



# **Connected Tayside: An Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Children and Young People (2020 – 2023)**



## **CONTENTS PAGE**

<b>Section 1: What is Emotional Health and Wellbeing?</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Section 2: National and Local Context</b>	<b>5-7</b>
<b>Section 3: Vision</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 4: Principles</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 5: Connected Tayside</b>	<b>9-12</b>
<b>Section 6: What do Young People in Tayside think?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Section 7: Tayside's Charter for Children and Young People/Our Commitment to Tayside's Children and Young People/Outcomes</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Section 8: Evaluation and Review</b>	<b>16</b>

# What is Emotional Health and Wellbeing?



Emotional health and wellbeing\* is about both feeling good and functioning effectively, maintaining positive relationships and living a life that has a sense of purpose. It is shaped by our life circumstances, our relationships and our ability to control or adapt to the adverse circumstances we face. Good mental health:

- can contribute to heightened self-esteem, optimism and a sense of control and coherence
- improves outcomes in education, employment and health
- benefits individuals, families, communities and society

*“Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”*

[World Health Organisation, 2014](#)

Those experiencing positive mental wellbeing are more confident, assertive and able to:

- develop emotionally, creatively, intellectually and spiritually
- face problems, resolve and learn from them
- cope with adversities, show resilience
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- contribute to family and other social networks, local community and society
- empathise with others
- use and enjoy solitude
- play and have fun.”

[Good Mental Health for All, NHS Health Scotland \(2016\)](#)

## 1. National and Local Context

The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027) sets out the vision for people in Scotland to get the right help at the right time, with a focus on prevention and early intervention, and access to supports and interventions from joined up services. For children and young people, the need for action was highlighted by the findings of the Dartington research undertaken across Angus, Dundee, and Perth and Kinross which informed the outcomes within the Tayside Plan for Children and Families (2017-2020). One of the main priorities for the Health and Wellbeing group of the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative was the development of a Mental Health Strategy for Children and Young People in Tayside.

The aim of this strategy is to use local data, (including a regional mapping exercise of services and interventions), to inform the delivery of local services to ensure that we get it right for children and young people by; promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing through universal services and a resilient workforce (in line with the recommendations of the national Mental Health Taskforce, now Programme Board); and developing clear pathways to targeted and specialist support, when needed.

Building on the work of existing services and the CAMHS Innovation Team, the ['Emotional Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People – A toolkit for all staff'](#) was developed and launched at Tayside's first Emotional Health and Wellbeing Conference at Abertay University in 2019. This allowed the views of over 200 people to inform the development of this strategy. This was in addition to the views of young people gathered through focus groups across Tayside and which informed the outcomes sought.

It is hoped that this strategy will demonstrate our commitment to children and young people in Tayside and to promoting and supporting their positive emotional health and wellbeing.

# Tayside: Strategies Plans, & Reports



# National: Strategies Plans, & Reports



# Resources: Tayside and National



One in ten children and young people aged five to 16 have a clinically diagnosable mental illness (Audit Scotland, 2018)

[Children & YP Mental Health](#)

Tayside has **1091** Looked after Children who are **4-5 times** more likely to suffer mental health issues than their peers (NHS T, 2017)

Over 75% of all mental health problems have their onset before the age of 20, and childhood and adolescence are the key stages for promotion and prevention to lay the foundations for mental wellbeing (PHP Scotland 2019)

[Child Health Profile \(March 2019\)](#)

Research tells us that having one key adult mitigates the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. (Bellis et al. Public Health Wales)

**1 in 4 children.** At least 7 out of 10 of these live in a house where at least one adult is working (PHP pg. 18) increasing the likelihood of developing poor mental health

75% of 15-year-old girls and 53% of 15-year-old boys in Scotland feel pressured by schoolwork (HBSC, WHO, 2020)

[Health Behaviour in School-aged children](#)

40% of LGBT young people consider themselves to have a mental health problem compared to 25% of all young people in Scotland (LGBT Youth Scot, 2013)

The Mental Health Strategy (Scotland) 2017-2027 states that: "Prevention and early intervention are key to minimising the prevalence and incidence of poor mental health and severity and life time impact of mental disorders and mental illnesses."

