



NHS
Brighton and Hove
Clinical Commissioning Group

Public Health Schools Programme

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Brighton & Hove CAMHS and Schools Link Scheme **Whole-School Emotional Health and Well-Being Pilot 2015-2016**

Robin Banerjee and Lucy Roberts, University of Sussex

Tracey Williams, B&H Educational Psychology Service

with Phoebe Averill, Kasia Borasinski, Kirsty Matthews, and Rosie Robins (University of Sussex)

Summary of key findings

- The pilot project was delivered and implemented with a number of key successes and goals successfully achieved.
 - **On-site PMHWs** were embedded in the participating schools.
 - A **school lead** coordinated and championed the work of the PMHW and the wider programme of work on mental health and well-being at all three schools.
 - Numerous individual and group **interventions and consultations** were undertaken with generally very **positive stakeholder feedback**.
 - Significant improvements were made in the establishment/consolidation of **systems and procedures for identifying/referring young people** at risk of EHWB difficulties.
 - Some progress was made towards developing a **whole-school approach** to EHWB that engages all stakeholders (young people, school staff, clinicians, parents etc.).
 - The **B&H EPS** provided a valuable forum for reflecting on practice, exploring progress, and resolving challenges faced in the work on EHWB.
 - **Reductions in external CAMHS referrals** were evident over the project period.
- The logic model of the pilot project had a number of weak links.
 - There was ambiguity, a lack of consensus, and uncertainty regarding the specific goals, optimal balance of activities, and distribution of responsibilities of all involved.
 - However, the experience of the pilot project will help to strengthen these links for future related work.
- The success of the project was hampered by different expectations and cultural beliefs systems regarding the well-being agenda in school. These were not sufficiently explored and discussed with relevant parties in advance of the pilot launch.
- There were substantial variations between the three pilot schools in terms of the existing context (and perceptions thereof), the activities undertaken, and the challenges faced. This may be amplified by specific contextual factors that influenced pressures in a given school at a given time (e.g., in this project, these included differing structures of the senior leadership team, the impact of an Ofsted inspection, and the transition to a new head teacher).
- Inadequate induction for PMHWs, together with practical, communication, and school system difficulties, presented challenging obstacles to the development of the project.
- There has been important progress towards developing a whole-school approach to EHWB, but much remains to be done. Having an on-site PMHW does not in itself guarantee that continued progress can be made. Being embedded in schools carries much positive value, which was observed in all three schools. But without adequate support and mutual understanding of goals and the optimal balance of activities, on-site PMHW provision cannot be assumed to deliver desired outcomes.

Implications and directions for further work

- The pilot project on PMHW has had important successes and **should be extended**, with learning taken from the evaluation of the pilot used to strengthen future activity.
- Having an **identified PMHW link** for each secondary school, with dedicated time allocated to that school, is likely to have many benefits and – subject to resource availability -- should be rolled out where possible to other schools. It is valuable to combine this with having a **specific senior leader within the school** with responsibility for coordinating and championing work on EHWB.
- However, conditions should be applied with respect to **prior discussion about expectations, goals, and the optimal balance of activities** for all parties involved, most notably the Community CAMHS service, the school senior leadership team, the existing school pastoral team, those with oversight on behaviour/discipline, and the entire staff body. This is likely to be even more important than the physical presence of PMHWS on-site within the school, although the latter carries specific benefits when deployed effectively. **Rolling out the pilot without such conditions in place is not advised**, particularly as other school contexts are likely to present even greater challenges than those encountered in this pilot.
- A **specific workload allocation system** should be agreed in advance between schools and Community CAMHS with respect to the responsibilities of link PMHWs, particularly in terms of balancing one-to-one or group consultations/interventions for identified young people and work with the wider school community and climate (including all staff and parents). This may vary from school to school depending on local needs, but should be **explicitly discussed and agreed in advance**, with the understanding that workload arrangements would be reviewed and updated regularly (e.g., once a term).
- An **effective induction system** for any link PMHW – whether on-site or not – is essential for future EHWB work. This should not be limited to introductions and exchange of information within the school pastoral team; opportunities for discussion and shared understanding **with senior leaders and all staff** must be included.
- The senior leadership team of each school should ensure that **pupil voice** around EHWB and help-seeking concerns are explicitly prioritised and factored into the discussions of EHWB activities within the school (including training, interventions, curriculum, policies, and procedures). Greater awareness of the **peer context**, in terms of both possible issues and possible intervention approaches, is particularly important.
- Efforts to work with **networks of feeder primaries**, particularly but not exclusively around transition, should be explored as a key focus to enhance continuity of EHWB provision and support to young people.
- **Independent and rigorous evaluation** should be sought for future EHWB activity in schools, including the connections between Community CAMHS and school pastoral systems.