

# Mental Health Support Team (MHST) Darlington

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## Mental Health Support Team Development

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is an exciting new service in Darlington which has been formed as part of the government's plans for schools to provide early intervention for mental health support. Our service will enhance the provisions currently available and act as a bridge between education and mental health services.

The MHST Team consists of a Manager/Psychological Therapist, Senior Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (SPWPs), Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) and an Administrator.

We have been busy behind the scenes setting up the team and are delighted that the rollout of the service has now started. The initial 8 host schools in Darlington have been contacted to introduce the service and allow relationships to evolve.

Evidence suggests the transition period between primary and secondary education is a key opportunity to provide mental health interventions and support is particularly beneficial during this timeframe. The MHST are therefore currently offering support for these key transition year groups 4 to 8.

By offering a whole school approach we will work with Mental Health Leads to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

Access to our service will be via the school Mental Health Lead with whom we will liaise with on a regular basis in schools.

## What is an Educational Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP)?

EMHPs specialise in assessing, treating and signposting children and young people with mental health symptoms. EMHPs use Evidence Based Low Intensity interventions that are based on cognitive behavioural therapy and guided self-help. EMHP interventions are designed to treat children with 'mild to moderate' presentations. These early-stage interventions have a positive impact in developing resilience and limiting increase of symptoms.

EMHPs are experienced in understanding the needs of schools and colleges and will work within these settings offering 1:1 support to Children and Young People, group interventions and consultation to staff and parents. The EMHPs are currently completing their post-graduate training at Northumbria University, whilst their clinical practice is supported by SPWPs.

## What is a Senior Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (SPWP)?

SPWPs also deliver evidence based interventions to children and young people with additional support for staff and parents. The role involves providing supervision to EMHPs supporting their professional development.

We look forward to building strong relationships with our partners to help improve the mental wellbeing of children and young people within Darlington.

## INITIAL HOST SCHOOLS

- 1 Holy Family RC Primary
- 2 Harrowgate Hill Primary
- 3 Skerne Park Academy
- 4 Springfield Academy
- 5 Carmel College
- 6 Haughton Academy
- 7 Hummersknott Academy
- 8 Longfield Academy

## 3 ROLES OF THE MHST

1. To offer training, advice, support and consultations with school staff and other relevant practitioners
2. To build capacity – supporting Mental Health Leads in each setting to develop a whole school approach
3. To deliver individual and group-based evidence based interventions focusing on the mild to moderate mental health needs of CYP at the key transition point between primary and secondary education, covering **Years 4 to 8**



making a

difference

together