

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

7 MARCH 2023

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING, AND HEALTH  
INTEGRATION: COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY  
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION:  
COUNCILLOR FIONA BAKER**

Report Title	Report of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm – ICB update
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## List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	30/08/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	30/08/2023

## List of Appendices

**Appendix A – Report of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm** [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 7th March 2023, 6.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report presents to the Cabinet an update from Officers, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and other partners on the 7 March 2023 report and recommendations of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a task and finish panel to examine the provision in West Northamptonshire of services and support for children and young people who may be at risk of self-harm, which help people not to reach the point where they require specialist health services and which enable people to access those services when this is required.
- 2.2 The Task and Finish Panel presented its report to the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 February 2023. The final version of the report is set out at Appendix A. This report was presented to Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- 2.3 Following publication of the report, the Executive Director, People has worked with the ICB and other partners in order to provide the update detailed within this report against the recommendations of the Task and Finish Panel's review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
  - a) Note the update provided by the Executive Director People
  - b) Support regular updates being provided to the West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board on improvements in child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.
  - c) Thanks the Chair of the Scrutiny task and Finish panel and its membership for it work to support better outcomes for children and young people.

## **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 The recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review are intended to contribute to the provision of effective services and support for mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people in West Northamptonshire. This reflects the Overview and Scrutiny function's role for the development and review of policy.
- 4.2 This report provides evidence of how the scrutiny review has been responded to by officers and system partners.

## **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The purpose of the scrutiny review was to examine the provision in West Northamptonshire of services and support for children and young people who may be at risk of self-harm, which help people not to reach the point where they require specialist health services and which enable people to access those services when this is required. The NHS website defines self-harm as "when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body."
- 5.2 The scope for the scrutiny review identified the following key lines of enquiry:

- What lower-level services and support are available to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people experiencing problems that might otherwise escalate to the point where they could lead to self-harm? Are the services and support provided by different organisations linked together effectively?
- What specialist health services are available to support children and young people who have a higher level of need? What are the routes into these services? How accessible and how quick to respond are they in practice?
- What is the extent of self-harm by children and young people in West Northamptonshire, given previous data showing that the number of 15-19 year olds hospitalised for self-harm in Northamptonshire was above the national average? How does the latest position compare to that in similar authorities and what are the reasons for any differences?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen existing provision, if this is necessary, taking account of the current context in which service providers in West Northamptonshire are operating?

5.3 The intended outcome of the scrutiny review was to make evidence-based recommendations to the West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet and/or other applicable decision-makers that are intended to contribute to the provision of effective services and support for mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people in the area.

5.4 The recommendations below were put before cabinet for its consideration on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023. For each of the recommendations below this report provides an update on progress to date;

5.5 *Recommendation 1 - To seek a discussion with West Northamptonshire schools through the Schools Forum about contributing additional resources on a system-wide basis to support children and young people's mental health using a top slice from schools budgets.*

5.6 It is proposed that the consideration of this recommendation will be heard by the schools forum in October 2023.

5.7 *Recommendation 2 - To approach the f40 group of local authorities about making a collective case to the government about the need for additional resources to support children and young people's mental health and the impact of current pressures.*

5.8 The cabinet member for Children will take forward this action at the next meeting of the F40 group.

5.9 *Recommendation 3 - Commit to the development of a new Youth Strategy for West Northamptonshire that should set out how organised youth activities will contribute to supporting children and young people's mental health.*

5.10 The West Northants Youth offer Board is now established and is taking a programme of work forward that will see the creation of a Youth strategy that will include interventions that support activities that contribute to children's and young people's mental health. The

strategy will be delivered by our emerging Youth collaborative which we are currently developing with support of the National Youth Association. This work sits as part of our delivery of the “Best Start In Life” ambition for children and young people.

