

Kind Minds

Staffordshire partner newsletter with useful information about children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Summer
Issue 27
2026

Welcome to the Summer issue of Kind Minds

Kind Minds is produced every term, and we welcome your feedback or contributions. Share your ideas: sandra.webb@staffordshire.gov.uk

If you need Kind Minds in an alternative format, please contact us.



Stay Well Service

Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing service

Jointly commissioned by Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Integrated Care Board, Stay Well, is a Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS) provided by Changes Health and Wellbeing, North Staffs Mind and The Dove Service.

Offering a successful blend of both group and one-to-one support, demand for Stay Well services continues to rise. Consequently, we are working hard to expand our reach and to establish a responsive and accessible mental health service for children, young people and families across Staffordshire. We provide rapid contact, assessment, and aim to follow this by access to support within just 20 working days.

Here are some exciting updates about our service:

- We have established new delivery venues in Cheadle, Leek, and Tamworth
- Our new website makes it easier for CYP, families, and professionals to find information, access resources and make new referrals
- We have strengthened and expanded our social media presence. Designed to promote our service and to inspire and inform young people to enhance their wellbeing - we have recently incorporated videos of Stay Well staff discussing wellness tools and grounding techniques
- A highly effective way for young people to support each other and learn how to improve their mental health, we are improving access to our psycho-educational programmes and peer-support groups
- Our service menu now includes one-to-one cognitive behavioural therapy to address simple phobias

Children, young people and their families, and professionals can refer through the Single Points of Access (see page 6) or directly into the Stay Well service.

To contact us, refer or get some information, advice and guidance Call: 01782 418 518 or go to our updated website: [Stay Well CYP | Stay Well Children & Young People Support](#)
For online referrals: [Stay Well online referral form](#)

Follow us on: [Stay Well Staffordshire | Stoke-on-Trent | Facebook](#)
[Stay Well Service | Staffordshire \(@staywellstaffordshire\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)

Update from Mental Health Leads in Education Network

Content of the Mental Health Leads in Education Network Spring meetings:

- Building self-esteem presentations and resources shared by Staffordshire and Stoke-on Trent Educational Psychology Services. See page 3 for a Key summary.
- Break out rooms were used for the first time in meetings, here members were able to share great ideas of Whole school approach activity in their settings and take ideas they heard back to their settings.
- There were also opportunities for members to get involved in ICS System Improvement Board workstreams.



Mental Health Leads in Education Network

connects colleagues from education settings across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent through termly Microsoft Teams meetings, regular updates and sharing information. If members are not able to attend information and meeting recordings are shared afterwards.

Not yet a member? We'd love to welcome your education setting to the network, to join contact:

Staffordshire -

email: sandra.webb@staffordshire.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent -

email: Natalie.Harrison@stoke.gov.uk

Upcoming Mental Health Leads in Education Network meetings:

Tues 19 May 7.45-8.45, Wed 20 May 16.00-17.00

Free Online Mental Health Leads Network Workshop 2 June 4pm-5pm

Project Real - Teaching Online Safety and Misinformation with Free, Co-Created Resources

With Dr Yvonne Skipper, University of Glasgow

Misinformation is one of the biggest challenges we face today, it shapes what we believe, how we vote, and even how we see the world. Therefore, helping young people learn to spot it is more important than ever.

Project Real co-creates engaging, evidence-informed resources to help young people develop skills in online safety and spotting misinformation. Developed in partnership with young people, teachers, Education Scotland, and Police Scotland. Project Real offers a range of free classroom-ready materials, including lesson plans, comics, short videos created by influencers, and interactive activities such as password-guessing games.

During the session, Dr Yvonne Skipper will briefly outline the context for this work, interactively showcase a selection of the resources, and demonstrate how they can be used flexibly across different age groups and settings.

The workshop will also highlight opportunities for teachers to get involved in future co-creation and evaluation work, shaping resources that reflect the real challenges young people face online.

To attend the workshop sign up here: [Project Real Workshop Sign up - Fill in form](#)

Self-esteem key summary

Borba's Model

- Michelle Borba's work recognises 5 distinct areas that contribute to self-esteem.
- The first three building blocks are the areas that we most likely need to focus on.
- Only when we are sure that a pupil is secure, aware of their personal attributes and feel they belong should we try to work directly on their level of motivation or sense of competence.

