

# News story: Education Secretary marks Mental Health Awareness Week in Hastings

Young people and parents are set to benefit from extended mental health services in Hastings, backed by a £600,000 annual investment from the government's Opportunity Area programme.

The funding will develop the advice and support services available for young people in Hastings to improve their emotional wellbeing at home, school or further education, the Education Secretary Damian Hinds announced during a visit to Sussex Coast College in Hastings yesterday (17 May) to mark Mental Health Awareness Week.

Hastings is one of 12 Opportunity Areas identified as social mobility 'coldspots' which are receiving a share of £72million to raise aspirations and opportunities for the young people who live there.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Young people in Hastings have told us mental health is one of their big concerns, and we know that it can have a real impact on their lives – that's why the Opportunity Area programme is spending over £600,000 a year to improve training for school staff, increase access to local services and strengthen family relationships to boost wellbeing at home.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, it's important to hear first-hand from the people running these important projects in Hastings and from the young people who benefit. The more we can improve the support that is in place for them, the more likely it is that they will grow up feeling confident and positive about their future.

The mental health investment includes:

- £100,000 per year to expand Hastings' award-winning i-Rock service to five days a week from three as of September 2018. i-Rock offers a drop-in service for young people aged 14 to 25-years-old providing them with advice on emotional and mental wellbeing, employment, education and housing;
- Around £250,000 per year to develop an emotional wellbeing service for schoolchildren aged nine to 14 that will offer training and expert clinical advice to clusters of schools, as well as supporting groups or individual children who are suffering from anxiety, depression, anger

issues or those that are at risk of self-harm or eating disorders;

- More than £250,000 per year to expand support for parents and carers in Hastings, including 'Triple P – Positive Parenting Programme', which aims to encourage parents to seek support where they need it and offers practical strategies to help foster healthy family relationships, preventing problems developing at home; and
- Working with schools and colleges to identify the best approaches being used to supporting their students' mental health and resilience, to share locally for the maximum benefit.

Chief Executive of Triple P UK, Matt Buttery, said:

The Secretary of State is absolutely right to prioritise social mobility, and Opportunity Areas have real potential to transform life chances for children and young people. Triple P is an evidence-based parenting programme that delivers real and long-lasting benefits for children and families, and is a vital part of the jigsaw.

Triple P is working with a number of partners in the Hastings Opportunity Area to help families build healthy relationships and prevent problems developing, including in mental health. We look forward to continuing our work and expanding our offer so that all young people in the area, and indeed across the country, can achieve their full potential.

Confirming the funding during Mental Health Awareness Week, the Education Secretary was joined by Amber Rudd, MP for Hastings and Rye and met with young people who have benefitted from the i-Rock project, as well as school and college leaders and members of the Hastings Opportunity Area independent board to discuss the programme's wider work.

The programme has been developed in partnership with local organisations and the additional funding builds on existing investment from Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group and East Sussex County Council.

Hastings Opportunity Area will focus on four strands of work: improving literacy, raising attainment in maths, broadening young people's horizons and preparing them for the work, and improving mental health and resilience.