

Title of Report	CYP Mental Health Needs Assessment 2025 Report
For Consideration By	Health and Wellbeing Board
Meeting Date	Wednesday 21 January 2026
Classification	Public
<u>Ward(s) Affected</u>	All
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Is this report for:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision

Why is the report being brought to the board?

<p>1. This report presents the findings of the City and Hackney Children and Young People's (CYP) Mental Health Needs Assessment, 2025. It provides the Board with a current and extensive overview of mental health and wellbeing needs across the City of London and Hackney. The Board is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review the key findings and recommendations - a set of summary slides (Appendix 2) have been prepared for members that do not have time to review the full report ○ Discuss and comment on how these recommendations will be taken forward as part of the new Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan.
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Has the report been considered at any other committee meeting of the Council or other stakeholders?

- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Alliance - 16/7/2025**
 - Presented draft recommendations for comments and sign off to finalise.
- **Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) Strategic Partnership - 11/9/2025**
 - Presented summary slides and recommendations with very positive feedback received. Members asked that a series of workshops are set up to turn the report's recommendations into an action plan.
- **City and Hackney PbP Delivery Group - 11/9/2025**
 - Presented the summary slides and recommendations. The report was positively received and there was agreement from the Group regarding the recommendations presented. The group highlighted several recommendations that may be more challenging to implement given they require cross-partnership working. The group also approved the item to be taken to the City and Hackney Executive Partnership Board. This was previously scheduled on 4/11/2025 but the meeting was cancelled. The item will now be taken later in 2026, following further work to develop the new Emotional Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, which this project informs.
- **Mental Health Investment Committee - 26/9/2025**
 - Presented the summary slides and recommendations, which were positively received and approved.

1. Background

- 1.1. The 2025 CYP Mental Health Needs Assessment provides an up-to-date analysis of the mental health needs of children and young people (aged 5-25) in the City of London and Hackney. It draws on a range of quantitative data (including primary care records and school census information) and qualitative insights from young people and professional stakeholders to understand current needs, service use, and system gaps.
- 1.2. The assessment is particularly timely, as services continue to adapt to the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly increased demand for mental health support. The findings and recommendations are intended to provide an evidence base for strategic commissioning and the development of the next joint Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is due to be refreshed for 2026. A detailed breakdown of findings, recommendations and data limitations can be found in the full report (Appendix 1). A summary presentation of the report's key findings and recommendations is also provided (Appendix 2).

2. Mental Health Needs

- 2.1. The needs assessment reveals a growing and unequal burden of mental health needs among children and young people in City and Hackney, a trend that has been significantly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.2. Nationally, the prevalence of probable mental disorders among 17–19 year-olds more than doubled, from 10.1% in 2017 to 25.7% in 2022.
- 2.3. City and Hackney have a higher prevalence of several key risk factors for poor mental health when compared to London and England averages. These include higher rates of children living in low-income households and those with experience of the social care or youth justice systems. This underscores that addressing children's mental health is a matter of social justice, and is rooted in the wider determinants of health, requiring a holistic approach that tackles both clinical and socioeconomic determinants.

3. Identifying Needs

- 3.1. The report highlights significant disparities in how mental health needs are identified and recorded across different settings and demographic groups.
- 3.2. Diagnosis rates of common mental disorders and depression increase with age, and females are more likely to be diagnosed than males. Conversely, males are more likely to have a diagnosed severe mental disorder (SMD). The highest diagnosis rates for SMDs are seen in the Black ethnic group.
- 3.3. In education, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are most commonly identified in secondary school-aged males and children from Black and Mixed ethnic backgrounds. This suggests mental health issues may sometimes be perceived and managed as "behavioural" problems, particularly in boys.
- 3.4. In primary care, diagnosis rates for common mental disorders (CMDs) and depression are highest among females and those from White and Mixed ethnic backgrounds. This pattern contrasts with usage of some specialist services, such as the Children and Family Services (CFS) Clinical team, where Black and Mixed-ethnicity teenagers are substantially overrepresented.
- 3.5. There are also geographic and cultural variations, with lower diagnosis rates in North Hackney, likely linked to cultural stigma, language barriers, and a reluctance within the Charedi Jewish community to engage with statutory services.

