

# SEND Update for Parents and Carers

School Year 2020-2021 - November

Mental health is the focus of this issue. We are all living through strange times; our children are back in school, but school looks different and we are adapting to the new rules about where we can go and who we can spend time with.

It's not surprising that some of us may be feeling unsettled and experiencing different feelings than usual. It is more important than ever to look after ourselves and know how to get support for our children and families if we need it.

Here are details about some of the support that is available and details around what is happening across schools in Northumberland to support mental health.

## Northumberland Inclusive Education Service

Northumberland County Council SEND Support Services has been renamed due to a change in the way the service works. They are now called 'Northumberland Inclusive Education Services' (NIES).

NIES is now free at point of delivery and schools no longer need to pay for assessments when seeking advice on how to help and support a child or young person with additional needs.

NIES has a number of specialist teams, including the Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Support Service who provide assessment, support and advice to school staff, parents and carers for children and young people experiencing difficulties in school or settings.

You can access more information about the different teams via the links below:

- [Psychological Services](#)
- [Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Support Service](#)
- [Autism Support Service](#)
- [Speech & Language & Communication Service](#)
- [Literacy Support Service](#)
- [English as an Additional Language](#)
- [Sensory Support Service](#)
- [Portage Service](#)

## Kooth

Kooth.com is a digital online counselling and support service that NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning group (CCG) has commissioned. It went live in June 2020 and is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. There are no waiting lists, referrals or thresholds.



It provides a free, confidential and anonymous way for young people aged between 11 - 25 to access emotional wellbeing and early intervention mental health support. The website can be found [here](#) and provides helpful articles, discussion boards and activities to support mental health as well as online counselling. Qualified counsellors are available through an online chat service and sessions can be booked in advance or accessed sooner through a drop-in service between 12pm to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10pm on weekends.

Click [HERE](#) to find out more information about Kooth



## Wellbeing for Education Return

This is a national training programme from the Department for Education that is being delivered to all schools across the country. It aims to support staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a direct result of the pandemic, as well as to any emotional response they or their teachers may still be experiencing from bereavement, stress, trauma or anxiety over the past months.

A Senior Mental Health Lead post has been appointed who will coordinate the delivery of training and support to schools across the county. The nationally developed training programme recognises that teachers and other school and college staff may need additional support to be able to understand the range of reactions young people may have as they return to the classroom and get back on track. It will help give them the confidence to support pupils, their parents, carers and their own colleagues, and know how and where to access appropriate specialist support where needed.

### How can I help my child at home?

We have put together an online padlet of resources to help you support yourself and your children. [Access it here.](#)

## Pop Up Return to School Hub

Following the first lockdown with many children and young people with SEND being at home, we understood that it would be difficult for some children and young people to return to school or that some may be worried and anxious about returning.

A 'pop up return to school hub' was set up with practitioners from across education, health and social care. This pop is in addition to services that are already in place and is focussed on supporting children and young people with emotionally based school avoidance to access help and support from the right professional as soon as possible.

Services involved include; Primary Mental Health Workers, School Nurses, Local Authority Early Help Coordination Team, Educational Psychologists and Specialist Advisory Teachers.

The pop-up hub has been extended until Christmas when it will be reviewed to determine whether there is still a need for this coordination for children with emotionally based school avoidance.

If your child is continuing to worry or feel anxious about going to school please speak to your SENCo about whether a referral would be helpful.

## What support is available for parents and carers?

The booklet “Wellbeing and Mental health during Covid-19: A guide to looking after yourself and others” is available [here](#) and includes lots of practical ideas and contact information to support you.

If you're a parent or carer affected by Covid-19 in England, there is a new Barnardo's service called 'See, Hear, Respond'. They are usually able to offer help if you are expecting a child or caring for anyone who is:

- under the age of 18,
- has a special educational need and are under the age of 25,
- not already supported by social services in England.

If you're not sure if they can help, you can call them for free on 0800 157 7015 to speak to a friendly person in their team, who will support you in figuring things out.

Support is free, and you can call between Monday and Friday 9am – 9pm and Saturday and Sunday 10am – 6pm. For more details, please visit [Barnardos - See, Hear, Respond](#)



## What if our child needs more support?

If you feel your child needs additional support, there are a range of local and national services who may be able to support you.

If your concerns are about how your child is getting on at school please talk to their class teacher, pastoral lead or SENCo who will be able to get in touch with the appropriate education support service.

[Northumberland Early Help Hubs](#) are the route into a range of support teams.

Complete a hub form or ask your child's school to support you with this. Outline your concerns and they will get the right service to contact you.

[The Primary Mental Health Work](#) (PMHW) team support emotional wellbeing and link in with the Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPs) if the needs require it.

They have a consultation telephone line where you can phone and talk to a Primary Mental Health Worker about your concerns. Tel:01661 864588