

**Director of Public Health Annual Report  
2024 - 2025**

**A Stich in Time: Supporting the Mental  
Wellbeing of Young People Today to  
Improve Their Prospects for Tomorrow**

## Foreword

To be finalised

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# Introduction

## 1.0 Mental health and wellbeing in children and young people

For children and young people to lead healthy, fulfilling, and happy lives, good mental health is essential. It is central to overall wellbeing and allows children and young people to take advantage of opportunities that present throughout life. However, providing support for children and young people facing mental health problems and fostering good mental health is complex, and remains an ongoing challenge that demands collective effort from the individual, their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. This report highlights how the mental health of children and young people in Oxfordshire – those aged up to 25 years – is changing and what can be done to manage this change.

Improving the population's mental health has been a national priority in the past decade<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, the burden of mental health problems remains substantial and continues to grow for individuals of all ages, with an estimated 70 million or 1 in 6 people aged between 16-74 years in England experiencing symptoms of a mental health problem in the past week<sup>2</sup> and over 3.5 million people in contact with secondary mental health services in 2022/2023 alone, a 10% increase compared to 2021/2022.<sup>3</sup>

An estimated 1 in 5 individuals between the ages of 8 - 25 years were likely to have had a mental health problem in England in 2023<sup>4</sup>, with referrals to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in England increasing by around 12% each year since 2016.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.1 Defining Mental Health

The World Health Organisation<sup>6</sup> defines mental health as 'a state of wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community'. This definition references how mental health relates to the person themselves, their relationships, and their ability to function in and contribute to a society. Because mental health affects how people experience and respond to the world around them, it influences all aspects of life and is integral to individual and collective decision making.

Discussion of mental health is therefore complex, and it is important to acknowledge that definitions of mental health problems can differ between contexts. This report includes data from various sources that are sometimes not directly comparable. For example, some sources record mental health based on patients reporting their own

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<sup>1</sup> NHS England. NHS Long Term Plan. <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/areas-of-work/mental-health/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health/> (2019).

<sup>2</sup> NHS England Digital. Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey> (2014).

<sup>3</sup> NHS England. NHS mental health dashboard. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/taskforce/imp/mh-dashboard/> (2024).

<sup>4</sup> NHS Digital. Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england-2023-wave-4-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey> (2023).

<sup>5</sup> Rt Hon Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham, T. Independent Investigation of the National Health Service in England: Technical Annex The Rt Hon. Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham OM KBE FRS FMedSci HonFREng. (2024).

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organisation <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

experiences, where in other contexts, rates of prescriptions for commonly used drugs are used as an indicator for mental health problems or mental health problems are differentiated by whether or not they limit capacity for work. We aim to make this clear throughout the report where necessary.

### **Mental Health Language**

While we all have different ways of talking about our mental health, some words and phrases are more respectful and widely accepted by others. As more people talk about their mental health, the language we use about mental health is changing. This can have a positive impact on the stigma of mental ill health. Mental health problems is a phrase that many people who experience them have said feels appropriate and helpful for them, we therefore use this phrase throughout this report.

Mind<sup>7</sup> and the Mental Health Foundation<sup>8</sup>.

The landscape of mental health can include discussion of wellbeing, and emotional wellbeing. Therefore, interventions intended to support wellbeing may be different to mental health interventions, there is frequently crossover, and these can be protective of, or beneficial to mental health. Additionally, mental health problems frequently occur alongside other conditions. Certain diagnoses, such as autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, are widely acknowledged to increase the risk of mental health problems but are not in themselves mental health problems.

The mental health landscape includes self-harm, suicide, and severe mental health problems. These are important and Oxfordshire's Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy is currently being refreshed and will be published in 2025.

The scope of this report does not focus on clinical management of mental health problems, but on the wider picture of mental health including exploring the factors influencing trends in mental health, and potential systems approaches to protecting and supporting the mental health of children and young people.

### **1.2 What are the consequences of mental health problems in children and young people?**

Mental health problems in children and young people are interlinked with physical and emotional wellbeing, and impact individuals, families and surrounding communities.

Insert infographic on the impacts of mental health on emotional wellbeing, physical health, social consequences and health inequalities

<sup>7</sup> Mind, *Mental Health Language*: Online - [mental-health-language.pdf](#)

<sup>8</sup> Mental Health Foundation, *Talking about Mental health*: Online [Talking about mental health | Mental Health Foundation](#)

For instance, mental health problems in childhood have been linked with a wide range of emotional and behavioural impacts such as reduced sleep quality<sup>9</sup> increased risk of self-harm and suicide<sup>10</sup>, greater rates of alcohol or illicit drug use<sup>11</sup>, and challenges with attention and conduct at school.<sup>12</sup>

There is growing awareness of the physical health consequences of mental health problems, including difficulties with maintaining a healthy weight<sup>13</sup>, issues with sticking to treatment for medical conditions such as type 1 diabetes mellitus<sup>14</sup> and higher risks of developing chronic conditions such as heart disease in adulthood.<sup>15</sup>

Mental health problems in children and young people are also linked with social outcomes such as lower school readiness, higher school absenteeism and lower educational attainment.<sup>16</sup> Difficult family environments including domestic violence, abuse, or neglect are also strongly related to mental health problems in children, with individuals in such family conditions being more than twice as likely to have a mental health problem than those in more stable families.<sup>17</sup>

This can have significant implications for employment and training opportunities, with adults that report mental health problems at an early age less likely to be in employment, education and training, and more likely to hold lower-quality jobs.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, mental health problems are strongly linked to inequality, with children from lower-income families around four times more likely to experience mental health problems than those from higher-income families. This can be cyclical, with mental health problems being worsened by factors associated with deprivation such as unemployment or poor housing, while also being a barrier to taking actions to improve living conditions. Promoting and enabling good mental health is therefore a vital component to reducing health differences within communities to break the cycle of negative thoughts reinforcing each other.

## 1.2 What are the objectives and aims of this report?

Supporting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount to building a thriving society.

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<sup>9</sup> Liu, J. et al. Childhood sleep: physical, cognitive, and behavioral consequences and implications. *World Journal of Pediatrics* 20, 1 (2024).

<sup>10</sup> Moran, P. et al. The natural history of self-harm from adolescence to young adulthood: a population-based cohort study. *Lancet* 379, 236–243 (2012).

<sup>11</sup> Roberts, J. Low mood and depression in adolescence: clinical update. *British Journal of General Practice* 63, 273–274 (2013).

<sup>12</sup> Schlack et al. The effects of mental health problems in childhood and adolescence in young adults: Results of the KiGGS cohort. *J Health Monit.* (2021) doi:10.25646/8863.

<sup>13</sup> Patalay, P. & Hardman, C. A. Comorbidity, Codevelopment, and Temporal Associations Between Body Mass Index and Internalizing Symptoms From Early Childhood to Adolescence. *JAMA Psychiatry* 76, 721–729 (2019).

<sup>14</sup> Borus, J. S. & Laffel, L. Adherence challenges in the management of type 1 diabetes in adolescents: prevention and intervention. *Curr Opin Pediatr* 22, 405–411 (2010).

<sup>15</sup> Goldstein, B. I. et al. Major Depressive Disorder and Bipolar Disorder Predispose Youth to Accelerated Atherosclerosis and Early Cardiovascular Disease: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 132, 965–986 (2015).

<sup>16</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. Resolution Foundation (2024).

<sup>17</sup> Office for National Statistics. Children whose families struggle to get on are more likely to have mental disorder. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/childrenwhosefamiliesstruggletogetonaremorelikelytohavementaldisorders> (2019).

<sup>18</sup> Goodman, A. et al. The long shadow cast by childhood physical and mental problems on adult life. *108*, 6032–6037 (2011).

This report provides an overview of mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Oxfordshire, highlighting the potential drivers for changes in mental health over the past decade. It will also explore the intricate relationship between mental health and employment, emphasising the challenges and barriers that young people with mental health problems face during this transition period to adulthood. This report describes what we can do to tackle this growing issue, examining the current evidence base behind interventions aimed at improving mental wellbeing and showcasing the ongoing efforts in Oxfordshire to support local children and their families. Lastly, it will outline the recommendations aimed at improving the mental health of all children and young people in Oxfordshire.

DRAFT

## Changing mental health among children and young people

### 2.0: What is the global and national picture of mental health in children and young people?

Mental health problems among children and young people have been increasing at an alarming rate over the past few decades, with an estimated 166 million young people suffering from a mental health problem in 2019 – roughly equivalent to one in seven.<sup>19</sup>

Depression and anxiety are now ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> biggest contributors to poor health in children globally. In comparison to 1990, the overall burden from mental health problems in children and young people has grown by 15%, with the United Kingdom having one of the higher rates of young people diagnosed with new mental health problems compared to other countries in Western Europe.<sup>20</sup>

In England it is estimated that approximately 1 in 5 children and young people aged 8-25 had a probable mental health problem in 2023, as defined by scoring highly on the strengths and difficulties questionnaire – a questionnaire used to assess children’s mental health.<sup>21</sup> This has risen sharply in recent times, with around a 66% increase in 8–16-year-olds and more than a doubling in 17–19-year-olds since 2017. Since 2021, there has also been a 30% increase in probable mental health problems amongst those aged 20-23, with young women experiencing approximately twice as high rates of probable mental health problems as young men.

Insert infographic showing the rise in mental health problems in children and young people in England between 2017 and 2023.  
Source: Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2023 Survey.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.1: What is happening in Oxfordshire?

Oxfordshire has also observed changes in the mental health and wellbeing of its children and young people. This is particularly important given the high proportion of students in the county. Using national estimates, around 35,000 of Oxfordshire’s children and young people were likely to have had mental health problems in 2023 (Figure 1.)

