

**CHILDREN & FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL:  
SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING  
AND COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS  
FINAL REPORT**

Report of the Director of Children's Services

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.1.** As part of the Scrutiny Work Programme approved by the Council for the municipal year 2020/21, the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee requested a scrutiny review to consider the support for young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools. The breadth of support for emotional wellbeing and mental health support to children and young people of school age is broad ranging. The specific focus of the review was therefore agreed as twofold:

- a. To understand provision and how we support those young people who have emotional health issues but perhaps are not acute enough to warrant full scale intervention.
- b. To understand how school's feel in terms of dealing with emotional health issues and whether there is more that could be done.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

**2.1.** The Review Panel heard from a broad range of invitees regarding the current offer for the identification of mental and emotional need, along with the provision and support available for children and young people of school age in Stockport.

**2.2.** Stockport currently has 68,714 children and young people aged 0 to 19 years living in Stockport, and 51,083 children aged 5-19 (*JSNA Children and Young People's Mental & Emotional Health January 2020 – appendix 1*). A refresh of this JSNA is planned, following the current completion of the COVID-19 JSNA.

**2.3.** As the UK emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic it is expected that there will be a surge in need and demand for mental health and wellbeing services. Indeed, we have seen an increase in emotional and mental wellbeing need over the past year and additional support has been put in place in response to this.

**2.4.** The exact nature and duration of this increase in demand is hard to predict but it is expected to be especially acute as children and young people return to school. The increased demand is expected to last for some time, possibly years.

**2.5.** In order to manage this demand at the earliest possible opportunity, it is important that all services work together and focus on early help and support, in addition to there being sufficient provision for those in need of specialist support.

**2.6.** Along with increasing access to online support, self-help, self-referral and the universal offer through schools, Stockport has 2 key operating systems that work together dynamically to ensure that the needs of children and young people can be picked up at the earliest opportunity and access to early help or specialist support will become increasingly swift and appropriate.

2.6.1 See 5.2 - Development of a single point of access (SPOA) for emotional wellbeing and mental health services - a key piece of work that has been accelerated during the last year, with a start date of 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

2.6.2 See 5.4 - Team around the School.

**2.7.** The governance and planning to underpin this work is outlined in Appendix 2.

### **3. REVIEW METHODOLOGY**

**3.1.** The Review Panel agreed that the Scrutiny Review would consider that the 'support for young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools', would be undertaken in a single session held in March 2021, with key individuals invited to attend and present information relevant to the review topic. The list of attendees is Appendix 3.

**3.2.** The Review Panel first considered the report of the Director of Children's Services, providing a broad overview of the current breadth of support for young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools, including the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with regard to mental health and wellbeing.

**3.3.** There were 5 objectives to the review that

- i) Ensure that we have a system set up in schools and colleges that enables young people to talk through their issues.
- ii) Establish what services are in place now, what benefit they bring, what further services are required, how these could be implemented.
- iii) Consider the current system for emotional and mental health support and identify what else is needed to ensure young people need to feel reassured that this is something we can help with.
- iv) Consider specifically what is provided by third parties, if third parties are already set up to offer these services and if so, what support the council can offer.
- v) Explore the opportunity for an action plan for the council to help make positive changes as required.

**3.4.** A concurrent scrutiny review took place with regard to youth participation in Stockport. As mental health is one of the key priorities for young people, it was agreed that relevant recommendations from the findings of both Reviews would be pulled together to ensure potential opportunities for youth participation regarding awareness raising would be highlighted and actioned.

## 4. THRIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

4.1. The Stockport Partnership has been developing the use of the national iThrive framework to assist in understanding the needs of young people and looking at the support available regarding mental health and emotional wellbeing for children, young people, and families. The iThrive model is articulated as a visual 4 quadrant framework with 'thriving' at the centre:

- **Thriving:** those who need effective prevention and promotion to support their mental health.
- **Getting Advice:** those who need advice and signposting
- **Getting Help:** those who need goal focused, short term interventions
- **Getting More Help:** those who need extensive and specialised goals based help
- **Getting Risk Support:** those who have not benefitted from or are unable to use help but whom services need to provide support for as they remain a risk.



