

# Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

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Produced by the Knowledge Management team Evidence Briefs offer an overview of the published reports, research, and evidence on a workforce-related topic.

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## Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

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### Key publications – the big picture

#### [Children and young people's mental health: National workforce census 1 April 2023- 31 March 2024](#)

NHS England and NHS Benchmarking Network, May 2025

The children and young people's mental health workforce census forms part of a larger programme of work within the [NHS Benchmarking Network](#) which focuses on workforce profiling and analysis. The objectives of the children and young people's mental health services workforce census included:

- Provide a current overview of the national children and young people's mental health workforce, enabling comparisons with previous annual submissions to give an accurate picture of overall workforce expansion and its alignment with the NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan.
- Provide a series of outputs to support work nationally, regionally and locally to retain, diversify and grow the workforce.

#### [Children's Mental Health task and finish group: Key findings and recommendations](#)

Local Government Association, February 2025

The task and finish group has developed a number of recommendations for both central and local government, setting out what more can be done to support children and young people's mental health.

#### [Future Minds: Why investing in children's mental health will unlock economic growth](#)

Centre for Mental Health, January 2025

Taking steps to turn around the youth mental health crisis will help the Government progress four of its five Missions: Growth, Opportunity, Health, and Safer Streets. We are proposing a costed plan of phased action. We recommend immediate and

scalable steps the Government can take to close the treatment gap and provide earlier support that prevents problems from escalating. We also propose a Government-commissioned review that would authoritatively identify root causes of the crisis – examining the role of, for example, inequalities, the pandemic and social media – and the failings of the mental health system itself. Finally, we outline measures that could be delivered through local government and make a real difference in the long-term prevention of mental ill health in young people.

#### [Mental health 360: services for children and young people](#)

The King's Fund, February 2024

More children and young people are accessing services, but even with current levels of expansion, supply does not meet demand. There is a gap in support for children and young people who need a greater level of support than is currently available in education settings but do not require specialist mental health treatment.

#### [The role of paediatricians in children and young people's mental health - position statement 2024](#)

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, February 2024

This position statement outlines the role of paediatricians in supporting children and young people's (CYP) mental health and includes key policy recommendations. It is intended to:

- Inform paediatricians about the current mental health landscape
- Describe the role of paediatricians in supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, alongside the rest of the children's workforce
- Be aspirational about a future of working in a more integrated way across mental and physical health and achieving a better future for children and young people and the workforce which support them - this includes RCPCH's national policy calls for

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improved support, training, and increased capacity across the paediatric workforce

- Outline what the College is doing on CYP mental health, and link to relevant national guidance, resources and legislation.

### [Children and young people's mental health: policy and services \(England\)](#)

House of Commons Library, January 2024

This briefing covers the structure of Children and young people's mental health services, recent policy from the Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Education and NHS England, and evaluations of Government policy.

### [The Good Childhood Report 2024](#)

The Children's Society, 2024

The Good Childhood Report 2024 looked at children's responses to the latest Understanding Society survey wave to assess how wellbeing has changed over time, for all children, and by gender.

In 2021/22, the latest data available, children's (aged 10 to 15) mean scores for happiness with their life as a whole, their friends, appearance, school, and schoolwork were all significantly lower than when the Understanding Society survey began in 2009/10. Family was the only aspect of life where there was no significant difference in children's average happiness compared to 2009/10.

In 2021/22, on average, children were most happy with their family, and least happy with their appearance. In terms of proportions, almost one in six children (15.6%) were unhappy with their appearance (that is, they scored below the midpoint of the scale for this measure).

### [Children and young people's mental health services: Targets, progress and barriers to improvement](#)

Education Policy Institute, December 2023

This report assesses the progress that has been made against government targets to improve children and young people's mental health services since 2015. Whilst some progress has been made in improving service provision, EPI finds that this has been outpaced by rising demand for services, with concerning levels of variation in the services available across England and a need for better data and greater transparency regarding service availability, quality and outcomes. Informed by these findings and advice from advisory groups, EPI makes a range of policy recommendations, providing a blueprint for a future government's strategy to improve children and young people's mental health services.

### [Children and young people's mental health: An independent review into policy success and challenges over the last decade](#)

Local Government Association, June 2023

Many children and young people continue to face challenges accessing support for their mental health and their experiences of services are not consistently good. Patchy implementation of policies has also fuelled a postcode lottery in provision meaning that children and young people do not get a consistent offer of support. What is more, while some attempts have been made to integrate mental health support across the system, there has been an overall lack of progress in effectively integrating services within children's social care and the special education needs (SEN) and disabilities system of support, meaning children in these groups face particular challenges in accessing support.

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### [Deconstructing the System: Young people's voices on mental health, society and inequality](#)

Young Minds, April 2023

Many of the findings from across the three surveys are disappointing. For example, a particular inequality arose for Non-binary people and young Muslims, as only 14% and 17%, respectively, felt comfortable talking to a parent or carer about their mental health. Understanding these limitations is a useful tool in identifying where we are failing to support young people and ensure significant focus is given to these areas. YoungMinds could do more to include communities that feel isolated and unsupported: we are striving for more diversity in our future work, not as something tokenistic, but as an authentic commitment to amplifying the needs of underrepresented young people.

### [Progress in improving mental health services in England](#)

National Audit Office, February 2023

Many people will experience mental health problems in their lives. Around one in six adults in England have a common mental health disorder, and around half of mental health problems start by the age of 14. The proportion of young people estimated to have a probable mental disorder rose between 2017 and 2022, following the COVID-19 pandemic: for example, among 17- to 19-year-olds, the proportion went up from 10% to 26%.

[See Part Three: Increasing mental health service workforce, funding and information]

### [State of the nation 2022: children and young people's wellbeing](#)

Department for Education, February 2023

The wellbeing of children and young people has been a focus of Government policy for a number of years. The impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has further emphasised the importance of supporting our children and young people's

wellbeing, which is why it remains a central part of the Department for Education's plans for recovery. This report, the fourth State of the Nation, focuses on trends in mental health and wellbeing over the 2021/22 academic year, when a range of recovery-focused activity was in place across Government, which included the Department for Education's education recovery programme.

### [Children and Young People's Mental Health Workforce Census](#) Health Education England and NHS Benchmarking, January 2023

This report details the findings from the fourth national stocktake of the Children and Young People's Mental Health (CYPMH) workforce across England. The report builds on the previous collections undertaken by NHSBN on behalf of Health Education England, which were undertaken in 2016, 2019 and 2021. As such there was a three-year gap between the 2016 and 2019 census, a two-year gap between the 2019 and 2021 census and only a one-year gap between the 2021 and the 2022 census this year. The 2016 and 2019 censuses covered the 2015 and 2018 calendar years respectively, both with a census date of the 31st December. The 2021 census covered the financial year 2020/21, with a census date of the 31st March 2021. The census this year collates data from the 2021/22 financial year with a census date of 31st March 2022.

### ['It's Hard to talk': Expanding Mental Health Support Teams in Education](#)

Barnado's, December 2022

Approximately one in six children and young people between the ages of 6-16 have a diagnosable mental health condition. This rises to one in four for young people aged 17-19. 50% of mental health issues are established by the age of fourteen, with long term health, social and economic impacts across the life course.

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The crisis in children and young people's mental health, threatens the prospects of a generation.

### [Supporting children and young people \(CYP\) with mental health needs in acute paediatric settings: a frameworks for systems](#)

NHS England, November 2022

Over the past decade, there has been increasing need for mental health services to support children and young people (CYP). The pandemic resulted in a greater number of CYP presenting with mental health disorders, often with complex needs requiring care or medical stabilisation, within a paediatric or acute setting. Increasing need, coupled with winter pressures, has put a strain on systems. We need to work together to ensure CYP, and those who look after them, are supported. The commitments outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) make clear that achieving parity of esteem – valuing mental health equally with physical health – is a key priority, though we acknowledge there is still some way to go in meeting this challenge. For services to be delivered effectively and for patients to feel supported and staff to feel confident, we need to facilitate better integration of physical and mental health for CYP.

### [Heads up: Rethinking mental health services for vulnerable young people](#)

Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition and Centre for Mental Health, July 2022

It reviews the latest data on mental health among children and young people with a focus on those who are at higher risk, including young people from racialised communities, lower socioeconomic backgrounds, young people with SEND, those who have been in contact with the criminal justice and care systems as well as LGBTQI+ communities. It brings together the views of young people and mental health practitioners, setting out the barriers to accessing mental health care and making clear recommendations for change.