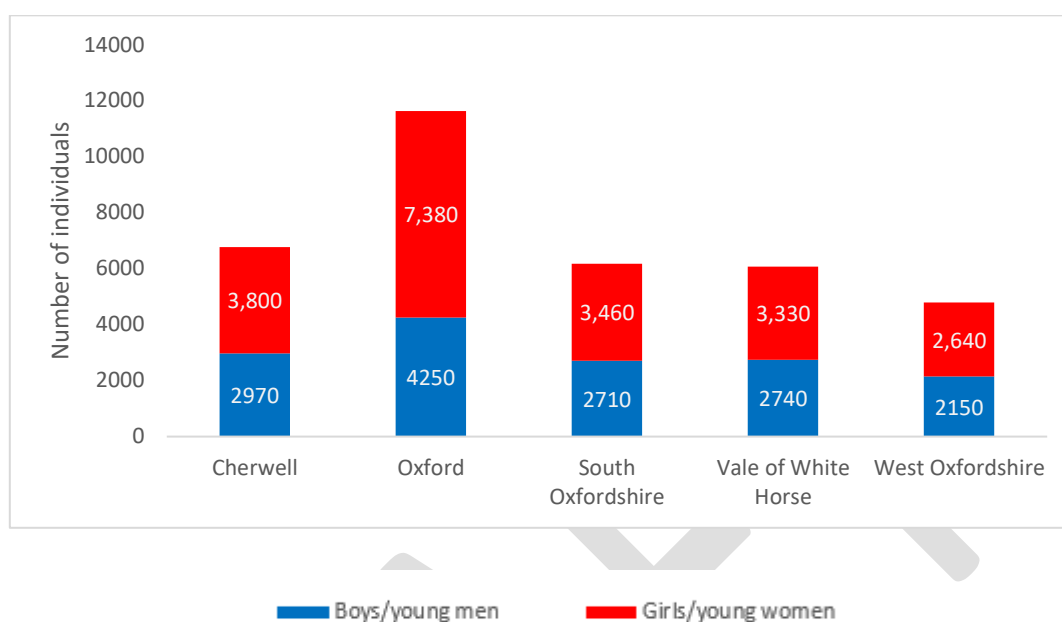
<sup>19</sup> UNICEF. Adolescent mental health statistic. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/mental-health/> (2021).

<sup>20</sup> Piao, J. et al. Alarming changes in the global burden of mental disorders in children and adolescents from 1990 to 2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease study. 31, 1827–1845 (2022).

<sup>21</sup> NHS Digital. Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england-2023-wave-4-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey> (2023).

<sup>22</sup> NHS Digital. Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england-2023-wave-4-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey> (2023).

**Figure 1. Estimated burden of mental health problems in children and young people by Oxfordshire districts in 2023.**



*NB: These numbers have been generated by applying national estimates of prevalence of probable mental health problems in children and young people (from Mental Health of Children and Young People in England Survey 2023) to the ONS mid-population estimates for Oxfordshire in 2023. This estimate includes the student population.*

Referrals to secondary mental health services have steadily increased across all childhood age groups, with an 83% rise between 2016/2017 and 2019/2020 for ages 0 to 9, a 58% rise for ages 10 to 19, and a 36% rise for ages 20 to 24.<sup>23</sup>

These increases are significantly greater than those seen in individuals aged 25 and older. Overall, an estimated 11% of 0–19 year olds were referred to secondary mental health services in 2022/2023, one of the highest rates in the South East region.<sup>24, 25</sup> The proportion of children receiving support in school for a special educational need, with social, emotional and mental health identified as the primary need, has also been steadily rising in Oxfordshire and nationally, with growth in Oxfordshire outpacing the national trend (Figure 2).

<sup>23</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Mental Wellbeing Needs Assessment. (2021).

<sup>24</sup> Centre for Mental Health. Mapping the mental health of the UK's young people.

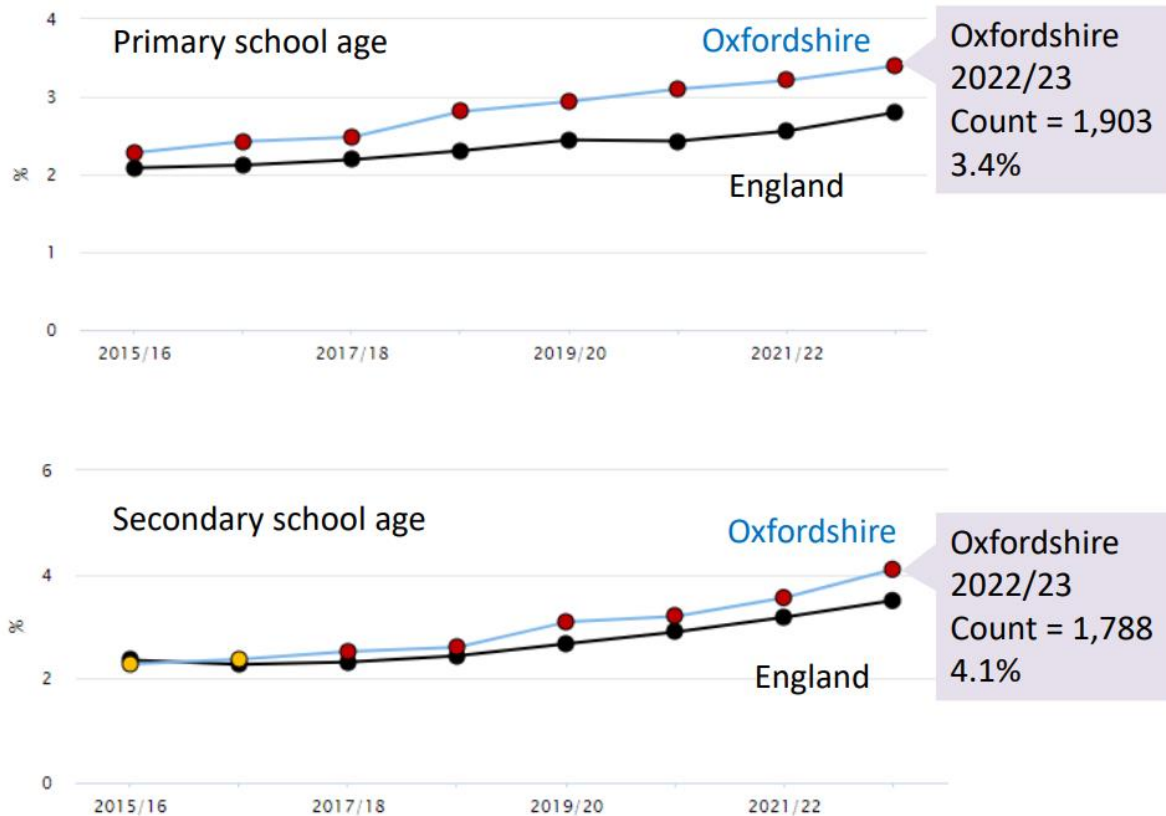
<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/mapping-the-mental-health-of-the-uks-young-people/> (2024).

<sup>25</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire Marmot Place Launch Event Slide Deck. (2024).



**Figure 2: Percentage of all school children with social, emotional and mental health identified as their primary type of need, who are registered as having a special educational need. Source: Oxfordshire County Council Data Hub**

The number of school children with Special Education Needs (SEN) who are identified as having **social, emotional and mental health as the primary type of need**, as a percentage of all school pupils (academic years)



In Oxfordshire, we have observed not only an increase in the number of children requiring specialist mental health support, but also a growing number of children and young people with mental health needs below the threshold for referral for clinical services. Approximately 48% of referrals to CAMHS were assessed as needing alternative support pathways rather than specialist CAMHS care, suggesting a rising number of children who may be living with mild-to-moderate symptoms of mental health problems.<sup>26</sup> This also suggests challenges in identifying appropriate alternative support for these young people from other relevant organisations in the county.

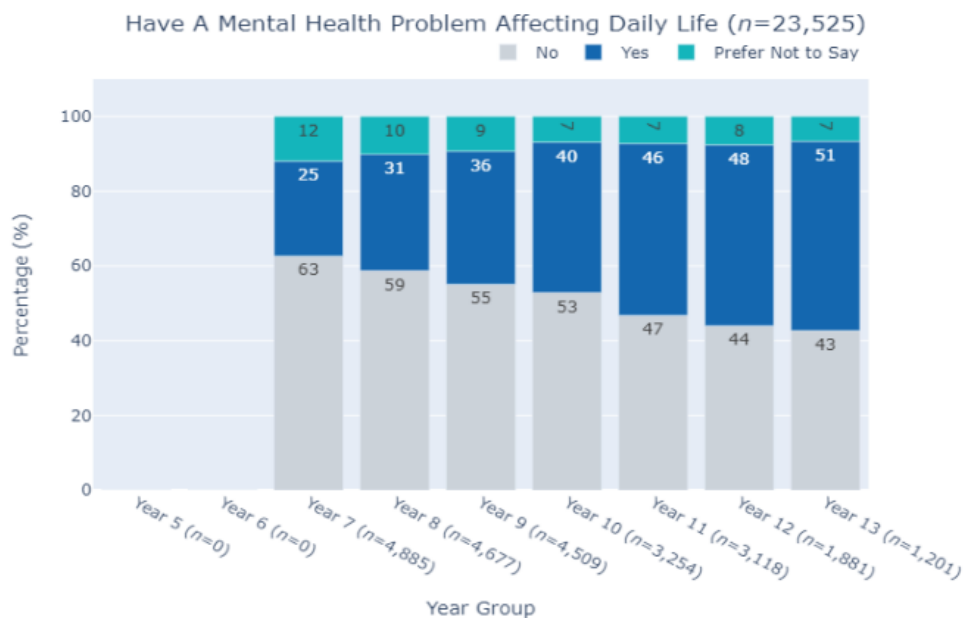
The 2023, the OxWell School Survey provided deeper insights into mental health and wellbeing of children in Oxfordshire. A significant proportion of pupils reported that mental health problems impact their daily lives, including over half of pupils aged 17-18 years (Figure 3). Additionally, around one in five students reported feeling lonely and one in four reported often or always feeling sad or empty<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Promotion and Mental Ill Health Prevention Strategy. (2022).

<sup>27</sup> University of Oxford. OxWell 2023 Results. <https://oxwell.org/2023-results/> (2023).

Figure 3. Proportion of students who report a mental health problem affecting daily life in 2023. Source: OxWell School Survey 2023.

## Student Responses to Mental Health, Self-Harm, and Mental Health Services Questions



Special educational needs are distinct from (although they can occur alongside) mental health problems. However, the number of children with special educational needs that impact their educational experience has also risen. The prevalence of autism among students known to schools is significantly higher in Oxfordshire compared to the national average. In 2020, approximately 20 out of every 1,000 pupils in Oxfordshire were recorded as having autism, a figure that has more than doubled since 2015.<sup>28</sup> Though this should not be conflated with the rise in mental health problems, it is relevant to the discussion around diverse needs in education, as well as demand for services such as CAMHS and educational psychology.

Within Oxfordshire, striking inequalities in mental health and wellbeing are evident. Around a quarter of children aged 8-16 years with mental health problems have a parent who is unable to afford out of school activities, compared with around 1 in 10 children who do not report mental health problems<sup>29</sup>. More deprived areas such as Greater Leys have approximately 6.5 times the rate of self-harm as less deprived areas such as North Central Oxford.<sup>30</sup>

### 2.2: What could be behind the rise in mental health problems in Oxfordshire?

Due to the wide range of drivers that can affect and impact youth mental health, several factors are likely to have contributed to the rise in mental health problems in children and young people in Oxfordshire.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Health and Social Care. Fingertips. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/> (2024).

