

'Kind Minds' Newsletter



Children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing
Staffordshire



Welcome to this autumn edition of Kind Minds.

Kind minds will now be moving to termly editions, rest assured though, it will still contain all the usual great articles, information, and signposting.

This newsletter has been produced by several partner organisations across Staffordshire, with the aim of pulling together useful information about children & young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We produce a newsletter every term and **we would welcome your thoughts on the types of information that would be most useful to you.**

Please get in touch with ideas, contributions or to be added to the distribution list:



sandra.webb@staffordshire.gov.uk



Introducing the
MyHappyMind programme



The Mental Health Support Team sub commission myHappyMind to work with primary schools in East Staffordshire (Burton and Uttoxeter).

myHappyMind is a science backed, NHS backed programme, it supports schools to develop a whole school culture of mental wellbeing through fun and interactive lessons and resources. The program is delivered by teachers using **pre-made digital lessons** projected onto the interactive whiteboard and supported by journals for every child, soft toys and other physical resources.

myHappyMind also comes with **a staff wellbeing program** and **an app for parents** for them to support the child's journey too. To learn more, we encourage you to watch this short video tour: WWW.LEARN.MYHAPPYMIND.ORG

Mental Health Support Team (Lichfield) Mental Health Support Team offer is now expanding to Lichfield and recruitment for this has been completed. There are still some schools that haven't signed up, if you haven't yet, please respond to the Expression of Interest which has been sent out.

Mindler (sandbox) Mindler continues to support Mental Health Support Team (East Staffordshire). They are delivering workshops on Anxiety. If you have children and young people suitable for Mindler groups then please contact your schools Mental Health Lead and Education Mental Health Practitioner.



Mental Health Leads in Education Network



The Mental Health Leads in Education Network continues to grow, with colleagues from education settings across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. Meetings are held termly and are a way of sharing information, resources and best practice as well as offering an opportunity for mental health leads to come together to ask questions, seek support, and share ideas.

Network members are given access to our web platform, which allows you to chat with colleagues in between meetings, continue to share ideas and seek support from peers. Building on this positive peer support, we established a list of 'buddies,' where settings have indicated that they wish to 'buddy up' with others. This helps the conversations and support to continue across the Network, between termly meetings.

Mental health leads in education network meeting dates for the 2023 / 24 academic year:

Date	Time	Districts
Autumn Term 2023: Mental health and School attendance		
Tuesday 14 th November 2023	07:45 – 08:45	North Staffordshire (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands) & Stoke-on-Trent
Thursday 16 th November 2023	16:00 – 17:00	
Friday 10 th November 2023	07:45 – 08:45	South Staffordshire (Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Stafford, South Staffordshire, Tamworth)
Wednesday 15 th November 2023	16:00 – 17:00	
Spring Term 2024: Staff wellbeing, Mental health support for adults/staff		
Tuesday 5 th March 2024	07:45 – 08:45	North Staffordshire (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands) & Stoke-on-Trent
Thursday 7 th March 2024	16:00 – 17:00	
Wednesday 28 th February 2024	07:45 – 08:45	South Staffordshire (Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Stafford, South Staffordshire, Tamworth)
Thursday 29 th February 2024	16:00 – 17:00	
Summer Term 2024:		
Tuesday 18 th June 2024	07:45 – 08:45	North Staffordshire (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands) & Stoke-on-Trent
Thursday 20 th June 2024	16:00 – 17:00	
Tuesday 11 th June 2024	07:45 – 08:45	South Staffordshire (Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Stafford, South Staffordshire, Tamworth)
Thursday 13 th June 2024	16:00 – 17:00	



All meetings take place via Microsoft Teams. Those on the distribution list will be sent a Teams link to allow them to join the meeting as well as an agenda nearer the time.

If you are a mental health lead in a school or an education setting (including post-16 education), and would like to be added to the MHL Network mailing list, please email:



Staffordshire schools / settings: sandra.webb@staffordshire.gov.uk



Stoke-on-Trent schools / settings: heather.griffiths@stoke.gov.uk

Want to know more about Mental health lead training for schools?



Senior mental health lead training: Find out how your school or college can apply for a grant and access DfE quality assured training to help develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The Department for Education (DfE) is offering a grant of £1,200 for eligible state-funded schools and colleges in England to train a senior mental health lead to develop and implement a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

This training is not compulsory, but it is part of the government's commitment to offer this training to all eligible schools and colleges by 2025.

Eligible schools and colleges are now able to apply for a senior mental health lead training grant to commence training by 31 March 2024. Grants will be provided to cover (or contribute to) the cost of attending a quality assured course and may also be used to hire supply staff while leads are engaged in learning [Senior mental health lead training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).



Staffordshire Emotional health and wellbeing service UPDATE: from Action for Children on groups and workshops

This term we have been working hard to reduce wait times for children and young people coming to us for support. **Children, young people, and their parent/carer can get support from our service quickly and with minimal wait** by attending one of our **group workshops or information sessions**.

In response to some of the questions and requests made we have developed **two quick guides**. See pages 27- 29

Parent/Carer group workshops

'Action for Children parent group workshop' guide gives an overview of the sessions available and some feedback from others who have attended. It aims to help parent/carers access support for themselves and learn how they can best support their child or young person.

Action for Children Parent Group Workshops

Communicating with My Child
"When we know better, we do better" Parenting is the hardest job of them all. Want to learn how to communicate with your child more effectively? This Parent Workshop outlines the role of parents in communicating positively and modelling emotional regulation to children who are struggling with their emotions. It teaches strategies from the Whole Brain Child and shows how we can connect with children, respond to emotions and relate to children in age-appropriate ways.
The 1 hour introduction workshop gives you tips and techniques to enrich relationships and encourage emotional connection.

Communicating with My Teen
"When we know better, we do better" Parenting is the hardest job of them all. Want to learn how to communicate with your teen more effectively? This 1-hour introduction workshop for parents supports understanding of the teenage brain, gives tips and techniques to enrich relationship, develop effective communication and encourage emotional connection.

Fantastic session. We are very early days in acknowledging and trying to understand neurodiversity within our daughter but this session has helped soo much.

Anxiety, Autism & Neurodiversity
Find out how anxiety can affect your neurodiverse child. Gain an understanding of the four areas of difference, how these can impact your child and learn practical techniques to support them to manage overwhelming feelings and emotions.
This one session workshop enables you to think about anxiety from the perspective of your child whilst equipping you with practical tools to support them. It's an informative workshop which is appropriate for parents or carers of autistic children, children with autistic traits or other neurodiverse conditions; for example ADHD or Dyscalculia.

"Its really opened my mind to some useful techniques and made me think why didn't I think of that in the last 9 years?"

Timid to Tiger
Timid to Tiger is a parenting-based approach to managing anxiety in children. It aims to teach Parents effective Cognitive Behavioural Techniques (CBT) to help children manage worries and fears. It helps to build confidence in children to minimise the effects of anxiety. If parents learn the techniques, they are in the best position to teach them and reinforce them on a day-to-day basis.
This 8 session course uses attachment-based play and gentle disciplinary techniques to help build the parent-child bond. It teaches tools to help manage children's fears and worries. By delivering the course in a group setting we also connect and learn from others, taking strategies from other people in a similar situation.

Fantastic session today, really informative and very helpful. I wish I knew all of this a couple of years ago

I was a bit perplexed when this was suggested rather than someone working with my child however I can completely appreciate why it was recommended now!



Children and young people group workshops

These quick guides 'Action for Children Groups' and 'Action for Children Young People's group Workshops' aims to explain to parent/carers and young people what the workshops are, how the group workshops can help and what to expect when attending. It is understandable that a child or young person may be feeling anxious around joining a group so this quick guide can help to reassure those anxieties.