Sense of
purpose

Sense of
competence

Sense of
identity

Sense of
belonging

Sense of
security

Building sense of security

- Building a trusting relationship with the child
- Setting reasonable limits and rules that are consistently reinforced
- Creating a positive and caring environment

Building sense of identity

- Tree of life
- Exploring family heritage
- Creating an 'All about me' poster/ book
- Cultural celebration

Building sense of belonging

- Support to join clubs
- Facilitating peer support
- Friendship lessons
- Card sorting activities to gain pupil voice (what aspects of school they like/ don't like)

Building assertiveness

- Assertiveness training can increase self-esteem by empowering children to express their needs, opinions and boundaries
- Teach 'I' messages à "I feel (*insert feeling*) when you (*insert behaviour*). I would like you to (*insert request*)."
- Defining boundaries (physical, social, emotional)
- Using stories/ video clips to demonstrate assertiveness
- Sorting card activities (assertive/ aggressive/ passive)
- Role play
- Problem solving activities e.g., If-Then activities to plan for situations where assertiveness is needed

More ideas!

- Positive feedback & praise
- Value effort not perfection
- Promote self care
- Challenge self critical talk
- Help them set S.M.A.R.T goals and make plans
- Emotion coaching



Whole School/College Approach

Do you want to know more about Whole School or College Approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing? Learn more about the 8 principles in this guidance: [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing - GOV.UK](#)

National Children's Bureau explains the importance of a whole school approach. The approach involves many components including; early identification and intervention, staff wellbeing and development, and skills-based work for pupils. Why have a whole school approach? Improved pupil wellbeing- Improved staff wellbeing and retention, Improved academic learning, Strong link to improving school's overall effectiveness, Development of social and emotional skills, Prevention of MH problems, and Improved school behaviour - reduction in fights, bullying, exclusions and absence. Read more: [Whole school approach](#)

To help Mental Health Leads embed a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing, a **Mental Health Lead Resource Hub** has been developed by **Anna Freud**, in partnership with education representatives and mental health experts.

5 Steps to Mental Health and Wellbeing is a Free framework to help develop your whole-school or college approach to mental health. The framework complements the eight principles outlined in the Department for Education's guidance on a whole-school or college approach and reflects key recommendations from NICE on promoting social, emotional and mental wellbeing in education. [Click here for more information](#)

5 ideas to support your Whole School/College Approach:

1. **Build a strong team around you**

Ensure you have a team to support your role as Mental Health Lead (MHL). This not only helps to manage workload but also creates a shared vision and collective responsibility for driving your whole school/college approach and action planning.

2. **Use meaningful stakeholder voice**

Regularly gather and act on the views of pupils, parents/carers, and staff. This empowers your whole community and ensures your mental health and wellbeing initiatives are relevant, responsive, and making a measurable impact.

3. **Plan for key 'pinch points' in the year**

Identify times in the academic calendar when wellbeing may be under increased pressure (e.g. exam periods). Plan ahead to implement supportive strategies such as workload adjustments, protected time, or informal opportunities like "tea and chat" sessions.

4. **Communicate consistently and widely with parents/carers**

When promoting support, workshops, or resources, aim to use at least three different communication methods (e.g. school apps, text messages, social media). This increases reach and ensures important messages are not missed.

5. **Embed training across the whole staff team**

Mental health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. Ensure training and awareness opportunities are available for all staff, not just the Mental Health Lead, so that support is consistent and embedded in everyday practice.

Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

Katie Evans
Team Lead



Millie Brown
Trainee EMHP



Jasmine Wilson
Trainee EMHP



Grace Bray
Trainee EMHP



Megan Hutchinson
Trainee EMHP



We're delighted to share that the Seisdon Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is now fully up and running, bringing early intervention mental health support directly into our local schools. This new team led by Team Lead Katie Evans alongside trainee Education Mental Health Practitioners (Trainee EMHP's) Grace, Millie, Jasmine and Megan has already made a fantastic start, approaching their work with enthusiasm, dedication and a strong focus on improving emotional wellbeing for children and young people.

MHSTs are part of a national initiative to expand accessible mental health support in education settings, offering evidence-based, low-intensity help for mild to moderate mental health needs and working alongside school staff to build strong whole-school approaches to wellbeing.

The Seisdon MHST team were delighted to host a successful launch event a few weeks ago, and even more pleased that all 12 schools selected to work with us are now signed up and engaged. That full engagement from local educational settings means every pupil has access to the early support they need when they need it, whether that's through one-to-one sessions, targeted group work, or a whole school approach with staff and families. MHSTs are designed to be responsive and preventative, complementing existing support and helping children and young people stay engaged with their learning and thriving in school life.

Looking beyond our local area, the national MHST programme has an ambitious target: to expand to reach 100% of schools and colleges in England by 2029/30. This means that within the next few years, every school and college across the country is expected to have access to a Mental Health Support Team, helping to ensure that children and young people everywhere can get early, evidence-based support before difficulties escalate.

We are also incredibly proud of our trainee EMHPs, who have now successfully passed their OSCE assessments and after Easter, will begin seeing children and young people for direct support across the schools. Completing this rigorous assessment is a significant milestone, demonstrating their competence and readiness to work independently with real clients within the MHST framework. Our trainees have thrown themselves into their roles with enthusiasm, and the positivity they bring to their work already shines through in how they've engaged with staff, pupils, and families.

