


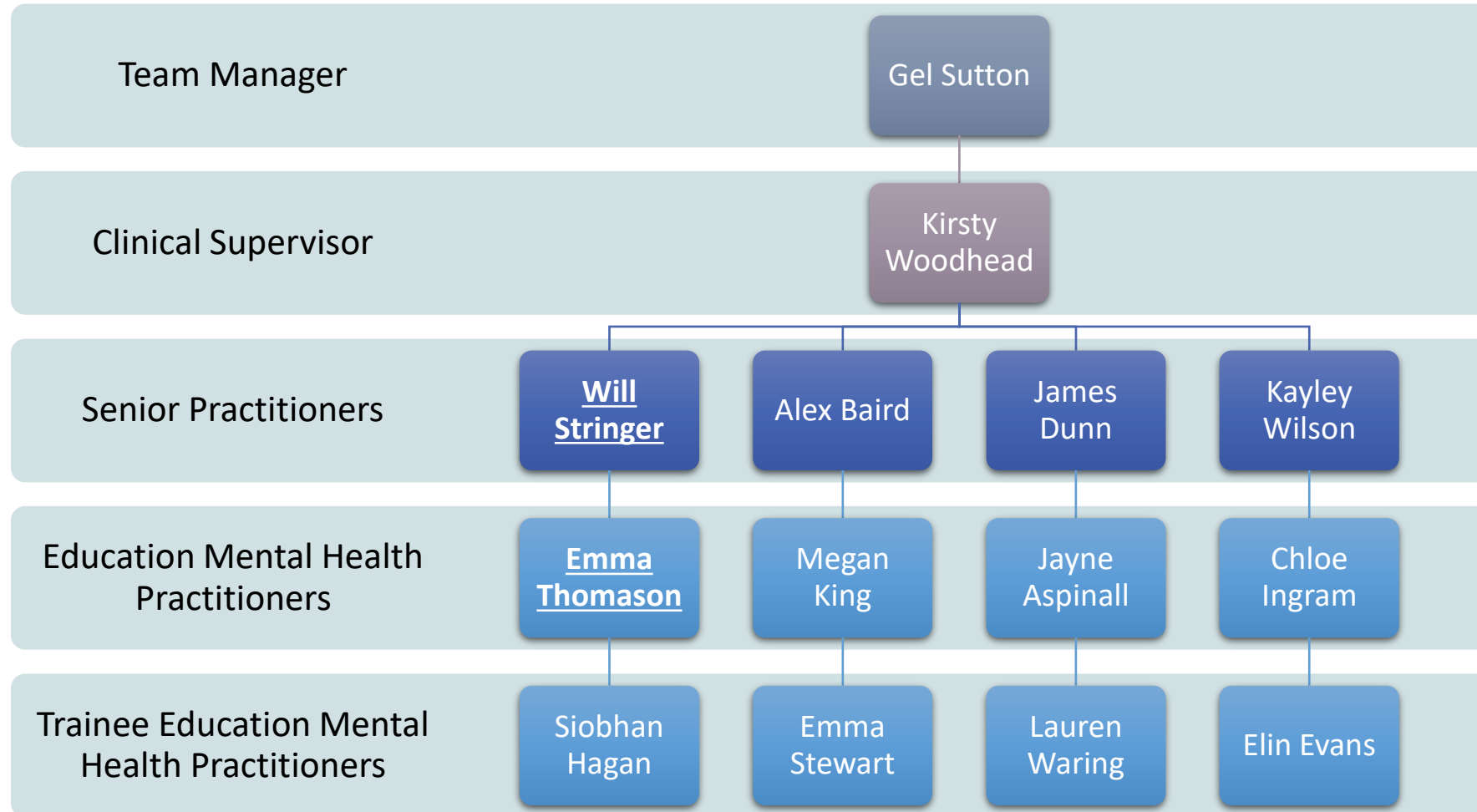
# Mental Health Support Team: Who are we and what do we do?

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# Agenda

- Introduction to the team
  - What we do
  - Recognising the signs of mental/emotional health difficulties in children
  - Q&A
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# St Helens Mental Health Support Team