11% of young people (18-34) report having attempted suicide and 16% report self-harm at some stage in their lives (PHP Brit J of Psychiatry, 2018)

Longitudinal research in the UK has shown that good social and emotional skills (including self regulation, self awareness and social skills), developed by the age of 10, are predictors of a range of adult outcomes, such as life satisfaction and well being, labour market success, and good overall health. Goddman, A. et al 2015

19.5% of children (0-17 years) in Tayside live in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1 Quintile 1)

(NHS Tayside CH Rep, 2019)

Studies indicate that school age children living with a recognised protected characteristic higher chance of being bullied

[World Obesity Day](#)

1 in 6 children (2.9 million in the UK) will experience parental mental illness, 70% will suffer mental health and other difficulties as a result."

[Children's Commissioner's Vulnerability Report 2019](#)

### Children with mental ill health in the family

<b>2,933,770</b>	Children living with at least one parent reporting symptoms of anxiety/depression
<b>285,986</b>	Children whose mother and father are reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression
<b>900,000</b>	Children whose resident carers report symptoms of anxiety or depression (2017)

### 3. Vision

Across Tayside we know the need for good emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people is increasing. The needs of our children and young people will not be met solely by the skill and expertise which rests within clinical settings and consulting rooms. It will require the resources which rest within our communities and all systems around our children and young people to be fully activated; in schools, youth groups, charities and the family home. The community and service engagement necessary to meet this need will challenge us all to think and behave differently. It will affect change in our attitudes, culture, beliefs and behaviours. Children must be made aware of, and supported to, use healthy habits and coping strategies: exercise, appropriate sleep and screen time, eat well and maintain a healthy weight. Coping strategies including peer support, positive self-talk, emotional regulation and positive relationships with a trusted adult will help us get it right for children and young people in Tayside. In the absence of appropriate education, relationship and support, children may engage in substance abuse, violence, abusive relationships and poor eating habits. If we are to get it right for all our children and young people in Tayside, change must begin with ourselves, our local authorities, health services, parents, schools and partners. We must all work in partnership with children and young people to understand their lives and work together to address the underlying challenges.

### 4. Principles

This strategy for children and young people in Tayside is premised on the following principles, underpinning our service improvement;

- **Ask Once, Get Help Fast (Early Intervention and Community Support)**  
Children and young people will get the right help at the right time from the right people
- **For all our bairns (Collaborative Working)**  
Breakdown organisational and professional boundaries to provide children and young people with the right care; provide experiences which are experienced as consistent and integrated
- **Notice, Ask, Know (Creating a navigable system you can understand)**  
Adults will apply their understanding of the continuum of need and support from universal to targeted and specialist services  
Pathways to appropriate support should be easily accessible in a navigable system that all can understand
- **Asking Inspires New Growth? (Communications with Children and Young People)**  
Adopt an enquiry based approach in service design and delivery  
Through Learner Participation we will provide better outcomes – learn by listening
- **Folding the Edges In (A Welcoming Environment)**  
Vulnerable children and young people will be enabled to access services by ensuring environments are welcoming, friendly and emotionally safe.



## 5. Connected Tayside

This strategy aims to make the connections between the different aspects of a child or young person's life that may impact on their emotional health and wellbeing and to ensure that in Tayside, we have an holistic and connected approach to prevention and early intervention.



### Ambition

In Tayside, we have the same ambition for emotional health and wellbeing, as for physical and nutritional health. Universal health care must promote positive emotional health and wellbeing with the ultimate aim of reducing the need for specialist services.

## Perinatal Mental Health

It is essential when we consider the continuum of a young person's life, we include perinatal support. According to the Royal College of General Practitioners, "Up to one in five women... are affected by mental health problems in the perinatal period. Unfortunately, only 50% of these are diagnosed. Without appropriate treatment, the negative impact of mental health problems during the perinatal period is enormous and can have long-lasting consequences on not only women, but their partners and children too."

The [Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy](#) 2016 (PPYPS) addresses the mental health and wellbeing of young people in this part of the life course through advocating a range of cross-cutting interventions and services.

A self-assessment against the recommendations in the PPYP strategy highlighted key areas for the focus of collaborative action:

- Strengthen the collective leadership and governance
- Make sure that real-time data and current evidence is used by the partnerships to drive interventions for those in greatest need
- Develop new, integrated pathways to ensure that young people, especially those at greatest risk, can access the information, support, and services that they need
- Ensure that the implementation of the Tayside Strategy for Parents meets the specific needs of young parents and is fully aligned to the recommendations in the PPYP strategy

## Parenting

The Tayside Strategy for Parents provides a firm basis for joint working to meet the expressed needs of parents.

