



Exceed SCITT

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Approval date:	September 2023
Approved by:	SCITT Board
Next review:	September 2024

At Exceed SCITT our core values are inspire, excel and care. We are dedicated to helping our SCITT Teachers to feel emotionally healthy and well. We have a supportive and caring culture and we treat everyone with respect and kindness. We recognise that each SCITT Teacher is unique and that their contributions are valuable. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us feel vulnerable and that anyone may need extra emotional support at times. We believe that good mental health is everyone's responsibility, and that we all have a role to play in supporting it.

Aims

- Create a supportive work environment for all SCITT Teachers
- Acknowledge and respond to SCITT Teachers' changing needs
- Help SCITT Teachers balance work and personal life
- Provide support for specific wellbeing issues
- Empower SCITT Teachers to work towards a healthy and supportive workplace

What is mental ill health?

Mental ill health in the workplace and in general are any conditions that affect a person's state of mind. These conditions can include, but not exhausted to, levels of depression, stress and anxiety which may result in burnout or nervous breakdowns if left unaddressed. Substance abuse may also perpetuate mental health issues. Mental ill health may manifest as physical symptoms dependent on the issue and the individual, others may not suffer with any physical symptoms or side effects.

For more information on types of mental ill health please follow this link:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/>

The law

The law protects employees who suffer from medical conditions or mental disorders as it does with physical disorders. For those who suffer from a mental or physical impairment which is likely to or has lasted for a period of 12 months or more, and where it affects their ability to do day-to-day activities, they are classed as disabled for the purposes of the law under the Equality Act 2010. As disability is a protected characteristic under section 6 Equality Act 2010 those persons will then be entitled to reasonable adjustments and protection from detriments.

We will attempt to support trainees who come to us with a pre-existing mental health condition or those who start suffering with a mental health condition during training by establishing strategies that work for those trainees suffering and to help prevent those who are not from suffering. Many people are able to manage their mental health and perform their role to a high standard so assumptions should not be made about what effect a mental health condition might have on a trainee's performance.

Indicators

Early intervention is often crucial in preventing a mental health problem becoming more serious. There may be no outward sign that someone is experiencing a mental health problem, and people will have different experiences, but indicators might include:

- Changes in behaviour or mood or interaction with colleagues.
- Changes in work output, motivation levels and focus.
- Struggling to make decisions, get organised and find solutions to problems.
- Appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn and losing interest in activities and tasks they previously enjoyed.
- Changes in eating habits, appetite and increased smoking and drinking.

Open communication and support

We want to actively support all trainees, and those who may be at more of a risk of facing mental ill health, for example but not limited to, pregnant women, new parents, or those with a pre-existing condition.

To tackle this, we provide an open communication approach, where employees are welcomed to discuss any problems, questions or developments which may or is currently adversely impacting on their mental health. We understand that some trainees may not feel comfortable to speak to a higher level of authority within the organisation and so we encourage trainees to approach and speak to a Mental Health First Aider at the SCITT or at their placement schools.

If any trainee is considered by the SCITT staff, colleagues in school or fellow trainees to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken straight away. The matter should immediately be referred to the SCITT Leadership who will seek medical advice if that is reasonably practicable. Every effort will be made to contact any person nominated by the trainee as an emergency contact. Where necessary the emergency services will be called. The wellbeing of the trainee and those around them will at all times be our first concern.

We expect all SCITT Teachers to:

- Be honest about their wellbeing and ask for help when needed
- Be respectful and empathetic to each other and staff
- Support other SCITT Teachers and staff
- Follow the SCITT policy on out-of-school hours working
- Be positive and supportive team members
- Take part in wellbeing training
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other staff they may be working alongside

Role of Partnership Schools and Exceed SCITT staff

- Build and maintain positive relationships with SCITT Teachers, valuing their skills and contributions
- Provide a confidential support system for SCITT Teachers, free of judgment
- Take complaints and concerns seriously, following school and/or SCITT policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, regularly discussing work-life balance with trainees
- Induct SCITT Teachers properly and thoroughly, creating an environment where they feel comfortable asking for help
- Understand that personal and professional challenges can temporarily impact work performance and take this into account during reviews of progress and capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services

- Arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Stay in touch with SCITT Teachers who are absent for long periods
- Monitor SCITT Teacher sickness absence and meet with them to discuss any patterns that emerge
- Conduct return-to-work interviews to support SCITT Teachers' transition back to work

