

Together for Children and Young People Programme

Legacy Report

October 2022



This report summarises both the progress made by the **Together for Children and Young People Programme** in Wales and key learning and considerations for future work.

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Foreword from the Chair

This legacy report has been developed in partnership with people most experienced and affected by emotional health and wellbeing matters - children, young people and families.

Working together has indeed been a central feature of this Programme and has been its strength. I share with Foreword with the Chair of the National Stakeholder Group, a group of parents and carers whose contribution to the thinking and development of the Programmes work has been exceptional. It has been a privilege to lead the Together for Children and Young People Programme working with such dedicated, wise and talented people. Building on that strong coproduction ethos, a focus on Partnerships and Systems has helped to create whole system approaches that keep the whole family at the centre.

As a result of coproduction and partnership working, so much has been achieved. A number of new frameworks have been developed, published and are in implementation, including the Whole School Approach, NYTH/NEST and National Neurodevelopmental pathways and standards supported by a new digital platform as a key enabler of future delivery. This progress is all the more remarkable given the global pandemic and the need for the programme team and partners to deploy a high degree of flexibility to respond to changing circumstances.

The programme closure sees the transfer of these core frameworks into Welsh Government in the knowledge that key partners such as Regional Partnership Boards, NHS and Education sector are now in a more mature state and more equipped to implement the transformational changes required to better meet the needs of children young people and their families.



The programme's legacy is to share this knowledge and experience, in the form of both reflections and recommendations, to help inform future decision makers to continue to make a difference and ultimately improve the emotional wellbeing, mental health and lifetime opportunities for children, young people and their families.

Carol Shillabeer

Chair of the Together for Children and Young People Programme

It's hard to know where to begin to talk about the Together for Children and Young People programme. Do I discuss the NEST/ NYTH Framework launch which frames an early help and enhanced support model of a whole system approach to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families, or do I talk about the underpinning of the Rights of the Child and how trusted adults are the enablers in meeting needs at every stage of learners' development and experience? There is so much content to celebrate that I have to make a decision on where to focus.

I am instinctively drawn to the culture change that will embed across education and statutory services, as we step change to relational approaches and psychologically informed environments that look to care for all who enter through the doors and arrive at a safe haven. The reason I am drawn to talk about culture change is because I and other parents/carers have experienced a wonderful sense of belonging first hand as we coproduced the framework with young people and the programme team. We have become a family that is united in our values, goals and visions for our children and young people of Wales. The values led culture of the programme facilitated this.

We now know that only when people trust relationships and feel safe within their environment, will they feel empowered to share their voice in guiding education and services to meet the wellbeing needs of their own communities. From this nurturing process, education and services will build a strength focussed approach through inquiries and innovation, harnessing the lived experiences and talents of communities and build a united front on the promotion of equity, inclusivity, belonging and sound wellbeing of all those involved.



To everyone who is working now on building community relationships, providing a sense of belonging and enabling our voice to be shared to improve outcomes, we thank you. Families have waited a long time for services to go upstream and we will do all that we can to support you as you build your nest around us.

Ceri Reed

Chair of the National Stakeholder Group

Summary

The Together for Children and Young People' (T4CYP) Programme was established as a Welsh Government (WG) priority with cross cabinet commitment.

The Together for Children and Young People' (T4CYP) Programme was established as a Welsh Government (WG) priority with cross cabinet commitment. Launched in February 2015, T4CYP was led by the NHS, and facilitated as a multi-agency service improvement programme. The priorities for the programme included exploring ways to reshape, remodel and refocus emotional health, wellbeing and mental health services provided for children and young people (CYP) in Wales, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Its aims were to ensure that all support and services are underpinned by prudent health and care principles.

In 2019, the Programme extended for a further period; it closed at the end of September 2022. The extension was prompted by several key elements including the momentum that had been built in relation to the wider system working and the potential for truly shifting from an NHS focused approach to a wider multi-agency, multi-component approach. Key stakeholders such as the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee (Welsh Parliament), the Children's Commissioner; the Expert Reference Group and the children, young people and families themselves indicating the sense of a much greater gain for Wales if the Programme could push forward on the wider aspects to get them 'over the line'.

