Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

September 2026- Review September 2028

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Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

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

(World Health Organization)

Mental Health and Wellbeing is not however, just the absence of mental health problems. In order for the community of South Wilford CE Primary to have a positive mental health and wellbeing, we want all pupils and stakeholders to:

- Feel confident in all that they do
- Be able to express emotions appropriately
- Make and maintain positive relationships with others
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Know how to manage stresses and deal appropriately with change
- Enjoy every day that they come to school.

Policy Statement

At South Wilford C of E Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community (children, staff, parents, carers and stakeholders). We recognise how important mental health and wellbeing is in our lives, and that it is equally as important as physical health. Mental health is a critical part of a child's wellbeing, and we recognise that poor mental health can adversely affect a child's learning and progress. Our whole school values are at the root of all we do in school, and we use these positively to promote good mental health and wellbeing for all of our community. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health.

By making our school mentally healthy, we strive to ensure a nurturing, welcoming and supportive environment, where all children can build on their potential, no matter their life experiences. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for our pupils: those who are affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health. We aim to provide a safe, healthy and fun place for all our community to be. We want to ensure we help the children deal with their own mental health, support others who may be suffering from poor mental health, and understand what they can do in order to have a positive mind-set.

Aims

Our policy aims to set out the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need. There may also be links to our Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Equalities and Relationships Policies.

Our policy aims to:

- ♣ Promote positive mental health in all members of our school community across the whole school
- ♣ Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- ♣ Advise on how we prevent mental health problems
- ♣ Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- ♣ Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- ♣ Signpost our community to seeking further advice and support
- ♣ Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carer

Lead Members of Staff

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health across the school. Within this, all staff should understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems. Looking out for such signs will allow for staff to have early intervention and provide them with the support they need.

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- ♣ Natalie Aldridge (HT), Simon Good (DHT), Abi Todhunter, Henry Jolliffe
- ♣ Natalie Aldridge- Named mental health lead
- ♣ Deana Bull (ELSA)
- ♣ Paige Rimell-PSHE Lead
- ♣ Abigail Todhunter– SENDCO

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection office of staff or the head teacher.

If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Natalie Aldridge, mental health lead, or any of the Senior Leadership Team, dependant on the nature of the referral. Guidance about referring to CAMHS can be found on the BEHMS pathway at http://www.bemhnottingham.co.uk/

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

We believe that the school has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and providing them with strategies to prevent a decline in individual mental health throughout their school life. Our creative curriculum allows for children at South Wilford to develop a range of strategies and approaches to support them on their journey through school, whilst maintaining positive mental health. These activities include:

Whole school activities

- Themed weeks/days linked to mental health awareness
- Assemblies led by pupils and staff (Resilience leaders and faithful friends)
- Playground buddies – a group of pupils selected at the start of each academic year who are on 'duty' at break and lunch times to support with any issues
- A help zone in the playground to support children struggling with issues around mental health and wellbeing.
  Leaflets for parents, carers and staff across school

- A display in the staff area which promotes positive mental health and support for what to do if you want help
- Displays around school about themed days on mental health
- Resilience leaders group- A group of children who have taken part in a 12 week training programme and then graduate to support others with resilience and mental health.

Transition programmes

- DARE programme, GREAT project and 'The Actual Game of Life' programme for Year 6 children.

Class activities

- Weekly 'At our Best' assembly – including certificates linked to school values, attendance rewards, Out of school achievements and other rewards
- The Great Project for Year 5 – a programme linked directly to domestic violence
- Zones of Regulation programme throughout the year and used daily.
- An allocated wellness mentor timetable, with individual slots for children receiving targeted support.
- ELSA support for children who require it.
- Leuven scale used to assess wellbeing in all children.
- Teacher mentors allocated for various children where needed who are not their teacher and follow them through school.

Staff activities and strategies

- Thank you wall in the staff room
- Well being wall in staff room
- Prayer wall in staff room
- Thank you in weekly briefings as well as a positive quote to start
- Payback time for report writing
- Staff room dedicated to wellness and a separate PPA room.
- Alternating staff meetings- 1 week is led and the next is given ove for completion of admin tasks such as updating website
- PPA can be at home.
- Allocated time for subject leadership
- Allocated time to visit teaching and learning in school as CPD
- Half day wellness time
- Wellbeing boxes in staff toilets.
- Reduced marking
- No formal observations
- Reduced report writing format
- 3 data drops per year reduced from 6
- Wellbeing survey annually
- Trust benefits package

Identifying, supporting and referring children with mental health needs

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined on the BEHMS pathway website: http://www.bemhnottingham.co.uk/professionals/directory/. The Mental Health lead will be able to give advice on the best option to take in each individual situation.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring

students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Staff are also aware of protective and risk factors which contribute to Mental Health need and behaviour (see appendix ii). These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Natalie Aldridge, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead.