[See p. 29: Workforce expansion]

### [Briefing: Improving children and young people's mental health services](#)

The Health Foundation, July 2022

In this briefing, we present analysis from the Networked Data Lab (NDL). Led by the Health Foundation, the NDL is a collaborative network of local analytical teams across England, Scotland and Wales. These teams analysed local, linked data sources to explore trends in mental health presentations across primary, specialist and acute services.

### [Children and Young People's Mental Health Services: GIRFT Programme National Specialty Report](#) Free FutureNHS log in required to view

Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT), April 2022

Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) is the fastest growing area of healthcare across the country with resulting increases in resources. There are a multitude of national drivers and programmes to ensure this resource is targeted, valued and effective. Significant changes in the commissioning arrangements are taking place through the NHS-led provider collaborative programme. The Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) report looks to support and enhance these national programmes, while allowing a clearer focus in identifying unwarranted variation or improvement requirements in unexpected or unexplained areas. I am honoured to be in a position where, through careful analysis of data and many clinically-led conversations, we can influence how resources can be used to provide best outcomes not only for Children and Young People (CYP), but also reduce their future needs for adult mental health services.

[See p. 70 for Workforce]



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### [A revolution in mindset: addressing the youth mental crisis after the pandemic](#)

Reform, April 2022

See part 3.4.3: Developing a skilled workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on the mental health and wellbeing of the nation. However, its impacts have been particularly severe for teenagers. Disruptions to everyday routines, lost opportunities to learn, and limited chances to socialise have left many feeling isolated and anxious. Alarming, by late 2021 more than one in six 11–19-year-olds had a probable mental health condition, up from one in nine before the pandemic.

This research puts forward practical recommendations – from improving the use of data to better understand young people's mental health needs, to enhancing the supporting role that schools can play – to put young people's mental health at the heart of the recovery.

### [The government's response to the Health and Social Care Committee report: children and young people's mental health](#)

Department of Health & Social Care, March 2022

This is the government's formal response to the recommendations made by the Health and Social Care Committee in its report, Children and young people's mental health.

### [Time for action: investing in comprehensive mental health support for children and young people](#)

Centre for Mental Health, December 2021

This report highlights the historic underinvestment in children and young people's mental health, and the postcode lottery of support which has resulted. Public spending on children's mental health lags behind investment in adult mental health services and there is wide variation in the amount spent per child in

different areas. The report calls for a comprehensive mental health investment strategy for 0-25 year olds.

### [Children and young people's mental health](#)

Health and Social Care Committee House of Commons, November 2021

According to NHS data, the mental health of children and young people in England has worsened since 2017. Even before the pandemic, children and young people were facing a mental health crisis. Although children and young people under 25 have always had to deal with personal identity issues in formative years, risks to mental health have been greatly exacerbated by heightened academic expectations and the ubiquity of social media. Three lockdowns and the social distancing requirements of the pandemic have made the situation worse. Children and young people have struggled with the loss of normal social structures, being unable to socialise in person with peers and not being able to attend school or university. The need for teaching and assessment to take place virtually led to further stress because of the uncertainty it created about people's futures. Research from the Centre of Mental Health shows that, in England, 1.5 million children and young people under 18 will need new or additional mental health support as a direct consequence of the coronavirus pandemic.

[See p. 22 for “workforce pressures”]

### [Reaching the tipping point: children and young people's mental health](#)

NHS Confederation, August 2021

What impact has the pandemic had on children and young people's mental health and the services that support them?

[See p. 28: Workforce]

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### ['Feeling heard': partner agencies working together to make a difference for children with mental ill health](#)

Ofsted et al, December 2020

We reviewed the practices of individual agencies, as well as the effectiveness of multi-agency working arrangements, including children's social care, health services, youth offending services, schools and the police. The findings in this report consider the extent to which agencies work collaboratively with partners to identify children experiencing mental ill health, as well as how they intervened early to support these children and get them the help that they need when problems arise. The report shows that when partners work together effectively to understand children's needs and identify and support children living with mental ill health, this improves children's access to support with their mental health.

### [Building resilience: how local partnerships are supporting children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)

Local Government Association, February 2020

The purpose of this research is, firstly, to explore some of the factors which are contributing to this nationally challenging context and, secondly, to develop an evidence base for how local government and its partners can work most effectively together to deliver a coherent and joined-up offer of support for children and young people's mental health. The research is based on a review of the existing evidence base, workshops with around 80 participants from councils and their partners in health and in-depth engagements with eight fieldwork areas.

### [What does the Long Term plan say about children and young people's mental health?](#)

NHS Long Term Plan, 2019

The Long Term Plan explains what the NHS will do over the next 10 years to expand mental health services for children and

young people, reduce unnecessary delays and deliver care in ways that young people, their families and carers have told us work better for them. Its commitments are based on the views of patients, staff, experts and stakeholders, including the young people who joined NHS England and YoungMinds at an event in 2018 to get their views on what the future of mental health services should look like.

### [Strategic Framework: Children and Young People's Mental Health \(CYPMH\) Inpatient Workforce Development](#)

Health Education England, no date

Health Education England, along with NHSE, NWSDU and Experts by Experience, has launched a new strategic framework. This framework outlines the vision for the children and young peoples' mental health inpatient services workforce and sets out clearly how that vision can be achieved by developing a sustainable and consistent approach.

## Case Studies

The NHS Confederation's report ["Reaching the tipping point"](#) (August 2021) includes case studies – look for the yellow boxes.

The Local Government Association report [Building resilience: how local partnerships are supporting children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) (February 2020) includes case studies – look for the boxes.

### [Children and young people's mental health workforce strategy](#)

Healthy London Partnership, May 2019

This strategy focuses on those whose jobs support the mental health of children and young people (the workforce) and attempts to explain why we are looking at this issue, what we did to explore it and what we found. It includes a list of challenges



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that surfaced when we were talking to services, professionals and young people; these are shown below and explored in more detail later on in the document. We have heard from a lot of people how important it is for plans to be developed together across their local systems. This strategy document aims to highlight key workforce issues and priorities and to be a guide for the development of operational plans that will ultimately improve the provision of mental health care for children and young people in London by addressing these workforce challenges.

### [Integrated care in action – children and young people](#)

NHS Long Term Plan, January 2019

This case study shows how integrated care systems are supporting children and young people.

### [Local leadership and accountability for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing services](#)

Local Government Association, October 2018

We want all our children to have bright futures. Key to that is ensuring that they have the emotional resilience and tools to make good choices, overcome challenges and move confidently towards where they want to be in adulthood. The current system cannot deliver that – so how can we ensure that it does?

### [Innovation Insights: A service model for children and young people's mental health innovation](#)

Health Innovation North West Coast, no date

Several leaders in mental health across the North West were keen to understand the approach taken to children's mental health services in Sweden because they have a much lower length of stay on mental health wards in comparison to the UK. It was found that Sweden have focussed on prevention and a holistic, social model that includes a variety of novel concepts, such as: parent psychoeducation, digital integration, self-selected and briefer admissions onto wards, contracts with

parents and multi-agency commissioning. Health Innovation North West Coast used its model for complex change and service transformation to consider how services might be redesigned in the UK. We use the model to co-design a proposed future state that will improve outcomes by introducing innovation to optimise the deployment of resources and embrace integrated care concepts.

### [Children and young people \(CYP\): case studies](#)

NHS England, no date

- [Tackling Health Inequalities: Involving children and young people in a Strategic Health Assessment to identify population health needs](#)
- [Using Provider Collaborative savings to enhance community support for young people in the North East and Cumbria](#)
- [Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear's innovative approach to supporting young people who display behaviours that challenge.](#)
- [How expert by experience leadership is transforming experience for young people in North Central East London Children and Young People's Provider Collaborative](#)
- [Minding the Gap: support through transition](#)
- [Early Intervention in Psychosis Service provides support to children and young people](#)
- [County Durham Crisis and Liaison](#)
- [Dozens of children have smoother adoption thanks to unique Sheffield scheme](#)
- [How collaboration across mental health services in South London is making a difference to young people's lives](#)
- [Mental health COVID-19 children and young people case studies](#)

### [Mental health Covid-19 children and young people case studies](#)

NHS England, no date

- [Sussex Partnership NHS FT – Expansion of virtual consultation capacity](#)
- [Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS FT](#)
- [Liverpool Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\) Partnership – Adaptations to COVID-19](#)

## The Star for workforce redesign

More resources and tools are available in the **Mental Health and Learning Disability** and **Maternity and Children's** sections of [the Star](#).

## Statistics

You can find relevant statistics on the [Health and Care Statistics Landscape](#) under “**Health and Care**” and use the “**Mental Health and Dementia**” filter.

## National Data Programme

Workforce, Training and Education staff can look at the [National Data Warehouse \(NDL\)](#) SharePoint site to find out more about datasets and Tableau products.