The Programme largely was split into three phases. The initial phase was a focus on the NHS itself and specifically specialist CAMHS. The waiting times were significant, and reports of a 60 month wait in one area clearly indicated that urgent action was required. Importantly the voices of children and young people, a core feature throughout this Programme, highlighted very clearly that young people viewed specialist CAMHS as far from a first line support mechanism but that a wider approach focused on other support mechanism such as schools and community services should be developed. Specific investment in terms of increasing specialist CAMHS capacity as well as pilots of school in-reach services, and a resetting of expectation regarding timely access to support helped to improve access overall. Importantly understanding the specific requirements for children, young people and their families with a potential neurodiverse presentation required a different approach in meeting their needs. This was an important step in starting to recognise and understand neurodiversity connected but distinctive from specialist CAMHS.

The second phase of the Programme brought a breakthrough in the wider system working. Whilst phase one had focused on the NHS, it was clear that working with people who worked with children and young people was key to enabling core support structures in their daily lives. What was later named as ‘the Whole School Approach’, the work provided a critical partnership between the education service, the health service with support from children’s social care services, and in Phase 3 later became the platform for the NEST/NYTH work. The roles of Government, Inspectorates, Improvement agencies (consortia) and the NHS working together identified the common aim and mechanisms for delivery. Importantly the views of children and young people, first shared in the Hafal report ‘Making Sense’ and built upon through the development of a National Youth Stakeholder Group meant that ‘agencies’ were responding to the expressed needs of young people. Important changes in the curriculum in Wales signalled an ideal opportunity to build health and wellbeing, including emotional health and wellbeing, into the core aspects of the education system.

The third and final phase of the Programme focused on three key aspects. The provision of an early help and enhanced support framework; the development of a delivery mechanism through Regional Partnership Boards and a whole system approach to neurodiversity. The NEST/NYTH Framework, so called as a result of children, young people and families contributions, provides a whole system approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health. Evidence based, and built on the experiences of practitioners, young people and families, it provides a framework for collective action. The second strand of work on supporting Regional Partnership Boards to develop and deliver their approaches to implementing the Framework resulted in a structured and mature relationship with RPBs whichever stage of development they were at. This is critical work to continue to ensure that the Framework itself is not another great piece of work that does not fulfil its potential through ineffective implementation.

The final strand of work is one which has been more challenging but that offers significant potential moving forward. Neurodiversity is a developing area. The profile of single ‘diagnostic’ groupings for example autism, remains prominent, although the dialogue, prompted in part by this Programme is starting to create a broader understanding of neurodiversity. Despite the significant and highly impactful progress made during this programme in relation to national pathways for neurodiversity (neurodevelopment) and creative, local approaches there remain some fundamental challenges. The awareness of neurodiversity, a positive development, is resulting in increasing demand for assessment and support and as yet the ability to fully align policy, resources and capacity to meet demand has yet to be achieved. A strategic approach, building in creative solutions and opportunities is required and the Programme offers suggestions for further consideration. This area would benefit from strong policy alignment, as successfully demonstrated through the Whole School Approach between education and health services.

In summary there are several key points of learning and reflection that could support the approach to future work. The importance of views and children and young people themselves has been crucial. The views offered at the start and throughout the Programme have been clear, considered and pragmatic. The role and view of parents and carers as partners in shaping the work became more prominent during the extended Programme. The Parent and Carers Network became a core vehicle for dialogue, and building trust and confidence that their views, as the most important people in children’s lives, were shaping future services.

The importance of drawing critical partners together, co-creating common purpose and determined action is key. This was particularly the case in this Programme when the education and health sectors came together guided by the central aim to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children. This coalescence at both policy and practice level laid the foundations for the Whole School Approach development overseen by the Ministerial Task and Finish Group for Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

It is clear that the NHS cannot itself deliver or achieve ‘health and wellbeing’ when it comes to the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. From the start of the Programme, the then Minister for Health and Social Services indicated that too many times the only options available to support children and young people and their families with emotional and mental health issues were specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health services in the NHS. The development of the NEST/NYTH Framework signals a significant change in the offer to children, young people and their families. This Whole System Approach to be implemented by Regional Partnership Boards enables a focus on wellbeing as universal in schools and early help and enhanced support opportunities in their communities. Evidently, developing approaches that engage multiple agencies as well as children, young people and their families are more likely to succeed, however in most cases the delivery mechanism via Regional Partnership Boards will need support and nurturing. A population based approach, informed by regional population and wellbeing needs assessments are a core foundation upon which to develop approaches to emotional health and wellbeing.