The whole team has been described as wonderful and enthusiastic by everyone they've met, and it's easy to see why. Their commitment to learning, to supporting young people's emotional wellbeing, and to collaborating with schools is setting a strong foundation for the service. We look forward to the positive impact this team will continue to have after Easter and throughout the coming year as they help build resilience, support emotional health, and make mental health support a welcoming and integral part of our schools.

There are now **Mental Health Support Teams** (MHST) in all districts. To find out if your school has a MHST ask your schools Senior Mental Health lead.

In schools that do not yet have a MHST – Stay Well (see page 1) will support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.

For more details and find out which schools are supported by MHSTs:

[Mental Health Support Team - North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust](#)

[Mental Health Support Teams in Schools :: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Introducing **SAFE** steps for Mental Health Support for Children and Young People in Staffordshire.

Staffordshire County Council

Mental health support for children and young people

Follow the **SAFE** steps for mental health support to find the right help at the right time.

- S Self help**
Advice and signposting to wellbeing activities and digital tools
- A Ask for advice and help**
Young people's wellbeing services and support
- F Fast specialist support**
Specialist mental health support for young people
- E Emergency services**
Mental health crisis and urgent help

Scan to find out more.

staffordshire.gov.uk/imhere

The childrens and young people's mental health support pathway old map is no longer in use and has been replaced with **SAFE**.

We now have simple **SAFE** steps to follow, linking to the online resource that outlines the support available for children and young people, and how to access it, including:

- Local services and referral routes for getting help and more specialist support
- Advice and activities to promote wellbeing
- Digital tools and apps for young people

Follow the **SAFE** steps for mental health support to find the right help at the right time.

Things to do:

- Remove the old pathway map and replace with the new poster
- Display the poster and if you have screens you can display the digital poster
- Share the updated webpage. [Staffordshire Connects website.](#)
- Share SAFE with your networks, include in your newsletters and on your website, so everyone can see how to access support and advice.

You can view the pathway, download the poster, and also access the **SAFE** digital poster for digital screens under 'Related images' on [Staffordshire Connects website.](#)

Making a referral for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing support in Staffordshire

Here in Staffordshire, we have **Single Points of Access**, these are central hubs for children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS), providing a streamlined referral process making it easier for families and professionals.

Support and guidance are provided through the Single Points of Access, they will triage information provided to understand the needs of the child, young person, and their families. Simplifying the way children, young people, their families or carers access support.



North Staffordshire

- Child and adolescent mental health services are accessed via the **Single Point of Access (SPA)**, bringing together children and young people's mental health services including Stay Well.
- The **SPA** can take telephone calls / referral forms from self-referral or from professionals.

Telephone: 0800 0 328 728

Online referrals:

<https://combinedwellbeing.org.uk/da-our-services/>



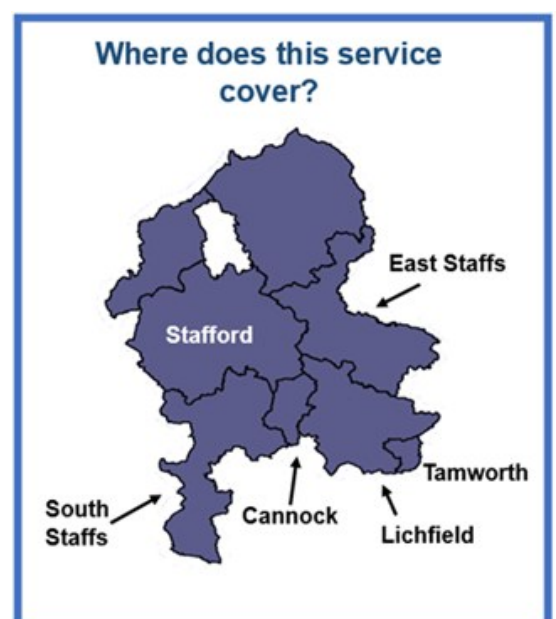
South Staffordshire

- Child and adolescent mental health services are accessed via the **Children and Families Single Point of Access (CaFSPA)**, bringing together children and young people's mental health services including school nursing, and Stay Well.
- The **CaFSPA** can take telephone calls / referral forms from self-referral or from professionals.

Telephone: 0808 178 0611

Email referrals to: CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk

[CaFSPA How to make a referral](#)



Changes to ADHD assessment and treatment at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare trust has established a new stand-alone children and young people's ADHD Assessment and Treatment service, so it is no longer embedded within CAMHS. The trust is also introducing a new joint ASD/ADHD referral form which parents and schools will complete in partnership.

For further information, or if you have any queries about the changes, please contact:
Deborah Boughey,
Young Adult Pathways and SEND Service Lead,
Interim Service Manager Neurodiverse Pathway

deborah.boughey@combined.nhs.uk



Mind website has tips for looking after your wellbeing, for 11-18 year olds.