Action for Children Groups

At Action for Children, we assess every referral that comes into the service and offer a stepped care approach dependent on need. This means that we would use our clinical judgment to identify the most appropriate intervention for your child and offer a support pathway accordingly. We offer a variety of group workshops to support young people with their emotional wellbeing which is our main offer of support.

What are the benefits of attending a group workshop?
Your child or young person will get the same support as 1:1 only quicker. Accessing our group workshops will often enable you to access support within the matter of a few weeks. Our group workshops are evidence-based and are designed with young people in mind to consider the best ways to support and engage them. A big chunk of our workshops are around understanding the difficulties that we are experiencing and how we are able to manage them. There are also opportunities to individualise the content and discuss some of the things you may be struggling with and offer tailored advice. A big advantage of being in a group workshop is that the other people in the group will often be experiencing things that you may be able to relate to which can help you to feel less alone and feel heard. Young people also often offer advice to others around what has worked for them, which can be really powerful.

What's the difference between groups and 1-1s?
Our 1-1 sessions are based on the same content that is delivered within our groups. Whilst our group workshops can be offered within the matter of a few weeks, due to demand our 1-1s have a significant wait, whilst we are unable to give an accurate estimate of our waiting time as this varies with the demand for the service, we are currently managing a wait of around eight months (Aug 2023). We would always recommend trying our group workshops in the first instance. If you feel that you are struggling with the group you can always get in contact with us to let us know and we can consider some of the things that may support you to access the group or consider whether alternative support would be appropriate instead.

How to support a child or young person if they are anxious about accessing group workshops
It is understandable that a child or young person may be feeling anxious around joining a group, especially if anxiety is something that they struggle with. When we feel anxious about something we often try to avoid it as it may feel scary however as parents we want to do by our best to support our children to feel confident to face anxiety. We would encourage you to have an open conversation with your child to explore any worries they may have and validate that it is understandable to feel anxious when we try something new. We would encourage you to join the session with them if they feel comfortable with this before the group takes place you may want to support them by doing things that they find calming. You may also want to remind them of how the group may be helpful and giving them some positive feedback to remind them that they can do this! Once the group is over it is really helpful to have a structured activity that they can look forward to.

What to expect when attending a group?
Most of our group workshops take place virtually via Microsoft Teams. We would always encourage people to put their cameras on however we understand that there may be circumstances where this isn't possible. We often have around 10 people in each workshop and split our workshops according to age ranges so you are able to be in a group with people around the same age as you. Our group workshops are run by 2 members of staff who will be delivering the group as well as sending information about the group beforehand. You are able to get in contact with them should you have any questions around the group. As part of our ground rules we ensure to let everyone know at the beginning of the session that they are entering a safe space. This means that we expect that all information shared within the group is kept confidential by other members of the group and not shared elsewhere. When you join our groups you are able to join using your first name and your personal details will not be visible to other members of the group.



Testimonials

"Everyone was listening and I felt that my opinions mattered and were heard"

"Both ladies that delivered the workshop were brilliant with all the children. My child is very shy so didn't show himself in camera a lot. He wasn't pushed to do so either which was very thoughtful."

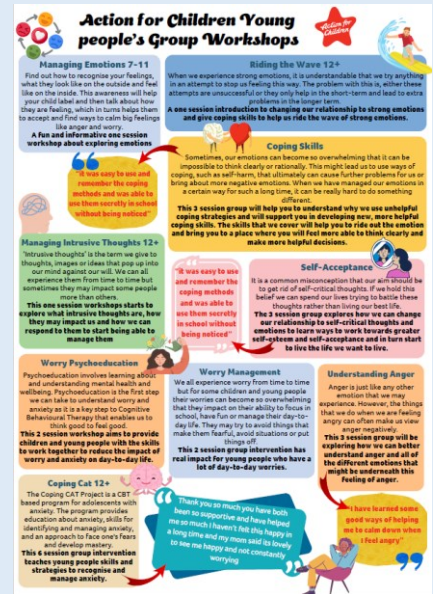
"Everyone was talking about how they feel and I've got strategies to try"

"I found the session useful and have used some of the top tips to help me. They work."

"Everybody was so friendly and I wasn't forced to say anything I wasn't comfortable with, but encouraged to speak by the team and over the group call, by the other people on there. It made me feel so much less afraid and alone, and I now have a plan of action for bad days / moments in my day."

"I think the fact they were very open to what you said to say. They supported you to be your ownable and most effective."

"There was a comforting environment created"



Action for Children Young People's Group Workshops

Managing Emotions 7-11
Find out how to recognise your feelings, what they look like on the outside and feel like on the inside. This awareness will help you and your child label and then talk about how they are feeling, which in some helps them to accept and feel ways to calm big feelings like anger and worry.
A fun and informative one session workshop about coping emotions

Riding the Wave 12+
When we experience strong emotions, it is understandable that we try anything in an attempt to stop us feeling this way. The problem with this is, either these attempts are unsuccessful or they only bring on the short-term and lead to extra problems in the longer term.
One session introduction to changing our relationship to strong emotions and give coping skills to help us ride the wave of strong emotions.

Coping Skills
Sometimes, our emotions can become so overwhelming that it can be impossible to think clearly or rationally. This might lead us to use ways of coping, such as self-harm, that ultimately can cause further problems for us as we bring about more negative emotions. When we have managed our emotions in a certain way for such a long time, it can be really hard to do something different.
This 3 session group will help you to understand why we use unhelpful coping strategies and will support you in developing new, more helpful coping skills. The skills that we cover will help you to ride the emotion and bring you to a place where you will feel more able to think clearly and make more helpful decisions.

Managing Intrusive Thoughts 12+
Intrusive thoughts are the terms we give to thoughts, images or ideas that pop up into our mind against our will. We can all experience them from time to time but sometimes they may impact some people more than others.
This one session workshop starts to explore what intrusive thoughts are, how they may impact us and how we can respond to them to start being able to manage them

Self-Acceptance
It is a common misconception that our aim should be to get rid of self-critical thoughts. If we hold this belief we can spend our lives trying to battle these thoughts rather than bring our best life. **This 3 session group explores how we can change our relationship to self-critical thoughts and emotions to learn ways to work towards greater self-esteem and self-acceptance and in turn start to live the life we want to live.**

Worry Management
We all experience worry from time to time but for some children and young people their worries can become so overwhelming that they impact on their ability to focus in school, have fun or manage their day-to-day life. They may try to avoid things that make them fearful, avoid situations or put things off.
This 2 session group intervention has real impact for young people who have a lot of day-to-day worries.

Understanding Anger
Anger is just like any other emotion that we do when we are feeling angry can often make us view anger negatively.
This 3 session group will be exploring how we can better understand anger and all of the different emotions that might be underneath this feeling of anger.

Worry Psychoeducation
Psychoeducation involves learning about and understanding mental health and wellbeing. Psychoeducation is the first step we can take to understand our anxiety and anxiety as it is a key step to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which enables us to think good to feel good.
This 2 session workshop aims to provide children and young people with the skills to work together to reduce the impact of worry and anxiety on day-to-day life.

Coping Cat 12+
The Coping Cat Project is a CBT based program for adolescents with anxiety. The program provides education about anxiety, skills for identifying and managing anxiety, and an approach to face one's fears and develop mastery.
This 6 session group intervention teaches young people skills and strategies to recognise and manage anxiety.


Thank you so much you have both been a supporter and have helped me so much I have been the one happy in a long time and my mood and I'm slowly to me my happy and not constantly worrying


I have learned some good ways of helping me to calm down when I feel angry

Waiting times: Our wait times can differ depending on the young person's pathway. Wait times for a group workshop are minimal enabling children and young people to receive support quickly so please encourage children and young people to access this support.