The pandemic brought significant challenge to everyone, and especially to children. The recognition of school as a protective feature for children and young people and their emotional health was illuminated. Also highlighted however were the flexible approaches needed for some children, for example those who are neurodiverse.

The Programme, working with Welsh Government, was able to influence improved options for children, young people and their families in accessing school hubs as one way of support. Whilst the school approach works well for the 70% or so who are in mainstream education, further widening of approaches are needed to help address mental health inequalities into the longer term.

The 'whole system' in Wales (NHS, Education, Social Care, Third Sector) and society more broadly is learning about emotional and mental health and wellbeing, and approaches need to flex to take into account new thoughts and considerations. This is particularly true in relation to neurodiversity. Strongly held views about particular approaches will shift but only with an active dialogue and deep listening to people with lived experience and practitioners. The system in Wales has the potential to develop high quality new knowledge through partnerships with academia. The strength of expertise across the range of stakeholders, and particularly parents and carers, is a platform upon which to build significant research reputation in the fields of neurodiversity and wider emotional and mental health.

Finally, the role of Government Ministers and policy officials more broadly is critical. Where join-up across policy areas and departments has been most coordinated and effective, significant and rapid strides have been made. The best example of this is the work on the 'Whole School Approach' later the 'Whole System Approach'. The broader, collective commitment across departments and portfolios may be more complex; the results of achieving this however are considerable. Whether at national (Welsh Government), Regional (Regional Partnership) or local level (health boards and local authorities) the importance of data and intelligence, understanding outcomes, experiences and value is important. In addition, individual and collective stories further support the drive for action.

The summary recommendations therefore focus both on the 'what' and the 'how' - both are equally important and inter-twined.

Introduction

The Together for Children and Young People' (T4CYP) Programme was established as a Welsh Government (WG) priority with cross cabinet commitment.

Launched in February 2015, T4CYP was led by the NHS, and facilitated as a multi-agency service improvement programme. The priorities for the programme included exploring ways to reshape, remodel and refocus emotional health, wellbeing and mental health services provided for children and young people (CYP) in Wales, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Its aims were to ensure that all support and services are underpinned by prudent health and care principles.

The Programme itself can be viewed in three phases:

The **early work** of the Programme focused on supporting improvements and development in specialist CAMHS, particularly given the service pressures including extended waiting times.

The **second phase** of the Programme sought to help progress an understanding and approach to universal support, and its importance in building resilience.

The **third and final phase** of the Programme related to 'Early Help and Enhanced Support'. With the learning from the Whole School Approach in mind, this work focused on the importance of multi-disciplinary and agency work, with the aim of developing a Framework to guide future service development and improvement. The Programme was ended in September 2022, and the below sets out how identified workstreams are incorporated into existing programmes moving forward, including the NHS, Welsh Government and Public Service Boards and Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs), who will all play a critical role in enabling a smooth transition. This report draws out specifically the aspects of the third and final phase.

Programme Mandate December 2019 (for final phase)

- 1** The delivery of a framework which describes the **early help and enhanced support** to be available across all areas of Wales. The framework will build resilience and support mechanisms as part of a whole system approach for children, young people and their families. It will also seek to describe the linkages to initiatives and services being put in place through the work with schools and more specialist mental health services in both primary and secondary care. This will involve close working between T4CYP and the NHS CAMHS Network, alongside the Whole School Approach Team and Social Services Improving Outcomes Team based in Welsh Government.
- 2** Working with wider partners through **Regional Partnership Boards** to develop the early help and enhanced support framework and then supporting its adoption at an RPB level. This work will align with the direction of travel already signalled by Welsh Government on the future strategic role RPBs should play in this important multi-agency agenda. This T4CYP workstream will include the identification of models and approaches that can be implemented across Wales by facilitating the sharing of good practice and learning from projects supported by the Transformation Fund.
- 3** Supporting the development of **a whole system approach for children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions**. This work stream will develop a future vision and support the development of policy for neurodevelopmental support services in Wales, key to steering the work to ensure the needs of all children (whether within or below the current threshold for specialist services) can be met. This will be undertaken by closely working with Welsh Government officials and linking with the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Act 2018.

