

## **Schools Wellbeing Partnership**

### **Chair Recruitment Pack**

Dear Potential Applicant,

I am delighted that you are considering applying to be Chair of the Schools Wellbeing Partnership, hosted at the National Children's Bureau (NCB). I am pleased to be in the role as interim Chair for the Partnership, and lead the Schools Development portfolio at NCB. However, it is vital that a new independent chair be appointed to bring their skills and experience to bear and to move SWP on to even greater success.

The role of the Schools Wellbeing Partnership is arguably more important now than it has ever been. With the prevalence of mental health problems increasing and provision falling short of demand we need to be able to take one voice back to government, with clear and convincing arguments about what needs to change. Schools are often the first to realise a child or young person is in need of support, and therefore have a unique view of current experiences, need and local systems.. A key role of the partnership is to amplify those messages and make sure they are heard.

There are real challenges ahead, not least winning support for the long-term systemic change needed to embed wellbeing and mental health approaches in schools across the country.

I would be delighted to talk to anyone who is thinking of applying and might find that helpful. We are commencing the recruitment process now so there can be a period of overlap in the autumn in time for getting to grips with the new policy environment that a newly formed government will bring.

Octavia Holland

Deputy Director for Education and Equalities - NCB

Interim Chair for the Schools Wellbeing Partnership

## **Who We Are**

We are a national network of over 64 organisations from the education, health and wellbeing, and children's sectors that support schools and provide services to improve the wellbeing and mental health of all children in education.

Our membership includes professional associations, schools, academic institutions, and the voluntary and community sector.

Our vision is that wellbeing and good mental health is a strategic priority and embedded into the culture and ethos of every school.

Good wellbeing is an essential foundation for learning, and achievement based on individual strengths and needs enhances wellbeing. We have an opportunity through the Partnership to create a shared strategic narrative and common language which is aspirational and creates the standard for how we respond to children and young people's wellbeing in education.

## **Our History**

The Partnership for Well-being and Mental Health in Schools was founded by Action for Happiness in 2012 to 2013 along with a wider group of interested parties, including the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and the Matthew Elvidge Trust.

In 2014, NCB became the accountable body for the Partnership. A steering group strategically drives the Partnership and members are invited to be part of this strategic group. A part-time coordinator for the Partnership is provided via NCB.

In 2019, NCB commissioned an independent review of the Partnership to explore vision, purpose, strategic priorities, membership and stakeholder opinions.

Shortly thereafter, the Partnership renamed as the Schools' Wellbeing Partnership.

## **Where are we now?**

Since 2019 the Partnership has positioned itself as a key player in the children and young people's mental health and wellbeing field. We were invited by DfE to join the then Ministerial Mental Health in Education Action Group. We have strong relationships with the Mental Health charity sector who value the Partnership and the expertise it brings in relation to schools. The pandemic brought mental health and wellbeing in schools into sharp focus, giving the Partnership a key opportunity for influence in a timely way.

The need for influence and change is clear. We have seen increasing prevalence of mental health and wellbeing needs in children and young people, with rates of probable mental health disorders increasing from 1 in 9 in 2017 (10.8%), to 1 in 6 in 2020 (16%). There is a need across the education

system to access good quality, accessible information about the relationship between children and young people's wellbeing and how this relates to learning.

The Schools' Wellbeing Partnership is well placed to respond to the real challenge of mental health as we don't need to advocate a particular product or intervention, but what it means to be mentally healthy and well, and articulating this in the context of schools, colleges & education providers. We see our role to be of building consensus, creating a shared narrative, having a working definition of 'wellbeing in education' which can be applied to individual schools, building the evidence base, and articulating the impact of change.

We want our new Chair to support our ambition and be at the forefront of developing a shared strategic narrative and common language, which is aspirational and creates the standard for how we respond to children and young people's wellbeing in education.

## **Vision and Objectives**

Our vision is that wellbeing and good mental health is a strategic priority and embedded into the culture and ethos of every school.

Our definition of the 'education system' includes education settings in their broadest sense, including alternative provision, special schools, sixth forms, colleges and early years settings. It does not include universities.

We have a specific focus on supporting policy and system change in educational settings to ensure that positive wellbeing and good mental health are 'embedded into the culture and ethos of every school'.