- Parents have access to good quality information that supports them to make informed choices, plan for and meet their family's needs
- Communities are inclusive, understanding children's needs and supporting families to thrive
- Families have access to effective services that are delivered by a skilled and confident workforce that value the role of parents
- Policies that affect family life are supportive and deliver positive outcomes

## Healthy Weight

One key ambition of the Child Healthy Weight Strategy (2020-2023) is that child healthy weight is seen as a society wide issue. This ambition is supported by a call for action for strategies, including the Connected Tayside – An Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Children and young People (2020-2023), to be aligned with one another to create an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle. Creating places where children,

young people and their families are more likely to eat well, be physically active, enjoy the outdoors, reduce screen time and have a healthy weight are all aligned with supporting positive emotional health and wellbeing.

## **Mental Health and Poverty**

Evidence shows there is a strong link between poor mental health and people experiencing housing problems and homelessness. Poor quality housing may also affect children and young people's wellbeing. Housing services alone cannot prevent homelessness or address housing need. Through a whole systems approach, we have significant opportunities to develop joined up policies and service provision. Work through Cost of the School Day and the Child Poverty Action Group provide opportunities to address issues of growing up in poverty.

## **Rural Communities**

The challenge presented by isolation is keenly felt by many in our rural communities. The National Rural Mental Health Forum has been established to help people in rural areas maintain good mental health and wellbeing.

## **Stigma and Discrimination**

Where children and young people do not feel welcomed, or do not see themselves represented, it can be hard for them to open up about emotional, health and wellbeing needs or to believe they will be listened to. Differences in ethnicity, sexuality, or gender identity, for example, should not be barriers to receiving high quality services to support emotional health and wellbeing needs.

## **Workforce**

The key to **ask once, get help fast** is ensuring a workforce that understands emotional health and wellbeing and can offer the right support at the right time across Tayside. Our workforce strategy is to build confidence and capacity at a universal level and promote the ability to problem solve, listen, and sign-post for all health and wellbeing needs. By for example, building on the CAMHS Innovation Fund training, embedding the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Toolkit in our practice, further developing the partnership with Abertay University in providing training for staff, continuing training in Nurture Principles, promoting the Trauma Informed Workforce Training Plan as well as Scottish Mental Health First Aid. The provision of Counselling Services in schools, as part of a continuum of support, will also enable the delivery of **ask once, get help fast**. Improved support at the earliest point could stem the flow of referrals to more intensive supports such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

## **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

Continuous improvement work on access to CAMHS, and reducing waiting times, should ensure that children, young people and their families will be provided with Specialist CAMHS Services that deliver accessible, timely, person-centred assessment and treatment. They will be directed into the most appropriate mental health pathway, which pays particular attention to vulnerable children e.g. looked after children. Improvement work on access should also consider design of partner services and referral pathways, to reduce patterns of rejected referrals.

## **Transitions**

The transition from children's mental health services into adult mental health services can often be challenging for young people. Both children's and adult services need to co-operate to make this transition as seamless as possible. Smooth transitions between services are also part of achieving joined-up/connected and accessible services.

## **Digital World**

There is a recognition of the digital world that young people live in and how this can support and/or have a positive or negative impact on their mental and emotional wellbeing.

## **The Third Sector**

This sector plays a crucial role in supporting people, in providing services, in developing research, and in policy development. Support to the Third Sector can also help in achieving, for example, Participation and Empowerment in a rights-based approach, because of the role that the Third Sector often plays within communities, at the local strategic planning level, and in national policy development and legislation. The Tayside Collaborative will consider how its support to the Third Sector can help build capacity in local areas for effective partnerships between Third Sector bodies, between the Third Sector and public authorities, a strong mental health Third Sector Interface, and to support continuing development of recovery-oriented services.

## 6. What do young people in Tayside think?

Children and young people are at the heart of this strategy and have played a key role in developing the focus and direction of the work.

A group of pupils from secondary schools across Tayside participated in workshops to share their views on a range of issues in relation to Mental and Emotional Wellbeing including: current issues, the support in place, barriers to this support, and what we can do differently to make things better. The feedback from these sessions has informed our strategy and was shared with delegates at the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative, Emotional Health and Wellbeing conference held in August 2019.



