



# AT SCALE: CASE STUDY

## Transforming Mental Health Services in a London Borough through a Single Point of Access (SPA)



### BACKGROUND

The Children’s Commissioner for England (March 2024) stated more than a quarter of a million (270,300) children and young people are still waiting for mental health support after being referred to Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) in 2022-23.



Nearly one million children and young people are referred to CYP Mental Health Services



270,300 children and young people are still waiting for services



Average wait time for those who access support is 35 days



305,000 children and young people receive support



372,800 children and young people have their referral closed before accessing support



Nearly 40,000 children and young people wait over two years for a service.

### SUMMARY

The At Scale team have a wealth of experience within the Social Care and Mental Health Sector. With this experience to hand, a good knowledge of best practice, developing collaboration and working partnerships we worked with a London Borough to develop A Single Point of Access (SPA) Delivery Model that would create real and sustainable service transformation to increase mental health services for children and young people (CYPMH).

### THE ISSUES

Variety of place based organisations offering differing quality of referral models

No single nominated organisation supports children and young people from initial referral to treatment

CAMHS often serves as the default destination for all mental health concerns

Children and young people can be passed between multiple organisations, causing delays



### THE CHALLENGE

Almost all CYP cannot access support unless they are referred to the Childrens and Young Peoples Mental Health Service.

The lack of reliable data across services and partners further compounded these issues, which lead to inefficiencies and further highlighted the urgent need for change.

The Borough needed to consider the financial limitations and seek to provide service efficiencies and value for money.



#### High Demand

High demand for mental health services among children and young people



#### Lack of Early Intervention

Lack of specialised early intervention for mild to moderate need



#### Significant Number

Significant number of children awaiting mental health support



#### Inconsistent Support Pathways

Inconsistent support pathways across geographical footprints



#### Referral Failure

Some referrals do not lead to actual support



#### Fragmented System

Fragmented system leads to intervention delays



#### Long Wait Times

Children and young people still face long wait times for help



#### Lack of Continuity

Lack of continuity in care from referral to treatment

## WHAT WE DID

At Scale was commissioned to develop a comprehensive vision and model for the SPA, centred on the principles of “No Wrong Referral” and “Right service at the Right Time”

We reviewed the existing access model and through face-to-face interviews, data review, and exploration of best practice models, a child-centric approach was adopted to understand the unique needs and journeys of children and families accessing mental health services in the Borough.



## IMPLEMENTATION

The SPA model was designed to address key areas for transformation, including the establishment of a single point of access, co-location/information sharing, and improvement of mental health assessment and intervention pathways.

By aligning with national best practices and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the SPA aimed to streamline processes, increase access, and enhance service quality.

## IMPACT

The introduction of a SPA promised significant benefits for children and young people, partnership organisations, and for the London Borough.

The SPA focuses on efficiency and best use of resources, improved access to services, simplified pathways, enhanced collaboration, early identification of safeguarding concerns, and more efficient use of resources.

Best practice identified improved access to services achieving key milestones.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Critical success factors for the Borough’s SPA will include responding effectively to current system challenges, implementing a culture shift towards collaboration and accountability, establishing robust governance structures, securing adequate funding, and ensuring senior management oversight and accountability.

