



Department of Health & Social Care

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Dear Chair

GOVERNMENT UPDATE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

We are writing to update you on children and young people's mental health services in England. You asked that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) and Health Education England (HEE) provide the following information:

Recommendation 1a: *From April 2019 to April 2022, the Department and NHS England should provide annual updates to the Committee on:*

- *the number of young people who:*
 - *request or are referred for treatment (i.e. number of young people who request a CAMHS appointment);*
 - *whose requests/referrals are accepted; and*
 - *who subsequently receive treatment, and how long they had to wait;*
- *the proportion of young people with a diagnosable condition who receive NHS-funded mental health services;*
- *waiting times across the range of children and young people's mental health services.*

In 2019-20, the number of young people aged 0-17 referred to NHS-funded community children and young people's mental health services was 530,561¹. Of those referrals, 352,437 individuals received contact with services in the year. 153,308 individuals received one contact and 199,129 individuals received at least two contacts. The average waiting time between referral and second contact was 44 days.

¹ Source: Mental Health Services Dataset (MHSDS), NHS Digital. This includes all people with a referral open at any point during 2019-20 and the contacts received during that year. Not all individuals who request or are referred to treatment are recorded in the dataset.

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health set a target of at least 35% of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition receiving treatment from an NHS-funded community mental health service by 2020/21. This target is measured in terms of people who receive at least 2 contacts following a referral to NHS-funded community services in 2019/20, based on prevalence estimates from 2004 ONS population data.

In 2019/20, 391,940 individuals received at least 2 contacts with services within the year. Based on the prevalence estimates derived from 2004 ONS population data, NHSE/I estimates that 36.8% of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health need accessed treatment in 2019/20² and the 2020/21 target was therefore exceeded a year early.

Although two contacts is generally viewed as a proxy for treatment, more recent evidence shows that in many cases one contact can deliver appropriate support or treatment depending on the nature of the presenting problem.

Data on waiting times for children and young people are currently collected for eating disorder treatment. In 2019/20 (Q4), the percentage of children and young people with an eating disorder seen within 1 week (urgent cases) was 80.5% and the percentage seen within 4 weeks (routine cases) was 84.4%. As described in the NHS Long Term Plan and detailed in the Mental Health Implementation Plan, we are working towards the delivery of a 95% standard by the end of 2020/21 and beyond.

Recommendation 1b: *From April 2019 to April 2022, the Department and NHS England should provide annual updates to the Committee on progress in implementing and evaluating the pilot schemes for the Mental Health Support Teams in schools.*

As part of its NHS Long Term Plan commitment to ensure that by 2023/24 at least a further 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 can access mental health care, NHSE/I is working with education and third sector partners to deliver new mental health support teams in schools and colleges. This programme started in December 2018, with 25 areas selected to deliver 59 mental health support teams. Of those, 12 areas were also piloting a 4-week waiting time to provide faster access to NHS mental health services for children and young people who need expert care.

The first cohort of the new workforce has now completed their studies and are embedded within the new teams, who are working hard with schools and colleges to provide a tailored offer of additional whole school/college support and direct interventions to individuals and groups of children and young people.

A further 123 teams were commissioned in 2019/20 and are currently in their training and set up phase. In May 2020, NHSE/I regional teams confirmed a further 58 areas where 104³ new mental health support teams will be developed

² We continue to report against the 2021 Five Year Forward View target as it was originally defined, but based on more recent prevalence from the 2017 ONS, NatCen and NHS Digital Children and Young People's mental health prevalence survey and more recent population figures we estimate this to now equate to an access rate 34.7%.

³ In the current context of Covid-19, adjustments may be made to the final number

during 2020/21 to work with schools and colleges to improve children and young people's access to mental health care. The first cohort of the 2020/21 trainee educational mental health practitioners (EMHPs) will be recruited by the selected areas and start their training in universities across England in the autumn. A second cohort will begin training in the first quarter of 2021.

The National Institute for Health Research and Health Services & Delivery Research Policy Research Programme have jointly commissioned Brace Rapid Evaluation Centre and the Policy Innovation and Evaluation Research Unit to carry out a robust and independent evaluation of the implementation of core proposals within the 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper'. The protocol for this evaluation was published in October 2019. The evaluation fieldwork was temporarily paused due to the COVID-19 restrictions and future plans for the evaluation are currently being reviewed to account for the impacts of COVID-19 on this fieldwork, and any revisions will be included in an updated evaluation protocol.

