

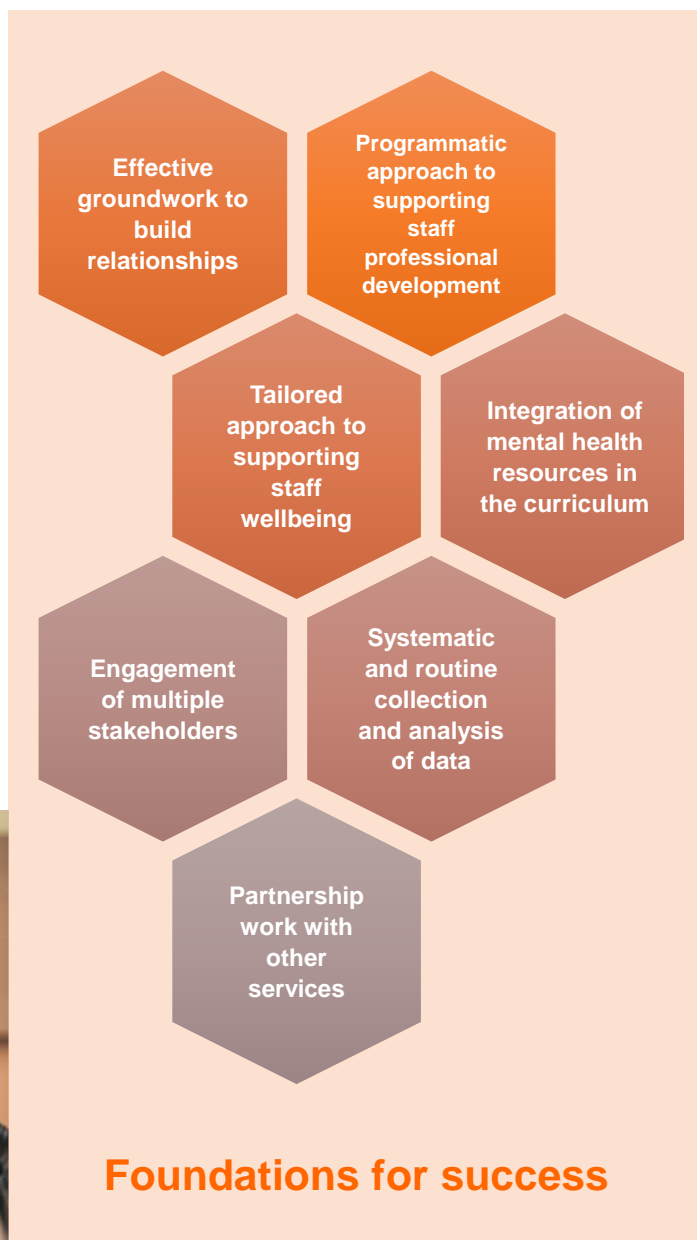
A 'Whole School Approach' to mental health

Making mental health and wellbeing in schools everyone's business, with outcome measurement embedded.

Mental health support in schools is hugely important, for pupils' wellbeing and educational outcomes, as well as their life-chances going forward. A 'Whole School Approach' (WSA), making mental health and wellbeing everybody's business, has been adopted by Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) supporting schools across east and south east England, involving staff, pupils, governors, parents and external services.

A [Best Practice Review and Evaluation of Whole School Approaches to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health within MHSTs](#) was undertaken by KSS AHSN and ARC KSS in partnership with academics from the [School of Psychology at the University of Sussex](#), in partnership with the [Charlie Waller Trust](#).

The findings from the Best Practice Review and Evaluation have been fully embedded in national operating guidance for MHSTs.



Foundations for success

'There has been huge appetite nationally for the work we are doing on whole school approach and it has been invaluable to work in collaboration not only with Department for Education, NHS England and a vast number of MHSTs, but also children and young people themselves. We look forward to co-developing outcome measures which will help build sustainability and a concrete evidence base.'

Becca Randell, CYP Mental Health Implementation Lead for ARC KSS and AHSN

- 1 Maintain a sustainable funding commitment to MHSTs
- 2 Provide guidance for staff to develop a thorough and rich understanding of school policies, procedures, and practices



YMCA

- 3 Prioritise the establishment of mechanisms for engaging multiple stakeholders
- 4 Systematically gather and collate evidence of the WSA profile
- 5 Address the challenge of balancing clinical interventions with wider WSA goals of creating a strengths-based school environment that promotes wellbeing
- 6 Enhance workforce development regarding WSA for MHST leadership, school Senior Mental Health Leads (SMHLs), and all clinical and educational staff members
- 7 Undertake a substantive programme of implementation work



The review recommended the development of outcome measures to support the delivery and measure the impact of whole school approach within MHSTs.

As a result, KSS AHSN and ARC KSS will be working in partnership with University of Sussex, Charlie Waller Foundation and Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust over next four months to co-develop and pilot tools that measure the impact of whole school approach within MHSTs across the south east and east of England.

Resources

Follow this link for more information about the [Best Practice Review of Whole School Approach](#).

Find out more

For more information about the Whole School Approach analysis and outcome framework, contact Becca Randell, becca.randell@nhs.net.

‘This review presents a compelling picture of the enormous potential of MHSTs in transforming school communities through developing a whole school approach to mental health.

However, while there is emerging evidence of positive impacts arising from this work, our research indicates that we now need to develop a common framework for understanding, implementing, and measuring the impacts of whole school approaches to mental health.

Spreading the best practice we have seen in this project across different regions will make a meaningful difference to the children and young people, parents, carers, and staff in our school communities.’

Professor Robin Banerjee, Head of School Psychology, University of Sussex

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The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

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