4.2. According to the JSNA data overlaid with the iThrive model (January 2020) of the 51,083 children and young people of school age at that time, there were:

- 37,100 Thriving
- 8,250 Coping
- 3,900 In need of help
- 1500 In need of more support
- 300 In need of risk support



### What can we conclude about the prevalence of mental health conditions in children and young people in Stockport?

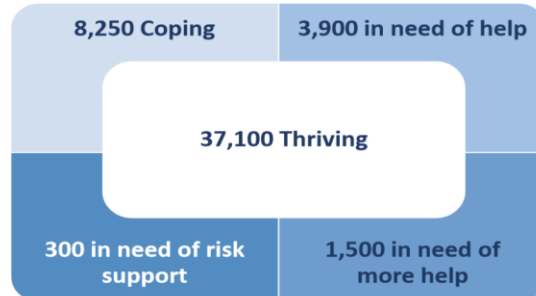
Using a range of data sources, we can estimate the numbers of children and young people who might need support in the different areas of the iThrive model. In doing this, it should be noted that one of the premises of the Thrive framework is that people can move frequently between these areas and that whilst an individual may be in need of 'risk support' one month, they could be 'coping' the next. Therefore, these figures can only ever be a guide to the level of need in the borough.

There are 51,083 children and young people aged 5-19 in Stockport.

Using data from the NHS Digital survey, our service data and the previous estimates of levels of need via tiers of service, we can estimate that:

- 37,100 will be thriving
- 8,250 will be coping
- 3,900 will be in need of help
- 1,500 will be in need of more help
- 300 will be in need of risk support

A total of 13,950 with some level of need.



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4.3. The provision and support for children and young people is outlined in brief within the Thrive framework in the attached paper (Appendix 4).

4.4. There is a broad range of support for children and young people of school age through Healthy Young Minds (HYMs), education services, Stockport Family and the voluntary sector (VSCE). Those discussed at the review panel are outlined below:

## 5. PROVISION

### 5.1. Online Support

5.1.1 **Kooth.com** – <https://www.kooth.com/>

5.1.1.1 This is an online mental health support and information platform offering young people in Stockport (11-18) free, anonymous and safe mental health and wellbeing support, helping to address with anything that a young person might be facing. The Kooth platform (all pre-moderated) includes:

- The Magazine (articles, research, creative writing etc- written by the Kooth team and by young people).
- The Forums (posts, discussions and friendly advice and words of support from the Kooth community on a variety of topics).
- Activities and text based chat with trained, professional Counsellors and Emotional Wellbeing Practitioners.

5.1.1.2 The current data showing the usage of Kooth from April 2020 and by children and young people in Stockport is:

- 3,487 logins across 546 users

- 139 chat sessions
- responded to 1345 messages
- 96.4% Stockport users would recommend the service to other users

5.1.1.3 Communications with local stakeholders- There are 2 Kooth engagement officers working in Stockport. They have been working with many schools (including Secondary, Primary & PRUs), young people and services across Stockport, delivering assemblies, staff training and other workshops. They have also attended and given a presentation about Kooth to Stockport Designated Safeguarding Leads and to the Primary and Secondary Heads Consortium, all of which are leading to many more sessions being booked in with their staff and pupils.

#### 5.1.2 **Local Offer**

5.1.2.1 The **Stockport Local Offer** (LO) provides advice, information and services to children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and their families. The LO has an emotional and mental wellbeing access to support page, providing a range of information and support.

<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/site.page?id=l6Quw022rbw>

#### 5.1.3 **CHAT Health**

5.1.3.1 School nurses are launching CHAT Health in May 2021. This is a confidential platform, through the use of texts, for children and young people to access health advice and support which can be followed up by face-to-face appointment.

5.1.3.2 This platform will particularly benefit young people who are home educated, in private school or in colleges where drop-ins are not available. National data shows 40% of young people who would usually access this service would do so for emotional health and wellbeing support.

### 5.2 **Single Point of Access**

5.2.3 Stockport developed an emotional wellbeing and SEND hub in April 2020 as an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This sits with the existing early help hub in the MASSH (Multi Agency Support and Safeguarding Hub).

5.2.4 The MASSH as well as being a referral point is also a support hub. Early in the pandemic the consultation line for professionals was extended to families as a means for self-referral and to ask for support. The MASSH is also a point of notification and support for children and young people living with parental mental health issues.

