



Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health

The Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care jointly published "Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health: A Green Paper" in 2017, and a subsequent consultation response in 2018, setting out the governments commitments to improve mental health support in and around schools and colleges.

As part of this, government committed to incentivise and support all schools and colleges to have an effective senior mental health lead (referred to in the Green Paper as a Designated Senior Lead for mental health), by offering training free of charge to every school and college by 2025.

Other commitments include:

- Funding for new Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), to provide extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help within a school and college setting
- Mental Health Awareness Training for a member of staff from all state-funded secondary schools in England by March 2020
- National roll out of the Link Programme training nationally from autumn 2019, supporting stronger partnerships between schools and colleges and local specialist NHS children and young people's mental health services
- Piloting a 4 week waiting time for access to specialist NHS children and young people's mental health services

The senior mental health lead role

In 2017, 70% of schools reported having a mental health lead, and 77% of post-16 education settings did so in 2018. Each school and college is different, and these mental health leads will inevitably have different levels of skills and knowledge to support positive mental health, and different responsibilities, as roles are locally defined to fit in with other relevant roles and responsibilities.

Schools and colleges are in a unique position to influence pupil and students, and help prevent mental health problems, by promoting wellbeing, positive mental health and resilience as part of an integrated approach that is tailored to the needs of their pupils and students. Therefore, we are encouraging schools and colleges to develop a strategic senior mental health lead role, with the skills and knowledge to lead a [whole school or college approach to mental health](#).

The senior lead role is not a mandatory role, rather, it is about helping schools and colleges to make the best use of existing resources and effort to help improve the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and students. The exact nature of the senior lead role is likely to vary according to a range of factors, such as the needs of pupils and students, existing provision and the size of your school or college and may be embedded as part of wider arrangements for pastoral care and other statutory responsibilities.

Senior mental health lead training

To support the development of knowledge and skills for senior leads, DfE has recently launched an exercise to recruit a specialist training supplier to develop and deliver a bespoke mental health training programme. Training will be funded for one member of staff per school/college. Subject to

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contract award, we intend to have the training supplier in place early next year and for training delivery to commence from June 2020. Training will be prioritised in the first instance to schools and colleges receiving Mental Health Support Teams, making this available to all schools and colleges over the next 5 academic years (by July 2024).

The training will equip senior mental health leads with the knowledge to implement effective processes for ensuring pupils and students with mental health problems receive appropriate support, and to promote positive mental health within the school/college so that it becomes a key part of how schools and colleges operate.

Training objectives and outcomes

The core training objectives are to:

- Support the identification of children and young people at-risk and those exhibiting signs of mental ill health
- Increase knowledge of the local mental health services and working with clear links into children and young people's mental health services to refer children and young people into NHS services where it is appropriate to do so
- Facilitate improved coordination of the mental health needs of young people within the school or college and awareness of the delivery of interventions where these are being delivered in the setting – including by the new Mental Health Support Teams where these are in place
- Support staff in contact with children with mental health needs to help raise awareness, and give all staff the confidence to work with young people and parents
- Support the delivery and measurement of outcomes of interventions on children and young people's education and wellbeing
- Support a positive whole school/college approach to mental health.

The knowledge requirements and expected outcomes for the training closely align to Public Health England's ['Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing'](#) – principles to promoting a whole school/college approach to emotional health and wellbeing'.

Principle, and useful resources	Expected outcome
<p>Identifying need for, and impact of, mental health interventions</p> <p>'Measuring and monitoring children and young people's mental wellbeing: a toolkit for schools and colleges'</p> <p>'PM: mental health training for teachers will "make a real difference to children's lives"'</p> <p>'Review of children in need'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead knows how to implement a process for earlier identification of, and appropriate intervention for, pupils/students with mental health issues. Including utilising pre-existing documents, such as Education Health Care Plans, where appropriate. • Lead understands mental health fluctuations due to life experiences and is able to share strategies and exercises that can be passed onto pupils/students and staff, to help them manage their mental health and develop their own coping strategies. • Lead understands the importance of sharing information between schools and colleges to help the transition through education and knows how to do this. • Lead is aware of common and more serious mental health challenges and understands risk factors associated with mental health difficulties of specific groups, including young carers, LGBTQ+¹, children and young people with special educational

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (or Questioning) and others.