4. Meeting Mental Health Needs

- 4.1. Access patterns vary significantly across the local service offer, indicating that different groups of young people engage with support in different ways.

- 4.2. Specialist CAMHS caseloads in City and Hackney saw a 70% increase between 2019/20 and 2022/23.
- 4.3. Online services such as Kooth and targeted services including Off Centre have a disproportionately high number of female users, while males are underrepresented across many services relative to their likely level of need.
- 4.4. Services focused on neurodevelopmental conditions, such as CAMHS Disability, see a higher proportion of males.
- 4.5. Waiting times vary across the system. For NHS CAMHS services, First Steps has the shortest waiting times for assessment, while Specialist CAMHS has the longest waits for treatment to begin.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1. The needs assessment proposes 22 recommendations, grouped under five themes, to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in City and Hackney. These recommendations are fully detailed in the full report (Appendix 1) and summary slides (Appendix 2). A summary of the report's recommendations is provided below.

5.2. **Reducing inequalities and improving joint working with our communities**

- Remove barriers to accessing emotional wellbeing and mental health services
- Strengthen partnerships with the voluntary and community sector (VCS)
- Improve equitable access to support through advocacy, interpretation services and peer-led ambassador models
- Diversify and develop a representative mental health workforce
- Develop a programme of work with a specific focus on neurodiversity inclusion and access across all services

5.3. **Communication, knowledge and information**

- Create a council-led Communications Strategy targeted to children and young people which includes Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Develop a specific Parent/Carer set of communications
- Develop and provide an enhanced consultative approach
- Develop a resource clarifying offers available

5.4. **Developing more flexible, needs-based approaches**

- Services provide more flexible, accessible, personalised and community-informed service models and support
- Move beyond a solely medical model of mental health
- Expand peer support for young people

- Develop interventions to increase mental health literacy
- Strengthen postvention support after suicide or serious incidents
- Prioritise prevention and early intervention

5.5. Recommendations for schools

- Ensuring that Children and Young People’s wellbeing is a priority for Hackney education
- Schools prioritise improving their communication of their mental health support offer
- Improve communication between the local authority and families during transition from primary to secondary school

5.6. Further investigation, research or work needed

- Improve data sharing and use of insights across the system.
- Support services to improve the quality of data collection, including outcome measurement and evaluation, and strengthen analytical capacity
- Improve coordination and communication between professionals
- Explore barriers to engagement and missed appointments.

6. Next Steps

6.1. The findings and recommendations from this health needs assessment will provide the evidence base for the update of the joint Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan, due for 2026. Acting on them will require a sustained, whole-system commitment to ensure services are equitable, accessible and effective for every child and young person.

6.2. The initial next step will focus on hosting a series of workshops with key partners, as suggested by the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategic Partnership, in order to turn the 22 proposed recommendations into a deliverable action plan.

7. Policy Context:

Please detail which, if any, of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities this report relates to?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving mental health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increasing social connection
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporting greater financial security
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All of the above

Please detail which, if any, of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 'Ways of Working' this report relates to?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strengthening our communities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating, supporting and working with volunteer and peer roles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborations and partnerships: including at a neighbourhood level
<input type="checkbox"/>	Making the best of community resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All of the above

8. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Has an EIA been conducted for this work?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No

9. Consultation

Has public, service user, patient feedback/consultation informed the recommendations of this report?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Have the relevant members/ organisations and officers been consulted on the recommendations in this report?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

10. Risk Assessment

- 10.1. A key risk is the lack of additional resources available to take forward the recommendations for which these are required. These recommendations require further exploration and discussion with local partners.

- 10.2. Regarding the delivery of the report's recommendations there is a risk of failure to secure the sustained, whole-system commitment from all partners. This will be mitigated through leveraging existing fora (the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Partnership, CAMHS Alliance, and a range of system meetings) in which partners are already engaged.
- 10.3. There is also a risk that without targeted work to understand barriers to engagement, services will continue to be inequitable for underserved groups, undermining efforts to reduce health inequalities.

11. Sustainability

N/A

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Appendices	<p>1) Full report: City and Hackney Children and Young People's Mental Health Needs Assessment, 2025</p> <p>2) Summary slides: Summary Slides - CYP Mental Health Needs Assessment, 2025</p>