

Children and young people's mental health briefing for Sunderland Children's Scrutiny Committee on 07/01/21

1.0 Overview

Following the update provided in October 2020, this briefing note sets out the current position regarding waiting times for children and young people's mental health services

During the second Covid-19 lockdown all children and young people's mental health providers continued to deliver services, including accepting referrals, undertaking assessments, and delivering treatment. All providers now deliver a mix of online and face to face interventions, the latter being undertaken according to clinical need.

Clinical time is maximised through the use of online appointments. Clinical time to undertake appointments has been released through the cancellation of non-essential meetings and a reduction in time spent by staff travelling to appointments. 'Did not attends' have also reduced. However, additional clinical supervision sessions have been required due to the demands of telephone and online working.

Due to the low referrals during the first lockdown and new ways of working implemented by providers, services have reduced their waiting lists.

Positive feedback continues to be received from children, young people and families regarding the delivery of online interventions. STSFT, who deliver the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, report that clinical outcomes are comparable for both online and face to face interventions.

2.0 Waiting time data

Referrals into children and young people's mental health services reduced during the first lockdown but have risen during September and October to higher levels than this time last year. The comparison of referrals this year to last year by month is set out in chart 1 below.

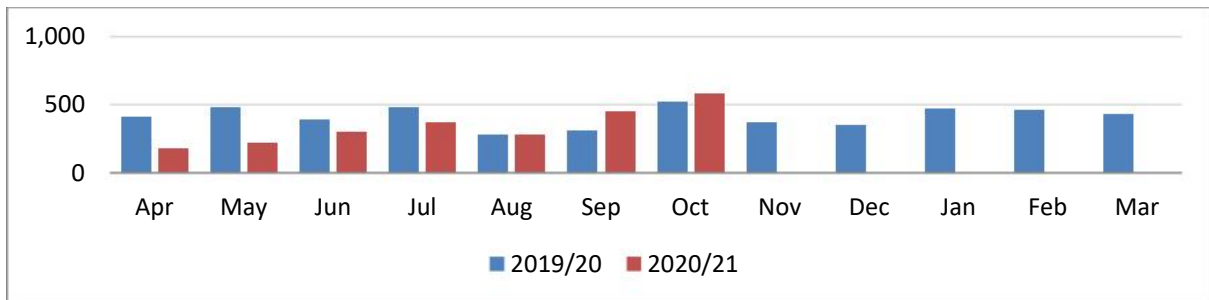


Chart 1: referrals into the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Waiting times to treatment (i.e. to second appointment) have reduced, see chart 2 below.

