

## **Focus on: Child and Adolescent Learning Disability Service (CALDS)**

The CALDS team is part of BCUHB working across Conwy and Denbighshire with young people aged 5 to 18 years who have a learning disability and additional complex needs. The team is based in Denbighshire's Children's centre and offers support into the young person's home, school or respite provision.

CALDS employs a comprehensive approach for service users working alongside other disciplines including Clinical psychologists, Social services and Education.

### **Joint Assessments**

The team noticed that they were receiving lots referrals for children with mental health that were not eligible for a service from CALDS. Ordinarily to access CALDS services the child or young person generally has an IQ lower than 70. However it was noted many referrals were related to children and young people with a higher IQ than this, however demonstrating challenging behaviour and mental health concerns and perhaps a generally lower IQ indicating a learning **difficulty** (as opposed to a learning **disability** diagnosis in order to access CALDS services).

Although some of these referrals would not ordinarily access the CALDS team's services, it was felt that partnering with CAMHS and highlighting the child's primary health need i.e. learning disability or mental health and who was best to work with the child through their areas of expertise would give the *best outcome* for the child or young person.

This led to a new process being piloted, where the CALDS team have been working in **partnership** with CAMHS providing a Learning Disability nurse to be part of the Mental Health consultations and assessments for those young people highlighted as possible or diagnosed learning disability. The hope is that a practitioner from CAMHS will be identified to do the same within CALDS for a limited time.

With the specialist learning disability nurse being part of the CAMHS assessments, it allowed them to access more information around the young person's learning needs and adaptive skills. This information is collected through discussion with parents and CAMHS clinician, evidence of school work, educational psychology reports or a statement of educational needs. This allows the team to assess if for example CALDS would be the best service to support that child. If CALDS was not the best



option, having the specialist LD nurse involved, allowed any gaps to be recognised and appropriate advice and guidance to be given.

For example, if the child's IQ was too high to meet criteria for CALDS, but they had an identified *learning difficulty* not disability, advice and guidance on accessing additional support could be given in the joint consultation with CALDS practitioner.

Working in partnership with education and CAMHS the team have been able to look at adapted DBT (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy).

Laura from the CALDS team is currently spending one day per week in Conwy CAMHS team supporting them and fostering partnership working with her Learning Disability expertise. Melanie Woodruff has worked in Denbighshire CAMHS and the links between CAMHS and CALDS are already improving using speciality and best practice through joint working and partnerships.

The positive outcomes from this support has been less inappropriate (and time consuming) referrals and more support for individuals with learning disability and associated mental health concerns who have a service that highlights their PRIMARY health need.

For more information about this joint working between CALDS and CAMHS please contact:

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