



# Community Planning Aberdeen

<b>Progress Report</b>	Project End: LOIP Aim 5.2 Increase by 80% the use of digital resources for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing by 2022.
	Increase by 40% the use of the wellbeing scenario on the Mind Of My Own app by care experienced children and young people by 2022.
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<b>Governance Group</b>	CPA Board – 19 April 2023

## Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project Aim 5.2 which sought to:

1. Increase by 80% the use of digital resources for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing by 2022.
2. Increase by 40% the use of the wellbeing scenario on the Mind Of My Own app by care experienced children and young people by 2022.

## Summary of Key Information

### 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Mental Health Foundation for Scotland reviewed the Mental health impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in Scotland on vulnerable groups. Within Aberdeen, we recognise many of the factors highlighted within the review through our own professional and personal lives seeing a negative spiral of mental wellbeing across our schools and communities.
- 1.2 Mental wellbeing has been a significant focus over the past year and the declining mental health of all has been recognised. 'Good Mental Health for All' recognises the benefits of improving mental health which link with positive health and social outcomes for individuals and the broader community. Those who have positive mental and emotional wellbeing are more likely to have success within their lives.
- 1.3 Digital resources enable children and young people to access direct and immediate information, support and service information for their mental health

and wellbeing. This was felt to be particularly important during periods of lockdown and times of reduced face-to-face contact with professionals.

## **2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM**

- 2.1 Against this background, in February 2022, the CPA Board approved the project charter for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to:
1. increase by 80% the use of digital resources for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing by 2022; and
  2. Increase by 40% the use of the wellbeing scenario on the Mind Of My Own app by care experienced children and young people by 2022

## **3 WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?**

- 3.1 Following engagement with pupils and staff working with children and young people, the project focused on testing the following changes:

- **Increase opportunities and support available through digital means/  
Promote the use of trusted online digital resources to children, young people and families**

We considered local multiagency resources that already existed to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing with a view to understanding uptake and impact. These resources could be categorised as:

- Resources for engaging with professionals such as Near Me, Google Classroom and MOMO
- Access to information from websites and social media
- Resources to engage with children and young people such as surveys

- 3.2 It became apparent that the number of resources and opportunities are vast when considering such a wide parameter as mental health and wellbeing and collecting data on uptake, acceptability and impact was challenging. Much of this relied upon analytics which are limited in value (ie. a hit on a website is not an indicator of impact). However, we also recognised that an education app was required for children and young people and the Safer Schools App was developed and launched. In addition, to this there required to be a resource for parents and carers and a new mental wellbeing section was added to the EPS (Educational Psychology Service) digital site. Also, the suite of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) online resources was built upon to include support for children affected by the war in Ukraine. These have been widely distributed and will form part of a national suite of resources.

- **Enable participation in development of digital resources and supports**

- 3.3 As part of a wider neurodevelopmental pathway pilot the development of new 'need specific' digital resources is about to get underway. This will be a web-based resource for children and families with neurodevelopmental need to access information, signposting and support. It will also have a professionals section. This work is at an early stage so there is no improvement to report yet but it will be developed in co-production with children and families.

- **Increase staff awareness and confidence in signposting to digital support methods**

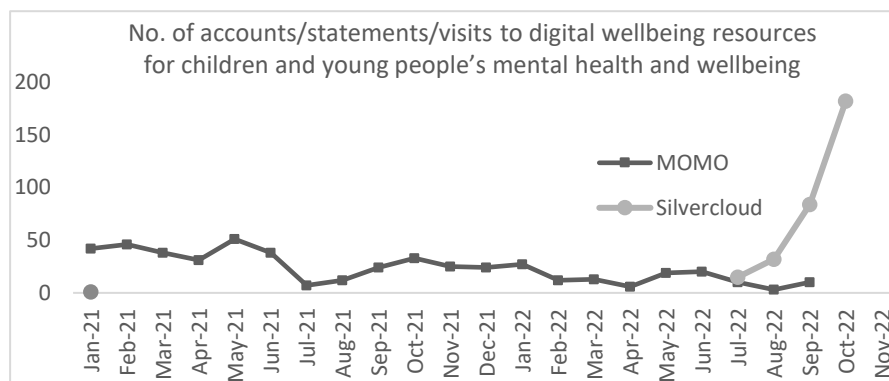
3.4 The 'Silvercloud' programme was introduced to CAMHS in April 2022. This is an online programme that helps teach techniques to reduce symptoms of low mood, anxiety and stress with 80% of users showing improvement in anxiety and depression.