On the website you will find ways to look after your wellbeing including animations with ways to connect with your senses and pause, as well as videos where young people share ways they look after their wellbeing using journalling, music, and setting boundaries when using social media.

[Tips for your mental wellbeing - for 11-18 year olds | Mind](#)

Why not focus on one good thing that happened to you today.

Noticing small wins can help us to feel better.



Click video clip or watch on YouTube: [Wait, wait, wait. Take a moment and breathe | #mindcharity #mentalhealth #shorts - YouTube](#)

State of Education: Mental Health

The latest National Education Union survey highlights a worsening mental health crisis among pupils, with teachers reporting widespread anxiety, absenteeism and social difficulties, particularly in secondary schools. The majority of teachers say current in-school mental health support is insufficient, with access to counsellors and other specialist provision declining despite rising need. Teachers also report increases in self-harm and eating disorders, alongside long waiting times for external services such as CAMHS. Read the press release here: [State of education: Mental health | National Education Union](#)

Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition

website has Lunch and Learn webinar recordings, as well as resources and toolkits, publications and latest research. Find out more [Resources | CYPMHC](#) they also have a newsletter providing useful updates sign up here: [Join Our Newsletter | CYPMHC](#)



Have you heard of **5 ways to wellbeing**? you might have heard about eating at least 5 pieces of fruit & veg, but what about mental health? Research carried out by the New Economics Foundation found that there are five ways to wellbeing. [Five ways to wellbeing | New Economics Foundation](#) 5 Ways to wellbeing aim to prompt people into thinking about those things in life which are important to their well-being and perhaps should be prioritised in their day-to-day routines. **Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep learning, and Give.** They're not complicated and it's easy to fit them into your day, you're probably doing some already.

Connect: Connecting with the people around us is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others. Arrange to meet up with friends, reach out to someone - send a letter or give them a call. Having a chat can give your mood a boost, talking and especially laughing, releases endorphins, a natural feel-good chemical that promotes an overall sense of happiness and wellbeing.

Be Active: Physical activity can help maintain positive mental health, being more active can help with sleep, reducing stress, anxiety and unhelpful thoughts. It doesn't mean having to run marathons, you can just use the stairs rather than the lift, go for a walk at lunchtime (maybe connect with a colleague at same time) do some stretches, potter in the garden.

Taking Notice: Paying more attention to the present moment, to our thoughts and feelings and to the world around us boosts our wellbeing. It can be using Mindfulness - stopping, calming, resting and noticing. Simple things like noticing changing seasons, take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Being aware of the world around you and how you are feeling to understand what makes you feel happy or stressed or anxious.

Keep Learning: We're always learning new things - often without realising it. Learning can help improve and maintain your well-being; it can boost self-confidence and self-esteem; help build a sense of purpose. People engaged in learning report feeling better about themselves and a greater ability to cope with stress, as well as feeling more self-confidence, hope and purpose. Why not sign up for a class to learn a new skill, read a book (maybe try a book you normally wouldn't pick up), research something you are curious about.

Give: There's been lots of research about the effects of taking part in social and community life. Some studies have shown that people who help others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Is there anything you can do today, to be kind or helpful to someone else? Make a brew for a colleague, offer to help out with something they are finding difficult to complete. Maybe volunteer at a local group/charity.

For more information why not check out [5 ways to wellbeing | Staffordshire County Council](#) and take the 5 ways to wellbeing challenge. Sign up for weekly email challenges to improve your emotional and mental wellbeing

Explore the Wellbeing hub with resources based on **5 Ways to Wellbeing**. Here you'll find everything you need to get involved and boost physical and mental wellbeing in your classroom. There are also 5-minute morning moves created especially for Primary schools by Joe Wicks. Find out more here: [Wellbeing hub - BBC Children in Need](#)

Twinkl has a number of **5 Ways to Wellbeing** resources available to download. As well as wellbeing activities for KS2 and KS1 children and also staff wellbeing. Download here: [The Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) [What is Wellbeing? | KS2 | Definition of Wellbeing - Twinkl](#)

Grow to School have some great ideas for incorporating **5 Ways to Wellbeing** into interesting and engaging nature based activities [wellbeing-pack-24.pdf](#) find other free lesson plans, guidance, and activities on their website: [Free lesson plans, guidance, and activities - Grow To School](#) Teacher training is also available: [Teacher Training - Grow To School](#)

Living Streets, Walk to School Week 2026

This year, living streets five-day challenge takes place between **18 and 22 May**. [Walk to School Week](#) Pupils will be encouraged to walk, wheel, cycle, scoot or Park and Stride to school every day of the week. With classroom packs, pupils can track their progress on a brightly coloured wallchart and earn stickers as they go along with a special reward at the end of the week. [Order your packs now](#)



Why not also link Walk to School Week with 5 Ways to Wellbeing?

