

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Guide for education colleagues

The problem

- The rate of diagnosed mental health conditions in children and young people (CYP) is rising, highlighting a growing crisis that services are struggling to meet.
- Systemic barriers disproportionately affect pupils in deprived areas, from ethnic minority backgrounds, and those who are neurodivergent.
- Schools often lack the resources to tackle mental health problems, missing vital opportunities to protect and promote pupils' wellbeing.

What you can do as school staff

- **Embed good mental health into whole-school culture** by creating emotionally-safe, calm classrooms and using inclusive, trauma-informed approaches.
- **Use wellbeing data tools** (e.g., #BeeWell, Age of Wonder) to monitor student mental health, identify priority groups, and co-design interventions.
- **Advocate for the establishment and strengthening of mental health support teams** and ensure staff are trained to respond appropriately to early signs of mental ill-health.
- **Promote healthy routines** (e.g., sleep, physical activity, screen time), particularly for pupils experiencing vulnerability and include these in the curriculum.
- **Implement a mix of universal and targeted mental health initiatives**, such as whole-school wellbeing programmes, anti-bullying strategies, and tailored support for pupils experiencing issues like loneliness and low mood.

Evidence-based insights

There are approximately **1.4 million** CYP (aged 8-17 years) with a mental health condition in England.

Only **one third** of schools in England have dedicated mental health teams.

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

Age of Wonder

A longitudinal cohort study in Bradford working with young people and families to co-produce initiatives that focus on early intervention, community and psychosocial interventions, and public mental health approaches to prevent mental ill-health.

Online Social Anxiety Cognitive therapy for Adolescents (OSCA)

An internet-delivered, therapist-assisted cognitive therapy for adolescents with social anxiety disorder, combining self-study modules and exercises with regular 20-minute sessions with a therapist.

#BeeWell Greater Manchester

A large-scale youth-led wellbeing measurement and improvement programme that guides schools and local services to act on student mental health needs.

The Relational Toolkit and The Young Advisors' River of Change

Encourages young people to actively share their experiences and perspectives, supporting a shift towards recognising CYP as expert decision-makers in shaping the health and wellbeing policies and practices that affect them and their peers.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your school.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

Please share this guide and start a discussion in your school about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.