

KENT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16TH SEPTEMBER 2021

ITEM NAME

Report from: Jane O'Rourke, Associate Director, Children's and Maternity Commissioning Team, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group CCG

Brid Johnson, Director of Operations, Essex and Kent, North East London NHS Foundation Trust

Gill Burns, Children's Services Director, Essex and Kent, North East London NHS Foundation Trust

Author: Sue Mullin, Senior Programme Manager, Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group

Summary

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on children, young people and their families with general demand increasing across all emotional wellbeing and mental health services and a concerning rise in acuity and complexity for those children who need urgent or emergency care. This is a national increase, with other areas in the South East experiencing higher demand in some pathways, however the increase in Kent and Medway has put extreme pressure on services. The Kent and Medway Covid-19 response, supported by NHSE/I and NHS investment, has paid particular attention to increasing emotional wellbeing and mental health service capacity and supporting the pressures within crisis, eating disorder and neurodevelopmental pathways. There is an established and coordinated system-response, with oversight from the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Improvement Board and the Kent and Medway Integrated Children's Delivery Board. Action planning and delivery is continuing across agencies to increase crisis prevention services, support general hospital resilience and increase inpatient capacity.

The children and young people's mental health system is dynamic and complex. Kent and Medway's whole-system approach to children and young people's mental health is considered an area of good practice regionally with well-established Local Transformation Plan programmes and services. The national targets described in the

NHS Long Term Plan around access to mental health services have been consistently exceeded across Kent and Medway. However, we are not complacent and are ambitious in meeting the needs of our children, young people and young adults.

We have prioritised the following areas:

- Developing a new neurodevelopmental pathway
- Focusing on the 18 to 25 offer and transition from children to adult services
- Increasing emotional wellbeing and mental health capacity across the system
- Increasing investment and securing additional investment from national programmes
- Increasing resilience within schools and primary care to access/respond to emotional wellbeing needs of children and young people

1. Estimated prevalence and access targets – recent update

For children and young people aged 5 to 16, the prevalence of probable mental disorders has increased statistically significantly between 2017 and 2020, from 10.8% of the population in 2017 to 16.0% (one in six) in 2020, according to a nationally representative survey commissioned by NHS Digital.

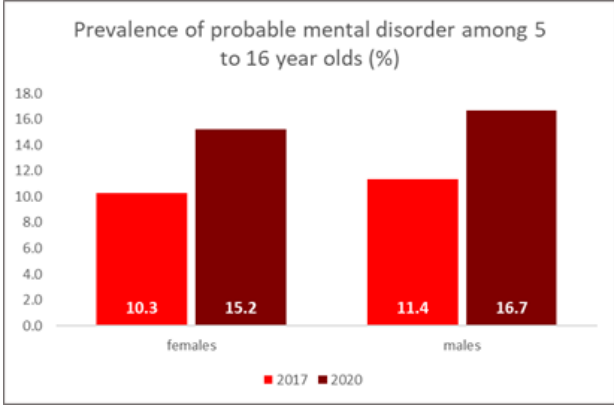


Chart 1

Applying these prevalence estimates to the Kent and Medway under-18 population would suggest that 55,250 children and young people have a probable mental disorder and an additional 33,150 children and young people (9.6%) have a possible mental disorder. Certain groups of young people are particularly vulnerable to mental illness, for example: women aged 17 to 22 years and children and young people who have experienced trauma through adverse childhood experiences.

Kent and Medway CCG are required by NHSE to set out the route to achieving the national target of increasing access to specialist mental health support. The Kent Local Transformation Plan and Medway Local Transformation Plan sets out the CCG and stakeholder response to the 5 Year Forward View (5YFV) and NHS Long Term Plan

requirements in relation to children and young people’s emotional wellbeing and mental health.

The national access target increases every year and has been achieved and exceeded across Kent and Medway since 2016/17. In 2021/22, 43.7% (15,665) of Kent and Medway children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition were able to access treatment compared to a 35% national target.