Possible warning signs include outside of the risk factors listed in appendix ii are:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Staff are also aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive. All of these behaviours may be as a result of home problems, difficulties in learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger or immediate harm, the school's child protection plan needs to be followed. If there is a medical emergency, then the appropriate procedure for this needs to be followed.

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff. If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advice and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file in My Concern. The Pastoral lead is also a DSL so will pick up all concerns relating to mental health as will all DSLs.

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, who will provide store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps, and whether external support is required.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student or a member of staff on then we should discuss with the person:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

It is important that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils and adults who choose to make a disclosure to themselves or a friend. Staff make it clear to the children that the concern will need to be passed to the Mental Health Lead or DSL, and recorded, in order to provide the appropriate support to the pupil or adult in question.

Parents must always be informed if a pupil is at risk of harm or unable to keep themselves safe. Students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, and any of the DSLs must be informed immediately.

Assessment, intervention and support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead and recorded as noted above. An assessment will then take place by the Mental Health Lead (and DSL/SLT if appropriate) to ensure that the concern is addressed as quickly as possible, and that the appropriate support is given. This may be from within school, or from an external specialist service. We believe early intervention is key, and we aim to deal with any concerns as quickly as possible, and provide support immediately. Below identifies the type of support that can be given based on any disclosure:

Need The level of need is based on key members involved with the person who has made the disclosure	Intervention and support (examples that could be provided)	Monitoring
High	Referral to CAHMS, assessment for 1:1 or family support Consultation with school staff and other external agencies Other interventions eg art therapy, resilience leaders, ELSA, Sports and wellness mentor. If concluded that an EHCP is needed, this would be referred to the SENCO and SEND policy.	All children needing targeted support will have an appropriate care plan/action plan. If appropriate, the plan will be shared with parents/carers, and are then reviewed/evaluated to consider the impact. These plans are overseen by the Mental Health Lead.
Some need	Access in school to nuture group, mentor, school nurse, 1:1 intervention, ELSA	
Low	General support and continuing to monitor eg class teacher/TA intervention, mentor	

In some cases, a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These can include

anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders. The BEHMS pathway provides a range of different services which can offer support for these needs, and referrals can be made by the school to access these. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil/parent/carer, and when it is most appropriate for this support to be accessed for the child.

Specialist Service	Referral Process
CAHMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)	Referral can be made through school, GP or self-referral via the BEHMS pathway.
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through Mental Health Lead or SENCO

Other specialist services in Nottingham which can be accessed are:

- ♣ Nottingham Community Paediatric Services
- ♣ Base 51 Counselling Service
- ♣ KOOTH online counselling
- ♣ SHARP (Self-Harm Awareness)
- ♣ CAHMS Self-Harm team
- ♣ CAHMS Crisis team

More information about these services can be found on the BEHMS Pathway Website. A list of services which can be accessed without referral can also be found in appendix iii.

Appendix iv also shows the procedure taken by Nottingham City Council once a referral has been made for a specialist service.

In some cases, mental health needs can arise from issues where a child is not being kept safe. In this case, referrals to children and families will be made, and parents/carers will be informed that this is being done.

Working with Parents and Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- ♣ Can the meeting happen face to face?
- ♣ Where should the meeting happen?
- ♣ Who should be present? What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news being shared.

When a concern is raised, the school will:

- ♣ Contact parents and meet with them (although there may be circumstances where this may not happen, as child protection issues are identified).
- ♣ Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- ♣ Be available for follow up meetings/phone calls
- ♣ Make a record of the meeting
- ♣ Discuss how the parents/carers can support their child
- ♣ Keep parents/carers up to date and fully informed about decisions and next steps

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- ♣ Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- ♣ Share materials and books.
- ♣ Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- ♣ Run a parents group for parents to talk to each other in a safe place about their concerns and problems. Eg Coffee mornings
- ♣ Run events linked to the awareness of mental health eg. World Mental Health Day.
- ♣ Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- ♣ Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings (Meet the team, parents evenings etc)
- ♣ Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Parents and Carers with Mental Health Needs

If we are aware that parents and carers are suffering with their own mental health needs, the school will ensure that they support the individual and the family in the best way they can. The wellbeing of the school community is important to us, and we will ensure we do our best to support any need.