## Published Peer Reviewed Research

### Workforce

#### [Training Senior Wellbeing Practitioners: the development of a framework to identify and assess clinical competency](#)

The Cognitive Behaviour Therapist, May 2025

The SWP Skills and Competency Framework (SWP-SCF) is a new tool developed in response to the need to operationalise and assess the skills necessary to work with the range of presentations SWPs are required to treat, whilst retaining fidelity to the low-intensity intervention approach. As training providers we have used the SWP-SCF with our first cohorts of SWPs as an aid for skill development and reflective practice, as well as for assessment of clinical competency within assignments. Students and tutors have reported good face validity and utility, and further assessment of the validity of this framework appears warranted.

#### [Experiences of commissioning services for child and adolescent mental health in England \(UK\): a qualitative framework analysis](#)

BMJ Open, October 2024

Our study sought to explore and understand commissioners' experiences of commissioning services for child and adolescent mental health, including their perspectives on the needs of their populations, challenges they face and their needs for support and data. The findings highlight how commissioners are negotiating a complex and changing political, social and economic environment with competing priorities and pressures. Proportionate funding for CYP's mental health services was seen by commissioners as essential to ensure services are able to meet current need, alongside a greater focus on prevention. Researchers now need to work alongside commissioners to provide timely, succinct outputs that better support

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commissioners' plan services and improve the health of the populations they serve.

### [Knowledge, attitudes, and practices on child and adolescent mental health among healthcare workers in sub-Saharan Africa: a scoping review](#)

International Journal of Mental Health Systems, July 2024

Child and adolescent mental health is a global priority. In sub-Saharan Africa, despite the high burden, there is a gap in health services for children and adolescents with mental health disorders. To bridge this gap, healthcare workers require a good understanding of child and adolescent mental health, the right attitude, and practices geared to improving child and adolescent mental health. This scoping review examined the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to child and adolescent mental health among sub-Saharan African healthcare workers.

### [A pilot evaluation of the role of a children's wellbeing practitioner \(CWP\) in a child and adolescent mental health service \(CAMHS\)](#)

Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, April 2023

In order to improve access to evidence based psychological therapies for children and young people, the government has focused on developing new professions, such as the Children's Wellbeing Practitioner (CWP), to deliver low intensity approaches. Evaluative data for the effectiveness of low intensity cognitive behavioural therapy interventions delivered by CWPs is sparse. Findings from this evaluation support the potential value of low intensity cognitive behavioural therapy interventions delivered by CWPs in reducing anxiety and depression. Recommendations will include the development and expansion of the CWP role and CWP Services and the need for further evaluative data.

### [Perceptions of the key components of effective, acceptable and accessible services for children and young people experiencing common mental health problems: a qualitative study](#)

BMC Health Services Research, April 2023

This study has identified four components that from a CYP, parent and practitioner perspective are essential if a mental health service for CYP with CMHPs is to be effective, acceptable and accessible. These were open access to support, therapeutic relationships, personalised support and the development of self-care skills. Other studies have similarly highlighted the importance of these individual components, adding weight to their significance, however, in this study they have been unified and developed into a set of foundations for service design which can be tailored to a local context, and which have utility for policy and practice.

### [How does reorganisation in child and adolescent mental health services affect access to services? An observational study of two services in England](#)

PLoS ONE, May 2021

This study highlights how the model of service change or 'transformation' adopted across many English services can help to increase access to services, but it takes time for the benefits of reorganisation to be realised.

### [Building a Child Mental Health Workforce for the 21st Century: Closing the Training Gap](#) Abstract only\*

Journal of Professional Nursing, 2019

Of the children and adolescents with mental health concerns who receive treatment, most do so in outpatient community mental health service sites, systems of care which have largely failed to produce significant clinical outcomes. Suggested strategies to improve care in child mental health treatment include improving families' access to services, increasing use of evidence-based practices (EBPs), and holding service sites

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accountable for demonstrating outcomes. Producing a workforce to implement these strategies will require cultivating providers who have developed specific competencies within a range of agencies that naturally interface with the daily lives of families and their children. The authors report on a recently developed interprofessional child community fellowship for psychiatry residents and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners aimed at training providers to deliver child mental health services in a variety of community settings. Activities that focus the fellowship are outlined along with the development of the related competencies: EBP translation, collaboration skills, and outcome measurement. Evaluation strategies for fellows' competency development are discussed.

### Nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals

#### [Recognising the Value of Everyday Interactions in Inpatient CAMHS: Patient Thank-You Letters as Insights Into Nursing Impact](#)

International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, May 2025  
These findings provide valuable insight into relational practice from young people's perspectives, emphasising the importance of everyday interactions in shaping positive inpatient CAMHS experiences. Thank-you letters offer a critical but often overlooked source of feedback that can enhance understanding of young people's experiences beyond structured patient surveys or complaint mechanisms. Unlike formal evaluations, these letters capture spontaneous expressions of gratitude, offering a richer view of the relational aspects of care that young people find most impactful.

#### [Expanding the early intervention offer: A new care pathway for children's wellbeing practitioners in a south London child and adolescent mental health service](#)

Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, September 2023  
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have been under recent increased demand, with increasingly limited resources, contributing to longer waiting lists, and a growing proportion of rejected referrals due to limited capacity and increasing thresholds. Child and Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs) provide an opportunity to meet the needs of rejected referrals. We aimed to determine the feasibility of a new and direct referral route within a South London CAMHS.

#### [Promoting young people's mental health: the role of community nurses](#)

Nursing Standard, January 2023  
Community nurses are in an ideal position to promote positive mental health and ensure timely referral to appropriate services to enable young people to access the support they need. This article explores how the pandemic and social media have affected young people's mental health, particularly in relation to anxiety.

#### [Towards an Understanding of Successes of the Psychiatric Nurses in Caring for Children with Mental Health Problems: An Appreciative Inquiry](#)

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, January 2023  
This paper explored the successes of psychiatric nurses in caring for children with mental health problems using appreciative inquiry (AI). A qualitative exploratory and descriptive design was used to allow for new ideas that can fundamentally reshape the practice of child psychiatric nursing. Purposive sampling was used to select psychiatric nurses caring for children with mental health problems. Focus groups were used

to generate data. The results indicate both positive and negative prospects for psychiatric nursing practice. The positive possibilities included commitment, passion and dedication of staff to the children. The negative aspects that need urgent attention include lack of specific, integrated child mental health within the mental health care services, shortage of resources and not-fit-for purpose infrastructure. Appreciative inquiry verified the commitment of psychiatric nurses in caring for children with mental health problems and the potential for dedicated child psychiatric institutions in realizing the needs of such children. The needs of children with mental health problems must be addressed through positive care in the health system.

### [Receiving thank you letters in inpatient child and adolescent mental health services \(CAMHS\): A qualitative study of nurse's experiences](#)

Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, January 2023  
This research has considered the experience of inpatient CAMHS nurses receiving expressions of gratitude and identified potential rewards such as improved understanding of professional identity, enhanced reflexivity, enhanced team cohesion and increased professional and personal confidence and motivation. All of this can contribute to staff well-being, which in turn can improve patient care. The experience of sharing and discussing gratitude within the focus groups highlighted the benefits of actively utilizing gratitude as a foundation for group-based support.

### [Therapeutic relationships within child and adolescent mental health inpatient services: A qualitative exploration of the experiences of young people, family members and nursing staff](#)

PloS One, January 2022

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), especially inpatient units, have arguably never been more in demand and yet more in need of reform. Progress in

psychotherapy and more broadly in mental health care is strongly predicted by the therapeutic relationship between professional and service user. This link is particularly pertinent in child and adolescent mental health inpatient services where relationships are especially complex and difficult to develop and maintain. This article describes a qualitative exploration of the lived experience of 24 participants (8 young people, 8 family members/carers and 8 nursing staff) within inpatient CAMHS across four sites in the UK. We interviewed participants individually and analysed the transcripts using thematic analysis within a critical realist framework. We synthesised data across groups and present six themes, encapsulating the intricacies and impact of therapeutic relationships; their development and maintenance: *Therapeutic relationships are the treatment, Cultivating connection, Knowledge is power, Being human, The dance, and It's tough for all of us in here.*

### [The Changing Role of the Music Therapist in an Educational Setting for Young People Experiencing Mental Health Challenges](#)

Australian Journal of Music Therapy, 2022

At a school in Sydney's north, young people experiencing mental health challenges are changing the way music therapy is conducted within an educational setting. The reach of music therapy has extended to their everyday life and, as a result, there has been a change in my role as music therapist, and in the way music therapy is conducted and perceived by the participants. There has been a re-evaluation of methodology, philosophy, and outcomes, as the participants have progressed in their own wellness. The evolution of my role as a therapist in this setting has achieved outcomes that have gone beyond what I have previously experienced when working in other schools. This paper will detail the gradual change in the therapist's role by discussing students' responses to music therapy, and the therapist's responses to the students' outcomes. It will also



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discuss how these changes have assisted participants in self-determining their journey with music, their wellbeing and their educational outcomes.