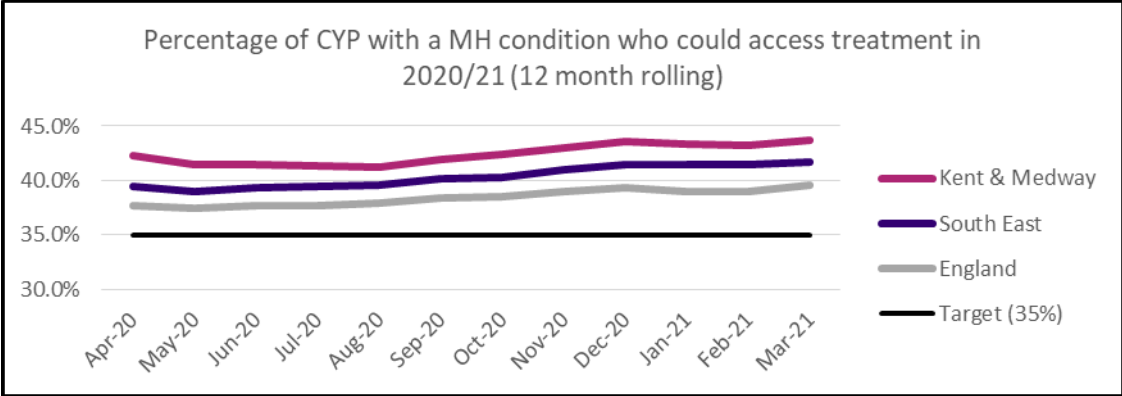


Chart 2. Source: NHSE

In 2021/22 the NHS Long Term Plan and Spending Review target is for 16,613 children and young people in Kent and Medway to receive a mental health service. Our planned commissioning will see us exceeding this target by providing a service to at least 17,703 children and young people. By March 2024, Kent and Medway CCG is working to meet a trajectory of 22,158 children and young people receiving a service (3,500 above the national ambition).

2. Covid-19 Impact

2.1. National and regional findings

NHSE local sub-regional analysis of Covid-19 has shown that the 2020/21 increase in children and young people’s mental health referrals has been within the region of 70-107%. NHS Benchmarking warns of a 20 to 60% surge in children and young people’s mental health referrals in 2021/22. For the South East region where the surge has been higher, this figure is expected to be between 40 to 60%. NHSE South East programmes’ team expect the Kent and Medway increase in 2021/22 to be lower than neighbouring counties, but still high at 40 to 50%.

Across the NHSE South East Provider Collaborative¹ geography (for Kent this is a Kent and Sussex footprint) delays to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Tier 4 admissions/transfers have been increasing. As commissioner for Tier 4 beds, NHSE report inpatient demand has been on an

¹ Provider Collaboratives are responsible for managing the budget and patient pathway for specialised mental health, learning disability and autism care for people who need it in their local area, covering adult low and medium secure, CAMHS tier 4 and adult eating disorder services.

unsustainable upward trend since June 2020, particularly with regard to eating disorder beds. The graph below shows children and young people for which a referral has been received in the South East region where they are yet to be admitted. Delays in admission have a significant impact on the local system where children and young people are held and managed at home or in acute paediatric wards.

