

<b>Decision-Taker:</b>	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Refugees
<b>Date:</b>	21 May 2024
<b>Report title:</b>	Extension of Nest Children and Young People's Mental Health Service to Schools
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	All
<b>Classification:</b>	Open
<b>Reason for lateness (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable
<b>From:</b>	Strategic Director of Children and Adult Services

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Refugees approve that the School Engagement Team Children and Young Peoples Mental Health project delivered through the Nest be extended for a further 18 months to 30 September 2025 at a cost of £318,000.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

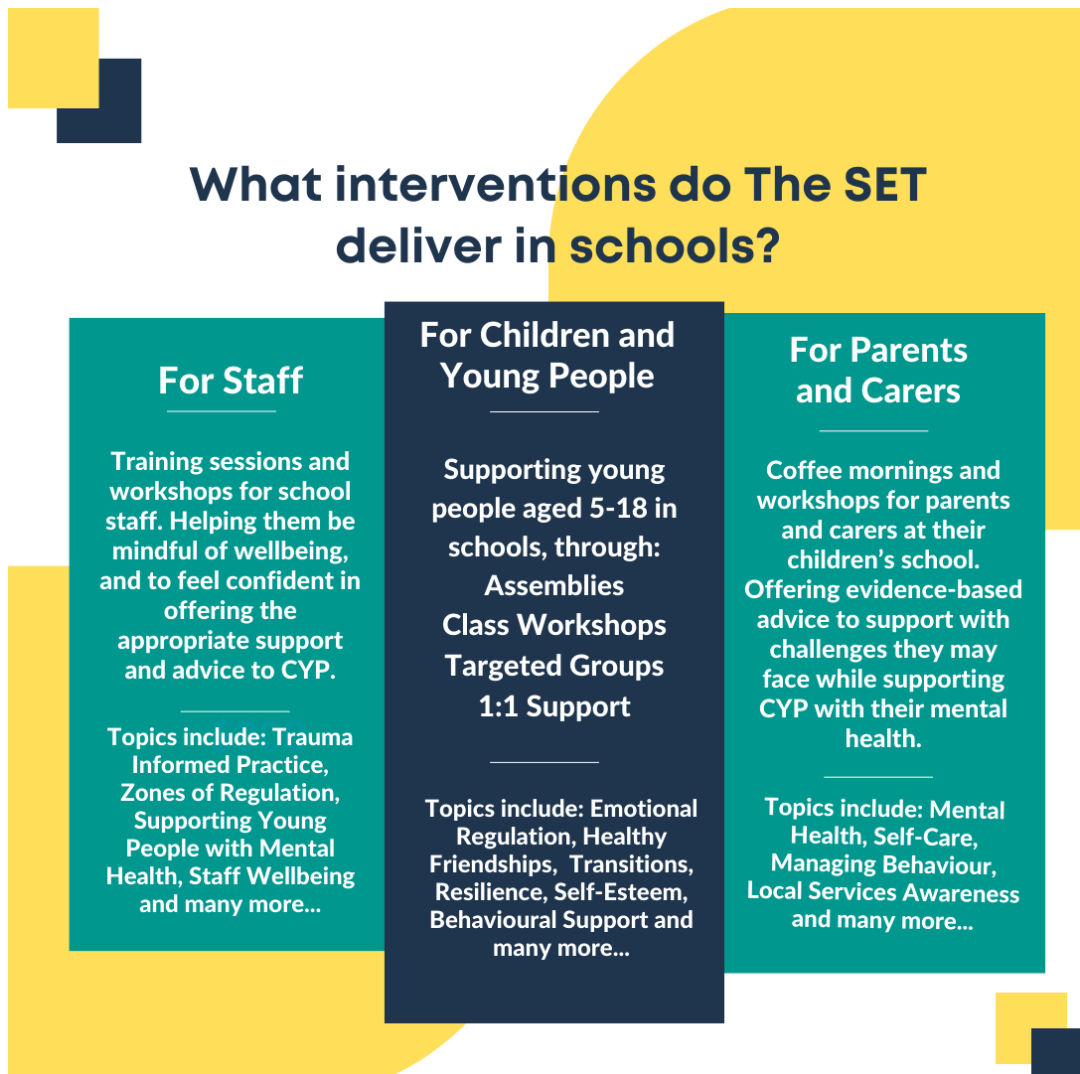
2. In February 2021 Council Assembly agreed to launch the 'New Youth Deal: no young person to be left behind'. This sought to:
  - Promote young people's mental health and well being
  - Enable young people to access education, training and jobs
  - Create new forms of youth governance through a youth parliament
3. As a part of this, funding was allocated to expand the Nest Mental Health Service, operated by Groundwork, to schools through the School Engagement Team (SET), this was extended using departmental budgets to March 2024. It is the further extension of this funding that this report relates to. This project expanded the free mental health drop in service offered by the Nest to Southwark schools. This is a part of the commitment to support 100% of children and young people with mental health needs.
4. The School Engagement Team works across primary, secondary and specialist schools within Southwark offering a wide range of support to children, young people, parents / carers and teachers. Its focus is to raise awareness around mental health and wellbeing, help with school transitions and offer support to those identified at risk of exclusion. They work closely with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) to minimise the risk of overlap and provide a wide offer of support across Southwark.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The range of projects supporting children and young people's mental health has grown as additional funding has become available, the projects being funded are making a positive difference to children and young people. As part of learning from this it is proposed that there independent evaluation of the impact. External funding has been secured through Impact on Urban Health a charitable arm of The Guys and St Thomas's Trust to undertake an independent evaluation of projects offered through the Nest. This is planned for completion by September 2024 and as a part of this consideration will be given to bringing the Nest Open Access Project and School Engagement Team together to form one specification that closely aligns with the nationally funded MHST, we continue to work closely with the Nest and they are supportive of this evaluation. This extension provides time to undertake the evaluation and also co-production of the future commissioning plan with children and young people.