### **Key objectives:**

- Increase awareness of the importance of wellbeing and mental health in schools and how this connects to learning
- Influence and campaign for wellbeing and mental health in schools to be prioritised
- Support schools to implement the changes needed for wellbeing and mental health to be embedded
- To grow and develop our membership.

### **We will achieve our objectives by:**

- Developing a set of strong, cohesive messages about children and young people's emotional wellbeing in order to influence policy and practice
- Influencing and informing the development of policy that impacts on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools

- Enabling the Partnership to come together to identify common challenges, share effective practice and information, collate learning and evidence; identify potential solutions; to collaborate on new developments in this area
- Building stakeholder relationships and representing the views of the Partnership to policy and practice decision makers.

## Recent activity and publications

- Joint submission with the CYP mental health Coalition on the Department of Health 10-year mental health plan call for evidence
- [Consultation response](#) on the DfE behaviour guidance review
- Convening 2 joint members events (in May 2021 and October 2022) in partnership with the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, with a focus on ensuring a better systematic response to Children and Young People's Mental Health in Schools
- Growing our memberships to the Partnership and Schools Forum; we currently have over 60 Partnership and 250 Schools Forum members
- Mental health and wellbeing: Preparing for recovery resources for Primary schools and Secondary schools

## Membership

The Partnership is made up of over 64 organisational members, which includes a wide range of stakeholders. The majority of the Partnership's members are either schools, professional teaching or educational bodies or voluntary sector providers delivering services into school settings.

Membership of the Partnership is open to national, regional and locally based charitable, statutory organisations and individuals who share the aims of the Partnership.

Membership is currently free. For a full list of our members please see [here](#).

## Steering group

Membership of the steering group is drawn from the wider membership, and is organisational. The steering group meet termly.

Our member organisations are:

Family Links, Fair Education Alliance, Young Minds, Place2Be, Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, the Sam West Foundation, the Kemnal Academies Trust, the Anna Freud Centre.

The group supports with strategy and direction, developing and delivering work priorities, providing content for consultation responses, sharing learning and intelligence, promoting the work of the Partnership, promoting the wider agenda around children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

NCB's Programme Lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing is responsible for preparing the steering group meetings and ensuring its work plan is on target.

## **Schools Forum**

The Schools Forum brings together schools and other education providers together as an online platform for sharing best practice around improving mental health and emotional wellbeing for pupils, to help schools build a clearer picture of what works.

Through the Schools forum we aim to create an evidence base for what works, thereby driving and inspiring change in how schools can create an enriching educational environment that is conducive to a good level of mental health and wellbeing support for every pupil.

The Schools Forum will also serve as a platform for sharing policy developments around mental health and wellbeing directly with schools.

There are currently over 250 subscribers to the Schools Forum.

## **Collaborative working**

Since 2018, the Schools Wellbeing Partnership and Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition have worked closely coordinating at least six joint members consultation events. These events have been organised to draw together consultation responses, sector evidence and provide opportunities for government representatives and members to shape the implementation of Green Paper commitments in schools and colleges. This joint work produces collaborative written responses submitted to relevant government Departments.

The commissioned review formalised a joint working agreement between the Partnership and Coalition including explicitly agreed partnership working processes. These arrangements have allowed both organisations to maintain our identities whilst also minimising future overlap and duplication.

## **Meet the NCB Family**

The Schools Wellbeing Partnership is hosted by the National Children's Bureau (NCB), a leading national charity and a highly influential and proactive voice for all children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable. NCB is committed to all children and young people being given equal opportunity to the education, health services and specialist care they need to be safe, secure and to reach their potential. We specialise in working across a range of critical issues affecting the lives of millions of children with our priority areas currently focused on early years, special education needs and disability, mental health and wellbeing, health and social care and education and learning.

NCB is a dynamic and multifaceted organisation, convening and supporting partnerships between government and charities and between professionals and service providers. In doing so, we apply the best possible evidence to influence policy and support effective implementation of services that are informed by children, young people, their families and communities. Over the past 50 years we've formed specialist membership groups to draw partners together to drive change in key areas where we need to make childhood better. Every single one of these groups is a unifying voice speaking with clarity and influence, working according to the five priorities of making evidence count, involving children, bringing organisations together, developing the workforce and building respect and trust.