Changing context

The context and landscape has changed significantly since the inception of the Programme in February 2015.

With increasing powers of devolution a Wales specific legislative framework and prioritised Ministerially-led Group provides the backdrop to some of the Programmes work, including:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, which has led to the development of Public Service Boards and the need for long term Wellbeing Plans;
- The Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, also outlines the need to develop Regional Partnership Boards and Area Plans;
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act);
- The introduction of Ministerial Groups (Advisory/Task & Finish) groups including:
 - Whole System Approach
 - Outcomes for Children

In recognition of the evidence regarding the specific aspects of children and young people's lives, additional 'system' work was established with the Programme was both sighted on and had some interdependency with, including:

- The National mechanisms for early years including Cymru Well Wales Partnership, and First 1000 days
- ACEs - Adverse Childhood Experiences - Programme
- The establishment of National Mental Health Network Board, which incorporates 4 Networks and 1 National Programme :
 - Specialist CAMHS; Perinatal Mental Health; Eating Disorders and Adult Mental Health
 - Suicide and Self Harm Prevention

The Childrens Commissioners engagement with children and young people and the profile of caseload work led to emotional and mental health being a key priority for the Commissioner. Working closely with the Children's Commissioner, the 'No Wrong Door' work and the Rights based Approaches have been fundamental interdependencies for the Programme.

The pandemic, almost overnight, changed the context of this Programme and its work. The delivery of the core components as mandated by the Welsh Government were able to continue, albeit in different ways, and the outcomes of this are outlined below. The indirect impacts of the pandemic however are still being felt and in addition the current cost of living issues are making the need significantly greater and the importance of focusing on children and young peoples emotional and mental health al the more important.

Running alongside this Programme, the Children Young People and Education Committee (CYPE) were both informing and being informed by the work. A number of inquiries and follow-ups were underway during the Programme that required a flexible approach to the key issues and findings. Most of these reports related to phases 1 and 2 of the Programme and are not repeated here in this summary report.

Progress: Phases 1 and 2

Further detail is available on request, however the summary below outlines some of the key aspects of progress made during the earlier phases of the Programme.

- 1 An increased provision and quality improvements of specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (sCAMHS). The Welsh Government investment of over £6m resulted in an expansion of services and workforce. Despite significant recruitment issues the resources expanded to provide a more timely, and higher quality response across Wales. Service Improvement Frameworks were developed and implemented enabling a consistency of approach with justifiable local variation to meet specific requirements.
- 2 An increased provision of community 'intensive' services across Wales. The issue of urgent responses, including in the out of hours period, has been a key feature. Significant progress was made during the early phase of the Programme with community intensive teams being established and enabling a greater proportion of more intensive support being provided in the individuals own home, reducing the need for inpatient admission wherever possible.
- 3 Improved waiting times, recognising that there is more to do to ensure sustainability. It is clear that waiting times improved. The pandemic challenge has brought this back into focus, however the improvement pre-pandemic should be a platform on which to build following it. The 28-day access standard has enabled Wales to set out clearly the importance of timely responses.
- 4 A reduction in inappropriate out of Wales placements, again however, recognising the pressure of demand for inpatient services. Important improvements had been made in this area, enabled in part by the investment in specialist CAMHS services including the community intensive teams. Overall demand, prompted to a significant extent by the pandemic, has seen an increase in placements above the level of provision that has been possible in Wales. Although this is improving, further focus is required in this area.

