

Wellbeing for Education Return – Frequently Asked Questions

1. There is a lot of content in the Wellbeing for Education Return (WER) materials. What is the best way to cascade this?

There is a wide range of content available to provide everything you might need, expecting that you will wish to select and tailor the content you use according to your local context and the specific needs of your audience.

Local area leads and experts have flexibility in how you tailor and use these materials in a way which is most supportive of your local schools and FE providers. It is also for you to determine how and when to deliver this training to education staff in your area, in line with local and education settings' contexts and requirements. Some areas are integrating the materials provided into their existing wellbeing offer to education settings. Others are tailoring and delivering the materials as provided, for example working across health, voluntary sector and education partners to add important information such as local directories of services and/or support.

2. What is expected of me as a local expert?

It is intended that local experts will train nominated staff in all local schools and FE providers, so that they can also cascade key learning that helps others within their settings to feel confident to support children and young people. As you plan your support, please talk to education setting partners about their current needs, what works best for them, how to build on things they are already doing and how or when you deliver training in busy schools or college days in the current context. Many local areas, for example, have education experts leading on, or supporting this locally.

3. How will school and FE uptake be measured?

There are no mandatory criteria for measuring LA performance on this work. However, the Department for Education (DfE) is encouraging all LAs to use this funding to provide WER training and follow-up support to every school and FE provider in their local area until the end of March 2021. The DfE will also issue two Management Information (MI) requests, one in October 2020 (issued on 22 October) and one in March 2021, to capture LA information on local delivery. All LAs are encouraged to respond to help understand nationally how support is being provided and is working on the ground.

The DfE continues to engage with local area leads and experts on local delivery so that that they can further shape the WER offer and support LAs, schools and FE providers. This includes sharing practice examples from other areas. You can continue to reach them at Wellbeing.EducationReturn@education.gov.uk

4. How does WER fit with other offers around children and young people's wellbeing and mental health?

The DfE is mindful of the pressures on education staff at this time, with schools and FE colleges **prioritising immediate wellbeing and mental health issues** for children and young people. WER provides targeted resources and funding for local support to help them to do that in the specific context of the pandemic. It is designed to complement – not replace – existing longer-term resources, training and support.

For example, the **Link Programme** continues to run, offering support to develop important, longer-term local partnerships on children and young people's wellbeing and mental health. **Mental Health Support Teams** (MHSTs), where established, have adapted in light of the pandemic and continue to offer support for children and young people in schools and FE settings. There is also a new statutory requirement on schools to teach **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)**, including a specific module and support on mental wellbeing.

This autumn the DfE is also reviewing current needs, and the best way of delivering **senior mental health lead training** for schools and FE providers. The government remains committed to its Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper commitment to providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges. There will be further information on this when our review has completed.

5. How can WER reach FE settings?

Local area leads and experts are reminded that they should offer WER training and support to **all** settings, **including FE**. FE safeguarding leads may be a viable contact route and it may be possible to reach them through Local Safeguarding Boards. If you are experiencing difficulty in reaching FE staff, another option is to contact the Association of Colleges (<https://www.aoc.co.uk/contact-us>). To date, some local areas have engaged FE staff through, for example, tapping into Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion networks or liaising with SEND case workers or Educational Psychologists working in FE settings.

Please note that FE providers may employ hundreds of staff, so you will need to consider how you can support training dissemination in these settings.

To understand how and help ensure that FE settings and staff can benefit from WER, the DfE is also following up with local areas delivering training and support to FE staff to share practice, as well as with representative organisations and policy leads.

6. How can we engage and collaborate with local education settings and services?

We are aware that local area leads and experts are approaching this in a range of ways and that DfE has shared and will continue to share examples of practice via WER local leads. Examples include:

- Hosting **virtual introductory webinars with education staff and wider local services** to raise awareness of the programme, gauge interest, understand areas of need, ascertain preferred methods of delivery and how to cascade within settings and identify and address gaps. Involving wider local services (MHSTs, voluntary

sector, Children and Young People's Mental Health Services, primary care etc.) at the same time enables everyone to hear the same messages.

- **Pitching training at school and FE senior leadership teams (SLT) as the primary audience and leads** in cascading within their settings, on the basis that those leads have the buy-in and authority to do so.
- **Using different local services and professionals to deliver different parts of the training** according to expertise and to share workload (for example, Educational Psychologists, MHSTs and/or the voluntary sector delivering content from the first webinar and CYPMHS, primary practitioners and other specialist services delivering content from the second).
- **Seeking to mitigate potential low engagement from schools and FE providers through highlighting the benefits of training and/or risk factors** around not putting support in place – for example, the impact on staff wellbeing and retention.
- **Using existing school and/or FE networks** to engage with and offer training to staff – for example school improvement forums, primary or secondary headteacher forums, Special Educational Needs (SEN) inclusion forums and networks, and so on.

7. How can we identify and target need?

We are aware that local area leads and experts are taking different approaches, according to the specific context, demographics and needs in their local areas and guided by what school and FE staff are telling them. The WER content also emphasises and allows for targeting and adaptation of training and resources to support specific groups of children and young people, staff and parents and carers – particularly those who may be more vulnerable to wellbeing and mental health challenges linked to the pandemic.

