



Service Without Thresholds

A white paper for better mental health and emotional well-being services for 0–25 year olds from The Children’s Society and Xenzone

‘...as many as 30,000 children are turned away from specialist mental health services without further support.’

**The Children’s Society, 2015
Access Denied report**

‘There are serious and deeply ingrained problems with the commissioning and provision of Children’s and Adolescents’ Mental Health Services. These run through the whole system from prevention and early intervention through to inpatient services for the most vulnerable young people.’

The Health Select Committee, 2014

‘The idea of truly joined-up services goes well beyond linking face-to-face and digital counselling, it’s about creating partnership-working for a holistic system.’

Xenzone



‘0.7% of NHS funding is spent on children and young people’s mental health and only 16% of the 0.7% is spent on early intervention.’

CentreForum, 2016, Children and Young People’s Mental Health: State of the Nation

‘The current levels of mental health support are doing an injustice to young people – and particularly to vulnerable young people. They do not need barriers to access support; they deserve immediate access to mental health professionals once they have had the courage to ask for help. We want to create a service that is 21st century and that welcomes vulnerable young people in particular. We know this approach works from our work in The Children’s Society and separately with Xenzone – now we can offer this altogether. Bring it on.’

**Rob Willoughby, Area Director of the Midlands
The Children’s Society**

‘Early intervention and ease of access are essential to the future of services for children and young people. Young people, children and families need a simple route in. The individuals and institutions that support them in everyday life – midwives, health visitors, primary and secondary school teachers, pastoral support staff and carers – need a simple route in too. Digital services are but one part of the jigsaw. They are very easy to access but they also need links to the access points within CAMHS. Our approach is to develop a blended one stop provision which builds relationships with local provision already on the ground – working alongside CAMHS, social care, schools, GPs and community-based counselling and support services – to ensure children and young people receive a joined-up, seamless service.’

**Elaine Bousfield, Chairman
Xenzone**

Service Without Thresholds

Xenzone and The Children’s Society have come together to transform mental health services and support for vulnerable young people aged 0–25 years. We looked at the challenge of how to create a truly joined-up service to deliver better mental health and emotional support services for children, young people and young adults (CYPYA).

As a leader in the provision of digital counselling and support services, Xenzone has over a decade of experience delivering online counselling, therapy and support for the early intervention of mental health and well-being problems to young people in need. The Children’s Society works with some of the most vulnerable teenagers facing issues like sexual exploitation, family neglect, domestic abuse or mental health problems.

The problem

‘Services turn away, on average, nearly a quarter (23%) of children and teenagers referred to them by their GPs, teachers or others.’

CentreForum, 2016, Children and Young People’s Mental Health: State of the Nation

We feel that there should be no such thing as an ‘inappropriate referral.’ No child or young person should be turned away because their problem or presenting issues are not ‘bad enough’. Indeed the

report cited indicated that the figure of 23% may be higher, as even more young people are signposted into other services but are not followed up to ensure support is put in place. Additionally, the fact that half of all mental health problems are established by the age of 14 – rising to 75% by the time a young person reaches 24 years of age (Mental Health Taskforce Strategy, April 2016) – is a clear illustration of the need for early help, prevention and intervention.

In its Access Denied report, The Children’s Society highlighted that many children and young people develop mental health problems as result of trauma, abuse and neglect. Yet these vulnerable young people, with a mix of both mental health problems and safeguarding needs, are often those who are turned away from the services they desperately need.

As a nation we need to put this right. We need to build a Service Without Thresholds or tiers. A service that places prevention and early identification at its core, and also serves the needs of those CYPYA who are most vulnerable.

Key principles

The model proposed by Xenzone and The Children’s Society builds on the strengths of both organisations and rests on three premises:

- 1.** We support the social model principles of prevention, early intervention and recovery.
- 2.** We endorse the Thrive¹ Model, as developed by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and the Anna Freud Centre, which allows children and young people access to support as and when they need it, regardless of severity of the issues and presentation.
- 3.** We will deliver services that are CYPYA-led, using a combination of face-to-face and digital delivery, with no waiting times and access to support that is focused on the needs of the young people rather than the needs of the service.



