

## **NORTH TYNESIDE**

# Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy

2021 - 2026



North Tyneside Council

# Foreword

This strategy outlines our priorities and joint commitment towards promoting and improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all our children and young people (CYP) in North Tyneside.

Over the past few years there has been a growing understanding that looking after the mental health and emotional and wellbeing of children and young people is just as important as their physical health. In fact, good mental health is fundamental to good physical health, self-esteem, self-image, self-reliance and enabling children and young people to achieve their potential.

Mental health is everyone's business, it is not the responsibility of just one organisation or even of the 'health and care system', everyone must consider what they can do – whether you are a parent, carer, young person, friend, practitioner, commissioner, or service provider – to give children's mental health and emotional wellbeing the resources and attention it warrants.

It is well established that over half of all mental health problems manifest before the age of 14 years and 75% have developed before the age of 18 years. Mental illness affects all aspects of a child's development. Therefore, a delay in treating or untreated mental health problems in children and young people has a long lasting and far-reaching impact.

We hope that this strategy provides a clear vision for North Tyneside that recognises the importance of supporting and equipping children, young people their parents and families, to recognise their mental health and wellbeing needs, access appropriate and timely support at the earliest stage and reduce the risk of poor mental health outcomes.

**Jacqui Old -**  
**Director of Children's and Adult Services**

**Lesley Young Murphy –**  
**Director of Nursing: Chief Operating Officer**

**Wendy Burke –**  
**Director of Public Health North Tyneside**

Thank you for taking time to read this strategy. We all know that Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing plays a significant role in how children and young people think, feel and behave.

We understand that Children and Young People's needs change throughout their childhood, and we want anyone who may be struggling to be able to ask for and get appropriate help and support when they need it. This help might be a reassuring conversation with a parent or teacher, through to online support or more specialist mental health input.

This strategy has been developed with input from our young people, who I know from conversations with them are very passionate about mental health. They recognise the need to understand and equip themselves to manage their own mental health and emotional wellbeing but also want to be able to access appropriate support when they need it. We want to ensure that our young people continue to have a strong voice throughout the delivery of our accompanying action plan to check that what we are putting in place is making a difference.

We know that there are many examples of great innovative work, services and projects happening across North Tyneside that support children and young people's mental health, but as young people have told us, this needs to be more joined up.

I'm confident that by working together we will see more collaboration which will provide the best possible support for our children and young people. I will continue to drive forward this approach and advocate for children, young people and their families to deliver the changes needed.

**Councillor Peter Earley – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning.**

Before the pandemic, a lot of young people I know struggled with mental health. Whether it was anxiety confused for being an 'introvert' or depression mixed up for 'laziness' or a 'lack of motivation'. Mental health issues in young people have been an issue for a long time - it's just been highlighted by the pandemic. Thankfully, even before COVID-19, there was a progression in supporting young people's mental health.

It was more accepted, young people felt more able to ask for help and overall, it became less of a 'taboo' topic to discuss. However, despite this progression, I, personally, was just not seeing any change in schools, despite being constantly reminded that mental health issues in young people are supposedly a 'top priority' for adult decision makers. This is why I decided to make this my pledge; to create better support in schools for young people's mental health and to ignite a change within these schools to overall improve the support for young people.

**Suzie McKenzie, Young Mayor, North Tyneside Council**



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"How do you do it?" said night.

"How do you wake up and shine?"

"I keep it simple," said light.

"One day at a time."

Lemn Sissay

# 1. Our Vision

The North Tyneside Children and Young People's Plan sets out the key priorities for enhancing children's services and improving outcomes for children, young people and families, particularly those most vulnerable. This Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing strategy will support the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan.

## Our vision is to:

- Create the conditions to ensure all our children and young people in North Tyneside are resilient and can thrive
- Develop children and young people's resilience and coping strategies
- Strengthen the protective factors which promote emotional wellbeing and positive mental health
- Ensure every child and young person has access to early help to support their emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Support and services to those who need them most are delivered in the community, closer to home.
- Ensure children and young people that require specialist mental health services can access evidence-based interventions when needed

The aim of our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy is to work together as a system in North Tyneside across all agencies and partners to:

- Develop resilient children, young people and families.
- Ensure easy access for children, young people and families to get the right mental health support at an early stage from universal services
- Improve access to specialist mental health services for those children and young people who are at high risk of poor mental health

This strategy will set out how we plan to improve the understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing, through the school curriculum, workforce development training across the system and early help interventions for children, young people and families. Our ambition is to prevent longer term mental health conditions developing by building coping strategies, developing resilience and creating a culture of acceptance and understanding.