### Current Offer

6. The range of interventions offered by the School Engagement Team are illustrated below:



7. **Awareness raising:** this has mainly been delivered through workshops for children and young people in a whole class setting. These sessions are designed to complement the schools existing PSHE curriculum and are instrumental in increasing awareness of the importance of mental health and reducing stigma.
8. The SET also does lots of vital work within schools to raise staff awareness around mental health and the importance of supporting CYP wellbeing.

Staff training sessions:

- Are bespoke, catered around the needs of each specific school
  - Are to educate teaching staff on important mental health topics
  - Help staff to be mindful of wellbeing in their day to day work with CYP
  - Offer a space where staff can openly express concerns, ask questions, and seek advice
  - Give staff an opportunity to explore their own wellbeing, learning about the importance of taking care of themselves.
9. SET also works to raise awareness parents and carers, to equip them with the right tools to be able to support CYP with their wellbeing and mental health. Sessions help to:
    - Connect the families with their child's school
    - Educate parents on important topics relating to CYP mental health
    - Give parents a safe space for support with their own wellbeing.
  10. The SET provide a safe space for parents and carers to seek support and advice on how to support CYP with their mental health. This working alongside the sessions CYP received in school offers a holistic approach to mental health support.

### **Transitions:**

11. Transitions are a key area that the SET interventions focus on within schools. Supporting CYP with transitions, whether that is from one school year to another, from primary to secondary, or from school into sixth form or college, is extremely important to prevent this change in their life from having a negative impact on their mental health.
12. The interventions the SET provide in regard to opening up conversations around transitions and change, provide valuable support. This support is a preventative measure to help CYP feel less stress and anxiety around school transitions, this in turn means school refusal and further mental health struggles are less likely to occur.

### **Exclusion Prevention:**

13. Southwark's 2022 Schools Inclusion Charter states "we want all of our children in education". This is also a priority for The SET who provide interventions for CYP which, as well as having a positive impact on their mental health, also help improve their relationship with school – reducing stress, managing behaviour, improving engagement and reducing exclusions.
14. A new initiative has been set up since September 2023. SET trialed a mentoring intervention with a small cohort of children who were referred for 1:1 support. They received 6 sessions of mentoring/coaching which was extremely well received by the parents, children, and school. Each of the children presented with challenging behavior and were at risk of either exclusion or becoming a school refuser. The work they did with SET:
  - Improved their wellbeing
  - Helped improve their relationship with school
  - Increased their confidence and self-worth
  - Gave them coping strategies for when they are struggling
  - Allowed them to feel listened to and understood
  - Equipped them with better skills resolve conflict.
15. This trial was extremely successful and the SET are aiming to roll this out across other schools as it has proved successful to prevent exclusions.
16. **Interventions outside of term time:** the SET have also done some valuable partnership work during the school holidays. When it is not term time, the SET is able to collaborate with local organisations within Southwark to gain access to CYP. This creates opportunities for CYP to:
  - Have access to a safe place when not in school
  - Improve their wellbeing
  - Increase their confidence and self esteem
  - Receive support with transitions in to the next step of school
  - Preventing school refusal and exclusions.
17. **Co-production:** Young peoples, parent / carers and teachers views and needs are ascertained in order to inform and shape delivery, especially at the start of each individualised intervention.
18. **Exclusion:** Young people at risk of exclusion or those that have already been excluded are offered wrap around support, in addition an initial mental health assessment with a Clinical Lead is offered with onward referral to a specialist service such as CAMHS if required.

