

# **Starting Well, Living Well, Supporting Well**

A Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire  
Approach to Children and Young  
People's Mental Health and  
Emotional Wellbeing

2018 – 2023

## The Vision

We want children and young people and their families and carers in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to achieve their optimum potential as individuals and play an active role in their communities. This means enjoying good emotional wellbeing and positive mental health.

We recognise that to deliver this vision it is not the responsibility of one organisation alone. Children, young people, parents, carers, family members, professionals, schools and colleges, services and local communities all have a part to play in transforming the way in which we support children and young people to achieve positive mental health and to reach their potential.

We want children and young people to receive help at the earliest opportunity and to get the help they need as quickly as possible. The ambition is to enable them to:

- Be confident and resilient to be able to achieve their goals and ambitions;
- Make a positive contribution to society and the communities in which they live;
- Access the right support when they need it, having an informed choice in the way in which they are supported;
- Be involved in deciding how services meet their needs and are delivered.

## Priorities in Working Together

We have made a commitment to work together across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to strive to achieve the shared vision.

**The Pledge – A commitment to deliver POSITIVE change in supporting children and young people to Thrive** - across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent partners will:



## **Section 1: The Ambition and Context**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is a priority for us all. Children and young people's emotional wellbeing impacts on every part of their lives, their education, the relationships they have with their friends and family and the choices they make. Children and young people with good emotional health are better able to learn, participate and achieve their potential. It is also recognised that positive mental health is an important factor in enjoying good physical health.

We know that good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life deals them and helps them to grow into well-adjusted healthy adults. Providing children and young people and their families with the right type of support for their mental health at the earliest possible opportunity can help to avoid many of the damaging social and health problems they may face later in life.

Most children and young people do well and are thriving however we know there will be times when they need some extra help and support. To improve services and the mental health of children and young people, a whole-system review is needed to ensure provision is fit for the future. There needs to be a re-focus away from medicalisation and mental ill health to prevention, early intervention and support for the mental wellness of children and young people, their families and their communities.

Mental health is often influenced by many factors associated with the wider environment in which children and young people live. Some groups of children are more likely to experience poorer mental health than others. It is vital that these children and their families are supported to tackle the root causes of their issues. We know that effective early intervention can help prevent the development of poor health and longer term, enduring mental health conditions in adult life.

Better outcomes for children and young people will be achieved through fostering collaborative relationships with partners and local communities. We also accept that transforming the offer to children and young people will mean working differently, making sure that investment is being used to best effect in achieving the right outcomes for communities as a whole.

The local approach to children and young people's emotional well-being and mental health outlined in this Strategy has been designed, considered and consulted on with all stakeholders. This includes children and young people, their parents and carers, over 400 professionals across the whole workforce, Commissioners and Senior Officers within Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-On-Trent City Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's), the wider children's partnership including over 60 Providers and NHS England.

### **1.2 Why do we need a Strategy?**

#### **1.2.1 The National Policy Context**

There is a focus at a national level on the need to transform emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people. There are a number of national strategies, policy documents and guidance which have informed the development of this Strategy and are outlined below:

- Future In Mind – [Promoting, protecting and improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#) (May 2015)
- The NHS [Five Year Forward View Report](#) (2014)
- The Green Paper – [Transformation Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision](#) (2017) outlines changes the government wants to make, which will affect schools and colleges and mental health services, including mental health lead in every school and college by 2025.

It proposes:

- Mental health support teams (trained staff linked to groups of schools and colleges) working with schools and colleges
- Shorter waiting times to access Children and Young People's mental health services – testing ways to reduce waiting time to 4 weeks
- A new national partnership to improve provision for 16-25 year olds

The Strategy will focus on:

- tackling stigma and improving attitudes to mental illness;
- establishing integrated and clear pathways to support in the communities where the children and young people live;
- promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention;
- improving access to services – a system without tiers;
- care for the most vulnerable;
- accountability and transparency;
- developing the workforce.

### **1.2.2 The Local Policy Context**

This Strategy supports the delivery of a number of objectives set out in related local strategic documents which have been informed by engagement with key stakeholders and communities.

The Strategy takes account of the findings and recommendations in the **Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (April 2017)** and the more recent **Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (May 2018)**. We also recognise the need to take full account of what local communities are telling us their priorities are.

### **Current Commissioning Arrangements**

Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent there are strong collaborative commissioning arrangements in place between the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Local Authorities to support the commissioning of services for children and young people in relation to meeting their mental health and wellbeing needs.

There are also wider links across statutory agencies to the commissioning of services in relation to Public Health, early help, early years and family support, education, domestic abuse and youth offending. Where practical, a collaborative commissioning approach has been adopted to reduce duplication, make best use of resources and to aid market development.

## **Section 2: Transforming Services**

### **2.1 Strategic Aims**

We want to ensure that:

- All those who support children and young people have the confidence to promote positive emotional health and wellbeing and have the right knowledge and skills to provide information, advice and support where necessary, recognising that promoting good mental health is everyone's business;
- Children, young people, their families and communities are able to support themselves and each other to maintain good physical and mental health;
- Children and young people are receiving early help and support to manage their emotional health needs, reducing the need for referrals to specialist services;
- A skilled workforce is in place to support children and young people and their families across all levels of need;

- Parents, carers and families have a better understanding of what is normal development in relation to their child's/young person's behaviours and are able to recognise and know how to support the early signs of emotional stress;
- Effective support is available to parents and families who are experiencing difficulties where the risks from parental behaviours are likely to have an impact on the child/young person's mental health.

## 2.2 Future Commissioning Priorities

We recognise the current services that are commissioned to meet the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of children and young people are not as cohesive as they could be and provision is variable across the County and City. There is less support available to intervene early to meet low to moderate needs and to prevent these escalating. This inevitably puts pressure on the more specialist services in meeting higher or critical needs.

We know that the commissioning of services that are responsive to the needs of children and young people and their families, at the right level and at the right time will deliver the best outcomes.