<sup>29</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Unemployment claimants to May 2022, Oxfordshire Insight. <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/unemployment-claimants-may-2022> (2022).

<sup>30</sup> Oxfordshire County Council Data Hub <https://data.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Insert infographic on the drivers of mental health problems

### **Better awareness of mental health problems in children and young people**

Greater awareness of the symptoms suggestive of mental health problems in children has contributed to higher referral rates and demand for services. A growing awareness of support available and reduction in stigma attached to mental health support may also be contributing to the growth in people seeking help. This has also been seen in other areas, such as higher rates of referral for autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder<sup>31</sup>.

### **Traumatic childhood experiences**

Stressful and traumatic events during childhood are strongly linked to mental health problems in childhood and later in life. An estimated three out of four adolescents who have experienced traumatic childhood experiences develop mental health problems by the age of 18<sup>32</sup>. Prevention of these events remains a priority in Oxfordshire, where the number of domestic abuse crimes involving children in Oxfordshire has been increasing since 2012<sup>33</sup>.

### **Parent child relationships**

There is a growing understanding of the importance of a strong parent-child relationship for the wellbeing of children. Factors such as family disruption, parenting distress, and the use of harsh discipline are linked with a greater risk of developing behavioural problems, whilst nurturing and responsive parenting are associated with better wellbeing during childhood.<sup>34</sup> Recent research has also highlighted that relationships, emotional wellbeing and development in the earliest years of life predict later learning, earning, emotional and social skills and mental and physical health<sup>35</sup>.

### **Changing behaviours**

Changing behaviours have also played a key role in the worsening mental health in children and young people. Reduced levels of physical activity have been linked with mental health problems.<sup>36</sup> Recent survey data suggesting that children aged 11-16 with a likely mental health problem were more than four times more likely to not have exercised in the previous seven days than children without a probable mental health problem.<sup>37</sup> Although Oxfordshire still has a higher proportion of children and young people who are physically active than nationally, this has declined since 2019<sup>38</sup>

As can rising costs of living especially in counties such as Oxfordshire, where the cost of housing is high relative to incomes, has led to changes in family dynamics

<sup>31</sup> Russell, G. et al. Time trends in autism diagnosis over 20 years: a UK population-based cohort study. (2021) doi:10.1111/jcpp.13505.

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, K. et al. The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Public Health* 2, e356–e366 (2017).

<sup>33</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025. (2022).

<sup>34</sup> R, R. et al. Parenting and child mental health. *London J Prim Care* (Abingdon) (2017).

<sup>35</sup> Parent Infant Foundation Securing Health Lives (2022) <https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/securinghealthylives/>

<sup>36</sup> Biddle, S. J. H. et al. Physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents: An updated review of reviews and an analysis of causality. *Psychol Sport Exerc* 42, 146–155 (2019).

<sup>37</sup> NHS Digital. Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england-2023-wave-4-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey> (2023).

<sup>38</sup> Department of Health and Social Care. Fingertips. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/> (2024).

with young people living with families for longer, which can impact on their lifestyles and their mental health.

Substance use also continues to be an important contributor to mental health problems, with nearly half of young people starting substance use treatment reporting a co-existing mental health problem<sup>39</sup>.

### **COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions**

A particularly important factor has been the consequences from lockdown restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic – symptoms of social isolation, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder were found to have increased substantially during lockdown compared to before the pandemic<sup>40</sup>. In particular, evidence has suggested that the pandemic was more likely to impact girls and young women, disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) requirements, contributing to the rise in mental health problems in these specific populations<sup>41</sup>.

### **Social media**

The growth of social media has helped children and young people to connect with others and develop relationships and communities. However, social media has also provided a platform for harmful content such as harassment and cyberbullying, which can have severe detrimental effects on a person's health and wellbeing and has been significantly linked with depression and anxiety<sup>42</sup>. This is an important factor for Oxfordshire, where an estimated 37% of children aged 8-18 years spend around 4 hours on social media each day<sup>43</sup>.

### **Unemployment, poverty and deprivation**

Unemployment can have a significant impact on young people's mental health, leading to challenges such as financial stress and social isolation. It can also lead to poverty and deprivation, which continue to be a significant area of concern for children and young people. The importance of this issue is explored in more detail in the next chapter.

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<sup>39</sup> Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Young people's substance misuse treatment statistics 2022 to 2023 report.

<sup>40</sup> Bignardi, G. et al. Longitudinal increases in childhood depression symptoms during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Arch Dis Child* 106, 791–797 (2021).

<sup>41</sup> Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people#references> (2022).

<sup>42</sup> Piteo, E. M. & Ward, K. Social networking sites and associations with depressive and anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents – a systematic review. *Child Adolescent Ment Health* 25, 201–216 (2020).

<sup>43</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Promotion and Mental Ill Health Prevention Strategy. (2022).

## Mental health and unemployment

### 3.0 Why is economic activity important for mental health?

Research has highlighted the harmful effects of unemployment on both physical and mental health<sup>44</sup>. Being unemployed or working in poor-quality jobs can result in financial strain, increased stress, and a heightened risk of mental health problems such as depression. In turn, mental health problems can significantly impact a person's capacity to find and maintain employment<sup>45</sup>.

Mental health among working age people is critical to economic growth. It is particularly important as an aging population and rising levels of chronic conditions are forecast to increase the number of people living with illness by 37% by 2040, a rise which will not be matched by the estimated 4% growth in the working population<sup>46</sup>.

Insert infographic to highlight

- Working age population expected to increase by 4% in 2040
- People living with major illnesses will increase by 37% in 2040
- Nine times the rate of increase in working age population.

Source: Health in 2040: projected patterns of illness in England - The Health Foundation.

### 3.1 What barriers prevent young people from being economically active?

The current generation of young people face several challenges to entering the employment market and remaining in education and training. The transition into adulthood can be a highly stressful period of life, marked by challenges such as gaining independence, maintaining relationships, and managing finances, with support often being limited or difficult to access. This has become more difficult in recent years due to a variety of factors including where salaries have failed to keep up with rising costs of areas such as groceries and housing<sup>47</sup>. Competition ratios for entry-level jobs, particularly for recent graduates, have also grown substantially in some sectors, making it more difficult for young people to find quality employment opportunities<sup>48</sup>.

Insert infographic on current barriers for young people entering the job market

- Three in five young people think that it has become more difficult to find a job than ten years ago
- The three biggest barriers to entering the workplace were lack of skills or work experience, low wages, and lack of support such as reasonable adjustments.

<sup>44</sup> Institute of Social and Economic Research. Understanding the impacts of income and welfare policy responses to COVID-19 on inequalities in mental health: a microsimulation model. <https://www.health.org.uk/funding-and-partnerships/programmes/understanding-the-impacts-of-income-and-welfare-policy-response-covid> (2022).

<sup>45</sup> The Health Foundation. Unemployment and mental health. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/unemployment-and-mental-health> (2021).

<sup>46</sup> The Health Foundation. Health in 2040: projected patterns of illness in England. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/health-in-2040> (2023).

<sup>47</sup> Office for National Statistics. Housing Purchase Affordability, UK.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingpurchaseaffordabilitygreatbritain/2022> (2022).

<sup>48</sup> Institute of Student Employers. ISE Recruitment Survey 2023. [https://ise.org.uk/page/ISE\\_Recruitment\\_Survey\\_2023](https://ise.org.uk/page/ISE_Recruitment_Survey_2023) (2023).

- A third report a mental health problem, with nearly nine in ten believing it affects their ability to find work

Source: Youth Employment Outlook Report 2024 – Youth Futures Foundation<sup>49</sup>

### 3.2 How does unemployment also act as a precursor to mental health problems?

Unemployment and lack of opportunities in education and training also drives poor mental health through several other mechanisms.

#### **Intergenerational influence**

Intergenerational influence refers to the impact that previous generations have on the children and young people of today, particularly on aspects such as behaviours, values, and socioeconomic status. Worklessness in the previous generation in a family can lead to financial strain, exposing children and young people to stressors such as inadequate housing and poor nutrition, as well as impacting on their expectations and aspirations. The effect of intergenerational worklessness shows that children raised by parents who have been out of work were more likely to have poorer educational attainment and to not be in education, employment or training<sup>50</sup>.

#### **Deprivation and poverty**

Unemployment can lead to deprivation and poverty, which has subsequent negative impacts on mental health. There is a strong association between poverty and domestic violence. While domestic violence affects all types of people, its occurrence is higher among those living in more deprived neighbourhoods, lower income households, and among those experiencing severe debt<sup>51</sup>.

It is also more difficult for individuals in more deprived areas to reach mental health support because there can be fewer services available, stigma around poverty, and additional barriers such as lack of transport options.

In Oxfordshire, areas with higher rates of deprivation and unemployment also tend to have higher rates of children and young people with mental health problems and higher rates of unemployment<sup>52</sup>.

#### **Social isolation**

Loneliness is a key risk factor linked with mental health problems in young people, with strong associations to depression and anxiety<sup>53</sup>. Being in employment, education and training can be protective through providing opportunities to socialise, interact and connect with others, and in many cases having access to employee or student support and wellbeing programmes. Furthermore, unemployment is associated with societal stigma, making it more difficult for individuals to seek support from others as well as financial strain that may exclude them from social activities.

<sup>49</sup> Youth Futures Foundation. Youth Employment 2024 Outlook. <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/our-work/ignite/youth-employment-2024-outlook/> (2024).

<sup>50</sup> Schoon, I. et al. Intergenerational transmission of worklessness: Evidence from the Millennium Cohort and the Longitudinal Study of Young People In England Centre for Analysis of Youth Transitions. (2012).

<sup>51</sup> McManus S, Scott S, Sosenko F (2017) Joining the dots: the combined burden of violence, abuse, and poverty in the lives of women. Agenda: London

<sup>52</sup> Oxfordshire County Council Data Hub <https://data.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

<sup>53</sup> Mental Health Foundation. Loneliness in young people: research briefing. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/public-engagement/unlock-loneliness/loneliness-young-people-research-briefing> (2020).

Insert infographic Negative cycle of unemployment and mental health problems between unemployment and mental health

### 3.3 How does poor mental health lead to unemployment or low-quality employment?

A recent report from The Health Foundation<sup>54</sup> outlines the link between mental health and economic activity and highlighted some particularly worrying trends in the 16-34 age group. It discusses mental health problems which are 'work-limiting' (where it is the primary health condition, and it affects the amount or type of work an individual can do) alongside mental health problems which are 'non-work-limiting'. While both types have increased in frequency, the growth is larger in non-work-limiting mental health problems. The report discusses that their impact can be greatest among people with fewer qualifications further exacerbating inequalities.

