

Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in schools

Information for
patients and carers



Our Service

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is an early intervention service offering support and advice to children and young people, parents or carers, and school staff.

We aim to build resilience and to empower children and young people (as well as the adults in their lives) to learn strategies and new ways of taking care of their mental wellbeing.

The service is made up of a number of mental health professionals and we work within allocated schools across Halton, Knowsley, St Helens and Warrington. Each school will have an Educational Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) based approximately half to one day per week in allocated schools. Your school's practitioner will provide direct, ongoing support to your school, including:

- Providing interventions to pupils with mild to moderate mental health conditions, such as anxiety, low mood or behavioural difficulties. If a child needs specialist support, they will be able to make an onward referral for them to local services, such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Providing training, education and advice to school staff to help them better support pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing
- Championing mental wellbeing and resilience across the whole school community, providing guidance around issues such as bullying and coping with exam stress.

The Educational Mental Health Practitioner

The EMHP provides guided self help based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques. They can provide brief advice for mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety, phobias, depression or low mood, and behavioural difficulties. If the school feel a young person may

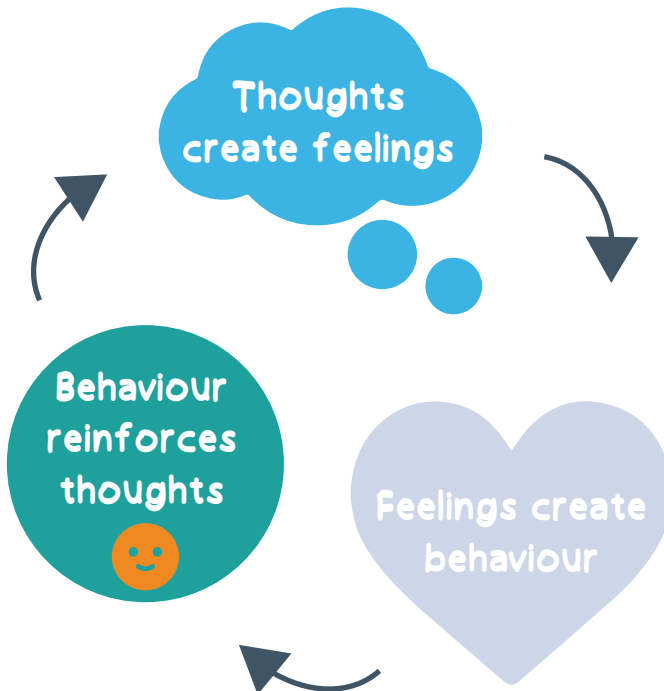
benefit from this support, this can be discussed with consent from a parent or carer.

How can we help?

We can offer one to one support or group sessions, and we will work closely with teachers and parents or carers. We will help children learn to take care of their own mental health using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which will help children to break unhelpful thought patterns that may be making them feel more anxious or sad.

CBT is a type of talking therapy that has been proven to help people of all ages to focus on how thoughts and emotions can affect our behaviour.

The cognitive cycle



The 'whole school' approach

The 'whole school' approach is an ethos which involves all parts of your child's school working together to create and sustain a mentally healthy school environment.

We will help support the whole school approach by providing consultation, advice, resources, workshops and training to pupils and staff.



Consultation Process

Consultations are meetings between our team and a mental health lead within the school.

At the consultation, information is gathered on mental health needs and a brief description of issues; risk or vulnerabilities; any additional needs; safeguarding history, and understanding if any other services are involved in the young person's care. We would also check our secure online database for any further relevant information.

If we feel that our team support may not be appropriate, we would try to offer advice and share details of other services.

If we feel that from the information provided, that support may be appropriate, an assessment is offered.

MHST Assessment

During an assessment, we try to understand what is going on for the young person, at that moment and how we might help. We will cover:

- Mental health symptoms and experiences
- Thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social and family relationships



- Education or work
- Culture and ethnic background
- Assessing risk
- Goals and hopes for the future
- Any previous support.

Assessments are usually at school but may also be offered in local children's centres or online. Parents or carers would typically be invited to assessments but can take place one-to-one with parent or carer consent. Assessments usually take up to an hour, but you may want to allow for additional time if required.

