

News story: NHS and schools in England will provide expert mental health support

The new mental health support teams will be based in and near schools and colleges in 25 areas and will start giving support in 2019.

Each designated team will support up to 8,000 children and young people in around 20 schools and colleges in their 'trailblazer' area.

Mental health support teams will:

- build on support already in place from school counsellors, nurses, educational psychologists and the voluntary sector
- support children and young people with mild to moderate mental health issues
- help children and young people with more severe needs to access the right support, and provide a link to specialist NHS services

The Department for Education will also fund training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges to ensure a 'whole school' approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The first mental health support teams will begin their training in January 2019 at 7 universities nationwide.

The trailblazer sites will be set up in between one-fifth and one quarter of the country by 2023 to 2024.

One in nine young people aged 5 to 15 had a mental health condition in 2017. Teenagers with a mental disorder are more than twice as likely to have a mental disorder in adulthood.

Plans for further expansion of children and young people's mental health services will be set out in the NHS long-term plan.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Children and young people with mental illness should receive the same level of support as those with physical illness.

Made possible by the extra £20.5 billion we are investing in the NHS, today's announcement will see the health and education systems come together so our children can access the help they need at school, and takes us a step closer to achieving our goal of parity between mental and physical health.

Minister for Mental Health, Inequalities and Suicide Prevention Jackie Doyle-Price said:

Early intervention is crucial when it comes to mental ill-health and today's announcement will ensure that young people can immediately access life-changing support when the signs of mental health issues first appear, helping to prevent these problems from escalating further into adulthood.

Encouraging young people to think about their mental wellbeing in the same way they do their physical aches and pains is a vital part of our goal to put mental and physical health on equal footing, and will help ensure no young person is left to suffer in silence.

It's estimated 1 in 4 of us has a common mental disorder at any one time – I'm confident that, by introducing improved access to critical care at a young age, we are delivering on our promise to help people lead healthier lives for longer and build an NHS that's fit for the future, which will be set out further in our long-term plan.