5.2.5 The work has accelerated to establish a Single Point of Access (SPOA) for all children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health referrals through the pandemic, building on the work described above. This will be positioned within the MASSH and include specialist mental health workers who will provide early assessment and triage.

5.2.6 On 6<sup>th</sup> April the SPOA will be fully launched and will serve as a point of expertise and skill that parents and professionals can access to find out the offer available as well as dealing with referrals.

### **5.3 In School Support – school provision**

5.3.3 **School provision** – all schools have an emotional wellbeing offer. Schools deliver a package of wellbeing support to pupils in a variety of ways as suits their school community. Schools will usually have identified staff in school to lead on mental wellbeing or pastoral teams, who other staff can go as a first point of call for any concerns about a child experiencing mental wellbeing difficulties.

5.3.4 Schools have been well supported through the pandemic to provide information and support to children and young people to maintain their wellbeing and respond to needs as they arise.

5.3.5 Prior to the pandemic all schools were given training on the Stockport Mental Wellbeing strategy for schools and accompanying self-assessment tool, which provides schools with a framework for addressing mental wellbeing at all levels of the Thrive model. This was also accompanied by Anxiety and School Avoidance guidance for schools and parents and accompanying training for schools.

5.3.6 Capacity is being developed in schools to further support young people through training of school staff and the Emotional Wellbeing Planning Group is currently working on bring this training offer together into a coherent offer.

5.3.7 Health education will become statutory in the curriculum from September 2021 and this will include identifying early signs of mental wellbeing problems and where to go for help.

5.3.8 Most secondary schools have a wellbeing section of their school website providing information for both pupils and parents.

5.3.9 Other staff working in and with schools such as School Aged Plus workers are also engaged in the school wellbeing offer, such as through Team Around the School model, where the enhanced model is working, and through the Designated Safeguarding Lead programme.

5.3.10 Where schools have concerns about children missing from education, they can contact the MASSH for support and this worked well during the school closures in lockdown.

5.3.11 Schools work closely with a range of services to support their pupils, including those listed below in section 5.4.

## 5.4 Services

5.4.3 There is a range of direct support in and out of school for children and young people of school age. Some of the services that provide this support are as follows:

- 5.4.3.1 **School Nurses** – The school nurse team comprise 21 qualified nurses with additional qualifications in specialist public health nursing. All schools in Stockport have a named School Nurse, plus a named nurse for home-education children. Secondary schools receive 2 confidential young person’s drop-ins per week which during the pandemic have been offered virtually. The team receive self-referrals, staff referrals and parent referrals to this service. Depending on level of need nurses are qualified to offer mental wellbeing interventions or refer on as required.
- 5.4.3.2 School Nurses are launching Chat Health confidential online platform in May 2021. This will particularly benefit young people who are home educated, in private school or in colleges where drop-ins are not available. National data shows 40% of young people who would usually access this service would do so for emotional health and wellbeing support. The service also has an advice line for parents and carers.
- 5.4.3.3 **Education Psychology** - The Educational Psychology service have delivered the Department for Education training programme, published in late summer 2020, based on Mental Health First Aid to support earlier intervention and this is being followed up with regular supervision for school staff. They are also delivering evidence based Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Programme to deliver lower tier therapeutic interventions for young people. These will support the mental health support teams national programme that will be put into place next year. Webinars were run in September 2020 in preparation for reopening of schools following the first lockdown, using psychological theory to inform practice.
- 5.4.3.4 Working with colleagues, the service has produced materials for parents, carers and school staff on guidance on talking to children about COVID-19 and coping with anxiety around COVID-19.
- 5.4.3.5 The service has also been responding to critical incidents and bereavement, which has been especially needed during this time.
- 5.4.3.6 **Behaviour Support and Primary Jigsaw** - Children are referred to Primary Jigsaw from the Behaviour Support Service. There is no waiting time to access this service so it can provide a swift response to the needs of identified children.
- 5.4.3.7 During the first lockdown Primary Jigsaw did a survey with parents to find out what the issues were for parents and children during that time. This information was translated into some useful tips that were shared to

support families during this latest lockdown. More information can be seen on their website. <https://www.behavioursupportservice.co.uk/covid-19-update-for-parents-and-carers/>