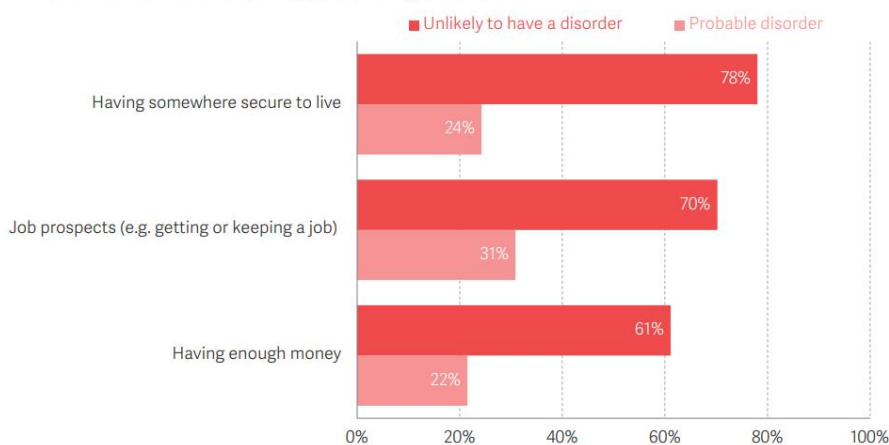
#### Aspiration and resilience

Good mental health and wellbeing is important for fostering a person's resilience, aspiration and ability to look forward to the future. Symptoms associated with poor mental health such as lack of energy, negative self-esteem, and excessive anxiety, can make it challenging to maintain motivation and engagement during employment and training. This can be especially important when seeking work. A survey carried out in England in 2023 found less than a third of young people aged 17-23 years with a mental health problem reported a positive outlook on their job prospects, whilst more than two-thirds without mental health problems are optimistic about their future<sup>55</sup>.

Figure 4: Proportion of Young People aged 17-23 years who feel optimistic about the future, by topic and mental health of young people.

Source: The Resolution Foundation<sup>56</sup>

Proportion of young people aged 17-23 who feel optimistic about the future, by topic and mental health of young person: England, 2023



NOTES: The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was used to assess different aspects of mental health and estimate the likelihood that a child has a probable mental disorder.

SOURCE: RF analysis of NHS England, Mental Health of Children and Young People in England.

<sup>54</sup> [Mental health trends among working-age people - The Health Foundation](#)

<sup>55</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. The Resolution Foundation (2024).

<sup>56</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. The Resolution Foundation (2024).

## Educational attainment

Mental health problems significantly impact educational opportunities for children and young people, negatively affecting attendance and being related to lower educational achievement<sup>57</sup>. In turn, this impacts future employment opportunities where lower qualifications are associated with lower wages and employment rates<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, the negative impacts of both reduced educational achievement and mental health problems can compound, with 33% of non-graduates with mental health problems reporting unemployment compared to 19% of non-graduates without such problems<sup>59</sup>.

## Quality of employment

The influence of mental health problems on aspiration, resilience and educational attainment, in addition to potential symptoms such as low energy, reduced concentration, and social anxiety can make it difficult to obtain and retain work. This is particularly true of good quality jobs that are paid well, are secure and have regular hours<sup>60</sup>. 40% of employees aged 18-24 years with mental health problems were on low hourly pay, compared to 35% of employees without mental health problems. Additionally, 11% of employees aged 18-24 years with mental health problems were on zero hours contracts, compared with 6% of their peers<sup>61</sup>. Mental health problems can lead to more time away from work and the need for part-time or flexible working arrangements, making it challenging to sustain employment. As individuals aged between 18-24 years report greater stress-related impacts due to work compared to those aged 55 and over<sup>62</sup>, reasonable adjustments and workplace wellbeing is increasingly a priority.

### 3.4 What are current trends in young people who are not in employment, education or training?

Overall, the percentage of young people in the United Kingdom aged 16-24 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has decreased in the past decade, from 16% of people aged 16-24 years in 2011 to 12% in 2023<sup>63</sup>. However, the number of young people who are not working due to long term sickness has increased dramatically, almost doubling from around 93,000 in 2013 to around 190,000 in 2023 (figure 5) with mental health problems being the most common reason<sup>64, 65</sup>. In 2023, 45% of young people out of work aged 18-24 years reported a

<sup>57</sup> Smith, N. R. Adolescent mental health difficulties and educational attainment: findings from the UK household longitudinal study. *BMJ Open* 11, 46792 (2021).

<sup>58</sup> Department for Education. Graduate labour market statistics, 2023. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-labour-markets> (2024).

<sup>59</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. The Resolution Foundation (2024).

<sup>60</sup> Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. Untapped potential: reducing economic inactivity among people with mental health problems. <https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Untapped-potential-Reducing-economic-inactivity-among-people-with-mental-health-problems-WEB.pdf> (2023).

<sup>61</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. The Resolution Foundation (2024).

<sup>62</sup> Mental Health UK. Burnout Report: one in five needed to take time off work due to stress in the past year. <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/burnout-report-one-in-five-needed-to-take-time-off-work-due-to-stress-in-the-past-year/> (2024).

<sup>63</sup> Office for National Statistics. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2024> (2024).

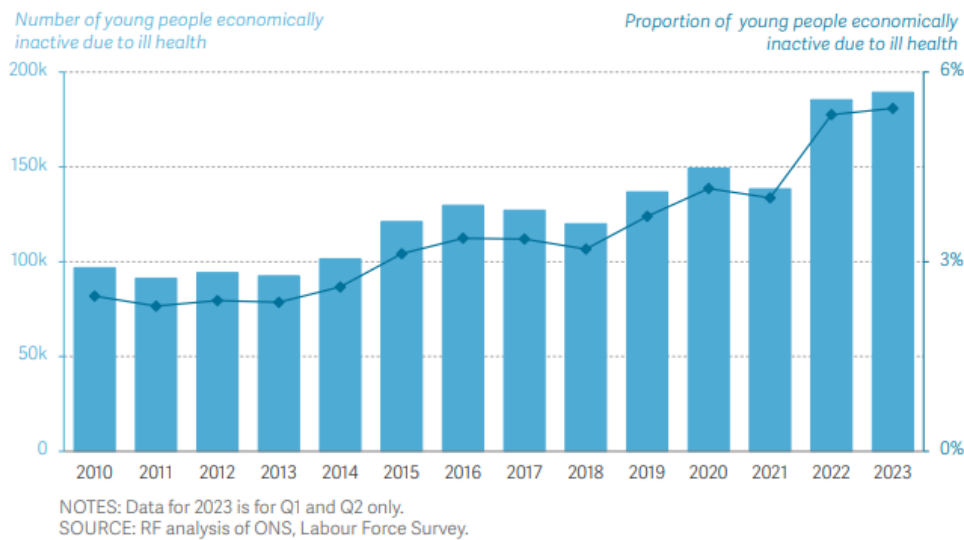
<sup>64</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. The Resolution Foundation (2024).

<sup>65</sup> Office for National Statistics. Rising ill-health and economic inactivity because of long-term sickness, UK. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/economicinactivity/articles/risingillhealthandeconomicinactivitybecauseoflongtermsicknessuk/2019to2023#data-sources-and-quality> (2023).



mental health problem compared to only 27% of young people in work, a difference that has widened since 2014<sup>66</sup>.

**Figure 5: Graph showing economic inactivity due to ill health in young people between 2010-2023 in the UK. Source: The Resolution Foundation.**



In Oxfordshire, the overall proportion of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is lower than other parts of England – around 4.4% of 16–17 year-olds in Oxfordshire were classified as NEET compared to 6.9% regionally and 5.2% nationally<sup>67</sup>. However, this has started to increase, and the number of students aged 16-18 who are NEET and reporting CAMHS input or mental health problems has risen since 2022.

Although the proportion of individuals aged 16-24 years claiming unemployment in Oxfordshire is lower than the national average (3.6% compared to 7.6%), there remains significant differences in the proportion of unemployment between districts, for example, the lowest rate in South Oxfordshire is at 1.8% whilst the highest rate in Oxford City is at 5.2%<sup>68</sup>. Inequalities are even greater when looking at some of the different communities in the county, with the number of claimants being much higher in more deprived areas such as Littlemore, compared to less deprived areas such as North Oxford (Figure 6)<sup>69</sup>.

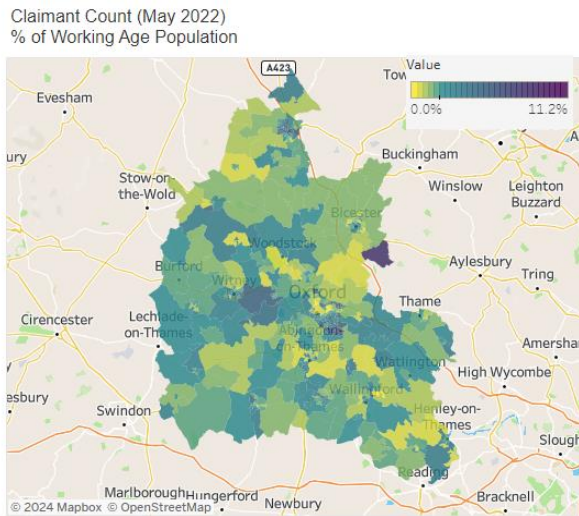
<sup>66</sup> Mccurdy, C. & Murphy, L. We've only just begun Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment. The Resolution Foundation (2024).

<sup>67</sup> Office for National Statistics. Labour Force Survey. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/labourforcesurvey> (2024).

<sup>68</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2024: Oxfordshire Data Hub <https://data.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

<sup>69</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Unemployment claimants to May 2022, Oxfordshire Insight. <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/unemployment-claimants-may-2022> (2022).

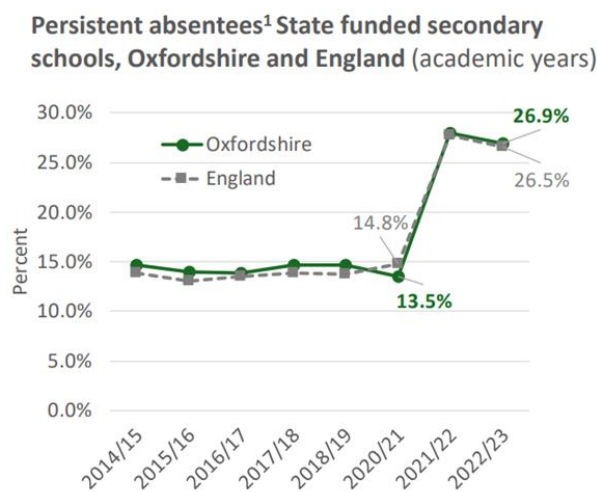
**Figure 6: Map showing the differences in proportion of working age population that are unemployed in Oxfordshire in 2022. Source: Oxfordshire County Council Data Hub**



When it comes to education, an issue of growing concern for Oxfordshire is the increase in rates of persistent absenteeism in secondary schools. If a pupil is persistently absent it means they miss 10% or more of possible sessions at school or miss 7 days of more across a school term.

