



Department  
for Education

# **A whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing: Case studies from MHSTs**

**Case studies and resources collated for the MHST Community of Practice**

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# Purpose

A key role of an MHST is to support the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce, develop and deliver the whole school/college approach.

Further details of an MHSTs role are set out in the [MHST Operating Manual](#) (page 23) and the principles behind a whole school or college approach are available in [guidance published in 2021](#).

This document has been produced for the MHST Community of Practice (CoP) to showcase examples of MHSTs supporting education settings and provide a range of related resources developed by MHSTs. We will continue to update this document on a rolling basis, and encourage you to revisit this document as new case studies and materials are released.

Our CoP and [webinar series](#) are intended to help MHSTs to develop their service offer to education settings, supporting them to implement a whole school or college approach.

Further information, including updates regarding the senior mental health lead training offer for schools and colleges, can also be found at [promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#).

We would also encourage you to promote the [Schools and Colleges Pack](#) to your education settings, to support them to understand a MHST's scope and purpose.



# MHST Case Studies

The following case studies highlight examples of activities undertaken by MHSTs and their linked schools or colleges to develop a whole school or college approach, mapped against some of the eight whole school or college approach principles.

## Leadership and Management

### NELFT NHS Mid/South Essex MHST

Having consulted with local senior leaders, Mid and South Essex MHST recognised a need to support school staff to understand how a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing, and the support of the MHST, fit into an educational framework.

In response, the MHST have developed a whole school college approach [mapping document](#) to support education settings to plot their mental health and wellbeing provision against the Ofsted Inspection Framework. By utilising a format and language similar to curriculum planning, this document supports education settings to engage with and embed mental health planning and delivery into their wider strategy via the familiar 'intent, implementation and impact' model.

Alongside wider identification of areas for development, the document supports schools to focus on support the MHST can provide to their whole school or college approach and meeting their Ofsted requirements. Focusing on 2 or 3 elements of the Ofsted framework that can add value to the school, the MHST works with settings to consider potential interventions, time frames, and evidencing their intent, implementation and impact, reviewing progress and plans on a termly basis.

Once populated, the provision mapping document acts as the school's strategic vision for mental health delivery, suitable for inclusion within school's improvement plan. This resource can be presented to the school's Governing Body and Ofsted to capture the impact of a whole school college approach with support from the MHST upon pupil wellbeing.

Featured within the [June CoP webinar](#), the template document provides an additional framework to support education staff to understand and engage with whole school or college approaches to identify and support pupil mental health and wellbeing needs.

#### **Further useful tools to support leadership and management include:**

##### [Whole school or college approach to emotional, mental health and wellbeing diagnostic tool](#)

A diagnostic tool created by Brighton and Hove MHST to audit current mental health provision, to be used as a basis for action planning and strategic support.

##### [Mental health and emotional wellbeing audit: framework for schools](#)

A tool designed by East Sussex MHST to support schools and colleges to audit mental health and wellbeing provision, to form the basis of action plans.



## Mental health and emotional wellbeing annual action plan example template\*

An example action plan template created by East Sussex MHST, demonstrating example actions, success criteria and impact.

# Ethos and Environment

## Kent and Medway MHST

[Mental Health Support Teams across Kent & Medway](#) have partnered with [Active Kent and Medway](#) to promote the connection between physical activity and emotional wellbeing and mental health. So far, this has included training for MHST practitioners, co-facilitating a workshop for young people and jointly produced comms for schools.

Alongside this partnership, MHST sites are supporting education settings to promote a culture of respect, inclusivity and diversity through their whole school or college approach offer. Thousands of local pupils have participated in the Black and Asian Mental Health Awareness assembly developed by the MHST in collaboration with young people. This assembly was developed in response to a service audit that showed that fewer children, young people and families from Black and Asian backgrounds were accessing the service than would be expected based on the populations in our schools. The assembly aims to raise awareness of the service, to normalise emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties, to explore some of the barriers to help-seeking in Black and Asian communities, to reduce stigma associated with emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties and help seeking, and to provide culturally specific signposting.