- 5.4.3.8 Jigsaw offer a variety of courses for parents and for staff. The 'parenting anxious children' course has been moved online, which has made it more accessible for parents who would not usually be able to attend a face to face course. This has received good feedback and has been identified as particularly useful for parents of children transitioning to year 7. There has also been good take up of a mindfulness course for teachers and plans to also make this available for pupils. Many other courses are also provided, such as on bereavement and loss.
- 5.4.3.9 **Secondary Jigsaw** - Pendlebury Pupil Referral Unit remained open for all pupils during the lockdown due to the vulnerabilities of all pupils, whilst also offering virtual teaching and support. For some pupils this has meant spending more time at the unit whilst they were not able to attend mainstream school. There has been a focus on post 16 provision to ensure all young people have moved on to other provision.
- 5.4.3.10 There is a clear pathway for referral to other service such as Educational Psychology as required.
- 5.4.3.11 In partnership with Marple Hall School a wellbeing programme was devised following the return to school in September which have been well received and used by many secondary schools, in addition to the wellbeing training offer for schools. This has helped secondary schools to be prepared to deal with wellbeing issues and support pupils on the return to school.
- 5.4.3.12 The 'Checkpoint' network run by Pendlebury offers support to emotional wellbeing leads in schools. The purpose is to work together, discuss shared issues, share resources, offer mutual support and receive shared training from other agencies.
- 5.4.3.13 **Healthy Young Minds (HYMs)** - HYMs is a specialist service which sees young people with more acute needs. The pandemic has led to an increase in the numbers of young people presenting with more complex needs and higher vulnerability. This means that for some young people identified with less urgent needs, waiting times are long whilst the service focusses on crisis support. This impact is reflected in other localities where HYMs (Pennine Footprint) is a provider and is indicative of the increasing number of young people in crisis through the pandemic. There are further proposed developments in HYMS, in particular:
- Partners are working together to plan how we meet the need of children and young who are on waiting lists and their families.



- The CCG is working with Pennine Care to develop plans for commissioning additional short-term support to meet the needs of the children and young people who are currently on waiting lists.
- The CCG is working with Pennine Care to develop plans for further development of HYMs in 21/22.

5.4.3.14 **Beacon Counselling** - Beacon currently provide a counselling service to several secondary schools and a few primary schools. Last year over 4000 young people were supported through this.

5.4.3.15 They are increasingly supporting more young people of different ethnicities and LGBT young people. Support has covered a variety of issues including anxiety, anger, self-harm and suicidal ideation.

5.4.3.16 'SOS' is Beacon's youth engagement project – currently this is focusing on understanding how young people have dealt with the pandemic and what was missing and would be useful.

5.4.3.17 Beacon are also able to use their expertise to support school staff with training, supervision and workshops.

5.4.3.18 **Other services** not discussed in the meeting (see appendix 5), but who also provide emotional wellbeing support to children and young people in schools include the following:

