

## Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Wards: All

### **Subject: Response to Children and Young People’s Task Group Report – Review of Eating Disorders and Self-Harm affecting young people in Merton**

Lead Director: Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families

Lead member: Councillor Brenda Fraser

Contact officer: Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director Education and Early Help

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#### **Recommendations:**

A. That Cabinet note the information contained in the report.

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#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. At its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023, the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the findings of a Task Group, comprising Cllr Linda Kirby (chair), Cllr Jil Hall and Cllr Samantha MacArthur, which sought to understand how well young people with eating disorders and/or self-harm have been, and are, supported in Merton. The report included a list of recommendations to support the ongoing work needed in this area. These recommendations were noted and approved by Cabinet in its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES**

- 2.1. Recommendation 1: *Through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) board request that records be kept by providers of services at all stages of the ITHRIVE assessment levels, and provided to the board for monitoring.*
- 2.2. Records are kept by a number of services already. A request for this to happen with a broader range of services through the CAMHS Partnership Board will be made, so that the situation can be monitored.
- 2.3. Recommendation 2: *Through the CAMHS Partnership Board, request that, for children and young people with an Eating Disorder, CAMHS referral numbers, waiting list times and staffing information are made available so that they can be regularly reported to C&YP Scrutiny panel.*
- 2.4. This information will be requested through the CAMHS Partnership Board.
- 2.5. Recommendation 3: *In order to support parents:*
- *Promotion of good practice guidance apps.*
  - *Information resource pack made available.*

- *Specific point of contact at schools or CAMHS to offer ongoing support or advice.*
- 2.6 Apps have been promoted for use in schools through Headteacher meetings, and forums for school Mental Health Leads. Merton CAMHS provide a specific service, through the South West London and St George's Trust (SWLSGT), which offers assessment and treatment in the community for young people up to the age of 18 with an eating disorder. Key points of contact within schools for children and young people to raise their concerns are available; this will look different in each school depending on their staffing structure. The possibility of an information resource pack will be raised at the CAMHS Partnership Board.
- 2.7 *Recommendation 4: Through the CAMHS Partnership Board, request that a flexible approach to providing a counsellor is ensured.*
- This request will be made through the CAMHS Partnership Board.
- 2.8 *Recommendation 5: Provide training for primary schools to identify the early signs of eating disorders CLLF.*
- 2.9 Training will be provided for primary schools through the Merton Schools' Mental Health Forum.
- 2.10 *Recommendation 6: Provide ongoing training to secondary schools on how to support self-harming young people CLLF.*
- 2.11 Training will be provided for primary schools through the Merton Schools' Mental Health Forum.
- 2.12 *Recommendation 7: South West London Eating Disorders, who diagnose conditions, should be invited to speak to Merton Schools' Mental Health Forum*
- 2.13 SWLSTG Trust's Eating Disorders Team will be invited to speak to the Merton Schools' Mental Health Forum.
- 2.14 *Recommendation 8: Merton's Social Media should publish information on these issues and support available.*
- 2.15 Merton's Communications Team will work with officers in CLLF to publish this information.
- 2.16 *Recommendation 9: My Merton – Double page spread on these issues and information on what support is available.*
- 2.17 Merton's Communications Team will look to see how best this information can be shared across their platforms.
- 2.18 *Recommendation 10: Lobby for social media platforms to address the issues of self-harm and eating disorders.*
- 2.19 The Leader of the Council has undertaken to write to social media platforms on this issue.

2.20 *Recommendation 11: Research reasons behind this phenomenon [of lower school attendance], and promote the / thrive guidance on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).*

2.21 Attendance data has been, and continues to be, analysed robustly. Absence from school as a result of illness has been identified as a concern, and work with professionals across the range of local health providers is ongoing, to raise awareness and to find multi agency ways to address the issue. The EBSA guidance has been shared with schools and professionals across the partnership which support children and young people.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 None for the purposes of this report

### **4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1 The views of children and young people, including about mental health, are regularly sought through a range of mechanisms, including the Youth Parliament, the Young Inspectors' Programme and 'Our Voice' (the Children in Care Council).

### **5. TIMETABLE**

5.1 This work will be addressed over the coming calendar year.

### **6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

### **7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

### **8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None for the purposes of this report

### **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None for the purposes of this report

### **10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None for the purposes of this report

### **11. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

None

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None

Department Approval	Name of Officer	Date of Comments
Legal		
Finance		
Executive Director		
Cabinet Member	Brenda Lorraine Fraser	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024