¹ Wolpert, M., Harris, R., Hodges, S., Fuggle, P., James, R., Wiener, A., McKenna, C., Law, D., York, A. and Fonagy, P., 2015. THRIVE Elaborated.

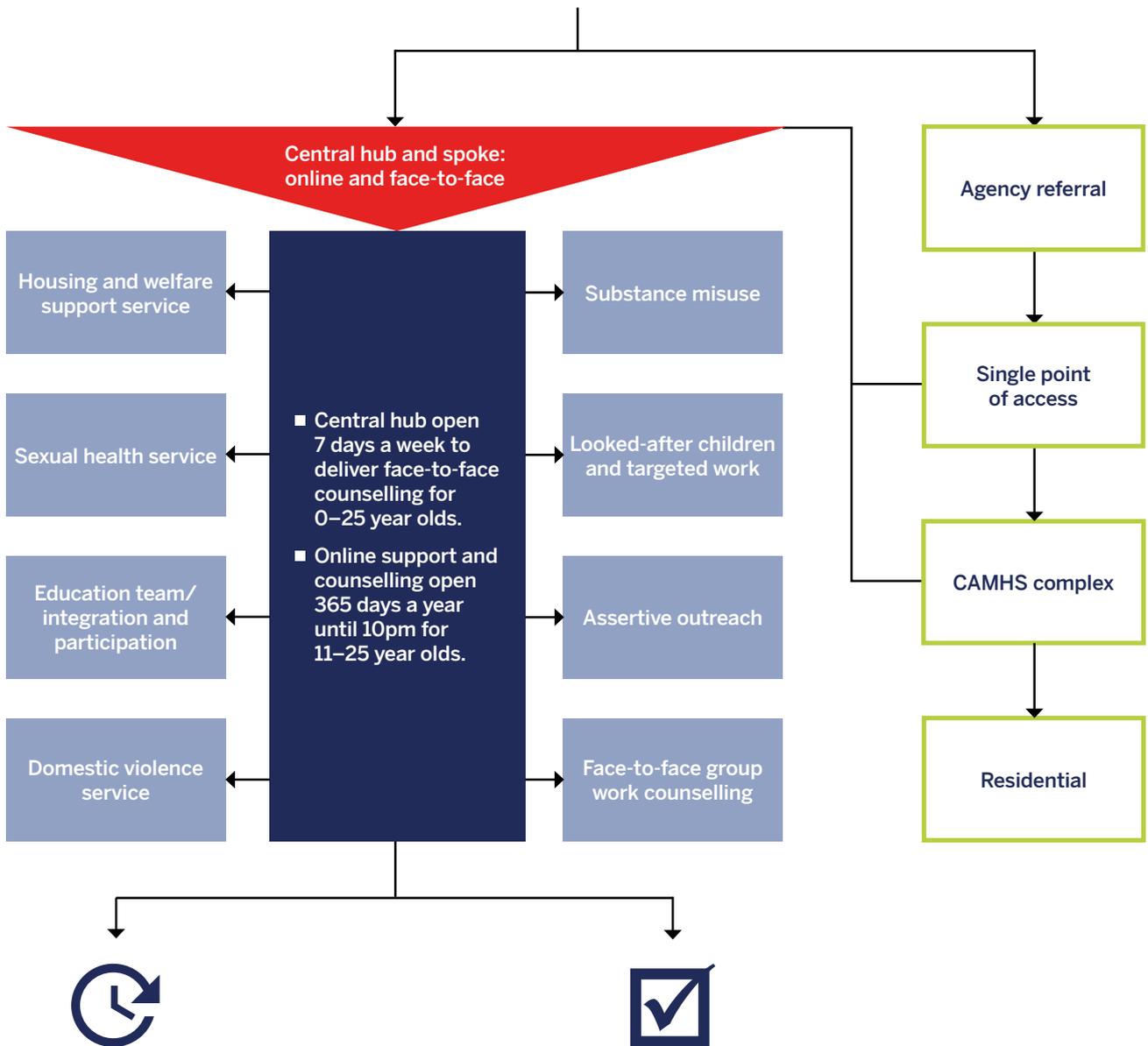
Service Without Thresholds



Commissioned service



Children and young people 0–25



'Half of all mental health problems are established by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 24 (Five year plan report).'

