Mind's whole school approach to mental health

mind
for better mental health

We're Mind, the mental health charity

We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect.

Nationally, we provide advice and support to empower anyone with a mental health problem. We do this through our helplines, online communities, specialist mental health information and workplace training. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness, and promote understanding.

Locally, in communities across England and Wales, our expert network of 130 local Minds provides practical, tailored services to over 300,000 people a year. Rooted in everyday lives, our local services find positive ways to help people live well and feel valued, without fear of discrimination.

Moving to become an all age charity

Nationally, over time, we're expanding our work to support anyone facing a mental health problem from childhood through to adulthood.

This is a big step and we're working with children and young people throughout England and Wales to make sure we listen and understand the problems they are facing.

We're getting started by expanding our work in schools and building on our existing expertise: almost 60 of our local Minds already work with children and young people.

Schools are where young people tell us they want to access support. It's also where our local Minds have found unmet need.

Both UK and Welsh Governments have highlighted that schools will play an increasingly important role in helping to address that need by delivering mental health promotion and prevention activities.[1]

From September 2018 we're piloting a new way of supporting the mental health of everyone involved in school life: pupils, the entire school workforce, parents and the wider community.

We call this our 'whole school approach to mental health'.

---

1. Mental Health Taskforce, 2016; Welsh Government (2012) *Together for Mental Health: A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales;* Department of Health and Department for Education (2017) *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper*

" Some kids in the class picked on me for the shape of my eyes, which really upset me. I started getting really bad tummy aches and headaches. I was worried and tearful at nights, and was having time off school because of it.

I didn't know at the time, but this was all anxiety.

Mum asked the Headmaster for support, but he said it was only for kids with physical health problems.

I got to the point where I just wanted to die. I ended up in hospital the next day.

Looking back, the teachers were not aware of anxiety. They didn't understand how it affects students and that simple things, like shouting, can be a trigger. It felt like because they couldn't see my pain that it wasn't there. "

14-year-old girl

Why we're taking on this vital challenge

Support for childhood mental health is approaching breaking point – services are fragmented, inconsistent and stretched.

One in 10 young people has a diagnosable mental health problem – that's around three in every class of 30 pupils.[2]

Whether they're dealing with a mental health problem or struggling with life's challenges, all young people should have the help they need, when they need it. Without exception.

Yet, we know that children and young people being referred for support are too often turned away for not being unwell enough.[3]

In England, it is estimated that only 25% of children and young people who need treatment for a mental health problem are able to access it.[4]

In Wales, while improvements have been seen, assessment targets by specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services continue to be unmet. Many children and young people are being left without support well beyond 28 days.[5]

Without the right help, at the right time, mental health problems in childhood can have a long lasting impact.

Over half of mental health problems in adult life start by the age of 14, and 75 per cent by the age of 24.[6]

The scale and urgency of this complex situation can't be addressed in isolation, and can't solely be met by the NHS. It needs all of us to work together.

2. Green,H., Mcginnity, A., Meltzer, Ford, T., Goodman, R. (2005) *Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain: 2004*. Office for National Statistics
3. Children, Young People and Education Committee National Assembly for Wales (2018) *Mind over matter: A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales*; Care Quality Commission (2018) *Are we listening? A review of children and young people's mental health services*
4. Public Health England, *The mental health of children and young people in England, 2016*
5. Children, Young People and Education Committee National Assembly for Wales (2018) *Mind over matter: A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales*
6. World Health Organisation, *Mental Health: Child and adolescent mental health*

Our research

We carried out a three-month investigation to help us begin to create our evidence-based whole school approach to mental health for England and Wales.

Our researchers studied published evidence to find out which existing interventions work best in school. They interviewed local Minds already providing support to children and young people in schools, asking them to share their learning and expertise. In addition, our local Minds held in-depth conversations with 130 children and young people and 140 teachers and parents asking them what they want and need.

Our findings

- There is unanimous support for a whole school approach to mental health from all sections of the school community. For it to be successful it's essential they're all involved in designing it.

- Children and young people want help in school that's respectful, practical and flexible, not medical or judgmental. They place huge value on their mental health and wellbeing, and want it to be given the same importance as academic success.

- Schools want to do more, but need help to implement it. They also find it hard to find the time or resource.

- Teachers and parents want to better understand mental health and to have the tools and resources to achieve this. They want to know where to access support for young people and for themselves so they can feel more confident and have important conversations.

- Local Minds across England and Wales are well placed to deliver a whole school approach because of the work they're already doing in schools.

- The current evidence for the things that work in schools is mixed and limited, which is why we are developing our own approach.

- What's clear is that support needs to be broad enough to reach all members of the school community, but flexible enough to give specialist support to those who need help the most.

Our approach

Our whole school approach to mental health is designed by children, young people, parents, the school workforce and local Minds.

It gives the entire school community the things they say they desperately need and want us to provide.

It involves a self-assessment tool for schools and tailored assemblies, workshops, 121s, information and training for everyone who's part of school life.

Our approach aims to help young people, parents and the school workforce to:

• cope more easily with the challenges of everyday life

• manage stress

• build supportive relationships with their peers.

Each school following our approach will:

• promote good mental health and wellbeing to everyone as a right

• support everyone with a mental health problem

• find causes of poor mental health and find ways to keep everyone well

• respect diversity and promote equality

• build external partnerships to support children and young people to achieve their very best.

Our pilot

From September 2018, five local Minds are carrying out a pilot of our whole school approach to mental health for a full academic year in 16 secondary schools in England and Wales, potentially reaching over 30,000 people.

Local Minds are collecting evidence throughout the pilot and this will be analysed then published towards the end of 2019. We'll use the evidence to refine our approach so we can go on to support thousands more people in schools in the future.

Mind

15–19 Broadway, Stratford,
London, E15 4BQ

Third Floor, Quebec House,
Castlebridge, Cowbridge Road East,
Cardiff, CF11 9AB

mind.org.uk
e: cyp@mind.org.uk
🐦 @MindCharity
f mindforbettermentalhealth
in Follow us on LinkedIn

mind
for better mental health