- 5.11 *Recommendation 4 - Agrees to consider reasonable opportunities to enable non-statutory organisations that provide services and support for children and young people’s mental health to make use of empty Council or commercial premises in West Northamptonshire and to work with commercial partners where necessary to facilitate this.*
- 5.12 Through the Youth Offer Board the Council is actively engaging with voluntary sector providers. This has supported two submissions for capital Youth Investment funding.
- 5.13 *Recommendation 5 - Supports the take up of mental health first aid training by community groups working with children and young people in West Northamptonshire.*
- 5.14 The Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism collaborative is actively promoting the take up of mental health first aid training.
- 5.15 The scrutiny review of child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm identified specific recommendations for the ICB. The Executive Director People has actively engaged with the ICB and has received the following responses.
- 5.16 Whilst the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (the ICB) was not engaged in the review exercise, the ICB thanks the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee of West Northamptonshire Council for its interest in this area and welcomes the report into child and adolescent mental health, and their efforts in coordinating a broad view of children with mental health needs who may be at risk of self-harm. The ICB particularly extends its thanks to the young people taking time to share their experiences.
- 5.17 The report of the scrutiny committee sought to confer several actions onto the ICB. The ICB offers the following response to these actions:

*Development of overall provision for children and young people’s mental health to respond to increasing demand.*

*The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to develop and implement a long-term whole-system strategy to provide effective support for children and young people’s mental health in Northamptonshire which incorporates the following principles:*

- *Local access to services throughout the authority*
- *No disparity between the services available or initiatives being trialled in West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire when services are organised on a countywide basis*
- *Delivery of services from locations that encourage young people to use them*
- *Provision that enables service users to tell their story once rather than needing to do so repeatedly to different organisations*

- *Development and delivery of services to be informed by good intelligence about who is using them and potential barriers to access that may affect children and young people from different backgrounds or communities*
- *Effective oversight and leadership of an overall offer that involves a range of different service providers*

The ICB leads production of the Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing on behalf of Integrated Care Northamptonshire. This is an annual process culminating in a published plan to review previous year's performance and setting strategic objectives for the next year, based on Key Lines of Enquiry set by NHS England. The most recent publication includes a "youth friendly" version, developed by CYP, and an Easy Read version, which can be found on this web page: [Children and young people | Integrated Care Northamptonshire \(icnorthamptonshire.org.uk\)](https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk)

The areas of focus and development for 2023/24 are included in the plan and devised by a multi-agency group of providers and commissioners, based on both national targets and the views and presenting needs of our population.

Plans are in development or are already underway to support the development of all of the above areas during 2023/24. Some of these are ICB-led, and some are led by system partner agencies.

The ICB would welcome the opportunity to contribute towards the development and implementation of a longer-term strategy for children and young people's mental health. However, it is imperative that this be developed and committed to as a system, through the appropriate Children's Transformation Programme, if it is to meet its aspirations in an effective and sustainable way.

The ICB mostly commissions services on a countywide basis. Where services are in place in only specific areas of the county, an EQIA is completed to recognise potential inequities. WNC will be pleased to know that the next two teams funded under the Mental Health in Schools Teams (MHST) programme will be within the West Northamptonshire area.

The ICB already commissions services which operate from a variety of locations. The ICB is supportive of using alternative community venues to host mental health services if this can be done so safely and practicably, however the additional financial costs of this may be prohibitive and actually reduce the number of children able to access support.

5.18 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to develop and implement a plan for effective provision of the core CAMHS function, to include the following elements:*

- *Maximising capacity to meet future demand and to reduce waiting times to an acceptable level*
- *Organisation of CAMHS services to link up with Local Area Partnerships and to help build strong relationships with partners in local communities to encourage continuity of support for children and young people.*

The ICB has regular liaison with colleagues in NHFT responsible for the delivery of services for Children and Young People. The ICB is aware of the waiting list in CAMHS and the risks and challenges surrounding this, including a national lack of mental health workforce, but also understand the effort NHFT is going to, in order to improve this, and the processes in place to check in with children on their waiting list. Waiting times for assessment have reduced in recent months, and as of February 2023 stand at average of 9 weeks.

