

<i>item:</i>	10
<i>report:</i>	CYP47/08

MENTAL HEALTH LINK WORKER

By Sally Amor and Sally Nowell

Summary

Delivering for Mental Health (Scottish Executive 2006) recommends that a: *'named mental health link person is available to every school, fulfilling the functions outlined in the Framework.'* Within the Argyll and Bute and Highland integrated children's services partnerships the role and its related functions have been developed by a process of consultation with key stakeholders in health and education services.

Feedback on the model detailed in this paper and the related discussion will inform the submission to the Scottish Government quality visit in October 2008, to assess progress regarding the implementation of Delivering for Mental Health Requirements across the Highland Partnership.

The Highland Joint Committee for Children and Young People is asked to:

1. Note the functions of mental health link worker
2. Endorse the proposed service model
3. Agree to a wider consultation on the proposed service model with specialist CAMHS, CHPs, schools and the educational psychology service

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Mental health and well being is a clear priority for the Scottish Government, which recognises the importance of the mental health and well being of children and young people across the continuum of promotion, prevention and care is recognised.
- 1.2 The prevalence of children and young people with mental health difficulties in schools is estimated as follows:

A secondary school with a population of 1000 young people, with a total associated primary school population of 1000 will have 200 children and young people directly affected by a mental disorder: of these 100 would have a clinically significant conduct disorder, 80 an emotional disorder and 20 would be hyperactive. In addition, 200 young people would be experiencing mental health difficulties that affected their day to day life.

- 1.3 This highlights the importance of advice and assistance to school staff to ensure a sensitive and effective response.
- 1.4 Delivering for Mental Health (Scottish Executive 2006) requires that a: *'named mental health link person is available to every school, fulfilling the functions outlined in the Framework.'* There are a range of professionals who are involved in supporting the mental health and well being of children and young people in schools, across the continuum of promotion, prevention and care and as such, a range of professionals will be involved in delivering the role.

2. Functions: Mental Health Link Worker

- To advise school staff regarding referral to specialist CAMHS
- To work with local authorities and other relevant agencies to plan, identify and, where appropriate and possible, provide topical and specific training opportunities in mental health for school staff including the impact on mental health of child protection issues.
- To be a contact point regarding information about mental health.
- To provide support for the mental health agenda within the health promoting school setting in conjunction with other relevant agencies.
- To facilitate access to consultation regarding mental health issues for school staff.
- To support the development of clear referral protocol regarding mental health issues with school staff.
- To work within the school environment to facilitate young people receiving mental health care and treatment accessing mainstream activities which promote emotional literacy.
- To support schools to develop the role of PSE sessions in exploring issues around mental health and well being.
- To support and encourage schools to provide generic sessions for parents, children and young people around relationships and associated risks around development of mental health difficulties in conjunction with other relevant agencies.

3. Proposed service model

- 3.1 The role requires a range of mental health competencies. It is not a set of tasks for any single individual within the system. It is proposed that it will be delivered across an associated school group by a range of professionals within the 'Getting it Right' framework.
- 3.2 Such an approach is likely to include close involvement between schools and named persons / lead professionals in schools, with a primary mental health worker and/or educational psychologist, supported by community paediatricians, school nurses and teaching staff involved in pupil support.

- 3.3 The role will reinforce the processes, individuals and forums that are available for advice, information and access to mental health services. Critically, there has to be a standard multi-agency process, as part of a clear GIRFEC protocol, to make decisions regarding referral to specialist CAMHS.
- 3.4 Thus, while the individuals who fulfil the functions may vary across geographies, according to local circumstances, there will be both consistency and clarity in the approach. For example, initial work undertaken in one Highland locality has determined that the role will be delivered variously across the primary mental health worker, educational psychology and the public health (school) nurse.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 details professionals who may be involved in delivering the functions across the Highland system.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 Consult with the wider network of associated school groups, educational psychology services, CHPs and specialist CAMHS services on the functions and proposed personnel to fulfil the different functions
- 4.2 Identify issues and gaps through the consultation process and incorporate these into related workforce and financial planning processes
- 4.3 Explore options as to how the role can be monitored and supported as part of the wider CAMHS Framework Implementation Plan
- 4.4 Identify risks and issues in relation to delivering the function that will be addressed through the associated development of best practice guidance

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Appendix 1 - Mental Health Link Worker

Function	Delivered by
To advise school staff regarding referral to specialist CAMHS	Multi-agency process, as part of clear GIRFEC protocol (see [*] below)
To work with local authorities and other relevant agencies to plan, identify and, where appropriate and possible, provide topical and specific training opportunities in mental health for school staff including the impact on mental health of child protection issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Mental Health Worker • Educational Psychology
To be a contact point regarding information about mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Mental Health Worker • Educational Psychology
To provide support for the mental health agenda within the health promoting school setting in conjunction with other relevant agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Mental Health Worker • Educational Psychology • Pupil support • Public Health (School) Nurse • Health Promoting Schools Officer
To facilitate access to consultation regarding mental health issues for school staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Psychology • Pupil support
To support the development of clear referral protocol regarding mental health issues with school staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Officers Group as part of GIRFEC process [*]
To work within the school environment to facilitate young people receiving mental health care and treatment accessing mainstream activities which promote emotional literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead professional • Primary Mental Health Worker • Children's Services Worker • Educational Psychology • Pupil support • Public Health (School) Nurse
To support schools to develop the role of PSE sessions in exploring issues around mental health and well being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Mental Health Worker • Quality Improvement Team • Educational Psychology • Pupil support • Public Health (School) Nurse
To support and encourage schools to provide generic sessions for parents, children and young people around relationships and associated risks around development of mental health difficulties in conjunction with other relevant agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named person • Primary Mental Health Worker • Children's Services Worker • Educational Psychology • Pupil support • Public Health (School) Nurse • Community Paediatricians