



Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Document provenance

This policy was approved:

Personnel Committee

Date: February 2023

Next Review:

Date: February 2025

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every two years. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle

ELT Owner: Chief Executive Officer

Related documents:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for students
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Support Staff Appraisal Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Sickness Management Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Special Leave Policy

Summary of policy:

This policy outlines how E-ACT Academies will work to promote the positive mental health and wellbeing of all staff to promote current and future success.

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. Introduction and purpose

- 1.1. At E-ACT, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole community (pupils, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives, in just the same way as physical health. E-ACT aims to promote a positive working environment where employers and employees collaborate to achieve our goals, promote the physical and mental health of all employees, and welcome diversity by providing opportunities for people with mental disabilities to participate in the workplace.
- 1.2. We recognise that sometimes a place of work can have a significant impact on our mental health and wellbeing. We have a dedicated and passionate workforce committed to E-ACT's vision and values (Thinking Big, Doing the Right Thing, Showing Team Spirit). However, this commitment can also mean we can take on too much which can impact our own wellbeing.
- 1.3. At E-ACT our aim is to help to develop protective factors which build resilience to mental health difficulties and to be an organisation where we:
 - Strive to be leaders in workplace wellbeing.
 - Recognise that good mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is vital to us all and to our current and future success.
 - Commit to ensuring that we all have the right support, guidance and work-life balance to maintain our mental wellbeing at work.
 - Have an environment where staff feel a sense of belonging and feel safe to talk about their difficulties without feeling stigma or discrimination.
- 1.4. Positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is vital to every one of us and to our future success. It helps us to not only achieve our collective vision and values but allows us to flourish and feel empowered in our lives.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 E-ACT is committed to its people and we know that people perform better when they are able to be present, confident and motivated in their jobs. We are dedicated to the following:
 - Promoting mental wellbeing among staff and tackling the causes of work-related mental health issues;
 - Providing support to staff who are experiencing a mental health difficulty;
 - Developing and supporting line managers to effectively support the mental health and wellbeing of all staff at E-ACT.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, parents/carers, visitors to the academy and the local community.

4. Legislation and regulation

Definition of mental health

- 4.1. Mental health and wellbeing is defined as *“a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”* World Health Organisation - https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/)
- 4.2. We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Mental health and emotional wellbeing sits on a continuum, it has no absolutes and it can affect anyone regardless of their position within the organisation. At E-ACT we refer to the four-quadrant continuum as developed by Mental Health First Aid England (MHFA).



- 4.3. Common mental health diagnosis includes depression, anxiety, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). These make up the majority of the problems that lead to one in four people experiencing a mental health problem in any given year. Signs and symptoms can range from the comparatively mild to very severe.
- 4.4. Severe mental health diagnosis includes psychosis and bipolar disorder which are less common. These can have varied signs and symptoms and can affect a

person's day to day life in varying degrees.

- 4.5. Work-related stress is defined by the [Health and Safety Executive](#) as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work. Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as increased capacity for error. Stress is not a medical diagnosis as it is perceived differently by each individual, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or more severe mental health illnesses.
- 4.6. Mental health and wellbeing are not just the absence of mental health problems. Our mental health can change from day to day, month to month, or year to year. Where someone's emotional wellbeing drops, we want to support them in their recovery and return to the workplace or volunteer position.
- 4.7. In order for the approaches in this policy to be successful, alongside managers taking responsibility for promoting and reflecting mental wellbeing in the workplace, we will need the active engagement of staff.
- 4.8. Under the Equality Act (2010) a person with a mental health illness is described as having a mental impairment and therefore a disability. A disability is described in law (the Equality Act (2010)) as 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'
- 4.9. The Equality Act (2010) requires all places of employment to:
 - Not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled people;
 - Make reasonable adjustments, so that disabled people are not disadvantaged. An example of a reasonable adjustment at work could include changing your role, allowing flexible working or offering counselling or mentoring.
- 4.10. E-ACT will operate within the law. The legal framework, statutory guidance, key policies and government strategies most pertinent to mental health can be found in:
 - The Mental Health Act (2007)
 - Mental Health (Discrimination) Act (2013)
 - The Equality Act (2010)
 - The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (This applies to any employees under the age of 26).
 - The SEND Code of Practice (last updated April 2015) (This applies to any employees under the age of 26).

