

CYPSP Voluntary/Community/BAME Partners Summary Update – May 2021

The CYPSP Vol/Com/BAME partners have noted that all of their work is concerned with improving Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.

This report contains a summary of feedback from partners in relation to strategic activity, challenges and suggested opportunities to influence and lobby.

Summary of Vol/Com/BAME Activity

- Response to policy consultations including SEN, Mental Health Strategy, Disability Strategy, Draft Programme for Government, Finance Budget.
- Action Mental Health (AMH) provision of trauma informed programmes using a bioecological framework which improve children's mental health and emotional wellbeing and build resilience. Programmes include capacity building for key adult contacts, for children and young people and those who support them, leading to 'whole school' and whole community approaches to mental and emotional wellbeing, all known to improve health outcomes across generations and create environments which nurture wellbeing and promote resilience.
- Barnardo's/SEHSCT pilot of an emotional wellbeing service to children and young people as part of the MDT service with GPs. The service will work directly with children and young people who are experiencing anxiety, bereavement, trauma, family difficulties and relationship issues. The systemic model is outcome based and aims to capacity build the supports around the child/young person to allow improved communication and functioning at home, school and the community.
- The provision of OT led early intervention 'Early Years Powered Mobility (EYPM) Clinics', reducing frustration, improving resilience

and building essential skills in children with complex disability - leading to improved outcomes. (Mae Murray Foundation (MMF))

- MMF Resource Library – 12 young people with complex disabilities have borrowed all-terrain wheelchairs, for their sole use to enable them and their family to get active outdoors in environments, off the beaten track, where there are no crowds and the risk of Covid infection is reduced. This allows the family to stay active and maintain the mental well-being, exploring new and remote locations where a regular wheelchair would struggle with the terrain.
- The continued delivery of online service and activities across all partner agencies.
- AMH provision of therapeutic services for children and young people including counselling, creative therapy and family therapy.

Challenges Identified

- The impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental and emotional wellbeing is widely recognised with particular concern for how this will manifest in coming years.
- Recognition of the need for adequate cross departmental commitment to mental health funding which will bring NI in line with GB and Ireland and reflect the higher levels of need in NI. This includes lack of statutory funding for AMH programmes identified above and limits AMH/ C&V/BAME sector capacity to meet the demand.
- Waiting lists for children and young people's counselling have increased.
- Lack of regulation in the provision of children and young people's wellbeing programmes creates challenges for schools when commissioning these services.
- MMF - Untimely gap in equipment provision causing detriment to children who are already hugely disadvantaged – that is, outgrowing Mae Murray Foundation free wheelchair loan scheme –

before NHS chair is provided. This is causing frustration and upset to children and can lead to challenging behaviour and self-harm. Having enjoyed independent mobility, and importantly play, for between 6-24 months, it is catastrophic to return to being reliant on others for movement and choice making. It also causes parent/caregiver significant stress. There is now a growing body of evidence demonstrating that long-term outcomes for these children with complex disability will improve dramatically if given the opportunity of timely and continuous EYPM intervention.

Lobbying / Influencing Activity / Opportunities

- A Mental Health recovery plan which addresses the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's wellbeing should be advocated for across departments. The MH Champion has committed to highlighting this in the consultations on the new Mental Health Strategy. (AMH)
- The implementation plan for the children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing in education framework notes the intention to 'design/commission a programme of evaluation to cover all programmes and services delivered through the framework'. We would welcome the opportunity to be involved and contribute to a co design approach. (AMH)
- Ongoing engagement by CiNI with MLA's, MP's and DE re children and young people's mental health.
- Continued work by CiNI in highlighting the issue of food and fuel poverty on the MHEWB needs of children and families, including the involvement of CiNI in the co-design groups for the anti-poverty strategy and the disability strategy where Department for Communities are the lead Department and work to secure the continuation of free school meals outside term time. Direct payments have been secured until Easter 2022.
- Appropriate next step chair is available and if it was placed on the NHS list then these children would not face this disadvantage and harm. Opportunity to launch a joint NHS/MMF research pilot – perhaps via Trust charitable funds, if meets criteria. Small number of children – huge impact. (MMF)