mental and emotional wellbeing services currently being offered to children and young people of East Renfrewshire and the demand on those services over the last year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to note:
- a) the content of the Mental Health and Wellbeing in Children's Services Report;
 - b) the range of different provision available to meet the varying presenting needs of our children and young people; and,
 - c) the challenges and response of services to the Covid19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

3. Supporting children and young people's mental health is a high priority for East Renfrewshire Council, particularly as we seek to provide support to those impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and at the same time address the significant needs that existed prior to it.

4. The Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce was jointly commissioned by the Scottish Government and COSLA in June 2018. Recommendations of the taskforce, COSLA and the Scottish Government were supported by the equal distribution of £2 million between local authorities, for use by local collaborative partnerships for planning, development, and programme and change management costs.

5. In July 2019, the Scottish Government confirmed that it would be providing £12 million funding to local authorities to support delivery of the access to school counselling services. This supports the delivery of the national commitment to:

- continue to enhance community based support for emotional wellbeing/mental distress through ongoing investment and support for local partnerships;
- ensure crisis support is available 24/7 to children and young people;
- support mental health pathways and services for vulnerable children and young people, aligned to the work of the Promise;
- develop a support programme to enable the implementation of the CAMHS service specifications;

- agree and support the implementation of a neurodevelopmental service specification/principles and standards of care; and,
- develop a programme of education and training to increase the skills and knowledge required by all staff to support children and young people's mental health.

REPORT

6. East Renfrewshire HSCP and the Education Department have worked with local partners, to respond to increasing demand, for mental health and wellbeing support, which has ensured more children, young people and their families receive the support they need, when they need it. As a result of a co-production event held in 2019, East Renfrewshire's approach includes:

- Development of school counselling provision – with a model to include upper Primary School and extend availability to include school holiday periods,
- Commissioning a new model of systemic individual and family support which would work between home and school.

7. The tier two multi-disciplinary recovery service Healthier Minds, was established in November 2020 in response to the rapidly increasing demands around mental health and wellbeing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has enhanced youth counselling provision across the local authority by an additional 50%, and has provided a comprehensive programme of resources to upskill school staff and the wider children's workforce to respond earlier and prevent children's distress escalating into higher level concerns that would require clinical or medical responses.

8. An emerging area of increasing need is from children and young people with a neuro developmental diagnosis or suspected diagnosis. Families and services are reporting a significant rise in emotional distress and associated conditions for children and young people within this population. To support this, a teacher with experience of supporting young people with ASD was recruited to the Healthier Minds team.

9. Healthier Minds adopts a collaborative approach to identifying opportunities to strengthen mental wellbeing with a team comprising of a mixture of multi-agency professionals from HSCP, Education and third sector who have been recruited, seconded or aligned to the recovery model.

10. From the first meeting of the Screening Hub on 25 November 2020 up to 29 January 2022, 490 children and young people have been supported. This has included 68 children and young people with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The three main reasons for referral remain unchanged since the service began:

- Anxiety/stress;
- Low mood (include suicidal ideation & depression); and,
- Emotional regulation.

11. The Healthier Minds Service, in collaboration with the Educational Psychology Service, has established a Healthier Minds Staff Network with the delivery of 10 information sessions for teachers and training for Pupil Support Assistants. Group work and whole-class interventions (primarily in relation to managing anxiety) are being developed and piloted to widen the reach of the service. In addition to this, every primary and secondary school have teachers who have participated in a Counselling Skills Course and due to positive feedback, there is now a third cohort of staff participating.

12. Staff across all agencies in the Healthier Minds Screening Hub have highlighted the increased levels of need in the referrals they are supporting due to the current capacity of other services, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). However, strong links with colleagues in CAMHS mitigates some of this. For example, CAMHS has carried out risk assessments where the needs are deemed high following discussion at the Hub.

13. In light of the increasing demand on services including Healthier Minds, Youth Counselling and CAMHS, East Renfrewshire has secured a new service called Togetherall who will provide East Renfrewshire residents aged between 16 and 25 years with free access to an online platform offering mental health support. Togetherall is an evidence based, clinically moderated, online peer-to-peer mental health community which provides a forum for shared experiences and mutual support. The platform promotes a sense of belonging and connection through community and it accessible anywhere, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

14. A robust data recording system has been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of activity undertaken by the Healthier Minds service. This includes use of the Stirling Wellbeing Scale (Appendix 1) and gathering a range of qualitative feedback such as pupil, parent/carer and staff views. A summary of stakeholder feedback is included in Appendix 2.

