

<b>6 October 2020</b>		<b>ITEM: 10</b>
<b>Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Thurrock School Wellbeing Service</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> N/A	
<b>Report of:</b> Gemma Fitzgerald, Team Lead, School Wellbeing Service		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director, Children's Services		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

The School Wellbeing Service (SWS) is a partnership model between Thurrock Childrens' Services, Thurrock Public Health, Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group and local Schools and Academies. The universal service focuses on prevention by promoting protective factors and reducing factors, in order to strengthen and improve the emotional wellbeing of school aged children and young people, as well as supporting families and school staff. The service works in partnership with schools to enhance staff skills and knowledge whilst integrating and embedding best practice to create mentally healthy environments for Children and Young People (CYP), School staff and the wider community.

### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 Children's Overview & Scrutiny to identify how they would like the new team to report back.**
- 1.2 Children's Overview & Scrutiny to note the work that has taken place.**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The issue of CYP's mental health in Thurrock was highlighted within the 2016/17 Brighter Futures Survey. From local research and discussions with CYP, schools and families it is clear that there is an increasing need for more mental health support for CYP. The development of the Thurrock School Wellbeing Service was a clear recommendation from the Thurrock Mental Health Summit in May 2018.

- 2.2 Increasing pressure is being placed on schools to cope with emerging mental health difficulties and there is a rising demand for treatment services. However, it is evident that there is a great deal of support and innovative practice already taking place across the locality to try and address CYP's mental health needs. The SWS is working in partnership with schools and local mental health services to deliver evidence based interventions and programmes. This universal, preventative and sustainable model focuses on increasing CYP's resilience by promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors.
- 2.3 The School Wellbeing Service will integrate, embed and strengthen existing services to provide training, workshops and reflective discussions to school staff. It is the intention that the SWS will provide an opportunity for schools to extend and enhance their existing work on promoting good mental health and supporting those who are experiencing difficulties, knowing when to provide universal, targeted support or when to refer to a local specialist service.
- 2.4 Covid-19  
Due to covid-19 and the school closures the SWS were unable to complete the delivery of the Brighter Futures Survey to all schools. This has impacted on the ability of the service to delivery any interventions or resources as per service plan, as the service is being evaluated by the University of East Anglia and the baseline data had to be obtained prior to schools receiving interventions. However, the service was aware of the wellbeing needs of school staff and families, therefore the service created a support line that could be easily accessed via phone or email for school staff and parents/carers. The support line was facilitated Monday to Friday 08:00am-18:00pm. The service also adopted their approach and provide reflective sessions for school staff who requested them, these were completed virtually. The service also worked with EWMHS Mental Health Support Teams to create short videos for families about how to support families with the transition back to school. The service also worked closely with the MIND charity to create a range of short videos increasing awareness of how to promote positive wellbeing, all of which were showcased on social media channels.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 This is a three year funded programme and we will need to consider how we can ensure this work is imbedded in mainstream delivery. The external evaluation will provide an evidence base of impact of the service overtime.

### **4. Aim of the service**

- 4.1 To transform the way that emotional wellbeing and mental health support is delivered in schools and academies. This will be achieved by supporting schools to create mentally healthy environments for students and staff by tackling problems quickly, working preventatively and intervening at an earlier stage with meaningful and effective interventions that promote positive

wellbeing, allowing CYP to become emotionally available to access education, make academic progress and thrive.

## 5. Service Objectives, Outcomes and Actions

Please see appendix for details.

## 6. Key Performance Indicators

- 6.1 Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been identified which enable the service to measure progress. They will also help to determine whether action has been taken, ensuring that the service has been embedded within the locality and that it has been effective in strengthening the universal preventative approach that schools adopt when supporting Children and Young People's wellbeing and mental health:

Service KPI Scorecard		Progress
All schools in Thurrock to complete a needs assessment	95%	100%
All schools to complete a Mental Health Action Plan	80%	80% Due to Covovid-19 the allocated practitioners are liaising with schools to arrange a follow up meeting so that any amendments can be made to their action plans to reflect the current level of wellbeing need)
SWS to deliver mental health awareness and relevant training to all schools and academies	95%	In accordance with the evaluation the SWS were informed to complete the Brighter Futures Survey as a baseline prior to delivering any further training. Due to covid-19 we were unable to complete delivery in all schools. The service are arranging to deliver the survey again within all schools in Thurrock. As soon as the surveys are delivered the delivery of interventions and resources will commence.
SWS to work with the SWS partnership board members to explore all funding opportunities	£20,000	The SWS have obtained 15,000 funding from the Community Safety partnership to create a programme that identifies the needs of students who are at risk of permanent exclusion, the programme will also highlight strategies for schools and parents to utilise whilst highlighting the voice of students, parents/carers and schools. This is currently on hold due to the theatre company that we

		<p>are working with being furloughed. We have a meeting booked in for October 2020.</p> <p>2,000 funding has been obtained from the CCG to create mindfulness sessions. Sessions have been created for primary and secondary students as well as school staff. These will be shared with schools this academic year – we have explored virtual platforms for these to be easily accessed.</p>
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## 7. Improvement Areas and progress

- 7.1 The School Wellbeing Service launched on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The Action plan details 5 improvement areas, please see the table below for details on each area and the progress that has been made to date. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the School Wellbeing Service have adapted their approach to supporting schools. The SWS has worked in partnership with the Educational Psychology Services to create a support line for School staff, parents/carers and professionals to access during lockdown.

