



# Business and Children Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	2 February 2022
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Draft Report: CYPMH task group
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of GCL
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolios</b>	Young People and Learning ASC/Public Health
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for All
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Artemis Kassi</b> <a href="mailto:akassi@westminster.gov.uk">akassi@westminster.gov.uk</a>

## 1. Executive Summary

This is a preliminary draft of the Children and Young People's Mental Health task group report.

## 2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

Committee members are asked to provide initial comments on this preliminary draft of the task group's report. Members are further requested to:

- consider the preliminary draft;
- provide steer on the report; and
- consider the recommendations.

### 3. Background

Mental health and emotional well-being are in the spotlight in the media and public discourse. The problems are not new and for various reasons are emerging as amongst the most critical concerns of public health today. Psychological problems amongst children, adolescents and young adults can be wide-ranging and may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), disruptive conduct, anxiety, eating and mood disorders and other mental illnesses.

The Children and Young People's Mental Health task group was established in March 2021, with the added dimension to its work focusing on the emotional and mental well-being of Westminster's young residents: on 23 March 2020, the UK went into lockdown as a measure to control and protect against the Covid-19 virus. For children and young people, this resulted in remote learning and reduced socialisation, with immediate and likely long-term impacts on their mental health and emotional well-being. The shift to remote learning also necessitated increased reliance on technology.

The CYPMH task group members investigated:

- what the Council was already doing through, for example, Children's Services;
- what safeguards were already in place;
- what the experiences of young people in Westminster are/might be;
- what parents/schools/institutions in Westminster may already be doing; and
- what the main obstacles to good mental health and emotional well-being are.

The task group found from evidence collected throughout the pandemic that, whilst children and young people generally coped well during the first wave of the pandemic, some children and young people had experienced greater negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. This group of those who were particularly adversely affected included: children and young people who are disadvantaged economically; those who had pre-existing mental health needs prior to the pandemic; those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); and autistic young people. With the pandemic ongoing at the time of this Task Group report, various in-person services and opportunities for socialising and learning were still unavailable for many children and young people in Westminster, or had become more difficult to access.

This preliminary draft has been produced with a view to finalising the report imminently. Given the proximity of local elections, the aim is to accomplish this finalisation by early March. The Committee members, including those who have served on the task group along with colleagues from the Adults and Public Health Policy and Scrutiny Committee, are aware of Children's Mental Health Week (7 – 13 February).

Once finalised, the ambition for this piece of work is to assist in shaping policy concerning the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people in the coming years.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Artemis Kassi**

**[akassi@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:akassi@westminster.gov.uk)**

**APPENDIX:**

Preliminary Draft CYPMH Task Group Report