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	<p>needs and disabilities (SEND), children in need, and adverse childhood experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead understands how to differentiate when the need of the child or young person would be better met by an education or health intervention, specifically in relation to SEND, and how to access the right service. • Lead is aware of tools used by mental health professionals to measure outcomes of interventions and, within the school/college, be able to identify additional measures to assess the pupils'/students' progress. • Lead knows how to give and seek support to and from existing mandatory roles, such as SENCOs, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Designated Teachers and Virtual School Heads, to ensure pupils/students with mental health conditions get the support they need to be able to fully participate in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
<p>Targeted approach and appropriate referrals</p> <p><u>'Mental health services and schools link pilot: evaluation'</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead aware of statutory and independent mental health service provision in their local area and has a plan for how to embed interaction with the services, bringing together education with mental health professionals to make the most of shared resources. This will include making the best use of resource available, such as the Mental Health Services and Schools/Colleges Link Programme (Link Programme), and where their school/college has access to one, working effectively with the new Mental Health Support Team(s) for their local area to provide the right support for students. • Lead understands the threshold for making a referral to children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) and is skilled to write an appropriate referral to CYMPHS. • Lead can ascertain what help can be provided for pupils/students who do not meet the CYPMHS threshold but require more support than mild to moderate interventions. • Lead empowers the student voice to inform what support is needed for them.
<p>Staff development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead is confident to work with all staff in the school/college to raise mental health awareness, developing a wide understanding of different techniques and approaches for improving mental health, appropriate to the need of their school/college. • Lead able to facilitate development of school staff by ensuring any training offered on mental health has been attended and that all staff understand the process for managing mental health concerns. • Lead is equipped to support staff to understand their own mental health and resilience, including signposting/ arranging appropriate supervision for staff dealing with mental health issues and incidents in the school/college. • Lead has a plan to promote the use of evidence-based resources and development opportunities which will help to refine the quality of their school/college's handling and knowledge of issues relating to mental health.

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<p>Creating an ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity</p> <p><i>'Respecting School Communities Self-Review and Signposting Tool'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead understands the elements of a whole school/college approach and has a plan for how to embed them in their school/college to improve mental health. • Lead is able to effectively communicate a values-based approach and to promote openness and understanding to normalise mental health and its fluctuations throughout life. • Lead knows how to use local services/resources to enhance their school/college messaging and develop social, emotional and mental health partners in the community. • Lead understands how culture might impact views on mental health and is aware of wider interventions that certain children and young people might be going through, such as contact with the justice system or social services.
<p>Leadership and management</p> <p><i>'Mental health and behaviour in schools'</i></p> <p><i>'Supporting mental health in schools and colleges'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead knows how to engage with existing mandatory and appropriate roles within their school/college, to put in place a whole school/college approach to mental health throughout the school environment and existing policies. • Lead can access and share practical tools and support with other schools/colleges, through peer support networks. • Lead has identified self-development, including their own bias and how this can affect their approach to developing a whole school approach.
<p>Enabling the Student Voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead knows how to empower and involve all the student body, including those with additional needs and communication difficulties, in the co-production, and embedding, of their whole school/college approach, including identifying opportunities for appropriate use of pupil/student peer-led wellbeing support.
<p>Working with parents, families and carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead able to engage and include parents/carers/families/ /virtual school heads and the outside community promoting a culture of wellbeing which the school/college is trying to create within and outside school hours.

The delivery and format of the training

The precise format of the training is not yet known, and will be developed with our training supplier and shaped by the needs of senior leads in schools and colleges.

However, we expect there will be 2 distinct phases for schools and colleges to develop and implement an effective senior mental health lead role that supports them to take a whole school/college approach to mental health:

- A 'Knowledge and Planning Phase' for senior mental health leads, to be led and delivered by the training supplier. It is expected that leads will complete this phase through face to face workshops, within a period of 6 calendar months of training commencing.
- An ongoing 'Implementation Phase' in schools and colleges to be led by senior mental health leads. The training supplier shall ensure the leads have the knowledge and committed action plan to embed their whole school/college approach to mental health, through the delivery of the 'Knowledge and Planning phase', to enable leads to conduct this phase effectively.

The training will meet the needs of senior mental health leads in different types of schools and colleges, taking into account variations in the prevalence and complexity of mental health issues in some more specialist education settings, and be tailored to enable more experienced mental health leads to build on their knowledge and further improve and embed good practice in their school or college.

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A self-assessment tool will be made available through this training to guide and support the senior mental health leads to assess and understand their current whole school/college approach to mental health. The outputs of the self-assessment tool are expected to inform and facilitate the creation, and iterative improvement, of the lead's action plan to embed their whole school/college approach and support the delivery of the training's expected outcomes. The lead's action plan will be validated by the training supplier which will then qualify schools and colleges to receive a release payment from the department.

The training will also engage and involve the local area's specialist NHS children and young people's mental health services to support training delivery by giving tailored support and guidance to senior mental health leads, based on their local area and its needs. Senior leads will also be able to access and engage with a peer support network with other senior mental health leads to support each other in implementing their whole school/college approach to mental health. All training materials and resources will also be made available to schools and colleges engaging in this important programme.

We will provide further information as it becomes available over the coming months.