15. The Healthier Minds Service and Hub continue to operate in the 2021/2022 academic year. As mentioned in the [Access to Counselling in East Renfrewshire Schools](#) paper presented to Education Committee in October 2020, there was delay to the procurement process which led to the establishment of the interim Healthier Minds serviced mentioned above. The procurement process is complete and the newly commissioned Children 1st Service will begin in April 2022 with 5.6fte project workers and 1.0fte team manager. However, given the success of the interim service, both the new and interim service will be on offer in order to meet the increasing demand. All referrals will be managed through the existing Hub with the Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service aligning to the existing referral pathway.

16. The tier two Family Wellbeing Service has been operating since late 2017, initially as a pilot working with two GP surgeries. This was to address the increasing number of East Renfrewshire children and young people who were presenting at universal services such as GPs with requests for support around anxiety, depression, distress, and associated behaviours which are symptomatic of relational disconnection and trauma.

17. In 2019 East Renfrewshire HSCP in partnership with Children 1st, were successful in securing significant investment from The Robertson Trust to extend the delivery of the Family Wellbeing Service to all GP practices until June 2022. This new injection of funding for East Renfrewshire was approved as a Social Bridging Finance partnership contract between the three partners – East Renfrewshire HSCP, Children 1st, and The Robertson Trust.

18. Key successes of the Family Wellbeing Service include:

- Reduction of 63% in repeat presentations to GPs;
- Impact Criteria indicates interventions are achieving high levels of positive outcomes for service users; and,
- 269 children/young people and their families have been offered support.

19. As funding from The Robertson Trust will come to an end in June 2022, reserves accrued from the Scottish Government Access to Counselling in Schools Grant and Scottish Government Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Network Grant will be used to continue to fund the Family Wellbeing Service. It will be fully aligned with the Healthier Minds Screening Hub in order for a single referral pathway

to be established for all children and young people's mental health and wellbeing services, other than CAMHS.

20. The East Renfrewshire Youth Counselling Service is delivered by RAMH and is accessible to all high school pupils, pupils from P6 and 7 in primary schools and Isobel Mair School. This partnership has been in place for a number of years, prior to funding by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government investment for school counselling enabled youth counselling to increase by 50% in 2020. To ensure young people are directed to the most appropriate resource, the service now links in with the Healthier Minds weekly hub referral and allocation meetings. 137 children and young people have accessed this service, with the highest number of referrals relating to anxiety.

21. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are core clinical multi-disciplinary teams with expertise in the assessment, care and treatment of children and young people experiencing serious mental health problems. Specialist services for those at risk and with specific conditions are also provided, including inpatient care.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

22. The Scottish Government Access to Counselling in Schools Grant of £411,000 per annum and the Scottish Government Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework funding of £261,000 have been confirmed until 2022-23. As agreed at IJB, £675,000 has been committed from School Counselling and Children and Young People's Mental Health reserve and HSCP core budget for the continuation of the Family Wellbeing Service. Interim arrangements along with the Procured Healthier Minds model and the Family Wellbeing Service will be met within the funds allocated.

CONSULTATION

23. A co-production event with key partners (including children, young people and parents/carers) took place in November 2019 to determine how best to target the investment and agree what supports would best meet the needs of our families and school communities. All services included in this report as part of their provision frequently gather feedback from those who use their services and in turn this information is used to evaluate delivery and inform future service design.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

24. All of the services included in this report have been developed through the strong partnership working that exists among East Renfrewshire's children's services organisations, especially between HSCP, Education, Educational Psychology and third sector providers. In addition the services frequently report to the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People's Partnership.

POLICY

25. Mental wellbeing services for children and young people are designed and delivered based on local need and informed by national policy expectations. Locally the East Renfrewshire Children's Services Plan 2021-2023 and the HSCP Strategic Plan will provide policy direction and steer over this period.

EQUALITIES

26. East Renfrewshire Council, HSCP and local partners are preparing for the commencement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act through reviewing the range of tools for evaluating the impact of policy and services on the rights of children and young people and the ways they advance the rights of children or otherwise.

27. Going forward access to children's mental wellbeing services will be monitored to ensure there are no barriers particularly in the following areas:

- Children with additional needs
- Children who reside in areas of deprivation
- Children who are care experienced
- Children from a black or minority ethnic background

CONCLUSIONS

28. Improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is a key priority for East Renfrewshire Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership. Local as well as national data indicates that children and young people have been experiencing poorer mental wellbeing in recent years and this has been exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst there are clinical solutions for a small proportion of these children the majority will not benefit from existing specialist mental health services as their difficulties are routed in the social and familial environment.

29. This report has described the current community, school, and clinical provision available in East Renfrewshire and the demands on these services over the last year. The tier two services outlined in this report have been receiving referrals to them that are more appropriately tier three. With current demand and workforce pressures on CAMHS, the capacity of the tier two providers to respond to the significant needs of the children and young people referred will require continued support through professional learning and risk assessment and management.