- **Train staff in use of the wellbeing scenario on the Mind of My Own (MOMO) App**

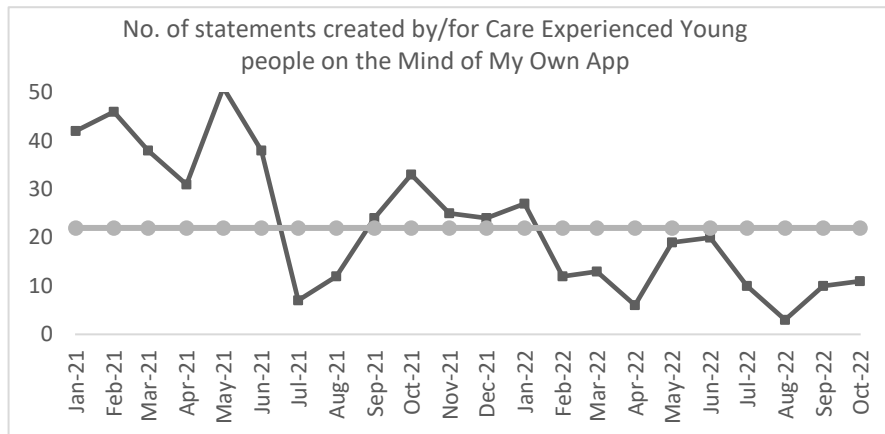
3.5 The app is a tool to support staff working with looked after children and young people to communicate. The app allows young people to easily express their views and be heard. They can use the app on their own device or they can share the worker's device when meeting with them.

#### 4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

4.1 In respect of aim 1, whilst there has been an increase in the digital wellbeing resources available as a result of the changes below, we are unable to evidence that the use of digital wellbeing resources for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing has increased – the reasons for this and challenges regarding data is described below. Despite this, the project can evidence that there has been a 113% increase in the no. of Silvercloud accounts activated between July and Oct 22, with 182 total accounts as at Oct 22.



4.2 In respect of aim 2, the graph below shows that following a spike in 2021, the numbers of MOMO statements reflected in the graph shows a reduction. Whilst this is the opposite of the intention of the aim, it actually represents an improvement as the purpose of MOMO is for children and young people to record a statement in the app when they are feeling unsafe, scared or unhappy. It is a positive outcome that the number of such statements are reducing. The lead social worker for MOMO has been on maternity leave with no-one specifically picking up this aspect of the role in her absence and this has had an impact.



4.3 In respect of the changes we tested we have recorded the following impact, however systems to measure the impact of the resources has been challenging and an area of learning for the project and whilst steps have now been put in place to ensure data is available, this will be learning the project will take into future projects to ensure this position does not arise again.

- **Increase opportunities and support available through digital means/ Promote the use of trusted online digital resources to children, young people and families**

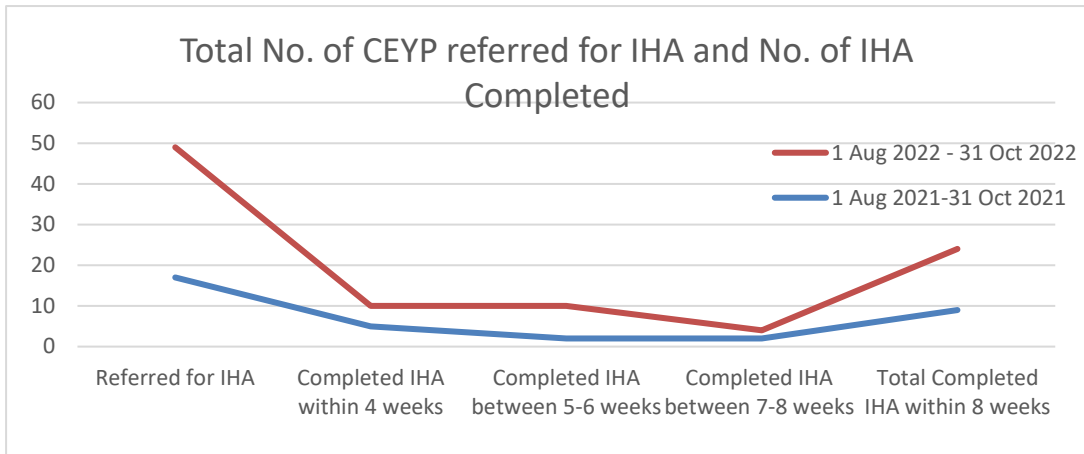
4.4 The Safer Schools app was launched during 2022 with all schools signed up to it. This means that the parents/carer's of 26,000 children can access the app and it has been promoted widely in regular school newsletters. Whilst, parents have responded positively, the initial version of the app did not gather analytics on its usage and therefore we are unable to advise of the usage and impact of the app. The app developers are working on an upgraded version that will enable data on the number of times the app has been accessed, however this is not currently available. This has been learning for the project in terms of ensuring that mechanisms are in place to gather data on the impact of any new resources introduced.

