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Dear Colleague

DfE Wellbeing for Education Return

I am writing to you to let you know about a unique opportunity to support pupils returning to school which has been funded by the Department for Education

Funding has been provided to train and support schools and colleges to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of pupils and students. The programme seeks to better equip schools and colleges to promote children and young peoples' wellbeing, resilience and recovery in response to COVID-19. As well as strengthening and building wellbeing and resilience, this aims to prevent the onset of mental health problems and ensure those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties access the right support. There are two elements to this project:

1. a new national training package providing guidance and resources for your school staff on responding to the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of your pupils.
2. funding to help put in place local experts to work with your nominated staff and provide ongoing advice and support until March 2021.

The DfE has asked that we identify a delivery partner and ask them to roll out the training to Schools, Alternative Providers & FE Colleges by half term. Although this is a national training programme, we have the flexibility to adapt the training content to our local context; so we will be working with the delivery partner to ensure the training builds on and compliments current work and approaches in schools. I am writing to ask if you would identify a key professional within school who can attend the training and lead on this work and the support that can be provided. Please complete the [Nominated Professionals Form](#). The training has been designed to be delivered by local experts and is likely to comprise two 90-minute webinars to nominated education setting staff. The exact format will be confirmed shortly.

The training content is as follows;

Webinar 1

- Whole school/college implementation
- Neuroscience – understanding learning and growth, wellbeing and resilience
- Actions to build resilience and wellbeing
- Implementation of actions across the whole school/college
- Vignettes/ case studies – bringing it all together

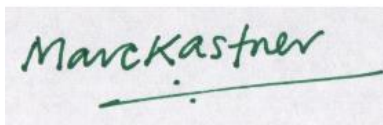
- Children and young people – specific learning
- Resources

Webinar 2

- Whole school/ college 'social scaffolding'
- Bereavement and loss
- What to look out for: warning signs
- Understanding anxiety, low mood, stress and trauma
- Anxiety and low mood
- Stress and trauma: supporting recovery
- Resources, links, references and next steps

I look forward to hearing from you within the next 7 days so that we can roll this programme out by half term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Marc Kastner". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

MARC KASTNER

Strategic lead for Inclusion

& Other Services to Vulnerable Children

[Nominated Professionals Form](#)

FAQ Sheet

WELLBEING FOR EDUCATION RETURN – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What is Wellbeing for Education Return?

- Wellbeing for Education Return is a new £8m package of training and resources intended to support education staff to promote children and young people, teachers and parents and carers' mental wellbeing and resilience and aid mental health recovery, in light of the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown.
- It includes:
 - a new, nationally developed training package developed for education staff
 - funding for Local Authorities to appoint local experts to deliver the training into schools and Further Education (FE) providers during the 2020 autumn term, tailor it to the local context, and to provide ongoing advice and support until March 2021.
- Our aim is to help as many schools and FE providers as possible to provide wellbeing support for children and young people, preventing as many as possible from developing mental health difficulties and ensuring those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties access the right support.
- It is funded by the Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care and developed and delivered in close collaboration with Health Education England, Public Health England, and NHS England and Improvement.
- The Wellbeing for Education Return training has been developed by the e-learning platform MindEd, working closely with the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families (AFC), who will deliver the training for local experts. Wellbeing for Education Return has been developed with input from an expert advisory group and wider network of mental health and education experts, advisers and providers such as headteachers, teachers, educational and clinical developmental psychologists and the voluntary sector.

2) What does the training cover?

