

Appendix B

Priority 4 Case Study: Mental health senior leaders and mental health in schools conference

Since 2021, the Department for Education has been offering grants to schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead. In West Berkshire we are above the national and regional average in terms of schools who have applied for a grant from the DfE, however, we are also aware of schools who have a trained lead who have not applied for the grant.

In January 2024 we conducted a survey to map how many schools in West Berkshire had a trained lead or a member of staff with responsibility around mental health. This survey also asked whether colleagues would be interested in being involved in a network of fellow mental health leads, and if so, how this might look.

59 schools responded to confirm they had a member of staff who held such a responsibility and 80% of schools confirmed they would be interested in joining a network to share best practice and learn more about how to support the mental health of young people and the wider school community.

Following discussions with school colleagues, the first West Berkshire Mental Health in Schools Conference took place on 20 March 2024, with representatives from over 30 West Berkshire schools.

The agenda included presentations from local partners, case studies from one primary school and one secondary school, and time for reflection and discussion amongst colleagues.

The intention is for the conference to become an annual event in between network meetings that will be a blend of online and in person meetings.

Feedback from the event was very positive – an example is provided below:

“Kayley and I just wanted to thank you both sincerely for the Conference yesterday. It was a great afternoon - very informative and useful, and we enjoyed the chance to listen to the organisations present and to speak to other colleagues. We would certainly welcome a second Conference next year!

We are also looking forward to networking opportunities before then, and we will always really welcome the chance to chat more about staff wellbeing as well as student wellbeing.”