

Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Date: 09 February 2022

Agenda item:

Subject: Children and Young people's Mental Health

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Cabinet Member for Children and Education.

Contact officer: Keith Shipman; Sarah Keen (CCG)

Recommendations:

A. Members to note the contents of the report

B.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The aim of this report is to give a summary of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health in Merton. It will also outline the changes that have been and are being made to Mental Health support services in Merton and show the expansion in preventative support.
- 1.2. The pandemic and lockdown responses had a significant effect on young people's mental health and referrals to support services. We know this from feedback from young people in the Young People's survey and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) monitoring presented at the CAMHS board.
- 1.3. Mental Health support services are commission largely by the CCG and the effectiveness of the support and its integration is led by the CAMHS board which is co-chaired by the CCG and Local Authority
- 1.4. In 2015 the Department of Health published Future in Mind. This has brought a restructuring and investment to support mental health services for young people. The CAMHS Board made a decision in 2018 to move away traditional models of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services as recommended by Future in Mind and develop a model called "i-Thrive". This is a cultural shift in practise as well as a reconfiguring of services. The model moves away from the old tiers of service, to 'Getting Advice and Support'; 'Getting Help'; 'Getting More Help'; and 'Risk Support'. In all services access should be made easier and linked more to community provision based on partnerships.
- 1.5. I-Thrive implementation has led to developing more preventative services ('Getting Help'), with the development in 2019 of a young people service for ages 11 – 25, run by Off The Record who take self-referrals.
- 1.6. In addition the CCG and LA have worked together to develop five clusters of schools each supported by a different Mental Health in Schools team. Funding for these clusters has been achieved through successful bids to the Department for Health and additional CCG investment. From February 2022

every school and FE College in Merton that wants to be in a cluster will be in a school or FE College led cluster. This compares to 15% of schools nationally having that offer. Each of these clusters is led by a Merton Headteacher/ College Principal. They work on school based Mental Health Plans to support children, parents and staff. This is augmented by the work of the Mental Health in Schools teams which provide direct support to children and parents. The aim of these teams is to provide preventative support.

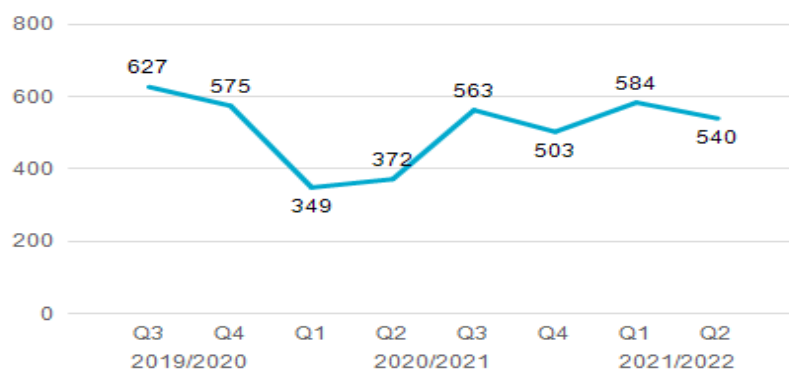
- 1.7. At the 'Getting More Help' stage, all referrals are now triaged by the Single Point of Access (SPA). This has meant that families get a reply about initial referrals more quickly. The SPA delivers brief interventions to reduce families' waiting times for support. A new post has been developed to work between the SPA and schools to support interagency working. If the SPA agrees that the referral requires ongoing support the case is referred over to the core team, The SPA also triages all neuro assessments (ASD assessments).
- 1.8. We have also increased community based specialist services. Additional capacity has been given to Cricket Green School and the Youth Justice Service (in response to a safeguarding learning review).
- 1.9. The next steps for i-Thrive development is to look at how we improve our work with regards to 'Getting More Help' and 'Risk' support. This is how we support our most vulnerable children and young people. Merton Local Authority commissions a CAMHS in Social Care team where therapists work alongside social workers. The Health and Wellbeing Board is currently looking at the structure, funding and impact of this service.