The persistent absence rates in secondary schools in Oxfordshire for academic year 2022 to 2023 was 26.9%<sup>70</sup> or 10,177 pupils which was similar to England at 26.5%. For primary schools pupils in Oxfordshire, 14.6% or 6,806 children were persistently absent compared to 16.2% for England (figure 7).

**Figure 7: Percentage of children who are persistently absent (missing 10% or more sessions/7 days across a term) from secondary schools. Source: Oxfordshire County Council Data Hub**



<sup>70</sup> [Child and Maternal Health | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

2022 data showed the educational attainment of disadvantaged young people in Oxfordshire at GCSE level and the A-level point score are below National averages<sup>71</sup>, and below that of their peers in other areas considered 'statistical neighbours' to Oxfordshire. The same report showed that Oxfordshire ranks in the lowest 25% nationally for educational attainment for disadvantaged children in early years development, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, and Key stage 4. The gap between this disadvantaged cohort and their peers is greater in Oxfordshire than nationally, with disadvantaged pupils achieving 27% below their peers in Oxfordshire in Key Stage 1 compared with 17% nationally. Nationally this gap is reducing, however in Oxfordshire it has widened from 20% in 2019 to 27% in 2022.

Diverse educational and vocational routes - including apprenticeships - are vital to ensuring that young people have an accessible route to skilled employment. Oxfordshire has seen a slight decline in the number of people starting apprenticeships over the last 5 years, with a total of 3640 in 2022/2023 compared to 3771 in 2018/2019<sup>72</sup>. More encouragingly, the number of young people completing their apprenticeships has been gradually rising. Understanding the factors underpinning what makes an apprenticeship successful could provide insight into the training and employment landscape and suggest how apprenticeships can fit into a vision to fill our skills gaps in Oxfordshire.

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<sup>71</sup> [OEC Report 11.09.2023.pdf](#)

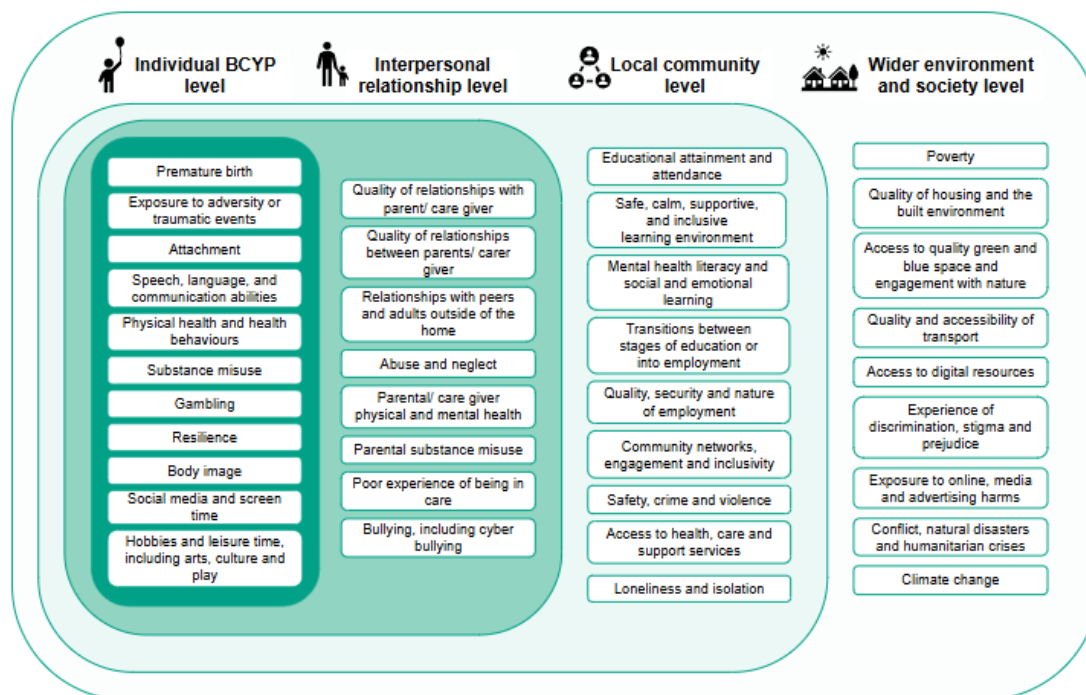
<sup>72</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire Local Skills Dashboard.  
<https://public.tableau.com/views/OxfordshireLocalSkillsDashboard/Home?:showVizHome=no> (2024).

## What do we know works?

### 4.0 What interventions can tackle mental health problems in children and young people?

As discussed in previous chapters, multiple factors including an individual's life circumstances, social relationships, and broader environment can influence their overall mental health and wellbeing. This has been outlined by the Department of Health and Social Care's *Improving the Mental Health of Babies, Children, and Young People* framework published in 2024, which highlight factors that can be targeted to improve mental health and wellbeing throughout childhood at the individual level, the interpersonal relationship level, the local community level, and the wider environment and society level (figure 8)<sup>73</sup>.

**Figure 8: Improving the Mental Health of Babies, Children and Young People framework. Source: UK Government.**



Research is underway investigating the diverse and wide-ranging interventions that could positively impact the lives of children and their families, particularly for those that are at greater risk of developing such issues. This section explores the growing evidence base behind such interventions.

<sup>73</sup> Department of Health and Social Care. Improving the mental health of babies, children and young people: a framework of modifiable factors. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-a-framework-of-modifiable-factors> (2024).

## 4.1 What works for individuals and families?

### **At the individual level**

Interventions focussing on individuals aim to strengthen resilience and reduce the impact of stressors that negatively affect mental health. Psychosocial interventions such as social-emotional learning and cognitive behavioural therapy are commonly utilised for treatment of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, and have been shown to be effective with both short and longer term benefits<sup>74</sup>.

Community-provided cognitive behaviour therapy can be particularly helpful early in development of mental health problems and for those below the threshold for referral for specialist mental health clinical services<sup>75, 76</sup>. Other approaches for children and young people who do not need specialist clinical support include initiatives that promote general wellbeing, such as sports, creative activities, supported access to nature, and participating in community or social groups. These have been shown to have direct mental health benefits and can complement more traditional interventions. This can be especially beneficial for people who may experience barriers asking for or accessing traditional mental health support<sup>77</sup>.

### **Interpersonal relationship level**

Given the importance of family throughout childhood, strengthening family dynamics has been a key area of interest for interventions aimed at improving mental wellbeing of children. There is strong and consistent evidence supporting interventions that focus on building parenting skills and enhancing parent-child relationships through behaviour management techniques. Emerging research suggests that in some cases these can be effectively delivered using technology such as online platforms, thereby improving accessibility for parents and carers<sup>78</sup>. Evidence also supports interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of parents as a way to improving the mental wellbeing of their children<sup>79</sup>.

Protection from bullying is also important to supporting mental health. This can include cyber bullying. Schools and families can have a role in this, and in cultivating opportunities for positive relationships with peers<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> Campisi, S. C. et al. Mental health interventions in adolescence. *Curr Opin Psychol* 48, 101492 (2022).

<sup>75</sup> McGorry, P. D. & Mei, C. Early intervention in youth mental health: progress and future directions. *BMJ Ment Health* 21, 182–184 (2018).

<sup>76</sup> Early Intervention Foundation. Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions. <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adolescent-mental-health-a-systematic-review-on-the-effectiveness-of-school-based-interventions> (2021).

<sup>77</sup> Centre for Mental Health. Trying something new. <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/trying-something-new/> (2021).

<sup>78</sup> Fazel, M. & Sonesson, E. Current evidence and opportunities in child and adolescent public mental health: a research review. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 64, 1699–1719 (2023).

<sup>79</sup> Early Intervention Foundation. Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions. <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adolescent-mental-health-a-systematic-review-on-the-effectiveness-of-school-based-interventions> (2021).

<sup>80</sup> Department of Health and Social Care. Improving the mental health of babies, children and young people: a framework of modifiable factors. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-a-framework-of-modifiable-factors> (2024).

## 4.2 What works at the community and wider environment and society level?

### **Schools and communities**

Community-level interventions highlight the role that neighbourhoods play in shaping the mental health and wellbeing of children. Key to this are schools, where providing programmes such as social and emotional learning has shown evidence for short-term benefits and some signs of longer-term impact<sup>81</sup>. Interventions that are focussed on the school environment and incorporating a whole-school approach to mental health, such as cultivating an anti-bullying culture and a sense of community, have demonstrated potential benefits for overall student wellbeing within schools<sup>82, 83</sup>. Additionally, access to nature and green space have been repeatedly shown to be beneficial to mental health as well as to learning. Initiatives such as Forest School have the potential to support mental health in young people through strengthening access to nature, and this is the subject of ongoing research<sup>84</sup>.

Among local communities, it is widely acknowledged that strong community networks, a sense of belonging, access to social activities and to safe spaces to independently play and socialise can benefit and protect mental health<sup>85</sup>. Supporting local communities to grow and develop these assets is complex and requires a collaborative approach, centred on the communities themselves. Community safety, spaces, events and activities, as well as community-based services such as libraries, youth groups, and sports and leisure facilities all contribute to a thriving community. This, in turn, can increase a sense of belonging, safety and social cohesion with an associated reduced risk of mental health problems<sup>86</sup>.

Place-based approaches (community led initiatives that target the specific circumstances of a place) have seen increasingly supportive evidence for improving mental health in children and young people<sup>87</sup>. Known as 'healthy place shaping', this holistic view of local areas and communities and how they can influence the health of their residents can also support good mental health<sup>88</sup>.

### **Environment and society level**

The building blocks of health such as housing, poverty, deprivation, income, and access to greenspace are important factors in the mental health of children and

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<sup>81</sup> Gee, B. et al. Practitioner Review: Effectiveness of indicated school-based interventions for adolescent depression and anxiety - a meta-analytic review. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* 61, 739–756 (2020).

<sup>82</sup> Centre for Mental Health. Trying something new. <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/trying-something-new/> (2021).