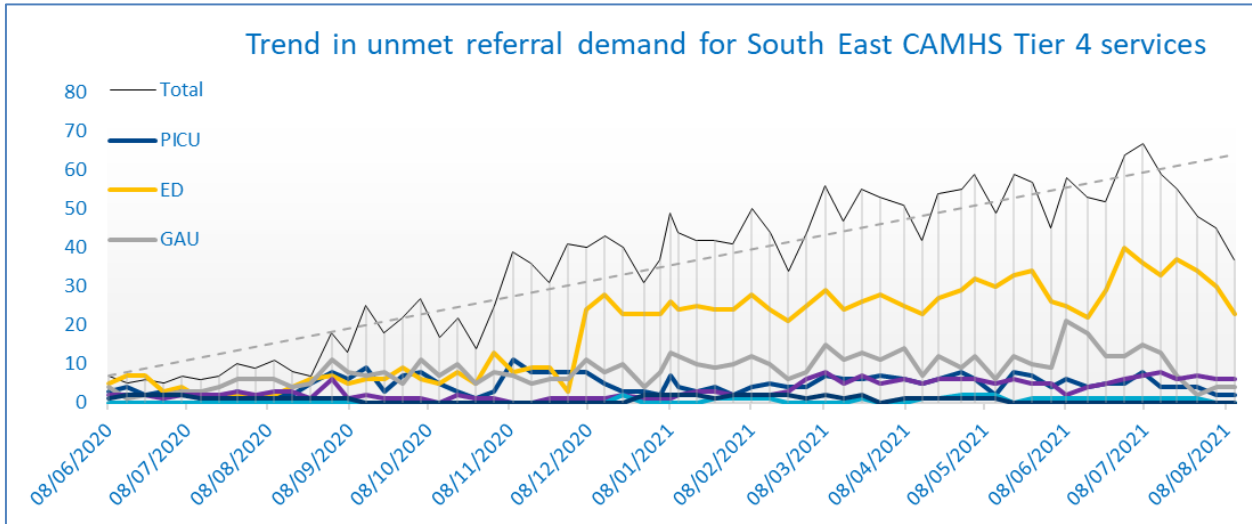


Chart 3. Source: NHSE/

2.2. Kent and Medway findings

2.2.1. General increase in referrals

Referral rates into all emotional wellbeing and mental health services reduced during lockdowns and increased once children and young people returned to school. The graphs below are of two large services: NELFT’s Kent and Medway mental health services, and KCHFT’s children and young people’s counselling service. Both services share a single point of access (SPA) and statistically significant increases in referrals were seen in autumn 2020 and spring 2021.

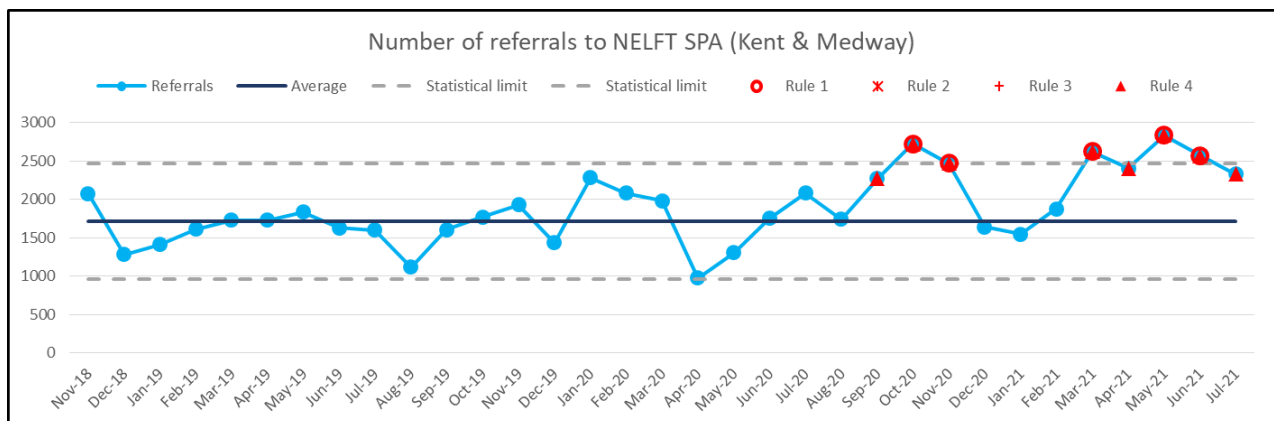


Chart 3. Source: NELFT

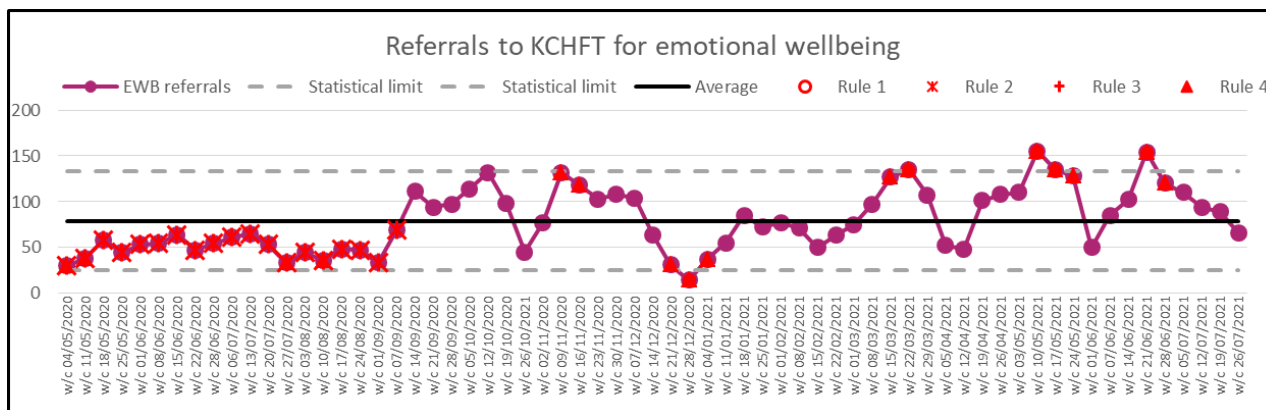


Chart 4. Source: KCHFT

Most services have reported an increase in children and young people experiencing anxiety, depression and increased needs associated with trauma. Porchlight delivers a range of emotional wellbeing services in Kent and Medway and explain: *Workers have noticed an increase in more complex cases over the last four weeks. Workers now have more young people on caseload working with Early Help. There is an increase in domestic abuse being reported within the family home and the safeguarding work has increased.* (April 2021)