Connect: Walking with friends, parents and siblings encourages conversations and sense of community. Walking buses can help reinforce belonging.

Be Active: Walking to school increases daily physical activity, supports physical health, energy levels and mental wellbeing.

Take Notice: What can you see and hear as you walk, routes and local landmarks.

Keep Learning: Learn road safety, navigation. Learn why walking is good for your health and the planet

Give: Encourage ours to join in and support friends new to walking to school. Families can get involved by supporting or volunteering with walking buses. Pupils and families are giving back by reducing traffic, congestion and air pollution around schools.

Mental health and wellbeing calendar: summer term 2026

Awareness days can be valuable points in the academic year to pause, reflect and focus on important issues. Anna Freud has a calendar of curriculum themes and occasions linked to mental health for the summer term, with activity ideas and suggestions for each theme.



This downloadable resource is useful with prompts for assemblies, classroom discussions or wider school and college activities.

Download your copy here: [Mental health and wellbeing calendar | Mentally Healthy Schools](#)



Loneliness Awareness Week **9 - 15 June 2026** is dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness. It's all about creating supportive communities by having open, honest conversations and everyone can get involved.

NSPCC has resources to support children who feel lonely [Helping a child with loneliness | NSPCC](#) Advice on having difficult conversations with children, why children can feel lonely and what you can do to help children feel less lonely.

Mental Health Foundation have school pack with materials and resources needed to support pupils to understand what loneliness is, how to reduce feelings of loneliness and where to find support. [Finding our connections to feel less lonely - school pack | Mental Health Foundation](#)

Disability Pride Month: Pride is personal

July is disability pride month [read](#) Claire's reflections on last year's disability pride month. Claire also talks about problem solving and planning skills, relying on others and building trust, as well as being part of the disabled community. Read more blogs and where to get help from the young minds website. [Where to get help, information and advice](#)



Go to scope website to find out more about disability pride month. [Disability Pride Month | Disability charity Scope UK](#) As well as advice and support, current campaigns, news and stories.

BITESIZE

The **Bitesize Parenting Teens Podcast** is about navigating life as the parent of a teenager. Actor and comedian Kerry Godliman hosts a different celebrity guest each episode. Kerry Godliman says: "Exam season can feel intense for the whole family. As a parent, you want to help, but it is not always clear how to do that without adding more pressure. This podcast is about honest conversations and helping parents feel less alone." Other episodes include: How does SEND affect schooling? and Helping teenagers find their path.

Find out more and how to access the podcast: [Parenting Teens: How can I support my teen with exams and revision? - BBC Bitesize](#)

PSHE Education Services. You can access mental health and emotional wellbeing resources through the Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service's [Central Resource Library](#). It is free to register an account and there is no limit to the number of accounts an organisation can have. [Register for an account](#).

To sign up for the PSHE digest contact Natalie - natalie@staffscvys.org.uk.

PSHE Education Services have commissioned RSE CPD training around AI, Deep Fakes, and Pornography. Learn what the terms mean, how it works, and how this technology affects our young people.

To book:

[28th April Session](#) 4pm (Primary and Secondary)

[16th June Session](#) 4pm (Secondary only)



Exams are coming, and that familiar stress is starting to hang over you, like clothes in your wardrobe that you really don't want to wear

But before we get into that, tick any of the following that fit:

- You've seen a "Study With Me" video on TikTok and thought everyone else is more focused than you
- You've ended up scrolling on Instagram or Snapchat longer than you meant to... then felt guilty after
- You've told yourself "I'll start in 5 minutes"... and then didn't
- You've had a moment of thinking to yourself: "What if I mess this up?"

Now tick these:

- Did Thomas Edison invent the lightbulb on his first attempt?
- Did J.K. Rowling get published straight away without setbacks?
- Did Ed Sheeran become successful overnight?
- Did Elon Musk give up when his rockets exploded?

If you ticked quite a few in the first list and mostly "no" in the second ... you've just spotted something important.

You're probably comparing your real, messy, in-the-moment life to someone else's highlight reel, or a story that's been smoothed out afterwards.

Life isn't smooth. People make mistakes. Some find exams easier than others. For many, getting information to stick can feel like falling down the Alice in Wonderland rabbit hole with no map. And yes, that can feel frustrating and unfair.

Here's the truth: Exams matter, but they do not define you.

There's a whole life waiting after them, college, apprenticeships, jobs, making music, starting a YouTube channel, travelling, trying things, changing your mind, figuring it out as you go. That's what most humans actually do and guess what, it's good to be human!

Your Nervous System, Stress and Revision - The Science Bit!

