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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Hywel Dda
University Health Board

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We're pleased to let you know that from the start of the new school year, your child's school will be receiving additional support from mental health practitioners from S-CAMHS (Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) from Hywel Dda University Health Board. The team providing this support are called the School In-Reach Team. School in-Reach is being rolled out across Wales following a series of successful pilot schemes funded by Welsh Government. We took part in this pilot in Ceredigion, providing support to school staff there and we have been able to learn from this work. We have now expanded the service to include both Primary and Secondary Schools in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, whilst continuing and developing our service in Ceredigion.

Why is this happening?

Whilst most children and young people do fine without extra support, there are some children for whom their mental health and emotional wellbeing gets in the way of their ability to learn, enjoy and participate in school life. School staff are often on the 'front line' in supporting such children and are well placed to make a difference in their day to day lives.

What are we doing?

Schools across the region will now have direct access to specialist knowledge from a dedicated School In-Reach practitioner, who will provide training, be on hand to give advice and provide more in-depth discussion about the school's support for a child's needs when required.

We've already sought the views of parents and children about this service, and there will be opportunities for you to provide your thoughts and feedback during the school year. We have included some FAQs which will hopefully answer any immediate concerns or questions you might have. If you do have any queries in the meantime, please contact your child's school.

School In-Reach Team

FAQs

What do I do if I have concerns about my child's emotional wellbeing or mental health?

If you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health and this is primarily affected or impacting on their learning, contact your school in the first instance to discuss this with them. If your child's difficulties impact them in other areas and it is getting in the way of them being able to have enjoyment in their life, you may wish to discuss this with your School Nurse or child's GP, who can suggest what support is available.

Will schools discuss my child's mental health without my consent?

No. Schools will be required to discuss any concerns about your child's emotional or mental health with you, or if your child is 16 or over, with them directly, before seeking our support.

Swyddfeydd Corfforaethol, Adeilad Ystwyth,
Hafan Derwen, Parc Dewi Sant, Heol Ffynnon Job,
Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin, SA31 3BB

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Cadeirydd /Chair
Miss Maria Battle
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive
Mr Steve Moore

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What records will be kept about any discussions if school contact SiR for advice?

We're required to keep a record of any discussions about specific children and young people as a matter of safety. This is to ensure that if the child accesses S-CAMHS support again in future, we are able to ensure the right support is put in place to help them stay safe. As with any health records, these are kept confidential and will not be shared with other people or agencies unless you or your young person give consent.

Will S-CAMHS talk to my child directly?

The purpose of School in-Reach is to help school staff give the right support to children and young people, not to give direct support to the child or their parents. We won't be talking to children directly.

Will we be given details of any discussions the schools have with S-CAMHS if they affect my child?

We know how important it is to parents and young people that they are told about discussions and plans that take place. To make sure this happens, we will send parents and young people a letter summarising any discussions and any changes we suggest to the school. This will also be copied to the child's GP, and any other support services are involved where appropriate.

What sort of qualifications do the practitioners have?

All the practitioners are registered nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and clinical psychologists. Some support will also be provided by Assistant Psychologists. All staff have regular clinical supervision and on-going training.

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