Our outcomes framework for children's services focuses all of our activity from a child and young person's perspective, with the objective that they are able to say:



**I AM  
SAFE**

Free from harm  
and abuse



**I AM  
HEALTHY**

Choosing  
healthier  
lifestyles



**I HAVE  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Living the life I want



**I HAVE  
A VOICE**

An active citizen  
with influence



**I AM  
HAPPY**

Resilient and  
enjoying life

## 2. The National and Local context

Children and Young's People's Mental Health is a key focus of national policies including: Closing the gap: priorities for essential change in mental health (2014), Future in Mind (2015), and The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (2016).

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out the priorities for expanding Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) over the next 10 years.

It aims to widen access to services closer to home, reduce unnecessary delays, and deliver specialist mental health care which is based on a clearer understanding of young people's needs and provided in ways that work better for them.

The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-lasting legacy for our children and young people. While they have experienced fewer health risks from COVID-19, they have suffered disproportionately from the indirect impacts. Existing inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and the disruption has been damaging, especially for vulnerable children who are likely to have had a vastly different experience of the pandemic than their more affluent peers.

### 2.1. What we know about children and young people's mental health

Currently, there are very few measures of good mental health and wellbeing at a population level. Most young people in North Tyneside have good mental health, but like physical health a person's mental health will fluctuate throughout their life.

- **87% of 15-year-olds in North Tyneside report medium to very high satisfaction with life, and this is similar to the England average.**

While a change in mental health can temporarily impair a person's ability to function, this will not necessarily lead to a mental illness.

- **Data from our Kooth online service highlight anxiety & stress as the most common issues for children and young people in North Tyneside.**

Most measures of mental health focus on mental illness and the prevalence of certain diagnosed conditions in the population.

- **1 in 6 children nationally now have a probable mental health condition (aged 0-19).**
- **This would equate to about 7,500 children in North Tyneside (out of our 0-19 population of 45,000) with a probable mental health condition.**

There is also clear evidence of an increasing trend in admissions for intentional self-harm for 10-24 years in the North East.

- **Young people aged 15-19 years old have the highest rates of hospital admissions for self-harm in North Tyneside (1,125.4 per 100,000) which is higher than the national rate (664.7 per 100,000)**

Despite the need for mental health support, NHS data shows that currently only one in three children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition receives NHS care or treatment.

CAMHS is the name for the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties.

- **Nationally there has been a 35% increase in referrals to children's mental health services in 2019/20. Referrals to our local CAMHS service are increasing each year.**

The data highlighted above demonstrates that it is crucial that we prevent the development of mental and emotional distress. We must ensure there is a graduated range of support across the system for young people when problems first emerge, particularly in our most vulnerable and at-risk groups.

As part of this strategy, we will commit to collect better local data to understand more about the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people in North Tyneside.

### 3. Our Strategic Approach to Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

North Tyneside's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy is focused on supporting children, young people and their families to manage whatever life brings. Just like the sea along our beautiful coastline there will be times when life is good and the sea is calm, there will be other times when the sea becomes choppy and the help of friends, family and others may be needed, and for some, there may be stormy days when specialist support is necessary.

We know that what happens in early life can have a longer-term impact if we don't get the support right during those crucial early years. Making sure parents have the skills to form strong attachments, provide nurturing and stimulating home environments and know where to find support, when needed, is key to our long-term strategy. The data tells us that 75 percent of adults with mental health conditions experience symptoms before the age of 18. We know that parental mental health difficulties can adversely impact on the wellbeing of their children too.

We are acutely aware that some groups within our community are more at risk of developing mental health difficulties, whether they are children in our care, are neurodiverse, identifying as LGBTQ+ or young carers, we will make sure that we provide the right support to enable them to have the best possible outcomes. Reducing health inequalities that exist across our borough is an important priority within this strategy.

To successfully realise our vision will require a borough wide approach, involving partnerships across different sectors, including our voluntary sector organisations. A key part of this work is our strategic alliance with the national charity Barnardo's. Over the next five years they will be working alongside North Tyneside Council, North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, Northumbria Healthcare Trust, Schools and local voluntary sector organisations to help us move away from a medical model towards a social model of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We don't want children to be given medical labels that stay with them throughout their lives. Our approach is about recognising that there is a clear link between physical and mental health and that by understanding the context and focusing on the health and wellbeing of our communities we can prevent mental health problems, reduce the risk of more serious conditions emerging and assist recovery.





