

Training Provider Engagement: Senior Mental Health Lead Training

**Mental Health Delivery Division: 10 May
2021**



Department
for Education

Purpose of Communication

To provide you with:

- An update on DfE progress, in readiness to offer schools and colleges grants for senior mental health lead training from the start of the new academic year 2021/22. A link to the press notice from 10 May is available [here](#).
- A timeline, to help you prepare to offer additional grant-funded training to school and college senior mental health leads.
- An option, for those who would like, to provide feedback on the quality principles which will inform decisions on which courses can be accessed through this funding.



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Background

- The Government has committed to incentivise and support all state schools and colleges to identify and train a senior lead for mental health by 2025.
- The aim is to provide a senior person (or person supported by the senior team) in every state school or college with the knowledge and practical skills to develop or introduce their setting's whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- From the beginning of the new academic year 2021/22, we are working on the basis that a fixed-value grant will be offered - with sufficient funding provided initially (up to March 2022) to train a senior lead in around a third of schools and colleges. The grant will consist of £800 to purchase training from the market, and a contribution to back fill the senior lead engaged in training (equivalent to two days of supply teacher costs).



Supporting schools and college to access high quality training that meets their specific needs

- To ensure training accessed by schools and colleges provides development that enables delivery of the intended outcomes, the Department intends to:
 - publish a training specification, quality criteria and guidance for training providers in June. We have taken on board comments received from providers on the training specification which is being finalised.
 - commission a quality assurance (QA) body, ready to assure courses in July / August 2021, instead of relying on a Dynamic Purchasing System for all training providers.
 - publish a list of assured senior lead training courses for schools and colleges, ahead of the start of the new academic year 2021/22.
 - from September 2021, ask senior leads to identify their training needs through a grant opt-in process, and provide a tool to help them identify suitable courses.
 - We are currently procuring a QA body for 2021/22 through the DfE's Education and Children's Social Care Dynamic Purchasing System (ECSC DPS).



Quality Assurance: Process

Processes to quality assure training courses are still being developed, however, we are working on the basis that (to enable schools and colleges to opt in and book training early in the new academic year):

- Training providers wishing to deliver grant-funded senior lead training will be invited in the summer to self assess their course against DfE learning objectives, and submit course information to the QA body for quality assurance.
- It will take approximately 6 weeks for training courses to be reviewed.
- Training providers will receive feedback on the outcome of assurance.
- Courses meeting the quality criteria will be added to an assured list, made available to schools and colleges opting-in for a grant. There will be an opportunity for providers to submit further courses during the academic year and for the list to be updated.
- There will be a process in place to raise concerns about a decision not to approve a course.
- A DfE commissioned QA body will undertake ongoing quality assurance of courses, and their delivery, and we will review processes and delivery ahead of what is anticipated to be a multi-year provision of grant funding.



Quality Assurance: Principles

- The Department is in the process of developing quality principles, on which to base objective quality criteria for training courses and providers, in consultation with health partners and other stakeholders. These principles are intended to capture some of the critical elements of quality training delivery that will maximise senior leads capability to take forward change after receiving training.
- We welcome your views on these quality principles, through responding to this short survey by 19 May: [Link](#)



Draft Quality Principles

Course Content

- content aligns with the specified senior lead learning objectives outlined in the training specification
- content demonstrates provider has a clear understanding of audience, including:
 - through specifying the skills level, stage of education and type of setting the training is intended for
 - using language that is engaging / suitable for senior leaders in a school or college and not overly clinical
 - reflects that the primary focus of a senior mental health lead is about strategic leadership of change to support effective whole school/college practice leading to improved outcomes for children, staff and parents
 - provides practical tools (templates etc) that can be used in the education setting
- content is informed by what has been shown to work, with clear attribution to clinical and other appropriate evidence and research.

Provider experience / skills

- provider has experience promoting to and supporting senior education staff to implement whole school or college approaches to mental health and wellbeing
- provider uses trainers who understand the relevant type of education setting, the opportunities and challenges facing leaders in instigating and sustaining effective whole school/college improvement.
- provider has experience engaging senior education staff with different backgrounds and views about mental health with varying skills and experience
- provider understands the strategic leadership challenges often faced in education settings implementing effective whole school or college approaches, and a range of approaches school and college leaders can take to overcome them
- provider uses trainers with experience of coaching senior leaders to lead cultural and organisational change
- understands how the health system works (CYPMHS, MHSTs and the voluntary sector) with current knowledge of the landscape

Providers approach to planning, delivering and reviewing the training

- delivers courses meeting DfE prescribed CPD criteria for senior leaders
- has clear focus on practical, translational learning – using methods proven to support sustainable outcomes
- shares and provides coaching to use tools e.g. to critically assess needs, plan a whole school or college approach
- operates in a non-partisan way and signposts to a range of relevant resources
- encourages or provides opportunities for reflective practice and peer learning to support sustainable change
- provider risk assesses what could prevent their training translating into outcomes in a school/college and seeks to mitigate
- is receptive to external quality assurance and feedback on content and training delivery
- there is a clear route for trainees to escalate concerns and there are regular practices to continually improve the impact of their training including in response to feedback
- provider recognises their duty of care, and has clear accessibility and inclusivity policies and provision to cover where attendees may need additional support



Indicative Timeline

- DfE QA body in place: end May 2021
- Testing of quality assurance process with training providers: late June 2021
- Publication of training specification, quality criteria and guidance: mid June 2021
- First expression of interest published for providers to self assess & submit courses for quality assurance – end June
- First round of training courses quality assured: July-August 2021
- First assured list of training courses published: early September 2021
- Senior leads start to go on grant-funded training: from mid-September 2021