



Foundations for Our Future: Our commitment to improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people

October 2021 update

Dear colleague,

Following our last update (dated May 2021) we wanted to share further progress regarding the implementation of the recommendations contained within our independent review and report, Foundations for our Future (FFOF) as well as other developments linked to this work in children and young people's mental health.

Key achievements over the past four months include:

Leadership of the programme

We have welcomed Lucy Butler (Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning for West Sussex County Council), as co-chair to the FFOF Oversight Board working alongside Sam Allen (CEO, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust).

We are currently in the process of appointing a young person to co-chair alongside Sam and Lucy, providing a key voice to represent the very people we serve in this work.

Co-production and engagement

We are committed to ensuring that young people and families are involved in the co-production of this important work.

Children and young people are already actively engaged in a range of workstreams, working together with our programme teams on projects such as the development of the Sussex-wide Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy; creating a Single Point of Access for advice, support and services; Urgent and Emergency Care transformation to provide early support to children and young people in self-defined crisis; and training for young people and parents to become eating disorder services Experts by Experience.

Recruitment of a dedicated children and young people's Participation Lead is now complete. This post will work to coordinate participation of children and young people across Sussex, building on existing networks, ensuring young people from our diverse communities are engaged and represented and involved in the FFOF programme implementation.

Communication with stakeholders

Additional content to support the communication of the full FFOF report and its key messages has been developed in partnership with children and young people working with the YMCA Downslink Group.

This includes a short film led by young people describing the review and the importance of

mental health in their own words; a simple infographic to depict the key messages of our programmes of work; and an identifiable and recognisable brand (look and feel) for the work. These can be found on our [dedicated web page](#).

Throughout July to September, we invested in both a summer holiday and a back to school public campaign aimed at promoting positive emotional wellbeing and where to get help. This work continued for World Mental Health Day on 10 October. The messaging focuses both on schools as well as parents and young people. Mental health and wellbeing resources were distributed across Sussex at schools, GP surgeries, with mental health teams, wellbeing teams, community services, social care, libraries, secondary care and beyond, including across digital and social media.

Our aim is to co-design our communications with young people and we have received invaluable feedback on the campaign so far.

Improving services and support for children, young people and families

Implementation of the FFOF recommendations is already seeing tangible changes and improvements to service provision for children and young people and their families. We are working to make sure there are clear, easy to access pathways of care, starting with prevention and early support, through to support for children and young people with a higher level of need.

Single Point of Advice hub

The team has made good progress in mapping out all services across Sussex to identify areas for improvement. This focusses on identifying, establishing and then promoting a multi-agency Single Point of Advice hub with one number/ place for access that can triage children and young people appropriately and offer the advice or support that best meets their needs. In the meantime, a programme of awareness and education directed at statutory referrers describing when and where to refer is underway with the publication of a new single web page for Sussex.

Sussex-wide Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy

We are actively working on the development of a Sussex-wide Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy as well as an overarching outcome framework.

As part of this important work, we want to make sure that physical health and emotional wellbeing are thought about together, and we are working with colleagues who are developing a Sussex-wide Children and Young People's Physical Health Strategy to ensure alignment. This will also take account of ambitions already detailed within the [Learning Disability and Autism Strategy](#).

A co-production group of children and young people, family/carer representatives and frontline staff from emotional wellbeing and specialist mental health services has worked together to advise on the appropriate format for the strategy, language used, and how it should be presented and accessed. Expert facilitators who are skilled in co-designing with children and young people, have been bringing people together in a safe and supportive way so that everyone has an equal voice and is able to put forward their ideas.

Implementation of the iTHRIVE framework

To assist with the above approaches of mapping services across Sussex and development of a Sussex-wide Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy, we are working within the [THRIVE framework](#) which is an integrated, person-centred, and needs-led approach to delivering emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children, young people and their families, which aims to describe this support in a common language that everyone

understands. The THRIVE framework enables us to think and talk about need within five categories; Thriving, Getting Advice and Signposting, Getting Help, Getting More Help and Getting Risk Support.