The **POSITIVE** approach to change will be based upon the principles developed in the [Thrive](#) model. This is built upon the foundations of families functioning well, having positive wellbeing and supporting the wider community as opposed to managing the impact of poor mental health on the individual, their families, their communities and society as a whole.

This involves:

- Working with Public Health to focus on **prevention, promotion and building capacity (Thriving)** within local communities to instil confidence and resilience to achieve positive outcomes in relation to their emotional wellbeing. In Staffordshire this aligns to the strategic priority of 'People Helping People'. In Stoke-on-Trent a strategic priority is to 'support residents to fulfil their potential'.
- Prioritising **early intervention and support (Getting Help and Getting More Help)** for those in most need, ensuring that collective resources are put to best use and delivering positive outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people.
- For those children and young people for whom there are more enduring issues around their mental health there will be a need for a level of support to help them to stay safe and well. These are some of the most vulnerable, disadvantaged children and young people. We will ensure that there are targeted and specialist services which provide **risk support (Getting Risk Support)** and management strategies to meet complex needs, including those with learning disabilities, autism or both.

## Section 3: Delivering the Vision

### 3.1 The Principles - We will:

- Ensure that children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing is recognised as a priority within strategic plans and in partners' organisational structures;
- Have collaborative commissioning arrangements in place, supported by aligned and pooled budgets where appropriate, making best use of collective resources;
- Ensure that all commissioning decisions are informed by a robust assessment of need;
- Be transparent about what is invested in local services and the outcomes delivered;
- Participate fully in developing and implementing the national Minimum Dataset across all levels and ensure that arrangements are fully embedded in all contractual arrangements with regard to services for children and young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs;
- Recognise and act on opportunities to influence local and national policy to the benefit of children and young people and their families.

## 3.2 Priorities for strategic change

In delivering transformation plans and priorities the focus will be on the following:

- Strive to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health;
- Work together to build strength and resilience and reduce exposure to risks of poor physical and mental health in whichever way possible;
- Invest in services which support children and young people at the very earliest stage to prevent their needs escalating and to reduce the social health and economic costs associated with poor health and wellbeing;
- Identify those who are exposed to being at higher risk of mental health problems, working to support them and their families in an integrated, holistic way to keep them safe and minimise risks.

These below themes have been identified and mapped against the principles of the [Thrive Model](#), which will enable the relevant transformation requirements to be identified and embedded in the delivery plan and potentially influence future commissioning intentions.

### Key Emerging POSITIVE Change Priorities:

#### Thriving

- Improving Access to Services;
- Training and Development – professionals/families/carers;
- Engagement with schools/colleges.

#### Getting Help and Getting More Help

- Digital Offer;
- Locality Based Services (Place Based Approach/Cooperative Working);
- Transition to adulthood;
- Early Intervention;
- Parental Mental Health.

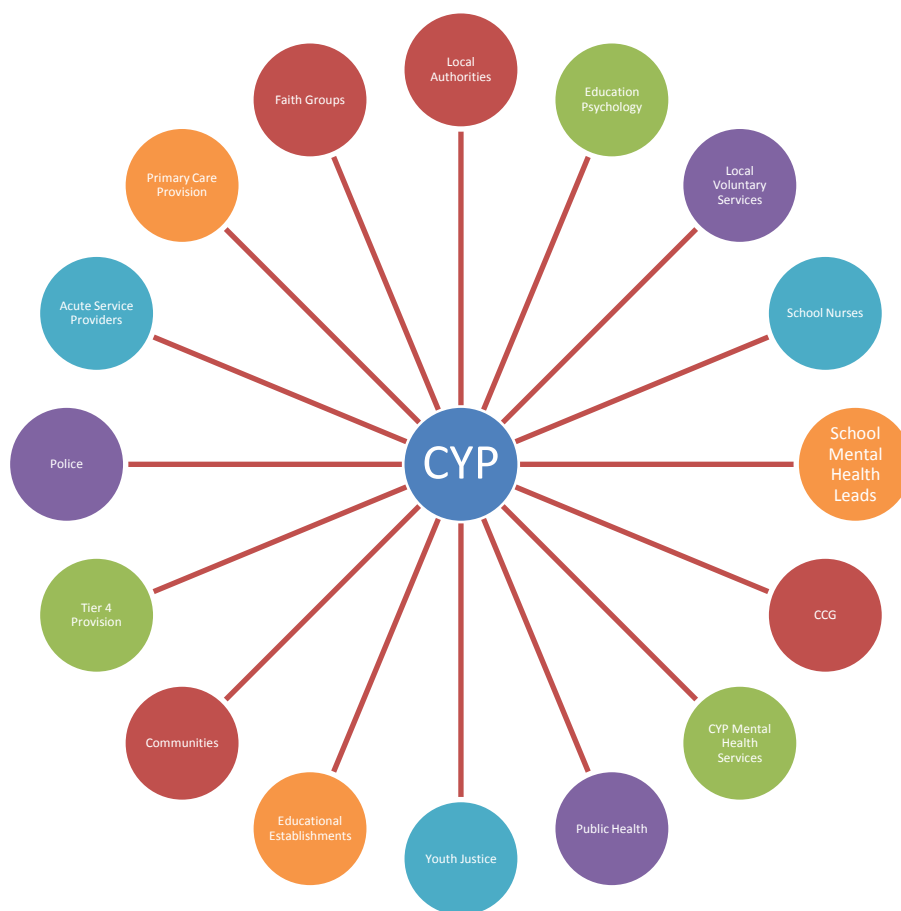
#### Risk Support

- Self-Harm;
- Suicide Prevention;
- Eating Disorder;
- Crisis Intervention;
- Looked After Children/Care Leavers;
- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Safeguarding children and young people (i.e., missing children).

#### Other Generic Priorities

- Developing the Workforce;
- Involving CYP service design and priority setting;
- Building Resilience among CYP, their families, carers and communities.

### 3.3 Shared Responsibility for improved outcomes



### 3.4 What will happen next?

The plan to implement and monitor the impact of this Strategy will be through the [Local Transformation Plan](#).

