

MORE TO DO TO PROTECT CHILDREN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

There have been notable improvements in how services promote and protect the psychological health and wellbeing of our children and young people, but there is still a great deal more to do, according to the interim report from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Review published today.

The Review, Chaired by Jo Davidson, Group Director of Children and Young People's Services at Gloucestershire County Council, has identified six main areas for future recommendations.

- **Making the whole system work more effectively** –the CAMHS Review is considering how leadership and accountability can be clarified and articulated so that children, young people, parents and professionals all understand who is responsible for what, when children need help.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – the Review suggests that the current focus of monitoring and evaluation on process improvements needs to shift towards the difference being made and outcomes.
- **Vulnerable children** – the Review recognises that in some areas of the country there is still a lack of access to and provision of services for vulnerable children and is looking at ways to better meet their needs.
- **Workforce development** – the Review suggests that approaches to improving mental health and well-being should be a specific aspect of training for the whole children's workforce.
- **Resources** – current dependence on short-term funding has a negative impact on financial planning and the long term viability of good programmes, workforce stability and recruitment. The Review will explore how this might be improved.
- **Cultural Change and Implementation** – the Review will explore how to improve everybody's understanding of what can be done to meet a child's mental health and psychological needs and disseminate good practice.

The review is aimed at ensuring that the educational and psychological needs of all children and young people with mental health problems, or those at risk of developing them, are being met.

Chair of the Review Jo Davidson said:

“The Review has shown that there is a lot of excellent work going on in all areas of CAMHS, but there is still a need to make it easier for children, young people and their families to get the help they need, when they need it. All services need to adopt the approaches used by the best services.”

Kevin Brennan Minister for Children and Young People said:

“I would like to thank the review team and everyone who has contributed so far. Their efforts are helping us to uncover where we need to do more to make services work better together and protect the psychological health and wellbeing of all our young people.

“We look forward to the seeing the final report and recommendations in the autumn.”

Care Services Minister Ivan Lewis said:

“I welcome this valuable report. We have already taken steps to improve child and adolescent mental health services – for example, funding has gone up from £322m to £461m in two years. However, there is more to do and I look forward to seeing the final conclusions so we can drive up the quality of these services further.”

The review has been informed by a national call for evidence as well as a study of current practice. Groups of experts and young people have played their part in helping to uncover the issues facing children’s mental health services and examples of existing good practice.

The Government knows that there are still gaps in the current CAMHS system and wants to see more early intervention in schools, as well as services working better together across the different boundaries to ensure that children and young people get the best support available regardless of the complexity of their needs.

Around one in ten children and young people will experience behavioural, emotional and mental health problems at some point in their lives.

The Review will publish its final report and make recommendations to Government in the Autumn.

Notes to editors

1. The National CAMHS Review was announced in December 2007 in the National Children’s Plan – Building Brighter Futures. It is an independent review, sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health.
2. The Review is focussed on the full spectrum of mental health and psychological well-being for 0-19 year olds and their families. It is considering how services can be improved further to meet the

educational, health and social care needs of all children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, mental health problems.