### **Current performance**

19. In the year 2023/24 7895 children and young people have been provided support by the School Engagement Team, it is not clear in the way it is reported if some children have attended more than one session. 20 schools are accessing support and the Team works closely with other parts of the Nest to reduce the risk of duplication. This is broken down as follows:

20. Sessions attended by children and young people April 2023- March 2024

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Assemblies	419	0	226	405	
Workshops	1782	912	1720	2193	
Targeted workshops	42	21	17	16	
121 support	13	42	59	28	
Total	2256	975	2022	2642	7895

21. Equality of access is a key focus of the Local Mental Health Transformation Plan and monitoring shows that the demographic coverage is positive and representative to local schools demographic data.
22. When comparing the data to the referrals by ethnicity to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) a higher percentage of children and young people from a Black or Black British, Asian or Asian British and Mixed or Multiple backgrounds are supported by the SET. Those from a White or other background are slightly underrepresented when comparing SET data with CAMHS data.

**Partnership work**

23. Ensuring children and young people access the right support at the right time ensures that those with low to moderate mental health needs may be supported before their needs escalate. In addition, the reduction of waiting lists for clinical services is a key priority in the Local Transformation Plan. The provision of preventative services for low to moderate levels of mental health needs is a contributor to this reduction. There is close working with the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust to ensure cases are referred into the correct level of service. This helps with improved management of waiting lists across the partnership.
24. The range of projects supporting children and young people’s mental health has grown as additional funding has become available. An evaluation of projects offered through the Nest is planned for 2024-25 and as a part of this consideration will be given to bringing the Nest Open Access Project and School Engagement Team together to form one specification that is put out to tender. This extension provides time to undertake the evaluation and co-production with children and young people.

**Policy framework implications**

25. Supporting residents of all ages to maintain good mental health, emotional wellbeing, and to thrive is a key priority for the Council and health partners in Southwark and South East London. This is reflected in the Integrated Care Board’s commitment to ensuring that ‘children, young people, and adults receive early and effective support for common mental health challenges.’
26. The Southwark Local Transformation Plan sets out the borough’s ambitions to improve children and young people’s mental health services locally, building on initiatives such as School Mental Health Support Teams and the Improving

Mental Health and Resilience in Schools Programme. It also sets ambitious targets to reduce waiting lists for those children and young people in need of support.

27. The Integrated Care Board and Southwark Council have committed significant investment into children and young people's services in recent years and continue to do so, in the context of a significant increase in demand post-pandemic.

## **Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

### **Community impact statement**

28. The Nest School Engagement Team works to co-produce the support to be delivered and use the feedback from children, young people, parents and carers and teaching staff to shape the service offer.

### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

29. Equality of access is a key priority of the Southwark Mental Health Local Transformation Plan. This project contributes to improving equality of access and therefore increasing access to services before crisis support is needed.

### **Health impact statement**

30. There are opportunities for improving children and young people's mental health outcomes through schools and support programmes. We know that referrals to clinical children's mental health services have increased and this project provides the opportunity to intervene earlier reducing the risk of children and young people needing a crisis response.

## **Climate change implications**

31. This project is delivered locally and is in line with the council's relevant policies and strategies as set out in Southwark's Borough Plan.

## **Resource implications**

32. By intervening early this project plans to contribute to a reduction in demand for clinical services and represents good value for money by meeting mental health needs at a low to moderate level.
33. An extension of the funding for 18 months from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2025 is requested in this report. Funding for this project is currently allocated in departmental budgets.

## **Financial implications**

34. Sufficient budget allocation exists within the Children and Families Division to fund the amount proposed in this report. The annual funding equates to £212k.

## Consultation

35. Ongoing consultation and co-production with children, young people, parents and carers and schools is in place to help shape service delivery.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

### Head of Procurement

36. Not applicable as a grant rather than procurement.

### Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance REF: [SB110424]

37. This report seeks approval of the extension of the School Engagement Team Children and Young Peoples Mental Health project delivered through the Nest for a further 18 months to 30 September 2025.
- a. The project forms part of the objectives of the 'New Youth Deal: no young person to be left behind' initiative previously approved by Council Assembly and is consistent with the council's statutory duties in relation to making provision for young people's mental health, including the Public Sector Equality Duty prescribed in the Equality Act 2010.
- b. The making of this grant is an executive function which is reserved to the Cabinet member in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and Part 3D of the council's Constitution.

### Strategic Director of Finance REF: [02DK2023-24]

38. The Strategic Director of Finance notes the contents of this report, and in particular the comments contained within the Financial Implications section.

### Other officers

### Consultant Clinical Psychologist / Assistant Director of Clinical Practice

39. School attendance and inclusion is a key issue for the well-being of all our families, and it is important to have a range of services supporting our children and young people in different ways and different settings. It is timely that we have the opportunity to have an independent evaluation of how our innovative service offers in Southwark are working for our children and families, so we are supportive of this extension to allow us time to receive and consider this planned evaluation before moving into the next commissioning cycle.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Quirke-Thornton Strategic Director of Children and Adult Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Suzanne Green, Programme Lead, Commissioning	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	18 April 2024	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director, Finance	Yes	Yes
List other officers here: Dr. Jenny Taylor, Consultant Clinical Psychologist; Assistant Director Clinical Practice	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		21 May 2024