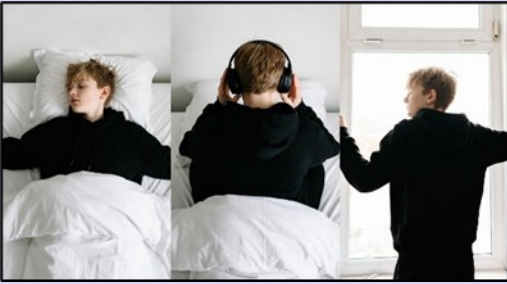
Your nervous system is like a ladder with three main rungs. It moves up and down all day depending on how safe it feels.

Even though exams aren't a physical threat, the stress and pressure can make your nervous system react as if you are in danger, and it tries to protect you by shifting down the ladder.

Have a look [at this video](#) to learn more about how your nervous system shifts states.

Rung	How You Might Feel	What it May Mean
Top Rung	Calm and Connected: You probably feel steady, clear-headed, happy to chat, and in control.	Learning and revision feel easiest here.
Middle Rung	Stressed and Activated: You could feel restless, on edge, have racing thoughts and have a faster heartbeat.	Your brain is trying hard, but thinking clearly is likely to be tough.
Bottom Rung	Flat and Shutdown: You may feel tired, unmotivated, and like 'this is pointless!'	Starting revision can feel almost impossible here.





What Actually Helps – Rung by Rung?

(3) If you're at the bottom and feel flat with lower energy levels - You Need Some Energy.

Put music on and move, do some stretches in your room, walk around the house, or step outside for some fresh air. A quick shower or change of scene can help. You don't need to feel amazing, just a bit more awake. Even small movements like standing up and putting on your favourite song can start to shift how you feel

(2) If you're in the middle and maybe feeling overwhelmed or restless - Your Body Needs to Settle.

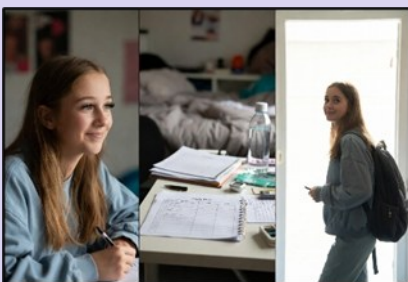
Try slow breathing (longer out-breath than in). Your brain listens to your heart and lungs. If you can slow your heart rate down by changing your breathing, your mind will follow, and you'll be more able to focus.

Try this:

- 4-7-8 breathing: In for 4, hold for 7, out for 8.
- Box breathing: In 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4.
- Simple controlled breathing: slow in through nose, slow out through mouth.

Also try listening to music you love, humming or singing, drinking a warm drink, get a hug, give yourself one, or sit with someone you feel at ease with. These things also calm your body so your brain can start to think again.

(1) If you're at the top of your ladder and feel calm and focused - This is Your Golden Window!



Do a short burst of revision. Take breaks before you drop down the ladder. Notice what helped you stay up here, and repeat it

You don't have to do this perfectly. If something isn't working, it doesn't mean you're failing it just means your nervous system needs something different right now, don't be afraid to shift states.

Short, regular revision bursts in the right state beat forcing long sessions every time. You don't need to get everything right. You just need to keep going, one rung at a time. Good luck!

[Another Video Here.](#)



Extra tools that work anywhere on the ladder

- 5-4-3-2-1 grounding: Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste. Brings you straight back to the present.
- Soothing activities: colouring, drawing, short meditation, butterfly hug, or white noise
- Have a look **at this VIDEO**

Quick Practical Wins:

- Make a simple study plan and break everything into manageable chunks so it doesn't feel overwhelming.
- Keep your notes and workspace organised.
- Look after your body's basic needs: sleep, movement, food, water. Your brain works better when your body feels looked after.

A Day in the Life of an Assistant Educational Psychologist

Hi, my name is Grace, and I am an Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP) working at Staffordshire County Council. I am part of a team of six AEPs working across the county. As a team we bring diverse range of previous experience working with children and young people aged 0-25, alongside completing further education in Psychology.

Educational Psychology aims to support the learning, development, and wellbeing of children and young people. Key groups we work with are children and young people, parents and carers, school staff, and external professionals. As a result, every day can look a little bit different as an AEP.

In Staffordshire EPS, we work alongside Educational Psychologists (EPs), who have completed doctoral training, and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs). We work across a wide range of education settings, from early years through to post-16, including specialist provisions, alternative provision, and pupil referral units. We also work with children's homes, community groups, childminders, and wraparound providers.

After talking with other AEPs, I've summarised the key areas that make up our day-to-day work.

Direct work with children and young people: Direct work is tailored to the needs and strengths of the individual child, or group of children we are working with. This can include carrying out observations, gathering pupil voice, and delivering interventions, amongst much more.

Work with parents and carers: We work closely with parents and carers to gain a holistic understanding of their child's strengths and needs. This can include meetings, phone calls, or home visits, where we work collaboratively with families in familiar environments.

