

Briefing Note providing assurance on the progress of the Calderdale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) work in relation to Children and Young People's Autistic Spectrum Disorder Assessments and Waiting Lists

Following the briefing to Children and Young People's Scrutiny (CYP) in June 2019, the following progress has been made in relation to CYP Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD):

Calderdale CCG and CMBC invested additional funding in 2019 to improve and reduce the ASD diagnosis waiting list for both pre-school (0-5 years provided by Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust (CHFT) and school age CYP (5 years and above provided by Northpoint Wellbeing Ltd and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT)).

Business cases were submitted and agreed and trajectories were approved between the commissioner and providers. Below is a summary of the agreements:

Pre-school – Correspondence with the provider (CHFT) commenced in November 2019. The plan is for an additional 34 sessions to be undertaken with a trajectory agreed to reduce the longest wait to 6 months by September 2020, (this is based on the basis that referrals do not exceed the average of 7 per month).

School age – a waiting list plan has been in place with the provider (SWYPFT) since April 2019. Ongoing monitoring has been undertaken to assess the numbers commissioned will have the impact on the waiting list and reduce the waiting times to 12 months by Feb/March 2020.

- April 2019 – 20 additional assessments were commissioned per month based on an average of 8 new referrals being received into the service. Due to continuing increase of new monthly referrals (average of 14 in contrast to 8 originally planned) and due to the higher than expected 'Did not Attends' (DNA's), the CCG and SWYPFT agreed to increase the number of additional assessments from November 2019.
- November 2019 – 28 additional assessments (additional 8 from April 2019) were commissioned per month. This increase enabled providers to manage the fluctuation in new referrals and the unplanned DNAs, whilst providing assurance to achieve the target set (12 month waiting time by Feb/March 2020).
- As at November 2019 – 159 CYP of school age have been assessed out of the 228 planned by the end of March 2020, showing the provider are on track to meet the deadline of 12 months by end of March 2020 at the latest.
- In addition 52 assessments of children aged between 4-6 years who were waiting up to 2 years for an assessment (due to the transition between pre-school and school age services) were completed by September 2019.

We continue to implement improvements as recommended following the Calderdale Local Area SEND Inspection in March 2019. This includes:

- Practitioner post responsible for supporting families on the ASD waiting list was made permanent at the end of 2019. This post has been received extremely positively by children and young people, and parent/carers.
- Support provided by Unique Ways to parents and carers whilst their CYP are on the waiting list.
- Joint working across the system to move forward and reduce the waiting times and the improve the experience for CYP with ASD.
- Increase in self-referral process through the First Point of Contact (FPoC).
- The FPoC implements an ASD/ADHD Neuro-developmental screening tool. This is an inclusive screening process involving providers, schools, the young person and their families, which enables the voice of the young person and parent/carer to be included in the screening process. This has led to improved partnership working across the system and a smoother transition process for children and young people who are referred for assessment.
- Recent feedback received from Calderdale National Autism Society (NAS) and Unique Ways is that parents are having a better experience and there has been a tangible reduction in the waiting times.
- Working on training and support for parent carers whilst their children are on the ASD waiting list - to be launched by Unique Ways in 2020.
- Enhanced short breaks (a pilot funded by NHS England): provides innovative support to children and young people with ASD. This is for children on a waiting list plus those who are not engaged with services.

Next Steps

Developments continue to be identified and undertaken by partners across Calderdale. For example the following are planned to be completed between January 2020 to September 2020:-

- CYP ASD Stakeholder Summit on 5th February 2019 Event - This event is being held during the Children's Mental Health Week - 'Find Your Brave' and is being organised and led by Calderdale Young People. This includes a market place for providers to share services/support available in Calderdale and the return of the ASD Interactive Bus (due to popular demand) which will be open to attendees of the event and the general public. The event is being held on the afternoon of Wednesday 5th February 2020 at Northbridge Leisure Centre.

- Continue to reduce the waiting times during 2020 and aim to make the service sustainable in order to manage the increasing demand of new referrals.
- Additional funding be allocated to the ASD post diagnosis support team (in the Council) who provide post diagnosis support to CYP referred into their service by schools/settings with parental consent. Since the implementation of the initiative to reduce the ASD waiting list there has been a significant increase in referrals to this team, from a pre-initiative average of 8 per month to the current rate of approximately 20 per month.
- Implement the new ASD/ADHD Neuro-developmental pathway (school age from 1st April 2020 and Pre-School from 1st September 2020) – deadlines on track.
- The Open Mind Partnership (which includes both providers and commissioners of children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services) is currently implementing a communication plan for 2020 to ensure that professionals supporting children and young people, parents/carers and families, understand the change that's taking place in the way emotional health and wellbeing support is provided in Calderdale.

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