

Working in partnership for our population: case studies

Perinatal Mental Health Services

In 2016, Mersey Care and CWP jointly secured NHS England funding for specialist perinatal mental health services across Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M). The partnership has delivered:

- Every NHS Long Term Plan commitment for perinatal and maternal mental health
- Consistently reached 10% of the birth population
- Supported over 3,400 women each year
- Equalities workstream increased access for ethnic minority women
- Waiting times meet all agreed Key Performance Indicators
- New Maternal Mental Health Service is now fully embedded.
- Published research demonstrating improved outcomes for women and families.
- Royal College of Psychiatrists' Team of the Year 2025.



Lead Provider Collaboratives (LPCs)

Since 2021, Mersey Care and CWP have jointly delivered four Lead Provider Collaboratives (LPCs) across Cheshire and Merseyside:

PROSPECT LPC www.merseycare.nhs.uk/prospect launched in 2021, led by Mersey Care in partnership with CWP and Elysium Health Care, and has delivered:

- 47% reduction in out of area placements
- 51% reduction in independent sector bed use
- 66.7% reduction in patients outside natural clinical flow (fewer patients placed in secure services outside their home area or optimal clinical pathway)
- Waiting lists for medium secure male services halved
- Joint business case to repurpose the Alderley Unit to a Low Secure Male Mental Illness service from April 2026, ensuring provision matches local population needs
- Joint Referrals Panel for LD/Autism secure enables a single bed stock approach, more robust clinical decision-making, and better use of North West resource
- Financial stability and risk management strengthened and recognised as national best practice
- Patient safety oversight and shared learning forums ensure that service user voice and lived experience are embedded in commissioning and service improvement.

EmpowerED LPC (Adult Eating Disorders North West); Level Up LPC (Cheshire and Merseyside Young People and Families); and Helix LPC (Cheshire and Merseyside Perinatal Mental Health) are led by CWP, in partnership with Mersey Care and other partners.

Level Up LPC www.levelupcm.nhs.uk launched in 2022 and has delivered:

- 55% reduction in average length of specialised inpatient stays
- 75% reduction in out of area placements
- 29.6% decrease in the number of total days which young people had their discharges delayed (from 2023/24 to 2024/25)
- Ancora CARE intensive home treatment team supported 53 young people to received CAMHS tier 4 care in their own homes in 2024-25. 29 were discharged earlier and 24 had an admission avoided
- 196 Social Care colleagues and 216 Mental Health Service colleagues trained to use the Complex Needs Escalation and Support Tool (CNEST). CNEST improves outcomes and reduces risk of hospital admission for young people across Cheshire and Merseyside
- Over 590 Gateway meetings held in 2024-25 including representation from Local Authority, social care, CYPMH crisis services, Tier 4 CAMHS, Acute Trusts, Children's Continuing Care/Complex Needs, Education, and named nurses for Looked After children.



EmpowerED www.empowerednw.nhs.uk launched in 2022 and has delivered:

- 15% reduction in average lengths of stay for adults with an eating disorder
- 23% reduction in out of area placements
- Launched intensive programme to support transition to the community for patients discharged from specialist ED services
- 200 professionals attended North West conference aimed at improving outcomes for individuals with eating disorders and complex emotional and relational needs - with practical action planning events held in each of the three ICB areas
- Launch of the QR Code Project designed to assist acute medical staff when supporting a patient admitted with a severe eating disorder
- 1,700 health and care professionals received specialist Eating Disorders training since 2023.



Helix LPC www.helixcm.nhs.uk went fully live September 2025 and has delivered:

- Opening of an 8-bed Mother and Baby Unit (first of its kind in Cheshire and Merseyside - also serving North Wales) in Dec 2025
- Design of MBU co-produced with experts by experience
- Wide stakeholder representation
- Strengthened links between community teams
- Launched Helix Expert by Experience Forum.

Helix

Cheshire and Merseyside
Perinatal Mental Health
Lead Provider Collaborative

www.helixcm.nhs.uk

Experts by Experience

- Experts by Experience are at the heart of everything the LPCs do. They shape services across the North West, including attending Clinical Delivery Groups with senior clinicians and influencing decisions at the highest level on the LPC Partnership Boards.
- There are now over 45 registered EbEs from across the North West and North Wales across the three Lead Provider Collaboratives, who have volunteered over 590 hours.
- Co-produced the nationally recognised Hear my Voice video series with young autistic people and those with a learning disability as well as their families www.levelupcm.nhs.uk/hearmyvoice
- Patient Contribution of the Year Award winner at the Patient Experience Network Awards 2024.

Commissioning Team

- Since 2022, the LPC budget has moved from inheriting a significant deficit to consistent financial balance. This has enabled the reinvestment into alternatives to inpatient care.
- 'Commissioning for Patient Experience' Award Winner at Patient Experience Network Awards 2023.

Urgent & Emergency Care (UEC) Mental Health

Mersey Care and CWP have made joint progress in transforming urgent and emergency mental health care across Cheshire and Merseyside, including:

- Standardising clinical support at Accident & Emergency Departments (AEDs) in C&M
- Joint mental health triage process at all AEDs
- Two dedicated Mental Health Crisis Assessment Services (MHCAS), which have already diverted over 500 patients from AEDs to more appropriate support
- 74% reduction in 12-hour decision-to-admit breaches from April to December 2025
- Consolidation of services at the Countess of Chester health park.



Mental Health Rehabilitation

The joint Cheshire and Merseyside Mental Health Rehabilitation Group was established in 2022 aiming to localise and realign rehabilitation services so that inpatient care is the exception – in line with national policy. It brings together Mersey Care and CWP inpatient and community leads under joint clinical leadership. Achievements include:

- Significant improvement in flow through inpatient rehabilitation, with the adoption of 10 high-impact initiatives such as purposive admission, expected discharge dates, and MADE meetings
- Engagement in system-wide housing reviews, resulting in improved housing support, timely discharge and reduced delays
- A comprehensive joint self-assessment against national inpatient and community rehab guidance
- Regional networks and task groups, including for learning disability and autism, to ensure all rehabilitation needs are met within high-quality local pathways
- Community alternatives have been strengthened through new demand and capacity modelling, and the expansion of community rehabilitation services (MHIST in CWP, CERT in Mersey Care). This has led to improved oversight of placements and a reduction in inpatient reliance, with more people supported in the community.