Wait times for one-to-one sessions are longer and we are working hard to reduce this. While we understand some children and young people prefer this type of support we would encourage them to try a group workshop. This can be a great way to see that others have similar emotions and difficulties and therefore reduce their feelings of isolation.

Our overall average wait times are currently: -

 Referral to assessment - 9.5 days

 Assessment to intervention - 5.8 days

Contact us: Remember to contact us, check progress of a referral or get some information, advice and guidance:

 **01782 977 877**

 staffordshirewb@actionforchildren.org.uk

 [Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service \(actionforchildren.org.uk\)](http://Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service (actionforchildren.org.uk))



Participation actively involves children and young people in the decision processes on issues that affect them. Participation can come in many forms, from young people panels during interviews, to speaking at events and redesigning services

The participation team ensure integration of participation of CYP and families safely and meaningfully in every part of what we do. Working in partnership with CYP, parents and carers and services to support CYP full co-production.

Building knowledge, confidence, and skills of professionals across the mental health system around participation. The team will be increasing participation of CYP and their families in the CYP's mental health system - at individual, organisational, local and national levels.

With support from the participation team, CYP and parents and carers will understand that their involvement in service level and local decision-making around mental health services could improve services and local systems. Putting the experiences of children, young people, parents and carers at the centre of service design to help to shape future developments and improve our services.

Services grow and develop through the use of feedback, and who's better feedback to hear than those who use our services.

If you would like further information or if you feel you may have any suitable CYP, Parents or Carers that would like to be involved with our participation team, then please contact us at Participation@mpft.nhs.uk

We will be hosting a series of events in the future. Please follow our social media pages in order to be notified of any upcoming events or information as the team develops. Exciting times ahead!

Facebook and Instagram: @mhparticipation
X (previously Twitter): @yparticipation



NEW: Children and Young Peoples Voice!



What is your perspective on Children's Mental Health? What are your young people saying about the topic - we'd love to hear from your perspective and stand in your shoes as part of an exciting project to add a tool to our co-production toolbox.

Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) is the provider of specialist CAMHS in South Staffordshire, along with a wide range of Children's community services. One of our key strategic priorities is improving how we involve children and young people in shaping our services.



To do this we are working in partnership with Gill Phillips, owner, and founder of 'Whose Shoes' which is a board game which can be used as a tool for Co-production. The game is established and popular in maternity services and MPFT are working with Gill to expand the range of scenarios so Whose Shoes can be used in other contexts.



As with many board games the game involves rolling a dice, moving a shoe and landing on a colour, with each colour representing a different perspective; Professional; Parent; Young Person or someone with power. The player then turns over a card and reads a perspective.

To do this we are crowd-sourcing material for the cards and are seeking involvement from anyone who has a perspective to share. This could include you or your students.

To get involved we invite you to dive into our padlet and make a contribution, or perhaps you could challenge your students to writing short poems for the 'poets' corner', linking it to your PHSE or literacy curricular. Perhaps they'd like to contribute artwork or a cartoon instead?

Equally we'd love to hear from teachers sharing their perspective by adding a comment or draft scenario or sharing something more creative with us.

Finally, if you'd like to learn more about this project, or get involved in hosting or participating in a workshop to actually play the game once it's developed please contact Lyse.Edwards@mpft.nhs.uk.

You can access our padlet here - feel free to leave something on the board [PHASE 3 Project: CYP - MH - MPFTWhoseShoes - crowdsourced squirrelling \(padlet.com\)](#)

Or read more about the project in 'Whose News'
<https://sway.office.com/1vjvAMZxeYYTNm70?ref=Link&loc=mysways>

Focus on....Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a 'broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have a severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school' (West Sussex Educational Psychology Service, 2018).

When a child or young person has severe difficulty attending school due to emotional factors, the effects can be far reaching. This can impact on academic attainment, could result in isolation from peers, difficulty in maintaining friendships and limit social opportunities, leading to feelings of loneliness. The root of school avoidance is often anxiety or fear, over time, the avoidance itself can worsen these feelings, creating a cycle of anxiety and distress.



The number of young people with attendance issues remains higher than before the pandemic, those persistently absent increased to 501,642 in secondary schools in autumn 2020, compared with 454,167 in 2019, not including non-attendance in covid circumstances (DfE, 2022)

Tamlyn, G. (Prof Doc thesis) **Explored the voice of young people** who have experienced emotional based school avoidance: [An Exploration of the Narratives of Young People Who Have Experienced Emotional Based School Avoidance](#)

Research by Klijakovic, et al. **exploring experiences and views of young people** seen within an inner London Pupil Referral Unit who were extremely socially withdrawn and unable to attend mainstream education. Among key themes identified was the role of anxiety in withdrawal from education [School refusal and isolation](#)



How youth work can help tackle school avoidance

Children and young people are facing increasing challenges, including poor mental health, wellbeing and anxiety, poverty and hunger. These challenges impact in the classroom and on a child's or young person's education. **Youth work** can have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people. **The NYA** (National Youth Agency) published a report - [Better Together: Youth Work with Schools](#), which explored how formal and informal education providers working together can improve wellbeing and attendance.

The report states that youth work can support schools on site or via outreach by:

- Engaging or re-engaging children and young people in learning and school, reducing exclusions and persistent absenteeism and improving wider wellbeing
- Delivering enrichment activities that support a range of skills development, progression, and community engagement.

At SCVYS, we believe that there are real connections to be made and benefits to be had between formal and informal education settings. We have a number of offers that span across these settings to show our commitment in strengthening the links between the two:

- [PSHE Education Service](#), as we see the value in linking the two settings together to ensure consistent delivery and key messages to enable children and young people to thrive as individuals and as members of society.
- [The Wham Plan](#) (Wellbeing and Health action plan) training young people to deliver in both formal and informal education settings. This is a series of emotional wellbeing sessions designed and delivered by young people aged 11-18 years.

Our [activity map](#) enables schools and colleges to know what youth activities are being delivered by SCVYS members in their local area. As SCVYS members, formal education colleagues can be assured they have the appropriate minimum operating standards including robust governance arrangements and safeguarding processes in place. Many of our members already deliver evidence-based interventions such as the Vulnerable Adolescent Support Programme, Turnaround Programme, mentoring and listening schemes as well as other alternative education work.



Locally, we have examples of excellent youth work taking place both in and out of school. One of our members - [Fun Club Hub CIO Charity](#) works closely with Erasmus Darwin Academy in Lichfield, to have youth workers within the school and at The Wilnecote School, Tamworth for youth work provision on site after school.

If you'd be interested in finding out more about the youth offer in your local area please contact us office@staffscvys.org.uk.

 www.pshestaffs.com

www.nya.org.uk/youth-work-with-schools

 office@staffscvys.org.uk



Emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA) Resources

This resource from Anna Freud looks at the topic of emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA) and shares ideas to help education staff address the issue.

Rather than the term 'school refusal', the term EBSA recognises that this **avoidance has its roots in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues**.

The downloadable resource introduces the topic of EBSA, explores some of the **potential risk factors** and **provides strategies and tips** to help education staff tackle the issue.

Addressing emotionally based school avoidance
For school leaders, senior mental health leads and classroom teachers



Download the resource from their website: [Addressing emotionally-based school avoidance \(annafreud.org\)](#)

On the website there is also a recorded webinar - understanding emotionally-based school avoidance.

[Understanding emotionally based school avoidance seminar - YouTube](#)



BITESIZE has information for Parents on how they can help their child with school anxiety and refusal, it explains what it is, how it might show in behaviour at home along with advice on who can help.



