

M-THRIVE Implementation Story

The Greater Manchester (GM) i-THRIVE programme team spoke with Rachel Pilling, the service manager for M-THRIVE about the development of the THRIVE Framework in Manchester.

Background

In 2018, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC), identified a need to redesign the current CYP Mental Health Offer across the City. This was around the same time that the Manchester Children's and Young People's (CYP) strategy was also developed and the synergy between both agendas was developed further.

MHCC provided a significant amount of funding to MFT CAMHS to lead on the proposal of a whole system offer. The CAMHS partnership board, consisting of core representatives from across system (health, social, local authority, education, youth justice, VCSE) was rebranded the 'THRIVE Partnership Board' with a single vision to implement principles of the THRIVE Framework to enhance the current offer to CYP. From this, the concept of a navigation offer for CYPF was designed and named M-THRIVE.

The M-THRIVE offer is a single point of navigation, a front door approach to Manchester's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health offer. This is a consistent and diverse offer that supports the individual needs of children, young people, and families to empower them to thrive within their own community.

What was the problem you were trying to solve?

CYP mental health provision was conceptualised by the four-tiered model, which often does not account for CYP who do not require specialist intervention and therefore do not meet the 'threshold' for CAMHS. CYP mental health provisions were historically organised into 'tiers' and required CYP to meet a 'threshold' to receive treatment/interventions. Unfortunately, many CYP at the lower end of the spectrum of needs did not meet this threshold and could only get interventions when their condition worsened. For these CYP and families, navigating a complex and over-stretched system to get the help needed was extremely difficult, and when they turned to trusted professionals from the system to support (i.e., GPs, teachers, Social Care workers etc.) there was a general gap in understanding the provision available.

The THRIVE Partnership Board aimed to answer some of the following questions: how can I access CAMHS when needed?; where else can I get help?; who can tell me what is on offer?; what is on offer while I wait? With these questions and the THRIVE Framework in mind, the M-THRIVE offer was designed moving away from a tiered approach to a needs-led, shared, whole system approach.

How was the service designed?

The M-THRIVE offer was designed as a single point of navigation, where CYP could present an issue to a locality-based team, with local knowledge of resources and key contacts across the system. The team would be a 'helping hand' to look through different support options available to them. Through shared decision-making conversations, they could jointly decide on which was the most helpful option and support them to get there. This also included signposting to self-help materials and providing key tips to self-regulate and prevent escalations within the community.

The model was developed further with a sub-working group of the wider Partnership Board and the roles required to fulfil this offer were identified:

- A service manager to oversee the city-wide offer delivered within each community-based hub.
- Team leads to oversee the operational functioning in each locality hub and link in with local partners.
- Practitioners to offer advice and signposting to services, helping CYPF get to where they need to go without needing to repeat their story many times and liaising with specialist CAMHS.
- Navigators and Pathfinders to hold and maintain the local knowledge, being the face of the three locality hubs.

Once the CCG signed off on the conceptual model, recruitment began and in January 2021, the service manager was appointed.

The model was piloted in one locality to start with (North Manchester) and the process of recruitment to the rest of the teams had started. In the North team there was a service lead, a team lead, a practitioner, an M-THRIVE navigator, and an M-THRIVE trainee navigator. Initial engagement with system leads to further develop the model and individual pathways with partners took place. Once these pathways were established, recruitment for the remaining two locality teams in Central and South Manchester took place.

As part of the model, roles were adapted, and clear differentiation of bandings and expectations of each staff member was provided. The new roles were as followed:

- 1) The Pathfinder: This role was set up to provide advice and signposting to children/young people who came through the M-THRIVE front door to a suitable pathway/service. The Pathfinder would also understand who was accessing the hub, what services are in each locality and work to increase access and reduce stigma.
- 2) The Navigator: This is a more interactive way of offering advice and signposting whereby the Navigator will identify services within the localities where they can work with children/young people. The model aims to be creative and holistic, so the Navigator is not limited to working out of M-THRIVE hubs but can work across the community, for example, in Sure Start centres, schools and youth centres.

- 3) The Practitioner: This role is part of M-THRIVE's 'getting help' offer. It was set up to support the hub leads and service lead in having shared decision-making conversations with CAMHS and early help to check that the temporary interventions for those not accepted by CAMHS or those on the waiting list are safe and appropriate.

Once the roles were outlined and agreed, recruitment took place for the other two locations to begin setting up the Central and South hubs. In the meantime, a timeline for launching the North pilot was designed and went live in April 2021.

The M-THRIVE vision was to also offer professional consultation and training and embed meaningful partnership working across the system. For this reason, the Service Lead started attending multi-agency meetings, including Children's Social Care Partnership meetings and Safeguarding meetings with Manchester City Council to identify the current important topics across the city and to be able to get to know what children/young people and professionals need. This consultation and training offer is still in its development with the aim to launch soon.

What is the offer?

