

**REPORT FOR WEST SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
13 JANUARY 2021**

Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing

To consider the current issues faced by children and young people in Suffolk in respect of their emotional health and wellbeing and how they are being supported.

The Committee's focus for this item:

- a) What are children and young people in Suffolk struggling with in terms of their emotional health and wellbeing?
- b) In terms of accessing the support needed, what has been working well and what could be improved

Preface

The subject of this HS Meeting and the challenges it presents are so incredibly complex that I am going to ask you to read through the Committee papers from P19 to P58. My greatest concern in all of this is that in an attempt to put support in place, it generates a system so complex that I struggle to understand where I would go to seek support, so are we confident that young people will be able to do this.

I am therefore encouraged by the Transformation Programme plan on Page 19, item 2 under the Transformation Programme, as it states

"The objective of the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Mental Health and Wellbeing project is to implement an integrated, system wide approach that enables all CYPE (0-25 years) in East and West Suffolk to have positive mental wellbeing, to enable them to flourish and lead rich and fulfilling lives. It will deliver a "*right person, right help, right time*" approach and there will be no wrong door. The model will have a stronger focus on early intervention, prevention and recovery.

Following the meeting the Committee made the following recommendations:

- commended the co-production work taking place, for which there was clear evidence presented of how this approach was helping to improve services;
- expressed concern about the impact of the third COVID-19 lockdown on young people's emotional health and wellbeing in general terms, due to restrictions placed on everyday activities and uncertainties about the future;
- recommended that the good work taking place in schools in the West of the County should be replicated in schools across Suffolk;

- recommended that support and advice should be available for young people in Years 11 and 13 who may be experiencing specific anxieties regarding the impact of COVID-19 on their education and future life chances;
- noted the importance of early intervention and prevention and also ensuring young people received the right sort of help, at the right time, in the right place, first time;
- recommended that training on mental health for front-line services, including for primary care, should seek to address the need for culture change – more listening, empathy, understanding, kindness;
- noted that waiting times for assessment and treatment were increasing, due to increasing demand and a lack of staffing capacity, and agreed to seek an update on this in 6-9 months' time;
- noted that work was taking place to review available staffing skill mix, but services faced a continuing staffing challenge due to COVID-19 related redeployment and absence;
- commended the work taking place in the CYP Engagement Hub to look at initiatives to offer young people peer support whilst they were awaiting assessment and treatment and recommended this be made a high priority;
- noted that significant improvements had already been made in delivering Education Health and Care Plans within the 20 week timescale, and wished to see this improvement continue

The meeting commenced with a presentation from a Mental Health Champion and I will forward the power point separately to accompany this report.

West Suffolk Hospital Future Systems Programme Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

In November it was determined that a Task and Finish Group be established to monitor the activity of the Future System Programme work and allow us to raise questions as the project develops, highlighting areas where a deeper scrutiny may be required by the full Committee before a final decision is made.

The first meeting of this committee was on 1 December 2020 and Pages 59 and 60 provide further details. The Terms of Reference are detailed on Page 61.

At the January Meeting, and as Chair of this Task and Finish Group I made the following comments:

“You have before you the Terms of Reference for the newly formed Task and Finish Group for the West Suffolk Hospital Future Systems Programme, which I hope you will consider to be beneficial to this Committee. I add weight especially to Items 2 and 3 where, with the fast-moving pace of this Project and the importance to West Suffolk, aging demographics, rurality and poor transport infrastructure inform much of the needs for our community and its delivery. These I feel will be some of the challenges that we may need to Scrutinise as the Project considers Co-location of services away from the current Hospital site.

This Group has been welcomed by the Project Manager, Gary Norgate, who has demonstrated his transparent willingness to share plans with us and with the wider community as the Project develops. However, at a recent public meeting, where the initial plans for site location and the general oversight of plans was being shared, only 38 members of the public attended. This was an immediate cause for concern and it may be that with the enormous amount of information relating to Covid that is landing on social media and in emails, the event was simply missed. So, taking the comment from Paragraph 2 of the T and Cs, *"It should add value to the NHS and its partners and should reflect the views and concerns of patients and the public"*. It is essential that the public have the opportunity to be fully informed and engaged with the developing project. In order to help facilitate this, the three members of the Task and Finish Group have set up group emails with their local community Groups, Councillors etc and will use this to inform of proposed developments in the programme shared by WSH Communications.

In order to ensure we maintain the integrity of Scrutiny this will be an information vehicle.

Health Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

A number of changes were made to the provisional Work Programme and these will be detailed with the papers submitted for the next Health Scrutiny Meeting on 17 March 2021.

Councillor Margaret Marks
30 January 2021