

# Hartford Infant and Pre School



## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

November 2021

Lead person: Mrs Vicky McGregor  
Adopted by Governors: Autumn 2021  
Date of revision: every 2 years

## **Policy Statement**

At Hartford Infant and Preschool, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils, staff, and where appropriate parents.

We have a supportive and caring ethos. Our approach is both respectful and kind. Members of our school community are valued for their uniqueness.

At Hartford Infant School and Preschool, we recognise that everyone experiences life challenges which can make them vulnerable at times. We understand that anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

This policy has been created in accordance with the CAM Academy Trust Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework 2021. It seeks to outline how at Hartford Infant and Preschool we are a cohesive, nurturing, and forward-thinking community. At the heart of our work lie the six core principles of The Cam Academy Trust.

We strive to be at the forefront of the Government's recommendations for mental health provision in schools, as we believe this will create a stronger, healthier community and enable our children to develop our core school values and be equipped for life beyond school.

Further details of how our policy sits within the Trust wide values can be found in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework document.

## **Defining Mental Health and Well Being**

To understand and best meet the needs prevented by poor mental health it is important to have a shared understanding of what we mean by mental health both within our school and Trust.

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

**“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” WHO 2013**

We understand Mental Health and Wellbeing as a spectrum rather than a fixed state of mind. We all experience positive and negative mental health and move within this spectrum when faced with challenges, chance, poor health etc.

## **Approach to Promote Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Good Mental Health helps children to:

- learn and explore the world;
- feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions;
- form and maintain good relationships with others;
- cope with and manage change and uncertainty;
- develop and thrive.

At Hartford Infant and Preschool, we understand the importance of knowing our children and families well and working collaboratively as a team. As such we recognise how we are in a good position to identify changes in pupil and staff mental health through the everyday relationships we have in our school community.

At Hartford Infant and Preschool we work to a graduated model of support and responsibility when it comes to staff and pupil mental health and wellbeing (see appendix 1) This aligns with our statutory responsibilities outlined in the SEND Code of Practice and research by the DFE.

We believe that equipping children and young children with skills and knowledge regarding mental health, and signposting them to sources of support before they are needed is good practise and empowers the children in our care to take ownership and promote their mental health in the context of supportive relationships.

### **At Hartford Infant and Preschool we will:**

- learn and explore the world;
- help children to understand and respond to their emotions and feelings;
- help children to verbalise their emotions;
- help children make and maintain positive relationships;
- promote self-esteem and ensure school community members know they belong;
- help children to build emotional resilience and to manage setbacks;
- help children to feel comfortable sharing worries and to ask for help when needed;
- encourage children to feel confident in who they are and to “dare to be different”;
- help children to develop and thrive.

### **How have we created a mentally healthy environment?**

- We have created a safe, nurturing environment where children can explore their feelings in their work and play.
- All staff model emotional literacy and resilience through positive relationships and teamwork.
- We promote our values and encourage a sense of belonging. Our values are embedded through our Hartford Heroes which focus on aiming high through involvement, perseverance, problem-solving, reflection and team work.
- We promote pupil voice and provide opportunities for children to participate in decision making e.g. School Council.
- We celebrate achievement - both academic and non-academic; e.g. Hartford Hero Assemblies and WOW Wall.
- We provide opportunities to reflect, learn from past experiences and plan.
- We provide opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others e.g. peer marking.
- We encourage the access of support to meet meets individual needs, e.g. providing intervention for pupils going through difficulties such as bereavement, separation, medical worries.
- We provide pastoral and mental health intervention for applicable pupils e.g. Acorn Group.
- We have a nurture group [‘The Nest’] which runs in the afternoon.
- We ensure that mental health is a standing item on staff meeting agendas to identify and plan to support emerging needs.
- We have excellent working relationships and engagement with outside agencies e.g. Inclusive Development agency.
- We have a designated ‘Healthy Week’ each year where we focus on all our healthy bodies and minds.
- We have a qualified Adult mental Health First Aider.
- We have conducted a staff wellbeing questionnaire (<https://forms.office.com/r/YekTSNkZ1a>) and analyse results to support needs. e.g. ensure staff ideas are listened to
- We organise staff wellbeing activities of which some may be promoted on a designated display board e.g. wellbeing half days, inspiring quotes, raffles etc

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally health and safety are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. We follow the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme across the school.

