

Royal College of Psychiatrists' briefing

Children and Young People's Mental Health | April 2018



A mental health crisis is developing among the country's children. It is estimated that one in ten children aged 5-16 years has a diagnosable mental health disorder¹ and data suggests demand is increasing.²

We cannot allow children to struggle alone any longer. The Royal College of Psychiatrists recommends:

- **The Government must be more ambitious in its roll-out of the proposals in the Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper. Some children who are eight now may not receive any additional support before they leave school at 18**
- **Add CAMHS psychiatrists, higher trainees and specialty doctors to the national shortage occupation list to tackle the 6.3% fall in child and adolescent psychiatrists since 2013³**
- **Increase and ringfence national funding for CAMHS and ensure it reaches the frontline**

Supporting the mental health of children in schools

The focus on supporting mental health in schools is welcome – but children with moderate disorders should receive specialist care in the NHS, not the classroom.

We welcome the Children and Young People's Green Paper plan to bring schools and NHS services closer together. Our members tell us that helping children at school is an effective way to prevent young people falling into crisis because they do not get help early enough.

The Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health in schools should be mandatory, with standardised training to ensure every child gets consistent care and timely referrals to quality, evidence-based services.

The proposed new Mental Health Support Teams have the potential to make a real difference – but they need to be rolled out faster. We know they can't be created overnight but under current proposals, but by the Government's own estimates, a quarter of a million children and young people who could be helped will still be missing out in five years.⁴

We support Mental Health Support Teams but welcome clarification on which professionals will make up the teams, who will train and supervise them and where the funding will come from. We have concerns that these Teams will be expected to manage moderate disorders. We have not seen evidence this works.

There must be very clear guidance to ensure Mental Health Support Teams appreciate the need for specialist input when disorders move from mild to moderate. The RCPsych believes Support Teams should be integrated into CAMHS and schools, but that CAMHS should manage them. This would not only ensure that children with moderate disorders are referred quickly, but also provides the option for Support Teams to manage moderate disorders where appropriate because of the clinical oversight available from CAMHS nurses, psychologists or psychiatrists to approve and monitor care plans.

If clinicians are not involved in the oversight of the teams, there is a risk that there will be different standards of mental health care in NHS settings and schools.

The CAMHS workforce

Child and adolescent psychiatrists have fallen 6.3% since 2013. CAMHS psychiatrists, higher trainees and specialty doctors must be added to the national shortage occupation list.

Improving access and treatment for children with mild problems in schools does not mean that severe problems and the need for specialist support will disappear. We must take the Green Paper as an opportunity to increase the capacity of NHS CAMHS.

Current long waits are almost entirely a symptom of lack of resources in CAMHS. Any improvements to mental health support for children and young people will always rely on a robust mental health workforce.

The four-week waiting time is welcome but properly supporting children with mental health issues goes beyond 'access'. It is vital that the evaluation of the waiting time pilot looks at time between first assessment and starting treatment and the number of staff in each CAMHS team delivering assessment. This should ensure children get a quality assessment and are not left in limbo after a first appointment.

The number of child and adolescent psychiatrists has fallen 6.3% since November 2013.⁵ The Health Education England mental health workforce⁶ strategy committed to 100 extra consultant CAMHS psychiatrists but none are for community services.⁷

The impact assessment shows that in the short term referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are likely to increase.⁸ With a reduced workforce, it will be increasingly hard for psychiatrists to support to Mental Health Support Teams and meet the proposed four-week waiting time target.

The latest training programme data shows that 48% of training places for child and adolescent psychiatry were unfilled.⁹ We cannot rely on trainees in the pipeline to sufficiently boost the workforce in future. We must add child and adolescent psychiatrists, higher trainees and speciality doctors in CAMHS to the National Shortage Occupation List. Recruiting already-qualified CAMHS professionals from overseas is crucial to achieving existing commitments and Green Paper ambitions.

Funding

The RCPsych says national funding for CAMHS should be increased and ringfenced

The new services planned in the Green Paper will need significant investment to make sure children receive the care they are promised. There is currently no guarantee the proposals will be funded in the next spending review period. If they are funded, full roll-out still won't happen before 2027/28.¹⁰

At a national level, NHS England has reported underspending for the funding promised through *Future in Mind* in 2015/16 and 2016/17.¹¹ National funding for CAMHS should be increased and ring-fenced as a first step to ensure money reaches the frontline and is spent as intended.

Commissioners need to be held to account on consistent investment for CAMHS. Recent RCPsych analysis revealed 70 out of 209 CCGs spent less than planned on CYP and eating disorders in 2016-17.¹² Previous RCPsych analysis of CCGs' CAMHS spend revealed inaccuracies in the way commissioners reported their spending. An accurate transparent record of CAMHS spend is vital to ensure money is spent as intended.

Follow up questions for the Government

- Will the Minister consider the Royal College of Psychiatrists' recommendation to add Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists to the National Shortage Occupation List?
- Does the Minister agree that the new Mental Health Support Teams are managed by NHS CAMHS to ensure they have the clinical oversight to manage moderate conditions?
- Does the Minister agree that making the Senior Designated Mental Health Lead mandatory is vital to the success of the Green Paper's proposals?
- What steps are the Government taking to ensure there are enough child and adolescent psychiatrists to implement the four-week waiting time for CAMHS?
- Can the Minister speed up the roll out of the Green Paper recommendations so no child has to wait 10 years for support in their area?

¹ The independent Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England. Five Year Forward View for Mental Health. February 2016. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf>

² Care Quality Commission. Review of children and young people's mental health services. October 2017. https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20171103_cypmhphase1_report.pdf

³ NHS Digital Workforce statistics (June 2017)

⁴ Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Education. Impact assessment on the children and young people's mental health Green Paper. December 2017. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664442/MHGP_IA.pdf

⁵ NHS Digital Workforce statistics (June 2017)

⁶ Health Education England (July 2017) https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/CCS0717505185-1_FYFV%20Mental%20health%20workforce%20plan%20for%20England_v5%283%29.pdf

⁷ Stepping Forward to 2020/21: The mental health workforce plan for England (July 2017), HEE https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/CCS0717505185-1_FYFV%20Mental%20health%20workforce%20plan%20for%20England_v5%283%29.pdf, p13.

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664442/MHGP_IA.pdf

⁹ North West HEE (2017) <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/ST4%20Fill%20Rate%20%26%20Competition%20Ratios%202017%20-%20For%20Web%20Site.pdf>

¹⁰ Impact assessment on the children and young people's mental health Green Paper (December 2017), DH, DfE
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664442/MHGP_IA.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-11-13/112701/>

¹² HSI (2017) <https://www.hsj.co.uk/mental-health/exclusive-variation-in-childrens-mental-health-spend-seems-unjustifiable/7020617.article>