2 DETAILS

2.1. In the Young People Survey, young people told us that the pandemic has affected their physical and mental health. Young people also told us that they worried about their families, especially where they were key workers. They were worried about world events – poverty and the death of George Floyd, and they told us that they are feeling happier now. Many children suffered family bereavements and their worlds have changed. Pandemic responses affected their access to services, socialisation and education. This led to worries about falling behind in school and the value of their qualifications.

2.2. Referrals to CAMHS 2019 – 2022

Referrals received (last 2 years)



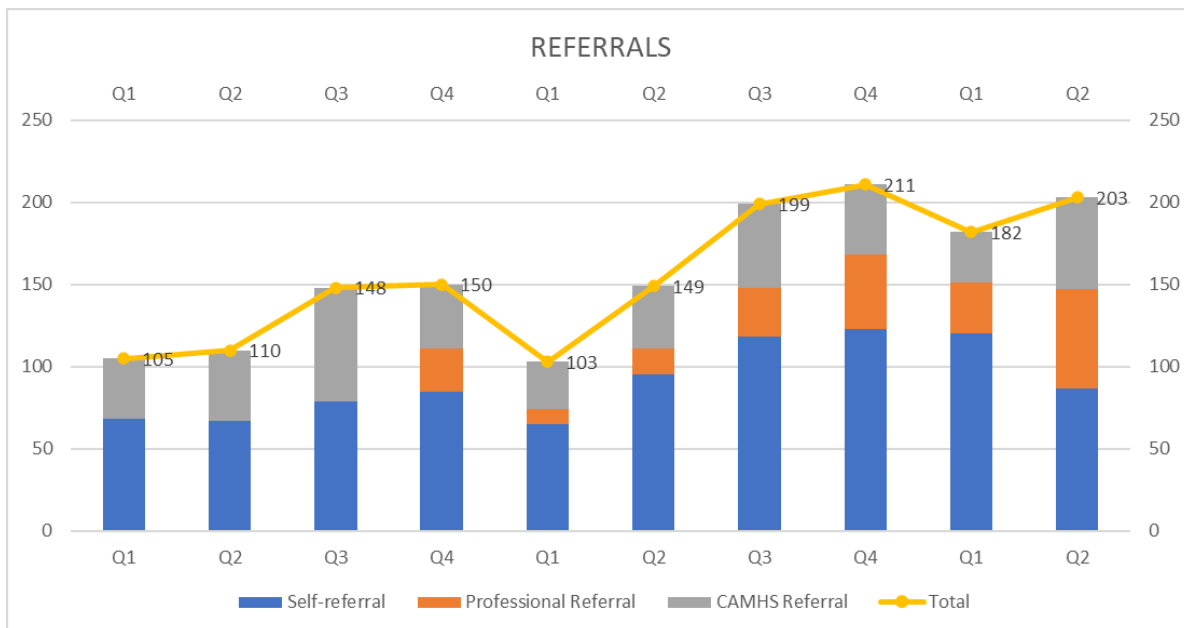
2.3. Referrals to CAMHS decreased during lockdowns but have now increased; they are, however, still below pre pandemic levels. Feedback from CAMHS practitioners is that cases are now getting more complex with an increase in children unable to leave their homes due to anxiety, eating disorders, tics and high risk behaviours. Many of these young people were known to services pre-pandemic and the pandemic has affected their mood and symptoms. This increase in high risk cases is mirrored in the increase in referrals to Merton Medical Education Service for children who cannot attend school due to their health. CAMHS are also reporting more urgent emergency referrals.