As part of the CYP MH funding available to NHFT in 23/24, the ICB is working with NHFT on a number of proposals which aim to reduce waiting times within the service, broaden their wider mental health service offer and ensure our children and young people with moderate to severe mental health needs receive their treatment in a timely manner. There will be close ongoing monitoring of any investments made to ensure a positive difference is made.

The ICB challenges the way the CAMHS data has been presented and interpreted within the report. The reported 180% increase in CAMHS demand is only possible by comparing the referrals into CAMHS during the initial Covid-19 lockdown period, when the main referral sources, GPs and education settings, were not able to deliver their services in the usual way, within their current level of referral activity. Had the ICB been involved in the preparation of this Report, its representatives would have been able to offer a wider range of data for comparative purposes. The Panel would likely have found the same increase for most local health services if the comparison was over the same period.

The ICB CAMHS commissioned service only provides mental health services to children with moderate to severe mental health presentations. Other services are available for children with mild to moderate mental health needs, and some of these are delivered by NHFT. One of the key factors in enabling CAMHS to future proof its services is to ensure there is a good range of preventative, early intervention and family support options available to ensure that our children and families are equipped with the skills they need to be resilient, know how to identify poor mental health and what to do about it. We look to our partners in WNC to work collaboratively with us, to ensure that a robust and equitable preventative and early help offer is in place for its population.

The ICB encourages its commissioned services to be well connected into their local areas to understand and engage with the local population. However, the ICB does not currently intend to alter the commissioning of CAMHS services, at this time, to align with the LAP model.

**5.19** *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree that all Local Area Partnerships in West Northamptonshire should include children and young people's mental health in their priorities*

Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board is committed to ensuring our children and young people receive the best start in life. The ICB believes that having a population of healthy, happy and resilient children and young people will enable them to maximise their outcomes during their life course. The ICB recognises that LAPs rightly have

autonomy in choosing their own areas of focus based on the need within their geographical area. And so whilst the ICB would encourage all LAPs to consider the mental health needs of children and young people in setting their priorities, it would not be appropriate for the ICB to seek to impose this as a priority across all LAPs.

- 5.20 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to continue to pursue opportunities to provide additional capacity to support children and young people's mental health and the "tier 2.5" level of provision, between targeted services such as youth offending teams, primary mental health workers and school youth counselling (tier 2) and specialist community CAMHS (tier 3).*

Northamptonshire ICB already commissions a range of services at the "tier 2.5" level of intervention. This is reflected in the Northamptonshire Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.

The ICB is aiming to provide service stability using 2023/24 mental health funding and is continuing with the funding for all of the above listed services. In some cases, plans are being developed to expand the offer further, to reach more of our children. The ICB will be happy to share those plans with WNC.

Success of these services is contingent upon strong prevention services and family support offers which should, in time, reduce reliance on higher level support to manage issues which could have been avoided, or reduced, through timely prevention. The ICB will be happy to work collaboratively with WNC to ensure that a robust and equitable preventative and early help offer is in place for its population.

- 5.21 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to work with the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Northamptonshire Police to ensure that the police role is integrated effectively in a whole system strategy to provide support for children and young people's mental health in West Northamptonshire.*

Colleagues within the ICB's Safeguarding team already hold close working relationships with Northamptonshire Police to maintain the safety of children in Northamptonshire and work closely together to safeguard our young people when they are at risk.

Northamptonshire Police and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner are also represented on the Children and Young People's Transformation Board. The ICB acknowledges that improvements could be made to integrate our strategic approaches towards the mental health of children and young people in Northamptonshire and will continue to work with partners to progress this.

- 5.22 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to investigate the feasibility of funding a school nurse and mental health first aider in all schools in West Northamptonshire*

This is out of the commissioning responsibilities of the Integrated Care Board. The commissioning of services for population health and prevention sits within the Public Health domain, located within West Northamptonshire Council. The ICB commissions a nursing offer for Special Schools.

