



Department  
for Education

# Opportunity Areas Insight Guide

## Health and Education





# Oldham case study



# Oldham: Healthy Minds Curriculum

Bounce Forward Resilience Skills training has been delivered in secondary schools and further education colleges in Oldham, in order to improve pupils' resilience and wellbeing.

## What was the problem?

Early in the life of the Opportunity Area programme, it was reported that young people felt that poor mental health and wellbeing was impacting on their learning. Local leaders wanted support focused on the high rate of sub-clinical mental health issues, including those that did not meet the threshold for clinical intervention, but were causing significant issues with behaviour, attendance and exam performance and impacting on progress and attainment. The Partnership Board felt from the outset that this should be addressed under Priority 3 of the Oldham Opportunity Area plan: 'All children and young people to be ready for life, learning and work'.

In 2018, the Opportunity Area funded a mental wellbeing team, consisting of a Mental Health in Education Manager, and two Mental Health in Education Advisors, all with qualifications in mental and physical health, in order to provide a borough-wide joined-up approach to mental wellbeing in schools. Since 2020, these roles have been funded by Oldham's Clinical Commissioning Group through the Mental Health Support Team funding. The mental wellbeing team worked with the senior mental health leads in schools and colleges to identify the causes of poor emotional health and wellbeing. They assessed the whole-school approach to emotional health and mental wellbeing across eight key principles, as set out in Public Health England's report, 'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. A whole-school and college approach'.<sup>13</sup>

Settings completed comprehensive self-assessments, and consultation meetings were held with the mental wellbeing team to identify gaps and set out clear priorities for each setting. This approach identified that pupils needed to be better equipped with resilience and coping skills, which in

turn would increase their wellbeing. Based on evidence from earlier Bounce Forward research (**Healthy Minds Research Project – Bounce Forward**) the decision was made that this approach needed to be available to all students, regardless of age, and embedded within the curriculum.

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Previous page:

Image from Oldham Bounce Forward Resilience Skills

13 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/958151/Promoting\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_s\\_emotional\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_a\\_whole\\_school\\_and\\_college\\_approach.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958151/Promoting_children_and_young_people_s_emotional_health_and_wellbeing_a_whole_school_and_college_approach.pdf)

## Implementation activities and successes

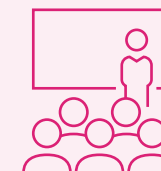
Following a competitive tender, a decision was made to work with the Bounce Forward charity, whose 11 years' experience of evidence-based practice has had long-term positive impacts on student wellbeing. Working in partnership with Bounce Forward, we decided that all secondary and further education settings would be trained in Bounce Forward's 'Healthy Minds Curriculum' programme, covering five key elements:

- Bounce Forward resilience skills.
- Social Media investigated.
- Mental Illness investigated.
- “.breath”.
- From School to Life.

Taking a phased approach, we first gained buy-in and commitment from school leadership to this whole-school approach by attending secondary heads' meetings and one-to-ones with head teachers and principals. School leaders identified teachers to attend the Bounce Forward training, which took, on average, five days to complete. Teachers and settings' leaders were supported to embed this approach by Oldham's mental wellbeing team through consultation and networking meetings where we shared good practice, as well as overcoming barriers to delivery. In the final phase, schools are now in the process of applying for a Kite Mark award from Bounce Forward, which recognises their efforts and commitment to the planning and implementing the Bounce Forward – Healthy Minds Curriculum. As a result of this approach, schools in Oldham now have specialist trained staff to deliver these vital life skills to pupils that support them through challenging times, such as how to recognise that failure is part of success and learn how to look after themselves and care for others.

£168,000 has been invested to support the roll-out of this work. 115 staff have been upskilled across 14 secondary schools, one pupil referral unit, two further education settings and two special schools. This training has prepared them to deliver Bounce Forward evidence-based resilience lessons to students. The Healthy Minds Curriculum has supported the implementation of the DfE's statutory Health Curriculum framework.<sup>14</sup>

# 115



staff have been upskilled to deliver evidence- and classroom-based programmes to improve resilience and mental health

14 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/908013/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

The success of this project, indicated by the feedback from schools, teachers and pupils, has been down to the fact that Bounce Forward resources and delivery have been outstanding. With all training delegates agreeing or strongly agreeing that they found the training useful; that the skills they learnt would be useful in their work with students; that this approach would help them to improve the school; and that they would recommend this training to others. The availability of pre-recorded sessions, and flexibility with dates and times of training and meetings, has ensured that delivery adapted to capacity in schools. The mental wellbeing team has supported leads in schools to embed this approach into the curriculum and share learning in meetings that are held every half term. Most importantly, the success of this project is down to the passion that Oldham school staff have to drive it forward.

Staff have reported that they have an improved understanding of pupil behaviour, and pupils have described that they understand their own behaviour better. This has led to improvements in behaviour and resilience overall.