## Section 4: Measuring the impact of success

### 4.1 How will we know if we are making a difference?

These will be the benchmarks of success in bringing about **POSITIVE** change:

- Children and young people will be able to recognise their own mental health needs and will know how to manage them;
- Families will be able to support themselves to achieve improved mental and emotional health and will know how to get help if they need it;
- Children, young people and their families will be supported by a range of interventions, including from their communities, peers and professionals;
- Schools and colleges will be clear and confident in the role they play in supporting positive mental health. They will be able to recognise and support children and young people with their needs and will know how to access help and support for those with higher needs;
- Universal staff will be able to help children and young people and their families thrive and will be able to recognise when help is needed and will be part of the support plan;
- Commissioned services will offer the best professional, evidence based expertise to children and young people and their families to support them to achieve the best outcomes;

- Everyone working with children, young people and their families will have the right skills, capabilities and knowledge to support them.

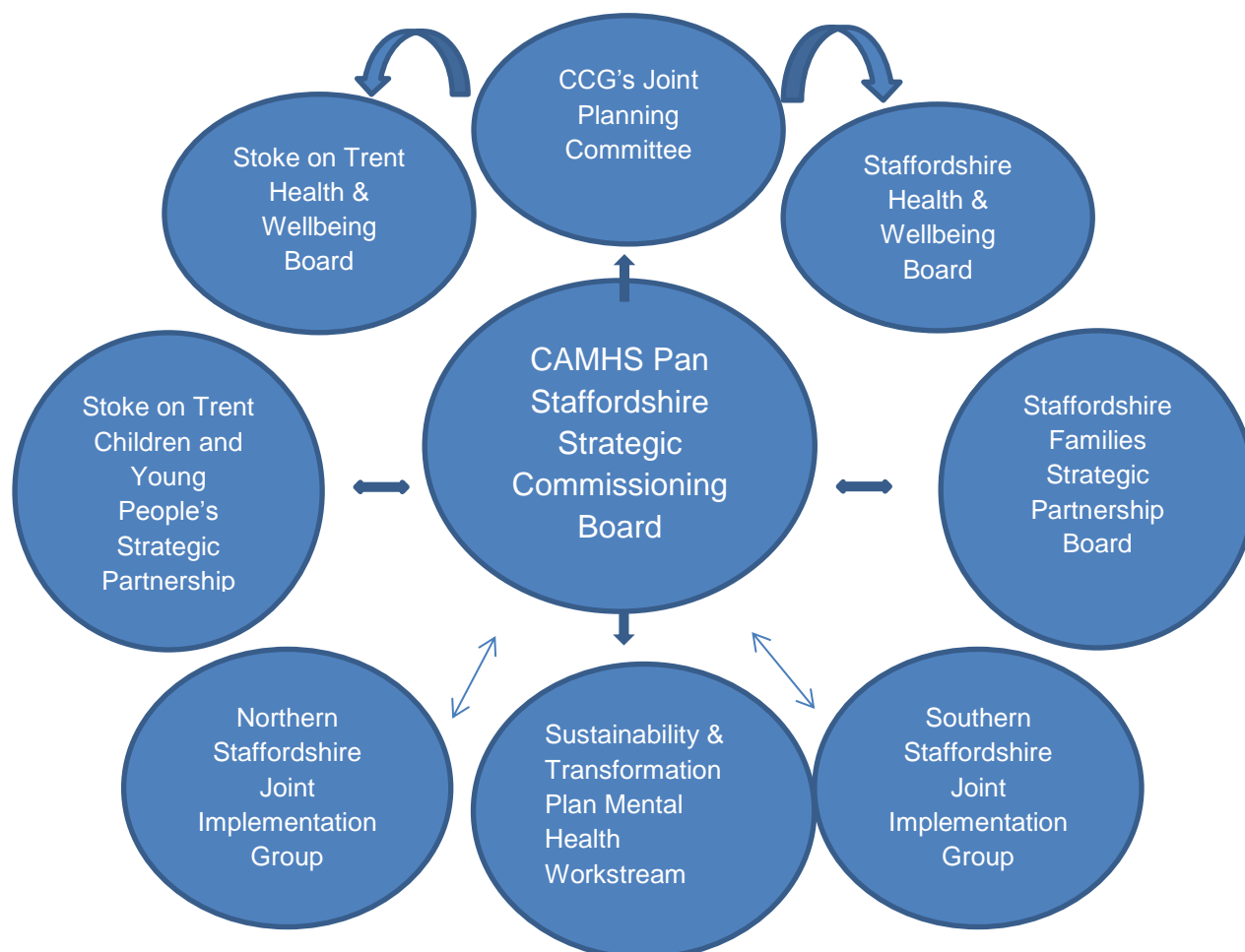
High Level Outcome	How will we know if this has been achieved?
<p>All Children and Young People (CYP) have improved emotional health and wellbeing and lead healthier lifestyles.</p> <p>CYP exercise their choice, control, and feel empowered to make healthier and/or safer choices in relation to their emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>More CYP will be supported to achieve positive outcomes in relation to their emotional wellbeing;</p> <p>There will be an improvement in the level and models of self-help and mutual/peer support;</p> <p>Better understanding of personal rights and options.</p>
<p>CYP will be supported to develop the resilience and capacity to manage their emotional stresses effectively, utilising the most appropriate support available at the time they need it, including maximizing local provision in their community.</p>	<p>An improvement in the capacity of CYP to access self-help following period of intervention;</p> <p>Increased numbers of people accessing early intervention support including: self-help information, advice and access to universal services.</p>
<p>Parents/carers will have increased confidence and knowledge to better manage their children's needs, where issues of mental health and emotional wellbeing impact on their functioning.</p>	<p>Improved outcomes for parents/carers and an increased confidence within the whole family to manage their mental health issues;</p> <p>CYP will be better supported in safe, stable family/carer environments where their needs are being met.</p>
<p>Professionals will have improved knowledge and skills to better understand and support CYP to positively manage the impact of poor mental health and promote optimum health and development of all CYP.</p>	<p>Improved support will be available through co-working and collaboration between primary care, health and social care services to meet the totality of individual and family needs;</p> <p>Improved skills and confidence to support CYP experiencing mental health distress;</p> <p>Professionals engaged in supporting CYP and their families/carers will be aware of the local pathways and services and will be confident in referring individuals requiring additional support to the most appropriate service to meet their needs;</p> <p>Increased awareness and understanding among partners and stakeholders of mental health issues, the impact of stigma and the need to encourage positive attitudes around mental health.</p>
<p>The wider community has an improved awareness and understanding of mental health issues which ultimately contributes to a reduction in health inequalities.</p> <p>Communities will feel supported to make the best use of their skills, time and other assets to increase self-esteem, confidence and resilience among vulnerable CYP to enable them to feel part of and make a positive contribution to their</p>	<p>Increased awareness/knowledge in communities of emotional and mental health problems, risk and protective factors, self-help and coping strategies;</p> <p>Reduced stigma and discrimination in regard to poor mental health;</p> <p>Improved access to a wide range of opportunities and locally responsive services to support CYP to achieve positive outcomes in relation to their health and wellbeing.</p>