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

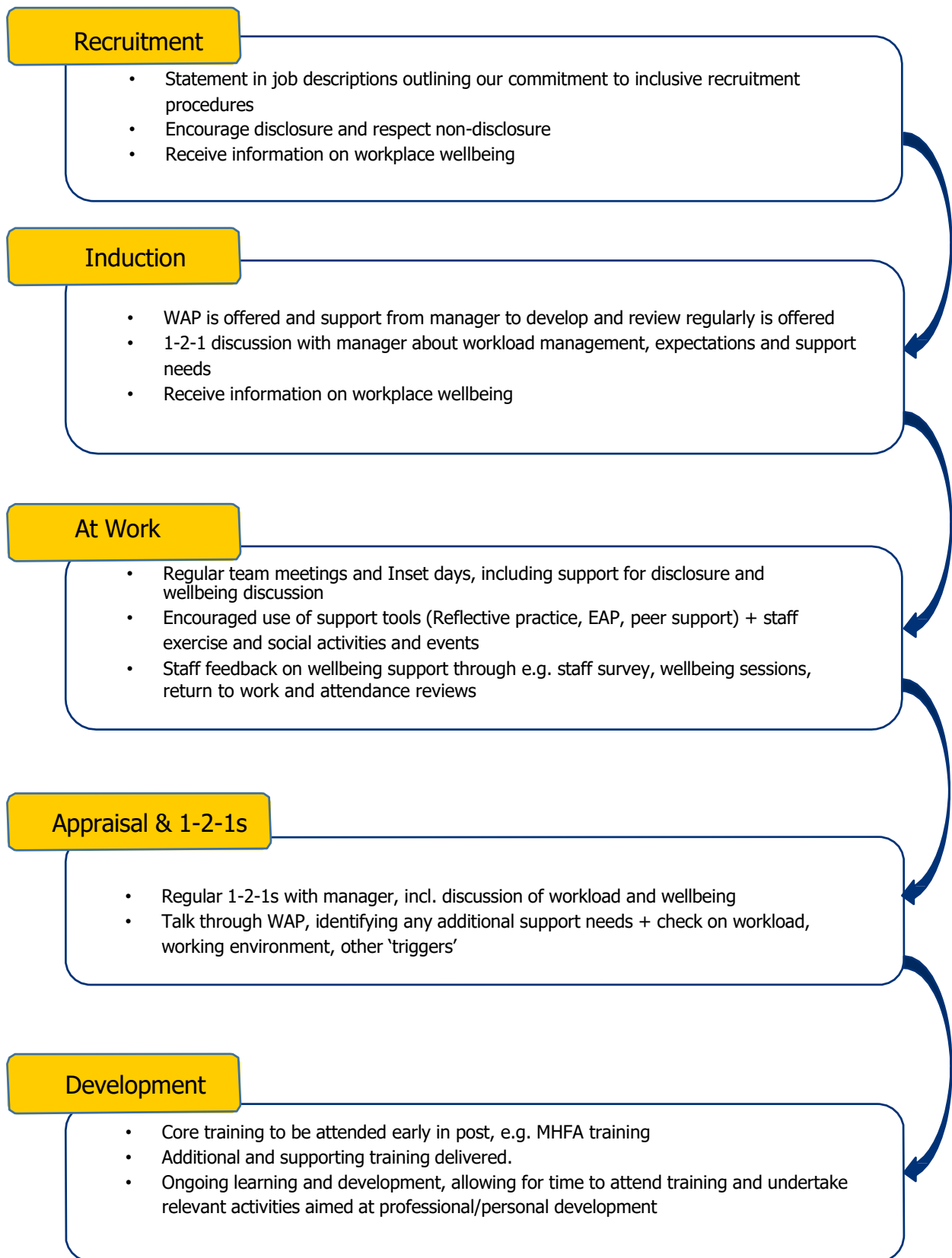
5. Policy statement

- 5.1. E-ACT's three core values are at the heart of all it does and this policy strongly advocates: Partnership working across academies and utilising trust expertise, local, and specialist agencies, as well as a meaningful person centred approach to supporting staff in line with the MHFA England ALGEE framework ('Team Spirit'); High aspirations and opportunity ('Think Big'); A commitment to legal compliance and a genuine desire to support *all* people ('Do the right thing').
- 5.2. This policy compliments E-ACT's Mental Health Strategy ASK (Awareness, Support Kindness):
 - Awareness – All staff have access to MHFA training and raising awareness events.
 - Support – There is a range of sources of support for staff including the Employee Assist Programme.
 - Kindness – Acts of kindness are encouraged, recognised and celebrated both for personal wellbeing and towards others.
- 5.3. Promoting mental wellbeing among staff and tackling the causes of work-related mental health difficulties.
 - E-ACT is dedicated to providing a work environment that promotes and supports mental wellbeing for all staff as well as offers assistance, advice and support for those experiencing a mental health difficulty. This also includes support for staff returning to work after a period of absence due to mental health illness.

Organisational commitment and procedures:

- 5.4. As part of our organisation-wide commitment to workplace wellbeing E-ACT has a National Mental Health Lead who leads the mental health strategy and provides guidance and support to MHFA instructors and any member of staff within the organisation. But it is equally important what happens on a day-to-day basis – especially the interaction between the employee, their line manager, team and wider colleagues.
- 5.5. All E-ACT staff have the opportunity to complete Wellness Action Plans (WAPs) with their line manager. Line managers have been provided with training by the National Lead for Mental Health on how to support and implement a WAP. WAPs are designed to be a supportive tool to identify how to promote positive wellbeing in staff members.
- 5.6. Supporting Wellbeing Pathway