- The training has been designed to be delivered by local experts in – as a working assumption - two 90-minute webinars to nominated education setting staff. The first webinar covers the whole school or college approach, wellbeing and resilience. The second webinar builds on the first, and focusses on helping school and college staff to reflect on ways that they can continue to apply theory to real life practice. It covers specific concerns related to mental health and emotional wellbeing such as bereavement and loss, anxiety, low mood, stress and trauma, warning signs and signposting. It will be for local experts to determine how best to deliver this training to education staff in their area, in line with local and education settings' contexts and requirements.
- Both include a series of themed case studies and links to evidence-based, straightforward, existing resources, which can be adapted to respond to children and young people of different

ages, education staff and/or parents and carers alike, as well as to the local context, and supplemented with details of local offers and services. Both are also segmented into six bitesize themes which can be easily adapted and used in a school or college context (for example in classroom teaching, a staff meeting, or group discussions with children and young people, staff or parents and carers). These are:

Webinar 1

- Whole school/college implementation
- Neuroscience – understanding learning and growth, wellbeing and resilience
- Actions to build resilience and wellbeing
- Implementation of actions across the whole school/college
- Vignettes/ case studies – bringing it all together
- Children and young people – specific learning
- Resources

Webinar 2

- Whole school/ college ‘social scaffolding’
- Bereavement and loss
- What to look out for: warning signs
- Understanding anxiety, low mood, stress and trauma
- Anxiety and low mood
- Stress and trauma: supporting recovery
- Resources, links, references and next steps

3) Which education settings are eligible for the offer?

- Local Authorities have been funded according to the number of state funded education settings in their locality. The training is aimed at those education settings for children and young people aged 5-19, including academies, special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision. If Local Authorities wish to distribute the training further, we would encourage them to take a needs-based approach.

4) Why isn't this available for Higher Education (HE) or Early Years (EY)?

- We recognise that the pandemic will have affected the mental health and wellbeing of many children and young people of all ages. The needs for different age groups and education settings vary, and Wellbeing for Education Return is a universal offer targeted at children and young people aged 5-19. It will therefore have relevance for children and young people entering primary school (for example, Reception) and for young people entering higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

Higher Education

- Protecting the mental health of current and prospective HE students is vital during these difficult times, and it is important that students can access the mental health support they need. We expect universities and other HE providers to provide this support. Since the Covid-19 outbreak, many HE providers have bolstered their existing mental health services, and

adapted delivery to means other than face to face. Staff at universities and colleges have responded quickly to the need to transform mental health and wellbeing services, showing resourcefulness and there are many examples of good practice.

- In June, the government announced £3m of Office for Students funding for Student Minds to support the creation of a new online resource, Student Space. The Student Space platform launched on 10 August for all students attending English and Welsh HE institutions and is designed to work alongside existing services offered by providers. The platform seeks to bridge gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation.

Early Years

- We have also adapted £3.6m worth of Early Years Disadvantage Grant to existing third sector organisations to support children's early literacy and language development (including EYSEND) and are providing an additional £1.15m DCMS grant funding (from the Chancellors package of support for the third sector) over 6 months to enable our existing VCS partners to broaden the scope of these grants to support disadvantaged and vulnerable parent child mental health and wellbeing, and early years providers to help children catch up and transition back into early education.

5) How does the training account for the experiences of groups who are likely to have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19?

- We recognise that the wellbeing and mental health impact on children and young people, their families and education professionals alike will vary significantly. We consulted widely on the development of this training, including with the NHS England and Improvement and Health Education mental health equalities and diversities adviser and clinical leads and advisers, as well as, for example, developmental, educational and principal educational psychologists.
- Covid-19 has exposed or magnified a range of vulnerabilities, inequalities and disadvantage for specific groups, particularly for BAME communities, children and young people with SEND, looked after children and carer leavers, young carers and/or those otherwise identified as vulnerable and whom did not attend school or college during lockdown. This may include those who are – or whose family members are - medically vulnerable. Wider societal issues may also pose challenges for wellbeing and increase vulnerability to mental health difficulties.
- Schools and colleges will need to be sensitive and responsive to these additional issues, stressors and risk factors for education professionals, children, young people and their families and ensure their voices are heard and understood.
- This training, whilst taking a universal approach and offering core principles for application across a range of ages, groups and education settings, also seeks to highlight these emerging challenges throughout and offers principles for adapting materials and approaches to support education staff to attend to (in)equalities, diversity and inclusion. The training draws, for example, on the *Recovery, Re-introduction and Renewal Handbook* (Whole School SEND Consortium, 2020) and Public Health England's (PHE) recent report on improving public health outcomes for vulnerable children, *No child left behind* (PHE, 2020).

