

Emotional Health Academy Summary

1) West Berkshire's children's emotional health need

The Good Childhood Report (Children's Society August 2015) reports that UK children are among the unhappiest worldwide. Emotional health need is one of the most common early indications of additional need; left unsupported, early emotional health difficulties can rapidly develop into a diagnosed mental health condition.

There are over 3000 children and young people in West Berkshire with a mental health disorder; yet national research tells us that less than 25% of those children will receive treatment or support with those needs.

Of the 80% of children and young people asking CAMHS for support/help in West Berkshire do not receive a service. The vast majority of our children subject to Child Protection Plans and those open to the Youth Offending Team have emotional health needs and many have mental health disorders. Most children are waiting over a year to be seen by a mental health professional and some are waiting over two years; for most children and young people, their condition deteriorates significantly in that time.

For many children and families the idea of accessing help or support from a medicalised mental health service is simply too daunting or stigmatising – those services become a last resort. Families tell us that having support and help available in their communities is crucial.

2) What do we want to do?

We need to think differently. We need to improve the level of early intervention, accessible to children and families in the community; and we need to do it quickly.

In summary we want to:

1) Create an Emotional Health Academy that will:

- **children will be seen in a week, rather than waiting a year** - take newly qualified psychology graduates and other emotional health qualified staff and train them to work with children and families in the communities in which they live.
- **We'll work in partnership** – to ensure that these staff work closely with schools, with GP surgeries, with Children's Centres, the Police and crucially with voluntary sector
- **We'll look at the needs of the whole family, not just the child** - by testing a new way of working with adult services, to see how we can work more effectively with whole families; where both adults and children are affected by emotional health needs
- **Sustaining good health** – we'll support children and young people to develop sustainable strategies to keep themselves well and promote

their long-term well-being; by drawing on their own resources, the resources of their friends and family; by utilizing and creating community led resources.

- **Getting to children early will reduce the pressure on child protection services later**

- 2) Commission specialist voluntary sector providers - to provide more non-stigmatising care in, and to, our communities in close partnership with the Academy.

Subject to approval, this will start 1st April 2016.

3) How much will it cost?

West Berkshire Council will use the £120,000 it already invests in emotional health services to better effect; by investing in less expensive workers and increase service capacity. We're seeking partnership funding from schools and health; and philanthropic investment too.

The Academy will generate income and become self-sustaining over time.

4) How do we know this is a good idea?

The Department for Education is particularly interested in these proposals and have suggested that the Academy is put forward for national Innovation Funding from 2017/18. Interest from the European Union is also emerging, we have had a first conference call with Copenhagen. This could lead to additional funding for West Berkshire.