Recommendation 2: *As part of the annual update to the Committee, the Department, NHS England and Health Education England should report on its progress in expanding the children and young people's mental health workforce, setting out any changes they may have made to plans or targets and knock-on effects to other parts of the Five Year Forward View. It should also include an update on recruitment and retention rates for the mental health workforce and make an assessment on any knock-on effect on other professions e.g. nursing and midwifery.*

Stepping forward to 2020/21: The mental health workforce plan for England indicated a planned increase of 4,400 whole time equivalent (WTE) posts, in the area of children and young people's mental health, including 200 additional doctors and 1,200 additional nurses. The expansion figure of 4,400 posts covered both staff employed directly by the NHS and staff providing NHS-funded services but not employed directly by the NHS.

Based on figures from a 2019 NHS Benchmarking exercise commissioned by Health Education England⁴ (HEE), there was an increase of 2,174 WTEs in the children and young people's mental health workforce between 31 December 2015 and 31 December 2018.

The trajectory of workforce growth to 4,400 WTE will continue to 31 March 2021, through the education and training commissioning pipeline. HEE reports that service providers are on track to meet the 4,400 workforce growth target on time.

Our commitments to children and young people's mental health in the NHS Long Term Plan have expanded our workforce ambitions. It is estimated that in addition to the existing requirements specified in *Stepping Forward to 2020/21*, a further 8,050 children and young people's mental health staff are required by 2023/24. Further information can be found in the *NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20-2023/24*⁵.

⁴ www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health/children-young-peoples-mental-health-services

⁵ www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/nhs-mental-health-implementation-plan-2019-20-2023-24.pdf

The NHS and HEE are also working towards meeting the Government manifesto commitment of 50,000 additional nurses which will be across all four fields of nursing including mental health and children's nurses.

There are no official published NHS Digital statistics available specifically for the children and young people's mental health workforce to measure progress against expansion plans. However, the NHS Benchmarking exercise commissioned by HEE in 2019 shows that the total children and young people's mental health workforce across all types of provider grew by 17% between the 2016 survey (31 December 2015 position) and the 2019 survey (31 December 2018 position). The NHS-employed workforce increased by 23%.

Across the four types of employers with dedicated posts (NHS, local authority, voluntary sector and youth offending teams), 14,065 WTE staff were reported as working within children and young people's mental health services. Of these, 80% (11,036 WTE) were employed by NHS trusts. NHS mental health trusts reported an increase from 8,976 WTEs to 11,036 WTEs with an additional 1,110 WTE posts being vacant. The NHS Benchmarking report indicated a 34% increase (534 WTEs more than in 2015) in mental health nurses delivering community mental health services. This is in comparison with a 13% increase (87 WTEs more since 2015) in mental health nurses working in inpatient services.

57 local authorities reported directly employing 1,259 staff working in children and young people's mental health services, indicating a growth of 23% since 2015. The independent sector reported 1,643 WTEs working in these services with 313 WTE posts being vacant. Voluntary organisations reported 321 WTE working in CYPMH services which indicates a growth of 103% since 2015. The number of staff working in youth offending teams was 792 WTEs which is a 20% reduction since 2015.

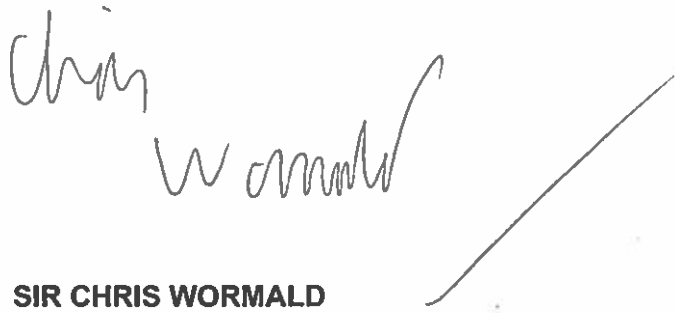
NHS Digital introduced the new mental health workforce statistics in December 2018 using the definition for mental health workforce which was agreed with arm's length bodies. This covers only those NHS staff who work directly on mental health services for people of all ages. Available data shows a 9.1% increase (9,899 WTEs) between September 2015 and March 2020 in this workforce, with an increase of 5.6% (6,321 WTEs) in the period between March 2019 and March 2020.

Further information can be found at:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/supplementary-information/2020/hchs-mental-health-workforce-in-nhs-trusts-and-ccgs-march-2020-ah3356>.

Next steps

DHSC, NHSE/I and HEE will continue to provide regular updates to the committee on progress as requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Wormald', with a long diagonal stroke extending from the end of the name.

SIR CHRIS WORMALD

Department of Health and Social Care

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Murdoch', written in a cursive style.

CLAIRE MURDOCH

NHS England and NHS Improvement

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Reid', written in a cursive style.

Professor Wendy Reid

Health Education England