### [Occupational therapy interventions in child and adolescent mental health to increase participation: A mixed methods systematic review](#)

British Journal of Occupational Therapy, May 2021

This study sought to identify the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions that are occupation-based/-focused for children and adolescents with mental health problems.

Considered as a whole, the evidence for the effectiveness of occupational therapy with children and adolescents with mental health problems is extremely limited. There is no high-quality evidence for occupation-based/-focused occupational therapy interventions for children and adolescents with mental health difficulties, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis. The available evidence is confined to small-scale studies of occupational therapy interventions for those with Asperger's syndrome or attention deficit hyperactivity disorders.

### [Nurses' experiences of working in the community with adolescents who self-harm: A qualitative exploration](#)

Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, 2021

This study provides insight into nurses' experiences of working with adolescents who self-harm in a community setting. It has demonstrated personal and professional conflict these nurses experience, and how they learn to cope and develop as a person and a professional. It emphasises ways to help manage and reduce the conflicts they experience, both personally and professionally. Findings are relevant for community CAMHS leads, in order to improve support

and training for CAMHS nurses, and subsequently improve patient care.

## Clinical psychologists

### ["I couldn't do the job anymore": a qualitative study exploring clinical psychologists' experiences of working in and leaving CAMHS to work independently](#) Abstract only\*

The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice, June 2024

Participants felt that over time there had been undesirable changes in CAMHS, which left them reminiscing about the past. Participants felt unable to do their job in CAMHS, meet the needs of children and young people and use their psychology skills. Participants emphasised the importance of colleagues and being part of a multidisciplinary team, which had been missed since working independently, but they also highlighted difficult relationships with managers. Participants felt that working at CAMHS had negatively impacted their emotional and physical well-being and their family life.

### [Experiences of newly qualified clinical psychologists in CAMHS](#)

Full text available with NHS OpenAthens account\*

Journal of Mental Health Training, May 2021

This paper aims to explore three aspects of newly qualified Clinical Psychologists' experiences: their transition and development; working in multi-disciplinary teams located in large organisations; and support and coping in the role.



### Pharmacists

#### [Collaboration Between Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists and Mental Health Pharmacists to Improve Treatment Outcomes](#)

Abstract only\*

Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, October 2021

Interdisciplinary collaboration between child psychiatrists and mental health pharmacists gives the psychiatrist more time for patient evaluation and treatment, while the psychiatric pharmacist provides drug monitoring, medication coordination, and education for providers. This collaborative approach improves outcomes, prevents adverse drug events, reduces hospital stays, lessens emergency department visits, and improves engagement and adherence.

### General Practitioners

#### [Raising Suicide in Medical Appointments – Barriers and Facilitators Experienced by Young Adults and GPs: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review](#)

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, January 2023

Unique to this review was the recognition that young adults want GPs to initiate the conversation about suicide. They see this as a GP's responsibility. This review further confirmed that GPs lack the confidence and skills to assess suicide risk in young adults. Both findings combined could explain previous results for reduced identification of suicide risk in this cohort. GP training needs considerable focus on addressing skill deficiencies and improving GP confidence to assess suicide risk. However, introducing suicide risk screening in primary care for young adults should be a priority as this will overcome the need for young adults to voluntarily disclose thoughts of suicide.

#### [First port of call: The role of GPs in early support for young people's mental health](#)

The Children's Society and Young Minds, June 2021

Many young people told us that they felt listened to and supported by their GP, received useful advice and signposting and ultimately felt that they benefited from their experience of talking to their GP about their mental health. For some young people, specialist NHS support might not be suitable and therefore a referral to a different service is needed. Other young people reported negative experiences which have left them feeling reluctant to access support through their GP in the future.

#### [Best practice when working with suicidal behaviour and self-harm in primary care: a qualitative exploration of young people's perspectives](#)

BMJ Open, December 2020

General practitioners (GPs) have a key role in supporting young people who present with suicidal behaviour/self-harm. However, little is known about young people's opinions and experiences related to GPs' practices for such presentations, and their decisions to disclose suicidal behaviour/self-harm to GPs. Additionally, existing guidelines for the management of suicide risk and/or self-harm have not incorporated young people's perspectives. This study aimed to explore young people's views and experiences related to the identification, assessment and care of suicidal behaviour and self-harm in primary care settings with GPs.

#### [Role of the general practitioner in providing early intervention for youth mental health: a mixed methods investigation](#)

Abstract only\*

Early Intervention in Psychiatry, December 2015

This study aimed to examine the role of GP in providing early intervention and treatment for youth mental health problems. Key barriers to treatment included the attitude of patients/families,

lack of specialist staff, poor service availability and time. Access to services (66%), knowing which interventions can be initiated in primary care (44%), having appropriate time and space (47%) and access to a youth worker (42%) were the interventions most commonly identified that would facilitate screening and treatment. The research outlined potential implications for clinical practice, research and education such as promoting awareness of mental health and the role of the GP in helping these issues, education of practitioners and improving access to psychological treatments.

### Schools

#### [Selective and indicated UK school-based mental health interventions: a systematic review and narrative synthesis](#)

Journal of Mental Health, March 2024

School-based interventions hold promise in promoting positive mental health amongst young people, emphasising the pivotal role of educational settings in addressing these challenges. Despite encouraging outcomes, this review highlights the need for further research to better understand intervention effectiveness, implementation barriers, and cost-effectiveness; to facilitate the development of tailored and impactful strategies for supporting young people's mental health.

#### [Partnerships at the Interface of Education and Mental Health Services: The Utilisation and Acceptability of the Provision of Specialist Liaison and Teacher Skills Training](#)

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, October 2023

The school experience has the potential to both enhance and threaten the mental health of students. As such, gaining a better understanding of whether and which school-based support services might be of value to students and staff is a priority. The pilot studies presented in this paper suggest that additional

investment into partnerships at the interface of education and mental health services may be useful for improving child and adolescent mental health support. Working through school staff is potentially sustainable and scalable, as they already spend so much time with students. Many staff members have relationships with students that are more meaningful than those that other extra-familial adults might have with them. Furthermore, conversations between staff and students can take place in a location that can be accessible to students and assist school staff. Ensuring that the many innovations and initiatives in this area follow a framework where their implementation is evaluated will hopefully ensure that learning about how to improve mental health support within educational settings is maximised and, thus, reaches more students.

#### [Teachers' perceptions of the barriers to assessment of mental health in schools with implications for educational policy: A systematic review](#)

British Journal of Educational Psychology, October 2022

This review explored teachers' perceptions of the barriers to assessment of mental health in schools. Despite the paucity of studies, a number of key themes emerged across different educational systems. At the individual level, the key factors outlined were role conflict, fear, teachers own mental health experiences, lack of knowledge, and the need for skills and confidence. Within the microsystem, the school ethos emerged as important while both parents and colleagues played important roles within the mesosystem. Studies also demonstrated the inadequacy of external services (an element of the exosystem) and the lack of training, the importance of policies and the impact of societal expectations (macrosystem).

## Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

### [School Nurses' Experiences in Dealing with Adolescents Having Mental Health Problems](#)

SAGE Open Nursing, September 2022

The school nurses work with mental health promotion and prevention and not necessarily treatment. Even so, the school nurses describe their work with individual students having mental health problems as containing elements of treatment. Some adolescents need someone to talk to in a short period of time, others need help from specialist health services. How to identify those who need help from others than the school nurse is questioned. The school nurses use their creativity, intuition, and knowledge but have difficulty identifying those students who need help with mental health problems from other professionals. Interaction skills and the use of suitable standardized assessment tools may help the school nurses in their decision-making if suitable assessment tools are available. School nurses need a close collaboration with the parents, the school personnel, and other health professionals. Collaboration with the personnel in schools needs to be more formalized.

### [Supporting school nurses to deliver emotional and mental health interventions: a service evaluation](#) Abstract only\*

Primary Health Care, August 2022

School nurses often encounter children and young people with emotional and mental health needs and therefore need to be able to manage potentially distressing situations. A service evaluation explored the experiences and perceptions of a small school nursing team of the support they receive to deliver emotional and mental health interventions.

Peer support emerged as the most important facilitator but participants lacked time to access it. Training was identified as another crucial source of support, but again time for it was lacking. Moreover, limited access to further support services for children and young people, and a lack of recognition and

understanding of participants' role by others, made it more challenging for participants to deliver emotional and mental health interventions. School nurses could be better supported in that aspect of their role by ensuring they have time for reflection and learning; by enhancing the training, tools and resources available to them; and by improving their professional recognition within and outside the NHS.