Exceed SCITT Leaders must:

- Set and model standards of conduct, including treating colleagues with respect and following agreed working hours
- Provide a non-judgmental and confidential support system for SCITT Teachers
- Monitor SCITT Teacher wellbeing through regularly reviews and structured conversations
- Base accountability systems on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate direct monitoring
- Regularly review SCITT Teacher demands, such as paperwork, and seek alternative solutions
- Keep SCITT Teacher's role and responsibility documents up to date, with clear responsibilities and consultation before changes
- Listen to SCITT Teachers views and involve them in decision-making, including considering workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively to all SCITT Teachers, ensuring they feel included and aware of changes
- Establish a clear policy on out-of-school hours working, including when it is reasonable to respond to communications, and provide clear guidance to all stakeholders
- Recognise and celebrate SCITT Teachers' efforts and successes
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines, and events so SCITT Teachers can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote SCITT Teacher wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services, with clear routes to escalate concerns for further support
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as assessment points or key observations

Action planning

Action planning is recommended by the mental health charity Mind which recommends that if an issue is identified SCITT Leaders should work together with trainees to develop a personal action plan to proactively manage their mental health. This allows people to plan in advance and develop tailored support for a time when they're not coping so well. It also facilitates open dialogue with leaders – leading to practical, agreed steps which can form the basis for regular monitoring and review.

An action plan should cover:

- Actions and behaviours that support the trainee's mental wellbeing.
- Symptoms, early warning signs and triggers for poor mental health or stress.
- The potential impact of poor mental health or a mental health problem on their performance.
- What support they need from the SCITT and partnership school(s).
- Positive steps for the individual to take if they are experiencing stress or poor mental health.
- An agreed time to review the support measures to see if they are working.

The action plan should be drafted by the trainee, with support from a health professional where appropriate, and then discussed and agreed with the SCITT Leadership.

The plan should be held confidentially and regularly reviewed by the trainee and the SCITT Leadership together. Trainees need only provide information that relates to their training, and that they are comfortable sharing.

Training adjustments

We are obliged to make reasonable adjustments to a training, school, or work practices to assist a trainee who has a disability to perform their role. A disability is legally defined as a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial long-term effect on normal day-to-day activities.

Appropriate adjustments will be discussed and agreed between the SCITT leadership, school leadership, the trainee and HR, taking into account the action plan and the advice and guidance of other professionals such as the individual's GP or occupational health advisors.

Examples of reasonable adjustments that may be made dependent on the circumstances include but are not limited to:

- a. Flexible working e.g. part time training
- b. Allowing more breaks during the day
- c. Adjusting the start and finish times, while still maintaining the hours of training

SCITT leaders should approach the issue of adjustments in an open-minded and flexible manner. The effect of any adjustments which are agreed will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are working.

Mental Health First Aiders

Mental Health First Aiders are trained to:

- a. Spot the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health;
- b. Start a supportive conversation with any trainee who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress;
- c. Listen to the person non-judgementally;
- d. Assess the risk of suicide or self-harm;
- e. Encourage the person to access appropriate professional support or self-help strategies. This might include encouraging access to internal support systems such as EAPs or in-house counselling services;
- f. Escalate to the appropriate emergency services, if necessary;
- g. Maintain confidentiality as appropriate;
- h. Complete critical incident documents as and when necessary; and

- i. Protect themselves while performing their role.

Exceed SCITT has two qualified mental health first aiders, they are:

- *Claire Mercer 07342 265171*
- *Suzanne Swann 07387 265092*

You can contact your MHFAs via telephone during working hours or speak to them face to face at hub day training.

MHFAs cannot provide the following services:

- a. Therapy (including counselling, CBT, psychotherapy etc.)
- b. Medical assistance

Their role is to sign post trainees to the appropriate support, as outlined above.

You should only contact your MHFAs during working hours, unless previously agreed with them otherwise and should avoid seeking any kind of therapy or medical support from them as they are not trained to assist in this manner.

Contacts to call - Personal Crisis

Local Single Point of Access (SPA), Leeds: 0113 3001 485 Bradford: 01274 221181

First Response Bradford 0800 9521181

Samaritans: 116 123

CALM: 0800 58 58 58

MindWell: the single 'go to' place for mental health information in Leeds.

Text **SHOUT** to [85258](https://www.shout24.org/), any time day or night if you need to talk