We will ask you to complete some questionnaires to help us do our job and support your progress appropriately. Data from questionnaires is entered into our secure online database so we can refer to it during your treatment.



Risk

As a mental health service, we have a requirement to complete a robust risk assessment with every young person we assess. Risk assessments aim to explore any current or previous thoughts; plan, intent and actions relating to suicide and self harm; risk to others; risk from others; vulnerability; neglect and other risky behaviours. We will offer risk advice and provide risk response numbers. A safety plan can also be created together. These measures help to keep children and young people as safe possible.

Confidentiality

All information that is discussed will remain confidential, unless we believe that something that has been shared puts a child or someone else at risk. In this instance, we would have to share this information with other relevant agencies. When we do this, we would always try to discuss this with you first.

Information gathered is added to an assessment letter, which is copied to school, school nursing service, and your GP. This information is input into our secure, internal patient record system.

Outcome

The information may be discussed at our team meetings.

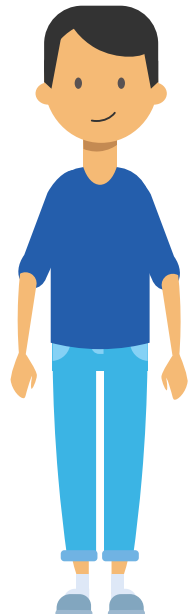
In these discussions, we will look at the outcome of the assessment and offer advice about which service might best support the young person's needs. This may involve telling you about other services.

If we can help, we will offer a personalised care plan. This will include information about therapeutic support and the number of sessions you can expect.

The following interventions are being offered by the service based on young people's age and need:

- Worry management intervention for anxiety
- Behavioural activation for low mood
- Graded exposure for phobias
- Parent led intervention for anxiety and parent led intervention for behavioural difficulties
- Group interventions might also be an option on some occasions.

Interventions are usually completed within schools, but may also be offered in local children's centres or remotely. They usually last one hour. The number of sessions depends on the type of intervention and individual needs. However, six to eight weekly sessions are usually offered.



SMS Text Messaging Service

We use text messages to remind people about their appointments. Text message reminders will be sent seven days and 24 hours before the appointment. Parents or carers will be automatically enrolled into the service, they will have the option to opt out if necessary.



How can my child get support from the team?

If you think your child would benefit from our support speak to your child's teacher, school's designated mental health lead or another member of staff, such as pastoral support staff. They will then discuss support with the MHST practitioner at consultation.

For concerns about risk or safety of a young person, you can contact the CYPMHS Response Team, which is available 24 hours, on 01744 415 640. If you need immediate medical attention, you should visit your local A&E department.

What we expect from you

For MHST interventions to be effective, regular attendance and engagement is important. People often have genuine reasons to miss an agreed appointment but it means your child's care and other patients' care is delayed. Missed appointments can sometimes be a sign that now is not the right time to access our service. If you do not attend appointments without contacting us it can lead to you being discharged.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please call us on **01925 664120**.

Thank you to the schools, parents, carers and pupils for any contributions to this leaflet. Should you wish to have an input in any future leaflets, please contact us on 01925 664120 or email:

mcn-tr.mhsupportwarr@nhs.net

mcn-tr.mhst-knowsley@nhs.net

mcn-tr.mhst-sthelens@nhs.net

mcn-tr.mhst-halton@nhs.net

Useful information

You can find further information on local services in your area on our website: <https://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/mental-health-support-teams>

SEND - SEND stands for Special Education Needs and or Disabilities. If your child has SEND, we can make reasonable adjustments to meet their needs. Please speak to our team to discuss.

Our patients matter

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust listens and responds to patients and their carers to help improve the services we deliver. If you have any comments, compliments or concerns you can speak with a member of staff or contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints Team.

Phone: **0151 471 2377**

Freephone: **0800 328 2941**

Email: palsandcomplaints@merseycare.nhs.uk

To request this leaflet in an alternative format or language, please speak to a member of staff.

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
V7 Building, Kings Business Park
Prescot, Merseyside L34 1PJ