### [Mental health services in the school environment – Future visions using a phenomenographic approach](#)

Journal of Clinical Nursing, May 2022

Four alternative future visions were formulated based on the perceptions of the stakeholders. They emphasised different aspects: (1) non-medicalising the school environment, (2) early and extensive intervention by school nurses enabled by work distribution with mental health specialists, (3) a multiprofessional team providing help on overall health questions and (4) a focusing of the services on mental disorders. Necessary changes were identified at the micro-, mezzo- and macro-level.

### [An Untenable Burden: Exploring Experiences of Secondary School Nurses Who Encounter Young People with Mental Health Problems](#) Abstract only\*

Journal of School Nursing, March 2022

The current study confirms that school nurses perceive their role with young people experiencing mental health problems to be very important, but there are significant personal and professional impacts in consequence. This was conceptualized as the experience of untenable burden. To overcome this problem nurses engaged in tactical prioritizing, a three stage process comprising strategic assimilation, optimizing outcomes and managing self.

## Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

### [Educators' perceived mental health literacy and capacity to support students' mental health: associations with school-level characteristics and provision in England](#)

Health Promotion International, December 2021

This study aimed to (i) examine the factor structure and internal consistency of the Mental Health Literacy and Capacity Survey for Educators (MHLCS); (ii) assess responses in relation to supporting students' mental health; (iii) describe schools' mental health provision in terms of designated roles, training offered, and perceived barriers; (iv) investigate variance in MHLCS outcomes explained by schools; and, (v) explore school-level predictors of educators' perceived MHL and capacity after controlling for individual-level characteristics.

### [Good interaction skills are not enough - competency in mental health issues in child health clinics and school health services](#)

Full text available with NHS OpenAthens account\*

Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, September 2021

The aim of the study was to describe the competency in mental health issues required by the work of public health nurses in child health clinics and school health services. Public health nurses in child health clinics and school health services need competency in mental health issues for the promotion of mental health, the alleviation of symptoms and treatment of disorders. The results indicate that good interactional skills are not enough: the current competency of public health nurses in mental health issues is insufficient and does not meet the requirements of the work.

### [Impact of counselling provision in primary schools on child and adolescent mental health service referral rates: a longitudinal observational cohort study](#)

Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 2021

Schools play an increasingly important role in supporting young people's mental health, and there is growing evidence in the

effectiveness of school-based mental health provision. Yet some people are concerned that increasing mental health support in schools may lead to a surge in referrals to specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – overwhelming services.

We found that having counselling provision in schools did not increase referral rates into CAMHS. In combination with the known effectiveness of school-based counselling, this generates evidence that having a school-based counselling service does not lead to a flood of referrals to CAMHS but is likely to be doing well at treating mental health challenges within schools.

Schools with a higher proportion of white-British students were associated with higher referral rates to CAMHS, indicative of an under-referral issue among young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. A review of the counselling service reported that while white-Irish and 'other' white, Asian and British-Asian students were less likely to attend counselling, black, black British and young people from mixed or 'other' ethnic groups engaged well. School-based mental health provision might offer an alternative means of support for young people likely to face systemic barriers in accessing health care through clinical referrals.

### [Role of school nurses in identifying and supporting children and young people with mental health issues](#) Abstract only\*

Nursing Children and Young People, March 2020

The aim of this literature review was to explore research about school nurses' ability to identify and support children and young people in secondary education with mental health issues. A search of healthcare-related databases was undertaken using search terms such as 'specialist community public health nurse' (SCPHN), 'school nurses', 'young people', 'mental health' and 'adolescent mental health' to identify relevant research. The literature review found that school nurses perform various

activities for children and young people, for example promoting optimal mental health, identifying concerns and initiating early interventions. However, the literature review also suggests that unless school nurses receive further education in mental health they will be unable to develop the necessary skills required to improve outcomes for children and young people in secondary education.

### Wellbeing, burnout, and stress

[Experience of compassionate care in mental health and community-based services for children and young people: facilitators of, and barriers to compassionate care – a systematic review](#)

European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, April 2025

While compassion is a well-recognised concept in health and social care, literature has identified various barriers and facilitators that affect the delivery of compassionate care. These include compassion fatigue, time limitations, organisational and clinical culture, insufficient resources or support, technological advancements, and burdensome administrative tasks. Despite being viewed as essential in health care, the concept of compassionate care remains poorly defined and expressed, particularly in the context of mental health services for CYP. This review explored the perspectives of CYPs, their parents, and staff regarding the compassionate care provided in community services. Additionally, it aimed to identify factors that facilitate or obstruct compassionate care for CYPs in both mental health and community settings services.

[Thesis] [An exploration of the emotional impact on Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists \(CPTs\), working therapeutically with adolescents presenting with suicidality](#)

University of Essex & Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, March 2025

The current study highlights that there should be a greater awareness of the emotional impact of working with suicidal adolescents. It also provides indicative evidence that facilitated peer support groups for clinicians might be beneficial, particularly if they have open-door and on-call policies, as well as protected thinking spaces for clinicians to participate in shared decision-making with more senior clinicians. The findings also suggest that more opportunities for standardised risk assessment training and work-based experiences may be beneficial.

[Staff Experiences of Working with Children and Adolescents Engaging in Behaviours That Challenge in Mental Health and Paediatric Inpatient Environments: A Qualitative Exploratory Study across Four European Countries](#)

Child Care in Practice, November 2024

Four themes were identified: (1) the importance of establishing a safe, therapeutic environment, (2) identified antecedents to behaviours that challenge, (3) how staff respond to behaviours that challenge, and (4) the needs of staff when maintaining a safe, therapeutic environment. Consideration needs to be given to the environments where young people are cared for, with an emphasis placed on safe, comfortable, therapeutic spaces to reduce behaviours that challenge. Staff should be better trained in trauma-informed practice, and both staff and service users should be provided with opportunities to de-brief following episodes of restrictive practices, with a focus on enhancing and maintaining therapeutic relationships.



## Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

### [Occupational stress in clinical and non-clinical staff in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\): a cross-sectional study](#) Abstract only\*

Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, March 2024

Previous literature has highlighted high rates of burnout among doctors and nurses in healthcare settings. Non-clinical and support staff such as administrative, housekeeping and managerial staff are also exposed to the stressors of a health care setting, but fewer studies report on their experiences. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine occupational stress in all staff working in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Ireland and identify risk and protective factors. Pre-pandemic levels of stress were high among clinical and non-clinical staff surveyed. Given the anticipated increased demand on CAMHS post COVID-19, urgent action is needed to protect all staff from intolerable levels of occupational stress and burnout.

### [The Mental Wellbeing of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS\) Workers in England: A Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study Reporting Levels of Burnout, Wellbeing and Job Satisfaction](#)

Healthcare, February 2024

The results suggest that about a third of the CAMHS staff surveyed are experiencing moderate-to-high levels of work-related burnout, levels comparable to national averages across the NHS workforce. We also observed that about a quarter of CAMHS workers reported levels of wellbeing indicative of mild-to-severe depression, a prevalence which is elevated relative to the UK population average. Burnout and wellbeing levels did not systematically vary across demographic and work environment factors, including whether staff worked in a clinical role or not. We observed robust associations across levels of burnout, wellbeing, and job satisfaction, with higher levels of burnout predicting lower wellbeing and higher job dissatisfaction.

However, it should be noted that the sample size was small and self-selecting, which may limit the generalisability of these findings. There is considerable scope for more research into how levels of occupational stress might be addressed to promote the mental wellbeing of CAMHS workers, which has important implications for service quality and patient outcomes.

### [Professional wellbeing and turnover intention among child therapists: a comparison between therapists trained and untrained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#)

BMC Health Services Research, November 2022

Poor professional wellbeing and job turnover is challenging for child mental health clinics and despite an increasing interest in implementing evidence-based practices (EBPs) in mental health services, little is known about if and how using EBPs may influence therapists' professional wellbeing and turnover intention. To investigate this, we compare the average level of compassion satisfaction, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and turnover intention between therapists trained in an EBP (Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – TF-CBT) and untrained therapists. We also explore the prevalence of and the associations between these personal and organizational outcomes. Although the prevalence findings are in general alarming, the present study provides the first empirical evidence for a potential positive effect of being trained in TF-CBT on therapists' wellbeing and turnover intention. We discuss these findings in the light of self-efficacy theory and the job demands-resources model.

