



Priorities for the cross-government 10-year mental health and wellbeing plan

In July 2022, Place2Be responded to the government's public consultation about mental health and wellbeing over the next 10 years. We based our response on our experience of delivering frontline mental health services in UK schools over the past 27 years. Here are the key points from our response, alongside proposals for actions to deliver this in practice:

1. *Embed wellbeing in education from an early stage*

- Through children and young people's education, encourage an increased focus on the promotion of wellbeing and positive mental health.
- Include more prominence of wellbeing and promoting positive mental health in the national curriculum.
- Greater prominence of wellbeing and whole school approaches in the Ofsted inspection framework.
- Schools to have access to a standardised measurement tool to measure pupil wellbeing annually, in order to identify trends and forward plan provision accordingly.

2. *Focus on prevention and early intervention, especially in primary schools*

- 50% of mental health problems in adults first develop before the age of 14. We must focus on prevention, early intervention and providing support at primary school stage.

3. *Systematically implement a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing across every school*

- There is much consensus that a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing is an effective way forward, but not all 8 elements¹ have been implemented.
- There should be full implementation and resourcing of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, i.e., all 8 principles, for all schools. A timeframe should be set for this, i.e., by 2025.
- This should include continuing the Senior Mental Health Leads training programme for the long term.
- It should include training and ongoing CPD for teachers and education professionals in supporting pupil wellbeing and mental health.
- This should also include access to parenting skills and support.

4. *Embed targeted mental health support in every school*

- Every school should have embedded evidence-based targeted mental health support. This should be from qualified professionals, with expertise in working with children and young people, using quality assured/evidence-based interventions.
- There needs to be more clarity on how this targeted support should be commissioned, funded and quality assured for schools.
- The Mental Health Support Teams could be enhanced and expanded over time, working with the voluntary sector and existing services such as school-based counsellors/mental health practitioners.

5. *Invest in, and diversify, the children's mental health workforce*

- The children's mental health workforce needs long-term investment.
- Where the voluntary sector is a provider of training, qualifications, and an employer, they can be used as a partner to bolster the workforce.
- Bursaries and subsidies for training with voluntary sector providers should be considered. There is also the option of looking at a national apprenticeship standard for counsellors/mental health practitioners working in schools.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1020249/Promoting_children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_and_wellbeing.pdf