- 5 The engagement of Children and Young People (CYP). The Hafal report (Making Sense 2015) and the clear recommendations arising from its the publication, was crucial in shaping the work and now provides a test for the legacy of the Programme. Outlined here, the key messages from young people provided a focus for action:
 - 1 Expand and/or create high-quality support provided by non-mental health professionals
 - 2 Don't medicalise growing up
 - 3 Reform CAMHS' referral systems
 - 4 Embed emotional intelligence and healthy coping mechanisms into the curriculum
 - 5 Introduce an absolute timescale for referrals
 - 6 Review practice within CAMHS
 - 7 Reorganise the transition to adult services
 - 8 Improve data collection and accountability
 - 9 Support carers
 - 10 Listen to young people
- 6 The establishment of a National Youth Stakeholder Group to support the Whole School Approach and the T4CYP programme with a clear development and engagement plan. This fundamental action continued the contribution made by the Hafal Report and helped shape the approaches being developed at every stage. It provided opportunity for young peoples voices to be heard as well as to directly share their views with key political and other system leaders.
- 7 The establishment of a National Parent and Carers Group with a clear development and engagement plan. This Group had a fundamental impact and contribution to the Programmes, informing at every stage of the development of the key elements of work. The building of relationships between the services and parents and carers is key and the importance is outlined in the contribution in the Foreword of this report, as described by the Chair of the Parent and Carer Network.

Progress: Phase 3 (final phase)

The Legacy Report demonstrates that, during the tenure of the programme, the key aspects have been significantly progressed. The mandate of the programme as set out by Welsh Government has been delivered, including additional expectations during the final phase of the programme alongside a pivoting of resources for a period of time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 1 The delivery of a framework which describes the **early help and enhanced support** to be available across all areas of Wales. This has been delivered in the form of the NEST/NYTH Framework. Key aspects of work involved in the development of the Framework and its implementation include:
 - The coproduction of the Whole School Approach Framework in partnership with Welsh Government, which has subsequently become statutory part of the education offer.
 - The Early Help and Enhanced Support work stream focused on three key areas: Developing a series of **Momentum and Inspiration events and communications** that aligned with the development and implementation of the NYTH/NEST Framework; **Engagement with Regional Partnership Boards** to work alongside them in their journey of developing and adopting the NYTH/NEST framework; and noting/action planning **key enablers and blockers** to this process.
 - The joint event with the **Childrens Commissioners Office**, co-producing an opportunity for young people to develop questions to put to all 7 Regional Partnership Boards, with a particular focus on **No Wrong Door** and how this fits with the NYTH/NEST Framework. These shaped the work of the RPB plans and serve as a baseline to measure progress against these key drivers for change.

- The ‘checking-in’ with children and young people of a focus on the key aspects/deliverables from their perspective, drew out the following summary elements:



Some of us are isolated and not in school/employment so we don't have a door to go through.



We need interim support in an accessible way and we want to be part of discussing what is available vs accessibility, text, phone, online chat, or face to face - all day around the clock.



We would like to see counsellors from each district that go to school, all join on a zoom meeting and the young people join to share how they cope - learning from each other, and can relate to each other and talk about shared experiences.



We would like to see increased understanding of mental health especially for males to help us to address stigma and labelling.



We want to see teachers staying after school and taking time to speak to us about mental health issues.



We want a better offer for 18 - 25 year olds, currently services stop after 18 you have to “grow up overnight”. We do not feel comfortable to access adult services. We need to have a middle ground to bridge the gap.



We need quicker and better access to support that wraps around us.

2 Working with wider partners through **Regional Partnership Boards** to develop the early help and enhanced support framework and subsequently supporting its adoption at an RPB level.