### ["The team needs to feel cared for": staff perceptions of compassionate care, aids and barriers in adolescent mental health wards](#)

BMC Nursing, August 2022

This study suggests that staff need the same elements of compassion as those which they seek to provide. A greater



## Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

emphasis needs to be placed on providing staff with individual, team and organisational level resources which help them to feel compassionately held within the interconnected systems in which they work, in order to be able to continue to provide high level compassionate care. Staff need to be nourished, valued and compassionately cared for in order to be able to care compassionately for the patients they look after.

### [Consultant psychiatrists' perspectives on occupational stress in child and adolescent mental health services \(CAMHS\)](#)

Irish Journal of Medical Science, July 2021

This paper explored the personal perspectives of consultant child and adolescent psychiatrists working in CAMHS and identified perceived factors contributing to their levels of occupational stress. Content analysis indicated that consultants' perception of CAMHS working conditions revolved around six factors: organisational factors, human resources, adequacy of services, professional relationships, socio-political factors, and public perception. The factors identified, coupled with the increased demand for CAMHS services in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, can exacerbate working conditions and increase occupational stress in professionals working in mental health services. There is an urgent need for engagement and collaboration between consultants leading the service and those responsible for planning and funding. There is an equally urgent need to work with patients, referrers, and the public to ensure adequate understanding of CAMHS' "core business" and allow delivery of specialist provision to young people with mental illness.

### [Wellbeing of CAMHS staff and changes in working practices during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, March 2021

Clinicians had significantly lower levels of mental wellbeing during the pandemic than population normative data, to the

extent that some clinicians were classified as at heightened risk of depression. A significant shift to remote working, reduction in face-to-face appointments, and decrease in clinicians' perceived ability to undertake clinical tasks was observed. Themes emerging from clinicians' experiences of working during the pandemic include being supported within the team, providing a service, working adaptations, and working as a team. A further theme highlights the needs of clinicians to complete their clinical role effectively.

## IAPT (now NHS Talking Therapies)

### [Evaluating the CYP-IAPT transformation of child and adolescent mental health services in Cambridgeshire, UK: a qualitative implementation study](#)

Implementation Science Communications, October 2020

The Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP-IAPT) programme was introduced to transform Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) across England. The programme comprised a set of principles that local CAMHS partnerships were expected to operationalise and embed with the aim of increasing access to services and improving the quality of care. This study explored how the implementation of the CYP-IAPT programme was executed and experienced by CAMHS professionals in the county of Cambridgeshire (UK), and the extent to which the CYP-IAPT principles were perceived to be successfully embedded into everyday practice.

### [Adapting IAPT services to support frontline NHS staff during the Covid-19 pandemic: the Homerton Covid Psychological Support \(HCPS\) pathway](#)

The Cognitive Behaviour Therapist, April 2020

This article describes the phased, stepped-care and evidence-based approach that has been adopted by the service to support

local frontline NHS staff. We wish to share our service design and pathway of care with other Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services who may also seek to support hospital frontline staff within their associated NHS Trusts and in doing so, lay the foundations of a coordinated response.

[A current review of the children and young people's improving access to psychological therapies \(CYP IAPT\) program:](#)

[Perspectives on developing an accessible workforce](#)

Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics, 2020

Innovative solutions are required to improve access and reduce wait times for children and adolescents requiring mental health support in England. The CYP IAPT program is attempting to achieve these aims by increasing the size of the CAMHS workforce, offering low-intensity treatments, and providing support in schools. The CWP and EMHPs are part of a new workforce that deliver low-intensity interventions for anxiety, depression, and conduct. The CWP and EMHP treatment philosophy is based on GSH; however, the programs also incorporate CYP IAPT principles such as goal-based work, routine outcome monitoring, and shared decision making. Although there is evidence supporting the use of GSH in clinical practice with children and adolescents, there are still questions about its long-term effectiveness and the types of patients it is best suited to help. As such, it is imperative that the new workforce program is effectively evaluated.

### Peer support

[A balancing act: integrating the expertise of youth peer workers in child and adolescent mental health services](#)

European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, June 2024

The integration of youth peer support workers (YPSWs) in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) is expanding and becoming more widely accepted. YPSWs are young adults

with lived experience of mental health challenges who provide social, emotional and practical support to youth with mental health challenges. YPSWs can place value on equality and can support youth to find personal meaning during recovery from mental health challenges. In doing so, YPSWs may add substantially to the care of youth who experience mental health challenges. This is important as youth with mental health challenges often feel existing CAMHS do not fully meet their needs, and services are too fixated on traditional clinical models to treat psychiatric symptomatology. Involving YPSWs can therefore assist CAMHS in providing mental healthcare that includes developmentally appropriate, youth-centered and recovery-oriented support.

["I Think Peer Support Helps to Demystify People Who Have Mental Health Issues and Helps to Remove That Stigma": Exploring the Defining Characteristics and Related Challenges of Youth Peer Support Through Participatory Research](#) Full text

available with NHS OpenAthens account\*

Community Mental Health Journal, March 2024

This study represents a participatory approach that can inform research design in evaluation of youth-focused interventions in future. It also brings attention to key issues that need to be addressed when developing peer support programming in youth mental health. This study offers insight to consider youth peer practice as the working conditions of young people coping with mental health issues and an opportunity to think more holistically about how to create healthier environments beyond health services. We hope that this study contributes to creating stronger organizational supports, healthier contexts for peers going forward and the development of more effective peer mentorship practices.

### [A systematic scoping review of peer support interventions in integrated primary youth mental health care](#)

Journal of Community Psychology, September 2023

This systematic scoping review aimed to collate and synthesise the evidence on key aspects of peer support interventions within integrated youth services and educational settings. Specifically, it synthesised evidence on the (1) assessed mental health outcomes in peer support interventions, (2) key characteristics and associated roles of peer support workers (PSWs) and (3) barriers and facilitators to implementation.

### [A systematic review exploring youth peer support for young people with mental health problems](#)

European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, December 2022

Youth peer support workers (YPSWs) are young adults with lived experience of mental illness during childhood or adolescence who support young people receiving treatment in mental health services. The contributions made by YPSWs are a promising development to facilitate consumer-centered and recovery-oriented care. Although the youth peer support workforce is expanding rapidly, structurally embedding YPSWs in practice is challenging. To overcome these challenges and thereby improve care for young people, insight into YPSW roles, barriers and facilitators for implementing and pursuing youth peer support (YPS) is a necessity. This systematic review examined the published literature to identify existing knowledge on YPSW roles in treatment settings, and the barriers and facilitators for implementing and pursuing YPS in practice.

## Supervision

[Implementing a supervision model in community children's mental health: Experiences of supervisors and practitioners](#) Full text available with NHS OpenAthens account\*

Psychological Services, May 2023

As conceptual frameworks, models of supervision are one way to strengthen supervision through intentionally incorporating theory, best practices, and research. Theoretically grounded and integrative, the Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) clinical supervision model incorporates best practices, guidelines, and techniques informed by explanatory and practice theories, and research. This article presents a qualitative study exploring the experiences of supervisors and supervisees in children's mental health settings implementing this model of supervision for an evidence-based intervention.

## Remote provision of services

### [Videoconferencing in mental health services for children and adolescents receiving child welfare services: a scoping review](#)

BMC Health Services Research, June 2024

This scoping review shows that if videoconferencing in mental health care is to become an established and trusted method aimed at children and adolescents receiving child welfare services, several unresolved and potentially negative issues need attention and more research. This particularly applies to whether videoconferencing decreases or exacerbates inequalities in access to mental health services. A further question is whether new barriers are raised by screen-based treatment to threaten good therapeutic relationships, and by extension treatment quality and clinical outcomes.

## Evidence Brief: Children and Young People's Mental Health

### [Experiences of Remote Provision across a Voluntary Sector Organisation Providing Mental Health and Wellbeing Services for Young People](#)

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, November 2023

Overall, alternative modes of provision are regarded as advantageous additions to service as usual. The changes catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the VCS service becoming more accessible; however, this format was not suitable for all. When considering future models of provision, assessing needs, preferences, and access to private space and hardware are all important considerations when deciding which format to use to achieve the best possible outcomes.

### [Frontline professionals' use of and attitudes towards technology to support interventions for adolescents with depression symptoms: A mixed methods survey](#)

Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, November 2023

Digital technology offers an effective way to deliver evidence-based treatment at scale. Frontline, non-specialist professionals may often be the first point of contact for adolescents when they begin to struggle with their mental health, including with depression symptoms. Therefore, they may be well-placed to signpost adolescents to digital mental health interventions, including single session interventions (SSIs). We found that UK based frontline professionals have favourable attitudes towards using technology to support adolescents with depression symptoms, particularly for those with mild-moderate symptoms as compared to those with severe symptoms. Technology was viewed as important to bridge the needs-access gap.

Professionals were interested in learning about online SSIs.

