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Response to the Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper from Shropshire Educational Psychology Service

We welcome:

- Incentivising schools to designate a lead member of staff for mental health.
- Research into the impact on mental health of social media with the suggestion that this should include how many hours parents are spending on social media and therefore less available to their children.
- Faster responses by the NHS to those showing signs of psychosis and eating disorders as well as improved services for women suffering with postnatal depression.
- The anticipated changes to teacher training so that teachers are more likely to recognise behaviours such as insecure attachment or trauma.

Concerns:

- That the emphasis is still on fast response and waiting times rather than the quality and the effectiveness of the intervention offered.
- That data collected on waiting times takes precedence over outcomes or client satisfaction.
- If the Mental Health Support Teams are not better qualified or trained than school staff they will increase referrals to the specialist services not reduce them.
- How do these Mental Health Support Teams link to TaMHS (Targeting Mental Health Support) and the staff in posts from 2009/2011 pilot?

- That there needs to be more focus on improved outcomes than diagnosis.
- That the closing of Sure Start Centres is likely to have been detrimental to the mental health outcomes for families.
- That Mental Health may still be regarded as a second class issue in schools compared to the narrow academic curriculum.

Suggestions:

- That the government could reduce the stress on the education system by having a more supportive and less punitive style of inspecting schools. This would create a climate in schools that is much more conducive to mental health.
- There are some wonderful examples of Children Centre staff in Shropshire running parent groups using a “No Worries” programme developed by Shropshire Educational Psychologists, based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy principles with very positive outcomes.

<https://www.shropshirelg.net/media/565261/No-Worries-for-Green-Paper.pdf>

In some areas they have run the parents’ group at the same time a group has been running in the primary school, so that the whole family have understanding and using techniques to reduce anxieties.

- Shropshire Educational Psychology Service has developed group interventions based on DBT (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy) aimed at self-harm. Statistical analysis provides positive impact measure.
<https://www.shropshirelg.net/media/565267/Managing-Moods-Update.pdf>
- The Service in Shropshire has developed staff training in Attachment and Attunement (Dyadic Developmental Practice). This intervention builds capacity in schools to assist children and young people who have experienced early developmental trauma. Impact measures are in the process of collation. This model can be adapted to support families with complex needs, broadening and linking the interventions across schools, families and communities.
<https://www.shropshirelg.net/media/565255/Therapeutic-Working-for-Key-Adults-Training.pdf>

- Schools should receive the funding directly so that they can purchase providers they find effective.
- If the Designated Leads are to be sufficiently influential and able to challenge systemic practices which may be negatively affecting young people's mental health, they need to have senior management status.
- It is important the Mental Health Teams link in with the Local Educational Psychology Services who know schools well and already offer therapeutic support to individuals as well as offering training to the schools and the professionals aimed at building capacity to support the most vulnerable pupils.
<https://www.shropshirelg.net/media/565264/Description-of-CBT-Cases-non-attendance-update-.pdf>
- Some of the funding could go to ensuring there continues to be a sufficient supply of Educational Psychologists being trained with understanding of the valuable contributions EP's make towards supporting positive mental health in schools and communities.
- Educational Psychologists should be considered as leads and supervisors within the Mental Health Teams to facilitate systemic practice in schools and communities as well as working with groups and individual students.
- There is ample data collected locally in Shropshire on effective interventions.
<https://www.shropshirelg.net/media/565270/EPS-Supporting-Mental-Health-Emotional-Well-Being.pdf>



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