



**Making Life
Better Together**



**South West London and
St George's Mental Health
NHS Trust**

Healthwatch Sutton report: The impact of the Covid pandemic on the mental wellbeing of 9-11 year olds in Sutton

Response: South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust

We know that [a third](#) of adults and young people reported their mental health worsened during the pandemic and it is concerning to see this trend continuing among 9-11 year olds in Sutton. This has been reflected in significant increases in demand for our services following the pandemic and we are working hard to address this in a number of ways, strategically, within our services and by building our networks with local schools to support early intervention and prevention.

Our Trust is committed to working with partners across the healthcare system in Sutton to improve the emotional wellbeing of everyone who lives, works and studies in the borough including children and young people. That's why prevention and early support for children and young people is a key priority in our local Integrated Care System's (ICS's) new mental health strategy which our Trust is supporting. This will build on work already progressed in Sutton through the ICS's *South West London Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing in Schools Programme*. Further detail is included below on this strategy and our work within local schools in Sutton.

We know how important it is to empower children, young people and their families both to look after their mental health, and to access support in a timely manner if they are struggling. Alongside our system's new mental health strategy, our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are actively working on improving local support for schools. This is happening through our Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools, improved information on our website and new communications protocols to ensure families, schools and professionals can refer and signpost to our services more effectively.

In recent years, we have also worked together with our ICS to open up new channels for children and young people beyond our services including the online Kooth service, which offers safe and anonymous online support and counselling for young people and an online mental wellbeing community. Over 6,000 children and young people in South West London have registered on this platform in South West London since September 2020.

Moving forward, we welcome working closely with Healthwatch Sutton and local partners to collaboratively implement our system's new mental health strategy, and in particular to support improved emotional wellbeing for children and young people across the borough.

Sharon Spain
**Director of Nursing
South West London and
St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust**

Dr Joel WT Khor
**Clinical Director, CAMHS
South West London and St. George's
Mental Health NHS Trust**



Respectful



Open



Collaborative



Compassionate



Consistent

South West London Mental Health Strategy

Over the summer our local ICS launched a new long-term mental health strategy to work towards ensuring South West London is the best place to live for emotional wellbeing. This strategy is a key part of improving the wellbeing and resilience of children and young people in Sutton, and South West London more widely.

Our Trust will be working closely with our ICS to support the delivery of this strategy over the next decade. In year one the strategy will focus on improvements for children and young people's mental health. This emphasis is reflected in the strategy's themes and aims:

- **Theme four:** *Prevention and early support including: Support for children, young people and families, healthy environments, mental health literacy and reducing stigma*
- **Aim three:** *Better support to equip our children and young people and those that support them to manage their mental health and emotional wellbeing in the future*

We know that there are things we can do to improve emotional wellbeing and resilience. There is new evidence around treatment, care and support emerging all the time, but improving mental health is not just about treatment. We need to consider wider wellbeing and social determinants of health as well as preventing progression of mental ill-health in young people. By taking a whole population approach to mental wellbeing and encouraging access to green spaces, being physically active, making connections through communities or friends and family, we can shift the whole population towards flourishing and reduce the numbers of people experiencing troubling mental health problems.

Specifically, we will support these and other areas of change by completing a detailed strategic review of mental health investment to date and the outcomes delivered from this, agreeing approaches to outcomes measurement and evaluation and reviewing public mental health work to identify future initiatives for deployment in South West London and ensuring mental health leadership and resourcing is in place.

You can find the strategy in full here: <https://www.southwestlondon.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Our-Mental-Health-Strategy-NHS-South-West-London.pdf>

Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing in Schools Programme

We are working directly with schools and colleges in Sutton to deliver key parts of our ICS's Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing in Schools Programme. One aim of this is to improve early intervention for children and young people by embedding Mental Health Support Team in Schools – provided by our Trust in Sutton – whilst also supporting a 'Whole School' approach to mental health and wellbeing.

This is part of a national programme which follows through on Government proposals set out in a 2017 Green Paper, 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision'. The national programme has three key areas, two of which are being taken forward in SWL through the Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing in Schools Programme with funding from the Department for Education and NHS England and Improvement. These include:

- Incentivising schools to identify a designated senior lead (DSL) for mental health to oversee the approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Creating Mental Health Support Teams, providing specific extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help



**Making Life
Better Together**



**South West London and
St George's Mental Health**
NHS Trust

- Supporting the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing in education settings with the aim of prevention.

Sutton was one of the 58 early adopters ('Trailblazers') for the national programme in 2018/19 and since then three Mental Health Support Teams have been established in Sutton covering 9 secondary schools, 16 primary schools, 5 specialist SEND schools and Carshalton FE College. Consideration is being given to ensure that the remaining 3 secondary schools and 22 primary schools will all be covered by MHST support by the end of 2024. Overall, in SWL, there are currently sixteen Mental Health Support Teams delivered by four mental health organisations, and by the end of 2024 the vast majority of SWL state schools and all Further Education (FE) Colleges in South West London will have access to MHST support.

Mental Health Support Teams are made up of teams of four Educational Wellbeing Practitioners (EWP), up to three higher level clinicians and a Clinical Psychologist Lead. Each team is attached to a set cluster of schools within the borough (each cluster has a student population of no less than 8,000 pupils). The teams deliver direct clinical interventions to train parents in primary schools to manage their children's anxiety or behaviour difficulties and in secondary schools the teams work directly with young people, linking in with parents as appropriate, to support mild – moderate anxiety and low mood presentations.

The 'Whole School' approach to mental health offered by the MHST incorporates training and support for staff, parents, whole year groups / classes or targeted groups of pupils. This is informed by an action plan drawn up across each cluster of schools and is reviewed throughout the year to reflect and address current mental health need as it arises.

Other key interventions were delivered across other domains of the Whole Schools Approach model including: Leadership and management, ethos and environment, curriculum and teaching, targeted support and appropriate referral, working with parents and carers, monitoring impact, student voice and staff development and support.

A detailed evaluation of the programme implemented to date was published in April 2023 and can be accessed here: https://healthinnovationnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SWL-CYP-EWB-Evaluation-Final-Report_v1.0_01_03_2023_Final-for-website.pdf

ENDS



Respectful



Open



Collaborative



Compassionate



Consistent