<sup>83</sup> Stea, T. H. et al. Interventions targeting young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) for increased likelihood of return to school or employment—A systematic review. *PLoS One* 19, e0306285 (2024).

<sup>84</sup> Armit, H et al: Forest school Interventions for Children's Health (FINCH): a feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial : Forest school Interventions for Children's Health (FINCH): a feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial - NIHR Funding and Awards

<sup>85</sup> Department of Health and Social Care. Improving the mental health of babies, children and young people: a framework of modifiable factors. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-a-framework-of-modifiable-factors> (2024).

<sup>86</sup> Park EY, Oliver TR, Peppard PE, Malecki KC. Sense of community and mental health: a cross-sectional analysis from a household survey in Wisconsin. *Fam Med Community Health*. 2023 Jun;11(2):e001971. doi: 10.1136/fmch-2022-001971. PMID: 37399294; PMCID: PMC10314672.

<sup>87</sup> McGorry, P. D. et al. Designing and scaling up integrated youth mental health care. *World Psychiatry* 21, 61 (2022).

<sup>88</sup> Alderton, A. et al. Reducing Inequities in Early Childhood Mental Health: How Might the Neighbourhood Built Environment Help Close the Gap? A Systematic Search and Critical Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 2019, Vol. 16, Page 1516 16, 1516 (2019).

young people,<sup>89</sup> however evidence about what works to address these factors is still emerging. Initiatives that address poverty and income inequality have found small positive impacts on mental health through initiatives improving access to income support<sup>90</sup>. As previously discussed, interventions to improve access to nature and green space can also be beneficial, although understanding the exact mechanism remains limited<sup>91</sup>.

Economic environments should also be considered. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development published recommendations in 2022 aimed at 'creating better opportunities for young people'. These emphasised the importance of fulfilling employment to mental health and life chances, and specified systems targets to build towards an inclusive economic environment, aiming to reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing through a productive, diverse and sustainable economy<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> Department of Health and Social Care. Improving the mental health of babies, children and young people: a framework of modifiable factors. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-a-framework-of-modifiable-factors> (2024).

<sup>90</sup> Boccia, D. et al. The impact of income-support interventions on life course risk factors and health outcomes during childhood: a systematic review in high income countries. *BMC Public Health* 23, 744 (2023).

<sup>91</sup> Bray, I. et al. Exploring the role of exposure to green and blue spaces in preventing anxiety and depression among young people aged 14-24 years living in urban settings: A systematic review and conceptual framework. *Environ Res* 214, (2022).

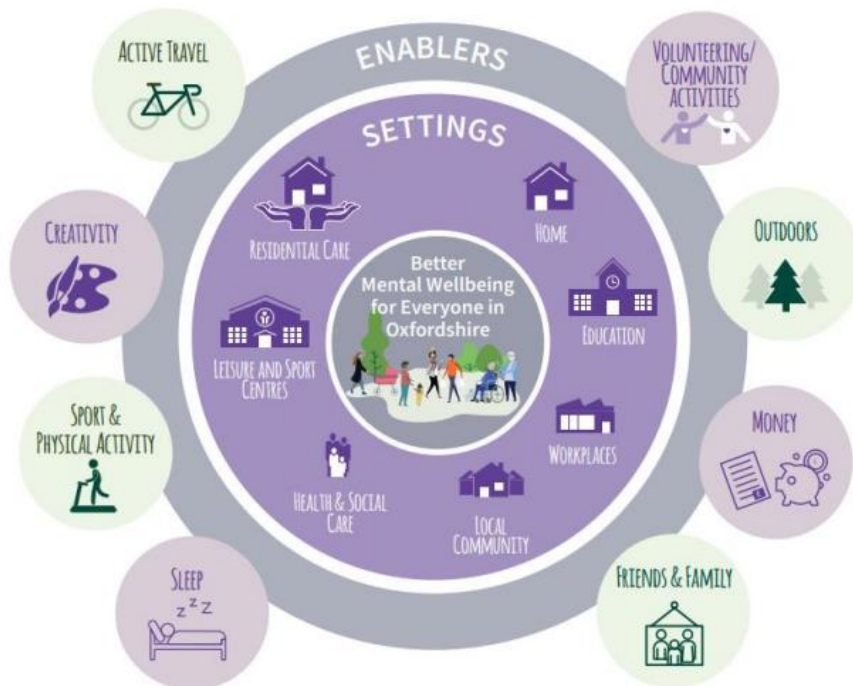
<sup>92</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Creating better opportunities for young people: 2022*: OECD Legal Instruments

# What's happening in Oxfordshire

## 5.0 What are we doing in Oxfordshire

Organisations in Oxfordshire have been working together to improve health and wellbeing based on shared ambitions outlined in the Oxfordshire Mental Health Prevention Framework 2024-2027 (figure 9.). This section outlines just some of the initiatives implemented by employers, NHS organisations, local authority, district councils, voluntary organisations and others to promote and enable good mental health among children and young people in Oxfordshire.

Figure 9: Oxfordshire's Mental Health Prevention Framework 2024-2027





## 5.1 Actions at the individual level

Insert logos and images

### **Self-help services**

Self-help services are essential in managing acute stress as well as offering longer term guidance for maintaining good mental health. In Oxfordshire, there are various resources available that provide children and young people with easy, low-barrier access to support without the need for a referral. Below are some examples of these services. As identified in the Oxfordshire Mental Health Prevention Framework, these are accessible through a 'no wrong door' single point of access approach.

- **Oxfordshire's 24/7 Mental Health Helpline** provides support for people of all ages experiencing a mental health crisis or emotional distress, with a specialised service for individuals under 25 years old. It offers a range of support using trained mental health professionals, including immediate help and advice as well as signposting to additional services that are more suited to the individual's needs.
- **OXME.info** is a digital resource that provides an online central hub for information on health, lifestyle, and employment opportunities for young people in Oxfordshire. It includes dedicated sections on wellbeing and offers detailed advice for individuals who are NEET. Additionally, OXME.info has a presence on social media platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram, to further increase engagement and awareness.
- **Tellmi** is a free app that provides a safe and supportive space for young people aged 11-18 living in Oxfordshire to discuss issues affecting their mental health with others in the community. It is fully anonymous and moderated, with additional support via professional counsellors available for individuals with more severe symptoms. Additionally, it has a detailed resource library with articles and information on mental health topics relevant to children and young people, with integrated access to over 700 vetted resources and support services.

### **Transition into young adulthood**

To ease the transition into adulthood, Oxfordshire has implemented several targeted services to help young people navigate this period.

- The **Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS)** by Oxfordshire County Council works with young people aged 11-18 (up to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan) across Oxfordshire to grow aspiration, develop resilience during challenging times, and reduce the risk of mental health problems. The service offers both group work and one-on-one support to address social and emotional needs, with an overall goal of helping young people transition into fully engaged, active adults who can make positive choices for their lives and communities. In 2024, over 120 young people received one to one support.
- The **Migrant Career & Employability Support Programme** is an initiative designed to provide targeted and specific career guidance to students from migrant families. It acknowledges the additional and unique challenges students from migrant families face and aims to supplement and enhance the support such individuals receive in schools. Typical services provided include

career guidance workshop, mentorship opportunities, and work experience placements designed to the needs of the students.

- The **Oxfordshire Supported Internship Programme** supports young people aged 16-24 with learning difficulties/disabilities with an Education, Health and Care Plan who need extra assistance with transitioning into employment. This one-year placement connects individuals with employers, providing them the opportunity to acquire essential skills and practical experience, with the goal of securing paid employment. Delivered in partnership with local organisations like Activate Oxford and Abingdon and Witney College, the program focuses on work readiness and employability skills, as well as offering additional support for mentors and financial support for additional costs such as travel. In 2024, 52% of individuals who completed the programme received an offer of employment following the end of their internship.

#### Case study from Oxfordshire Supported Internship Programme

"It's a great bridge between college and work and they make sure you aren't thrown completely into the deep end. It has helped boost my confidence and I am sure it would help others as work can be seen as very scary. I feel it's not as scary anymore, it's getting better. I'm not completely thinking about it all the time anymore. It's been a good experience overall."

- Experience of a local young intern

### **Substance use issues**

Substance use can be both a major contributing factor to, and consequence of, poor mental health.

- Cranston's **Here4Youth** providing a specialised support service for children and young people aged between 8-25 years affected by their own or someone else's substance use. A range of personalised services are provided including one-to-one support in safe spaces, education about alcohol and drugs, as well as the use of psychological therapies such as motivational interviewing. Additional support is provided to parents affected by such issues, with the Moving Parents & Children Together Programme providing a whole family-based approach to reducing the harms of substance use. Since April 2024, over 140 children and young people have been seen by the service, with over 550 intervention sessions delivered.

## 5.2 Actions at the interpersonal relationship level?

### **Interventions targeting families**

Family interventions are essential in supporting disadvantaged children at risk of developing mental health issues, as well as their parents and carers. Oxfordshire offers several initiatives designed to provide timely and appropriate support for these families. Below, we highlight some of the many available programs across the county.

- Several organisations specifically target the earliest years and provide early and effective support for families. The **Oxford Parent-Infant Project (OXPIP)** promotes and enables closer parent-child relationships through specialised therapy sessions designed for parents with infants up to the age of 2, with over 700 families supported in 2023. Additionally, **Home Start Oxford** has provided 470 struggling families with emotional support, practical advice and guidance with accessing additional services. The Growing Minds programme is delivered in partnership between Peeple, Home Start Oxford and The Berin Centre focusing on school readiness and educational attainment in Oxfordshire through activities such as free books for children, group workshops to share practice advice, and individualised home support.
- **YouMove** is an activity programme providing low cost and free activities for local families in Oxfordshire. So far, more than 2,700 families have been provided with access to a wide range of different activities such as swimming and badminton that are aimed at improving both the physical and mental wellbeing of families through promoting a more active lifestyle. In addition, local YouMove Activators in each district of Oxfordshire provide local guidance and advice, particularly supporting disadvantaged families such as refugee families and those with SEND requirements. From September 2024, the program has also expanded to include activities for children under 5 to encourage healthy and active habits from an early age.

**YouMove is really valued by participating families:**

*"Low-cost ways to get out of the house."  
[West Oxfordshire family]*

*"It gives us the chance to do something as a family that we couldn't normally do because of finances."  
[Cherwell family]*

*"Providing activities that enable my daughter to participate in her local community in activities that enrich her life."  
[Vale of White Horse family]*

*"Swimming with my son, he has discovered something he loves and that I can enjoy with him. I haven't swum for years so I'm rediscovering my love for it. It also gives my son and I quality one to one time which is invaluable."  
[Vale of White Horse family]*

- **Bounce Back 4 Kids (BB4K)** is a recovery service provided by Parent and Children Together for children who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse, alongside their non-abusive parents. The service aims to help families heal from trauma, focusing on safety, emotional readiness, and empowerment, typically through a 10-week program. The service also offers a range of other support, including individual therapy, group interventions, and

online resources. BB4K also provides domestic abuse training for practitioners and access to a private online community for continued support.