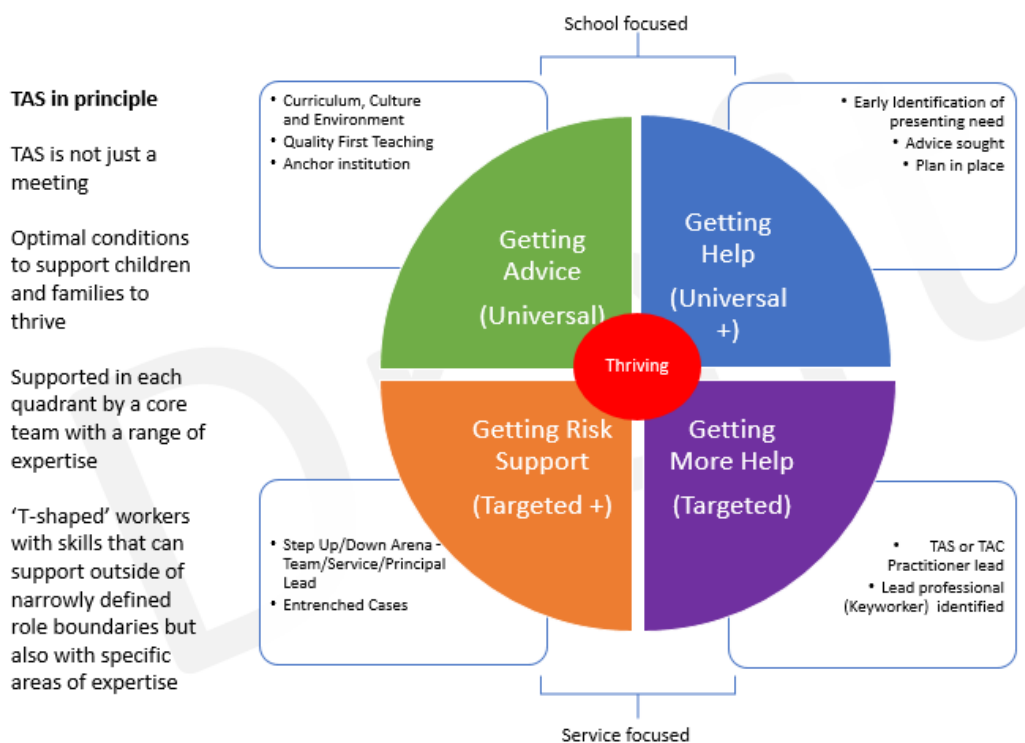
- *Community Eating Disorders Service*
- *Start Well teams and health visitors*
- *Start Well Coordinators*
- *School age plus workers*
- *Parenting team*

## 5.5 Team around the school

5.5.3 The team around the school (TAS) and team around the early years (TAEY) are the key operating models for working together to get the right support to children and young people at the right time. The TAS is the place where professionals and settings come together to identify who is the best person to support a child or young person if they need additional support.

5.5.4 The TAS was introduced initially as part of Stockport Family in 2016 and we have continued to work on this model to develop an enhanced model and blueprint for children and education service provision to work together, where children live, learn, play and transition and situated around our universal anchor institutions (GPs, Health Centres, schools and settings).

5.5.5 Continued work on the core offer of the TAS and the enhanced offer is underway in Stockport to ensure that we have equality of access to additional support for children and young people across the Borough.



## 5.6 Further Initiatives Underway

5.6.3 **A review of the Designated Schools Grant (DSG)** high needs block has been undertaken and there are some specific recommendations to consolidate the mental health and emotional wellbeing offer to schools paid through this grant. The work has been out to consultation and the final work on the outcomes of the review is taking place between April and June involving schools and other key stakeholders.

5.6.4 **Mental Health in Education Teams** – Stockport is keen to establish the Mental Health Teams in Education programme which is now part of the NHS plan. We have been successful in receiving £150K GM short term monies to help prepare for the role out. This will be delivered by August 2022. Key areas of activity will be to:

- Establish a Mental Health in Education Co-ordinator post and clinical leadership / consultancy
- Pilot school wellbeing workers based in Team around the School
- Roll out the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants programme in Stockport schools.

5.6.5 **Stockport CCG, with support from the LA**, have led on the procurement of a new voluntary sector early help and wellbeing service. A provider has been selected and this service will be operational from June 2021.

5.6.6 **The public health nursing service** (health visiting and school nursing) has invested in a multi-user licence for the Solihull Approach, which will give all parents resident in Stockport the ability to access a range of materials and