Improvement area	Progress
1. Establishment of the School Wellbeing Service.	<p>All posts within the School Wellbeing Service have been successfully recruited to.</p> <p>All schools and academies within Thurrock have been informed of their allocated SWS practitioner.</p> <p>The SWS have liaised with all local services and charities that provide wellbeing and mental health support to children, young people and their families (both universal and targeted services).</p> <p>The SWS have established a Thurrock CYP Mental Health Network (school mental health leads and representatives from services and charities).</p>
2. Schools will receive a tailored programme of support, resources and training that meets the wellbeing needs of their students, families and staff.	<p>All Schools have been informed of their allocated SWS practitioner and have received an initial meeting to discuss the SWS offer.</p> <p>Over 40 schools and local CYP services and charities attended the SWS launch.</p> <p>All Schools have identified a Mental Health Lead.</p>

100% of schools and academies had completed an action planning meeting with their allocated SWS prior to lockdown.

Prior to the delivery of the Brighter Futures Survey, the following interventions were delivered:

- 13 schools have received bespoke Mental Health Awareness CPD training sessions.
- 10 schools have received staff Reflective Discussions.
- The SWS had been working with students and staff to create the role of the Student Wellbeing Champion.
- Several Mental Health Network meetings had taken place prior to lockdown. These will continue into the new academic year, but will now be delivered virtually over Microsoft Teams.

In line with the evaluation the SWS were advised to pause the delivery of interventions until the baseline 'Brighter Futures Survey' had been delivered to all schools. The Brighter Futures Survey was delivered to 26 schools prior to the schools closing. All results have been uploaded and the School Health Education Unit are creating the report. The school Wellbeing Service will be delivering the Brighter Futures survey following the authorisation of direct service delivery and risk assessment approval.

The SWS team have attended training on a range of evidence based programmes including; anxiety management, anger management, Managing Emotional Triggers (MET), self-harm management, building resilience and stress management.

The SWS have built good working relationships with local services and charities in order to share best practice and resources.

The SWS continue to work in partnership with the University of East Anglia in regards to the service evaluation. Careful consideration has been given to the evaluation with regards to the impact of covid-19.

<p>3. A School Wellbeing Service pledge has been developed to allow schools to show their commitment to working in partnership with the service.</p>	<p>Schools have been introduced to the Pledge during their Action Planning meetings, and at the Launch.</p> <p>The action plan document includes a space for schools to sign the pledge. Schools will be reintroduced to the pledge when their allocated SWS practitioner meets with them during the first academic half term of 2020/2021</p>
<p>4. Transforming the way that wellbeing and mental health support is delivered in education, by providing a platform for CYP's to take a lead on promoting positive wellbeing within their school/academy and community.</p>	<p>The SWS met with the Youth Cabinet and delivered a training session on mental health awareness and to obtain feedback on the SWS offer. Since the initial meeting the SWS have met with the cabinet again and will continue to liaise with them to obtain the voice of CYP in Thurrock.</p> <p>The SWS have met with local services CYP's forums including SERICC and EWMHS to ensure that the voice of the child runs throughout the development of the service.</p> <p>The SWS have met with a number of students from both primary and secondary schools to develop the role of the Student Mental Health Champions.</p> <p>The SWS worked with 4 primary schools in preparation for the launch to obtain their views on mental health. The student's art work was displayed during the launch.</p>
<p>5. To facilitate the reduction of permanent exclusions (related to mental health) that are being made in the locality by schools and academies.</p>	<p>The SWS continue to work with the Partnership Board, schools and services to identify evidenced based programs that aim to reduce the number of permanent exclusions of C&amp;YP who are experiencing mental health difficulties. This piece of work had to pause due to the school closures, lockdown and the social distancing measures. The SWS have been in contact with the theatre company that are co-developing a programme for schools, staff and students.</p>

**8. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

8.1 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**9. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

**People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

**Prosperity** – a borough which enable everyone to achieve their aspirations.

## 10. Implications

### 10.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**  
**Strategic Lead Finance**

There are no financial implications. The School Wellbeing Service has been funded from the LA, Public Health, CCG and Schools. This funding has been identified for three years. We will need to consider how the work can be continued going forward. Funding streams will need to be identified by the School Wellbeing Partnership Board.

### 10.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**  
**Education Lawyer**

This report requires the committee to identify how they would like the new team to report back and to note work that has taken place. It does not require any further decision and there are no legal comments.

### 10.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Officer**

Mental Health is key barrier for many children and young people and has a direct impact on how they can become community based citizens. This programme is looking to address some of the inequities around mental health and offer tools for schools to develop and build resilience. The evaluation of this programme is central to how we can look at this as a whole system approach.

### 10.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None

## **11. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- Appendix 1 - Thurrock School Wellbeing Service Objectives, Outcomes and Actions

### **Report Author Contact Details:**

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School Wellbeing Service