30. Moving forward HSCP, Education and local partners will be considering enhancements and improvements to the current service offer to ensure we anticipate the level of need and mirror the national expectations; this activity will involve children, young people and their families, as well as wider partner organisations to ensure any recommended changes meet specific needs in East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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31 March 2022

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Stirling Wellbeing Scale

Appendix 2: Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale

Here are some statements or descriptions about how you might have been feeling or thinking about things over the past couple of weeks.

For each one please put a tick in the box which best describes your thoughts and feelings; there are not right or wrong answers.

	Statements	Never	Not much of the time	Some of the time	Quite a lot of the time	All of the time
1	I think good things will happen in my life	1	2	3	4	5
2	I have always told the truth	1	2	3	4	5
3	I've been able to make choices easily	1	2	3	4	5
4	I can find lots of fun things to do	1	2	3	4	5
5	I feel that I am good at some things	1	2	3	4	5
6	I think lots of people care about me	1	2	3	4	5
7	I like everyone I have met	1	2	3	4	5
8	I think there are many things I can be proud of	1	2	3	4	5
9	I've been feeling calm	1	2	3	4	5
10	I've been in a good mood	1	2	3	4	5
11	I enjoy what each new day brings	1	2	3	4	5
12	I've been getting on well with people	1	2	3	4	5
13	I always share my sweets	1	2	3	4	5
14	I've been cheerful about things	1	2	3	4	5
15	I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5

SCWBS Key

Wellbeing Sub-components and Related Items

Wellbeing Sub-Component	Item	Related Item on the SCWBS
Positive Emotional State	9	I've been feeling calm
	14	I've been feeling cheerful about things
	15	I've been feeling relaxed
	10	I've been in a good mood
	12	I've been getting on well with people
	11	I enjoy what each new day brings
Positive Outlook	8	I think there are many things that I can be proud of.
	5	I feel that I am good at some things
	1	I think good things will happen in my life
	4	I can find lots of fun things to do
	6	I think lots of people care for me
	3	I've been able to make choices easily

Each item is scored 1 to 5.

The minimum for the scale is 12 and the maximum 60.

Currently the mean average score is 44 with 50% of all scores within the range of 39 and 48.

Social Desirability Sub-Scale

	Item	Related Item on the SCWBS
	2	I have always told the truth
	7	I like everyone I have met
	13	I always share my sweets

Each Item is scored 1 to 5.

Overall scores of 3 or 14/15 on this sub-scale would indicate that the participant's wellbeing scores should be treated with caution.

Qualitative Feedback from Young People, Parents & Carer and School staff

Below are some examples of the type of qualitative feedback that is being received from children and young people:

We have been working together for a few weeks/months now, what do you feel is different now, if anything?

- Been able to attend school more often
- Developed useful coping strategies
- Worrying less
- Increased confidence
- More relaxed/calm/positive/less anxious
- Thoughts are more manageable
- Easier to make plans/making good decisions
- Feeling happier
- School is better
- Going out more
- Feeling positive about seeking support
- Feeling more confident about starting University
- Easier to speak about worries
- Nothing

If there has been a change, can you detail in what ways this work (and activities) helped to make this change?

- Having better understanding and reflecting on thoughts & feelings
- Time to reflect
- Introducing coping strategies/techniques
- Talking/sharing experiences
- Activities/distraction techniques/challenges
- Planning situations and possible outcomes
- Unsure/I don't know

What would have made it better?

- Different setting (e.g. outside of school, Face-to-face instead of online)
- More time/sessions
- Unsure
- Nothing

Did you feel that the Healthier Minds Team worker was understanding?

- Yes – 23

Did you feel listened to?

- Yes – 21
- Yes & No – 1

Would you recommend this kind of help to someone who was feeling similar?

- Yes – 22
- I don't know – 1

All parents who completed the parental evaluation form reported that they would recommend the service to others:

- “He is a different child from when we first referred him to the Healthier Minds Service”
- “I never once felt judged. She was so nice to me.”
- “Worker visited me at home and school and listened to my worries then helped me deal with starting high school”
- “Worker was very flexible with my young person and was able to (quicker than I've seen anyone else) respond to their mood/state of mind at the time and adjust the level of interaction they could cope with”

Some school staff said:

- “We have had a very positive experience using the Healthier Minds resources and team. The range of CLPL has been relevant and of high quality.”
- “Can I start with saying thank you so much for all the work that the HUB are doing for our young people. I have made quite a few referrals since December (2020) and I have been so grateful for all the various support that has been offered to each pupil.”
- “Thank you - we really value the support from Healthier Minds team.”