

## Creating a Mental Health team or lead person in School

For what age?	At what level?
All Key Stages	The team or lead person operates at all levels of universal and targeted support across the school

### What is meant by mental health team or mental health lead person?

The Green Paper (Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision) published by the government in December 2017 recommends that every school should have a Designated Lead for Mental Health, and as a part of the TaMHS programme, this role underpins and drives the development of all levels of provision shown in the 'Building Blocks of Provision' model.

The role of a team (usually for larger schools) or lead person (usually for smaller schools) involves maintaining an overview of the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of the school community. This includes staff and parents or carers, as well as pupils, and may involve such areas as:

- Ensuring that the whole school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing is reflected in the design of school policies (including relationship and behaviour policies).
- Consideration of how the school approach can be reflected in delivery of curriculum and pastoral support.
- Supporting the identification of those children and young people who might be at risk of experiencing difficulties with their mental health.
- Being the link between local mental health services and the school to ensure effective joined up working between professionals.
- Overseeing the delivery and measuring the effectiveness of interventions designed to promote positive wellbeing and mental health.
- Strengthening other school staff in their skills and confidence around working effectively to support mental health and wellbeing in others.

(Summarised from Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision, 2017)

### How do we know it works?

Effective joint working between professionals is known to be essential in order to best promote clear pathways of support for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (Future in Mind, Department of Health & NHS England, 2015).

Results from Mental Health Services and Schools Link Pilots: Evaluation Report (Department for Education, 2017) highlighted a suitable lead point of contact in a school, who was well supported by the senior leadership team, to be a critical success factor in establishing this effective joint working with children and young people's mental health services in the community.

This recent evidence builds on the existing conclusions from other sources, including that of Professor K. Weare (2000), who states;

‘Experience in [mental] health promoting schools has shown that it is beneficial for each school to appoint a co-ordinator whose task it is to ensure synergy and harmony between the various parts and participants, and between the outside community.’

(Promoting Mental, Emotional & Social Health: A Whole School Approach)

From the 2011 evaluation of the project phase of Northamptonshire TaMHS, for schools where staff received support to develop a ‘Mental Health Team’ or ‘Mental Health Lead Person’ role, the median overall impact rating out of 10 was 8 for vulnerable children and 8.5 for the school overall.

### How does it help children and young people?

Children’s and young people’s mental health and wellbeing is now a priority area for many professionals who work with children, young people and their families. Given the number of different individuals and agencies that could be involved in providing support across the different areas of a child’s or young person’s life, effective co- ordination is essential for support to be most successful.

The mental health lead in school is the co-ordinator across the wide ranging aspects of school life that can potentially impact upon pupil wellbeing. They hold an overview of the school system, which enables them to organise and drive development of provision, to meet the varying needs of children and young people, and the staff and families who support them.

The DfE (2017) survey Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges reported that; ‘Institutions with mental health leads reported wider provision for the promotion of positive mental health and for the support of pupils with identified needs. They were also more likely to adopt systematic approaches to identifying need.’

### How can I access training?

To access centralised training, including at the TaMHS Conference if appropriate, please visit:

- [LGSS I Learn booking website](#)

Training at your school, or within clusters, for your staff can be commissioned from the Educational Psychology Service by contacting the TaMHS Administrator:

[tamhs@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk](mailto:tamhs@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk) or by speaking to your Link Educational Psychologist