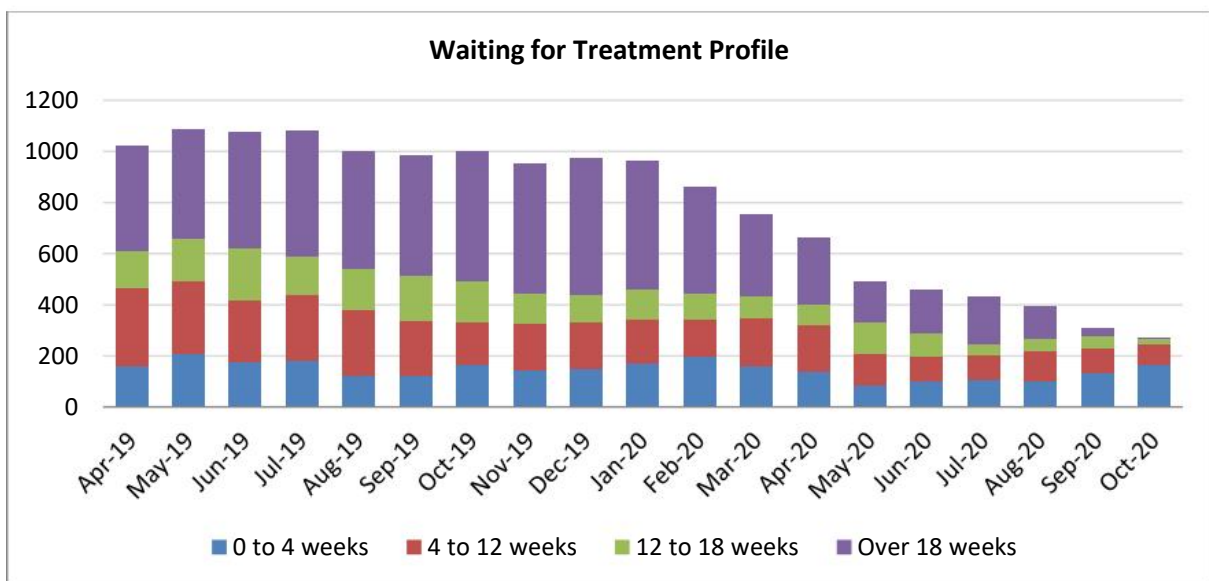


Chart 2: Waiting times for treatment across the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Chart 3 below sets out the current caseloads across the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

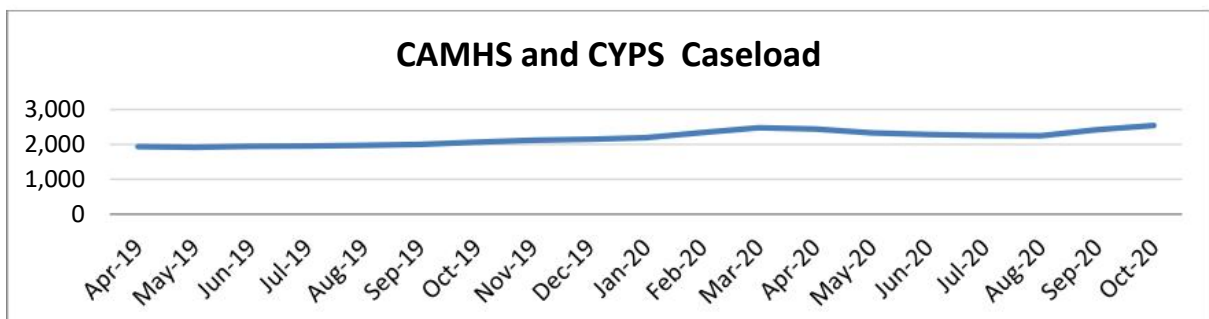


Chart 3: caseloads across the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

3.0 Other work underway to reduce waiting times

Mobilisation of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

The mobilisation of the first Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in Sunderland is underway with four trainee Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) commencing their training at Northumbria University. This is a 12 month course and will end in November 2021. Another four additional clinical roles are currently out to advert with an administrative role to be advertised shortly. All staff will be employed by South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust.

The MHST will deliver three core functions:

- Deliver evidence-based interventions for children and young people with mild to-moderate mental health problems, including:
 - Individual face to face work: for example, effective, brief, low-intensity interventions for children, young people and families experiencing anxiety, low mood, friendship or behavioural difficulties, based on up to date evidence
 - Group work for children and young people, students or parents for conditions such as self-harm and anxiety
 - Group classes for parents to include low intensity group approaches to issues around conduct disorder, communication difficulties
- Support the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop their whole school/college approach
- Give timely advice to school and college staff, and liaise with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education

Eight schools have been identified and will host the trainee EMHPs, 2 secondary schools and 6 primary schools.

When the EMHPs have completed their training and the MHST goes fully live in November 2021, it will cover approximately 20 schools and approximately 8,000 pupils.

Children and young people's mental health service redesign project

A children and young people's mental health service redesign project is underway to develop a CYP MH service model for commissioned children and young people's mental health services in Sunderland, based on the i-THRIVE needs led framework:

- Thriving - prevention and mental health promotion
- Getting advice - advice and signposting
- Getting help - focused goal-based input
- Getting more help - more extensive and specialised goal-based help
- Getting risk support – where CYP have not benefitted from or are unable to use help, but are still in contact with services

The collation phase of the project plan is underway, bringing together existing local information (funding, workforce etc.), national information (e.g. NICE Guidance, models and best practice).

Consultation has commenced with practitioners and providers. Co-production will also be undertaken with children and young people, parents/carers, and other stakeholder groups.