- The work with RPB's helped to identify some key themes which require further development and discussion across sector, across age groups and across geographical area approaches. These have been fully discussed with the children and young people and now form part of the legacy proposal and future recommendations.
 - A common theme across all regions relates to funding streams, and the strongly perceived negative impact of short-term funding. Feedback indicates that this has led to instability in the workforce, often at the cost of delivery. It has interestingly, in places, also reinforced barriers across organisations, leading to, for example, a 'carving up' of who should be paying for what. The potential of increasing pooled, longer term funding dedicated to Partnership initiatives and services may help alleviate many of these issues.
 - The long term financial sustainability of partnership initiatives and moving new models of working that reflect NYTH/NEST principles into core, 'business as usual' service provision is a regular feature of dialogue at the partnership level. Whilst the principle of seeking to 'mainstream' continues to be supported, the concern with potential of tapering Regional Integrated Fund, in the absence of increased core funding risks initiatives/services being stepped down. The concepts of 'invest to save' and 'taking down services to support innovation' have been reported as being fraught with difficulties. Despite clear evidence that investing in early intervention saves money down the line, and is overwhelmingly acknowledged to be the right thing to do, the day to day underlying demand for services results in an inability to switch resource streams in practice.
- Furthermore, the potential impact of savings spread so thinly across many services is difficult to both quantify, track and release, with some benefits being perceived as long term, stretching into adulthood and beyond.
- Despite the reported challenges of maturity of partnership working and funding approaches, the desire to implement NYTH/NEST across partner agencies has remained resolute. Furthermore, the commitment to this approach to planning, delivering and developing services has not come into question. It is now necessary to maintain and nurture this commitment and provide structured support for progressive improvement.
 - It is therefore recommended that Welsh Government now considers coproducing a new evaluation framework with RPB's in recognition of the value that will need to be associated with the distance travelled by RPB's who embark on embedding the framework. This work should include a focus on the outcomes and experiences of the children, young people and their families as a key component, if there is to be a collective realisation of the intended cultural shift.

3 Supporting the development of a whole system approach for children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions.

It would be fair to say that understanding in this area is evolving quickly both nationally and internationally. Wales should be positioning itself at the forefront of the thinking and development of inclusive, citizen centred approaches to neurodiversity. There has been significant progress made in this arena, however there is an imperative that the momentum gained must be maintained and progressed. Key elements of progress relate to:

- The co-development of a Neurodevelopmental pathway and standard across Wales in line with NICE guidance and the development of a suite of 16 early help resources to support families up stream. The key understanding that assessment only responses are not the answer is now strong, however assessment continues to be a key pinch-point of the pathway. At the time of closing of the programme around 10000 children were on the waiting list for an ND assessment. This represents around 1.5% of CYP under age 18 in Wales.
- The support, intervention or response, either before or after assessment, is a fundamental area for further work and investment. Integrating with the NEST/NYTH Framework is essential in understanding the supportive response at local and regional level that is or could be offered. The evidence of need is indisputable, the service model that will achieve an adequate response will require fundamental changes that build on the work achieved by education around the Additional Learning Needs. A systemic approach with unified purpose developed through collaboration and coproduction at both strategic and operational levels.
- The development of a Neurodiversity Wales Shared Platform which is the first of its kind in the UK. The platform brings together the voice of the parents / carer, the child, clinicians, education and other allied health professionals in an open and transparent way. The platform will aid assessments, provide a co-ordinated early help offer which build on the strengths of the child and supports the sharing of information to ensure families are not having to repeat their stories. There is strong clinical and family commitment to this way of working and it is clear that accelerating the further development and implementation of such supportive digital mechanisms could provide Wales not only with efficiency gains but respond clearly to a shared-care agenda.
- Further and ongoing work is needed in terms of a joined-up approach to policy. The exemplar of the Whole Schools Approach sets a way of working that draws in the component part of policy and the wider system, working collectively on a shared endeavour. Importantly the coproduction approach underpins this. In relation to neurodiversity further join-up could bring benefits of a whole systems approach, aligned and building on the work undertaken so far. There continues to be a focus disorder specific medical based models of care in terms of approach and funding. Whilst the importance of this offer cannot be underestimated, this provides one offer for children and young people and does not address the growing demand for wider support including ND and behavioural needs.

Recommendations for future work and further progress

- 1 Importance of views of children and young people themselves, in shaping the design and delivery of approaches and services is key. Ensuring engagement and co-production with children, and young people takes place systematically at national, regional and local levels.

Recommendations:

- A A systematic approach to coproduction is agreed and implemented across the whole of the system as part of service development and implementation.
- B The development and adoption of a coproduction Maturity Matrix should assist in monitoring the progress made at local, regional and national levels.

- 2 The importance of parents and carers perspectives in shaping services, supporting one another and fundamentally children and young people is critical.

Recommendations:

- C As part of the co-production recommendation above, specific approaches to planning and developing services with parent and carers as equal partners should be agreed.
- D Mechanisms to support Parent and Carer Networks nationally, regionally and locally should be implemented with a requirement to actively support the contribution of the parent/carer in individual care planning.