The specific content of lessons is determined by the needs of the cohort and any needs within the local community. The content will also reflect events which may be happening nationally, presently there is a focus on support around the significant impact of Covid 19 e.g. work completed in each year group on anger management due to lockdown through 'The Colour Monster' book. Subject matter is taught in a safe, supportive, and sensitive manner which is age appropriate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff in school have a clear responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of their students.

In line with the CAM Academy Trust Mental Health Training Competency Hartford Infant and Preschool staff will:

- have an understanding and awareness of what is meant by mental health and positive mental health;
- have an awareness and understanding of how to look after their own mental health (self-care);
- feel confident spotting the signs of poor mental health in pupils and other staff;
- identify risk factors and protective factors that impact mental health and barriers for certain vulnerable groups when it comes to accessing mental health support;
- understand their own role and responsibilities, and those of others (who to refer to) when concerns arise over a pupil's mental health;
- understand the crossover between mental health and wellbeing needs and safeguarding and pass on concerns to the DSL in line with our safeguarding policy;
- reflect on how their own beliefs, attitudes and experiences influence their approach to mental health;
- be proactive in implementing recommendations from Mental Health Lead and taking opportunities for professional development in mental health and wellbeing;
- have a general awareness of key local services and resources that can support better mental health in children and young people;
- be able to signpost children or their parents to sources of support.

## **Supporting staff with these responsibilities**

For staff to fulfil their responsibilities at this universal tier the following support and training will be provided. Staff will:

- have access to an up to date copy of this Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and the supporting CAM Trust framework;
- receive regular training on areas of Mental Health and Wellbeing and good practises that promote it from external, quality assure training providers;
- have regular opportunities to discuss pupil mental health in team meetings, pupil progress meetings and be confident of pathways for seeking support (see Appendices);
- receive informal supervision as needed from Hartford Infant and Preschool's Mental Health Lead Mrs Vicky McGregor. If external supervision is needed this will also be provided;

- be supported through line manager meetings, performance management reviews and at least annual well-being measures (Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale WEMWB Scale- see appendix 2).

### **Staff with Additional Pastoral Responsibilities**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils' in line with the Mental Health Training Competency for School, some staff have enhanced responsibilities with a deeper understanding and practical application of:

- a range of mental health problems for example anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide etc.;
- factors that make young people more vulnerable to poor mental health;
- services and care pathways that are able to support children and their parents and how to access these;
- strategies to build resilience and improve mental health;
- how to build emotional literacy through the curriculum and intervention sessions;
- impact of attachment, adverse childhood experiences and trauma;
- value of active listening and communication skills;
- knowledge of how to assess mental health;
- solution focussed/restorative approaches to behaviour management;
- ability to reflect and use supervision or support and advice.

### **Staff with Additional Responsibilities:**

- **Mrs Rae Lee** – Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Mrs Vicky McGregor** – SENDCo, Mental Health Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Family Support Practitioner
- **Mrs Du Toit** – Class Teacher and PSHE Lead
- **Mrs Moira Whitham** – Teaching Assistant and Nurture Practitioner
- **Mr Vaughan Clark** – Chair of Governors and Mental Health Link Governor

### **Targeted Support**

At Hartford Infant School we may offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- managing feelings using a 'worry box' [Talk Box]
- circle of friends
- nurture provision - see 'The Nest' Information
- drawing and talking therapy
- drama therapy

### **Tracking Progress**

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing including:

- the Boxall Profile
- strength and difficulties questionnaire
- pupil, staff, parental questionnaires
- termly class trackers

### **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

Staff will complete a termly **wellbeing tracker** (see appendix 3) aimed to identify possible difficulties which may include:

- attendance
- punctuality
- attitude to learning
- relationships
- physical signs
- family circumstances
- recent bereavements
- health indicators
- negative behaviour patterns

These are colour coded to aid identification (**Red** - concern with outside agency involvement **Amber** - concern managed within school provision/monitoring **Green** - no concern)

Warning signs will be taken seriously by all staff members, these may include:

- changes to eating or sleeping;
- withdrawing socially;
- repeated talk of physical pain or nausea without any clear cause;
- expressing a feeling of failure;
- changes inactivity or mood;
- self harm.

