

2 February 2021		ITEM: 9
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Thurrock School Wellbeing Service		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Jackie Hourihan, Team Lead, School Wellbeing Service		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

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. The service has continued to adjust its delivery model based on the changing context in schools as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Children's Overview & Scrutiny to note the work that has taken place.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Background information from Childrens O&S report October 2020. This report provides an update on the service delivery of the School Wellbeing Service in the context of the complex school circumstance arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 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.

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.

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 embedded in mainstream delivery. The external evaluation will provide an evidence base of impact of the service overtime. The evaluation being carried out in partnership with the University of East Anglia, has been amended to ensure there is a balance of effective evaluation whilst enabling service delivery to take place to all schools.

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

5.1

Service Objective	Outcomes	Action / Outputs	Golden Thread	Delivery Date
All schools in Thurrock will receive mental health awareness training delivered by the SWS.	Schools will have attended and participated in wellbeing and mental health training.	SWS will deliver wellbeing and mental health training sessions to provide evidence based programmes that will enable staff to promote positive wellbeing. Schools will receive a bespoke package of support meeting their specific needs.	P1a P1b P1c	From October 2019
CYP will be able to access preventative programmes, resources and support in regards to wellbeing and mental health within their school environment.	Mental Health Leads and other school staff will have the relevant resources to effectively support students. CYP have ease of access to effective support and resources within the school environment.	SWS will work closely with the Mental Health Leads. SWS will support schools in the development of their individualised Mental Health Action plan. SWS will work in partnership with schools to deliver bespoke training session to the Mental Health Leads and other relevant staff. Mental health awareness training will be offered to all school staff via a CPD session. The SWS will work with schools to promote student wellbeing champions, they will receive support from the schools allocated SWS Practitioner. SWS will broker outside agencies to provide further specialist support when required.	P1a P1b P1c	From October 2019
Parents and Carers to access wellbeing and mental health awareness training.	Parents and Carers to feel more informed about mental health and how to access further support if required.	SWS will work in partnership with schools to offer Parent/Carer workshops.	P1a P1b P1c	From October 2019
SWS will report into the Brighter Futures Board.	Brighter Futures to be fully informed of the progress, delivery and outcomes of the SWS.	To continue to work in partnership with the Brighter Futures Board and the SWS Partnership Board. The SWS will submit a written report twice per year.	P1a P1b P1c	From October 2019

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	
All schools in Thurrock to complete a needs assessment	95%
All schools to complete a Mental Health Action Plan	80%
SWS to deliver mental health awareness and relevant training to all schools and academies	95%
SWS to work with the SWS partnership board members to explore all funding opportunities	£20,000

7. Improvement Areas and progress

- 7.1 The School Wellbeing Service launched on the 15th 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. The service has restructured from January 2021 with an interim Team Lead position being established following the resignation of the existing Team Lead moving to a promoted post.</p> <p>All schools and academies within Thurrock have been informed of their allocated SWS practitioner who has established a working relationship with the school.</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). This has included additional mapping activities and joint service activities to ensure effective working across the wider field of wellbeing and mental health.</p>

	<p>The SWS have established a Thurrock CYP Mental Health Network (school mental health leads and representatives from services and charities). These meetings have been well supported by schools.</p>
<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>	<p>Every school within the locality have been informed of their allocated SWS Practitioner and have identified a Mental Health Lead within the Senior Management Team of the school, who has been the main point of contact for the SWS. All schools have had renewed contact by the SWS link from January 2021 to discuss the current issues and plan actions for support.</p> <p>Since the start of the academic year 2020/21 the focus of the SWS has been to facilitate the delivery of the Brighter Futures Survey (BFS) for all schools and academies. Due to the restrictions relating to Covid-19, the SWS have had to adapt the delivery of the BFS, students have completed the survey either online or on paper 30 schools and academies have completed the BFS and 20 have scheduled to deliver the survey at the start of the spring term. In total there have been 2,200 survey returns to date from schools which have provided a valuable insight into the needs of staff and pupils concerning wellbeing.</p> <p>In light of Covid-19 and the impact it has had and continues to have on student and staff wellbeing, the schools action plans have been reviewed and have been reintroduced to schools including action points that relate to the current mental health needs of students and staff during the pandemic. The recent contact with schools have led to an identification of new needs from the new lockdown and support is being put in place with regard to this.</p> <p>The SWS have continued to work in partnership with local organisations and charities, during the first lockdown and the school closures the SWS worked with MIND and the NELFT Mental Health Support teams (MHSTs) to create a series of wellbeing resources for CYP, Parents/Carers and school staff. From January 2021, the SWS will be reviewing all of these materials with the Educational Psychology Service and relaunching</p>

	<p>these for schools in the second week of term to ensure they are easily available and schools are informed of the support on offer</p> <p>There has been close liaison with the new Mental Health Support Teams (Health Trust service) to ensure the join up of work at both whole school and individual level. Information has been developed to show schools how these services operate and the joint working arrangements.</p> <p>The SWS have worked with the Educational Psychology Service to develop a Covid-19 wellbeing support line for parents/carers and school staff, since the launch of the line the service have provided support to a significant number of school staff. New communications will be going out to parents to ensure they are fully aware of this service and are encouraged to take it up.</p> <p>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 leading to a new evaluation programme of pre and post measures as opposed to control groups.</p>
<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. This is part of the action planning process and is being reviewed from January 2021 with schools to ensure a whole school approach is in place to support wellbeing.</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 continue to link in with the Youth Cabinet and other local youth forums to obtain and highlight the voice of the CYP with regards to promoting good mental health and highlighting areas of support. This important link has also allowed the SWS to improve their approach to ensure that it is needs led. There will be an ongoing programme of work to ensure the engagement with young people continues.</p> <p>A number of the SWS programmes and interventions have been reviewed by students from both primary and secondary schools to</p>

	<p>ensure that they are accessible, informative and effective.</p> <p>In addition to this, an identification and signposting service has been developed to support care leavers in accessing appropriate wellbeing and mental health services</p> <p>Specific support has been delivered as part of the Local Authority's Christmas event for Looked After Children which included an engaging presentation by the SWS of a number of key issues in relation to wellbeing which was well received by the young people and led to greater understanding of how to look after themselves.</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 have been working with N-Act Theatre company to create a programme of support to increase awareness of the mental health and wellbeing needs of CYP who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Due to Covid-19 and the lockdowns, N-Act Theatre company staff have been furloughed and work had to pause on the project. However, this has provided time to reflect on the approach and ensure that the SMT of schools are consulted with during the development of the programme. Prior to the first lockdown, a great deal of work had been completed with students who are at risk of permanent exclusion in both primary and secondary schools to obtain their voice and experiences. Conversations also took place with parents/carers and school staff to obtain a holistic approach. This work will be picked up again at the earliest opportunity to ensure its completion.</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: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Law

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. The committee is asked to note the content of the report.

10.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring 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 inequalities 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

- Appendix 1 - School Wellbeing Service Summary of Service Offer

Report Author:

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