- 5.23 *The Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to agree to review information about support available for mental health and wellbeing produced for children, young people, parents and guardians in West Northamptonshire and to consider the potential for this information to be enhanced.*

The ICB acknowledges the importance of clear and accessible information for our children, young people, families and carers to increase awareness of services available for their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and how these can be accessed. The NHS providers commissioned by the ICB are required to meet the NHS Accessible Information Standard, which “*directs and defines a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents, where those needs relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss.*”

It has been recognised that the information provided to children, families, carers and professionals could be improved to help them navigate a complex health and care system. A number of the ICB’s commissioned providers, both NHS and VCSE, have either recently developed or are in the process of developing updated information material, using participation and co-production as far as possible to test the effectiveness of the material produced. Services available are also on the WNC Local Offer.

The ICB will always support its providers in the development and circulation of updated information through liaison with the Integrated Care Northamptonshire communications team, however it is incumbent upon commissioned providers to develop the materials to effectively communicate their offer.

- 5.24 Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board also offers the following wider comments on the report;

The ICB has received feedback from its commissioned providers that some of our children and young people struggle with social isolation, and there is a need for our children and young people to have more opportunities to take part in meaningful activity and social interactions, which are financially affordable, within a safe, youth work-led setting in their local area. We are pleased to see WNC acknowledging this gap in provision and look forward to seeing both their strategic ambitions and operational plan for how this will be improved.

The ICB agrees with the review’s findings that further investment is required for the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children aged under 11. Mental Health Support Teams are present in some primary schools across the county, and the ICB has invested in an u11 mental health service, delivered by Service Six, however the ICB would be keen to join with other system partners so that a joint, co-ordinated approach can be taken to the development of a sustainable offer, to meet the range of presenting needs of Northamptonshire’s younger children.

The ICB acknowledges Northamptonshire’s position as an outlier for hospital admissions as a result of self-harm, but also notes that the data provided in the report

shows an improving position. There is a multi-agency self-harm pathway in place, which details the process required should a child present at A&E due to self-harm. This pathway is currently undergoing revision.

Section 10.214 of the review comments that “more attention could be given to the role of parents in providing support for young people’s mental health and wellbeing”. The ICB agrees with this comment and would support WNC in developing a wider support package for parents as part of its children’s centre model.

5.25 Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board will take away the following actions:

- Explore the possibility of using alternative community venues to deliver children’s mental health services
- Form stronger links with Northamptonshire Police and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner regarding the strategic approach to children and young people’s mental health
- Deploy effective monitoring of new funding initiatives to ensure a positive difference is made

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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6.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the how the recommendations of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been responded to and if this provides assurance that suitable action has been taken forward.

6.2 The recommendations of this report suggest that oversight is passed to the health and wellbeing Board going however cabinet could ask the children and housing committee to consider further action as required.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

7.1.1 The responses to the recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review do not have any material impact on the financial resources of the council.

### **7.2 Legal**

7.2.1 The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to make recommendations to the Cabinet. The Cabinet will need to reach decisions based on the usual public decision-making criteria including that members consider relevant considerations and no irrelevant considerations.

The views of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported by evidence can be decided upon but Cabinet’s responsibility remains to ensure that it has sufficient information to make a decision including the financial and legal implications of the specific proposals presented.

### **7.3 Risk**

7.3.1 The recommendations and responses resulting from the scrutiny review are intended to contribute to mitigating risks associated with children and young people's mental health.

#### 7.4 **Consultation and Communications**

7.4.1 The Task and Finish Panel heard from a range of expert advisors when gathering information for the scrutiny review, as set out in the final report.

#### 7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 The responses to the recommendations will be discussed at the Children and Housing scrutiny committee following cabinet.

#### 7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 None directly relating to this report.

#### 7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review are intended to have a positive impact on children and young people and their families in all areas of West Northamptonshire.

### 8. **Background Papers**

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None