

## Briefing Paper 2

### Child and Adolescent Mental Health

### National Assembly Elections 2007

*"We need to feel that we are in control and can get ourselves better. We all wish to see more evidence of care and common sense. There are so many assumptions and so much stigma about mental illness."*

Young person  
Barnardo's Cymru Marlborough Road Service  
Cardiff



**Save the Children**

Achub y Plant



**NSPCC** 

**Dim mwy o greulondeb i blant. DIM.  
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.**



**Barnardo's  
Cymru**

**RHOI'R DYFODOL YN ÔL I'N PLANT  
GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE**

## **Child and Adolescent Mental Health**

One in five children suffers from mental health problems in Wales. Mental health issues and mental disorders in young people can devastate the lives of those affected and destroy the quality of life of those around them. Articles 6 and 24 of the UN Convention gives children rights to good healthcare and the Welsh Assembly Government's seven core aims for children and young people highlights the need for them to "enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health".

### **What has been achieved since 2003?**

The Welsh Assembly Government's key strategy document for delivering Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), "Everybody's Business" was issued in September 2001. This ten year strategy outlines an inclusive approach to structuring and delivery of CAMHS, stressing multi-agency, multi-disciplinary working via a four tier structure which promotes partnership working with young people and families.

A multi-agency, multi-disciplinary All Wales Implementation Group was charged with assessing the level of investment needed for the CAMHS Strategy as well as delivering the strategy. This group's work was suspended in 2002 when work began on the Children's National Service Framework (NSF) in Wales and it has not been resumed after the introduction of Children's NSF in 2005, although we understand there is currently an NSF implementation monitoring group which includes CAMHS within its remit.

The Children's NSF aims to improve quality and equity of service delivery through the setting of national standards for health and social care. The NSF has a section on children and young people with mental health problems and disorders which carries two standards and a series of corresponding key actions. To date, only a small amount of funding has been made available to take forward the strategic and service delivery proposals outlined in "Everybody's Business" and the Children's NSF. Mental Health services for children and young people have had some benefit from "Wanless money" as well as from additional CAMHS funds announced in 2004. The additional funds were: £1.2m (recurrent) for beds for adolescent inpatients, forensic psychiatry, primary mental health workers and development of a new Diploma course; £1.4m one-off waiting times money to increase capacity in CAMHS. In some areas, Cymorth money has contributed to the setting up of early intervention processes. However, overall, this funding has only addressed a tiny proportion of the need (the CAMHS implementation group estimated the £10m per year would be needed for the first three years!)

Local Health Boards now have some targets for CAMHS, based on the NSF standards and have been required to submit local strategies to the Assembly Government. However, a number of the actions identified within "Everybody's Business" and the NSF have no timescales inside the ten year lifetime of the Framework. CAMHS commissioning is complex, with responsibilities split between different agencies at different levels of need. Three regional CAMHS commissioning networks have been set up to map and develop services, in close contact with Social Services and Education. The Public Health division of the Assembly is developing an all-age, cross-sector plan to promote mental health and wellbeing.

### **What are our current concerns?**

Despite the intentions of "Everybody's Business" and the Children's NSF, CAMHS provision across Wales is in crisis. There are major failings in the implementation of both strategies due to the extremely poor levels of resourcing. In England, £440 million has been allocated to CAMHS since 2000. If Wales was to spend an

equivalent amount per capita this would be £26.4 million. The Children's Commissioner for Wales has been very critical of the Assembly Government's lack of commitment to its own strategy.

Particular concerns for CAMHS in Wales include:

- Responsibility for CAMHS at different levels of need is split between different Ministers and between different local agencies. This can leave a leadership vacuum and make commissioning processes difficult.
- Wales has insufficient adolescent inpatient beds, fewer per head of population than in the rest of the UK. Additionally, there are poor linkages between inpatient and outpatient services.
- There is no specialist eating disorders inpatient provision in Wales.
- There is a desperate shortage of CAMHS for children with a learning disability e.g. children with autism and challenging behaviour.
- Wales has a disturbing child suicide rate which is five times higher than in England (source: Office of National Statistics).
- Children and young people are being placed inappropriately on adult wards and some are placed considerable distances from their homes.
- There are few appropriate counselling services for children and young people, in places where they would be likely to use them.
- There are difficulties in attracting people to work in CAMHS services and a shortage of generic child psychiatrists and primary mental health workers.

## **Recommendations**

We call on the Welsh Assembly Government to:

- Ensure that a "mid-point" review of its ten year CAMHS Strategy takes into account the views and experiences of children, young people and their families and frontline staff.
- Ensure that all CAMHS provision is commissioned and resourced for children and young people up to the age of 18.
- Give urgent consideration to the comprehensive resourcing of both CAMHS and the NSF for children and young people with mental health problems in Wales.
- Promote and support more services for young people with learning disabilities, those who self harm, those with substance misuse problems, those who receive a dual diagnosis and those with forensic problems and infant mental health services.
- To ensure that the number of inpatient beds required for Wales is based on a comprehensive needs assessment.
- Appoint/identify a CAMHS "champion", accountable to the Minister for Health and Social Services, with the authority to ensure the cohesive and coordinated implementation of "Everybody's Business" and CAMHS related NSF standards and actions across all ministerial portfolios.
- Ensure that the focus is not entirely upon the delivery of specialist Tiers 3 and 4, but instead offers a range of universal provision with the aim of supporting children and young people's emotional literacy and wellbeing.
- End the practice of placing children and young people on adult mental health wards.

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**This briefing is supported by Children in Wales**