



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	Project End Report: 5.1 Increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.
Lead Officer	Eleanor Sheppard – Chair of Children’s Services Board
Report Author	Lisa Williams
Date of Report	21.12.22
Governance Group	CPA Management Group – 18 January 2023

Purpose of the Report
This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project 5.1 ‘Staff Confidence in Supporting Children’s Mental’ and seeks approval to close this project.

Summary of Key Information
<p>1. <u>BACKGROUND</u></p> <p>1.1 The volume of children accessing support from guidance staff is far greater than pre-coronavirus pandemic and the seriousness of concerns has increased. This includes a rise in concerns of suicide, self-harm, eating disorders and substance use. Guidance staff are concerned about young people’s mental health more now than ever. School counselling lists are very full and young people are being placed on long waiting lists. Young people say that they are not aware of support services that are running or how to access these.</p> <p>1.2 All staff based in schools have a role to play in directly supporting, referring or signposting children and young people to appropriate mental health and wellbeing supports or services. Staff must be given the appropriate training opportunities and resources to be confident in their role. Those directly supporting children and young people with more serious mental health concerns need to be supported in their roles to deliver safe, high-quality, evidence-based, relational approaches while maintaining their own resilience and wellbeing.</p> <p>1.3 Staff in schools will have different levels of knowledge and awareness of how and where to signpost children and young people. To ensure consistency, staff must have easy access to information/resources to help signposting and/or referral of children and young people to relevant local and national supports and services.</p> <p>1.4 For this project baseline figures were taken from surveys conducted with Northfield Academy staff. (Please note that these figures are therefore estimates and based on a population proportion which is a fraction of the population that has the same characteristic.)</p>

Baseline figures:

I feel confident that I have the skills to start a conversation with a child or young person who is showing changes in behaviour that might indicate a mental health issue.

55% Agree or strongly agree.

I feel confident that I can support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing consistent with my role

55% Agree or strongly agree.

I feel confident of how and where to signpost young people to appropriate self-help activities, peer support or other agencies and resources

55% Agree or strongly agree.

2. IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

2.1 Against this background, the CPA Board approved the project charter for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.

2.2 This multi-agency project team agreed to focus on staff in our education settings initially with the view to scaling up and cascading the approaches in other settings if successful.

3. WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

3.1 The following changes were tested by the project:

- Offered monthly drop-in group supervision sessions to allow professionals to share, normalise and develop positive working relationships through shared experiences. (Sessions offered from January to June.)
- 1-1 supervision sessions offered for guidance staff. Staff are now able to access fortnightly 1-1 sessions at Harlaw Academy & Bucksburn Academy.
- Developed a signposting framework for practitioners to support children, young people and their families.
- Implemented whole school e-learning to ensure practitioners are confident in their role in directly supporting, signposting or referring pupils. Online live training sessions have been offered to PSA staff by ESO team. 'CLPL & Resource Suggestions' Thinglink created. (CLPL – Career Long Professional Learning).

4. HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

4.1 Yes, the project has achieved its aim. All ACC education staff were surveyed in November 2022. Figures show that 31% increase in the number of staff **who agree or strongly agree** that they can now support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, with 86% reporting this. (See below.)

I feel confident that I can support children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing consistent with my role.

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	84
● Agree	260
● Disagree	50
● Strongly disagree	4

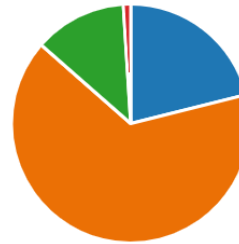


Figure 1.1 Confidence Levels Linked to Supporting C&YP’s Mental Health

4.2 Staff are now more confident when starting a conversation with a child or young person who is showing a change of behaviour that might indicate mental health issues - **91% agree or strongly agree.** (See below.)

I feel confident that I have the skills to start a conversation with a child or young person who is showing changes in behaviour that might indicate a mental health issue.

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	93
● Agree	270
● Disagree	33
● Strongly disagree	2

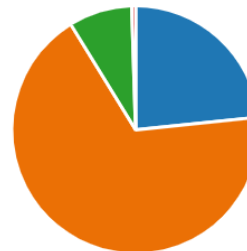


Figure 1.2 Confidence Levels Linked to Starting Conversations When Changes in Behaviour are Evident

4.3 Staff are now more aware of the services available to support learners & families across ACC as a result of the detailed Prezi presentation <https://prezi.com/view/Of1k5boc7c07oz9QETpj/> which offers a short description of all Tier 1, 2 and 3 services. The survey advised that 67% of staff felt confident of how and where to signpost children and young people to appropriate self-help activities, peer support or other agencies and resources. Whilst this is an increase of 12% does not reach the 80% target aimed to achieve. This project group felt that focus required in relation to this element of the project could be undertaken by the newly formed Mental Health Collaborative.

I feel confident of how and where to signpost children and young people to appropriate self-help activities, peer support or other agencies and resources.

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	43
● Agree	225
● Disagree	121
● Strongly disagree	9



Figure 1.3 Confidence Levels Linked to Signposting to Appropriate Self-Help Activities and Peer Support or Other Agencies.

4.4 Group sessions were offered across ACC (Guidance Teachers). Themed sessions were offered to encourage engagement. 50% of ACC secondary schools were represented. Anecdotal evidence suggested the sessions were worthwhile, although numbers were small. We increased signposting linked to these sessions in May to encourage more guidance staff to participate. Number of participants continued to be small in May and June. Following review of the session attendance and feedback, a decision was taken to reintroduce Network meetings in place of these group sessions.