2.2.2. Increased demand in specialist pathways:

Specialist pathways are experiencing an increase in the complexity and acuity of children and young people entering services, which is reflected in other services such as acute hospital trusts and children's social care. The key pressures are within the:

- **Eating disorder pathway:** The number of children and young people seen has been statistically significantly higher in the last 3 months (with 211 seen in March 2021 compared to the pre-Covid-19 average 154 per month). The service is currently meeting national targets relating to NICE concordant treatment timeframes.
- **Urgent and emergency care pathway:** Children and young people who are in a mental health crisis or acutely unwell: Self harm admissions into hospital trusts increased to 76 admissions in October 2020 and 59 in February 2021 (monthly average across Kent and Medway is 44). The increase in October 2020 was experienced by all acute setting and more prominent in east Kent in February 2021. In quarter one of 2021/22, acute paediatric wards reported a large and sustained number of very complex children and young people needing care. Delays in finding Tier 4 inpatient beds resulted in a system response (including KCC and NHSE/I) to resolve the pressure in the system.
- **Neurodevelopment diagnostic pathway:** Unlike emotional wellbeing and mental health services, there has been no referral suppression for diagnostic assessments during the lockdowns. This has been further

exacerbated by the invalidation of the diagnostic assessment licence (ADOS) during Covid-19 as it cannot be used virtually or while wearing PPE. This has had an impact on the waiting times for NELFT and the four paediatric providers in Kent and Medway.

2.3. Kent and Medway CCG Response

Below is a brief set of highlights of the combined response of agencies to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people over the past 12 months and forward plan into 2021/22

2.3.1. NELFT's Children and Young People's Mental Health Service

NELFT provide the majority of children and young people's mental health specialist interventions in Kent which are received through the Single Point of Access and delivered through their locality teams and crisis team. Despite a significant increase in referrals (see Chart 3), NELFT report an overall reduction for children and young people waiting over 18 weeks for treatment as they continue to prioritise and focus on patients experiencing long waiting times.

	Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21
Total Caseload (NLDS & CYPMHS)	11,670	11,635	11,937	12,756
Caseload - NEURO ONLY	7,077	6,736	7,456	7,077
Caseload - CYPMHS ONLY	4,593	4,899	4,481	5,679
Referrals received - CYPMHS	3,696	5,439	4,075	4,813
Referrals received - Neuro	885	1,358	1,106	814
Number waiting for first assessment - CYPMHS	1,031	375	285	524
Number waiting for routine treatment - CYPMHS	1,756	964	1,159	1,537
Number waiting for treatment - Neuro	3,237	2,821	3,288	3,133
Number of discharges (inc Neuro)	5,383	5,480	5,390	5,477

Chart 5. Source: NELFT

NELFT are one of 5 providers across Kent and Medway that deliver neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessments. The number of children and young people waiting for both autism and/or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) diagnostic assessments is significantly high. NELFT have worked with the CCG, KCC and paediatric providers under the SEND Written Statement of Action plan to address the current pressure in the pathway. Their response to the pressures have recently included:

- Collaborative work with commissioners to transfer all children and young people over 17 years old to Psychiatry UK for Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) diagnostic assessments (380 families offered a transfer of service to Psychiatry UK for their assessment)
- Additional investment to offer assessments to those who have waited the longest
- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) training for staff commenced in January 2021 to support ASC assessments
- Virtual drop in sessions commenced in the Jan 2021 for children and young people and their families waiting for assessments
- Consultant Pharmacist and Nurse Prescriber appointed to support the prescription and prescribing processes and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) assessments
- Shared care pilot commenced in May 2021 with 2 GP practices for ADHD Children and Young People
- ASC project commenced to contact over 2,000 families with children aged 13 to 16 years old to conduct a Clinical Harm Review

2.3.2. Additional Investment

During 2020/21, NHSE issued guidance to CCGs to ensure that investment into children and young people's mental health services was increased in line with the Mental Health Investment Standard (MHIS). Across Kent and Medway, investment is delivered under the Local Transformation Plan/Long Term Plan framework which articulates a commitment to growing capacity from early intervention and prevention services through to specialist services. In addition to the MHIS growth, Kent and Medway CCG bid for and received investment from NHSE winter pressure funding and System Development Funding, specifically targeted to address the Covid-19 impact.

