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london and home counties branch

London and Home Counties Branch

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How to integrate mental health, social care, education and other services for children, young people and their families in the pandemic era.

To continue promoting diversity, equality and inclusion related to our previously published newsletters, in this edition I am observing how to integrate mental health, social care, education and other services for children, young people, and their families throughout this pandemic era. My reason is to support holistic wellbeing when it is needed, and to help to reduce stigma and discrimination in mental health.

The pandemic has affected the mental health of children, young people and their families, making them vulnerable to the effects of the lockdown. Therefore I am focussing on ['The Green Paper'](#) as a guiding principle, to provide innovation in children's mental health.

I feel confident with the [submission of the Green Paper](#) that supports schools, colleges and universities, and by training specialists to support mental health to work together with the NHS, supporting children and young people's mental health. In addition, it should reduce waiting times to enable better access to professionals in the NHS to support children and young people's mental health.

I am of the opinion that this is a crucial time to act and look at how provision can be restructured and tailored in mental health, social care, across education and other services. There should be a multi-faceted approach to meet the needs of children, young people, and their families across the UK.

For instance, engagement should focus on:

- Listening to the views of children, young people and supporting their families
- Observing parental struggles
- Supporting any learning disabilities and types of physical and mental health conditions
- Listening to any vulnerable groups
- Supporting BAME and other groups with possible racialised experiences

The awareness of teaching mental health in the curriculum is hugely beneficial for children and young people, as it helps them in their social and emotional development, and in their attachments for effective relationships. This learning about mental health might likewise facilitate in them a significant change in their lives, and improve their resilience and wellbeing, particularly in this pandemic era.

Social prescribing and physical interactions should be considered, (outdoor play/studies/exercise/etc), following the changeable Covid-19 regulations. These are vital activities in children and young people's development and can help avoid brain alterations that ultimately might lead to mental health problems.

With the lockdown, it is important to observe the safety that social media offers in relation to what children are learning about. Consequently, it is essential to have awareness of safeguarding and in response to children and young people's individual needs for their general protection against any danger. It is as well pertinent to offer educational training to families, to aid their understanding of the functionality of difficult behaviours with positive informed approaches, to support children and young people's needs, and to define early interventions to prevent difficulties.

Accordingly, the NHS system should be offered support with its latest 'Long-term plan', to support the mental health of children, young people and their families. This should involve a [focus on integrated mental health models](#) of innovation and quality, working in partnership with different institutions and the communities, and seeking funding, to transform children and young people's mental health services to address the unequal effects that the pandemic has caused in wellbeing.

Finally, my greatest remedies to recommend are better communication and ongoing innovation which are beneficial to children, young people, their families, and all our societies, and that should continue to be used in practice beyond the pandemic.

In addition, by developing the understanding of the global discrepancy in access to healthcare for women, which is predominantly in low-middle income countries, we will be able to be optimistic and open doors to our women's health, with greater equality in the global health of women.

Olga Cecilia Farach,
L&HC Committee Member