NHS England, 2016, The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health

A Service Without Thresholds – the Xenzone and The Children's Society service model

Our model is a hub and spokes approach with digital services underpinning and enhancing the face-to-face service experiences. It is a truly blended approach.

The hub will be formed of staff co-located in the community – offering a multi-disciplinary team of counsellors, support workers, youth workers, therapists and social workers. The spokes refer to our delivery in schools and at alternative community venues. The model is based on a service delivery which on the one hand puts CYPYA into the centre, but which also reaches out to where CYPYA are. We recognise that urban areas with good transport links are more conducive to a strong central hub model. In more rural communities, or those with certain challenges (for example, where gang activity is rife), there is more need for an emphasis on a local presence and outreach into 'hidden' areas of need, ie a spokes approach.

The model will transform access to emotional and mental health support for all CYPYA, but will work particularly well for more vulnerable children and young people for whom access to clinical services is more problematic. It also provides a foundation for other services to work from the hub and spokes, offering more targeted support. It gives GPs and professionals an immediate access point for their patients, and will reduce the long waiting list for specialist CAMHS.

The principal offer:

The key elements of the Service Without Thresholds model are:

- **A physical shop** front in a central location, open 7 days a week including evenings. It will offer face-to-face counselling, play therapy and evidence-based interventions for younger children, group work, peer-to-peer support and information and advice.
- **A digital platform** provides counselling, therapeutic support and peer-to-peer support for 11–25 year olds, delivered through any connected device 365 days a year, with counsellors available until 10pm every day of the week.
- **Online and face-to-face support** is available without appointment or referral and includes: immediate access to a therapy team – consisting of mental health professionals, counsellors and psychotherapists all of whom are accredited (or eligible to be) by the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) or the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) – peer-to-peer support; fully moderated forums and self-help content.
- The model will work through **outreach to schools and colleges** and in the development of spoke sites that include targeted areas of need/issues or geography.
- **A single reporting system** where all activity and outcomes are recorded and presented to commissioners as one report. This reporting system will be

shared with partners who sign up to the model. Outcomes will be agreed with commissioners but may include the Outcome Star or Wheel, the Family Star, traffic light indicators or Kooth CoGs; YP Core, CAF and session-by-session monitoring.

Transforming services

We are aware that transforming services is difficult – whole system changes take time and managing the partnership arrangements to make them happen takes time too. This model requires partnership working and ensuring outcome measures are shared and joined-up. Pathways need to be established and reducing costs by developing co-location between health, social care and the third sector requires winning hearts and minds. The Children's Society has a track record of managing partnerships and Xenzone can bring the added benefit of understanding the digital environment and how it can transform services and improve access.

Our aim is to work with commissioners to transform access for CYPYA, providing immediate therapeutic support, counselling and brief interventions. This is a service without tiers or thresholds: it is about CYPYA choosing to access different levels of support how and when they want.

Our service will also transform the capacity of the local mental health system with efficient, cost-effective, evidence-based provision and early help. This model has the potential to double the capacity of the current CAMHS services in each locality.

'Schools report 90% increase in stress and anxiety. They are most satisfied with school-based counselling.'

ASCL and NCB, 2016, Keeping Young People in Mind

Involvement and participation

Our model will work with CYPYA to support the design, development and management of this service to ensure it is always relevant.

Through an Ambassadors Programme we will train groups of young people in peer support, equipping and enabling them to help each other in the online peer-to-peer support channels within the digital platform.

Networking and signposting

We will develop and work with commissioners to continually update a comprehensive service directory and support within an area. All this information will be part of the online resource available to CYPYA, their families, our staff and the staff of our partners.