2.4. **CAMHS reason for referral**

Presenting problem	Q2	%	YTD	%
Anxiety	132	24.4%	283	25.2%
Neurodevelopmental Conditions, excluding Autism Spectrum Disorder	121	22.4%	245	21.8%
Self harm behaviours	56	10.4%	127	11.3%
Conduct disorders	63	11.7%	121	10.8%
Depression	65	12.0%	121	10.8%
Suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder	57	10.6%	115	10.2%
Diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder	9	1.7%	29	2.6%
Unexplained physical symptoms	16	3.0%	26	2.3%
Eating disorders	3	0.6%	16	1.4%
Obsessive compulsive disorder	3	0.6%	12	1.1%
Post-traumatic stress disorder	5	0.9%	7	0.6%
Relationship difficulties	5	0.9%	7	0.6%
Suspected First Episode Psychosis	0	0.0%	5	0.4%
Gender Discomfort issues	0	0.0%	3	0.3%
In crisis	3	0.6%	3	0.3%
Attachment difficulties	2	0.4%	2	0.2%
Ongoing or Recurrent Psychosis	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Adjustment to health issues	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Total	540	100.0%	1124	100%

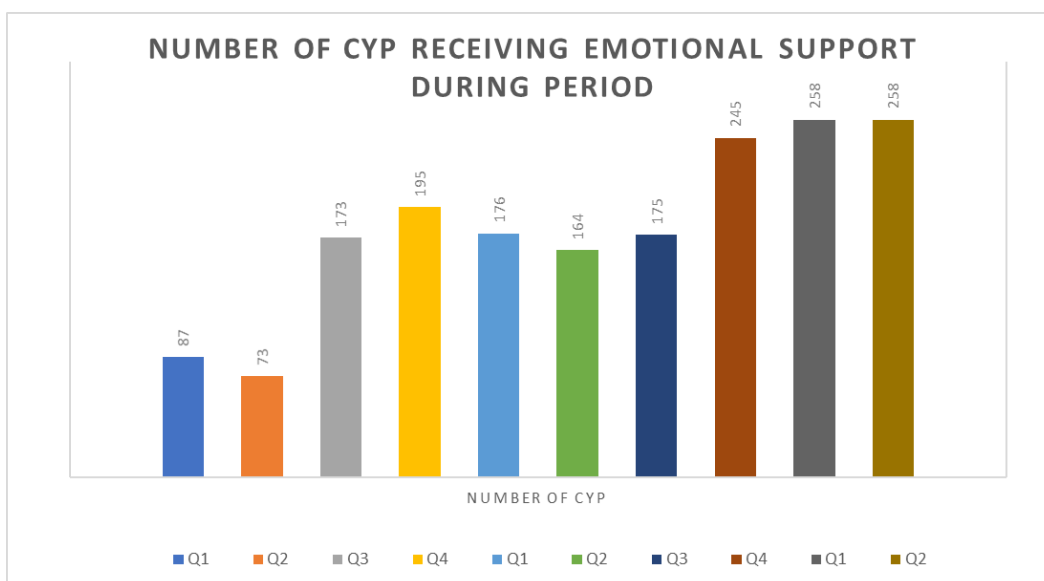
2.5. Anxiety is also a presenting feature of referrals in line with the Young People's Survey findings.

2.6. **Referrals to Off The Record**



2.7. Off the Record referrals only dropped in one quarter as a consequence of lockdowns, otherwise they grew steadily. 44% of their referrals are self-referrals so did not require a child to be in school or see a GP. This may account for the difference from CAMHS.