## 3.1. Co-producing our strategic approach

Central to our strategy is co-producing our approach to improving mental health and wellbeing with children and young people and addressing the issues that they have told us they are most concerned about:

Social Media

Friendships / relationships (and loneliness)

Worries about physical appearance

Experiencing feelings of anxiety

Not feeling happy

Worries about exams

Not feeling listened to by adults  
and views not taken seriously

Underpinning this strategy are the following values:

- The involvement of children, young people and their families is central to our service development
- The voices of children, young people and parents are listened to and used to inform decision making
- The focus is to move from a medical to a social model of mental health and emotional wellbeing
- We will use evidence-based approaches
- There is a need to normalise all emotions and value neurodiversity
- There will always be a graduated response
- We will take a public health approach, focused on need, evidence and partnership working that is holistic and community orientated
- Inclusion is central to ensure our most complex children and young people have the same opportunities as their peers.





# The Strategy

Our strategy is divided into three sections to reflect the need to look after our own mental health and wellbeing, have a good network of support around us and be supportive to others and be assured that specialist services are there when needed.



## Look Out for Yourself

Gentle waves – everyday stress that you can manage by yourself, with the right resources and a positive attitude.

## Look Out for Each Other

Bigger waves – specific problems where you might need some help from friends, family, neighbours or professionals in universal services.



## We're looking out for you

Life feels like a storm – more complex problems, specialist services are available to help.



# Look Out for Yourself

A sense of wellbeing comes from being able to cope with everyday stresses. Humans are complex beings and life will always give us problems to overcome but we want our children, young people and families to have the inner resources to manage most of what life brings.

## This means:

- Keeping a sense of perspective and recognising what tolerable stress is
- Becoming more self-aware and taking time to look after your own wellbeing
- Feeling a sense of gratitude and appreciating the little things that make life good
- Developing a sense of self-efficacy (belief in own ability to manage)
- Having a range of coping strategies
- Being brave and asking for help when needed



# Look Out for Each Other

NHS Digital data shows that people seeking support with mental health difficulties are generally more satisfied by help provided by friends and family than professionals. (85% of families getting support with children with a diagnosed mental health condition found the informal support of family and friends helpful, compared to 71% receiving formal support from specialist mental health services. NHS Digital)

Our strategy seeks to create communities that have the knowledge and skills to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people. This includes making sure our universal and early help services have the ability to provide information, advice and interventions that support children and young people with a range of mental health difficulties, including anxiety, sleep difficulties and low mood.



For children, young people and parents / carers this means:

- Ensuring children and young people can sustain healthy relationships.
- Being able to recognise the signs of mental health difficulties in others
- Showing kindness to others
- Being able to join youth groups and take part in sports, arts and cultural activities.
- Being non-judgmental about mental health difficulties and being a good listener.

For professionals working in schools and other universal and early help services this means:

- Being trained to use evidence-based interventions
- Building trusting relationships with children, young people and parents/carers to maximise access to early support.
- Providing support where and when needed.





# We're Looking Out for You

There may be times in life when some specialist help is needed, and our strategy is designed to reduce pressure on these services so they can become more effective and provide support in a timely way. There are also some children and young people that require the support of Children's Services and Specialist Mental Health services (both high and low intensity) and we want to ensure that these are high quality and can effectively meet the needs of those that need them.

We do not want our children to be defined by their mental health needs and be given labels that stay with them throughout their childhood. We hope that we can develop a better understanding of neurodiversity and see value in difference, so that all our children and young people can thrive and be accepted for who they are.

Sadly, some of our children and young people have experienced adversity in their lives. The more that schools understand the impact of developmental trauma, the better equipped they become in managing when a pupil becomes fearful or anxious due to their past experiences. We do all we can to protect children from harm but some still require specialist support to recover from past experiences.

We are going further in North Tyneside as we know that many adults in our communities and staff in our workforce have also experienced adversity in their childhoods or have neurodiverse needs and so we need to ensure our services and workplaces create safe environments, value self-care and are trauma-responsive. We recognize that post-traumatic growth can bring strength, empathy and increased resilience which can enhance the work we do and the support we can offer to our children and young people.

