



Confederation of School Trusts

Response to the Green Paper Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision

Response of the Confederation of School Trusts

A Introduction

- 1 The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) represents circa 1,000 academies, multi-academy trusts and foundation schools, representing joined up leadership across executive, governance and business leaders. We are the national organisation and sector body for school trusts. This places us in a strong position to consider the National Education Service from the viewpoint of the system's executive and governance leaders in self-governing schools and trusts.
- 2 We are completely apolitical. We work with political parties and politicians across the spectrum to advance education in the public interest.
- 3 CST welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.
- 4 CST broadly welcomes the recommendations in the Green Paper Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision. We believe it is important that the mental health care pathway is re-established following cuts to the local authority CAMHS grant which funded community-based provision. The reduction of community based services has left a very significant gap in the mental health care pathway, leaving schools holding children and young people who have serious mental health issues for much longer than should be the case. It has also placed unnecessary pressure on acute services and led to long waiting times in some areas.
- 5 We must ensure that we do not set up an expectation among parents and carers that teachers and schools are responsible for providing or delivering mental health interventions. This is primarily the responsibility of health. Mental health interventions should be delivered by qualified practitioners who are appropriately registered and in receipt of appropriate levels of clinical supervision.
- 6 Our remarks are organised in sections as follows:

- A Core proposals**
- B Mental Health Support Teams**
- C Schools and colleges**
- D Vulnerable groups**
- E Conclusion**

A Core proposals

- 7 It is good practice to have a dedicated senior lead for mental health and wellbeing, but if this leader is a teacher, then they are not a qualified mental health practitioner and should not be expected to be.
- 8 The identification of children and young people with mental health difficulties is much less of a problem than provision. We therefore welcome the Green Paper proposals for mental health support teams supervised by the NHS.
- 9 We do not support proposals for interventions to be delivered by teachers, for example, the Green Paper proposes that family-based behaviour change could be successfully delivered by teachers to help reduce child conduct problem. Teachers are not mental health professionals. They need to focus on the core business of teaching. There are not enough teachers in the system and for those who are in the system, there are workload issues. We cannot afford to deploy teachers to deliver mental health interventions.

B Mental health support teams

- 10 We welcome the proposal to establish mental health support teams.
- 11 We would advocate to the concept of MindSpace, funded by Barnsley clinical commissioning group (CCG) through its Future in Mind fund. The initiative works by embedding mental health practitioners in secondary schools so children and young people don't have to be taken out of school to access treatment. Consisting of three primary health practitioners, a parent counsellor, a family support worker and an emotional health support worker, the MindSpace team offers one-to-one sessions and groups for specific issues such as bereavement.
- 12 We believe that it is important to bring services out of the clinic, closer to where children and young people feel safe and comfortable. We would advocate the principle of a multi-disciplinary team approach, with schools and the mental health support team sharing information and responsibility for outcomes, through a range of therapeutic interventions

which focus on recovery and wellbeing. So the link between schools and the mental health support teams is crucial.

C Schools and Colleges

- 13 We need to avoid the view that parents and carers need information only about provision in schools or trusts. Parents and carers need information on the entire mental health care pathway, not just on the support offered by a school or trust.

D Vulnerable groups

- 14 There are a variety of vulnerable groups in any school or trust. Children with SEN and disabilities or those in the care system are two such groups. But not all children with SEN and disabilities or those in the care system will have mental health needs and conversely not all children with mental health needs will be on the SEN register or in the care system. We must be very clear about this. For some children, mental health issues are stimulated by traumatic experiences including war. For others, mental health difficulties appear to have no external stimulus. It is certainly the case that some more vulnerable groups are disproportionately likely to have mental health issues, but it is also the case the mental health issues affect can affect anyone, regardless of vulnerability.
- 15 I hope that this is of value to your consultation. CST is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that we can.

Leora Cruddas

Chief Executive

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