4.5 The suite of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) online resources was built upon to include support for children affected by the war in Ukraine. These have been widely distributed and will form part of a national suite of resources. Again, as with the above there is no record of how many have been sent out and how many have used the resource.

4.6 Online monthly school newsletters have an ongoing health and wellbeing section highlighting trusted resources. In addition, the EPS digital hub has had a mental wellbeing section added to it and this has been promoted through these newsletters. Analytics will demonstrate what themes have been accessed most and this will be reported through EP service improvement plan and self-evaluation. Data is being sought in relation to this.

4.7 We have seen an increase in the no. of referrals for Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) for Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP). As part of the project these were moved virtually, however despite this alternative option there has been a decrease in the number of completed Initial Health Assessments

(IHAs) for Care Experienced Children and Young People (CEYP). This will continue to be offered as an alternative option, however it cannot be considered an improvement as a stand-alone option with the preference remaining for assessments to be completed in person. As shown in the chart below, From August 1<sup>st</sup> 2022- October 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 - **Aberdeen City** sent **32** new referrals. **7 (22%)** of health assessment were not completed. This was due to **1(3%)** having no paperwork being received from social work, **2(6%)** no consent being given by parents, and **4 (13%)** young people declining the offer of a health assessment. **25 (78%)** children/young people had their health assessments completed.



- **Increase staff awareness and confidence in signposting to digital support methods**

4.8 The 'Silvercloud' programme has been introduced, this is an online programme that will help teach techniques to reduce symptoms of low mood, anxiety and stress. There has been a 113% increase in the no. of accounts activated between July and Oct 22, with 182 total accounts as at Oct 22.

- **Enable participation in development of digital resources and supports**

4.9 Children, young people and families have been, and continue to be, engaged and consulted with in regard to the usefulness, acceptability and development of digital resources. This will lead to their involvement in co-production when the work reaches that point.

4.10 As part of a wider neurodevelopmental pathway pilot, a scoping project to determine the health needs of 'older' (18+) CEYP has been undertaken. Nine young people participated in the project to help us understand their needs as they prepare to transition out of care. This highlighted that mental health concerns are one of the main support requirements for them and that it is often difficult to access the support that they need. The intention is for this to lead to the development of a digital resource with the involvement of CEYP however funding to support this will need to be identified.

## 5 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

5.1 The priority for an expanding number and quality of digital supports has reduced with the end of lockdowns and relaxing of public health measures to manage the

spread of coronavirus, however, we know that digital resources remain an essential option for children, young people, families and professionals. We are now putting systems in place to ensure that the usage of the resources is gathered and evaluated.

- 5.2 It is also recognised that the pandemic triggered the development of a range of approaches to make information more easily available to children and young people and their families (some of which are described above) and whilst opportunities for families to self-refer into services were also established and well received, there is now a need to look at all of the digital content available across the partnership to ensure a single point of access to information to improve cohesion across partners and this is a key outcome within the revised Children's Services Plan.
- 5.3 As discussed above, co-production with children and families will be key to ensuring that new resources meet their needs and are accessible to them. We will progress work specifically to develop a digital resource within the neurodevelopmental pathway pilot and for CEYP within timescales that external factors allow.

## **6 HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?**

- 6.1 For each of the digital resources we will now have systems in place to monitor usage and this will enable us to continue to monitor usage to ensure it is meeting the needs of our children and young people and their families.
- 6.2 The Safer schools app will be a rich source of data in regard to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing with a wide reach across the city. The upgraded version of the app will include analytics.
- 6.3 Qualitative evaluation will be undertaken to support engagement and co-production work with families.

## **7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD**

- 7.1 The learning from the development and the launch of digital resources will be taken forward as part of the neurodevelopmental pathway pilot and the development of new 'need specific' digital resources. We will ensure that the systems to gather the impact of the new resources are in place prior to launch and that all resources are co-designed.
- 7.2 There is a need to look at all of the digital content available across the partnership to ensure a single point of access to information to improve cohesion and this is a key outcome within the revised Children's Services Plan.

## Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that whilst the aims have not been achieved the changes tested are now in place and will continue within business as usual and where data has not been available this will now be available in the future; and
- ii) Note that the pandemic triggered the development of a range of approaches to make information more easily available to children and young people and their families (some of which are described above) and whilst opportunities for families to self-refer into services were also established and well received, there is now a need to look at all of the digital content available across the partnership to ensure a single point of access to information to improve cohesion across the Community Planning Partnership and this is a key outcome within the revised Children's Services Plan.

## Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities: -

- Better communication in partnership working
- Learning opportunities across multiagency

## Consultation

Children's Services Board  
CPA Management Group

## Background Papers

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.  
Charter 5.2  
LOIP 2016-26

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