Some local areas are, for example, taking a **tiered or phased** approach to training by auditing and targeting different levels of need, according to current school/FE staff progress in embedding a **whole school approach**. This could involve an introductory webinar (as above) for schools and FE to self-assess where they are, followed by three phases of training: a 'wellbeing recovery' session, an 'embed' session and an 'advanced' session.

8. What delivery models and methods can we use?

Examples of local area delivery models and methods include:

- **Building the content into INSET training or similar events** (for example, via a senior mental health leads conference) with schools or FE (some pre-planned).
- **Reducing content to around 70-80 core slides, focusing on areas of need or key themes** (wellbeing, resilience, bereavement, anxiety, senior leaders, staff wellbeing, how to cascade training, specific models from content).
- Planning **two, two-hour workshops**, spaced a week apart and **mapping the existing provision in the local area onto the WER content** – for example existing services, models or frameworks and training.
- **Segmenting training into one-hour sessions or webinars** focusing on different themes and staggering them over several weeks.
- Offering **'self-serve' themed sessions** for school and FE staff to select based on need.

- Developing a '**glossary**' **video with snippets of learning** from the WER content, with instructions on how to easily navigate to the preferred section.
- Running **core training**, then **follow-up sessions based on age**.
- Developing **bespoke sessions for different education settings** (for example special schools).
- Developing or building on, and sharing, existing signposting information, for example a **graduated response and signposting note for schools and FE providers** on local services and referral pathways.

DfE has shared and will continue to share examples of practice via WER local leads.

9. How can we reach schools and FE providers, children and young people and parents and carers?

Examples of how local areas are reaching staff and parents and carers at this stage of delivery include:

- Capitalising on the opportunity **to reach schools and FE providers in greater numbers through online platforms** (for example Zoom has a maximum call capacity of 300, functionality for smaller breakout rooms, etc).
- Alternatively, deliberately **keeping groups small** (c.30 participants) to enable detailed, interactive discussions.
- **Pre-recording training or recording live training to increase access** for schools/colleges who cannot join live. Offering live sessions to encourage take-up and providing access to recorded sessions at a later stage. Providing one or two **logins per school or FE provider** (for both live and recorded sessions), again to increase access and **monitor take-up from schools and FE**. Pre-recording training (with trainer(s) talking through content) to avoid inhibiting discussions (a potential risk for recording live training with participants).
- **Staff wellbeing** is a key theme, with **many areas focusing on this**, either through offering webinars on this first or further emphasising it throughout training. Some areas are focusing on senior leaders, on managing ongoing uncertainty, and/or including mindfulness and breathing exercises in sessions.
- **Engaging and/or offering training to governors**, including those responsible for wellbeing. One area has used governors to connect with harder to reach schools.
- **Engaging with community services** on how to reach specific groups (e.g. faith and youth groups).

DfE has shared and will continue to share examples of practice via WER local leads.

10. What follow-up support could we offer?

Again, it will be important to consult with school and FE staff on what follow-up support would be most helpful for them. Examples of local area planned support include:

- Considering various **supervision models** (for example using the Emotional Learning Support Assistant framework) ongoing pre-booked supervision slots.
- Other options include **work discussion groups, peer support networks, drop-ins/virtual surgeries or clinics, top tips on building confidence to**

cascade within settings, use of, e.g. the **Educational Psychology Reach Out** YouTube channel to connect more widely and share learning.

- Using training as a **bridge to further work, awareness raising and/or training with schools and FE**. Considering **follow-up work with SLTs** on, for example, developing a relational-based behaviour policy and trauma-informed approaches.
- Considering provision of **follow-up support (capacity allowing) via existing CAMHS or other link professionals** in or for schools and FE.
- Running **half-termly network meetings with school and FE leads** to discuss key themes and issues, check-in on what is needed, and plan support.

11. What follow-up support could we offer?

Some LAs are **developing local evaluation forms and polls** for local training to obtain feedback and understand outcomes and impact. Possible questions include how useful education staff found the training, who they intend to cascade it to in their school or FE setting and how they have translated material into practice.

12. How will WER be monitored nationally?

The DfE will issue two further MI requests in October 2020 (issued on 22 October) and March 2021, which will include a short series of questions on, for example, the number and types of settings you have reached with this training. The DfE has developed and tested this approach in conjunction with a range of local area leads and experts.

13. Is it possible to continue to network with other local areas following the training?

Yes. Throughout the training and follow-up sessions, local area leads and experts consistently noted that they found it helpful and valuable to network with colleagues across the country. There is significant appetite to continue to share practice and collaborate and we are aware that some leads and experts have established informal networks. The DfE has also, as part of its most recent MI request (on 22 October), asked local area leads and experts to confirm whether they would wish to have their email address shared with colleagues as part of a wider mailing list and network. If you wish to discuss this with DfE, you can continue to contact regional and national leads via Wellbeing.EducationReturn@education.gov.uk

14. Can we amend WER's name to reflect that children and young people have now been back at school or college for some time?

The intention has always been that the materials can be adapted, reduced or supplemented to meet the needs of your area. This extends to the name 'Wellbeing for Education Return'. We are aware that education settings are no longer 'returning' after the summer. Many areas have told us that they are exploring different titles and some have reflected that due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and related local restrictions, there is a process of repeated 'returning' in play. The DfE is encouraging you to do what will work best in your area.