City & Hackney CAMHS Alliance

WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS (WAMHS) PROJECT

What is WAMHS?

The Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) project is an initiative led by the CAMHS Alliance with the support of the Children and Young People's Integrated Commissioning work stream in City & Hackney.

This innovative project aims to improve mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people in schools, colleges, specialist and alternative provision education settings in City & Hackney.

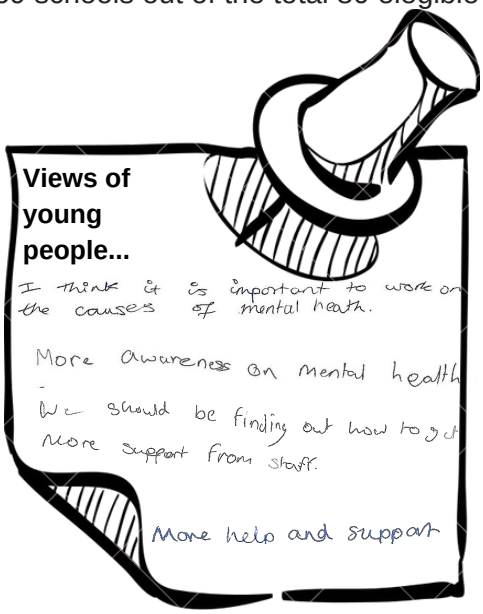
The WHAMS project started with a one year pilot in September 2018 and was run for an initial 15 months in 50% of state maintained schools in City & Hackney (39 schools participated in the pilot phase). The impact of the pilot was evaluated by Public Health City and Hackney, and the results of the evaluation were used to support extending the offer to remaining eligible schools in both boroughs.

In September 2019 the Universal WAMHS Offer was approved by the commissioning board and further 30 schools signed up for it. From April 2020 there will be 69 schools out of the total 80 elegible in City & Hackney who will be part of the WAMHS project.

Why did we start WAMHS?

Schools have been reporting higher numbers of students having difficulties managing their emotions, making the most of their learning and life opportunities at school and coping with the stresses of life both in and out of school.

Research shows that positive health and education outcomes are closely related. School staff may be one of the first to notice emerging mental health difficulties. In its recent Green Paper the Government stressed the importance of schools and mental health services working more closely together to make sure that children and young people who need help with their mental health are able to get it when they need it.



The Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) Project seeks to ensure that schools are settings where children and young people are helped to develop resilience and wellbeing in all areas of their lives, not only academically, but also socially and emotionally.

The focus of WAMHS is on **building resilience and coping skills** in students alongside helping students to access any extra help they may need, when they need it. It also aims to **upskill staff in schools** so that they feel equipped and confident in dealing with mental health difficulties and in supporting their students and their families.

WAMHS in City and Hackney

Schools and settings in City and Hackney participating in the WAMHS project have:

- A senior member of school staff to be their **Designated Mental Health Lead**. They will lead on mental health and emotional wellbeing in the school.
- A **Wellbeing Framework Partner,** a skilled education professional from Hackney Learning Trust who will help each school review their current provision and develop an action plan to improve the support systems around wellbeing and mental health in school across a number of areas (e.g. identifying need, working with parents, enabling student voice, monitoring impact, ethos and environment...)
- **An allocated mental health practitioner from Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS)**. They will visit the school regularly. Their role will not be to work individually with students in the school; instead they will help the school to increase awareness and knowledge in identifying and supporting their students' mental health difficulties and advise and support staff. They will do things such as:

- Attend regular planning meetings in schools to enable holistic thinking around student need
- Training for staff to recognise early signs of mental health difficulties and skills in managing the effects these difficulties can have in a school setting
- Consultation to school staff to support further understanding of need in students
- Support liaison with external services, so schools feel confident in referring students to other services if needed and agreed with the parent/carer and providing support in communicating effectively with these services.

Any records of discussions between school and the WAMHS worker regarding general issues for students at your child's school will not include any student details. If, however, there is a specific issue discussed about or with your child, in order to give the best possible care, the WAMHS worker will record details of the conversation and this information will be held securely and confidentially by the WAMHS clinicians' service. You have the right to Opt-out from this service if you wish to.

For further details on how information may be recorded visit the following **link**

For further information on WAMHS please speak to your **Mental Health Lead** in school or contact us at elft.wamhs@nhs.net.

You can also find more information about **The CAMHS Alliance** and our projects on the **Hackney Local Offer website** (www.hackneylocaloffer.co.uk/)

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