- 3 The importance of drawing critical partners together with co-created common purpose and determined action is essential. Developing approaches that engage multiple agencies as well as children, young people and their families are more likely to succeed but the delivery mechanism (RPB) needs support and nurturing. The NEST/NYTH Framework acts as that common purpose for Regional Partnership Boards in taking forward the development of approaches at the regional and local level, however RPBs will need support to implement these new approaches and to review and evaluate progress.

Recommendations:

- E Structured support should be provided to RPBs to build on the developmental approach taken to date.
- F A coproduced, Evaluation Framework with a focus on the outcomes and experiences of the children, young people and their families should be developed, implemented and shared transparently, both at regional and national level.
- G Aspects of partnership development and working seen as enabling should also be included in the Evaluation Framework. These could include how partnerships allocate and utilise of resources (both core and Regional Investment Fund), the development and deployment of workforce plans, and the effectiveness of multiagency team working.

- 4 The system and society more broadly is learning about emotional and mental health and wellbeing and neurodiversity. Approaches will need to flex to take into account new thoughts and considerations. Strongly held views about particular approaches will shift but only with an active dialogue and deep listening to people with lived experience and practitioners.

Recommendations:

- H Partnerships with Academia offer significant opportunity and advantage for Wales and these should be advanced as a priority.
- I Digital developments that promote access to assessment, advice and support should form a strong 'offer' for children, young people, families and professionals. Whilst these may be broad ranging, accelerating the further development and implementation of the Neurodiversity Wales Shared Platform should be actively progressed.
- J The call from young people to develop services for people aged 18-25 needs active attention and a national approach developed. This is particularly key as approaches for children and young people become more progressed, and the perceived gaps in approaches for adolescents and those in early adulthood become greater.

- 5 The role of Government Ministers and policy officials more broadly is critical. Where join up across policy areas and departments has been most coordinated and effective, significant and rapid strides have been made. The best example of this is the work on the 'Whole School Approach' later the 'Whole System Approach'.

Recommendations:

- K With particular reference to Neurodiversity, cross-governmental policy approaches should be enhanced to build on the collective progress made by through the Programme. It may be possible to adopt or adapt the successful Joint Ministerial Approach taken as part of the Whole School Approach and the Together for Children and Young People Programme.
- L The development of the NHS Executive and the National Social Care Office should be considered as a basis for a joint 'engine room' for focused work on the development and deployment of approaches to improving the outcomes and experience of children, young people and neurodivergent families. The 'engine room' approach should be established in partnership with, and drawing on the expertise of, colleagues across Education, Local Government and the wider NHS.

Key conclusion

The end of the Together for Children and Young People Programme marks a significant point in the development of approaches to improve the emotional and mental health of children, young people and their families in Wales.

From the mandate of the Programme over the last 2 years, it is clear that much progress has been made; but that this only marks a point in the further development of approaches in Wales. The firm foundation created through coproduction has afforded the opportunity to make concrete improvements at local, regional and national levels. These are however at an early stage of implementation and without structured support, attention and evaluation of progress the strong ambition set out through the NEST/NYTH Framework will not be realized. The challenges of the global pandemic experienced by children, young people and families further underlines the need to work diligently and purposefully on this agenda.

Whilst the achievements of the people working under the umbrella of the Programme have been set out, there remain fundamental issues to take forward. The recommendations made therefore are intended to offer a perspective of those involved and experienced in this area for future progress. Welsh Government, the sponsor body of this Programme, has made important investment in this area and to fully realise the benefits of this investment for all will have a key role in shaping the approach over the coming years. In that regard, it is hoped that this Legacy Report, provides at least some considered advice on the next steps.

[Neurodiversity Information Video](#)



Contact

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NHS Executive - Strategic Programme for Mental Health:
[executive.nhs.wales/networks-and-planning/
wales-mental-health-network/](https://executive.nhs.wales/networks-and-planning/wales-mental-health-network/)

Welsh Government NEST framework:
[gov.wales/nest-framework-mental-health-and-
wellbeing-introduction](https://gov.wales/nest-framework-mental-health-and-wellbeing-introduction)