<p>community.</p> <p>CYP and their families/carers that need support with their emotional wellbeing needs will be well connected with their communities and feel less lonely and socially isolated.</p>	
<p>CYP will be supported to live safely and independently and optimise recovery.</p> <p>Where there is a need for additional support CYP will be supported to access the right kind of support at the right time in the right place.</p>	<p>An increase in the number of CYP accessing appropriate support including information, advice and signposting;</p> <p>Improved access to early intervention services, that enable CYP to continue to function in their daily lives and help prevent escalation of need;</p> <p>Clear, integrated service pathways supporting CYP, their families/carers and professionals to better navigate access to services to best meet their needs;</p> <p>Reduction in the number of CYP needing crisis interventions or admissions to acute health and social care services;</p> <p>Reduction in the number of CYP entering secondary mental health care;</p> <p>A reduction in suicide rates and suicide attempts</p> <p>An improvement in CYPs transition experience from CYP services to adult mental health services;</p> <p>CYP will be appropriately supported to manage their recovery and where relevant their long term mental health conditions;</p> <p>Improved knowledge of professionals and communities of local service provision.</p> <p>CYP will feel satisfied with service delivery and the outcomes they have achieved</p>
<p>CYP and their families/carers will be actively involved in shaping the design, access and performance of mental health services, making a positive contribution to sustainable service transformation and improvement planning.</p>	<p>CYP will feel satisfied with service delivery and the outcomes they have achieved; Where service improvement is required CYP will play a fundamental role in informing and influencing transformation and developing new ways of working;</p> <p>Involvement will lead to increased social and communication skills, increased confidence and self-esteem and improved connectivity with their communities.</p>

## 4.2 Leadership and Governance

There are strong leadership and governance arrangements in place to ensure delivery of the Pledge. The leadership and governance model will provide critical challenge and hold each other to account on delivering the priorities.



## 4.3 Accountability, Transparency and Assurance

Who will hold partners and stakeholders to account to deliver the Pledge?		How will this happen?
Leadership and Governance	Pan-Staffordshire Joint Commissioning Board.  Health and Wellbeing Boards  Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) – Mental Health Workstream  Staffordshire and Stoke Safeguarding Children's Boards	Responsible for strategic decisions on transformation and commissioning of mental health services and overseeing the delivery of the CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) Local Transformation Plan.  Greater alignment to the STP governance with reporting mechanisms through the Mental Health Workstream

	Children, Young people and Families Strategic Partnership Board	
Communities	Elected Members and Select Committee Consultative Forums Overview and Scrutiny	Place Based Approach arrangements Elected Member feedback surveys/engagement events
The voice of children and young people	Young People's Voice Steering Group Children's Voice Project Staffordshire's CAMHS Participation Project and Stoke-on-Trent Youth Council	Challenge through a range of engagement and participation structures
Regional Assurance and collaboration	Future In Mind Steering Group (Regional Network)	Regional Collaborative meetings Regional Assurance and Peer Reviews
National Assurance and Peer Challenge	NHS England	Regional collaborative and peer challenge Assurance processes for the Local Transformation Plan

## Section 5: Service Insight

### 5.1 The Local Landscape

Understanding the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people is important if their wellbeing and life chances are to be improved.

Recent needs analysis has determined that across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, the prevalence of poor emotional wellbeing and mental health is higher in vulnerable groups such as those living with a parent with mental illness, those living in family environments where there are issues of domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse, those who are looked after children, young offenders and children with special education needs or learning disabilities. Financial pressures such as low income, debt and worklessness can have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of families and communities, particularly with regard to their mental health.

Whilst it is well understood that not all children who experience these vulnerabilities will go on to develop mental health issues, we are certain that more can be done to reduce the level of risk and build the resilience of children and young people from an early age and in their adolescent years to cope with such challenges.

