

Brief report for Corporate Parent Board. – 12.04.19

Meeting the emotional health and mental health needs of children in our care.

Purpose of report;

The purpose of the report is to provide a brief overview, in order to offer a level of assurance to the Corporate Parent Board, on the way in which we identify and manage the emotional and mental health needs of the children in our care and the value of the commissioned service for looked after children from CAMHS.

Identifying need.

All children coming into our care will have had an assessment of need (Single Assessment) which will have considered their emotional wellbeing and mental health. This assessment will have focused on understanding the child's current emotional presentation and wellbeing in the context of their current situation and past experiences. (Rather than just focusing on presenting behaviours/symptoms)

All children entering our care have an initial health assessment and those aged under 5 year old will have a review health assessment every 6 months and for children aged 5 years and over they will have an annual health assessment. These health assessments have a focus on emotional and behavioural development as well as physical health needs.

All children in our care have a looked after review every 6 months which is a review of their care plan. The social worker completes a report for these reviews. This report is an assessment of the child's current situation and includes the child's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

These assessment processes take into account the views of the child and parents and carers and the child is encouraged to influence plans and interventions by identifying what is important to them.

In between each of these reviews is at least one care planning meeting which aims to ensure that those involved with child meet and share information and this includes views on the child's emotional and mental health.

All children between the ages of 4 and 16year old who have been or are likely to be in our care for a year or more have a Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) completed in line with the annual health assessment.

The SDQ is an internationally validated brief behavioural screening questionnaire. The annual SDQ is completed by the carer and then scored using the designated SDQ scoring system. The scores are sent to the social workers and they are also screened by the looked after children nurses. The looked after children nurses will discuss with the social workers if any of the scores cause a concern about the child's emotional or mental health and the social worker with advice from the nurse will decide whether the situation requires routine care and monitoring and support or whether any further information or assessment or interventions are required or whether specialist assessments or interventions are needed and whether they are needed for the child for the care giver or for both and the social worker is then responsible for ensuring that referrals for services are made and are taken into account in the care planning process.

Teachers complete an SDQ for all pupils in line with the review of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) on a termly basis. The social worker will also consider these scores and include any interventions in the care planning process.

The workers and carers if unsure are also able to 'consult' with specialist therapeutic workers via the looked after children CAMHS contract.

Responding to need

Our approach is that an emphasis on emotional wellbeing should be embedded across our looked after children systems and carers and professionals need to have the skills and knowledge to understand how they can support the emotional wellbeing of the children in our care.

Support to the child can come from a range of people and services and places.

This includes schools who receive support from amongst others the Virtual School. The Virtual school offers training and support in respect of Attachment and Trauma and responding to children who have had adverse experiences.

Care staff in the children's homes receive training and development in respect of understanding and responding to the emotional and mental health needs of children in our care. This training comes from a variety of sources including via the workers in the looked after children CAMHS team.

Some of the children's homes operate a 'reflective supervision agenda' which focusses on revisiting with the staff team incidents and issues from the young person's perspective in context of that young person's early life experiences which could be trauma and attachment based. The staff team then reflect and adjust their responses accordingly.

Workers working directly with children have a number of resources and tools to help explore and understand young people's feelings and behaviours.

Foster carers have been involved in a rolling programme 'Nurturing attachment' and PACE training which is delivered by the workers in the looked after CAMHS team.

Residential workers and some social workers have also attended the PACE training. PACE is 'Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy and is training about a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving and responding to children that aims to make children feel safe.

Other training on offer for carers and workers in respect of supporting and meeting emotional and mental health needs includes, Responding to grief and loss, Communicating with children, Attachment and Practice, Working with troubled adolescents and ASD awareness. Bespoke training can also be spot purchased if need is identified.

We have provided training in the Solihull approach to social workers, residential workers and family workers. The Solihull approach is all about emotional health and wellbeing and is an evidenced based programme which develops an understanding of emotional, cognitive and social development and effective ways of responding.

Quite often services are in place before the child enters our care via school based counselling and emotional health and wellbeing services such as but not limited to ABC counselling service or Alliance psychological services and some children may already be involved with the mainstream CAMHS service and they will continue to receive these services so as not to interrupt the work being undertaken and relationship with the counsellors. Where appropriate children may be receiving services via LD CAMHS (Specialist CAMHS services for children with learning disability) or the Forensic CAMHS service.