All children/young people can access M-THRIVE via phone, the pop in service and the digital website. The Pathfinder collates all access forms that come through the service and a group allocation meeting is held weekly with the hub leads to identify the need of each child/young person and which worker they would be assigned to. If the child/young person needs advice and signposting, they would be assigned to the Pathfinder. If the child/young person would benefit from an engagement activity, the offer would be to assign them to one of the Navigators. Those that require a short-term intervention based on consultations with CAMHS or early help would be assigned to the Practitioner.

To increase access to the M-THRIVE offer a direct pathway has been set up with local CAMHS. Where CYP are unable to access traditional CAMHS services, an opt in model has been developed for all children/young people. A letter is sent which raises awareness of M-THRIVE and allows parents/carers and children/young people to know who and where their M-THRIVE hubs are in their community.

A similar pathway has been designed with Early Help to provide consultation to families where there are issues that are having an impact on a child's mental and emotional wellbeing. In addition, M-THRIVE has offered to support early-help in designing their own bespoke hub model by helping them to identify the location of the hubs and to help remove any barriers to accessing the hubs.

M-THRIVE also offer support to professionals around a child/young person or a cohort of young people they are working with. For example, a teacher may need support in approaches to working with young people around healthy relationships and social media and M-THRIVE will advise schools and signpost them to services that are in the community.

What are the benefits of this service?

M-THRIVE is a community-based service that can be accessed by children/young people, their families, and professionals. It is easily accessible via phone and walk ins, but even if the hubs are not open the digital offer is available so families and professionals can still access support. The main benefit of this service, is that they support CYP and families where they are, tailoring their approach to meet the needs of the locality and maintain current knowledge of where these CYP can access help, either instead of CAMHS, or while they wait for CAMHS intervention.

How has the service impacted service users & professionals?

We have had some successful stories around our youth offer. The M-THRIVE hub in North Manchester is based in the Factory Youth Zone and they have now got a bespoke package for children and young people at a specific age called 'junior choices'. This offer has received very positive feedback as it really works around their choices, their purposes and how they can overcome challenges.

In addition, we have had some really good feedback so far from the schools, children/young people and the families that have accessed our service.

"I could not have done it without M-THRIVE, nobody else wanted to listen, the impact that the service has had has changed everything, I can't thank you enough" (parent).

"My child has improved 110% since being with M-THRIVE, I never thought I would see such a turnaround" (parent).

"Had it not been for M-THRIVE, my child was about to be excluded from school for behaviour issues, now has a diagnosis of ADHD, has an EHCP and is being supported accordingly in the same school" (parent).

What challenges did you face setting up this service?

Whilst the THRIVE principles were clear and concise within the Framework, understanding the practical application of this as a redesigned offer for Manchester, was at times, challenging. For 12 months, the GM THRIVE Partnership board met on a monthly basis to understand the principles in detail and look at how this could be used to shape the system response to address needs.

Once the team was set up, it was important to link with the GM i-THRIVE programme to ensure we were working in a THRIVE like way within the advice/signposting and getting help needs-based groupings. However, in the beginning the team had a lack of awareness and understanding of the THRIVE Framework and were focused more on intervention. The M-THRIVE service is not primarily focused on intervention but rather it is about signposting, advising, building resilience, and occasionally offering temporary interventions to children/young people. Therefore, work was done to raise awareness of THRIVE in the context of M-THRIVE and to increase belief in this Framework within the team.

How does the approach align with the THRIVE Framework?

The key principles that were considered when designing the model of M-THRIVE were synonymous with the THRIVE Framework. For example, when CYP approach the service, through shared decision-making conversations, they are supported in accessing self-help resources (e.g. for self-regulation or resilience building) or to services and provisions in the community. In addition, M-THRIVE actively encourages CYP to engage in community activities to support them in 'Thriving'.

How does the service address interagency working and integration?

From the start of the programme, key partners from health, social care, VCSE, local authority, education, youth and community groups, and GMP etc. were engaged with the design of the model via the GM THRIVE Partnership Board.

As the teams are now established in their locality, interagency working and integration is a priority across the City, with key representatives still linking into the team, robust pathways being developed between partners and M-THRIVE embedding within existing structures and interagency forums. For example, the service lead attends CYP partnership meetings, safeguarding forum meetings, NEAT meetings, and youth forums. In addition, now that Phase 1 has gone live, phase 2 is focused on offering professional consultation.

Going forward there are plans to work closely with the GM i-THRIVE programme to continue to address interagency working and integration using models such as the AMBIT model.

What are the plans for further development?

Work is taking place to standardise and implement the outcome measures that M-THRIVE use. For the feedback on the hubs, the ESQ will be used, for the CYP feedback the CORES will be used and the use of goal-based outcomes for the Practitioners may be used as they can have up to 6 sessions with a child/young person.

Additionally, M-THRIVE aims to grow its offer which would require more capacity to support localities beyond Manchester and across the MFT CAMHS footprint (Trafford and Salford). As the evidence and learning becomes more established a similar model could benefit other localities in Greater Manchester.

The AMBIT model (developed by the Anna Freud Centre) offers a lot of strategies that are relevant to the M-THRIVE team. An example of this is the 'scaffolding relationships' tool. Future plans include the continued use of the AMBIT model in a preventative way.

There is still scope to do more work in implementing arts and culture approaches as part of the offer.