It suggests Parents keep in regular contact with school and work with them on strategies to help their child, including work for them to do at home if necessary.

- **Ensure each day is a fresh start.** Often pupils who've been unable to attend school then feel they can't reintegrate.
- **Try to avoid a 'shame cycle'.** Acknowledge their difficulty, validate their feelings and explain that you can work together to overcome barriers.
- **Work with the school to identify learning that can be done at home.** This will help to ensure that your child doesn't feel like they've fallen behind too much.
- **Be proactive in lowering baseline levels of anxiety.** For example, through mindfulness activities around transition points.

For more information visit [School anxiety and refusal: How parents can help their child get through tough times](#)



Parents' guide gives advice on how Parents can support children if they are anxious about school, or they are unable to go to school, strategies to try at home [School Anxiety and Refusal | Parent Guide to Support | YoungMinds](#)

Some ideas include:

Create a **morning routine** or timetable. Having a routine can create a **sense of security and reduce stress** prepare things like checking their timetable, packing bags and laying out clothes the night before. In the morning, **focus on the one thing they need to do next** as you work your way through the timetable, **rather than thinking about a big goal like 'getting to school'**.

Younger children might like to take something from home, like a favourite toy, into school with them - or use a worry box at home.

Worry boxes are containers into which children can post their anxious thoughts. Children can find them soothing because they:

- give them a physical way of getting rid of their worries, so they don't need to carry them around anymore
- make them feel safer by holding their anxious thoughts for them
- help them to understand that thoughts are just thoughts, not real things that happen in the world, and that it's possible to let them go
- create a routine for sorting out their worries and sharing them with you

[Guide to making a worry box](#)

Teenagers can use worry boxes too, but they may find a **Self soothe box** helps them feel calm [Guide to make a self soothe box](#)

This guide is written by Eve a young person who was introduced by a mental health professional to the idea of a self-soothe box. *'It's a tool I still turn to frequently.'* She explains *'You can change yours depending on your preference. I often take a miniature, more travel-friendly version when going on holiday also, which I would recommend if you find travelling stressful or anxiety-provoking'*.



In the video young people explain what they have in their self-soothe boxes



[How to make a self-soothe box - YouTube](#)

WATCH OUT....Upcoming online sessions to present.... **New Guidance around school non-attendance**



Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service have developed guidance around school non-attendance and are releasing an edited version this academic year.

This includes, how to **recognise early patterns of non-attendance**, the **potential risk** and **resilience factors** to be aware of, **identifying unmet needs**, **action planning** and **strategies** school staff can use to support young people and families in this area.

Please join us at **Mental Health leads in Education Network meetings** on **Friday 10th November** at **7:45** or **Wednesday 15th November** at **16:00** for virtual sessions where **Gemma Holmes, Senior Educational Psychologist**, will be presenting the updated guidance and seeking your views on the challenges you are facing.

Want to know more about Mental Health leads in Education Network? See page 2 of this newsletter!





Action for Children have advice and guidance for parents and carers on school refusal and school anxiety

Topics covered are: What is school refusal, why is my child refusing to go to school and how can my child get back to school.

Access the guide on their website: [What is school refusal and what can I do about it?](#) for information, advice, and guidance on school refusal, why your child might feel anxious about school and how you can get them the support they need.

We all feel anxious from time to time. Day-to-day things like friendship, money, exams, or work can cause anxiety. Or certain situations, such as travelling home at night, starting a new school, or giving a presentation.



But the feeling usually passes once we feel safe or solve the problem we had. Generally, the worries stop and we're able to carry on with our lives. Young Minds [Tips For Coping With Anxiety About Change](#)



Young people describe what living with anxiety is like access the video on YouTube:

[Living with Anxiety | YoungMinds - YouTube](#)



Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

The Department for Education has produced [guidance](#) on how to support school attendance where there is a pupil experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues:

[Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The guidance explains that Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or perform interventions but they are expected to work to ensure regular attendance for every child [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

Broadly speaking, the role of school staff is to ensure that the school is a **calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn**, which is the foundation of securing good attendance.

Schools will achieve this by [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#) through a whole-school approach to pupil mental health. Any associated anxiety about attending should be mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance [effective practice examples](#)





The Department for Education have proposals to tackle the postcode lottery of avoidable absence in schools. [New measures to increase school attendance](#)

A consultation proposed that all schools have robust policies detailing how they will support pupils to attend as regularly as possible.

The number of pupils persistently absent increased to 501,642 in secondary schools in autumn 2020, compared with 454,167 in 2019, not including non-attendance in covid circumstances.

It highlighted the importance of regular face-to-face education to allow all pupils to fulfil their potential.



RESOURCES



The Education Hub is a site for parents, pupils, education professionals and the media that captures all you need to know about the education system.

You'll find accessible, straightforward information on popular topics, Q&As, interviews, case studies, and more. [The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](http://blog.gov.uk)

Mental health first aid kit



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID KIT

Things can be overwhelming sometimes, but making a first aid kit can help you to cope when things are tough.

Visit ChildLine's website to find out what a Mental Health first aid kit is, tips on creating a first aid kit and when to use it. [Mental Health First Aid Kit | Childline](#)

Parents mental health guide



Young Minds have produced a resource for Parents and Carers - **Parents A-Z mental health guide:**

how to help children and young people with their feelings and behaviour, as well as mental health conditions, life events and where to get help.

Visit their website for more information: [Parents' A-Z Mental Health Guide](#)



Kerry a young person shares **Grounding techniques to help with anxiety**, which she uses. *'During an anxious period of time or a panic attack, I have found that I tend to start feeling very disconnected from everyone else. My thoughts can start racing at a mile a minute. Sometimes it can feel like I'm stuck in slow motion, or that everything is in fast forward. Everything seems to get much louder and out of focus.'*

She uses:

Square breathing: you breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds, hold for four seconds and repeat.



Going through senses: name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, one thing you can taste.

The alphabet game is where you name something for every letter of the alphabet within any category of subject. This could be animals, people's names, foods etc.

Visit Young Minds website [Grounding Techniques](#) to read more about Kerry's grounding techniques.



Fireworks is a Hednesford based registered charity which works in schools supporting children with their mental health through music, mindfulness, sign language.

They run small group sessions in schools, as well as doing class-based workshops and assemblies all within the theme of mental health.

If a pupil is struggling with their mental health, then it affects so many areas of their lives, school being a key area.

Fireworks work with pupils who struggle to come into school, they can provide a safe place for them to talk. Fireworks work with pupils in primary and secondary schools all who have varying needs ranging from Autism and anxiety to low self-esteem and bereavement. To find out more: [Fireworks \(webador.co.uk\)](http://Fireworks(webador.co.uk)) fireworkseh@gmail.com

Education staff and adults' wellbeing

You can't pour from an empty cup, so take time to refill. It can be difficult to think about self-care when you're busy, so much to do - so little time.....why not try Meditation? - it's simply a way for us to stop for a moment and be calm. In a busy world, it gives us the permission to pause, breathe and reset. Benefits, video and 7 step guide to meditate, as well as more self-help ideas can be found at: [How to meditate for beginners - NHS](#)



Not got time? Meditation can be for just a minute and easy to work into your day, [App • The One Moment Company](#) One Moment meditation is an app that takes you through warm up, one minute mediation and then cool down.....or just one minute meditation for when you need a quick recovery break.