**“At The Radclyffe School we believe wellbeing lies at the heart of our students going on to succeed, both in school and in the community. All students have individual needs, and with us valuing the importance of embedding the Healthy Minds Curriculum into our school day, this allows students to develop their emotional resilience and self-efficiency. The Healthy Minds Kite Mark Award has allowed us to ensure that a high-quality curriculum is in place to engage learners and enable them to thrive.”**

**Staff and Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Lead,  
Assistant Head teacher**

**“ My resilience lessons delivered in citizenship and values have helped me to understand how I feel when events take place, and because I understand them, I am able to control my emotions more and be more mature in situations.”**

**Year 9 Student**

**“Resilience Bounce Forward lessons have taught me how to be more mature and know how to make the right decisions.”**

**Year 7 Student**

Many of our other schools are on a journey to receiving this award and Waterhead Academy have received the ‘working towards’ status to evidence their commitment to the Healthy Minds Curriculum.

**The success of this project is down to the passion that Oldham school staff have...**

“The opportunity to work collaboratively and to share good practice with colleagues throughout fellow Oldham schools and colleges to embed the implementation of the borough-wide Healthy Minds Curriculum has been invaluable.

“Furthermore, the expert training and support received from Bounce Forward facilitators along with Natalie Williams Mental Health in Education Manager for Oldham Council has been integral to our academy implementing a comprehensive Healthy Minds Curriculum and achieving the nationally recognised Bounce Forward Kite Mark status.”

**Assistant Principal for Personal Development at Waterhead Academy**

In response to the pandemic, additional Bounce Forward COVID-19 resources were provided to schools and resilience training was offered to parents. Parents could choose from six different sessions:

- Introduction to resilient parenting.
- Optimism during uncertainty.
- Developing mental muscle.
- Compassionate communication.
- Mindsets and energy.
- Parenting to strengths.

In total 584 online sessions were delivered with approximately 50 parents in each session.

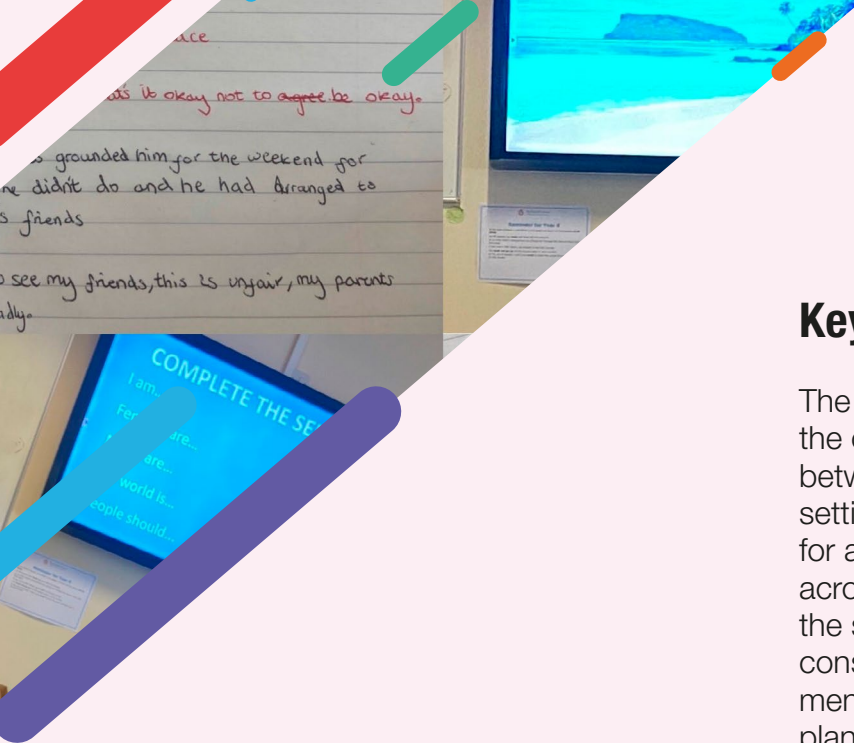
We also offered targeted groups for foster carers and parent or carers with children accessing CAMHS services, where the above sessions were adapted to the audience and delivered in two groups of 15.

“This has really got me thinking. It’s been useful to understand what impacts our feelings and behaviour and to learn about my strengths. I will look closely at my children’s beliefs and strengths.”

**Parent of child on the Raise Resilience Training**



Image from The Radclyffe School, Oldham



## Key ingredients for success

The key ingredient for success has been the collaboration and partnership working between the mental wellbeing team, education settings, and Bounce Forward. The need for a mental wellbeing approach embedded across the curriculum was highlighted through the self-assessments in school and via consultation with school leaders and senior mental health leads. A collaborative, flexible plan was then rolled out over three years with a clear outcome for children and young people to be better equipped with the resilience and coping skills which would in turn increase their own wellbeing.

As a result of this approach, and because each school is well equipped to pursue this journey by training key leaders, continuing relations with Bounce Forward and implementing recap training, we are confident that the Bounce Forward – Healthy Minds Curriculum will continue to benefit the education of children and young people in Oldham for many years to come.

**Healthy Minds Curriculum will continue to benefit the education of children and young people in Oldham for many years to come**



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