

## Spotlight on our Thriving in Education team

### Supporting children and young people to Thrive in Education

In West Sussex, we describe our approach to supporting mental health in schools under the umbrella of **Thriving in Education**.

The best way to find out more is to visit our [website](#), which takes you through our evidence based approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools. In this piece, you can find out about Thought-Full, WOWSI and the Thriving in Education Grants Programme.

Our work is underpinned by two national frameworks:

- The iThrive Framework for System Change developed by the [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#). So often our focus is on services and what is wrong; i-Thrive encourages us instead to focus squarely on the child, to promote wellbeing and be strengths-based.
- [Guidance on the 8 principles of a whole school or college approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing](#). The Thriving in Education website guides you through each of the 8 principles, offering best practice and further resources for each area.

The website also has separate sections for those schools that are part of the [Thought-Full](#) programme, and for anybody supporting a child or young person experiencing [Emotionally Based School Avoidance](#) (EBSA). An invaluable [Targeted Support A-Z](#) provides signposting for and support to an incredible array of support services.

The rest of this article focuses on some of the ways in which we are taking Thriving in Education forward with our West Sussex schools:

- Update from Thought-Full
- Information about the WOWSI project
- Thriving in Education Small grants programme
- Training and conference dates for your diary

### Thought-Full

Five years ago, just before the COVID pandemic first took hold, the first two Mental Health Support Teams were established in schools in Bognor and Crawley. The teams, known locally as Thought-Full (as the service was named by children and young people) provide support for school senior mental health leads, to help them develop a [whole school approach](#) to mental health and emotional wellbeing. As part of this whole school approach, Thought-Full provides one-to-one interventions in schools for mild to moderate mental health issues, and advice to school staff and liaison with other specialist services to help children and young people get the right support and stay in education.

Originally launched as a team of eight staff working with just 29 schools, Thought-Full has expanded and now works with 149 schools and covers 60% of West Sussex pupils, with ambitions to provide 100% coverage. The service has received more than 4,000 requests for one-to-one support for pupils since its launch.

We are proud to receive many compliments about the impact of Thought-Full to children and young people's lives:

*"The parents feel more confident and relaxed about supporting their child and the child managed the transition into the new year group really well. When talking to the parents at parents' evening they couldn't have been more grateful for the support they have received"*

From a school

*"Thank you for helping me with my scaredness. You make me feel happy and brave and strong."*

Year 6 child

*"We feel so lucky to be able to work alongside the whole Thought-full team who are always kind and supportive and a wealth of information".*

From a school

For further information please contact [Thought-Full@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Thought-Full@westsussex.gov.uk).

### **WOWSI**

Working on Worries Support and Intervention (better known as WOWSI) is a new project that will, by the end of this academic year, be working in 80 primary schools. School-based facilitators provide support for parents and carers to access an [online platform](#) which uses CBT approaches to build understanding of fears, worries, and anxiety in primary-aged children.

The parents of children who are experiencing mild to moderate levels of anxiety, including the early signs of EBSA, will be offered access to the 6-week programme. School based facilitators will be offered group-based support by specially trained local experts. West Sussex Parent-Carer Forum will support parents and carers taking part to build peer support approaches. For further information, or to express an interest in being part of the project please contact [WOWSI@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:WOWSI@westsussex.gov.uk).

### **Thriving in Education Grants Programme**

In Summer term 2024 we launched our inaugural Thriving in Education Grants Programme. We invited all West Sussex schools to apply for grants of up to £3,000, telling us how they would use the funds to develop their whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. We were bowled over with the response, receiving 46 applications to undertake a range of activities such as creating or enhancing wellbeing spaces, supporting mental health ambassadors or ensuring that the school library is well-stocked

with titles representing diversity and inclusion. Watch out for this year's application process, which will be sent to school Senior Mental Health Leads in the summer term.

## Dates for your diary

**March 6:** EBSA initial training. Join waitlist [here](#).

**March 10-26:** Senior Mental Health Lead Network Meetings. The theme this term is identifying need and monitoring impact Click [here](#) for more details.

**March 11:** EBSA and Motivational Interviewing. Book [here](#).

**March 31:** [The Adolescent Brain - Nurturing minds during turbulent times | West Sussex Services for Schools](#). To help school and college staff to better understand patterns in teenage behaviour and how their developing brain impacts their thinking, learning and emotions.

**April 22:** [Senior Mental Health Lead Training | West Sussex Services for Schools](#)

**April 29:** EBSA and Motivational Interviewing. Book [here](#)

**May 1:** EBSA and Anxiety. Join waitlist [here](#).

**June 18:** EBSA and Anxiety. Join waitlist [here](#).