6) Will the project be extended beyond March 2021, in the event of further waves of Covid-19?

- The Department does not currently have any plans to extend the project beyond this initial funding allocation. The purpose of delivering the project now is to equip education staff with the knowledge and training they need to respond to wellbeing and mental health needs that arise from the pandemic, and provide them with additional advice and support in the Local Authority until March 2021. If further surges in infection and/or lockdowns do occur, the intention is that schools and staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge, tools and skills to support children and young people.

7) How will this be delivered in areas with local lockdowns?

- Local Authorities are encouraged to deliver this training in a way that remains accessible to schools and colleges, considering the local context. The supporting principles can be applied remotely as well as in person, and the training offered to local experts allows for ample interactive sessions on how best to adapt and deliver this locally. We recommend that training takes place through webinars and online workshops outside of school or college contact hours to maximise their accessibility.

8) Why is this training for schools and colleges being delivered through Local Authorities?

- We know that responses are most effective when locally determined, reflecting local needs, contexts and networks. This is why the government is providing grant funding to help Local Authorities increase their capacity and maximise the impact of this initiative on children and young people, in a way that complements existing local provision. We want to support local areas to make the best of the funding and national training resources available, and will stay in touch with local leaders to offer guidance and training to local experts to support delivery into schools and colleges.

9) Why is this training and funding being directed at education staff, and not invested in NHS services?

- Education staff – including and beyond teachers, tutors and senior leaders - play a key role in supporting the wellbeing and mental health of their school or college communities. Whilst we appreciate the pressures education staff are facing in managing children and young people's and their safe return to school and further education, we also know they would like support to feel equipped to identify and respond to the wellbeing and mental health issues they may face.
- Wellbeing for Education Return is a prevention and early intervention offer intended to help education staff support and build children and young people's and their own wellbeing and resilience within the scope of their existing roles; prevent the onset of serious mental health problems that might later require specialist support; and help ensure that those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties can access the right support.
- This training is not mandatory, and delivery is locally determined so it can be tailored to the capacity and needs of nominated education staff.

- Where local areas choose not to provide this training to education settings, national webinars will be offered later in the autumn term. However, these webinars will not have the local adaptations or interactive sessions to help develop responses that account for local contexts and services.

10) How does this fit with the Government's other programmes, including the Schools and Colleges Link Programme and senior mental health leads training?

- Wellbeing for Education Return is designed to complement and build upon Government's long-term plans to improve evidence-based, outcomes-focused, children and young people's mental health support, which has been adjusted in light of the pandemic. This includes:
 - joint agency planning as a result of Future in Mind and the NHS Long Term Plan
 - continuing to invest in specialist NHS services and Mental Health Support Teams
 - national roll out of the Schools and Colleges Link Programme to support partnership working across education and health and
 - taking forward training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges after reviewing the best way to train those leads, building on this new initiative.
- Wellbeing for Education Return has been developed in response to Covid-19 and aims to provide universal short to medium term support to teachers and staff within schools and colleges as pupils and students return to school.
- It is complementary to the Link Programme, which continues to be delivered by Anna Freud, and is aimed at helping local areas improve joint working between local NHS mental health services and schools and colleges. Joint working is essential as local areas respond to mental health and wellbeing needs, and we are encouraging areas to join up with their partners in the local adaptation and delivery of this programme.
- We also remain committed to long term plans to implement the Green Paper commitments, including Mental Health Support Teams, and providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges to further develop knowledge and skills to introduce or develop whole school / colleges approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

**DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION
SEPTEMBER 2020**