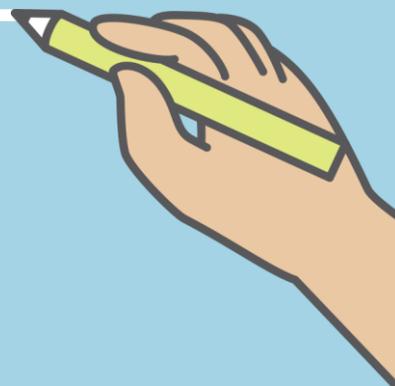


# GREATER MANCHESTER MENTALLY HEALTHY COLLEGES

School to college transition

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BURY COLLEGE  
JANUARY 2020



Bury College is a large further education college located in the centre of the market town of Bury.

The unemployment rate in Bury is slightly lower than that nationally and currently stands at 3.2%.

The proportion of students in Bury who left school in 2016/17 attained slightly higher grades than students nationally.

<https://burycollege.ac.uk/home/>

## School to college transition

This is part of the Greater Manchester Mentally Healthy Schools and Colleges programme. Due to the concentration of student numbers in a relatively small number of education settings and the short timeframes involved we recognised that a more bespoke approach to further Education colleges would be needed.

The aim of this project was to:

- Develop the capacity of further education and sixth form colleges in Greater Manchester to collaborate in support of the mental health and wellbeing of their staff and students
- Identify good practice that can be shared across the system.

There are 21 colleges in Greater Manchester (9 general further education colleges and 12 sixth form Colleges) and approximately 90% of 16 to 18yr olds in Greater Manchester are in colleges. During an academic year approximately 51,000 out of 56,000 16-18-year olds will study at these further education and sixth-form colleges.

The Association of Colleges (North) was awarded funding for 12 months in March 2019 to deliver a project to raise awareness and support development of the mental health agenda within individual colleges. Two main providers are supporting the project, Charlie Waller Memorial Trust and British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapists.

Together with our partner [Streetwise @ Early Break](#) our aim was to provide support for new learners over the summer holiday and during the first few weeks of term (July 2019 to September 2019). Streetwise is a charity committed to improving the emotional well-being and mental health of young people who reside in and around the borough of Bury.

## Identifying students

- We identified 15 students with mental health needs who would benefit from support through the summer holidays
- 9 referrals were received at the start of the project, although 1 refused the service. Further students were identified through self-declaration and/or self-referral

## What we did

### During the summer period

1. We ran awareness raising activities with local schools and continued to use our existing networks across emotional health and advocacy services in Bury and Rochdale to support all those who have applied to attend college and declared a mental health need on registration form.




- Are you aged 16 and have just left school?
- Are you going to Bury College in September?
- Are you having worries about being at college- making friends, coping with the change, managing the work?

## Let's Strive to Thrive!

Why not come along to our Summer Project for new Bury College students? Launching on Wednesday 31st July from 1:00pm – 3:00pm at Streetwise, 3 Wash Lane, Bury, BL9 6A5. Weekly group to:

- Meet new friends
- Learn all about college life, including a private tour around the college
- Be involved with team work, independent skills
- Learn where to get support in College and to support your peers



For more information, please contact Gemma at Streetwise @ EarlyBreak on 07540014572 or gphilburn@earlybreak.co.uk



2. We ran group sessions (16 students attended) that covered:

- Why are we here?
- Introductions
- Confidentiality
- Peer support and shared ground rules
- Worry



More sessions were run throughout September 2019 and beyond.

### The Bury College Student Wellbeing Group Agreement

In order to create a safe group environment, we agree that all members need to agree to respect and follow the points outlined below:

- We agree that anything that is discussed within group meetings must stay kept within the group.
- We agree that it's not acceptable to talk about another person without them being present, or in a way that is judgemental or hurtful.

- Everyone should be given time to contribute to the group; give group members the time they may need to talk and be mindful not to talk over other people.
  - We agree that no group member should feel under pressure to do anything that they don't want to, whether that's in the group itself, or about anything that may be planned outside of group meetings.
  - During group meetings, it is agreed that members will put their phones on silent, and in a visible place so that people can be confident that their conversations are kept confidential.
  - We agree that commitment to the group is important to build trust and confidence.
  - We agree that all members have the option to opt out of anything they don't feel comfortable doing or talking about.
  - We agree to try and respect and understand other people's points of view, even if we don't agree with them.
  - We agree that the purpose of the group is to provide support and advice to one another about general wellbeing, and to help others know that they are not alone.
3. Students also attended a bowling session and a tour of Bury College.
  4. We continued awareness raising with all students to ensure they had continued access and support through the project. We also provided follow-up contact with any students who missed a session(s). A poster, email with dates and a referral form helped us to promote this support for the next academic year.
  5. The students told us they'd like to be part of an on-going social support group. We discussed this during further meetings with the students in September. We discussed this during further meetings with the students in September 2019 and students are now engaged in a student wellbeing group where they meet regularly and engage in social support.