Dates for your diary - mental health and wellbeing celebration days



September	10 September	World Suicide Prevention Day
	19 September	Youth Mental Health Day
October	October	Black History Month
	10 October	World Mental Health Day
November	13 November	World Kindness Day
	13-17 November	Anti-Bullying Week
	16-23 November	Children's Grief Awareness Week
December	3 December	International Day of People with Disabilities
	25 November-10 December	16 days of activism against gender-based violence

World Suicide Prevention Day 10th September 2023

World Suicide Prevention Day is hosted on 10 September each year by the International Association for Suicide Prevention [Who we are - IASP](#) and provides the opportunity for people, across the globe, to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention. Suicide is the single biggest killer of men under the age of 45 in the country, but suicides among teenage girls and young women have almost doubled in recent years.

For more information please visit: [World Suicide Prevention Day - Mental Health UK](#)



Students bereaved through suicide can be under a lot of pressure, Cruse have resources to help schools support them. [Supporting children bereaved by suicide - Cruse Bereavement Support](#)

Around 10 lives are prematurely lost each month to suicide in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-trent. **#TalkSuicide campaign** aims to bring local individuals, organisations and businesses together to help prevent suicide. You can sign up at [#TalkSuicide - #DoingOurBit \(staffordshire.gov.uk\)](#) for Free training, resources, downloads, and tools

**#TALK
SUICIDE**



MindEd is a free educational resource on children, young people, adults, and older people's mental health. There are free suicide and self-harm prevention e-learning courses available on the website [MindEd Hub](#)

Over 200 teenagers are lost to suicide every year. **PAPYRUS** prevention of young suicide is UK charity dedicated to prevention of suicide and promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. [Help and Advice Resources | Papyrus UK \(papyrus-uk.org\)](#)





Step by Step is a **Samaritans** service that provides practical support to help schools prepare for and recover from a suspected or attempted suicide. Downloadable resources are available at: [Step by Step resources | Samaritans](#)

Need urgent help? If you need urgent support, feel unable to cope, are worried about your own mental health or someone you care for, help is available.



Call your **local NHS urgent mental health helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:**

North Staffordshire (Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle, Staffs Moorlands) on **0800 0 328 728 (option 1)**. If you have a hearing impairment or are unable to use the telephone, you can text the All Age Access Team on **07739 775202** and the team will respond as soon as possible (please note: this text service is charged at your network provider's rate).

South Staffordshire (Stafford, Stone, Rugeley, Cannock, South Staffs, Lichfield, Burton, Uttoxeter, Tamworth) on **0808 196 3002**. If you have a hearing impairment or are unable to use the telephone, you can email the All Age Access Team mhsi.staffordshire@mpft.nhs.uk and the team will respond as soon as possible.

Samaritans - confidential crisis support helpline, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - **116 123**. [Contact Us | Samaritans](#) they have email service and self help app

Is it an emergency? If someone's life is at risk because they have seriously injured themselves or taken on overdose call **999**. If you do not feel you can keep yourself, or someone else safe from immediate risk of harm, call **999**.



World Mental Health Day 10th October 2023

The [World Health Organisation](#) recognises **World Mental Health Day** on 10th October each year. World Federation for mental health theme for 2023 is **'Mental health is a universal human right'** [World Federation for Mental Health \(wfmh.global\)](#)

The green ribbon is the international symbol of mental health awareness. Did you know that the average adult will say "I'm fine" 14 times per week, yet only 19% actually mean it? Wearing a green ribbon/pin can create safe spaces for people to talk about mental health.



On **World Mental Health Day** young minds are asking people to wear yellow [#HelloYellow](#) to stand out and show up for young people's mental health

#HelloYellow





Register at [Home - Crisis Tools](#) to get free accessible video guides and text resources co-produced with young people with lived experience and mental health professionals. Learning guides to increase knowledge and confidence for anyone supporting young people in a mental health crisis. Gain certificates and CPD evidence for completing the learning guides.

Anti-Bullying Week 2023: Make A Noise About Bullying

This year it has the theme '**Make A Noise About Bullying**' and will take place from Monday 13th to Friday 17th November. The week will start with **Odd Socks Day on Monday 13th November**, where adults and children **wear odd socks to celebrate what makes us all unique.**

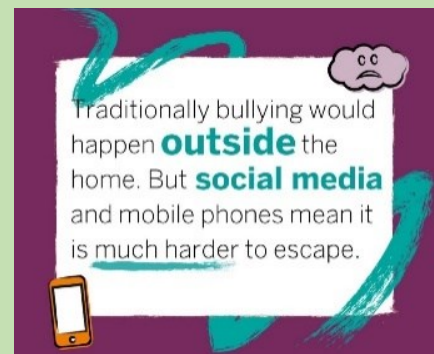


[Click to open in YouTube](#)

Free teaching resources are available from Anti-Bullying Alliance [Anti-Bullying Week 2023](#) Parents and Carers packs are available too [Parents and Carers](#)

Teachwire have Odd socks primary lesson plan [Odd Socks Day - Lesson plan for Anti Bullying Week - Teachwire](#)

Cyberbullying is a type of bullying that happens online or over digital devices, like mobiles. It involves the sharing or posting of private, hurtful, harmful, humiliating, or false information about a person. As it is online this bullying can be harder to escape. [The effects of cyberbullying on young people | The Children's Society](#)



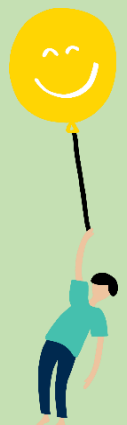
ChildLine have advice and tips for young people who are being bullied [Bullying and cyberbullying | Childline](#) It can be difficult to know where to start with helping someone who's being bullied. But just a few words of support and showing that you care can make a massive difference.

- **Let them know you're there for them**

Listening and letting someone who's being bullied know you're there if they want to chat can make a massive difference. Chatting to them regularly and saying you're there for them can help them feel less alone.

- **Help them to get support**

You could offer to go with them to report the bullying and help them think about what they want to say. Or you could help them [report it on social media](#).



- **Think before you like or comment on something**

Liking, sharing, or commenting on a post designed to bully someone can make it more popular and visible, even if you're not supporting it. Don't respond to a post, even if you're not sure if it's meant to bully someone.

- **Help to distract them**

Help them to take their mind off things for a short while. You could watch a film, play sports or a game together.

- **Be positive around people**

Whether it's posting positive things online, or being friendly to people at school, being positive can help lots of people to feel better.

Children's Grief Awareness Week 16-23 November 2023



Recognises and raises awareness of the bereavement experiences of children and young people. This year the theme is 'The Shape of Your Support'. Focusing on the people around a bereaved child or young person (beyond their friends or family) that can be there to support them through their grief. [Children's Grief Awareness Week](#)



Hope Again is the youth website of Cruse Bereavement Support. It has been created for young people, by young people. [Hope Again](#) website has advice, videos, and resources to support young people

experiencing grief.

[Resources – Hope Again](#)



International Day of Persons with Disabilities



International Day of Persons with Disabilities 3rd December is an annual event to spread awareness and understanding of disabilities that might not be immediately visible, such as mental illness, chronic pain or fatigue and learning disabilities. **The World Health Organisation** estimates more than one billion people - about 15% of the world's population experience some form of disabilities.

Most people think of disabilities as visible physical impairments, Invisible or 'hidden' disabilities can go unnoticed or unsupported. This can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Some 'hidden' disabilities could be:

- Mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, personality disorders
- Autism
- Visual impairments



- Hearing loss
- Sensory processing disorders
- Cognitive impairments such as dementia, learning disabilities, or traumatic brain injury.

Invisible disabilities can also make it hard to access activities that are important for mental health, such as socialising or exercising.