Work with school staff: We also work closely with school staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, key workers, and wraparound providers. This includes meeting with staff to discuss specific children and consider what support could be put in place. As AEPs we may also model specific strategies and interventions for staff to implement in school.


Training: A significant part of the AEP role involves delivering training to school staff, and sometimes to parents and carers. This may be co-delivered with EPs or independently, depending on the focus and audience. Training we deliver include Emotion Coaching, EPATT (Educational Psychology Assessment Through Teaching), Lego Play, Attachment and Trauma, and many more.

Practice development: Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service is committed to continuous practice development, which is an exciting and evolving part of the role. AEPs contribute to practice development groups focused on key areas such as mental health, behaviour, communication and interaction, and cognition and learning. We engage with current research, update and develop resources, and contribute to new training and service developments.

Supervision: There are excellent opportunities for supervision within the role. This includes one-to-one supervision with a Senior EP within our district, as well as group supervision facilitated by an EP. These sessions provide space to reflect on practice, problem-solve, discuss workload, and engage in ongoing professional development.

Commissioned work: We also support the service through a range of commissioned projects. Providing tailored support to meet specific needs commissioned by various providers. Current projects include Early Years, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA), School Non-Attendance, the Virtual School, and Children's Homes.

Administration: Supporting children and young people across multiple settings involves a range of administrative tasks. This includes planning and coordinating visits, recording visits, and writing up reports of our involvements. Also supporting wider service administration where needed.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and it is true that every day as an AEP is different. If you would like to find out more about the AEP role, **we will be holding an online information event**, led by the current AEPs in Staffordshire. **For more details see following page 15** 

Online Information Event

If you would like to find out more about the Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP) role, we will be holding an online information event, led by the current AEPs in Staffordshire. This informal session is a space to ask us any questions about the role and may be particularly useful for anyone considering applying for future AEP roles.

Date: Wednesday 6th May 2026

Time: 18:00-19:00 pm

Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

The session is open to everyone.

Please contact: grace.muirhead@staffordshire.gov.uk to register your interest or to ask any questions.



Free online course to help you support others called Conversations in the Community. You'll build confidence in how to have conversations about mental health and wellbeing, to be there for others in your community.

[Mind's free online course to help you support others - Mind](#)



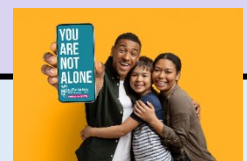
Free CPD Strategies to Support Teacher Wellbeing. Tips on how to prevent stress and support the wellbeing of teachers in FREE webinar [Free Webinar: Strategies to Support Teacher Wellbeing \(worthit.org.uk\)](#) Other free mental health and wellbeing training is available on the website as well as some with costs.

Free course **Supporting physical development in early childhood**. Learn how to ensure young children do enough physical activity and how it improves child mental and physical health development. Learn low cost, effective ways of accessing recommended amount of activities Course for practitioners, parents/carers:



[Supporting physical development in early childhood](#)

Your mind matters - You're not alone



Looking after your mental health matters just as much as caring for your physical health - but finding the right support can sometimes feel daunting. The good news is the [Staffordshire Health App Finder](#) is a free, easy-to-use tool that helps anyone discover expert-reviewed mental health apps. From fun, interactive activities to calming breathing guides, there's something for everyone. Quick, easy tools to help you de-stress, make sense of your feelings, and boost your mood.

Check out the curated children and young people mental health section: [Children & Young People's Mental Health - Staffordshire](#). You can browse by category or use the search function to find the right app for your needs. [Explore the apps](#)

Request a professional account - If you're a professional you can request a pro account. With a pro account you can create lists of suitable apps, send app recommendations direct to families and young people you're working with, and track which apps have been downloaded.

To find out more about pro accounts - email: lucy.gratton@staffordshire.gov.uk



Changes to advocacy service for children and young people in Staffordshire

On Wednesday 1 April 2026, our advocacy service provider changed. Support was previously delivered by Change Grow Live, and it will now be offered by Asist. This means our advocacy service will be provided by the same people who offer advocacy support to adults in Staffordshire. This is a great move for our children and young people. Having the same provider in both parts of the service will offer consistency and help them when they're preparing for the transition to adulthood. If you care for a child or young person who needs someone independent to help them express their views and wishes, you can make a referral to Asist.

You can find full contact details, including links to referral forms and information leaflets, on their [website](#). You can email - referrals@asist.co.uk call 01785 246709 or 0300 100 800 Referrals for the service can be made online - [Referrals - ASIST](#)

Don't worry if you've recently made a referral to Change Grow Live. They're supporting us with the move to Asist and will transfer all referrals made before 1 April 2026.