There is a commissioned service in place via CAMHS which is considered as 'additionality' for looked after children and more information about this service and its activity level is provided below.

Where a need has been identified for a more specialised service then 'spot purchase' arrangements can be made with appropriate services.

Looked After Children CAMHS service.

We have a commissioned service from CAMHS which is a dedicated service for looked after children and their carers.

This service is in addition to mainstream emotional and mental health services available to children and their families and is not a service that we have a duty to provide over and above the mainstream provision. The provision was initially secured to 'enhance' services for the children in our care and their carers so that children in our care are seen at the earliest opportunity and that their emotional wellbeing and attachment and trauma experiences were addressed early enough.

The main aims of this commissioned service is to improve, for children in our care, access to specialist emotional and mental health assessment and interventions, raise awareness of emotional and mental health needs of children in our care and access to timely support. This is provided by dedicated therapeutic workers (2 social workers trained and experienced in therapies) and additional psychology time. These workers provide evidence based interventions and work in collaboration with existing mental health services and to provide consultation and advice and training to workers and carers.

The workers in this CAMHS team offer a range of activity including direct work with children and young people, consultation with workers and carers, cognitive assessments, carer support, observations to help care planning and interventions, training carers and staff, attending staff meetings (in the Children Homes).

At quarter 3 the looked after CAMHS service had provided the following;

- Working with 111 children in our care
- Provided these children with 1,424 interventions.

The interventions are further broken down as follows;

| Intervention | Number |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Care coordination/indirect care | 113 |
| Psychology/wellbeing | 3 |
| Governed psychological therapies | 407 |
| Assessment | 615 |
| Family/Carer Interventions | 133 |
| Diagnostic support | 29 |
| Lifestyle | 123 |
| Physical | 1 |

Training

The workers have also provided

- 5 sessions of 'Nurturing Attachment' Training to foster carers.
- 2 days training 'Trauma Informed Care'
- 5 sessions of 'Attachment Training'

Outcomes

The CAMHS workers complete SDQ's at the beginning and end of their interventions as a means to measure improvements. This information is recorded on individual children's records and not recorded as service outcomes however I have undertaken a small and random sampling of children's case records where there has been involvement from the camhs service and these records do show improvement in the children's emotional health or carer support, the biggest impact appears to be on stability of these placements.

At the quarter 3 period there had been in addition to the 111 children active to the service 38 children discharged from the service. The information shows that the majority are discharged due to the treatment plan being successfully implemented and there being no further need for the service.

Feedback from staff and carers and children about the service is good and includes comments like "support from camhs is invaluable" "carer and young person felt they couldn't have managed without the support"

A recent Ofsted inspection of a children's home highlighted the looked after children camhs contract and the working relationships as good practice.

Reviewing the service

A review of the 'Looked After Children CAMHS contract ' is underway and this service has been continually reviewed in line with the protocol for reviewing commissioned services. All services have contract service reviews.

We are considering the way in which we deliver this service not because we are dissatisfied with the service provided but it is being considered to inform a wholesale review as part of the Future in Mind programme.

The review is considering matters such as capacity, range of services needed and a delivery model such as whether we should train staff/ employ therapeutic staff in house or whether it does need to be a separate service or not from other emotional and mental health services.

We have extended the current looked After CAMHS contract in order to provide consistency for the children, staff and carers who receive these services and can offer assurances that there is no difference in the level of support being provided.

Summary

The information provided in this report is intended to demonstrate that we do have robust systems in place to identify, monitor and meet the emotional and mental health needs of the children in our care. The approach we take is a whole systems approach which aims to support children by having carers and workers trained and skilled in identifying and supporting emotional and mental health and provide not only the children with the support required but also those caring for the children.

The contract in place is intended to enhance the service to children and young people and the contracted service is delivering a high quality service to those children and carers that they are working with and there are positive outcomes for them.

The review of services in place at the moment is to consider how we deliver future services and whilst we are undertaking this review the arrangements with the camhs service will remain in place to ensure that we can still respond to and meet the needs of the children in our care.

Jackie Ward

Service Manager

Looked After Children and Complex Needs.