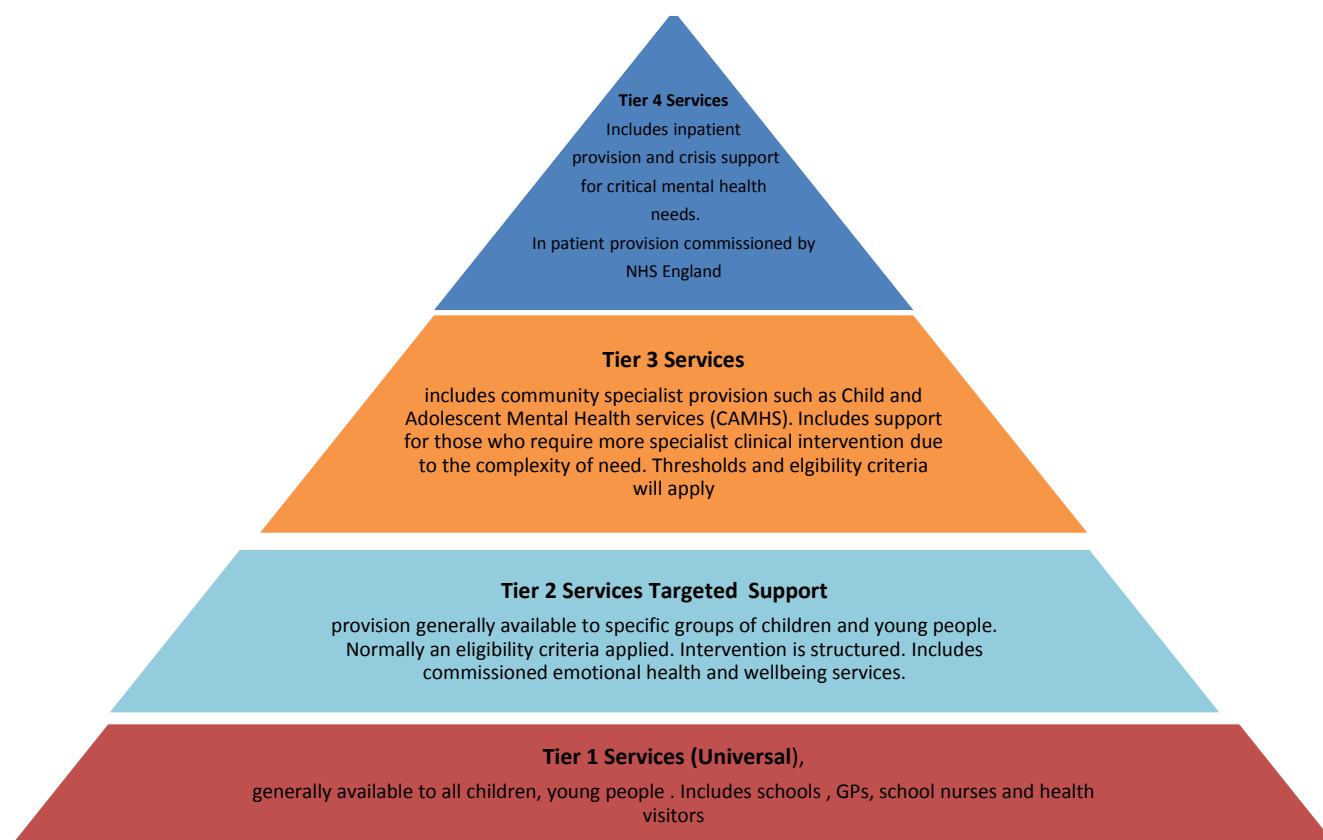
We understand that a child's relationship with their parents (or carers) has a major impact on their social and emotional development and a parents' ability to provide a nurturing relationship will depend on their own emotional and social wellbeing.

If these challenges are to be addressed there is a need to ensure that partners and stakeholders are working in a much more holistic, family focused way in providing the information, advice and support needed.

## 5.2 Current Service Provision

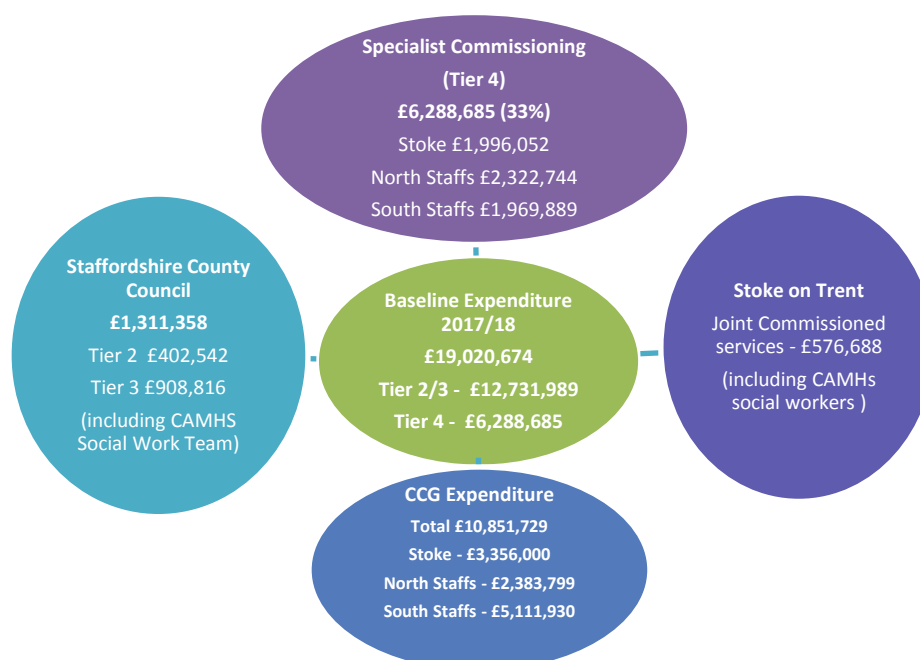
### 5.2.1 How current services are commissioned

In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent a traditional commissioning model is used, providing services across a number of tiers. The current investment planning reflects this model. The current model is outlined below:



## 5.3 Current Investment (Commissioned Children's Mental Health Services only)

The table below shows the expenditure across the Partnership in 2017/18 and is aligned to the commissioning model mentioned above.



## 5.4 What other support is available?

There are a range of other services which contribute to meeting the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and young people. This includes the following but is not limited to:

- Universal Provision – Information, advice and guidance;
- School Nursing/Health Visitor services;
- Mental Health Awareness Training;
- Children Centres/Family Support services;
- Multi-Agency Centres in educational establishments.
- Third sector provision of mental health services

## 5.5 Transforming Services - Key Achievements So Far

There are well established collaborative commissioning arrangements in place across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent between Local Authority and health partners. This gives us the positive foundation for further transforming services. Key achievements are detailed in the [Local Transformation Plan](#) and include progress in the following areas:

- Developing the workforce to better meet the needs of children and young people;
- Commissioning of community eating disorder services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent;
- Crisis support services;
- Improved technology infrastructures;
- Collaborative arrangements in place through the regional networks and with NHS England;
- Robust participation arrangements inform improved service delivery.

## Section 6: The Local Population Needs

### 6.1 National Data - Estimated Level of Need in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

There is a population of 225,000 children and young people across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The [Future in Mind](#) (2014) paper confirmed that 40% of young people experience at least one mental disorder by 16 years old. This equates to a high percentage of the population of young people.