Twinkl have free primary and secondary teaching resources ["Hidden Disabilities" Teaching Resources](#)



Training and Learning Opportunities



North Staffordshire Mind: Free half day **Suicide prevention and awareness training session.** There are limited number of places on suicide prevention training for individuals, businesses, clubs, groups, and organisations, across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. [#TalkSuicide Training - #DoingOurBit](#)

To find out more on our #Talksuicide campaign [#TalkSuicide - #DoingOurBit \(staffordshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Anna Freud: Mental health and school attendance training. Training modules are suitable for anyone working with children and young people in a school, college or community setting: Increases awareness and understanding of emotionally based school avoidance. Understanding evidence-based interventions and strategies to support students as well as access to resources. *Cost £ involved [Training for schools and colleges](#)

NSPCC Mental health and wellbeing safeguarding in education training. Online course to help recognise, respond to and support children and young people's mental health in schools and colleges. **CPD certified.** Gain confidence to effectively identify mental health issues that may become safeguarding concerns, and learn how to support and protect the children and young people you work with. *Cost £ involved [Mental health and wellbeing safeguarding children training](#)

Open University: Introduction to adolescent mental health is a free Online course. Covering different dimensions of adolescent mental health, recognising mental health problems, supporting young people, identifying sources of support and accessing services. [Introduction to adolescent mental health](#) The course is **CPD accredited.**



Free **CPD-certified Anti-bullying online training** from **Anti Bullying Alliance** [Free CPD online training \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



Mental health is as important to a child's safety and wellbeing as their physical health. It can impact on all aspects of their life, including their educational attainment, relationships and physical wellbeing. Mental health can also change over time, to varying degrees of seriousness, and for different reasons.

And we know it's an important issue for children: 45% of all Childline counselling sessions in 2018/19 related to mental or emotional health and wellbeing. Find out more at :[Child mental health: recognising and responding to issues | NSPCC Learning](#)

Evidence Library



The Childrens society have published **The Good childhood report 2022**. This shows that children's happiness continues to decline. Young people are on average less happy with their life, school, friends and how they look than ten years ago.

Key findings:

- UK children's happiness with their lives continues to decline.
- More children are unhappy with their appearance than with family, friends, school, and schoolwork. Girls are more likely to feel this way than boys.
- Happiness with school and schoolwork declines significantly with age and was significantly lower among children in lower income households.
- Over half of parents and carers feel that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the education of their children.
- 85% of parents and carers are concerned about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on their household/family.

The report can be downloaded [The Good Childhood Report 2022](#)



PHSE Education Stoke and Staffordshire is a Pan-Staffordshire PHSE education service where Schools, Parents & Carers, and Young people can find **support, information, advice and guidance about quality, age appropriate PSHE education** Visit their website www.pshestaffs.com for information, as well as educational resources via their Central Resource Library.





Child mental health: learning from case reviews:

It's important to think about the potential implications for child protection and safeguarding when working with children struggling with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Published case reviews highlight the detrimental impact adverse experiences, such as abuse or neglect, can have on a child's mental health. They also demonstrate how mental health problems can lead to safeguarding concerns. For example, in some case reviews a child's mental health problems led to self-harm or situations which put themselves or others at risk of harm.

This briefing is based on learning from a sample of case reviews published between 2021 and 2022 involving children with a wide range of different mental health problems. These ranged from diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health conditions, to wider concerns related to mental and emotional wellbeing. [Child mental health: learning from case reviews \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)



From resilience to wellbeing is a paper which explores schools' role in promoting children's mental health: An education policy analysis was conducted for England and Australia, two nations advocating a 'bottom-up' approach to mental health promotion, granting flexibility to schools and municipal authorities.

Notwithstanding cultural differences (research in Australia was with Indigenous young people), common aspects were evident across both datasets, revealing the centrality to young people of self-authenticity, relatedness, and connectedness to nature, as key to their wellbeing. The paper concludes in advancing a set of principles to underpin a relational and social identity approach to schools' wellbeing promotion strategy.

For more information: [From resilience to wellbeing: Identity-building as an alternative framework for schools' role in promoting children's mental health](#)





Social Media and Mental health.



Social media can impact on Children and Young peoples' self-esteem and mental wellbeing with often unrealistic images of bodies and lifestyles shared, as well as cyberbullying. [Social media damages teenagers' mental health, report says - BBC News](#)

Think of social media as the sweets and junk food of a 5 a day diet, if you have too much it's not healthy for you, getting the right balance can be tricky, make sure there's time away from social media to meet friends in real life not just online, be active by playing sports/go for a walk, make time for hobbies and clubs.



There are some hints and tips on talking to children about their use of social media [Social Media & Mental Health | Guide For Parents | YoungMinds](#) Remind children and young people that they shouldn't

share personal information, name, address or school name, sharing phone numbers or being asked to join private group chats. They shouldn't share pictures of themselves, or photos of their bodies: naked or sexual photos or videos. Explain to that if someone starts asking them questions or ask them to do things that, makes them feel worried/uncomfortable, or ask they speak on different messaging platforms, they need to come and tell you.



NSPCC have information on risks of social media for children, tips to help children stay safe as well as social media apps age ranges and main features. [Social media | NSPCC](#) Make sure you know the age limits for apps and that the correct age is used when signing up. TikTok accounts created by 13-16 years olds are set to private by default, but still review settings to ensure they've been set up correctly. Get involved ask your child to give you a demo of the app. You could suggest making a video together! It's a great way to show interest in what they are doing but also give opportunities to have a talk about different privacy settings. Further guidance for safer use of TikTok: [Is TikTok safe? | NSPCC](#) Tips like Family pairing of accounts, restricted mode to filter out adult content and daily screen time.

Social media however can have **some potential positive benefits**... appropriate use can help build friendships all over the world, helping children and young people learn and appreciate different cultures and ideas, finding support through specific groups. BBC have 5 ways children can make sure their online life is positive and fun. [5 ways a better internet - BBC](#). They also have age 7-11 teacher resources [OwnIt TeacherNotes](#)



Social media facts and advice for parents can also be found at: [Social media advice hub | Internet Matters](#)



Useful helplines and websites

Childnet: Provides [online information](#) for parents around supporting children with gaming at different ages.

Parents can [download their Family Agreement template](#) and find tips on using it with their family.

The Mix: Offers online information as well as helpline support to under-25s about anything that's troubling them.

Email support is available via their [online contact form](#).

Free [1-2-1 webchat service](#) and telephone helpline available.

Opening times: 4pm - 11pm, seven days a week [0808 808 4994](#)

Childline: If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, chat online or email about any problem big or small.

[Sign up](#) for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use their [free 1-2-1 counsellor chat](#) and email support service.

[Can provide a BSL interpreter](#) if you are deaf or hearing-impaired.

Hosts [online message boards](#) where you can share your experiences, have fun and get support from other young people in similar situations.

Opening times: 24/7 [0800 11 11](#)

Tellmi

Formerly known as MeeToo. A free app for teenagers (11+) providing resources and a fully moderated community where you can share your problems, get support, and help other people too.

Can be downloaded from [Google Play](#) or [App Store](#).



Below is a summary of who can access which service

Emotional Health & Wellbeing Service (Action for Children)	C&YP with mild to moderate emotional / behavioural difficulties around emotional wellbeing C&YP aged 5-18 (up to 25 for those with EHCPs / Care Experienced within Staffordshire, excl. Stoke-on-Trent)
South Staffordshire CAMHS (MPFT)	Supports children and young people living up to age 18 in South Staffordshire (South Staffordshire includes Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Stafford, South Staffordshire, and Tamworth). Self-referrals are welcome (the consent of a parent or carer will be required for children under 12, or those 12 and over with a special education need or learning disability).
North Staffordshire CAMHS (NSCHT)	Supports children and young people living up to age 18 in North Staffordshire (North Staffordshire includes Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle-under-Lyme) Online referrals and self-referrals are welcome (the consent of a parent or carer will be required for children under 12, or those 12 and over with a special education need or learning disability).
Mental Health Support Teams in Schools	C&YP with mild to moderate difficulties, focussing particularly on low mood, anxiety, and behavioural difficulties. C&YP aged 5-18 *within Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent, Burton & Uttoxeter, Stafford, Cannock Chase, Tamworth, Lichfield *Participating schools only

thank you to our partners:



We love to hear your feedback, especially if you have shared websites or resources from Kind Minds with Children and Young people: what have you/they found useful? Please ensure any feedback from children and young people is anonymised.