THRIVE will enable us to address concerns raised by stakeholders within the FFOF review where feedback (including that of families and young people) highlighted specific needs, for example: support for parents, carers and schools; a whole family approach; better awareness of services available; greater partnership working; and ensuring smooth and effective transitions between services.

We believe the THRIVE framework will help us put together an improved, integrated, response to the needs of children, young people and families; how people access the help and support they need, and ensure prevention and earlier intervention remain a priority.

Ready Set Connect

Working alongside our voluntary and community partners, we co-developed [a guide](#) to help young people prepare for phone or online mental health appointments. This was published following a youth-led consultation of young people (aged 16-25) across Sussex to:

- a) explore the barriers young people face when accessing remote (video or phone call) mental health appointments; and
- b) involve the young people consulted in creating solutions to break these barriers and improve their experience accessing these services.

[More information on this project >>](#)

Investment in services

Investment into emotional wellbeing support and mental health services across Sussex is underway, thanks to funding allocated as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

As well as some much needed further investment into specialist children and young people mental health services, we are also submitting plans for investment in emotional wellbeing support services that will provide earlier intervention and support. Specifically, some of this investment will include increasing Sussex Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) capacity to further support part of the Neurodevelopmental pathway.

Developing support resources for children and young people with eating disorders

Funding was successfully secured to co-produce resources to support children and young people at the early stages of an eating disorder. An organisation with expertise in co-production and creative methodologies will work with children, young people, parents and others to develop locally produced resources outlining advice and signposting to further support.

Our schools

We are pleased to share that we have invested in establishing and developing our Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) across all Sussex schools, making sure teachers and other staff are supported and equipped to provide much needed emotional wellbeing support.

At the moment, more than 42,000 children benefit from Mental Health Support Teams based in schools across West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Over the next three years that figure will increase to 120,000 as more teams are rolled out.

The Mental Health Support Teams are provided by the [Sussex Health and Care Partnership](#). This comprises NHS and local authorities working in collaboration, including Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Sussex Partnership provides specialist mental health

and learning disability services across the South East.

The expansion of the service comes as part of a £6.3million funding boost to specialist mental health services in Sussex. Teams will provide support to primary, secondary schools and colleges offering interventions within an education setting to those with mild to moderate mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. They will also support schools to develop their whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. They will give timely advice to school and college staff, liaising with external specialist services, to help children and young people get the right support and stay in education.

Sussex Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

As you will know, the pandemic has led to an increased demand for specialist mental health services. This is having an adverse effect on waiting times for initial assessments and treatment and has been identified as a top priority within the Sussex Health and Care Partnership Restoration and Recovery Plan and Mental Health Collaborative, with additional investment in local services already secured.

CAMHS have measures in place to support children and young people waiting for care and to ensure our teams become aware of any change in the level of need. All young people waiting have a regular check-in call while they are on the wait list and have access to drop ins. Work is underway to boost support available to children and young people waiting for emotional wellbeing services, including online drop-in groups and regular telephone contact as well as parent groups. In addition, e-wellbeing support directing young people and families to information and advice is also provided.

To improve the accessibility and flexibility of services, 21 per cent of contacts from Sussex CAMHS services (including Early Intervention in Psychosis) are now carried out via video.

We understand how difficult it is for children, young people and their families to wait for services when there is a need for treatment and care and we are doing everything we can to respond to this urgent demand. We will continue to keep you up to date about this work, which is closely linked to our plans for FFOF.

I do hope this update has been helpful and reassures you of the progress being made in children and young people emotional health and wellbeing services. We still have much to do and welcome your input and collaboration as we continue to move forward. If you have any questions about the FFOF programme, please get in touch. You can email the review team via beth.osborne@spft.nhs.uk

Yours faithfully



Simone Button - Programme Director, Foundations for our Future

Working in partnership The FFOF independent review was commissioned by:

- [Brighton and Hove City Council](#)
- [East Sussex County Council](#)
- [NHS Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group](#)
- [NHS East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group](#)
- [NHS West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group](#)
- [Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [West Sussex County Council](#)