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. We will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate for peers involved, and what might support might be appropriate for them, including 1:1 or group support.

Training

All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training, in order to enable them to keep pupils and staff safe. We also have access to a shared online space where research, published documents and information can be accessed by all staff when needed. This space is updated regularly and staff are notified when anything has been added. Staff are also encouraged to add their own resources to the file if they find anything useful.

All staff have been trained in recognizing mental health and responding with techniques in class from positively empowered education.

The Mental Health lead has attended a course on Mentally Healthy Schools through NottAlone.
We have an ELSA who attends the Nottingham City ELSA programme and supervision sessions.
Our Sports and wellness mentor has attended a course on mentoring primary age children.

Further training is accessed throughout the year, dependant on need for relevant staff members. A number of different training services have been accessed so far. DSLs are also provided with training at regular network meetings across Nottingham City.

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of staff is an essential part of school life at South Wilford C of E. We promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work-life balance and support staff in managing their own wellbeing. Initiatives we have put in place to support this are:

- ♣ Creating a staff room which can be accessed at any time and is not for work purposes.
- ♣ Staff wellbeing group – used for representatives to discuss wellbeing in school
- ♣ An updated and revamped staff room space, which includes a thank you and wellbeing wall as well as a prayer wall. Reading for pleasure is a focus and we have a staff library to share books.
- ♣ Free tea and coffee and regular snacks. A coffee machine is also available as well as a cold water machine.
- ♣ Payback time for teachers – for example report writing time
- ♣ Emails are only sent between 7am and 6pm during weekdays and there is no expectation to respond out of work hours
- ♣ Access to counselling via Transform Trust
- ♣ Positive quote at start of weekly briefings.
- ♣ Half day allocated for wellbeing.
- ♣ PPA can be taken at home.
- ♣ Reduced marking and assessment
- ♣ Reduced paperwork- including for reports and assessment.
- ♣ 6 data points reduced to 3.
- ♣ Pupil Progress meetings are collaborative and positive.
- ♣ No formal observations- moving to a collaborative teaching support programme.
- ♣ All staff are encouraged to choose an 'early dart' day once a week where they leave as soon as the children have gone.
- ♣ No clubs on Friday to allow all to leave by 4pm.
- ♣ All staff meetings are finished by 4.45pm and are one hour long.
- ♣ Briefings over zoom to allow staff to be in their rooms longer in the morning.
- ♣ An open-door policy by the Headteacher encourages staff to bring any issues when they occur and not have to wait.
- ♣ Staff survey annually
- ♣ 'Have your say' board on staff room wall to ensure all are heard when making decisions.
- ♣ Wellbeing boxes in staff toilets.
- ♣ Staff can attend important events in their families lives (Sports days, plays, funerals, graduations etc)
- ♣ No questions asked if staff leave earlier once children have gone or arrive later in the morning. An awareness that there are varied family commitments for our staff.
- ♣ Time allocated for environment and displays.
- ♣ Use of Apple classroom and I pads reducing need for printing and worksheets. Therefore less time spent cutting and sticking in books.

As a school, we are always looking for new ways to promote staff mental health and wellbeing, and are open to ideas which we can use in school.

Well-being is a standing agenda item in SLT and governor meetings.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in Sept 2025, but will be monitored annually by the Mental Health Lead.

General information and support with mental health needs:

Young Minds – www.youngminds.org.uk

Mind – www.mind.org.uk

Time to Change – www.time-to-change.org.uk

Childline – www.childline.org.uk

Place2Be – www.place2be.org.uk

Women's Aid – www.womensaid.org.uk

For support on specific needs:

Anxiety UK – www.anxietyuk.org.uk

OCD UK – www.ocduk.org

Depression – www.depressionalliance.org

Eating Disorders – www.inourhands.com

Self-Harm – www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicide – www.papyrus-uk.org

Child Bereavement UK – www.childbereavementuk.org.uk

More services for mental health needs can be found in the final pages of this document: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