Maybe you have something you would like to share that you find helpful to support Children and Young peoples' Mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Drop us a line at sandra.webb@staffordshire.gov.uk




Do you want to know what opportunities there are for young people to get involved and make their voice heard? Information below outlines the process for the forthcoming elections to the **Countywide Youth Forum, Staffordshire Youth Union, and the subsequent selection of the 4 local UK Youth Parliament representatives.**

This is open to all young people within the age range who are resident in Staffordshire.

UK Youth Parliament & Staffordshire Youth Union 2024-26











The next term of office for UK Youth Parliament will begin in March 2024, with elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) serving a two year term. To become a candidate in the elections for UK Youth Parliament, you must first be elected into the Staffordshire Youth Union (SYU).

Elections will be held Autumn 2023 for positions in Staffordshire Youth Union, with 4 seats allocated per Staffordshire Borough/District, with an additional 8 places reserved for young people countywide who may have missed out due to high competition in a particular borough/district.



STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY YOUTH SERVICES

Countywide Elections

	Staffordshire Youth Union
Stafford Borough	→ 
Newcastle Borough	→ 
Staffordshire Moorlands	→ 
East Staffordshire Borough	→ 
Cannock Chase District	→ 
Lichfield District	→ 
Tamworth Borough	→ 
South Staffordshire District	→ 
Additional Countywide Seats	→ 
	

Internal elections will then be held in Jan/Feb 2024 amongst the SYU members for the 4 Member of Youth Parliament positions

MYP
1

MYP
2

MYP
3

MYP
4

(Maximum total SYU membership = 40 young people)

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Staffordshire Youth Union (SYU)


Staffordshire Youth Union exists in order to amplify the voice, power and influence of young people within Staffordshire and beyond. We are not aligned to any political party and base our campaigns on the experiences of young people locally and nationally.



We support our Members of Youth Parliament and also develop our own local campaigns based on the issues that affect young people most. We help raise awareness, engage in social action to benefit young people and communities in Staffordshire, and work alongside the British Youth Council and UK Youth Parliament to bridge the gap between local and national politics.

Elections for SYU membership will be open for all young people aged 11-18 in Staffordshire to vote in, and it will be the responsibility of the candidates to manage their own election campaigns, which ensures impartiality from SCVYS in the interest of open and fair elections. SCVYS may ask candidates to attend events, answer a few questions or submit short video content as part of this process.

To be eligible to join Staffordshire Youth Union, you will:

- Want to represent and speak up for the views and priorities of other young people
- Be motivated to make positive change through your actions and supporting others
- Live, work, be educated or volunteer in the Staffordshire for 14+ hours a week
- Be aged 11-18 on 1st March 2024
- Regularly attend our monthly meetings (a mixture of virtual and in-person)



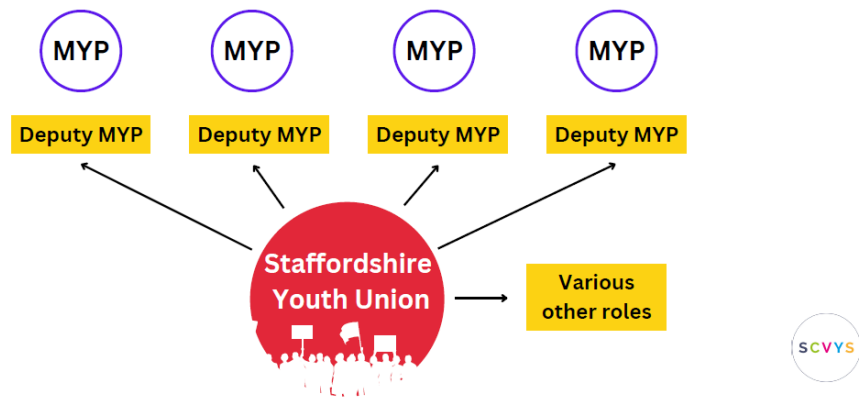



Once the newly elected Staffordshire Youth Union have met, got to know each other, held some initial priority-setting discussions, and voted on representatives for specific roles, we will hold internal elections from within SYU in early 2024 for the four positions as Members of Youth Parliament.

In addition to the roles as MYPs, there will also be specialist positions within SYU such as; Chair and Vice-Chair, Event Co-ordinator, Campaign Co-ordinator, Social Media Officer, Environment Officer, Health & Wellbeing Officer, Arts & Culture Officer and more, which will be allocated by vote.

This gives our young members an opportunity to develop their skills and confidence in many areas, regardless of whether they are directly involved in UK Youth Parliament.

Staffordshire Youth Union will also elect Deputy MYPs who will directly support the work of MYPs and will attend events in their absence, if necessary.



UK Youth Parliament Elections Timeline 2023-24



- Spring 2023**
Registrations open for Staffordshire young people aged 11-18 to apply for Staffordshire Youth Union
- July 2023**
Information on elections processes released
- Early September 2023**
Candidates who have applied for SYU submit bio/information for elections leaflets/promotional materials
- Late September 2023**
Distribution of candidate information countywide
- October 2023**
Ballots open, all Staffordshire young people aged 11-18 eligible to vote
- November 2023**
Votes counted, election results announced
- November 2023 onwards**
Monthly SYU meetings commence
- February 2024**
Staffordshire Youth Union votes from within its members to elect Members of Youth Parliament for 2024-26



All representatives of Staffordshire Youth Union and Members of Youth Parliament will be supported by a dedicated SCVYS support worker; to protect safeguarding and to ensure our young people have the tools they need to enact meaningful change.

We aren't looking for politics experts or A* students, all you need is a desire to work with other young people towards a better future.



Read the 2022-24 UKYP Manifesto [here](#)

Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Services is responsible for UK Youth Parliament in Staffordshire, and will ensure that elections run in accordance with the UK Youth Parliament Rulebook, which can be found [here](#).

SCVYS is a Registered Charity (no. 1129957) and Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 6876220)



Further information on the process and how to apply will be released July 2023.

If you are a young person and meet the eligibility criteria, please visit [this link](#) to register as a candidate for the Staffordshire Youth Union elections or scan the QR below.



Get in touch!

Sean Turner
Youth Engagement Co-ordinator

sean@staffscvys.org.uk

Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services





Action for Children Parent Group Workshops



Communicating with My Child

“When we know better, we do better” Parenting is the hardest job of them all. Want to learn how to communicate with your child more effectively?

This Parent Workshop outlines the role of parents in communicating positively and modelling emotional regulation to children who are struggling with their emotions. It teaches strategies from the Whole Brain Child and shows how we can connect with children, respond to emotions and relate to children in age-appropriate ways.

The 1 hour introduction workshop gives you tips and techniques to enrich relationships and encourage emotional connection

Communicating with My Teen

“When we know better, we do better” Parenting is the hardest job of them all. Want to learn how to communicate with your teen more effectively?

This 1-hour introduction workshop for parents supports understanding of the teenage brain, gives tips and techniques to enrich relationship, develop effective communication and encourage emotional connection.