### **Working in partnership with Parents/ Carers**

Once a child attends Hartford Infant and Preschool, we endeavour to discuss the importance of positive mental health and encourage an open sharing culture to help us facilitate the best provision for children from day one. This message is shared a through our Preschool and Reception home visits. In addition, at the start of each academic year, teachers meet with parents/carers and conduct a 'meet the Teacher' meeting that includes wellbeing. These conversations can continue as the year progresses.

At times families need support with their children or with events that happen in life. At Hartford Infant and Preschool we have a dedicated teacher who is available to facilitate support for children and families.

If families require support or just want someone to talk to outside the family who is non-judgemental Mrs McGregor can be contacted at school or by email at: [vmcgregor@hartfordinfantschool.org](mailto:vmcgregor@hartfordinfantschool.org) (please note she only works on Tuesday and Thursday).

Some common issues include:

- challenging behaviour
- anxiety
- emotional well-being
- sibling rivalry
- sleep difficulties
- self esteem
- sharing difficult news
- bereavement support

We recognise that parenting isn't easy and doesn't come with a manual, so a partnership approach can be helpful.

In addition to school support we have close links with the District Team who can offer training and drop ins with the Early Intervention Worker. Our current worker is Ms Zoe Hope and her contact details and more about her support can be found on posters in school and this information is routinely shared with parents and carers.

Parents/carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. To support parents/carers we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website;
- share key information through our school newsletter;
- ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through information sessions;
- keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE through the Learning Leaflets and newsletter and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home;
- provide workshops for discussion around themes suggested by parents/carers;
- involve parents/carers in whole school events e.g. Healthy Week, Healthy Selfie;
- encourage parents with urgent concerns to contact their local GP or contact 111 .

If a child discloses information of concern whilst in school, we will:

- contact the DSL immediately *if* a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents/carers may not be informed depending on the individual case;
- be sensitive when explaining a child's need to the parent/carer, recognising that parents/carers may be overwhelmed by the information need time to reflect;
- provide a clear means of contacting school with further questions;
- consider booking in a follow up meeting/phone call;
- finish each meeting with agreed next steps;
- keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record;
- ensure families are aware of how to access support within school and beyond.

## **Confidentiality**

If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we would normally, in an age-appropriate manner discuss this with the child and explain:

- who we are going to talk to;
- what we are going to tell them;
- why we need to tell them.

It is always advisable to share mental health care concerns with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

## **Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision, we work with a range of outside agencies to support and enhance our pupil's emotional wellbeing and mental health including:

- School Nurse
- Family Worker
- Cambridgeshire Mental Health Support Team
- Educational Psychologist
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Play Therapists
- Young Carers
- Drama Therapist
- Community Police Officers
- Paediatrician
- Specialist Teaching Team
- Younited

## **SEND and Mental Health**

Children experiencing ongoing mental health issues may have greater difficulty with learning. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a Special Educational Need (SEN) and will subsequently be added to the SEN register. Any identified support and provision would be discussed with parents/carers.

## **Sources of Support**

- <https://healthyschoolscp.org.uk/resources/emotional-health-and-wellbeing-service-ehws>
- <https://www.annafreud.org>
- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems
- [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)
- [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health
- [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health
- [www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders](http://www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders) - eating disorders
- Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry:  
[www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficultiesin-younger-children](http://www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficultiesin-younger-children)
- Anxiety UK: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)
- <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/if-youre-being-bullied/find-help-and-support>

## **Policy Development**

This policy has been written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, and professionals involved in mental health.