National research indicates the following estimates in the number of children and young people likely to require an intervention across each of the Tiers for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

#### Level of need by CAMHS tiers for children aged under 18, 2016

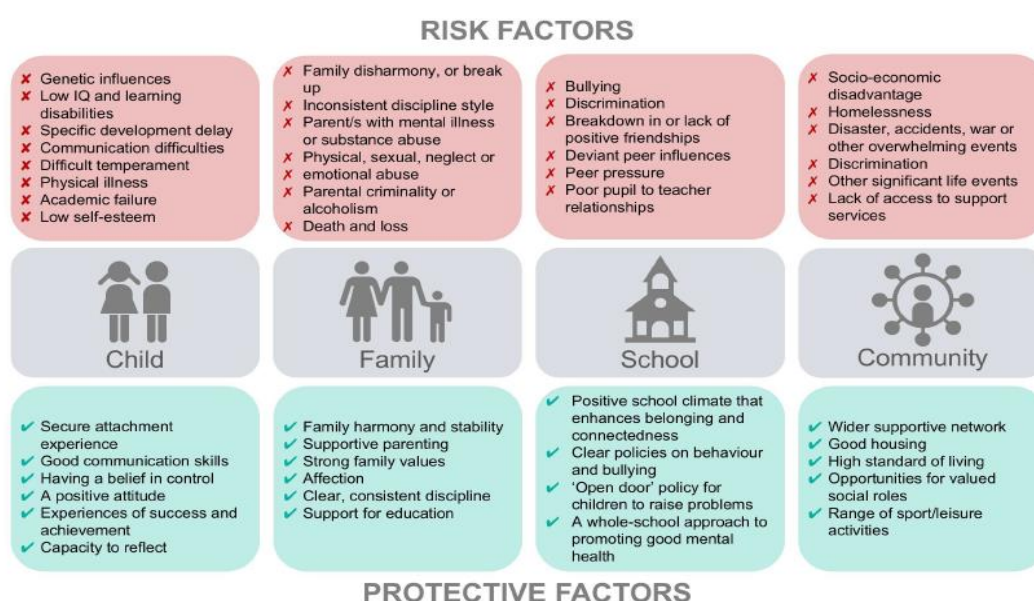
	Kurtz (2006)		Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health, December 2015	
	Proportion	Estimated number	Proportion	Estimated number
<b>Staffordshire (0-17 population = 168,800)</b>				
Tier 1	16%	27,000	10%	16,880
Tier 2	7%	12,600	7%	11,810
Tier 3	2%	3,330	3%	5,060
Tier 4	0.1%	140	0.47%	790
<b>Stoke-on-Trent (0-17 population = 56,700)</b>				
Tier 1	16%	9,000	10%	5,670
Tier 2	7%	4,200	7%	3,970
Tier 3	2%	1,110	3%	1,700
Tier 4	0.1%	50	0.47%	270

Source: Public Health England, Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health, December 2015 and 2016 mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, Crown copyright

## 6.2 Local Insight - What we understand about the needs of children and young people

Research suggests around half of adults with long-term mental health problems will have experienced their first symptoms before the age of 14 and three-quarters by their mid-20s.

Some of the key prevalence factors which influence poor mental health are in relation to parental and family environments such as worklessness and financial pressures such as debt and poverty, parental mental illness and domestic abuse. School factors such as bullying (including cyber bullying) and peer pressure are also common. Many children will have more than one risk factor which means that their risk of having poor emotional wellbeing is increased. It is recognised that many of these factors are not dissimilar to the root causes of many of the health and wellbeing issues that children face. With this in mind we will strive to work with partners to encourage whole system solutions.



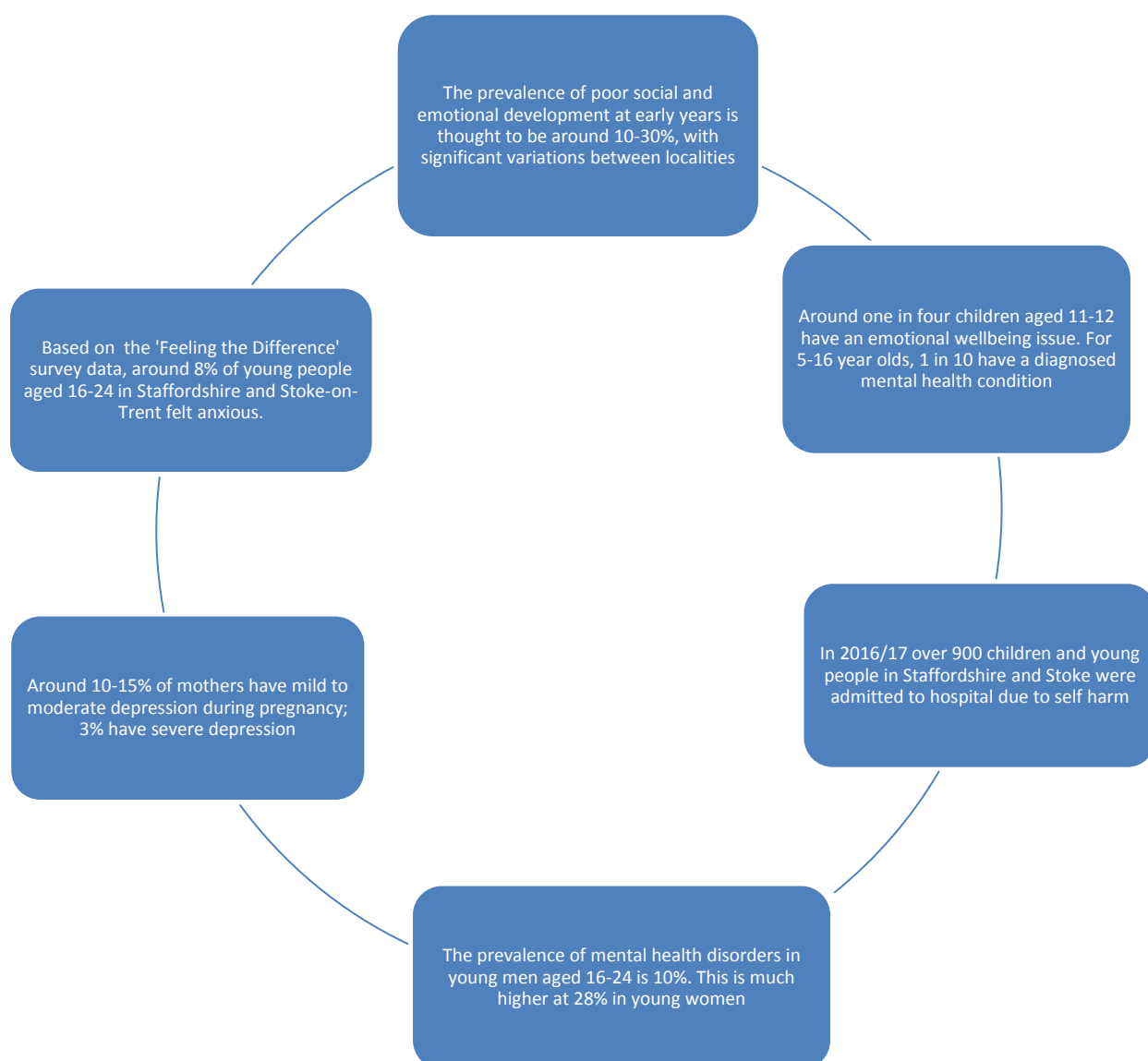
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### Children and young people aged under 19 receiving CAMHS treatment by CCG