“**Fantastic session. We are very early days in acknowledging and trying to understanding neurodiversity within our daughter but this session has helped soo much.**”



Anxiety, Autism & Neurodiversity

Find out how anxiety can affect your neurodiverse child. Gain an understanding of the four areas of difference, how these can impact your child and learn practical techniques to support them to manage overwhelming feelings and emotions.

This one session workshop enables you to think about anxiety from the perspective of your child whilst equipping you with practical tools to support them. It’s an informative workshop which is appropriate for parents or carers of autistic children, children with autistic traits or other neurodiverse conditions; for example ADHD or Dyscalculia.

“**Its really opened my mind to some useful techniques and made me think why didn't I think of that in the last 9 years?**”

Timid to Tiger

Timid to Tiger is a parenting-based approach to managing anxiety in children. It aims to teach Parents effective Cognitive Behavioural Techniques (CBT) to help children manage worries and fears. It helps to build confidence in children to minimise the effects of anxiety. If parents learn the techniques, they are in the best position to teach them and reinforce them on a day-to-day basis.

This 8 session course uses attachment-based play and gentle disciplinary techniques to help build the parent-child bond. It teaches tools to help manage children’s fears and worries. By delivering the course in a group setting we also connect and learn from others, taking strategies from other people in a similar situation

“**Fantastic session today, really informative and very helpful. I wish I knew all of this a couple of years ago**”

“**I was a bit perplexed when this was suggested rather than someone working with my child however I can completely appreciate why it was recommended now!**”





Action for Children Young people's Group Workshops



Managing Emotions 7-11

Find out how to recognise your feelings, what they look like on the outside and feel like on the inside. This awareness will help your child label and then talk about how they are feeling, which in turns helps them to accept and find ways to calm big feelings like anger and worry.

A fun and informative one session workshop about exploring emotions

Riding the Wave 12+

When we experience strong emotions, it is understandable that we try anything in an attempt to stop us feeling this way. The problem with this is, either these attempts are unsuccessful or they only help in the short-term and lead to extra problems in the longer term.

A one session introduction to changing our relationship to strong emotions and give coping skills to help us ride the wave of strong emotions.



Coping Skills

Sometimes, our emotions can become so overwhelming that it can be impossible to think clearly or rationally. This might lead us to use ways of coping, such as self-harm, that ultimately can cause further problems for us or bring about more negative emotions. When we have managed our emotions in a certain way for such a long time, it can be really hard to do something different.

This 3 session group will help you to understand why we use unhelpful coping strategies and will support you in developing new, more helpful coping skills. The skills that we cover will help you to ride out the emotion and bring you to a place where you will feel more able to think clearly and make more helpful decisions.

"it was easy to use and remember the coping methods and was able to use them secretly in school without being noticed"



Managing Intrusive Thoughts 12+

'Intrusive thoughts' is the term we give to thoughts, images or ideas that pop up into our mind against our will. We can all experience them from time to time but sometimes they may impact some people more than others.

This one session workshops starts to explore what intrusive thoughts are, how they may impact us and how we can respond to them to start being able to manage them

"it was easy to use and remember the coping methods and was able to use them secretly in school without being noticed"

Self-Acceptance

It is a common misconception that our aim should be to get rid of self-critical thoughts. If we hold this belief we can spend our lives trying to battle these thoughts rather than living our best life.

The 3 session group explores how we can change our relationship to self-critical thoughts and emotions to learn ways to work towards greater self-esteem and self-acceptance and in turn start to live the life we want to live.



Worry Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation involves learning about and understanding mental health and wellbeing. Psychoeducation is the first step we can take to understand worry and anxiety as it is a key step to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy that enables us to think good to feel good.

This 2 session workshop aims to provide children and young people with the skills to work together to reduce the impact of worry and anxiety on day-to-day life.

Worry Management

We all experience worry from time to time but for some children and young people their worries can become so overwhelming that they impact on their ability to focus in school, have fun or manage their day-to-day life. They may try to avoid things that make them fearful, avoid situations or put things off.

This 2 session group intervention has real impact for young people who have a lot of day-to-day worries.

Understanding Anger

Anger is just like any other emotion that we may experience. However, the things that we do when we are feeling angry can often make us view anger negatively.

This 3 session group will be exploring how we can better understand anger and all of the different emotions that might be underneath this feeling of anger.

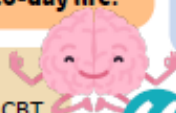
Coping Cat 12+

The Coping CAT Project is a CBT based program for adolescents with anxiety. The program provides education about anxiety, skills for identifying and managing anxiety, and an approach to face one's fears and develop mastery.

This 6 session group intervention teaches young people skills and strategies to recognise and manage anxiety.

"Thank you so much you have both been so supportive and have helped me so much I haven't felt this happy in a long time and my mom said its lovely to see me happy and not constantly worrying"

"I have learned some good ways of helping me to calm down when I feel angry"



Action for Children Groups



At Action for Children, we assess every referral that comes into the service and offer a stepped care approach dependent on need. This means that we would use our clinical judgment to identify the most appropriate intervention for your child and offer a support pathway accordingly. We offer a variety of group workshops to support young people with their emotional wellbeing which is our main offer of support.



What are the benefits of attending a group workshop?

Your child or young person will get the same support as 1:1 only quicker.



Accessing our group workshops will often enable you to access support within the matter of a few weeks. Our group workshops are evidence-based and are designed with young people in mind to consider the best ways to support and engage them.

A big chunk of our workshops are around understanding the difficulties that we are experiencing and how we are able to manage them. There are also opportunities to individualise the content and discuss some of the things you may be struggling with and offer tailored advice.

A big advantage of being in a group workshop is that the other people in the group will often be experiencing things that you may be able to relate to which can help you to feel less alone and feel heard. Young people also often offer advice to others around what has worked for them, which can be really powerful!



What's the difference between groups and 1-1s?



Our 1-1 sessions are based on the same content that is delivered within our groups. Whilst our group workshops can be offered within the matter of a few weeks, due to demand our 1-1s have a significant wait. Whilst we are unable to give an accurate estimate of our waiting time as this varies with the demand for the service, we are currently managing a wait of around eight months (Aug 2023). We would always recommend trying our group workshops in the first instance, if you find that you are struggling with the groups you can always get in contact with us to let us know and we can consider some of the things that may support you to access the group or consider whether alternative support would be appropriate instead.



What to expect when attending a group?

Most of our group workshops take place virtually via Microsoft Teams. We would always encourage people to put their cameras on however we understand that there may be circumstances where this isn't possible.

We often have around 10 people in each workshop and split our workshops according to age ranges so you are able to be in a group with people around the same age as you! Our group workshops are run by 2 members of staff who will be delivering the group as well as sending information about the group beforehand. You are able to get in contact with them should you have any questions around the group.

As part of our ground rules we ensure to let everyone know at the beginning of the sessions that they are entering a safe space. This means that we expect that all information shared within the group is kept confidential by other members of the group and is not shared elsewhere. When you join our groups you are able to join using your first name and your personal details will not be visible to other members of the group.

YOU CAN DO IT!

How to support a child or young person if they are anxious about accessing group workshops

It is understandable that a child or young person may be feeling anxious around joining a group, especially if anxiety is something that they struggle with. When we feel anxious about something we often try to avoid it as it may feel scary however as parents we want to try our best to support our children to feel confident to face anxiety!

We would encourage you to have an open conversation with your child to explore any worries they may have and validate that it is understandable to feel anxious when we try something new!

We would encourage you to join the session with them if they feel comfortable with this

Before the group takes place you may want to support them by doing things that they find calming. You may also want to remind them of how the group may be helpful and giving them some positive encouragement to reinforce that they can do this! Once the group is over it is really helpful to have a scheduled activity that they can look forward to.