# What do we do?

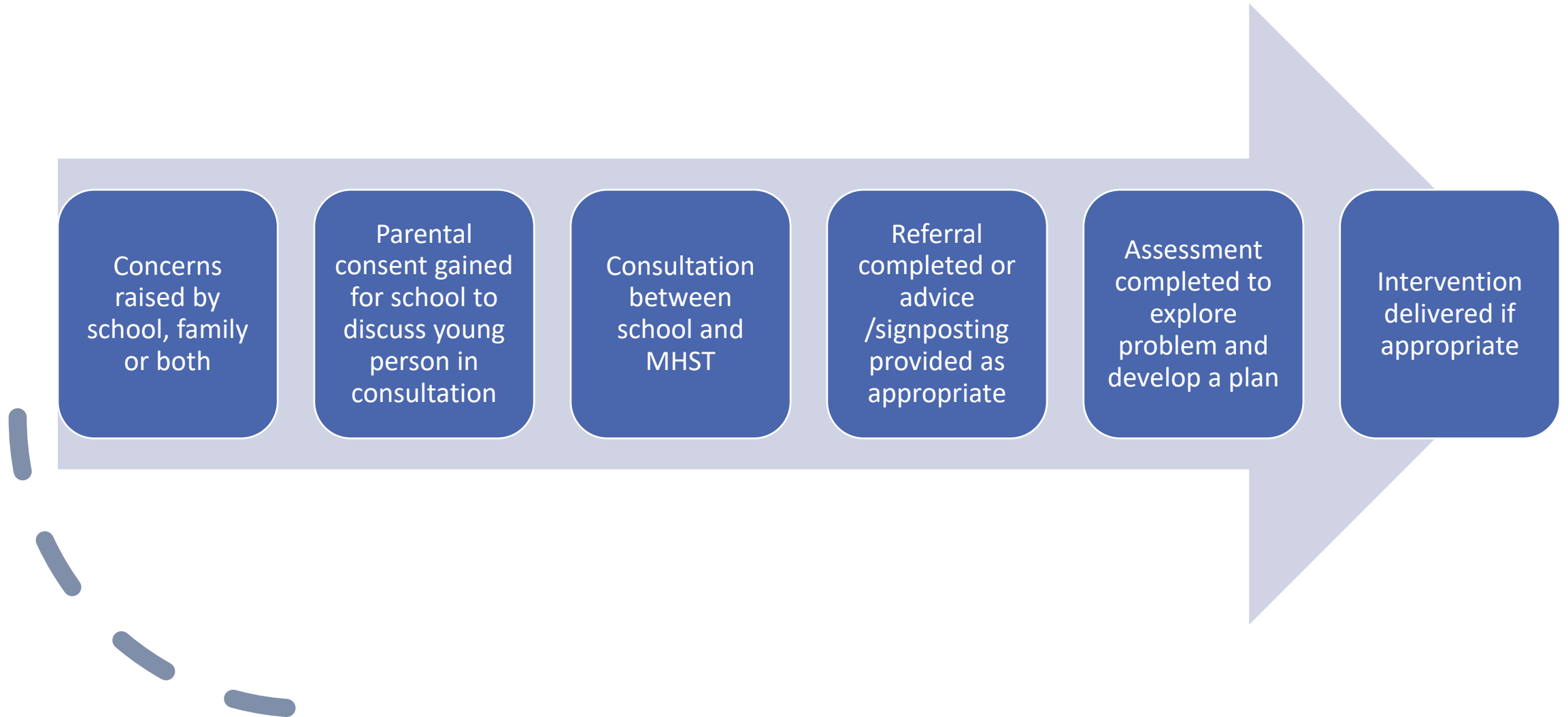
St Helens Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is an NHS service providing mental health support to primary and secondary schools across St Helens

We aim to help young people to learn strategies and new ways of taking care of their mental wellbeing

We provide evidence-based interventions to pupils struggling with anxiety, low mood and behavioural difficulties, using the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy

We also provide advice, signposting and training to families and school staff to help support young people in all areas of their life.