For 2021/22, the CCG's commitment to increased investment for children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services continues within the requirement to meet Kent and Medway CCG's Long Term Plan commitments and the stretch targets recently published in the NHS Mental Health Delivery Plan for 2021/22. This plan outlines the stretch targets to be met utilising the Spending Review additional investment of £79m nationally for children and young people's mental health. In 2021/22 the CCG have committed to invest over £31m into children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health services to meet the commitments within the NHS Long Term Plan and Local Transformation Plan.

2.3.3. Focus on specialist pathways

During 2020/21, the CCG has worked with NELFT to increase their workforce capacity within the crisis response service and increased case coordination and liaison with the acute trusts. The CCG developed a crisis vigilance dashboard which brings together information from specialist services, acute trusts, Local Authorities and NHSE/Provider Collaborative T4 commissioned services to support the monitoring of pressures and capacity across the system.

During quarter one of 2021/22, NHSE/I, KCC, Medway Council, providers and the CCG convened to respond to the significant pressure around availability of Tier 4 inpatient beds and the subsequent impact on local systems, in particular the acute hospital trusts, NELFT and social care. The crisis pathway action plan was developed and addresses identified pressures. Twice weekly system calls were implemented to ensure traction to address issues such as patient safety, service capacity and workforce competency across the complex and crisis pathways, including eating disorders pathway.

During 2021/22, a number of initiatives are being implemented under the crisis pathway action plan arrangements to address specialist pathway pressures, including, investment into an increased intensive home treatment model for children and young people who are in a mental health crisis or acutely unwell with their mental illness. This offer will reduce the reliance on and rate of growth of T4 CAMHS bed use. Other large programmes of investment which will be implemented this year include increasing the eating disorders offer (to include restricted feeding and preventative support pathways) and rolling-out of increased mental health workforce within acute hospitals.

2.3.4. Increasing capacity

During 2020/21 the focus was to meet as much of the increased demand as quickly as possible, this was delivered through 3 main routes:

- **Coordination of existing capacity** within a number of services. For example, providers whose main activity is delivering interventions in schools have been able to support the self-harm prevention pathway by taking appropriate referrals that come through the SPA. This coordination has enabled a degree of increased system resilience.
- **Expansion of existing services.** For example the expansion of Kooth online counselling, Be You LGBT+ peer support and suicide prevention programmes to extend in age up to 25 and across the geography of Kent and Medway.
- **Commissioning of new services.** For example, intensive family support service, bereavement support and an increased 18 to 25 offer.

The plans for 2021/22 include:

- Expansion of NELFT's crisis offer to include intensive home treatment model
- Roll-out of Paediatric and Young Adult Mental Health Liaison model across all acute trusts
- Expansion of the Emerge outreach advocacy support service to two new sites for children and young people aged 10-25 years who present to A&E because of self-harm, suicidal ideation, or emotional crisis
- Mobilisation of newly commissioned services including: specialist bereavement service for children and young people, suicide bereavement service for young adults and an unaccompanied asylum seeking children mental health support
- Expansion of the Mental Health Support Teams in Schools programme to initiate a further 4 teams by the end of the year (a total of 22 will be established by 23/24 delivering over 10,500 individual interventions a year)
- Provider Collaborative/NHSE commissioned increase of 3 general inpatient beds in Kent and Adolescent Hospital plus 3 additional 72 hour beds

2.3.4 Communication, information and engagement

Over the past 12 months, commissioners and providers across Kent and Medway have coordinated their communications to target families and schools with supportive information and advice. This coordination across agencies has been productive and the partnership approach has continued into 2021/22. In the past 12 months, over 75,000 crisis card have been issued to a range of agencies to give directly to children and families when they need additional help. More recently a 'How are you feeling?' booklet has been posted to households in Kent and Medway and a [Kent and Medway CCG Wellbeing Information Hub](#) has been launched. .

Engagement activities with children, young people and families has continued over the past year despite Covid-19 restrictions. Both HeadStart Kent and Medway Local Council have conducted large scale surveys of the school-aged populations. In addition The Local Transformation Plan participation workers have continued to work virtually and contact has remained high. Service users have continued to feedback qualitative information on the impact of commissioned services.

Lead officer contacts:

Sue Mullin, Senior Programme Manager, Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group

E-mail: suemullin@nhs.net

Phone number: 0771 7361121