courses to help parents respond to the emotional and developmental needs of children.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The meeting concluded with Panel member's commenting that from a Councillor and parent perspective the afternoon was incredibly informative and panel members were thankful to attendees for providing full and comprehensive information about the breadth and focus of support to children and young people's mental health in schools. In particular, a comment was made that '**Stockport children are in safe hands**' and Stockport are lucky to have such a wealth of support for children and young people.
- 6.2. The panel acknowledged the amount of good work being progressed by universal settings and services, from universal support in schools, to online and through self-help (getting advice part of the iThrive quadrant) through to 'getting help' and 'getting more help', again through schools and online, but also through a range of services in place to support schools, parents, young people and professionals with regard to supporting the mental and emotional health of children and young people of school age.
- 6.3. The recognition of the increase in mental and emotional need of our children and young people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic was acknowledged and it was agreed that the development and launch of the single point of access is a good step forward.
- 6.4. The work of Beacon and Kooth was held in high regard and seen to be an opportunity to expand and develop this provision. The acknowledgement of the work with young people to understand the impact of the pandemic and feedback into service development was made and opportunities to further involve young people is paramount.
- 6.5. The existing waiting list for specialist mental health services, delivered by Healthy Young Minds, has risen through the pandemic due to a variety of factors, including the increase in acuity of cases. There is a waiting list initiative group that has been established that is proactively looking at what can be offered from an early help position.
- 6.6. Whilst there are opportunities for early help to be offered to young people on the waiting list, this will and is creating a knock-on capacity pressure on the early help system. It should be a priority to make sure there is sufficient resource across the whole system of emotional and mental health provision, to ensure young people are supported, early in the life of the problem, by skilled people. There is a need to focus on ensuring robust universal and early help support to prevent escalation of problems that may then need specialist provision.
- 6.7. As mental health and many common mental disorders are shaped to a great extent by the inequalities in social, economic, and physical environments in which people live, taking action to improve the conditions of daily life from before birth, and during

childhood, provides the best opportunity both to improve population mental health and reduce the risk of those mental disorders that are associated with social inequalities. The adults caring for children, also need effective mechanisms of support to manage their stress and emotional wellbeing in order to be sensitive and positive in their role, thus, a “Think Family” approach to service provision is needed.

- 6.8. The question was raised as to the extent of awareness of the mental health and emotional wellbeing offer being recognised within all sectors of our community. It was acknowledged that further awareness raising with regard to the support available should be a priority.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. In light of the findings of the review, the following recommendations have been made:

- 7.1.1. Early Help and universal support is critical to ensuring there is a robust offer of support. There was a clear agreement to continue to develop the early help offer in respect of mental and emotional wellbeing. **It is recommended that a robust programme of workforce development for universal and early help staff is commissioned, along with expert supervision and consultation from specialist provision to support the universal and early help sector.**
- 7.1.2. Ensure the mental health support offer is understood and reaches all parts of the population is paramount. **It is recommended that a programme of awareness raising with regard to the support available to for young people regarding mental health and wellbeing, is undertaken with first steps taken before the end of the academic year (July 2021). This must make specific consideration of reaching all sectors of the community.** This should could start as a ‘week of action’ with a view to ensuring a programme of ongoing awareness raising across the annual calendar. This should be co-created with young people and the voluntary and community sector key providers (specifically Beacon Counselling and Kooth). It should ensure that, “information includes messages which remove stereotypes and stigma attached to mental health in order to promote active engagement by young people,” *Scrutiny Review, Children and Young People’s Participation (March 2021)*.
- 7.1.3. Ensure that awareness of the mental health and wellbeing support available, reaches all areas of our community and takes account of the view of young people in the Scrutiny Review into Children and Young People’s Participation. **It is recommended that Beacon Counselling and the school nurse service, jointly link with the Ethnic Diversity Service and young people representatives in Stockport to maximise the reach of the support and services to young people.**

7.1.4. The HYMs waiting list is of particular note. **It is recommended that the HYMS waiting list progress is incorporated into the dashboards received by the Scrutiny Committee from the next possible date post April 2021.**

7.1.5. There is a growing recognition that the mental health workforce is our whole network of family, friends, neighbours, teachers, nurses, early help teams, education services, social workers, voluntary and community sector. There is a strength in this wider network of mental health support. Future service design needs to capitalise on the strength in the wide range of provision and support offer. **It is recommended that a review of the current local investment into mental health provision for young people should be undertaken with immediate effect. This should be undertaken in time to meet the commissioning cycle and budget planning of the LA and CCG for 2021/22 implementation.** Consideration of local investment in the context of funding for young people's mental health across GM should be made.

## 8. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: JSNA CYP Mental and Emotional Health
- Appendix 2: Governance and Planning
- Appendix 3: Review Panel Attendees
- Appendix 4: Thrive model diagram with services mapped
- Appendix 5: Other services providing emotional and mental health support not mentioned in the review meeting.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS – NONE.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Heidi Shaw on telephone number Tel: 07800 618 320 or alternatively email [Heidi.shaw@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:Heidi.shaw@stockport.gov.uk)