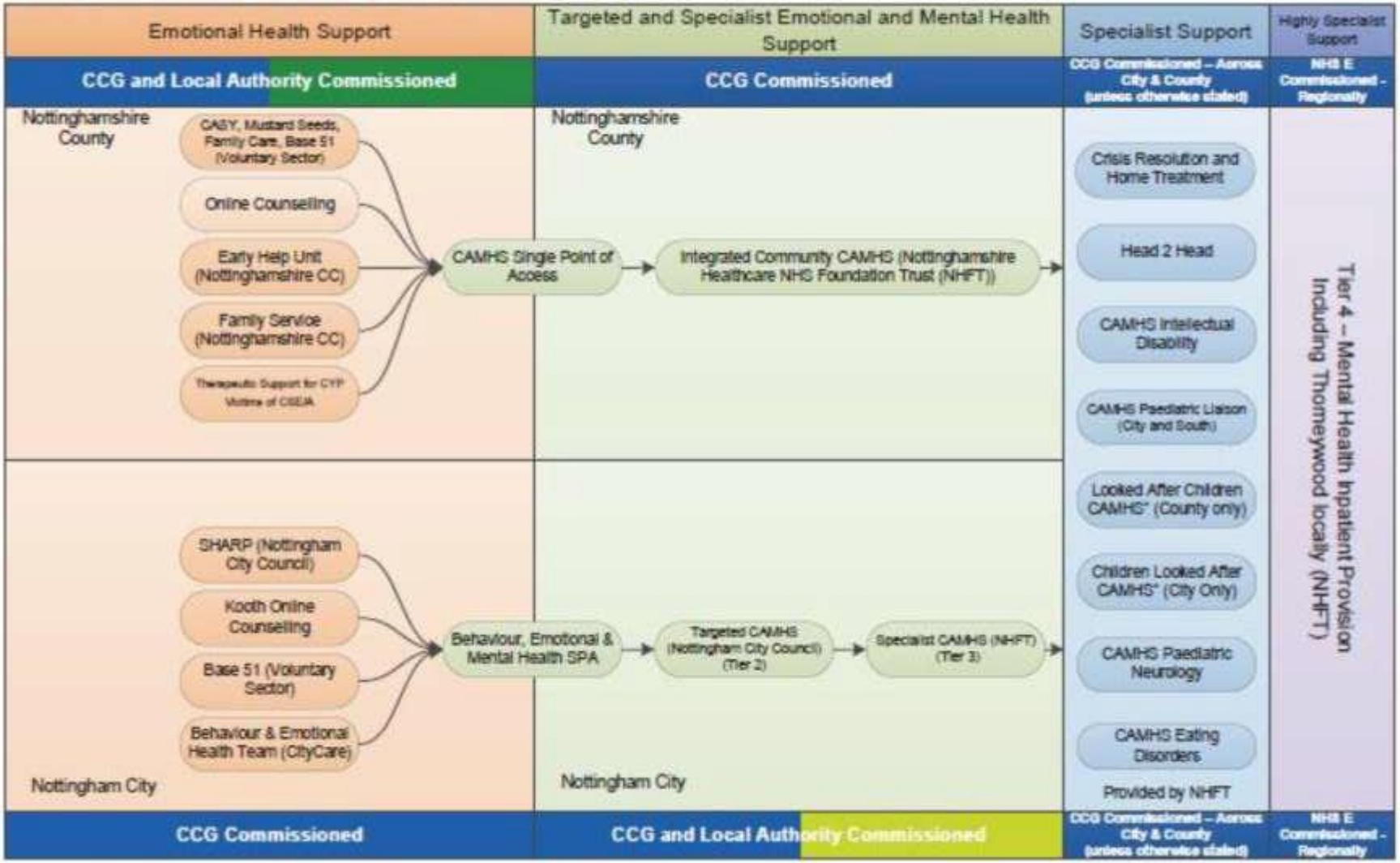
Nottingham Specific Support:

More information on Nottingham specific services can be found here: http://www.bemhnottingham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Resource_Pack_for_Professionals.pdf?x30455

Commissioned by:

Nottinghamshire County Council | Nottingham City Council | NHS

Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City CAMHS Provision



* Looked After Children teams in both the city and county are integrated local authority and NHFT teams.
- Nottinghamshire's Online Counselling is currently being procured and is not available yet.

Appendix iv – Referral process taken by Nottingham City Council