- 5.7. All academies have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some staff will require additional help and all staff through the Adult MHFA training will have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health difficulties and ensure that staff with mental health needs get early intervention and appropriate support.
- 5.8. The 'Supporting Wellbeing Pathway' below illustrates E-ACT's holistic approach to wellbeing and outlines the role of line managers in supporting and promoting wellbeing in the workplace. It is based around the journey of an individual from the point of recruitment, through induction and probation period and in work including 1-2-1s, appraisals, and ongoing learning and development.
- 5.9. The pathway demonstrates E-ACTs belief that supporting the wellbeing of staff centres on managers demonstrating effective people management skills. Managers need to support the wellbeing of staff through:
- In-depth induction
 - Providing opportunities to complete WAPs
 - Regular 1-2-1s (half termly)
 - Informative team meetings
 - Excellent role modelling of healthy working behaviour
 - Provision of learning and development opportunities
 - On-going Continued Professional Development (CPD)
- 5.10. The key message behind this pathway is that mental health and wellbeing needs to be approached at all levels and be integrated in general working practices, bringing mental health and wellbeing within the boundaries of normal working life.



Wellness Action Plans (WAPs)

- 5.11. WAPs are a personalised, practical tool we can all use – whether we have a mental health problem or not – to help us identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell and the support we would like to receive from our manager to boost our wellbeing or support us through a recovery.
- 5.12. To help support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff in the workplace, all employees should be encouraged to complete a WAP at the beginning of their employment – whether they have a mental health problem or not. The WAP looks at how we, as an organisation, can support employees and helps outline the support they value at work. Giving people the opportunity to draw up a WAP gives them ownership of the practical steps needed to help them stay well at work or manage a mental health problem.