Working with schools and FE and HE colleges

The principal offer outlined above will transform access and support to CYPYA across local authority and CCG areas. This blended model of immediate access to therapeutic and counselling support provides a platform for other support work with education, local authority and health sectors – and in particular targeted work to support vulnerable young people. These additional services could be commissioned alongside the principal offer or, if already contracted, they could be aligned to the Xenzone and The Children's Society model within the partner network.

Additional services that could be commissioned include:

- Ensuring that children and young people have access to consistent and good quality school-based counselling. (The Children's Society, The Good Childhood Report 2015.)
- Ensuring that all schools and FE/HE providers have a named linked CAMHS worker to deliver interventions, support and consultation to teachers for at least one day a week.
- Delivering a school and community-based Dialectical Behavior Therapy skills service to reduce self-harming behaviours delivered through group work and individual programmes.
- A series of six-week resilience programmes for primary and secondary schools, tailored to children and their teachers.
- Play therapy and targeted work with children aged 5–16.
- An Academic Resilience whole-school approach to improving the emotional and mental health of all children.

Reaching those who are more vulnerable with complex needs

Our model of immediate access to therapeutic and counselling support not only provides a platform for other support work with education, but in particular supports targeted work focused on more vulnerable young people, ie:

- Therapeutic work with children in care and those on the edge of care.

- Support for runaways and children missing from home, care or education.
- Access and therapeutic support for young people affected by Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Support for young people affected by substance misuse, housing needs or youth offending.

Developing partnerships

In developing this transformational approach to mental health support and immediate access, Xenzone and The Children's Society will need to be an integral part of the health and social care system at a local level. We understand that the model we are proposing will need agreed pathways and agreements with NHS mental health services, with inter-agency safeguarding services and arrangements, and with children's social care services.

Both organisations are experienced in developing these partnerships and have a long track record of collaboration at local and regional levels.

Vision

The need for a joined-up systemic delivery model is long overdue. Our model has the benefit of ensuring that children and young people do not fall through the net and that prevention, education and early help are prioritised.

Our model will transform access and will reduce demand on high cost services. It will significantly enhance the capacity of mental health services at the local level, be cost-effective and evidence-based.

Xenzone

Xenzone is an award-winning provider of online counselling services. With over 15 years' experience in the industry, our team of expert mental health therapists, counsellors and support workers have worked with tens of thousands of young people, hundreds of schools and over 33 commissioners to deliver pioneering services across the UK.

We are Organisational Members of the BACP (British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists) and all of our clinical staff hold membership with the various bodies that monitor the counselling and psychotherapy professions, such as the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy and the BACP.

Kooth, from Xenzone, is an online mental health counselling and well-being service providing support for children and young people, free at the point of use. Kooth works with schools and local health service commissioners to create an early intervention system for children and young people who need help and support with emotional or mental health problems.

The Children's Society

The Children's Society is a national charity that runs local services helping children and young people when they are at their most vulnerable.

It is a painful fact that huge numbers of children and young people in Britain today are experiencing emotional and mental health problems, alone and in silence.

One in ten young people is experiencing a mental health problem. Yet too often their problems are ignored, their voices are unheard and they are failing to access adequate services.

We are working to change how the most vulnerable young people access the mental health services they need through our innovative frontline services, ground-breaking research and extensive campaigning.

We are with young people every step of the way, until they're ready to share their experiences, often for the first time. By offering children and young people therapeutic support, befriending, counselling or advice in our services, we help get to the heart of their problems, start to repair the damage and alert others to their needs.

We want to grow our mental health support for the most vulnerable young people and get them the help they need.

'Self-harm admissions to A & E increased 93% amongst girls and 45% amongst boys.'

**HSCIC, Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Surveys
December 2014**

Together Xenzone and The Children's Society will widen access to services by removing tiers and providing a joined-up model of care. This unique and comprehensive model will be delivered across a network of partners, working with established health and social care systems and with clear pathways to specialist mental health services.

Find out more

Xenzone and The Children's Society are keen to develop this model and vision with you, our commissioners and with partners. Contact us to explore this further.

contact@xenzone.com
commission-us@childrenssociety.org.uk

xenzone.com
childrenssociety.org.uk