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Cannock Chase	572	566	1,360
East Staffordshire	406	499	1,175
North Staffordshire	806	1,167	1,585
South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula	865	981	1,625
Stafford and Surrounds	517	599	1,225
<b>Staffordshire CCGs</b>	<b>3,166</b>	<b>3,812</b>	<b>6,970</b>
<b>Stoke-on-Trent</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>1,758</b>	<b>2,295</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,429</b>	<b>5,570</b>	<b>9,265</b>

Source: Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health: Developing our local offer to secure improvements in children and young people's mental health outcomes, November 2017

## 6.3 Key Messages from local needs analysis



## Section 7: Engaging Stakeholders

It is important to ensure that the Strategy truly reflects the views, wishes and aspirations of all partners. We believe that this is the right way to determine the future priorities, where changes are required, where resources will be invested and what will deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

A number of engagement events have been facilitated during the development stages to help to determine what is working well, what needs to change and what needs to happen next to make a POSITIVE change.

### 7.1 What children and young people have told us.

The views and opinions of children and young people were sought through a range of methods to share what they saw as the main issues and priorities with the current provision. The overall messages that have come from discussions include the following:





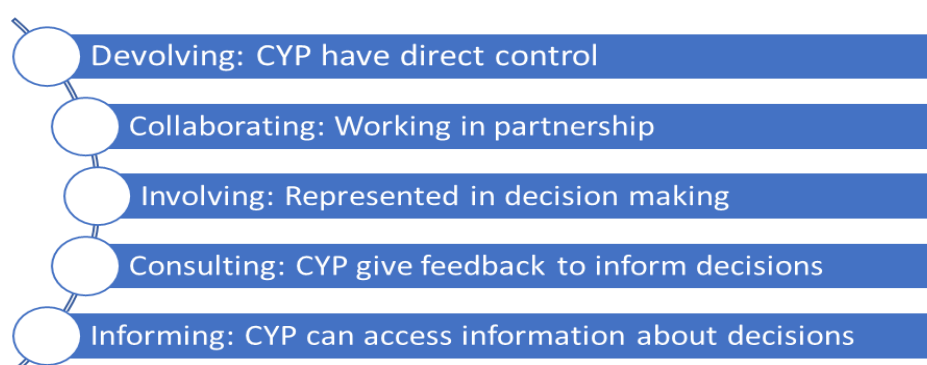
### Comments from young people at a range of engagement events

We know that mental health is important to children and young people. During 2017, almost 6,650 young people aged 11-18 in Staffordshire (equating to 8% of this age group) took part in the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)'s annual Make Your Mark public survey. The 2017 results found that Staffordshire children identified mental health as the second most critical issue they would like to see the UKYP campaign further on; this compares with it ranking fourth across England and sixth in Stoke-on-Trent.

In the Needs Analysis Survey completed during the Spring of 2018, children and young people identified several barriers that exist in relation to services. They displayed a limited knowledge of mental health services which were available to them and where to go to access help. They feel there is a stigma attached to having poor mental health and generally would not always feel comfortable approaching a professional for support. They advised that they would like to see more education around mental and emotional wellbeing and better information on what services are available to help them.

The effective development of preventative approaches to children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing will require a continued commitment to the voice of children and young people. Engagement, with rising levels of participation should see children and young people informing the direction that preventative services take. An increased awareness of pertinent issues faced by children and young people, including the rise in digital technologies and social media, would ensure that any commissioned services reflect need, are accessible and follow a Place/Asset Based Approach.

Children and young people can act as brokers (translating language, policy and insight) whilst bringing innovation and vision. Increasing levels of participation should ensure that the experiences of children and young people remain at the centre of service design, allowing us to ensure continuous improvement and should follow Arnstein's Ladder of Participation as outlined below:





## 7.2 What schools/colleges/educational communities have told us

Between May and July 2018, a wide range of educational partners across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent were engaged in several workshop forums through the national Mental Health in Schools Link Programme with the aim of sharing expertise and developing a joint vision for children and young peoples' mental health and emotional wellbeing in each locality.

Detailed information has been gathered to help to understand some of the challenges and ideas on how these could be addressed through this Strategy. The feedback from this engagement identified the following:

- Adopt a whole school approach
- Engage and connect with wider communities
- Prioritise professional learning for school staff which will equip them to manage issues of poor mental health which impacts on behaviours

## 7.3 What Parents and Carers have told us

In the spring 2018 Stoke on Trent City Council commissioned the Centre for Health and Development (CHAD) to carry out consultation with children and their parents/carers who have accessed mental health services to find out their opinions on the provision available.