### ['It's not like real therapy': young people receiving child welfare services' experiences of video consultations in mental healthcare in Norway: a mixed methods approach](#)

BMC Health Services Research, September 2023

The study reveals important weaknesses and disadvantages of online therapy as experienced by young people receiving child welfare services. It is particularly worrying that their criticism involves the relational aspects of treatment, as children receiving child welfare services often have relational experiences which make them particularly sensitive to challenges in relationships. This study shows that youth involvement in decision making of video consultations in therapy has been rare. Clinicians should be aware of these young people's doubts regarding the quality of video consultations in child and adolescent mental health care.

### ['Space to hide': experiences of remote provision across child and adolescent mental health services \(CAMHS\)](#)

BMC Health Services Research, November 2022

The study aimed to understand young people's, parents'/carers', and professionals' experiences of remote provision across CAMHS in one NHS Trust in the North West of England to inform future recovery practice so that remote sessions can continue where they have been well received but re-thought or replaced where they have not. Reduced travel time for both clinicians and families may increase capacity, enabling the service to meet the increased demand if clinical effectiveness can be preserved. In considering future models of provision, assessing clinical need, patient and family preference, and access to space and hardware are all critical when deciding which modality to use for the best outcomes for each individual.



### Education and training

#### [Delivering and implementing child and adolescent mental health training for mental health and allied professionals: a systematic review and qualitative meta-aggregation](#)

BMC Medical Education, February 2021

The synthesis statements, and underlying categories, provide practical recommendations for those designing, delivering, or implementing CYP mental health training, with a range of both mental health, and allied, professionals. They can be used to improve training content and delivery, and to maximise gains during implementation. The review provides a strong evidence-based foundation to “common-sense” principles, drawing them into a coherent and organised framework using a synthesis method grounded in pragmatism.

#### [Supporting minority groups in schools – reflections on training education mental health practitioners](#)

The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education, and Practice, 2021

This study aims to reflect upon the first wave of training of Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs), a new National Health Service role to provide support for Children and Young People (CYP) with low and moderate mental health needs in education settings in England. The study specifically focusses on the training for EMHPs in relation to their support for CYP who identify themselves as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME), refugees or from the traveller community.

#### [Young people and social networking sites: exploring the views and training opportunities of CAMHS social workers in Ireland](#)

Full text available with NHS OpenAthens account\*

Journal of Social Work Practice, June 2019

Findings suggest that participants consider an understanding of SNS to be an important part of CAMHS practice. However,

participants report that they do not feel sufficiently aware of SNS trends among young people, suggesting that there is scope for SNS-focused training/learning opportunities among this sample of CAMHS social workers. Implications for practice and suggestions for future research are outlined.

#### [The effect of a training programme on school nurses' knowledge, attitudes, and depression recognition skills: The QUEST cluster randomised controlled trial](#)

International Journal of Nursing Studies, July 2018

This school nurse development programme, designed to convey best practice for the identification and care of depression, delivered significant improvements in some aspects of depression recognition and understanding, and was associated with increased confidence in working with young people experiencing mental health problems.

### Service transformation

#### [Snakes and Ladders: The experience of being referred to and seen by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services](#)

SSM - Mental Health, December 2024

CAMHS has been under enormous pressure over recent years with clinical capacity more stretched than ever before in the context of the Covid19 pandemic, and significant workforce gaps. Parents/carers and young people are dissatisfied with long waiting times, lack of communication while waiting, rejected referrals without clear options for next steps, and dissatisfaction with assessments and care provided by CAMHS. Timely and sensitive signposting is important and whilst hybrid clinical support offers flexibility and increased accessibility, care must be taken to best meet individual needs and preferences. Care must also be taken to manage referral expectations and interventions must be put in place to reduce clinical burden in CAMHS and

reduce waiting times, improve accessible information, and clear communication about other services.

### [Service design for children and young people with common mental health problems: literature review, service mapping and collective case study](#)

Health and Social Care Delivery Research, May 2024

We have explored different service models for CYP experiencing CMHPs, preferring not to recommend any one model over others because the review data were equivocal and there was no strong support for any particular model in the case study data. Instead, we have developed an alternative, evidence-based model that outlines the fundamental components necessary for high-quality services for CYP experiencing CMHPs. Our model has utility for policy, practice and research, supports previous research and reports in this area and adds significant depth around core issues like confidentiality, aftercare, personalised approaches, engagement and organisational culture.

### [A collaboratively produced model of service design for children and young people with common mental health problems](#)

BMC Health Services Research, January 2024

A consistent organisational evidence-base for service design and delivery in CYP's mental health spanning many years appears to have had little impact on service provision in England and Wales. Rather than impose – often inflexible and untested – specific local or national models or frameworks, those commissioning, designing and delivering mental health services for CYP should (re)focus on already known, fundamental components necessary for high-quality services. These fundamental components have been integrated into a collaboratively produced general model of service design for CYP with common mental health problems. While this general model is primarily focused on British service provision, it is broad enough to have utility for international audiences.

### [How to make mental health services more youth-friendly? A Delphi study involving young adults, parents and professionals](#)

Health Expectations, August 2023

This Delphi study investigated to what extent young adults, parents and professionals (dis)agreed about the relevance of implementations of previously identified characteristics to the youth-friendliness of services. For many items consensus was reached within the public panel and the professional panel. These items can be used by services as a checklist for youth-friendliness. For implementation, it is important to note that participants showed more insecurity about the feasibility of these items in clinical practice. Finally, our study also revealed some topics of discussion that invite a continuous dialogue between young adults, parents and professionals in terms of treatment and service design and delivery.

### [Implementation of significant mental health service change: perceptions and concerns of a mental health workforce in the context of transformation](#)

Journal of Health Organization and Management, February 2022

The findings fall into three thematic areas around the transformation, namely (1) rationale; (2) implementation; and (3) maintenance. Staff members were supportive of the rationale for the changes, but implementation was affected by perceived poor communication, resulting in experiences of unpreparedness and de-stabilisation. Staff members lacked time to set up the necessary processes, meaning that changes were not always implemented smoothly. Recruiting and retaining the right staff, a consistent challenge throughout the transformation, was crucial for maintaining the service changes.



### [How does reorganisation in child and adolescent mental health services affect access to services? An observational study of two services in England](#)

PLoS ONE, May 2021

There is pressure to improve child and adolescent mental health services across many nations. Our findings provide robust evidence on how major service changes to child mental health services can be evaluated. Such service evaluations are rarely conducted and published because of the complexity of the intervention considered. This study highlights how the model of service change or 'transformation' adopted across many English services can help to increase access to services, but it takes time for the benefits of reorganisation to be realised.

### [Evaluating the CYP-IAPT transformation of child and adolescent mental health services in Cambridgeshire, UK: a qualitative implementation study](#)

Implementation Science Communications, October 2020

As indicated by quality improvement frameworks, before QI programmes are rolled out, time should be given to assessing readiness for change at both strategic and service levels and for preparing the organisational infrastructure to support the changes. This early stage of preparation is vital for laying the foundations necessary to engage stakeholders at all levels of the organisation. From the outset, there should be clarity about what the programme is and what it is trying to achieve, rather than a trickle of information over time with which it is difficult to keep up. The flexibility of a place-based approach to implementation is essential, but without training and support, it is unrealistic to expect local teams to have the requisite knowledge of evidence-based implementation strategies to do this.

## New ways of working

### [Improving access and flow within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: a collaborative learning system approach](#)

BMJ Open Quality, November 2020

Teams were brought together to help learn from each other and accelerate change through a facilitated collaborative learning system. Of the seven teams that began the collaborative learning system, six completed a project. Across the collaborative learning system collectively there were improvements in average waiting times for first, second and third appointments, and an improvement in the number of appointments cancelled. For the individual teams involved, three saw an improvement in their project outcome measures, two just saw improvements in their process measures and one did not see an improvement in any measure. In addition to service improvements, teams used the process to learn more about their pathway, engage with service users and staff, build QI capability and learn together.

### [Introducing a single point of access \(SPA\) to child and adolescent mental health services in England: A mixed-methods observational study](#)

BMC Health Services Research, July 2020

The introduction of a SPA has the potential to improve young people's access to mental health services. By addressing some of the barriers to access, simplifying where to go to get help and making it easier to contact the service directly, a SPA can help more individuals and families access timely support. However, the introduction of a SPA does not in itself expand the capacity of CAMHS, and therefore expectations within services and across sectors need to be tempered accordingly. SPA services providing different referral approaches can further improve access for the harder to reach populations.

