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NEWS RELEASE

Hertfordshire chosen as a national trailblazer in school mental health support

Schoolchildren experiencing mental health difficulties in Hertfordshire will get early help from special support workers in a new initiative announced today (Thursday 20 December).

The government has named Hertfordshire one of only 25 areas to launch Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in 2019.

“I am delighted that Hertfordshire has been chosen as a trailblazer in testing Mental Health Support Teams for primary and secondary school pupils,” said Dr Geraldine O’Sullivan, Hertfordshire and west Essex Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) clinical lead for mental health.

“Our plan will see 40 schools supported by two teams of support workers, which could include youth workers as well as mental health practitioners, providing evidence-based support in community venues, not just schools. We are also planning on having parent education programmes provided by the voluntary sector.

“This initiative will make a huge difference to the lives of children and young people across Hertfordshire. It will further improve links between mental health services and schools to ensure children, parents and teachers know where they can get support and help for young people with mental health concerns.”

MHSTs are a key initiative set out in the government’s recent Children and Young People Mental Health Green Paper.

Hertfordshire’s two NHS clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valleys CCG, which buy health services for the county’s population, are working with Hertfordshire’s Health and Wellbeing Board, Hertfordshire County Council and other partners to develop and implement the five-year mental health and wellbeing transformation plan for children and young people in Hertfordshire.

Dr O’Sullivan added: “Developing mental health support in schools so that young people have easy access to help is a key priority in Hertfordshire’s mental health and wellbeing transformation plan. The MHSTs will provide early help to pupils, support school staff and ensure children and young people with more severe needs access the right support by providing a link to specialist NHS services.”



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Beth Honnor, head of Stevenage's Marriotts School, who sits on Hertfordshire's Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing board, said: "Parents and pupils have told us they want more mental health support provided within schools and locally. School staff see young people day in, day out and are there for them at tough times, of course, but with these new teams we will be even better placed to help pupils in need."

The two MHSTs will be linked to Education Support Centres (ESCs) and each support 20 schools, testing how teams can work with other services and build on the wider transformation of mental health care for children and young people. Workers will be employed by Hertfordshire mental health services provider Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT).

In Hertfordshire:

- more than 400 schools already have a mental health lead
- more than 500 Herts professionals, including school and college professionals, Youth Connexions workers, social workers and residential care workers, have been trained in youth mental health first aid

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Notes to Editors

1. Across England, NHS and social care organisations have been encouraged to work together more closely to deliver more effective, joined-up and affordable services. The country has been divided into 'Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships' or 'STP' areas by the national organisation, NHS England. Hertfordshire and west Essex, is one of these STP areas.
2. To find out more about the Hertfordshire and west Essex STP, see www.healthierfuture.org.uk
3. Led by local GPs, East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group plans, designs and buys health services for 590,000 people in Hertfordshire, and monitors the quality and effectiveness of those services.
4. Led by local GPs, Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group plans, designs and buys health services on behalf of more than 625,000 people in west Hertfordshire, and monitors the quality and effectiveness of those services.
5. Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) provides mental health and specialist learning disability services across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, North Essex and Norfolk, providing care for over 30,000 services users each year, across more than 80 locations.
6. For further comment, contact enquiries@healthierfuture.org.uk



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