

Mental Health and Young People's Progression

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The Challenge – Mental Health and Young People in Devon



- Devon, as with other places, has seen a rapid increase in the number of young people with an underlying mental health need.
- Currently estimated at around 1 in 6 in Secondary Education, or around 15,000 individuals across the 14-25 age group in March 2023.
- Whilst NEET levels overall remain relatively low, NEETs with a recognised mental health condition have doubled since the onset of COVID.
- Waiting list for CAMHS has grown to over 2,000 in the past three years, roughly 4 times the demand of 2019.
- Partners reporting around 5% of all students now requiring additional mental health support at Year 11 transition.
- Those with a mental health condition in Devon are 25% less likely to progress into either further learning or employment.
- Demand pressures from our most deprived communities between 5-10 times higher than the County average.

The Cost to the Individual and Our Economy

- As we know, young people with a mental health condition face a range of barriers to progression:
 - Lost educational time and absence;
 - Loss of confidence and ability to engage with peers;
 - Behavioural challenges which schools may struggle with;
 - Lost achievement;
- Impact however not just about personal opportunity costs.
- Study work by the University of York in 2020 suggested that the working lifetime cost of an individual made NEET between 16-18 through a mental health challenge was around £170,000.
- In Devon, it is conservatively estimated that around 1,000 young people a year are outside employment, education and training at present. That equates to a £170m of lost activity over a lifetime.
- Long term unemployment due to mental health has doubled since the pandemic, with a subsequent increase in benefits. Estimated that around 35-40% of all unemployment benefit payments currently being made to individuals with a mental health condition.

So What Are We Doing?

- **CAMHS Capacity** – A small amount of additional dedicated resource has been secured for CAMHS in year, increasing the team’s head count on a temporary / project basis. Joint working ongoing with NHS / ICS colleagues to reinforce our shared offer.
- **Additional In School Pastoral Support** – Placing a stronger focus on mental health support across in-school services, including pan MAT capacity and within wider programmes, such as the Careers Hub and other school side interventions.
- **Devon Post 16 Transition Service** – Refocusing Devon’s core Post 16 Transition Programme to enhance support for those young people with a mental health condition. Additional 1-2-1 support rolled out across the contract.
- **Improved Alignment with DWP Mental Health Services** – Joint working to better align DWP’s national offer with local need, routing provision through local outreach programmes and contact points.
- **Enhanced Outreach Provision** – A range of enhanced outreach provision has been secured through District, County and Partner programmes (including the use of Shared Prosperity Fund in three districts). Support is often embedded within existing employability or inclusion activity.

However, total capacity / additional work being undertaken still cannot meet demand. The ongoing demobilisation of ESF funded support provision has recently begun to exacerbate this challenge, with youth facing provision facing a cliff edge over the autumn.

Case Study – Devon Youth Hub / Exeter Works

- Devon Youth Hub established as a standalone centre in 2021 to provide supplementary support for young people at risk of NEET / struggling to progress.
- Supported through a mixture of District, County and DWP funding, with an emphasis on those with the most acute need for outreach support. Quickly focused on mental health support and 1-2-1 coaching / referrals.
- Dedicated community outreach team, with an emphasis on keeping roles of outreach officer's flexible. Support offered ranges from formal advice and guidance and coaching, to helping individuals attend interviews and talk to learning providers and employers.
- Anxiety, depression and other clinical diagnosis increasingly prevalent through the cohort. Team has adapted over the last 18 months, with a focus on supporting individuals to manage change / challenge in a post covid world.
- Engaged with around 200 young people in first year, with around 100 directly supported into work or learning. Balance supported into wider programmes and provision.
- Recently relocated to Exeter Library to improve integration with wider services / access larger space.

What We Need – View from the Ground

- **Additional Resources for CAMHS and Acute Services for Young People** – Local authorities and their partners adapting as best they can, but demand post COVID has outstripped capacity. Limited local headroom to reinforce provision at the minute given wider pressures.
- **Improved Early Intervention** – Both for those coming through secondary, but also increasingly working with those coming through primary.
- **Renewed Support for Wider Outreach Services** – With the end of ESF, it has become harder to resource and support community outreach and softer support networks for young people. Need to ensure that replacement programmes are supporting the challenge.
- **Alignment of Interventions** – Whilst additional support is being put in place by the NHS, DWP and LAs, integration of aims and deliver models between programmes often remains difficult.
- **Data Sharing** – Too often a barrier to early and effective intervention between systems. Could significantly improve intervention in school facing services in particular.