

RISE Mental Health Support in Schools:



Understanding the views and experiences of schools in Gateshead

June 2022



Involve North East

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Introduction

- The RISE programme has been rolled out to schools in Gateshead since May 2019 and involves the RISE Mental Health Support Team (MHST) delivering low-moderate levels of mental health support to children and young people into schools.
- RISE is part of a joint programme between Health and Education.
- The Children's Society has been commissioned as the provider for the service since late February 2021.
- The programme uses a whole-school approach, supporting students and staff. It offers direct working with individual students, group sessions and support for teachers to shape lesson plans and assemblies, as well as supporting and educating parents.
- After a review of the service in 2019/20 it was felt to be timely to gather further feedback to ensure that the offering is meeting the needs of local education providers.
- During May 2022 schools across Gateshead were contacted to provide feedback on the RISE programme. Thirty-nine schools shared their views representing a 44.3% response rate:
 - o 29 from schools who have received services from RISE
 - o 10 from schools who have never received services from RISE
- We also took the opportunity this evaluation offered to gather some further information about the current mental health needs schools were seeing in their populations and other support they were accessing to meet these needs
- This report summarises the findings of the feedback and offers some recommendations for consideration ahead of the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

Key themes from RISE evaluation

- We received feedback from 29 schools who are either currently receiving services from RISE MHST, or who have previously.

What has the RISE programme been doing well?

- Schools have found accessing the RISE programme easy, helped by accessible and supportive staff.
- Recommendations from social workers and the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) encouraged three schools to access the programme.
- