

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Guide for Local Authority Colleagues

The problem

- Rates of diagnosed anxiety, depression, and eating disorders in children and young people (CYP) have doubled between 2003 and 2018.
- Mental health conditions have a large economic cost and impact on public services, with long-term costs estimated at £2.35 billion.
- Schools and health services often work in isolation, and with limited access to mental health support teams, many children's wellbeing needs are left unmet.

What you can do at a local level

- Collect data at a **local level to inform evidence-based interventions** to address local needs, ensuring children and young people are involved to co-produce local interventions.
- Move to **local prevention strategies and early intervention** to provide support at the point of need.
- Develop **partnerships at a ward level across sectors** to leverage resources, expertise, and support. This may include mentorships, training, internships, workshops, provision of equipment, and training programmes.
- Determine how the **local environment can be used to support good mental health** (e.g., through access to green space, play facilities for CYP of varying ages).
- Consider what can be done to **address the upstream causes of poor mental health**, such as poverty and unmet special educational needs.

Evidence-based insights

In England, approximately **1.4 million** CYP (aged 8-17 years) have a mental health condition.

Without further dedicated funding, **4 million children** will not have access to mental health support in schools.

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

Age of Wonder (AoW)

A longitudinal cohort study in Bradford using data dashboards to interrogate the prevalence of mental ill-health on a school, regional, and national level. AoW also works with young people and their families to co-produce early intervention strategies and psychosocial interventions.

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.

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.

The OxWell Student Survey

A data-first approach which empowered schools to make informed decisions surrounding interventions, ensuring that they met the needs of their pupils based on priority.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your local area/constituency.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

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