

## The mental health Green Paper – what schools need to know

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### Introduction

On 4 December 2017, the DfE and Department of Health released 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper' which outlines what the government wants to do to help children and young people with their mental health.

According to the Green Paper, 1 in 10 young people have some form of diagnosable mental health condition and the government is "committed" to ensuring support is provided to those who need it.

The important role of schools and colleges in supporting young people with mental health conditions is highlighted in the Green Paper, with many of the core proposals and wider action relating to the education sector.

This guidance outlines the core proposals from the Green Paper and the wider action relating to education that will be undertaken to support these proposals.

### The core proposals

The Green Paper sets out three ways in which the government will take action to fill the gap in support for children and young people's mental health – these are called the "core green paper proposals".

#### Core proposal 1: A designated senior lead for mental health in every school

The government wants every school and college to have a designated senior lead for mental health by 2025.

The mental health lead will be a trained member of staff who is responsible for the school's approach to mental health. Their core responsibilities will include:

- Overseeing the whole-school approach to mental health, including how this is reflected in policies, curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are supported with their own mental health, and how the school engages pupils and parents.
- Supporting the identification of pupils who are at risk of developing mental ill health and pupils who are displaying signs of a mental health condition.

- Understanding what the school's local mental health services offer and working with these services to ensure pupils are referred where appropriate.
- Understanding the mental health needs of pupils in school and overseeing the delivery of interventions being provided in an education setting.
- Supporting other members of staff with how to talk to pupils about mental health in order to raise awareness.
- Overseeing the outcomes of interventions on pupils' education and wellbeing.

Training to support the delivery of this goal will be rolled out to all areas by 2025. The Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund will be used to develop training which builds the skills of mental health leads and support them in delivering whole-school approaches.

### **Core proposal 2: Mental health support teams working with schools**

The government has proposed to establish new mental health support teams that will be linked to groups of schools and colleges. The teams will work with mental health leads in schools, offering individual and group help to young people with mild to moderate mental health issues, e.g. anxiety and behavioural difficulties.

Supervised by NHS children and young people's mental health staff, the support teams will be the link between the NHS and schools. The teams will act as a link between more specialist NHS mental health services and children so that they can access the support they need more swiftly.

The teams will also work alongside:

- School nurses
- School counsellors
- Social workers

### **Core proposal 3: Shorter waiting times**

As mental health support teams are trialled and rolled out, the NHS will pilot implementing reduced waiting times for access to NHS-funded children and young people's mental health services in the trailblazer areas. The aim is to bring the waiting time to within four weeks.

## **How will the core proposals be implemented?**

The "new approach", which incorporates all three of the core proposals, will be rolled out in a number of trailblazer areas from 2019.

The specific full rollout date will be determined by the success of the trailblazers and securing funding; however, the government is aiming for the approach to be rolled out to at least a fifth of the country by the end of 2022/2023.

In 2018, the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund will be used to support the training of designated mental health leads and the delivery of whole-school approaches.

Preparation for the rollout of mental health support teams will begin from 2018, including expanding training provision, recruiting trailblazer areas and recruiting the first group of trainees to staff the teams. Trailblazer areas would begin delivering the teams in 2019.

## **Wider action**

The core proposals will be supported by wider changes in both education and the community – below is the wider action that will take place in relation to education.

### **Identifying and responding to need**

The DfE will update their 'Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance' (2016) to reflect the key messages from Tom Bennett's 2017 'Creating a Culture' report which outlined how schools can promote good behaviour. The guidance will be updated to ensure it sets out the importance of setting clear routines and expectations in schools, alongside the impact of trauma, attachment issues or post-traumatic stress.

### **Mental health awareness training**

The government believes that having mental health awareness training in every school provides a good base to better support pupils. In their election manifesto, the Conservative party set out the commitment to having a member of staff in every school receive mental health awareness training – this commitment is reinforced in the Green Paper.

### **Teacher training**

A new framework will be incorporated into initial teacher training over the next two years and the DfE is aware that a number of providers have started to include training on mental health and wellbeing. The DfE will support the training sector to develop this practice, alongside including a specific focus on mental health in future school improvement programmes to support schools to develop other approaches.

### **Teaching children about mental wellbeing**

The Conservative election manifesto made a promise that every child will learn about mental wellbeing. To decide how to implement this, the government will undertake an engagement process for deciding on next steps in PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE). This process is underway and will include a focus on how mental health and wellbeing can support healthy relationships and how to secure high-quality teaching through PSHE.

### **Engaging parents and pupils**

The government has launched two pilots, announced in January 2017, which aim to increase the evidence base for peer-to-peer support having the potential to engage pupils with improving their mental wellbeing. The government is considering how best to inform schools of the outcomes of these projects.

Additionally, in order to assist engagement with parents, the government will review the existing requirements on schools for publishing policies and information for parents, and decide whether this needs to be updated to ensure mental health is properly reflected.

### **Ofsted**

The Green Paper states it is vital that the work schools do for mental health is recognised.

Ofsted is currently looking at evidence to inform the development of a new inspection framework for September 2019 – this will be informed by the Care Quality Commission’s second phase of their thematic review of children and young people’s mental health services (expected for publication in Spring 2018).

The DfE will look at evidence of how schools can effectively measure the impact of how they support the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils – Ofsted will be engaged in this process.

### **Social media and the internet**

While not directly linked to the education sector, social media is often a concern for schools. The actual impact of social media on mental health is not known; therefore, the government will work with the Children’s Commissioner to explore how social media affects mental health.

A report will be produced in 2018 on the impact technology has on the mental health of children and young people.

### **What’s next?**

A consultation on the proposals within the Green Paper was released at the same time as the document.

As many of the proposals in the Green Paper have a direct impact on schools, it’s vital that school staff respond to the consultation. The consultation will run until 2 March 2018 – views can be registered [here](#).

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### **Bibliography**

Department of Health and DfE (2017) ‘Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper’

Department of Health and DfE (2017) ‘Quick read: Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision’

<<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper/quick-read-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision>> [Accessed: 5 December 2017]