# The process



# Interventions provided



Brief Behavioural Activation for Low Mood



Worry Management



Graded Exposure for Phobias



Emotional Regulation



Parent-led Worry Management



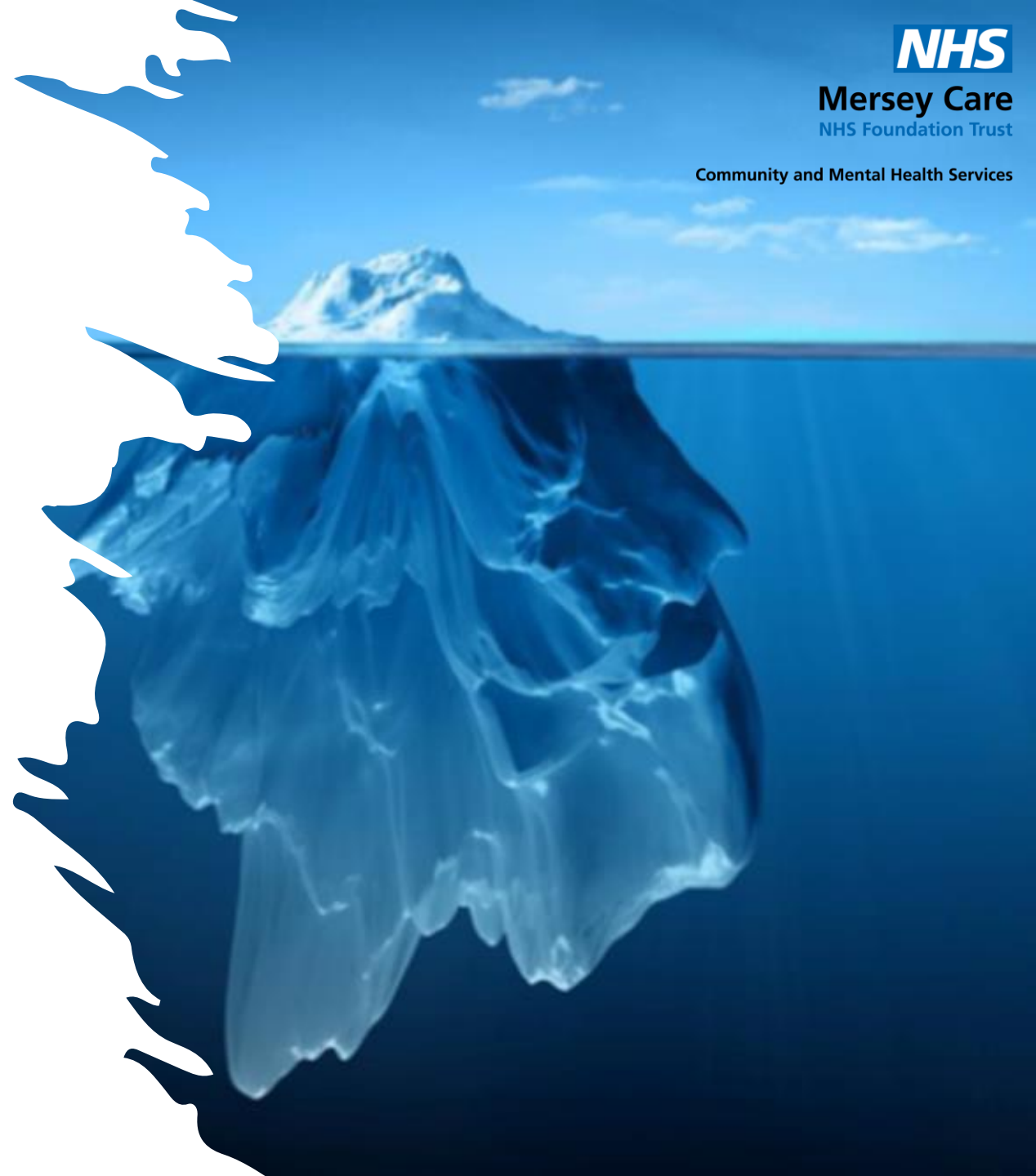
Parent-led Behaviour Management



Positive Behaviour Support Plans

# Mental health in children

- 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16) have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem
- 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14, and 75% by age 24
- Yet 70% of children and young people who experience mental ill health do not receive appropriate intervention at an early enough age
- Why?





# Recognising the signs

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- Changes to your child's mood, behaviour, friendships and school performance can all be indicators of an underlying mental or emotional health difficulty. Parents and carers may notice their child:
  - finding it hard to concentrate
  - not sleeping, or waking in the night with bad dreams
  - not eating properly
  - quickly getting angry or irritable, and being out of control during outbursts
  - constantly worrying or having negative thoughts
  - feeling tense and fidgety, or using the toilet often
  - tearful
  - being clingy
  - complaining of tummy aches and feeling unwell



# Worry and anxiety

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- Anxiety is a normal human emotion, however when a child experiences persistent worry, nervousness or unease, it can have a significant impact on their social, emotional and mental wellbeing
- Anxiety disorders are estimated to affect 5-19% of all children and adolescents, and about 2-5% of children younger than 12
- Long-term anxiety can severely interfere with a child's personal development, family life and schooling highlighting the need for early intervention



# Low mood and depression

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- Low mood and sadness will be experienced by all children at some point, but when this lasts a long time or is highly frequent, it can begin to have a significant impact on daily life and may lead to depression
- Depression occurs in 2.1% of young people (aged 5-19 years old)
- With support, up to 90% of children and young people recover from depression within the first year



# Fears and phobias

- A phobia is an overwhelming and debilitating fear of an object, place, situation, feeling or animal
- This is an extreme anxiety response to a specific trigger, which can have huge impacts on a child's emotional wellbeing, social life, education and relationships
- In some cases, the child may realise that the fear is irrational, but cannot control that anxiety response

Avoidance	Physical sensations	Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refusal to go to certain places</li> <li>• Refusal to do certain tasks</li> <li>• Refusal to be alone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to heart rate and breathing</li> <li>• Feeling hot, clammy or sweaty</li> <li>• Feeling sick, tense or having stomach aches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May verbalise that they are "scared" or "frightened"</li> <li>• May express an intense fear of being hurt, getting ill or dying</li> </ul>

# Emotional dysregulation and challenging behaviour

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- Some children and young people have difficulty regulating their emotional and physical responses to triggers
- This can result in emotional outbursts and physical outbursts, which are often out of their control
- This can lead to difficulties in the classroom, in the community and at home
- This has become a lot more noticeable since the pandemic, children are having to re-adapt to school, socialising and structure/routines

## Potential triggers

Being told “no”

○ Having to wait

○ Enjoyable activities ending

○ Having to share

○ Unexpected change

## Possible behaviours

Hitting out

○ Throwing

○ Shouting/screaming/  
swearing

○ Hurting themselves



# Question and answer session

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If you have any questions about

- Who we are and what we do
- How children are referred
- Recognising the signs of mental health difficulties

then please feel free to stick around and ask away!