

Private and Confidential

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Trust Management

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14 December 2021

Dear Ms Lake

I write in response to the Prevention of Future Deaths received following the tragic death of Mary Bush in August 2020. I know that you will be sharing this response with Mary's family and I would like to take this opportunity to express to her family again how very sorry we are for the loss of Mary.

I have shared your concerns with our children's, families and young people's leadership and wider team. I have collated below the response to each point with the actions we have taken already, and future actions to strengthen our offer to young people across the age range.

1. *Mary was referred to the mental health team in November 2019 and was assessed in January 2020, some three weeks later than should have been.*

The demand for specialist mental healthcare from the Children's, Families and Young Persons Service (CFYP) remains high and is increasing during the pandemic. The week ending 10th December saw a 25% rise in the number of accepted referrals; Norfolk and Suffolk have the highest referral rate into CFYP services nationally (NHS Benchmarking Network). The waiting time between referral and assessment for routine cases is longer than the Trust's target of 28 days. Exceeding the target wait to assessment is not service-wide.

Several teams in the CFYP Care Group are assessing referrals within the targeted waiting times but two teams are not. The Central Youth Team has problems meeting the target and so is part of a waitlist initiative to increase capacity of the clinicians and reduce the number of those waiting for assessment and waiting for treatment. Assessment capacity has been increased by supplementing existing clinicians with clinicians recruited from a private agency. Two agency nurses have been working on assessments and their contracts are being extended through until May 2022 to continue to address the demand.

2. *There was a delay in Mary receiving psychological therapy. She was still on the waiting list at the time of her death.*

The backlog of children and young people who are awaiting treatment has been a concern for some time and continues to be the focus of our efforts. Again, the Central Youth Team has the largest waiting list. Third sector partners, MAP, Ormiston Families, and the YMCA all have capacity and have agreed to work with some of those waiting for treatment. For those young people waiting for specific treatment, such as therapies, the teams are looking to address this by exploring options such as employing Assistant Psychologists to provide brief interventions including managing emotions and anxiety or providing webinars available to young people at their convenience.

CFYP successfully bid for funding to resource a project that will develop an online service we can offer service users. Digital packages have been used successfully by other NHS Trusts such as those

researched and trialled by Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust. We are learning from them as we develop our provision of digital interventions including applications such as 1:1 therapy (25yrs and under), also computer 'games' which target childhood anxieties (7-11yrs) and provide Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (12yrs plus).

3. *The evidence was that at the date of inquest, there continued to be a delay in service users receiving psychological therapy. Evidence was heard that balancing capacity and demand, which has increased, remains a challenge. The cases referred are of increasing complexity, as in Mary's case.*
and
4. *Some steps have been taken in an effort to deal with this, such as specific risk assessment training, focusing on intervention treatment plans to aid capacity and throughput, reviewing the skill mix of staff.*

The CFYP Care Group embarked on a service development strategy that is seeking to address the ongoing demand versus capacity imbalance. Work has been completed to establish the demand and capacity imbalance and a business case was submitted to the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in June 2021. The CCG has now agreed, December 2021, the additional funding to recruit six additional staff to the Central Youth Team. Interviewing to those posts is in progress.

To improve staff retention, the demand and capacity project included the development of job plans for all staff, skill mix review and needs analysis for training. This project has already improved staff morale and is likely to improve recruitment and retention in the future.

The Trust has secured funding for Clinical Associate Psychologists, four of which will be joining the Norfolk youth team. It is hoped that this initiative will be extended into the children's team if supported through the University of East Anglia who would be providing the training needed.

5. *However, there is the ongoing issue of recruitment and retention of suitably skilled staff by the Trust and the ability to resource this to enable the Trust to function effectively.*

There is a national recruitment problem for mental health services. We have changed the way that we attract new staff, adverts are written specifically to emphasise the opportunity for development and innovation which is ongoing within the service line. This is to encourage and attract the staff we need to support our vision for improvement. We have added relocation incentives to all our difficult to recruit posts as locality does appear to be a barrier for some. We are also offering remote and/or hybrid working where appropriate for the service.

The national expansion of mental health training provision is very welcome but is not an instant solution as the training takes time and demands a high level of supervision offer from existing qualified staff. To support the pace of expansion while still addressing our unmet need for service users, CFYP has recruited senior nurses and a Clinical Nurse Specialist to support the service development. Interviews to recruit to two Consultant Clinical Psychologist posts will take place on 20th December 2021. All senior staff recruited will work with service users and expand the skills mix available in teams.

I hope that these actions provide reassurance that the Trust is doing all that it can to improve our response to the demand for children's and young people's mental health services. We, as part of the wider integrated care system, continue to review and revise our approach to meeting the needs of the county's young people as a partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Chief Executive