To support embedding a whole school approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health, Kent and Medway MHSTs work with education settings using the [school resilience toolkit](#), which was initially developed by Headstart Kent. This supports planning, and implementation and evaluation (plan, do, review) of whole school approaches.

This example may include activities or initiatives that you can incorporate into your practice.

## Liverpool Learning Partnership

Liverpool Learning Partnership have implemented a range of resources to encourage resilience and respectfulness amongst pupils.

The team provide advice, guidance and training to support school mental health leads to develop a whole school or college approach offer. Initiatives include creating dedicated zones for relationship building and relieving stress in the classroom and playground, as well as introducing self-regulation tools such as 'worry boxes' and 'worry monsters', mindfulness tools such as the '5,4,3,2,1' approach and the [ROAR rainbow](#), a simple tool for children and young people to measure how they feel on a scale from 1-10. Pupils are clearly signposted to the wellbeing team via engaging posters and communications, encouraged to talk about the 4 R's (resilience, responsible, respect and resourceful), and provided 'have your say' spaces to input into creating a calm environment.



Featured within the [June CoP webinar](#), this video featuring pupils sharing how their wellbeing is supported may provide ideas to compliment your development of mentally-healthy ethos and environments in schools.

## Staff Development

### East Sussex MHST

East Sussex MHST have created a psychoeducation programme of resources for educational staff to outline the scope and purpose of the MHST, increasing their understanding and ability to support their pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

Alongside [introductory animation videos](#) on the role of the MHST, the referrals process and common mental health concerns amongst pupils, the MHST have created a **brochure of training workshops** for staff, [recorded webinars](#) on a range of mild-moderate mental health needs and produced a [toolkit](#) to support practitioners working with pupils with anxiety issues.

These resources may provide inspiration to compliment your whole school or college approach offer or provide a template to be adapted for use with your local audience.

## Targeted Support and Appropriate Referrals

### NELFT NHS Mid/South Essex MHST

The Mid and South Essex MHST hold 'Team Around the Learner' consultation meetings to ensure all education staff are involved in monitoring and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the school community.

The consultative sessions provide a forum for teams to discuss pupils, parents and caregivers of concern and the impact this has had upon staff wellbeing, including whether further support is required (such as mentoring, curriculum development or wellbeing services). The meetings also provide an opportunity to triage referrals to the MHST service or support with signposting to appropriate services.

Collaboratively developed with local school and college leaders, the format of the consultation and supervision meetings can be adapted according to the educational setting's context and culture. However, the basic structure involves weekly or fortnightly sessions featuring teaching staff presenting the case of learner of concern or challenge, followed by a group discussion and agreement of next steps.

This whole school or college approach to targeting support and referrals may be a model schools or MHSTs could consider adopting or incorporating into current procedures.



## Wider WSCA case studies

Further case studies of effective whole school or college approaches to mental health and wellbeing can be found on the gov.uk [Teaching Blog](#) site. These articles have been produced by education staff and mental health professionals and provide an insight into various practices undertaken by schools and colleges support the wellbeing of their school communities.

The site is regularly updated with new content, with existing blog posts relating to the whole school or college approach listed below:

### [Ensuring every student has the opportunity to look after their mental health](#)

A blogpost from the head of student wellbeing and school counsellor at Hove Park School on how they embed emotional wellbeing support.

### [Mental health and wellbeing support that prepares students for classroom learning](#)

A blogpost from the headteacher and welfare manager at City Academy Whitehawk on how they have developed a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

### [Improving wellbeing support for pupils through senior mental health lead training](#)

A blogpost written by a junior school phase lead discussing how the senior mental health lead training has supported her to identify how to further support staff and pupil wellbeing.

### [Supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools](#)

A blogpost written by several senior mental health leads about their different approaches to supporting staff and pupil wellbeing, including working with the Mental Health Support Team.



# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the MHSTs and education settings who have contributed resources and case studies to this pack. Your support invaluable supports the continuous improvement of mental health and wellbeing provision for children and young people across the country.

We will continue to build this resource and would welcome you to share any examples of the effective support you have put in place with your schools and colleges. If you are interested in sharing your experiences, please talk to your DfE or NHSE regional leads.