### **Anti-Bullying Alliance (formed 2002)**

A unique coalition of organisations and individuals united against bullying, we're the national voice for evidence-based practice on the prevention of bullying. We co-ordinate national Anti-Bullying Week each November and our membership of core members and associate members is growing fast.

### **Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (formed 2004)**

We bring together over 25 regional, statutory and voluntary sector organisations to support schools to develop effective anti-bullying policy and practice and end bullying in Northern Ireland.

### **Council for Disabled Children (formed 1974)**

The umbrella body for the disabled children's sector, we bring together professionals, practitioners and policy-makers to champion children's rights. We've ourselves formed several influential special interest groups to tackle issues facing the sector. Each network provides dedicated support and expert advice through a combination of training, resource development and dissemination of best practice. We run the Special Educational Consortium (SEC) to provide an independent voice that supports the Government to develop policies that will benefit disabled children and young people and those with SEN, and challenges them when they do not.

### **Childhood Bereavement Network (formed 2001)**

The hub for those working with bereaved children, young people and their families across the UK, we bring members together to improve the range and quality of bereavement support for children and increase access to childhood bereavement information, guidance and support services.

### **Lambeth Early Action Partnership (formed 2015)**

Leading this influential local partnership to transform early years' services gives NCB the opportunity not only to make childhood better for thousands of children in four wards of Lambeth, but also to see close at hand how policy and practice makes a difference to families' real lives and experiences.

## **Chair**

### **Objective**

We are looking for a thought leader and influencer with the ability to inspire schools to adopt approaches that embed mental health and wellbeing in schools, as well as influence government officials and policy development.

### **Principal responsibilities**

Support the Partnership to achieve our vision and implement our strategic objectives.

Build the Partnership membership, ensuring sector wide representation.

Identify and build consensus and represent the views of the Partnership to a variety of stakeholders; balancing that alongside the views of their own organisation.

Work with the NCB staff team to develop and support delivery plan activities.

Chair meetings of the Steering group, and participate in other meetings as agreed, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process.

Co-chair member consultation events with the Coalition.

### **External Relations**

Act as an ambassador for the Schools Wellbeing Partnership and it's vision.

Act as a spokesperson for the Schools Wellbeing Partnership when appropriate.

Represent SWP at external functions, meetings and events.

### **Personal Specification**

Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to the Schools Wellbeing Partnership, its vision and strategic objectives.

A proven track record of stakeholder management, building networks and partnerships and utilising these to influence a policy agenda.

Strong interpersonal skills, demonstrating tact, diplomacy and the ability to listen and engage effectively.

Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment.

Ability to commit time to conduct the role efficiently, including travel and attending events out of office hours.



## Experience, Knowledge and Skills

Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation or experience of working in Education in a leadership position.

Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate and bring people together.

Significant experience of chairing meetings, ensuring all members are given a voice and that sound collective decisions are reached.

Experience of external representation and managing stakeholders.

Good understanding of the strategic landscape in education; and how to influence policy and practice.

## Terms

The Chair will serve a three-year term and will be eligible for re-appointment for a second term of three years with terms of service from date of original appointment.

The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration.

Steering group meetings are generally held in London or online.

### **The Chair will commit to the following annual meeting schedule:**

Three steering group meetings per year, held in London, virtually or hybrid

Two joint members consultations meetings with the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition

The Chair will commit to regular meetings with the national coordinator and/ or Deputy Director which may be conducted in person or virtually

The Chair may be invited to attend additional NCB events and stakeholder meetings, for example with relevant government Departments or civil servants.

## **How to apply**

Please apply by CV and supporting letter detailing your experience and the qualities you feel you would bring to the Partnership in the role of Chair.

The application deadline is Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 23:59 and interviews will be held virtually in the week of 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Please submit by email to Pamela Shaw, the National Coordinator of the Partnership for the Schools Wellbeing Partnership on [pshaw@ncb.org.uk](mailto:pshaw@ncb.org.uk).

Should you wish to have an informal conversation before you apply this can be arranged via the above contact.

For further information about the work of the Schools' Wellbeing Partnership please go to [www.schoolswellbeing.org.uk](http://www.schoolswellbeing.org.uk).