



Independent review of children and young people's emotional and wellbeing services and their experiences in Sussex

Nationally it is recognised that more needs to be done to improve the experience of people living with mental health issues, especially for vulnerable children and young people. Locally across Sussex, health and care partners have increasingly become aware that the current services and experience of children and young people needing emotional and wellbeing support is a specific area that needs to improve. As is the case across the country, these services are experiencing a significant, sustained increase in demand which is putting pressure on the whole system.

We know that staff working in health, social care, education and the voluntary sector work extremely hard to try to ensure families get the help they need. However, feedback we have received from some families and local GPs have highlighted that the current system is not working as well as it should. They are telling us that it is not always clear what support is available for children and young people, from whom or how to access it.

This is something that all partners have collectively agreed needs to rapidly change as we know how difficult and distressing it is for children, young people and families affected by mental health issues.

Therefore, following discussions involving the seven Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), NHS England, Local Authorities and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT), it has been agreed that an independent review will take place of the services available to children and young people requiring emotional and wellbeing support across Sussex.

We have decided to take this step because we recognise we can only improve the experience of our local communities by taking bold, concerted action to improve the whole system of care. Equally, we need to make sure we are doing everything possible to create the conditions where staff who work with children, young people and families feel supported to do the best possible job.

The main aims of the review will be to:

- Better understand the experiences of children and young people who need emotional and wellbeing support.
- Look at the current services to ensure they meet the needs of children and young people.
- Provide an external and independent point of view and perspective that takes into account the whole system.
- Ensure resources are being targeted effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of children and young people.
- Identifies any issues around options for children and young people, referrals and communication within education, social care and the NHS.
- Take into account and learn from local, regional and national best practice to identify areas for improvement.

The review will be led by an independent Chair over six months and will be overseen by a newly established joint NHS and Local Authority oversight group. It will report to the three health and wellbeing boards across Sussex, the SPFT Board and the Sussex CCG Governing Bodies. It is expected the voices of young people, families and carers will be heard and that their perspectives are taken on board throughout the process.

We do not expect this review to provide all the solutions to the challenges we face. However, it does represent a positive step forward for all organisations across Sussex in our collective commitment to working together to look at what is working, what is not and what we need to change to improve the experience of children, young people and families.

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