

Wokingham Mental Health Support Teams Briefing Paper

In 2017, the Government published its Green Paper for Transforming children and young people's mental health, which detailed proposals for expanding access to mental health care for children and young people, building on the national NHS transformation programme already underway.

In July 2018, the Government response to the Green Paper consultation set out a commitment to implement three core proposals immediately. These proposals are being delivered through a joint and collaborative programme led by the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Health Education England and NHS England:

- New Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges
- Support and comprehensive training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges
- Pilots for a four-week waiting time for children and young people's mental health Services.

In December 2018, 59 MHSTs, across 25 trailblazer sites were announced. These trailblazers, or a trailblazer site, were the first places in the country to develop and introduce MHSTs. Berkshire West CCG were selected as one of 25 trailblazer sites across the UK to introduce the MHST service.

In July 2019, Wokingham was successful in securing funding to set up one MHST.

MHSTs are a new service designed to help meet the mental health needs of children and young people in primary, secondary and further education (ages 5 to 18), by providing mental health support in schools, colleges and other education settings.

MHST teams are designed to work with schools to improve mental health and wellbeing among pupils as well as helping staff within a school or college setting to provide a 'whole school approach' to mental health and wellbeing. MHSTs will support the school and college to build resilience and wellbeing, support earlier intervention, enable appropriate signposting and deliver evidence-based support, care and intervention.

MHST teams will also work alongside and integrate with the mental health and wellbeing support that already exists locally, such as counselling, educational psychology and school nursing. Teams will also provide a key link with local children and young people's specialist mental health services (CAMHS).

Each MHST will cover several schools and colleges. Locally our MHST team will provide brief interventions to 12 schools (primary and secondary) to support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. Each team is expected to cover a population of around 8,000 children.

The Wokingham MHST team will focus on:

- Providing support for cases of mild to moderate mental health issues, basing their approach on evidence of what works best for children, young people and their parents (or other carers). This may be, for example, brief, low-intensity interventions for children, young people and families experiencing anxiety, low mood, friendship difficulties and behavioural difficulties.
- Supporting and working with the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop and co-design their whole-school or college approach. This will include identifying what support is already available and what is missing as well as providing targeted help by agreement, such as training parents, other carers and staff, or monitoring wellbeing.
- Giving timely advice to school and college staff, and liaising with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education.
- The service will take referrals from Participating Schools, GP's, Self-referrals, Parents/carers and other professionals.

In Wokingham, as in other MHSTs, newly-trained Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) will form part of the MHST team. The EMHPs are a brand-new addition to the Children and Young People's Mental Health workforce. The graduate level training programme for these new practitioners began in early 2019. Locally, Reading University is one of the Universities providing the graduate level training programme and four EMHPs are undertaking training in order to support participating schools in the Borough to identify and manage issues relating to mental health and wellbeing, as well as deliver interventions for mild and moderate needs.

The EMHPs will be supported in the Wokingham MHST Team by a Senior Educational Psychologist and senior Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) workers.

We are currently in the mobilisation phase of setting up Wokingham's MHST, and the team plan to 'go live' in January 2021.

An ambitious programme of work is underway through to December 2020 to ensure the team is ready, which includes:

- Recruitment of staff for the MHST: As of October 2020, the following roles are in post: Senior Educational Psychologist; Outreach Worker; four Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) and an Administrator. Recruitment is underway for two CAMHS worker posts.
- Service model and specification development: The team has consulted on a service model and a service specification.
- Putting arrangements in place to ensure that the local authority is able to flow data to NHS England in line with reporting requirements and adhering to a robust monitoring and reporting schedule as a condition of the funding: A new data capture system will enable data to flow to NHS England, in line with local and national requirements.
- Further communication and engagement activity with relevant partners, colleagues and schools. The service model and service specification has been consulted on with schools, colleagues and relevant partners. Service specific communication materials, including web based and paper based resources, are out for consultation. Monthly project board meetings review the mobilisation status of the project.

This page is intentionally left blank