- **Children Heard and Seen** is a charity service dedicated to supporting children and families affected by parental imprisonment. Established in 2014, it has worked alongside over 300 families and helped over 1,250 children with the negative impacts of parental incarceration, by using a child-centred approach to listen to and support the needs of the children.
- The **Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum** webinars is a series of online sessions aimed at providing educational information to individuals and the wider public regarding all aspects of mental health for children and young people. The webinars invite expert speakers to discuss changes in clinical practice, current research and up to date best practices in managing common mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.
- Oxfordshire's **ATTACH team** is composed of clinical psychologists, senior social care workers and educational psychologists which use attachment theory to provide specialised support to adoptive parents, special guardians and foster care families. The team utilises a variety of evidence-based methods such as trauma focused cognitive behaviour therapy to help parents and carers build better relationships with their children and aims to reduce the risk of developing future mental health problems.

### **Mentoring services**

Aside from parent child relationships, additional mentoring support can be crucial for inspiring young people to build aspiration and develop resilience.

- **Oxford Hub's Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring initiative**, aims to foster supportive, long-term relationships between volunteer mentors and children aged 7-11 years. Launched in 2017, this programme pairs mentors with local children to help boost their self-esteem, provide guidance, and facilitate personal growth through various fun activities, with 86 children supported and over 3,800 outings within the 5 years of the programme's inception. Mentors typically spend around four hours a week with their mentees, engaging in outings, assisting with homework, and introducing new interests. Individuals have reported both positive short-term outcomes such as better self-esteem and confidence, as well as longer term outcomes such as greater resilience and determination.

### **5.3 Actions at the local community level**

Communities play a vital role in the promotion of good mental health in children and young people. Below, we highlight several examples from various sectors that demonstrate the positive impact that communities can have on mental wellbeing.

### **Services by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust**

- **Oxford Link Programme** is a service established in 2022 that provides extra support to young people with high complex needs within Oxfordshire, often when routine services are finding it challenging to provide the appropriate help needed. With over 280 individuals already supported, the multidisciplinary service collaborates with organisations across the sector and helps people access the care and support they need by bridging the gap between individuals, their families and different agencies such as health and social

care, youth justice, and educational institutions. Additionally, the service has a strategic aim focussing on developing a cross-agency collaboration programme, identifying gaps in provision and acting as an information resource for allied professionals.



- **Children and Young People Healthy Child Programme**, provides 11 integrated teams covering Oxfordshire, consisting of school nurses, health visitors, and family nurses who provide support for a range of health-related issues, including mental health. More specifically, school and college nurses have responsibilities in identifying and helping children and young people at risk of developing mental health problems, as well as supporting transition into secondary school and adulthood. Family nurses provide additional support for first time mothers under 19 years of age, with a specialised pathway that prepares young parents for parenthood.
- The **School In-Reach Team** works with schools to provide students, parents/carers and staff with advice, training and education on common mental health problems such as anxiety. It delivers a variety of workshops and group sessions that improve mental health literacy in schools, as well as signposting to other services and assisting with CAMHS referrals for individuals who require specialised support. Parents are further supported via monthly webinars providing practical guidance and help on a variety of common children's mental health issues.
- The **Mental Health Support Team Programme** enhance the support already available in schools by offering specialised expertise and resources to deliver faster mental health assistance to individuals who may not meet CAMHS thresholds but would benefit from early evidence-based intervention. This typically involves psychological therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy and mindfulness sessions with a focus on supporting children and young people with common issues such as anxiety, behavioural difficulties, low mood, and phobias.

## Services by the Voluntary sector

- **Oxfordshire Youth** is a leading youth charity that aims to enable best-practice youth work to be fully accessible to children and young people aged 8-25 years in the region. The charity focuses on providing safe spaces, fostering strong and healthy relationships, and creating opportunities for young people to develop essential skills. It has reached over 32,000 young people through their extensive network and programs. Key initiatives of Oxfordshire Youth include:
  - **Youth Voice Network:** This network promotes the lived experience and opinions of young adults, enabling young people to guide the charity's work. Initiatives include the Oxfordshire Youth Podcast which explores a wide range of challenges that young people face, as well as the Mental Health Ambassador project which delivers a 10-month programme to build confidence, mental health resilience, and leadership skills.
  - **Supported housing:** Young People's Supported Accommodation is a service that has supported around 130 young people aged 18-24 years particularly care leavers or unaccompanied asylum seekers, with housing needs. Such work has been key in enabling such young people to live in appropriate housing and the opportunities to further develop their life skills.
  - **Support for third-sector organisations:** Oxfordshire Youth provide support for over 150 youth sector organisations through programmes, such as the Wellbeing Programme, that deliver skill-based sessions on managing complex issues, as well as mentoring and leadership training workshops to help develop future leaders in the youth sector. Organisations supported are then linked and connected through the Changemaker Network, allowing for greater collaboration between different sectors.
  - **Skills development:** Several development opportunities and programmes are offered to children and young people such as the Transition Through Leadership programme which has enabled over 70 children aged 11–13 years to develop leadership skills and self-confidence as they transition into secondary education.
  - **Connecting sectors:** In conjunction with Oxfordshire Mind, the annual Youth in Mind conference brings together individuals from all sectors focusing on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. In 2024, 16 workshops were delivered to share insights, discuss emerging issues and explore innovative approaches to improving the mental health of young people.
- **Oxfordshire Mind** is a voluntary organisation that collaborates with various sectors to promote mental health and wellbeing among children and young people. A key initiative provided is the Children and Young People Supported Self-Help programme designed for young people aged 7–17 years to help manage mental health challenges through a six-week guided course based on cognitive behaviour therapy principles. Delivered in 15 GP surgeries across five primary care networks in Oxfordshire, it has triaged and assessed over 1,280 young people across the county, with 73% of those who completed the programme reporting improvements to their wellbeing. Additionally, Oxfordshire Mind provides specialised Youth Mental Health First Aid training sessions aimed at improving the ability of individuals from a wide range of

disciplines to spot, manage and support young people in mental health crises and at high risk of suicide, with over 50 people since June 2024.

#### Oxfordshire Mind's Children and Young People Supported Self-Help Programme Feedback

*"Made me feel really comfortable from the beginning. Always listened and had nice general chats with me, the resources my CYP wellbeing worker provided were always helpful and relevant. It helped when we did them together and my wellbeing worker always felt she understood me." -Young Person*

- **SOFEA (Social Opportunities For Education and Action)** is a charitable organisation established in 2014 that works to transform the lives of vulnerable young people in Oxfordshire by providing educational, employability and wellbeing programmes. They provide tailored support programmes such as the Powerhouse Pathway to help connect local young people in Didcot with local employers, as well as promoting mental health through wellbeing programs and outreach services such as the Transitional Support Programme which offers one-to-one mentoring to 11–16 year olds. In 2022-2023, SOFEA has supported over 500 young people, with a significant improvement in overall mental wellbeing from young people participating in their programmes.
- **Banbury Young Homelessness Project (BYHP)** is a charity based in North Oxfordshire that is part of the Youth Access Network and provides young people struggling with information, counselling and advice services. Interventions include 1-to-1 therapy sessions to tackle common mental health issues, as well as mentoring and coaching sessions for individuals who are NEET.
- **SAFE!** is an independent charity in the Thames Valley region that supports young people aged 5-18 (up to 25 for those with additional needs) who have been impacted by crime. Since its founding in 2008, SAFE! Has helped young people rebuild confidence and quality of life through services such as the Support After Crime Service, which offers one-to-one and group sessions for individuals who have witnessed or been a victim of abuse.

#### **School based approaches**

- Promoting good mental health remains a primary strategic goal for Oxfordshire schools. The **Early Years toolkit** developed by Oxfordshire County Council, supports a whole-school approach to wellbeing and includes 31 core building blocks which include fostering effective leadership, enhancing engagement and learning strategies, and providing training and support for staff.
- As of August 2024, 69% of all Oxfordshire schools have taken up national grants to train **Senior Mental Health leads** in order to provide better oversight and strategic leadership on a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Oxfordshire's **Educational Psychology Service** works with children and young people facing difficulties and helps the individuals achieve the best possible outcomes at school using evidence-based psychological interventions. Additionally, the **Emotional Literacy Support Assistants**

(ELSA) training program has developed practitioners that provide tailored low-level interventions for pupils that help them to understand and manage difficult emotions, whilst building resilience. **Nurture Group Practitioners** support students with social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties through short-term interventions that have a holistic approach, combining academic teaching with developing social skills, confidence-building, and self-respect.

- The **Oxfordshire Virtual School** is an educational service that supports over 500 children and young people in the care system and provides educational programmes to suit their needs. It aims to reduce the attainment gap is decreased, by working alongside schools and carers to provide specific education support such as personal education plans and additional academic tutoring

### **Services in Higher Education**

- Both **Oxford University** and **Oxford Brookes University** provide a comprehensive range of mental health support services to support students facing mental health difficulties and to help them achieve their academic and personal goals. Such services include dedicated welfare teams, confidential counselling sessions, wellbeing drop-in sessions, and access to online resources such as self-help advice.

The **Oxfordshire Recovery College** offers a unique educational approach to mental health recovery for anyone over 16, focusing on co-production and shared learning by involving individuals with lived experiences to co-design and co-facilitate courses with trained professionals. It provides free courses aimed at empowering individuals by enhancing their knowledge and skills related to mental health and wellbeing, with targeted courses for young adults aged 16-25.

### **5.4 Actions at the broader environment and society level**

- **Marmot Place** partners from across Oxfordshire have committed to work together to develop the County as a “Marmot Place”. At its heart, this work involves working together to address the underpinning social determinants, or building blocks, of health that drive much of the poor health and health inequality we see in Oxfordshire. System partners have agreed to focus on three key areas:
  - The first of these principles is “**Give every child the best start in life**” and good mental wellbeing is fundamental to achieving this. As already identified in this report the prevalence of poor mental health in children and young people in Oxfordshire is not equally distributed but clustered in certain communities and population cohorts. The Marmot approach will help tackle these inequalities through partners working more closely together on the issues that cause these mental health inequalities.
  - The second priority principle is “**Create fair employment and good work for all**” and the third priority “**Ensure a healthy standard of living for all**”
- Oxfordshire is prioritising children and young people’s mental health through the **Oxfordshire Children and Young People’s Plan 2024-2028** and the **Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2030**.