6. Providing Support to Staff Who Are Experiencing a Mental Health Problem

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

- 6.1. E-ACT buy into Health Assured an employee assistance programme which is free of charge and offers a wide range of activities to all staff including counselling. The free 24-hour confidential hotline is: 0800 030 5182. Website: www.healthassuredeap.com. Username: Eact, Password: Act

Occupational Health

- 6.2. Managers may need to gain a better understanding of the employee's mental health problems and the underlying triggers and symptoms in order to plan and implement the right support for them. To gain such insight, refer the employee to an Occupational Health Specialist. HR teams will be able to provide you with more information and guidance on when and how to use Occupational Health.

Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAPs)

- 6.3. Employees will be offered the opportunity to complete a WRAP on their return to work after experiencing any mental health difficulties. This will enable line managers and employees to consider reasonable workplace adjustments to help give an employee the environment they need to do their job. For example: Support from manager, such as providing written instructions from someone whose anxiety affects their memory; Flexibility with working patterns (See: Flexible working policy), such as enabling a person to arrange their hours to enable them to attend weekly therapy / counselling sessions; Changes to the physical environment, such as moving a person's workstation or providing a quiet space for breaks away from the main workspace.

7. Training

7.1. E-ACT has trained Adult MHFA instructors to deliver the two-day Adult MHFA training to all members of staff within academies. Training sessions are delivered regularly throughout the academic year. The training enables staff to develop:

- An in depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing,
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues,
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress,
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgmental listening,
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support - whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix.

ALGEE Action Plan

7.2. Academies will utilise the MHFA ALGEE framework to support with crisis situations and to inform support process:

A – Approach, assess and assist the young person.

L – Listen and communicate non-judgementally.

G – Give support and information.

E – Encourage appropriate professional support.

E – Encourage other supports.

8. Responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to making the workplace mental wellbeing policy effective. The following section outlines the various levels of responsibilities within E-ACT to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and ourselves:

8.1. At an organisational level (the Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team) we will have in place: Annual Survey, Ensuring the work environment is appropriate, Policies and Practices that Support Staff Wellbeing.

8.2. The People Development Team will: Provide advice and support to employees and managers in relation to this policy; help to maintain the workplace wellbeing strategy and policy and strengthen these in the future when required; Monitor and report on levels of sickness absence which relate to mental health problems including stress-related illness (in conjunction with the occupational health service and departmental managers).

- 8.3. The mental health lead, headteachers and senior leadership teams will be responsible for: Providing training and awareness via the MHFA training courses; Taking stock of mental health and wellbeing such as MH audits and regular team meetings; Positive performance management such as setting annual objectives and conducting regular check-ins via 1-2-1s; Two way dialogue such as seeking feedback on own managerial approach; Workload management by organising work efficiently and effectively, clearly communicate responsibilities and expectations and support with prioritization; Offering tailored support by encouraging staff to develop a WAP.
- 8.4. Employees and Volunteers are responsible for: Accessing workplace support and signposting such as MHFA trained staff, EAP (Health Assured); Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated; Ensure own work-life balance; Raise issues of concern and seek help from your line manager, human resources or Occupational Health; Fill in a WAP with your manager and identify any support you may require

9. Monitoring and compliance

- 9.1. Regional teams inc. Line Managers and the People Development Team will monitor compliance with this policy within the academies in their respective regions. They will report to the Regional Education Director or the appropriate Director and Mental Health Lead, who in turn will report to the Challenge Boards.

10. Review

- 10.1. This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation and statutory requirements.

Appendix 1 - Wellness action plans:

A WAP reminds us what we need to do to stay well at work and details what our line managers can do to better support us. It also helps us develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these to our manager.

The information in this form will be held confidentially and regularly reviewed by you and your manager together. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing and that relates to your role and workplace. This form is not a legal document, but it can help you and your manager to agree, together, how to practically support you in your role and address any health needs.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that data gathered in this form will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone without the permission of the member of staff. Certain circumstances may require confidentiality to be broken in order to safeguard a member of staff.

