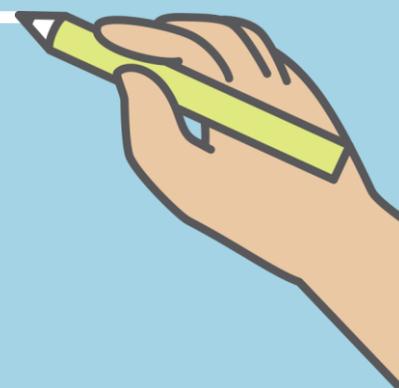


GREATER MANCHESTER MENTALLY HEALTHY COLLEGES

School to college transition

THE MANCHESTER COLLEGE
JANUARY 2020



The Manchester College operates over nine sites in the city of Manchester. It is the largest provider of further education in the Manchester city region.

Compared with the rest of the country, Manchester is an area of high social deprivation.

As of September 2018, the rate of unemployment was higher in Manchester than in the rest of the North West, and higher than the rate for England

In 2017/18, the proportion of pupils in the local authority who achieved GCSEs at grade 5 or above in English and mathematics was lower than the national average.

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.

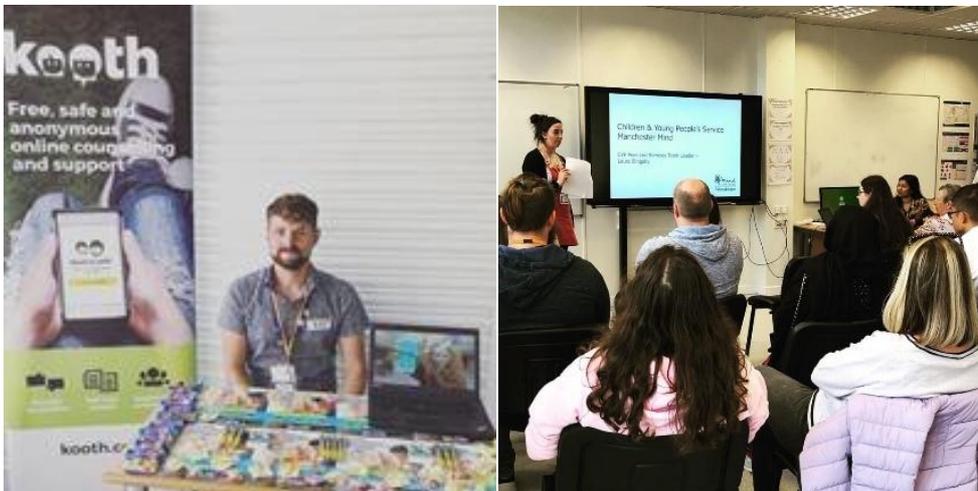
The Association of Colleges (North) was awarded funding for 12 months in March 2019 to deliver a project to raise awareness and support development of the mental health agenda within individual colleges. Two main providers are supporting the project, Charlie Waller Memorial Trust and British Association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

Our project ran from June 2019 to September 2019. Our transition team work with all students who disclose a special educational needs and disability prior to enrolment. With a significant increase in mental health disclosures we wanted to make sure we were delivering a robust and streamlined transition to these students. Our transition pathway included:

- highlighting specific students who were a high risk
- providing bespoke transition packages
- a positive wellbeing event for parents/carers and young people which included inviting outside agencies
- providing each campus with a list of the students requiring more support to enable continuous wrap around support after enrolment

Positive wellbeing event for parents and young people

The positive wellbeing event was attended by a mixtures of parents/carers, supportive older siblings, and young people who had applied to the college and declared a mental health difficulty. Many of the students who attended were extremely anxious about starting college and we were aware that this could lead to non-enrolment, poor attendance and leaving college before courses had been completed.



We liaised very closely with the external organisations ([Manchester Mind](#), [Kooth](#), the [Proud Trust](#)) who attended to ensure they were aware of the students and their needs. Many students visited the stands to ask advice and gather more information. Some students signed up for additional support there and then with external agencies. Our transition team were on hand to support students throughout the event.

We handed out a questionnaire and the students told us that:

- It was good to see that they were not alone in their mental health experience - seeing other students with similar issues helped them to feel less isolated
- They felt less anxious starting college and were more motivated to enrol on their new course
- They knew where to go for help and support in campus

Parents/carers felt re-assured about college and the support available.

Next Steps

- Our transition team set up a Promonitor tutor group for the students they've supported to track comments, retention and achievement
- Support teams are continuing to work with and monitor their students' mental health and wellbeing

Providing bespoke transition packages

Case study 1 - Student E

E has a diagnosis of anxiety, depression, is under CAMHS and takes daily anti-anxiety and antidepressant medication. E has an education, health and care plan but there have been long term difficulties in consistently attending education with E not having been in regular education since 2012.

E has difficulties leaving the house without support and anxiety is the main obstacle to him receiving an education and achieving his potential.

We provided initial support and enrolment into college but E's anxieties were too severe and he was unable to leave the house and attend college at this time.

What we did

- Held an initial meeting in college to explore options with E joining by telephone
- Arranged an informal campus visit to show him round to see if this was somewhere he could feel comfortable attending. E attended with support and he felt really comfortable in the campus, liked the environment and completed an application.
- Due to anxiety E was unable to attend our mental health awareness/wellbeing event in the summer

- Set up weekly campus visits with his current tutor to become familiar with the environment and using public transport. These helped alleviate some anxieties and ensure that he knew where to get support
- Ensured that all tutors were aware of E's needs so they could plan effectively to meet them
- Provided support at enrolment, an introduction to his new mentor and a wraparound support and monitoring package from day 1
- As E had been out of formal education for such a long time we provided initial support in course alongside access to his mentor when required.
- A support plan has been completed for E which highlights his difficulties and strategies for staff to follow.

Outcomes

E had a very positive first 2 weeks in college and has travelled to college independently. Both E and his tutors feel that he doesn't require in class support any more

Next steps

- We're continuing to liaise with E and his parent/carer to help us to monitoring his mental health and provide more support when required.

Case study 2. Student N

N became greatly affected by her mental health difficulties in Year 10 began to affect her school attendance through to Year 11. She completed Year 11 with a significantly reduced timetable and as a result become very isolated in her year group.

The key problem she faced was loneliness as she felt pushed to the side by school with a reduced timetable. N viewed Year 12 as a fresh start and enrolled at a local college. However, she had only been offered ad-hoc pastoral support but no concrete, fixed support or intervention. As a result, she withdrew her place on the course and was then not in education training or employment.

The college received her application but the transition officer struggled to get in touch by phone. As a result, an initial text was sent to introduce the college and the support we could offer. We 'talked' by text and then set up a 1-1 meeting. Over 4 months we held a series of meetings on campus where N met with pastoral staff, teachers etc. Our transition officer produced a bespoke support plan to make sure that all staff understood her needs and could put appropriate strategies to support her effectively in place.

Outcomes

- Through summer introduction to pastoral team N was able to start building relationships with her designated mentor and effectively supported her when difficulties arose
- N received a mental health wellbeing pack prior to starting college
- The transition officer met with N to discuss her initial college experience
- The college is continuing to support N and she is still attending and well supported by her mentor

Benefits of the project to students and college

- Proactive response to identifying the students with mental health difficulties for pastoral teams and tutors
- Deliver confident pastoral response for designated students reducing the risk of mental health crisis
- Improved retention figures
- Increased student personal and academic self esteem
- Collaborative working partnerships externally and between colleagues at the college (tutors, mentors, achievement tutors and student experience team)
- Promoted the importance of positive wellbeing for all students across college

GET IN TOUCH

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