

1. School reference groups

Online groups for staff from Primary, Secondary and Specialist schools to discuss mental health and ND topics. These groups began in January 2023 and run every half term. Current members of the groups are listed below.

Primary Schools (21)	Secondary Schools (11)	Specialist Schools (26)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandfield Frimley C of E Holy Trinity Pewley Down Hurst Park Scott-Broadwood C of E Hythe Community Maybury Westfield St Francis Wellgrove St John's Broadmere Furzfield New Monument Reigate Parish Bushy Hill St Clements Maybury Audley Wray Common, Merrow C of E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reigate St Andrews Ravenhill The Beacon Ashcombe Farnham Heath End Woking High Rodborough The Winston Churchill George Abbot Inclusive Education Trust Mat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foxgorve Manor Mead Walton Leigh Pond Meadow Brooklands Clifton Hill Wishmore Cross Academy Bramley Oak Academy Wallden Woodlands Ridgeway St Dominic's Sunny Down Freemantles Portesbery Westhill Unified Academy Philip Southcote Grafham Grange Carwarden The Park Gosden House Abbey Woodfield Lindenbridge Limpsfield Grange

Key themes we have heard from schools Reference Groups.

Primary Schools

- Staff expressing feeling overwhelmed with ND challenges especially regarding ND referrals.
- Concern over waiting lists for MH/ND support.
- There is a need to enable families to access more support to build resilience.
- It is useful for schools to have a space to share good practice.
- Streamline process of accessing the services available from Mindworks partners.

Secondary Schools

- Support in helping families understand there is a normal level of anxiety for CYP.
- Increase in CYP reporting being unhappy CYP leading to increases in Emotional Based School Non-Attendance, (EBSNA).

Schools would like support with the reintegration of these CYP back into school.

- Increase in ND demand. GPs signpost parents to schools for ND assessment referral without knowing the child well enough.
- Specific cohorts of children who suddenly seem to present with ND e.g., year 9/10 girls.
- Staff are overwhelmed with ND issues as they are not trained to give advice on ND to families.
- Staff not always clear on differences between disordered eating and eating disorders.
- Unmet need in those CYP who have been in crisis and after the 7-day response they are left without any support. CYP who self-harm / suicide ideation appears to be on waiting lists rather than supported.
- Calling for a streamlined process of accessing the services available from Mindworks partners.

Specialist Schools

- Leading on implementing programmes with specialist school dedicated budget. (£40k budget given to schools that resulted from post vacancies aimed at working within special schools).
- Improve joint working between health, social care & Surrey County Council.

ND Reference Group

- There is a desire to focus on CYP and their needs rather than focussing on a diagnostic label only.
- Recommend expanding training to include head teachers and governors to understand ND and move toward a wider culture change around ND.
- Supportive of needs-based approach and families being central.
- Reasonable adjustments are very subjective – this needs to be addressed through training.
- Large cohort of girls with possible ASD struggling with self-harm and suicidal thoughts and school feel they need more support.

2. Primary School Neurodiversity Survey (completed Feb 24)

Schools undertook a survey to gauge the understanding, needs and wants of their community to support children with neurodiverse needs. The findings from this have been presented to the Phase Heads, by two primary heads as part of contribution to developing a joint solution.

A summary of the feedback through this survey is included below.

The top 3 expectations schools have from a child gaining an ND Diagnosis were listed as:-

- 92 % of schools said to gain reassurance for the child.
- 76% said additional support.
- 67% said as a pathway to specialist provision.

Effectiveness of other services/support other than Mindworks

- 48% identified external services such as NAS.
- 42% stated no other services are effective.
- Nearly half felt no external support had much impact – support is insufficient, and staff are stretched to breaking point.

Suggestions to help with Mindworks demand pressures

- Checklist prior to referral – communication for parents that ND diagnosis will not trigger funding or additional resources.
- Support for CYP who are regularly disrupting others.

Impact on schools

- 99% report that a small number of children take all staff time.
- 96% report increased staff anxiety.
- 91% report prevention of teaching and learning.
- External pressures imply schools are NOT inclusive. Job of mainstream school becoming like a specialist setting.

Diagnosis and meeting need

- Surrey County Council is indicating that an ND diagnosis is not required to access specialist provision however, this was not the experience of 42% of the respondents.

Key learning from the school survey

- Schools are doing their best. It seems everything lands back on schools & headteachers to sort. Schools also have all the other children to consider too.
- Schools are on their knees and desperately need help for these children

Next steps with the primary school survey:

- Focused session with the heads and strategic leaders / partners to review the findings and agree resulting actions

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