## Economic Policy

- The **Oxfordshire Future Generations** initiative, a part of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, focuses on creating a sustainable and thriving future for the region for generations to come. It serves as a long-term strategic goal to address social, environmental, and economic challenges through collaborative efforts to enhance future health and wellbeing. This strategy aligns with Oxfordshire's vision of building healthier, fairer, and more resilient communities, ensuring a better quality of life for both current and future generations.
- The **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)** plays a crucial role in addressing barriers to education, training, and employment to have a sustainable and inclusive economy in Oxfordshire. By collaborating with various stakeholders such as local schools, businesses, and training providers, they provide career guidance and employability training to young people, particularly to those impacted by unemployment or are not in education or training. For example, the Social Contract Programme is a £1.7m initiative that specifically supports vulnerable groups impacted by COVID-19 pandemic by developing key skills and providing mentoring services and apprenticeships. Furthermore, OxLEP provides resilience-building activities which support mental health and personal development.

## Environment and Culture

- The **Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (OLNP)** plays a vital role in promoting mental health and wellbeing through nature-based initiatives in Oxfordshire. The partnership collaborates with various stakeholders and local organisations to enhance community engagement with the environment, such as improving access to greenspaces. Key initiatives of the approach include Green Social Prescribing which involves enabling individuals facing mental health problems to access and connect with the environment through community-based activities in nature. Such activities include group gardening, walking groups, and other outdoor engagements that support physical and mental wellbeing. The partnership also has a role in fostering community networks and support local group initiatives to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation.

### Case study of Greenspace & Us<sup>93</sup>

Greenspace & Us is a community insights partnership project that aimed to understand the barriers and enablers impacting access to greenspace for young women in East Oxford. A focus was placed on examining the potential wellbeing benefits of greenspace and nature for young people in Oxfordshire, with respondents reporting the following:

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<sup>93</sup> Community Insights project to understand barriers and enablers around access to greenspace for teenage girls in East Oxford, March 2023, [JP047 Edition 1 Greenspace & Us.pdf](#)

“[Greenspace is] a good place to think and to clear your mind.”  
“It could be a place where when you’re feeling upset or angry it’s a good place to think or let out your emotions.”  
“We will get calm at the local greenspaces.”  
“[Greenspace is] a place to play without boundaries.”

Priorities resulting from the project included providing a greater range of activities that integrate greenspaces, creating inclusive and safe environments, and empowering and supporting young women to connect with nature.

- The **Oxfordshire Libraries and Museums service** promotes arts, culture and history in Oxfordshire. It has a focus on improving mental wellbeing and health through workshops and activities that engage children and young people to connect and reflect on their culture and experiences. Additionally, volunteering opportunities at local museum services have been provided to young people to help develop their workplace skills and resilience.

Case study of a young adult with mental health problems volunteering with the museum service, reported by the parent.

“The museum is able to provide something truly special for my son and me. It gives us encouragement, inclusion and the patience he needs. There is a wonderful person there, leading the archaeology team. I watched the first meeting of my son and her and felt my shoulders relax as I could see she ‘got it’ and that this was a place I could leave my son. It gives him some space and independence. Somewhere he can calmly and quietly contribute, be appreciated and understood. Long periods of illness mean that he often misses going and the manager of the team keeps in touch with us via WhatsApp. This means so much, because illness can be so isolating and being given the opportunity to be part of something he is interested in means a great deal. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the museum staff for all they do for us.”

### **Community safety**

Community safety is an important aspect of enabling children and young people to feel comfortable in their community and access local activities and resources.

- The **Safer Oxfordshire Partnership** acts as a strategic board that comprises of representatives from public health, youth justice and exploitation services, and police services to help shape and deliver community safety agenda. Initiatives that been generated include bespoke substance misuse and exploitation workshops to school aged children, as well as the development of a multi-agency place-based Community Safety Framework for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour in the region.

### **Transport**

- The **Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan** aims to improve access to key services, including mental health support, by making buses a more accessible, affordable, and sustainable transportation option. Since 2021, over £8m has been allocated to the initiative, with the addition of 25 new bus routes. The plan also promotes affordable fares, including £1 fares on

Sundays in December 2024. Additionally, over £100,000 is being invested to explore ways to improve travel options for work-related journeys, aiming to reduce barriers that prevent access to employment.

### **Research and academia**

To deepen our understanding of how broader factors influence the mental health of children and young people, several research initiatives are currently underway to explore the local impact of these determinants. Two examples among many are:

- The **Flourishing and Wellbeing Programme** in Oxfordshire is a research initiative led by the Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre and funded by the National Institute for Health Research. Its primary focus is on developing evidence-based strategies and interventions to promote mental health and wellbeing for both patients and the public, using local infrastructure and resources in Oxfordshire. One example of such workstreams is Living Laboratories, where community resources like Oxford Botanical Garden and Harcourt Arboretum are used to investigate the best ways to improve individuals' mental health and wellbeing.
- The **OxWell Survey** is an initiative between Oxford University's psychiatric department, the NHS, schools and local authorities to undertake a large scale survey of the mental health and wellbeing of school aged children and young people. As well as academic research, the team report the anonymous survey results to schools and local authorities, enabling them to use the information to identify and address wellbeing needs.
- **Optimising cultural Experiences for mental health in underrepresented young people onLiNe (ORIGIN)** is a research programme led by the University of Oxford and in collaboration with several NHS trusts, museums, and charity partners. This research study aims to investigate the impacts of co-designed online arts and culture intervention aimed at reducing anxiety and depression in 16–24-year-olds. It particularly focusses on community engagement and collaboration, for young people facing challenges such as being a disadvantaged background, unemployment or from minority ethnic backgrounds. The effectiveness of such an intervention will be investigated in around 15,000 young people from all types of backgrounds.

## Recommendations

### 6.0 Introduction

This report has highlighted the importance of children and young people's mental health - not only for the physical and psychological health of future generations, but also for the broader benefits to society. We showcase just some of the wide range of initiatives, actions, and policies in Oxfordshire that contribute to supporting mental wellbeing and preventing mental health problems, emphasising the shared role that everyone can play.

Nonetheless, there remains much to be done. This report has four key recommendations for ensuring the mental health of our children and young people is effectively supported for years to come. We also highlight actions that can be taken at the individual, interpersonal relationship, local community, and wider environment and society level to support progress in promoting better mental health among children and young people in Oxfordshire.

### 6.1. Key recommendations

#### 1. **Strive to reduce mental health problems by addressing wider factors**

Mental health problems are closely linked to the building blocks of health such as deprivation, income, housing, and access to green spaces. In Oxfordshire, this is reflected in the varying rates of mental health problems across the county, which align with differences in deprivation. By collaborating with system partners, we can address these building blocks to create conditions that can prevent mental health problems arising and give us the best opportunity to improve mental health outcomes in the county. The success of this endeavour will hinge on meaningful partnerships and collaboration with the NHS, county and district councils, universities, businesses, educational institutions, and the voluntary sector.

- Wider environment and society

Organisations across Oxfordshire are collaborating with the University College London, Institute of Health Equity on a Marmot Place project to address health inequalities in local communities.

- Community

There is an increasing emphasis on empowering and supporting local communities to develop and maintain what is important and beneficial to them. Strengthening communities can lead to more opportunities for community events and regular activities, providing children and young people with a sense of belonging. These mechanisms have been shown to support good mental health. This report recommends prioritising work with local organisations such as community action groups, parish councils, schools and faith organisations.

## **2. Prioritise opportunity, activity, independence, and community**

Evidence in this report raises concerns around increasing isolation, reductions in physical activity, and excessive time spent on social media as contextual factors in the rise of mental health problems. Yet taking part in social activities including community-based arts and sporting clubs, and unstructured outdoor activity and play can be protective for mental health and wellbeing.

Young people are often dependent on adult family members for funds, transport, and organising activities outside the home. Prioritising public and active transport solutions and safe community spaces can help young people have safe places to socialise outside of the home, and provide opportunities for independent travel for social, education or economic purposes.

- **Wider environment and society**

Improving access to safe, inclusive spaces by addressing barriers such as transport links and ensuring that greenspaces and outdoor activities are available to all.

- **Community**

Provision of community hubs, family hubs and outdoor recreation and socialising spaces which are accessible for families, will enrich the choices available to families in terms of social and cultural opportunities.

Strengthening our youth communities and increasing access to group activities, such as after school clubs, that build resilience, set habits for greater independence in young adulthood. and tackle social isolation.

- **Individual**

Targeted schemes for young people to reduce barriers to accessing activities, social or economic opportunities should be prioritised. This may include free or subsidised bus travel, provision of cycling equipment or secure storage for cycles, and the provision (and targeting) of subsidised or free activities. A partnership approach should be taken to ensure that these measures can reach their intended audience.

## **3. Prioritising early and effective intervention**

By providing timely, appropriate, and evidence-based family and individual support, we can address challenges before they escalate when it is often at its most effective in fostering positive mental health and wellbeing. This can reduce the risk of developing more severe consequences of poor mental health in the future.

- **Wider environment and society**

Fostering collaboration between academic institutions and various sectors to advance research and the evidence base on interventions that address the root causes of mental health problems among children and young people.

- Community  
Developing and empowering senior mental health leads at schools to ensure delivery of early and effective support and intervention.
- Interpersonal relationships  
Improving mental health skills training, such as mental health first aid training, for parents, caregivers, and professionals working with young people. Provide pathways for struggling families to access early support through initiatives like family hubs and parenting programmes.
- Individual  
Increasing awareness of the signs and symptoms of mental health problems among children through universal health and wellbeing promotion. Expand mental health support options, including using digital platforms, to improve access for all individuals who needs it.

#### 4. **Ensuring diverse career and training opportunities are available for all young people**

By offering a greater range of alternative training and career pathways such as apprenticeships, we can help young people identify and pursue goals and aspirations that align with their interests. This is crucial in empowering young people and equipping them with the tools to succeed both personally and professionally over the long term.

- Wider environmental and social  
Prioritising mental health and workplace wellbeing to ensure everyone has access to quality education, employment, entrepreneurship opportunities and financial resources.
- Community  
Partnering with local businesses to increase the range of employment opportunities available for young people, including apprenticeships and supported placements for those with mental health problems.
- Interpersonal  
Providing mentorship programs to engage children and young people, especially those without strong family support networks, to foster resilience and aspirations.
- Individual  
Ensuring mental health support and career advice is available throughout childhood, with a particular focus during transition periods, to prevent individuals from falling through the cracks.