



Public Health Briefing



A New Emotional, Psychological and Social Wellbeing Service for Children and Young People in Devon

We are pleased to announce the award of the new support service to schools and learning community staff to improve the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of children and young people.

The service, which starts in September, supports the drive for early-intervention services which tackle mental health problems before they become more serious. The service will be split into three elements: school support, direct support for children and young people, and parenting support.

The school support element of the service has been awarded to Virgin Care Ltd, who already deliver Integrated Children's Services in Devon. The new service will be managed within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

“Over the past three years CAMHS has seen rising demand and increasingly complex cases. This service will help catch cases earlier, relieve pressure by building on existing skills, and simplify access to both information and to the specialist mental health interventions available from CAMHS.” – Heather Kapeluch, Head of CAMHS & Specialist Community Children's Services, Integrated Children's Service, Devon

The service will provide dedicated Enhanced Primary Mental Health Workers who will work with each learning community, offering Introduction to Mental Health and ongoing training supported by Young Devon and Exeter University, as well as clinical supervision for staff and specialist consultation sessions. Teachers and other educational staff will be able to use the sessions to discuss concerns, identify emerging mental health problems and develop solutions to better support the children and young people they are responsible for.

“There is overwhelming evidence that children and young people with higher levels of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing do better in school. We have worked with schools and our partners to find out how we can best support the emotional and psychological needs of Devon's young people. This new service will be responsive to emerging mental health issues and help tackle them before they become more serious and have a negative impact on young people's lives.” –Dr Virginia Pearson, Director of Public Health, Devon County Council

The direct support element of the service has been awarded to Young Devon, who already have extensive experience delivering direct support to young people aged 11-19 in Devon. Tim Tod, Chief Executive Young Devon, explains that the new service will be delivered in partnership with Xenzone (Kooth) and Virgin Care Ltd (CAMHS) so that any young person will be able to quickly access information and appropriate levels of support through:

- Obtaining self-help tools online
- Accessing online counselling at a time they need it
- Joining young people's support and participation groups
- Engaging with a mentor to plan different coping strategies
- Face-to-face counselling

The service is also developing targeted parenting support for parents of primary aged children which will be delivered by local children's centres.

"Mental health and emotional wellbeing have been identified as a top priority for Devon. I am delighted that we have been able to work together to invest in this critically important new service." –Councillor Andrea Davis, Chairman of the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board

Service details are being finalised and more information will available over the coming months.