<p>1. What helps you stay mentally healthy at work?</p> <p><i>(For example: taking an adequate lunch break away from your desk, getting some exercise before or after work, light and space in the office, opportunities to get to know colleagues)</i></p>	
<p>2. What can your manager do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work?</p> <p><i>(For example: regular feedback and catch-ups, explaining wider organisational developments)</i></p>	

<p>3. Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you?</p> <p><i>(For example: conflict at work, organisational change, tight deadlines, something not going to plan)</i></p>	
<p>4. How might experiencing poor mental health impact your work?</p> <p><i>(For example: you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work tasks, difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches)</i></p>	
<p>5. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health?</p> <p><i>(For example: changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues)</i></p>	
<p>6. What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or help you to manage the impact?</p> <p><i>(For example: extra catch-up time with your manager, guidance on prioritising workload, consider reasonable adjustments)</i></p>	

<p>7. Are there elements of your individual working style or temperament that is worth your manager being aware of?</p> <p><i>(For example: a preference for more face to face or more email contact, a need for quiet reflection time prior to meetings or creative tasks, negotiation on deadlines before they are set, having access to a mentor for questions you might not want to bother your manager about, having a written plan of work in place which can be reviewed and amended regularly, clear deadlines if you have a tendency to over-work a task, tendency to have particularly high or low energy in the morning or in the afternoon)</i></p>	
<p>8. If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health – what should we do?</p> <p><i>(For example: talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted)</i></p>	

<p>9. What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them?</p> <p><i>(For example: you might like to take a break from your desk and go for a short walk, or ask your line manager for support)</i></p>	
<p>10. Is there anything else you would like to share?</p>	

Employee signature:

Date:

Line Manager signature:

Date:

Review date:

Appendix 2 - Wellness recovery action plans:

Employee concerns	Impact at work	Suggested solutions	Action agreed	Review
What does the employee believe are the main issues?	How are the issues affecting the employee at work?	What could solve the issues? (manager and employee)	What actions have been agreed & why? (for manager and employee)	Review date of actions in place

By signing, the manager and employee agree the notes are a true reflection of the discussion and agree to complete the agreed actions without unreasonable delay.

Name of Line Manager:

Signed by Line Manager:

Date:

Name of Employee:

Signed by Employee:

Date:

Appendix 3 - All employees support:

Assured Employee Assistance

All E-ACT employees have access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme, a free, confidential service which offers the following:

- 8 Sessions of face to face counselling per person per issue – including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) where required.
- Active Care - Day 1 Stress Intervention – This service provides proactive intervention to manage stress related absence.

If you experience an episode of absence linked to stress or a mental health condition and are absent from work, there are additional services available.

- Active support to the employee, in addition to the counselling services
- An occupational health nurse will engage with the individual in order to understand their needs and any treatment or advice that has been given to them
- Serious Illness and Accident Support – Employees suffering a serious illness or accident have access to their own Personal Nurse Advisor (PNA). Depending on the specific condition and needs of the employee, the PNA may arrange a home visit, therapy or counselling along with the provision of relevant information on support networks.
- GP call back and Medical Helpline
- Financial support services - Including formal debt counselling services which can arrange Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) for individuals where required
- Online Health Portal – Offering support on general wellbeing as well as fitness, personal coaching and medical information.
- Emotional Support – Factsheets with video presentations by a leading Counsellor and Psychologist
- Medical Factsheets – Over 200 Factsheets written by specialists
- HSE compliant stress coaching tool
- Online health assessments and fitness resource with video clips and the ability to create bespoke exercise plans

<http://www.healthassuredeap.co.uk/> **Line managers support:**

<https://mhfastorage.blob.core.windows.net/mhfastoragecontainer/701a89376be3e811815970106fa92171/Line%20Managers'%20Resource.pdf?sv=2015-07-08&sr=b&sig=XR7zeyyxM%2BbdzloEv8voalnM3FeOlls3Pj%2BGKfVy68%3D&se=2019-08-05T16%3A44%3A36Z&sp=r>

For support on specific mental health needs:

- Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- OCD UK: www.ocduk.org
- Depression Alliance: www.depressoinalliance.org
- Eating Disorders: www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com
- National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk, www.selfharm.co.uk
- Suicidal thoughts: <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems
- www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
- www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health