## 7. Tayside's Charter for Children and Young People/Our Commitment to Tayside's Children and Young People/Outcomes

- **I need trusting and positive relationships to promote my emotional health and wellbeing and develop my resilience**

- We will promote respectful relationships through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum, relationships and anti-bullying policies, whole school interventions, for example, nurture, relational and restorative approaches, rights based learning etc.
- We will promote prevention and early intervention through universal curricular approaches, community activities and partnership working
- We will promote positive mental health and strategies to cope with mental health issues

**Outcome Measures:**

Improvements in emotional health and wellbeing, and resilience, evidenced by local measures of wellbeing/resilience and/or the national Health and Wellbeing Census

Young people report having access to a consistent, trusted adult

- **I want there to be reduced stigma about mental health issues so that I can ask for help when I need it**

- We will promote an openness to the discussion of emotional health and wellbeing and a wider understanding of the range of responses to challenges and adversities

**Outcome Measures:**

A reduction in stigma reported by young people

Increased confidence in asking for help from adults and peers reported by young people

Increased use of supporting services as evidenced by participating measures

- **I need to know where to go for help and support when I need it most**

- We will raise awareness of supports and services available for young people across Tayside
- Provide up-to-date signposting to these services
- We will work with young people to ensure that they can access the information they need in a way that is most accessible for them

**Outcome Measures:**

Quicker and easier access to supports and services reported by young people

Young people report knowing where and how to access information and support

- **I want a safe space to talk and be listened to without judgement**

- We will establish welcoming, friendly environments, including school, community and clinical settings
- We will promote better knowledge and understanding of mental health issues and increase staff confidence and consistency in responding appropriately

**Outcome Measures:**

Increased staff understanding and confidence in responding to emotional health and wellbeing issues in young people  
Improvements in young people accessing a confidential space  
Young people report feeling listened to and understood

- **I want my teachers to understand mental health issues and know how to help me when I need it**

- We will provide professional learning for practitioners in recognising mental health issues in young people through Abertay University
- We will promote understanding of pathways to support through the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Toolkit
- We will provide guidance on appropriate referrals when specialist services needed

**Outcome Measures:**

Increased professional awareness of pathways to support in Tayside reported  
Improvement in appropriateness of referrals to school health  
Young people report feeling better supported by their school  
Improvement in appropriateness of referrals to CAMHS and reduced waiting times

- **I want there to be more Mental Health First Aiders and Counsellors in schools to talk to**

- We will improve the range of supports available in schools
- We will provide training in Mental Health First Aid for teachers and pupils
- We will provide access to train the trainers in Mental Health First Aid
- We will increase access to Counselling services in schools

**Outcome Measures:**

Increased numbers trained in Mental Health First Aid in Tayside  
Increased numbers of Mental Health First Aid Trainers across Tayside  
Counselling available in schools across Tayside (for children from 10 years) with positive outcomes evidenced

- **I want better local information for my parents/carers so that they know how best to help and support me**

- We will raise awareness of parents and carers about mental health issues in young people
- We will provide accessible information to parents/carers on universal and targeted supports available across Tayside

**Outcome Measures:**

Increased access to and positive feedback from parents/carers on available information  
Increased awareness and understanding of signs of mental health issues reported by parents/carers  
Increased confidence in where and how to access appropriate support reported by parents/carers

## 8. Evaluation and Review

The following reflective questions should be used by all stakeholders to evaluate and review how they implement this strategy across their organisation:

How will you consult on the strategy?

How will you involve all stakeholders, including children and young people?

How are you going to implement this strategy?

How will you share the strategy across your organisation?

What difference will implementing the strategy make in your setting/context?

How will you evidence progress against the outcome measures?

To successfully put this strategy into action we require to take collective responsibility for thinking creatively about how we need to act and work differently to improve the mental and physical health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people through early advice, support and education. ‘

Implementation of this strategy can be supported by the [‘Emotional Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People – A toolkit for staff.’](#) This toolkit has a clear purpose to be a valuable and accessible tool which supports all universal staff in supporting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing. It aims to raise awareness of emotional health and wellbeing and the importance of prioritising early intervention, highlighting the role all staff can play in promoting this with the children and young people they work with.

***“Our children and young people will have the best start in life and Tayside will be the best place in Scotland to grow up.” (TRIC Vision, 2017)***

**Task and Finish Group (PG3)**

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