New guidance released on screen time for under-5s

The government has published new, evidence-informed guidance to help parents and carers support healthy screen habits for children under five. The advice recognises that screens are part of everyday life but highlights the importance of balance during a child's early development. The early years are critical for development - 90% of a child's brain development occurs by age 5, making it a critical period for the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills.

Key messages include avoiding screen use for under-2s wherever possible, except for shared activities like video calling with family. For children aged 2-5, screen time should be kept to around one hour a day or less, with screens avoided at mealtimes and in the hour before bedtime.

The guidance also encourages parents to choose slow-paced, age-appropriate content, avoid social media-style videos and AI tools, and use screens together with children. Watching and talking about content together supports learning, language development and relationships more effectively than children using screens alone.

- Swap out screens at bedtime or mealtimes for reading stories or playing simple games.
- Children copy everything you do - their brains are like sponges. Be mindful of how often you use screens around your child.

The advice is available for parents to access on the [Best Start in Life website](#), alongside a whole range of other free resources and advice on everything from pregnancy to starting school.

Campaign communications resources including posters, digital screens, social media content to promote in settings are available here: [Best Start in Life - Screen Time | Best Start in Life | Campaign Resource Centre](#)

Around 10 lives are prematurely lost each month to suicide in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. **#TalkSuicide campaign** aims to bring local individuals, organisations and businesses together to help prevent suicide. You can sign up at [Talk Suicide | Doing Our Bit](#) for Free training, resources, downloads, and tools.

**#TALK
SUICIDE**

Suicide Awareness & Prevention Courses, courses are **adult** or **focused on Children and young People** and are available **FREE**. To book training click on the link: [Bookings | Public Health \(staffordshire.gov.uk\)](#)



Amparo is the commissioned bereavement support service for those affected by suicide in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent [Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent - Amparo](#)

Amparo's local Liaison Workers aim to make initial contact within 24 hours of a referral being made.

To find out more about Amparo, or to make a referral, [visit this page](#). If you're a professional and want to learn more about the Amparo service and the support offered, book onto one of the free briefing sessions [here](#).



Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide is the UK charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people.

Are you, or is a young person you know, not coping with life? For confidential suicide prevention advice contact 0800 068 4141 pat@papyrus-uk.org text 88247 for more information see [Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention](#)

Need urgent help? If you need urgent support, feel unable to cope, are worried about your own mental health or someone you care for, help is available.

Call your **local NHS urgent mental health helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:**

North Staffordshire (Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle, Staffs Moorlands) on **0800 0 328 728 (option 1)**. If you have a hearing impairment or are unable to use the telephone, you can text the All Age Access Team on **07739 775202** and the team will respond as soon as possible (please note: this text service is charged at your network provider's rate).

South Staffordshire (Stafford, Stone, Rugeley, Cannock, South Staffs, Lichfield, Burton, Uttoxeter, Tamworth) on **0808 196 3002**. If you have a hearing impairment or are unable to use the telephone, you can email the All Age Access Team mhsi.staffordshire@mpft.nhs.uk and the team will respond as soon as possible.

Samaritans - confidential crisis support helpline, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - **116 123**. [Contact Us | Samaritans](#) they have email service and self-help app

Is it an emergency? If someone's life is at risk because they have seriously injured themselves or taken an overdose call **999**. If you do not feel you can keep yourself, or someone else safe from immediate risk of harm, call **999**.

Useful helplines and websites

Childnet: Provides [online information](#) for parents around supporting children with gaming at different ages.
Parents can [download their Family Agreement template](#) and find tips on using it with their family.

The Mix: Offers online information as well as helpline support to under-25s about anything that's troubling them.
[Get support](#) - discussion boards, support groups, text support and counselling is available.

Childline: If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, chat online or email about any problem big or small.
[Sign up](#) for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use their [free 1-2-1 counsellor chat](#) and email support service.
[Can provide a BSL interpreter](#) if you are deaf or hearing-impaired.
Hosts [online message boards](#) where you can share your experiences, have fun and get support from other young people in similar situations.
Opening times: 24/7 [0800 11 11](#)

Tellmi: A free app for teenagers (11+) providing resources and a fully moderated community where you can share your problems, get support, and help other people too.
Can be downloaded from Staffordshire Health App finder (info below) or google play or app store

Staffordshire Health App finder has a range of trusted, clinically-reviewed apps to address a variety of mental health needs—whether it's managing anxiety, building resilience, or coping with everyday stress.

Click the link [Staffordshire health app finder](#) or scan the QR code



We love to hear your feedback.

Have you shared any websites or resources from Kind Minds with colleagues, families, children and young people. If so, we'd really like to hear about it.

Tell us which resources you found useful and how you have used them.

When sharing feedback from children and young people, please remember to keep it anonymised.

Please get in touch with ideas or contributions:
sandra.webb@staffordshire.gov.uk

This newsletter has been produced in partnership with:



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