## Post induction get together

### Preparing for College.....

It's normal to have mixed emotions about anything new, especially starting college! You may feel lots of different emotions...possibly all at the same time! This is 'normal', especially during the first few weeks whilst you settle in.

In your groups, take a few minutes to discuss the following:

How you felt before starting college...	How you felt on your first day...	How you're feeling now...
Terrified Lonely excited Lost Long	didn't want to be there people fitting in making friends speaking to people Long • Frustration Confused	nervous better stressed relieved unorganised

We invited students to a post induction get together where they could meet as a discreet group before the start of the new academic year. This gave them the opportunity to any further questions they had and identify any further support they needed

## Benefits

- Participants have successfully made the transition to Bury College.
- Participants have accessed mental and wellbeing interventions where they would not have done previously.
- Participants have taken an active role in mental health and wellbeing awareness at the college which is ongoing (eg the student wellbeing group).

## Next steps

- Ideally we want to try and tie the wellbeing group in with the possibility of training students who are interested in becoming peer mentors who can take more leading roles in the group developing their skills, confidence and self-esteem. Plans are in place to develop a peer mentoring programme to continue the partnership working and train peer mentors in both settings concurrently. Participants from the student wellbeing group will be offered the training in addition to other students who are interested in the role.
- We're keen to explore the possibility of expanding the scope of the project so that we can train this year's participants as peer mentors to support next year's participants in their transition to college.

## Case study - young person: Mia\* (\*pseudonym)

Mia was referred into Streetwise from core CAMHS/ Healthy Young Minds in February 2019. She was experiencing high levels of social anxiety, negative thinking & social isolation. Mia attended 1:1 therapy sessions (CBT), however when her therapy ended she still remained socially isolated, was still experiencing panic attacks & social anxiety. This affected her overall attendance at school, self-esteem, and her commitment to her academic work and her overall wellbeing.

Mia was one of the first young people to engage with the project just after completing her GCSEs. Mia attended the group at Streetwise which was a safe place for her as she had completed her CBT sessions there. Mia was waiting for her GCSE results in the hope she achieved the grades to access Bury College on a Health and Social Care course.

Mia struggles with physical symptoms of anxiety, such as increased heart rate, shakes, flushing and withdrawal/avoidance. Mia was very concerned about starting College and facing her peers, often becoming overwhelmed. Mia experiences negative thoughts

around her body image and self-esteem and this is compounded to an overall avoidance of social interaction.

The project provided a platform for Mia to practice her techniques learned in 1:1 sessions and apply them in social settings. Mia was comfortable accessing the group initially at the Streetwise premises as this was a familiar setting for her.

This exposure to her peers in an intimate setting was an anxiety provoking experience for Mia, but she felt it was a safe place to practice her coping mechanisms.

Mia visited the college during the summer break as part of the project and met with college's mental health support team.

Alongside this, Mia developed some relationships with her peers in the group and has continued to attend the group regularly, agreeing to take on a minute taker role within the group. Mia has attended all the group sessions and also follow-up 1-2-1 support sessions with Bury College's counselling support services. Mia started on her Health and Social care course and has met many friends since starting. There have been no concerns regarding her attendance in class and Mia is now able to use her coping strategies when she is feeling overwhelmed.

Mia really benefitted from having the connection with her peers before starting college in September. This supported her transition into College successfully. Mia is now more aware of how to access the mental health services available and is attending college regularly; she is less socially isolated and feels more able to manage her anxiety on a day to day basis.

Mia enrolled in college and attending regularly; she is on target in all of her subjects and has 92% attendance. Mia's outcome measures were completed throughout the project and we saw a significant improvement in symptoms, overall improving mood and general wellbeing. It is our hope that Mia will complete peer-support training with Streetwise early 2020 and use her skills to support young people who are in year 11 who may be joining the College in September 2020.

# GET IN TOUCH

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<https://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health>

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