

Item 12: Question Time

To the Leader of the Council

“It is noted that the current waiting list for school age children to be referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is now in the region of two years. It is crucial that our vulnerable young people are able to get a diagnosis at the earliest opportunity. Therefore, can I please have assurances that the Leader will immediately address the unacceptable delays for referrals to this and other mental health services within our school system?”

Response to Ms P Munro

This is not the case in Highland. The current maximum waiting time for a Tier three Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in Highland (provided by NHS Highland) is 34 weeks and for a Tier 2 Service is 12 weeks (provided by Highland Council). 50% of children and young people referred to the Primary Mental Health Worker Service (Tier 2 Service) are seen within 6 weeks. This service is managed within Highland Council, with very close links to the Tier 3 Service within NHS Highland. There is still work to be done to direct the right service to the right child at the right time and to support families and staff working more directly with children and young people to better understand emotional wellbeing and mental health, so that they can engage in more preventative work at an early stage. NHS Highland and Highland Council staff are working together to meet the recommendations of the Government’s Mental Health Strategy and are engaged in the ongoing discussions regarding Counselling in schools and the wider role for school nurses in supporting mental health within schools.