## For specialist services this means:

- Having well-trained professionals able to provide effective, evidence-based specialist support.
- Providing advice, information and interventions in a timely way.
- Working in close partnership with professionals from different agencies, including the voluntary sector, to meet the needs of those with multi-faceted needs.
- Gathering regular feedback from service users to drive improvements
- Providing trauma-responsive services



## 4. What have we done so far and what more do we need to do?

Over the past 5 years a lot has been achieved by a range of partners and young people with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention, focusing on our most vulnerable children and young people. A summary of key progress to date is outlined below:

### 4.1. Promoting Resilience, Prevention and Early Intervention

#### Successful developments

- Emotionally Healthy School Resource Pack: whole schools approach to supporting mental health
- Mental Health First Aid training in schools
- Young Person's participation and engagement: MH:2K citizen researcher project.
- Young Person's Help Yourself Leaflet designed by young people through Phoenix Detached Youth Project.
- Barnardo's Schools survey – understanding local needs
- Anna Freud Centre Schools Link Programme - workshops to promote and strengthen communication and joint working arrangements between schools and mental health professionals.
- Friends Resilience Training – a resilience intervention proven to reduce anxiety and depression and promote positive mental health for children, young people and families.
- Thrive Approach Training – staff from our schools have been trained in this approach that supports child development through nurture and play.
- Sleep Awareness training – through Sleep Scotland to support our new Sleep Service.
- Pilot of Cultural 'Social Prescribing' Model for Children and Young People – North Tyneside Local Cultural Education Partnership. Encouraging access to cultural activities for those children and young people who require support to improve their self-esteem to build resilience and emotional wellbeing.
- The LINK Programme (delivered by The HIVE Team) – delivering psychoeducation on the brain and body's response to stress and trauma, to children and young people in KS2 and KS3.
- Peer support groups for LGBTQ+ young people at The Base (Barnardo's)
- YMCA's Healthy Habits programme and the development of Ambassador roles.
- Providing Kooth online resource to all schools. This includes an online counselling service and a range of discussion forums.

## 4.2. Improving Access to Support

### Successful developments

- Specialist Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Crisis Referral Pathway to enable SENCOs in schools to make direct referrals to CAMHS.
- CAMHS/Early Help – Triage Pilot for children who present to CAMHS, but do not meet thresholds. Two Early Help workers are linked to CAMHS to develop the family support offer.

### 4.3. Support for High Risk and vulnerable Groups

### Successful developments

- DfE Pilot: Mental Health Assessments of Looked After Children
- Criminal Justice Enhanced Case Management approach: Trauma Recovery Model
- Young Carers Centre counselling support during Covid pandemic.

### What more do we need to do?

- Establish the new Mental Health Support Teams that will be working with our schools. One team to start in September 2021 and another in September 2022. Each team will work with around 15-20 schools and deliver low intensity interventions.
- Improve access and reduce timescales for children and young people with severe, complex and enduring needs. Develop further support to address their additional emotional wellbeing needs.
- Develop capacity across the workforce so that everyone has better skills, ability and confidence in recognising and dealing with children and young people's mental health issues and promoting emotional wellbeing.
- Set up our new Sleep Service based on a tiered model. Universal staff trained in Sleep Awareness, key services trained in Sleep Counselling and a specialist nurse led service for those most at need.
- Build on our work with children and young people through co-production and peer support.
- Build on the work of the Barnardo's Alliance to successfully deliver on the shared ambition to move from a medical model to a social model of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing by embedding the successful approaches we have been exploring.
- Repeat the Schools Survey in Autumn 2021 to provide a comparison with the previous outcomes. Survey to be carried out biennially.
- Build on existing VCSE sector activity and assets to support young people to be able to better manage their own health and wellbeing, as well as being able to support the wellbeing of their peers. This includes working alongside young people to establish a Recovery College-style offer as well as more open access, community-based emotional health and wellbeing activities and support services.



## 5. How we will know we have made a difference

**We will know we are succeeding when we see measurable systems change over the next 5 years, which involves:**

- More children and young people reporting wellbeing and positive satisfaction with life in the biennial mental health and wellbeing survey across schools.
- Fewer children and young people with social, emotional and mental health issues being noted as their primary special educational need
- Professionals across universal services have a greater awareness and understanding, leading to increased confidence around mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Increasing the range of support available to children, young people and their families.
- Appropriate referrals into specialist mental health services, with positive measurable outcomes.

We will develop a dashboard with a range of indicators that demonstrate impact against these outcomes.

We all have a responsibility to contribute to the success of this strategy by Looking Out for Ourselves and taking care of our emotional wellbeing, as well as Looking Out for Each Other by being there for our friends, families and colleagues when they need us. To ensure we continue to Look Out for You, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy is supported by a Delivery Plan to help us to achieve our ambitions in a timely way.



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