

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

31 MARCH 2022

QUESTION 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Councillor White to ask the Chair of the Committee:

Covid and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Green councillors are concerned that Covid has caused an additional toll on the mental health of our young people. Before the pandemic mental health services were already stretched. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support our children in need. What is the target and average length of time a young person in Reading waits for a first appointment with CAMHS? And what is the target and average length of time a person waits for treatment with CAMHS?

REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee:

I invite Councillor Terry, the Lead Councillor for Children to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by Councillor Terry, Lead Councillor for Children: I thank Cllr White for his question, as you will see from the information below it was not a straightforward matter to answer this question and so I propose inviting CAMHS to a future ACE meeting to discuss Reading data and local challenges.

CAMHS data is not currently disaggregated to provide a Reading specific response. CAMHS have provided the following information on waiting times for referrals to the specialist mental service (not neurodiversity referrals):

The only areas of service that have national access and waiting time standards are for children & young people eating disorders and Early Intervention in psychosis, where standards are 1 week for urgent and 4 weeks for routine referrals. Currently within Berkshire CAMHS the average waiting time for mental health referrals, based on rolling 12 months is 12 weeks. For core CAMHS (Specialised Community Team; Anxiety & Depression Pathway) its 29 weeks. There is a triage process in place to respond to urgent referrals.

Berkshire-wide referrals to CAMHS have increased by 40% over the past 2 years (from an average of 670 referrals per month pre-pandemic to an average of 940 referrals per month in the last 12 months).

Brighter Futures for Children will be working with CAMHS & the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to explore ways to share Reading only data in future.

The Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership monitors our most vulnerable children impacted by mental health. There are currently 4

children from with acute needs in Tier 4 beds. All are for eating disorders. The latest data below indicates an increase in under 18s admitted to hospital increasing from early 2020 but stabilising from this time last year.

Total number of children 0-18-year-olds admitted to RBFT mental health issues including self-harm

	Q4 19/20	Q1 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q3 20/21	Q4 20/21	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22
Reading	70	47	62	71	79	75	63	71

The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans open to CAMHS has also increased in the last year. In response Reading Borough Council awarded funding for a project for co-located CAMHS workers with Childrens Social Care, match funded by CCG. This team will support Children Looked After - including those placed out of area.

Child Protection Plan in CAMHS	Q3 20/21	Q4 20/21	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22
Reading	76	67	77	90	95

Brighter Futures for Children, schools & local voluntary groups provide support which aims to prevent needs escalating to CAMHS thresholds. In BFfC this includes:

- The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) are currently supporting 112 children & young people and the Primary Mental Health Team have 58. A second MHST team goes live in September.
- This week we have 100 young people being supported by our targeted & specialist youth workers. All would have a holistic early help assessment which assesses and supports any emotional wellbeing needs.
- Recommissioning of Kooth - an online counselling support service available to all Reading children & young people

BFfC worked with Reading Borough Council colleagues to review the 90+ applications for the most recent Covid Support funding round. Of the £220k awarded, 12 organisations with a focus on children & families were awarded £126,477. This included No 5 Young People's counselling service.