

2.2 The mental health of children and young people in Walsall

The Walsall JSNA of 2013 identified the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people as being a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Walsall Children's Safeguarding Board and Walsall Children and Young People's Board have also identified this as a priority.

In 2015, a children and young people emotional health and wellbeing needs assessment was published, to provide a universal population need based approach for children and young people in Walsall.

The focus of the report is on promoting good mental health: identifying risks, protective factors and interventions which will help children and young people build strengths and skills, especially resilience skills, which can help to develop coping strategies and manage adversity.

The overall aim of the health needs assessment is to present a profile of emotional health and wellbeing of children, young people, families and communities in which they live in Walsall.

Many factors influence the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. The needs assessment aims to:

- Describe the level of need within the population of Walsall.
- Describe the service provision for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health issues.
- Review the evidence base of good practice
- Assess unmet need to inform commissioning and service model development
- Make recommendations for system wide development

Recommendations

Emotional wellbeing and mental health in younger children

- Increase the provision of age appropriate support services in place for children under age of 11
- Ensure alternative provision for support for young people is available both in and out of office hours to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to specialist services
- Establish and publicise the provision of talking therapies for young people experiencing mental health issues, particularly in groups with low uptake such as males and ethnic minority groups

Services at the point of transition

- Develop a transition service for young people based upon the expressed needs of young people; exploring the feasibility of developing a 16-25 service.

- Set joint protocols in place so that young people within the transition age group are managed by both CAMHS and AMHS, so they can both provide joint assessment.

Services for children in care

- Assess children who are in care, leaving care and those on the cusp or entering care for what support might be required around their emotional health and wellbeing and offer appropriate emotional wellbeing and mental health support for this group.

Self Harm

- Set support for young people who self harm in place to reduce the number of young people who self harm in Walsall
- Establish training for staff to recognise and support young people who self harm.
- Develop out of hours services for young people who self harm

In schools and other youth settings

- Offer support to schools and Early Help providers to promote the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people
- Provide schools and other settings with support;
 - to help children develop social and emotional skills and wellbeing,
 - to help parents develop their parenting skills.
- Work with schools and youth settings to help integrate children's emotional wellbeing and mental health into all aspects of the curriculum, tailored to the developmental needs of children and young people
- Ensure teachers and other staff are trained to identify when children at school show signs of anxiety or social and emotional problems and how best to discuss the problems with parents and carers and develop a plan to deal with them, involving specialists where needed.
- Ensure that educational establishments have access to the specialist skills, advice and support they require

Early intervention for emotional wellbeing and mental health

- Strengthen early intervention services for children and young people at the tier 1 level and ensure that awareness of services is raised in the community.
- Provide early help support around conduct disorders and antisocial behaviour and support workers in the community and primary care to assess and support individuals and their families

Specialised services for emotional wellbeing and mental health

- Investigate a single point of access
- Investigate how the delays in reaching assessment stage at tier 3 might be reduced

- Strengthen alternatives to inpatient care on an intensive outreach basis. Work with Tier 4 services on pathways to reduce need for inpatient stay/ reduce length of stay.
- Consider increasing access to consultant support at tier 3

Workforce development

- Support for frontline children's workforce to enable them to understand their role in promotion, prevention and early intervention
- Develop a common understanding of different levels of need and categorisation of thresholds in order to support identification of need and appropriate referrals
- Ensure frontline services have access to information and advice about what services are available. Provide an up-to-date directory of services to support referral; within the proposed directory to provide a clearer referral process
- Ensure referrals processes are clear to reduce children being referred back and forward between different professional groups.

Areas for further investigation

- Identify why the diagnosed prevalence of ASD in children 5-9 years is low in comparison with expected prevalence as set out by ONS
- Identify why referrals to CAMHS are lower than might be expected from the 15 - 17 age group and BME communities and reduce barriers to access from these communities
- Further explore the issue of stigma

Access to services

- Ensure that the mental health of women is assessed at every visit during pregnancy and in the postnatal period
- Develop a robust maternal mental health pathway

Click the link below to access the full needs assessment.

[Children and Young People Mental Health Needs Assessment](#)