The consultation was designed to understand the experiences and assets of how children keep themselves emotionally well. Parents/carers were asked about their own experiences of services available to their children and themselves. This is what they shared:

- Better access to information with clear links via key websites to a directory of all services;
- Improved access to information about what services are available
- Better collaboration between services;
- Emotional wellbeing support should be embedded within the culture of schools, with sustainable resources in place to support
- Informal support networks are very important and should be encouraged;
- Family support would be useful for those parents whose children are accessing services themselves.
- Children use a variety of recreational strategies to keep themselves emotionally well. It is important that shared learning is encouraged around what works;

## 7.4 What Providers have told us

In May 2018 a Market Engagement and Shaping Event was held in Staffordshire, attended by over 60 local, national and regional providers of children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services. Providers and partners were asked about the challenges that they face and asked for their input on transforming the commissioning landscape. They shared the following views:

<b>Market Challenges</b>	<b>Transforming the Commissioning Landscape</b>
School and family links are important but are often not part of solution planning	Involve providers in market shaping
Access and navigation of services is often complex and disjointed	Prioritise prevention and early intervention. Aim not to create dependency
There is limited knowledge of what services are available	Introduce clear and integrated pathways. Have a whole system approach but recognise localities and diverse communities
Investment in services is inequitable – no balance between prevention and crisis intervention	Provider better support for schools and their communities, equipping with skills to manage emerging issues and knowledge of where to refer when more help is needed
Families are not always resilient to provide	Provide flexible models of support – be where

support due to their own pressures. Support systems should be built around family networks	children are and build on peer support. Recognise service user choice
Demand for services for low to moderate needs is at an all-time high. This puts pressure on waiting times and also on higher level services as needs escalate	Consider co-location and integrated working – no wrong front door.
Contracts are often too restrictive and do not encourage providers to test out more flexible approaches.	Maximise the opportunities around more flexible model of support such as through the use of technology and digital platforms
The level of need is rising, particularly those with more complex needs such as Looked After Children and their parents/carers	Value the role of the parent, family and wider community is supporting the child/young person's needs

## 7.5 What Partners have told us

During June and July 2018 two stakeholder events were held in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent to help to inform the Strategy. 35 stakeholders in Staffordshire and 33 in Stoke on Trent. Stakeholders were asked about priorities for transforming services and how to ensure that the whole support system around the family's mental health is effective. The key emerging themes included:

### Improved Information, Advice and Support

- Everyone needs to be better informed of what is available.
- An increased, shared, professional understanding of the subject matter and the roles that different professionals play in supporting children and young people effectively.

### Transforming Services

- Consider co-location, integration of services and multi-agency models of support;
- Recovery focussed approach rather than building dependency;
- Commission based on outcomes rather than outputs;
- Consider what works now and build on these positive foundations;
- Simplify referral pathways and assessment processes. Clear pathways and timely, accessible services;
- Move away from a medicalised approach;
- Developing the workforce – invest in the right way to improve skills and confidence that enables staff to competently support children and young people engaging in positive risk taking behaviour.
- Make intelligent use of technology;
- Instil a balance between brief intervention and more structured packages of support, which is needs led rather than system led;
- Encourage peer support where appropriate.

### Whole System/Family Support

- Involve family and carers at the earliest stage;
- Parental mental health is equally important. A child not coping may be due to the parents struggling;
- Parents need more tools e.g. positive parenting and family support;
- Consider a more joined up approach with adult mental health services around parental mental health. Understand the influences and impacts on a child/young person's mental health.

### Communities Supporting Each Other

- Community capacity building is fundamental to promoting positive emotional and physical health and provide support when needed as part of social value role;

- Maximise the use of wider community initiatives – use an asset based approach of keeping people well and resilient, promoting and embedding positive emotional health and community integration.

### **Role of the school/college communities**

- Better knowledge and training for professionals. Schools need to know who to approach and what is available;
- Schools should have emotional health and wellbeing policies as standard and emotional wellbeing should be part of the curriculum;
- Consider multi-use of school buildings as a community resource and hub for on-site support. This will bring wider benefits.

It is acknowledged that most service practitioners and professional partners are confident in identifying when a child or young person has emotional wellbeing needs and in dealing with low levels of emotional wellbeing. They are knowledgeable about how to get more specialist support for children and young people with more complex needs. Educational partners have shared that they would like to be more confident in knowing how to access or signpost children and families to locally available community solutions or networks of support. Some of the key issues raised were as follows:

- Enough capacity in specialist services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people;
- Accessible and flexible services, offered locally at a range of venues and times;
- Better communication, training and improved knowledge and partnership working;
- Improved access to support and appropriate resources, particularly for those with low to moderate needs;
- The importance of nurturing and developing positive relationships with the child and the family environment.

### **7.6 What Leaders have told us**

Close work with Elected Members has taken place to engage their views as informed representatives of local communities.

In Staffordshire, engagement with the All Party Members Group (APMG), which has shown a keen interest in considering how to achieve innovation in practice in supporting children and young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, has been invaluable. The Group has supported the engagement programme through facilitating a series of workshops, which has included presentations and debate with school and college professionals, commissioners, service providers and children and young people themselves.

This shared learning has identified the following priorities for change:

- Training and awareness at all levels for teachers, governors, parents as well as children, at all ages throughout their time at schools and colleges;
- A need to develop and strengthen a sense of community and Citizenship;
- Community networks for sharing ideas and approaches through the Place/Asset Based Approach;
- Focus on early years;
- Access to information; developing and positive messaging;
- Training and awareness;
- Tackling root causes through whole system approach;
- Impact of social media on children and young people.

The below infographic highlights the findings from these engagement sessions:



The change required in addressing these priorities is not to be underestimated. The engagement with children and young people, their families and service providers in shaping and sharing the vision will continue to support the change and drive improvement. The commitment to change is recognised throughout this Strategy and marks the start of the next five years in transforming the offer to children, young people and their families.