Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you have further questions, please contact:

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## The WISE Project

Wellbeing in Secondary Education



Schools’ Information Leaflet



**What is the purpose of this study?**

This study will introduce and evaluate a pilot scheme (the “intervention”) aiming to provide support for secondary school staff’s emotional wellbeing. Studies show that secondary school staff members have more difficulties with psychological distress compared to the rest of the working population, due to stressors such as excessive workload and challenging behaviour from students, and that such distress is associated with sickness absence and early retirement. Further, there is evidence that both teaching and non-teaching staff would welcome greater support and training to support student emotional wellbeing.

**Who is undertaking this study?**

Researchers from the University of Bristol are conducting this study. The work is being funded by the National Institute of Health Research, as part of their School for Public Health Research. Professor David Gunnell is the Principal Investigator and Dr Judi Kidger is the Lead Researcher.

**What does the intervention involve?**

There are two parts to the intervention:

* A group of 6-8 staff will receive training in a validated, national programme called Mental Health First Aid (MHFA; http://www.mhfaengland.org/) and subsequently will provide a confidential peer support service to colleagues, in which they listen, offer advice and signpost them to services as appropriate.
* Training in Youth MHFA, a version of the programme developed for adults working with teenagers, will be made available to the wider staff body (free of charge), to strengthen their skills in supporting students.

**What will my school have to do?**

Schools who agree to take part will be randomly allocated to either an intervention group – in which they receive the scheme outlined in the previous paragraph - or a control group in which they will continue with usual practice. In all schools all staff and students in years 9 and 10 will be asked to complete a 30 minute questionnaire at the start of the evaluation, and a follow up questionnaire at the end. We will feed the overall results for your school from each round of questionnaires back to you, ensuring no individuals can be identified. In some schools we will be carrying out a series of short interviews with staff. We will also ask schools for data on number of staff absent and their grades over the time of the intervention. All data collected will be confidential; only the research team will see individual responses, and they will be securely stored and reported on anonymously.

**What happens next?**

If you are willing for your school to take part, please contact the research team as described in the invitation letter. If more than six schools agree to take part, we will randomly select six for the study. This means that even if you consent to be entered into the study, you may not be selected. And if you are selected you may be a control school and therefore not receive the intervention. All control schools will be offered a financial gift at the end of the study of £500-£1000, depending on school size, which could be used for staff training.

**What will be done with the study findings?**

The findings about the new scheme may be published, and will be communicated to schools, Local Education Authorities, policy-makers and other researchers. The names of all participating schools and individuals will be kept anonymous. The results will be used to assess the extent to which the intervention was delivered successfully and its likely effectiveness. If the findings are positive, funding will be sought to deliver and evaluate the intervention on a larger scale.