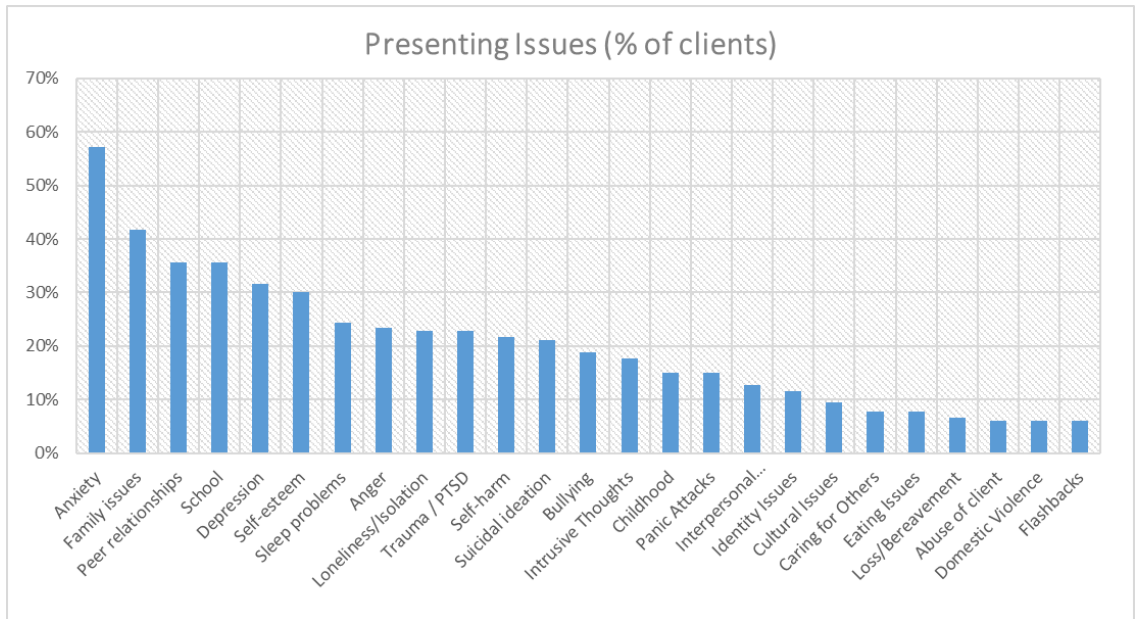
2.8. Numbers of children and young people receiving a service from Off the Record:



2.9. During Q2 (the most recent data available, from autumn 2021) 258 young people received support, showing a maintained increase in the number of young people being supported by this service over the course of the year. The number of children and young people supported are a 253% rise on quarter 2 pre pandemic.

2.10. The number of sessions offered during this quarter was 796: an increase of 80, and an increase of 10% in comparison with the previous quarter, demonstrating that the service is offering increased levels of support.

2.11. Presenting Issues Off The Record

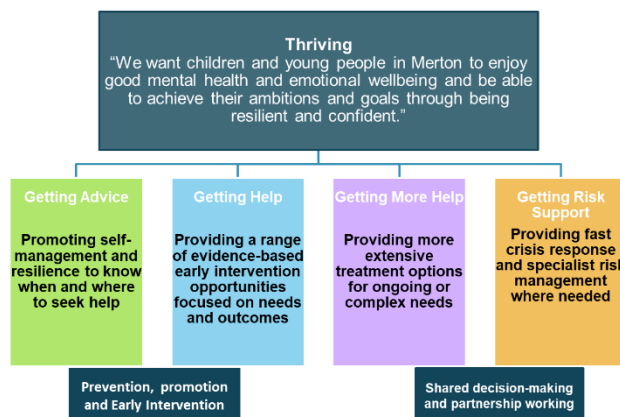


2.12. Anxiety and Family issues are the highest presenting issues: this is similar to the findings of the Youth Survey

3 I-THRIVE IMPLEMENTATION MODEL



i-Thrive Concept



I-THRIVE SERVICES

SEE APPENDIX 1

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Not applicable

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

5.1. Young People's Survey

6 TIMETABLE

6.1. Not applicable

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Not applicable

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Not applicable

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. Not applicable

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. Not applicable

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. Not applicable

12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

12.1 Merton Emotional Well Being Support for Children and Young People – this is still in draft and will be circulated to partners once signed off for publication by the CCG.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1. www.talkofftherecordonline.org

13.2. <https://www.swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/find-a-service/service/merton-camhs>