4.5 Recruitment issues resulted in a delay initially in testing 1to1 supervision. Dedicated one to one supervision has meant that work can be examined closely, and sessions are relevant to the experience of the supervisee. The supervisor has no management responsibility. The supervisor is responsible for developing a safe, supportive and reflective space that enables the supervisee to explore thoughts, feelings and responses to work based experiences. Initial feedback from staff who have participated in the one to one sessions has shown that this has been a welcome addition to professional support available, stating that the time to reflect and listen to advise has been appreciated. One to one sessions will continue to be tested in the two schools for a further 6 months, at which time will be further reviewed and scale up considered.

4.6 Staff have access to a wide range of CLPL & resource suggestions which increases confidence levels when supporting learners & families. One such resource is [Thinglink](#) which Figure 1.4 below shows that since introduction in May 2022, views have increased per month with staff continuing to access the Thinglink, increasing to 603 views by December.

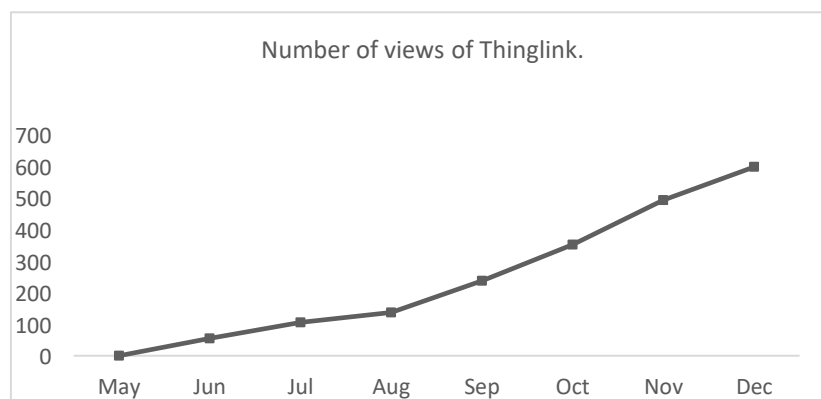


Figure 1.4 CLPL & Resources Thinglink Views

5. HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

5.1 The data shows that the aim has been achieved, with all of the change ideas reviewed and embedded as business as usual with the following in place to ensure ongoing promotion and review of the changes to ensure that the improvement is sustained:

- Thinglink 'Supporting Children's Mental Health - CLPL & Resource Suggestions' [Supporting Children's Mental Health — ThingLink](#) - The Thinglink is available to all via SharePoint and will be promoted on an ongoing basis.
- Signposting Prezi <https://prezi.com/view/OfIk5boc7c07oz9QETpj/> - The Prezi was showcased at a recent Head Teachers meeting and the link has been made accessible to all staff. In order to ensure that all ACC staff have access to the presentation it will also be uploaded on to Aberdeen Protects and will be promoted on an ongoing basis..
- 1-1 supervision process is now established. Evaluation of this support offer will be monitored as it progresses. If the supervision continues to evidence benefits, we will look to offer similar support on a wider basis across the city.
- Ongoing LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) training programme will continue to be offered across all schools.

5.2 The results of our questionnaire would also indicate that further focus is required in order to increase confidence levels linked to signposting for self-help/peer support or other agencies. We feel that the work required here could be undertaken by the recently established Mental Health Collaborative and considered as part of the development of the revised Children's Services Plan. Members of the group will offer their time to support the Mental Health Collaborative in order to ensure progress continues, if appropriate.

6. HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

6.1 Ongoing review of our support to staff in relation mental health interventions in schools sit with the Quality Improvement Manager and Health & Wellbeing working group. An annual survey will be undertaken to ensure that the improvements are maintained and also to support identification of any other areas of support required by staff. Should other settings adopt the improvements as set out in section 7 below, the questionnaire will be shared to ensure that a consistent approach to evaluation of the improvements are taken.

6.2 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will continue to be monitored and reported to the Children's Services Board, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

7.1 Initially the focus involved staff in our education settings with the view to scaling up and cascading the approaches in other settings if successful.

7.2 If evaluations continue to reflect positive outcomes, then supervision sessions which offer meaningful support through quality professional dialogue for all guidance staff across Aberdeen City Council could be recommended.

7.3 The 'Signposting Prezi' and 'Supporting Children's Mental Health' Thinglink will be available on Aberdeen Protects to ensure all agencies can access the documents/resources and this will be promoted by the Children's Services Board, along with the outcomes of the project, to all partner organisations supporting children and young people. Moving forward the resources created could also be shared through the Family Support Model.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Management Group:

- i) Agree to recommend to the CPA Board that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that the most recent questionnaire results were able to demonstrate that the aim had been achieved with over 80% of teaching staff can confidently support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing consistent with their role;
- ii) Note that the dataset for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the Improvement Programme dashboard to ensure progress is monitored;
- iii) Note that the results of the questionnaire would also indicate that further focus is required in order to increase confidence levels linked to signposting for self-help/peer support or other agencies and agree that improvements required be considered by the recently established Mental Health Collaborative and as part of the development of the revised Children's Services; and
- iv) Endorse the opportunities for scale up and spread of the improvements as described above.

Opportunities and Risks

There is an opportunity to further build on the work from this project in line with the Mental Health Collaborative which recently obtained Children's Services Committee approval.

CONSULTATION

5.1 Project Team
Stretch Outcome 5 Sub Group

Contact details:

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