## **Links to other policies and DfE publications:**

SEND

Anti-Bullying

Behaviour

PSHE

Medical

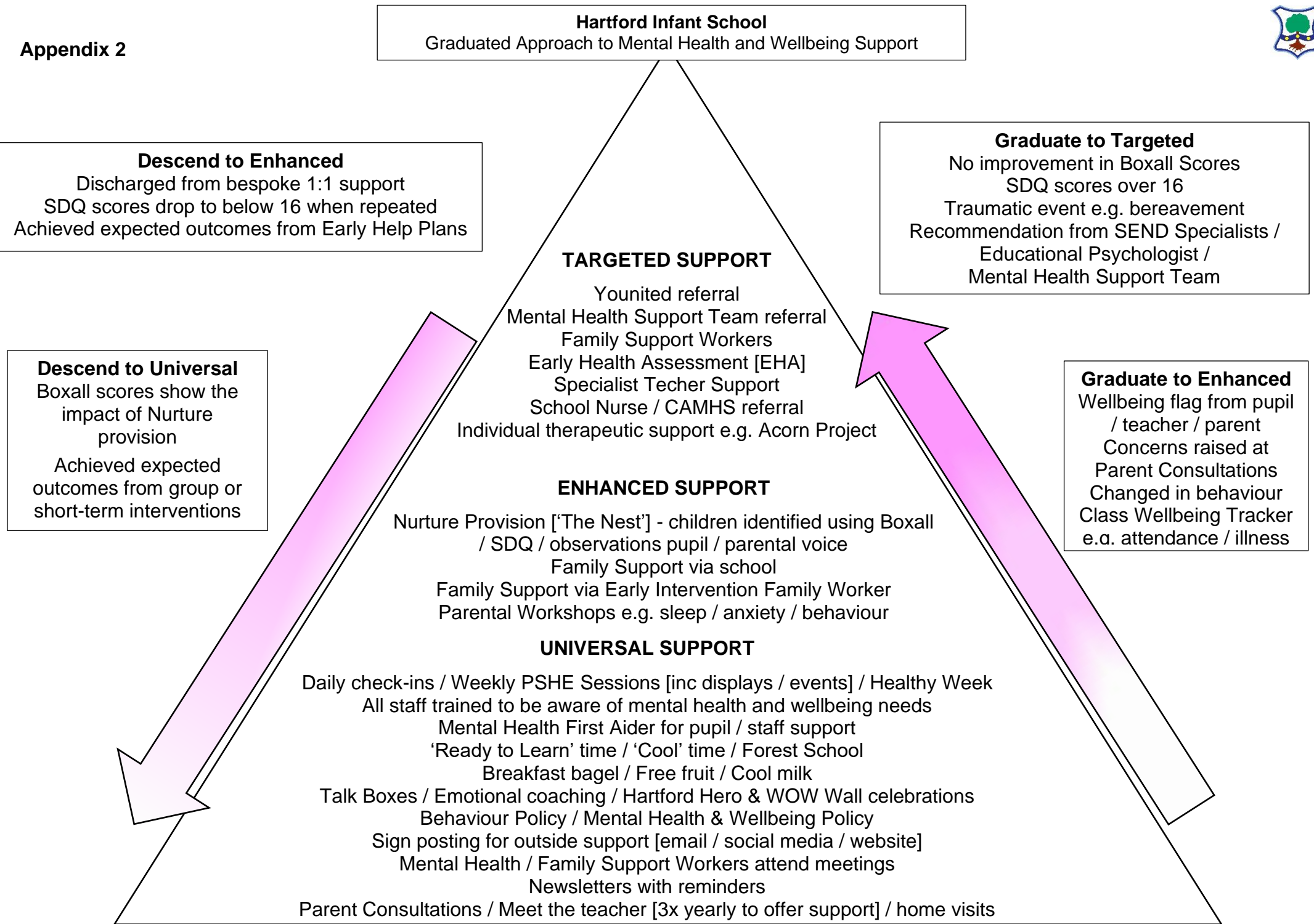
Accessibility

Equalities

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021



# Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings- 2022



## Appendix 2

### The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