### [Evaluating the effects of appointing an associate nurse consultant to a CAMHS team](#) Abstract only\*

Mental Health Practice, April 2020

Nurse consultants have an important role in strengthening the capacity and productivity of the workforce in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). An associate nurse consultant (ANC) was appointed to a local CAMHS team in County Durham, primarily to support the medical staff. A service evaluation of the effects of the newly developed post on the team, particularly the medical staff, showed that it had reduced the medical staff's workload.

The evaluation further showed that the ANC had enhanced the support available to nursing staff and that there may be scope for another similar role to provide better coverage of the locality and respond to all healthcare disciplines' needs. A major benefit of the appointment of an ANC is that it has developed another route for nurse career progression, thereby providing a means of improving staff recruitment and retention.

### [Delphi study to identify key features of community-based child and adolescent mental health services in the East of England](#)

BMJ Open, June 2019

These findings help to operationalise high level plans for service transformation in line with the goals and needs of those using and working in the local system and may be particularly useful for identifying gaps in ongoing transformation efforts. More broadly, the method used here offers a blueprint that could be replicated by other areas to support the ongoing transformation of CAMHS.

## Competency Frameworks

### [Children and Young People's Mental Health Competency Framework](#)

Supporting Children, Young People and Families, April 2025

This framework sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed by professionals delivering mental health support to children, young people, and families. It integrates developments since the original [CAMHS framework](#) (NHS Education for Scotland and UCL, 2011), which [even in its name - use of 'CAMHS', which is being replaced by CYPMH] is outdated; updating it to ensure integration of the principles of [CYP-IAPT](#) (NHS HEE, 2014), the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) commitments (NHS England), the [THRIVE Model](#) (Anna Freud and Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, 2014), as well as the latest guidance from [NICE](#), [CORC](#), and other specific relevant guidance such as updated guidance for all mental health practitioners [Staying Safe from Suicide](#) (NHS England, 2025). This framework reflects the move away from a tiered service model towards a needs-led, person-centred approach, ensuring that children, young people and families receive the right help, in the right place, at the right time from a system that works together across health, education, social care and VCSE organisations.

### [Senior Wellbeing Practitioner Role \(for EMHPs and CWP's\) Graduate/ Post-Graduate Diploma Training](#)

Health Education England, December 2022

Ensuring the supply of staff trained to deliver high quality care for children and young people's mental health (CYP MH) is critical to delivering the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) commitments. The availability of appropriate CYPMH supervision is emerging as a key limiting factor for any options of expansion of MHSTs and other CYP MH services beyond current plans. It is also becoming increasingly clear that in order to reach the access

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target of 345,000 by 23/24, and 100% coverage by the end of the LTP period, we will need to equip our workforce to offer a broader range of interventions to children, young people and families from a wider range of backgrounds and in spaces beyond the clinic and educational settings. The CYP MH low intensity psychological professions workforce is critical to achieving these commitments.

### Competencies for work with children and young people (4-18 years)

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, August 2022

A map of core competencies for work with children and young people.

### Counsellors' Guide: The competences for humanistic counselling with children and young people (4-18 years)

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, July 2022

This guide identifies the competences required for undertaking effective humanistic counselling for children and young people within the 4–18 years' age range. It describes a framework for the competences; how practitioners should apply this; its advantages for clinicians, trainers and commissioners; and the uses to which it can be put.

### Counselling children and young people (4–18 years) training curriculum

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2022

The aim of this curriculum is to enable counselling practitioners to gain knowledge of, and competence in, working with children and/or young people aged 4–18 years in order to engage in therapy with this age group in an ethical and effective way.

### Children and young people's mental health & wellbeing: a knowledge and skills framework for the Scottish workforce

NHS Education for Scotland, April 2021

For everyone working with children and young people, we hope this framework provides a common language and shared understanding of the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and how this links with staff learning and development. The framework sets out the different levels of knowledge and skills required by members of the Scottish workforce to promote positive wellbeing and good mental health for children and young people. It is part of our wider work to improve the mental health care for children and young people.

The framework has been written in collaboration with partners across the Scottish workforce including health, education, social care and third sector organisations, and involved listening to what young people want and need from the adults that support them.

### Online and phone therapy (OPT) competence framework

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement for many of our members to move to online or phone counselling reinforced the need for the framework and curriculum to be updated. This updated online and phone therapy (OPT) competence framework and user guide for working with adults provides members with a more robust, up-to-date framework to support training and practice in OPT.

### Children's Wellbeing Practitioner (CWP) Supervisor Training – Competency Assessment and Development Framework Curriculum

Health Education England, October 2020

The Children's Wellbeing Practitioner (CWP) role was developed in direct response to the Government's Five Year Forward View report (2016) which provided an indicative trajectory for

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increased access to services, recognising that this would require a significant expansion of the workforce. It made clear that the CYPMHS workforce needed an additional 1700 practitioners up to 2020/21 to close the gap between demand and provision for evidence-based mental health treatments for children and young people. The NHS Long Term Plan and Implementation plan (2019) further outlines this need and the ongoing expansion of the CYPMHS workforce. These reports challenge us to ensure there is step-change in the accessibility of support for children young people and their families, to tackle mild to moderate presentations in a timely and effective manner and to accelerate the identification and triaging of more complex cases for appropriate treatment.

### Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) Supervisor Training Competency Assessment and Development Framework

Health Education England, October 2020

The new Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) role is in direct response to the Government's green paper. As this document and the government response to it outlines, the aim is to develop Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) to deliver mental health provision to local education clusters. The EMHP forms part of the MHSTs, alongside other senior mental health practitioners and specialist supervisors. These specialist EMHP supervisor roles are in place to provide safe and effective practice during both the EMHP training year and once qualified. As part of the MHST and EMHP programme, participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are commissioned to deliver EMHP supervisor training and assurance and challenge support to facilitate effective and robust supervisory practice.

### Competence Framework for Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists

Association of Child Psychotherapists, 2020

This document identifies the skills and knowledge acquired by Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists (CAPPTs) during their six-year training. It describes a framework of the relevant competences, and discusses how this should be applied and its advantages for clinicians, trainers, managers and commissioners.

### Inpatient CAHMS CYP whole team training specification

Health Education England (no date)

The key aim of this programme is to transform existing inpatient services for children and young people by adopting and adapting where necessary, those elements of the CYP IAPT programme that will help improve outcomes for children and young people, and by providing treatment which is based on best evidence, outcomes focused and client informed. Improving the mental health and well-being of all CYP is a national priority. In most cases, mental health needs can be met through community services however a small number of young people have needs which can only be met through highly specialised inpatient care. Residential psychiatric provision for children and young people has a complicated history spanning 60 years, but notably over the past thirty years there has been a dramatic reduction in inpatient beds, resulting in inpatient psychiatry becoming a low volume, high cost, 'supra district' service (Green & Jacobs, 1998).

### Module aims and content of Education Mental Health Practitioner for Children and Young People Curriculum (EMHP)

Health Education England (no date)

This EHMP role is in direct response to the government's green paper (Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Department for Education (DfE), 2017) on improving the access

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to, and quality of, mental health support for children and young people, with a particular focus on access within education settings. As the green paper, and the government response (DHSC and DfE, 2018) to it outlines, the aim is to develop Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) that will deliver mental health provision to local education settings, with each participating school and college having a designated mental health lead. It is proposed that the new EMHPs will form a core part of these teams, alongside other MH practitioners and specialist supervisors, and will be employed by local participating mental health services. These Health Education England (HEE) commissioned EMHPs will undertake a Postgraduate/Graduate Diploma at participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). They will be trained to delivery low intensity interventions both face to face and remotely (see modules 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6) with children, young people and their parents/carers for common mental health problems (anxiety, low mood and behavioural difficulties). They will also be taught the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively in education settings and to support whole school approaches to mental health (see modules 4, 5 and 6). They will need to evidence their knowledge, skills and attributes through the specified assessments and clinical practice requirements.

### Delivering inpatient children and young people's mental health care

UCL (no date)

Welcome to the multidisciplinary competence framework for staff working in children and young people's inpatient mental health services.

### Module Aims and Content of Wellbeing Practitioners for Children and Young People Curriculum (CWP)

Health Education England (no date)

The Five Year Forward View report (2016) provided an indicative trajectory for increased access to services recognising that this will require a significant expansion of the workforce. It made clear that the CYPMH workforce needed an additional 1700 practitioners over the next four years to close the gap between demand and provision for evidence-based mental health treatments for children and young people.

The NHS Long Term Plan and Implementation plan (2019) and Mental Health Implementation Plan further outline this need for the ongoing expansion of the CYPMH workforce.

These reports challenge us to ensure there is step-change in the accessibility of support for children young people and their families, to tackle mild to moderate presentations in a timely and effective manner and to accelerate the identification and triaging of more complex cases for appropriate treatment.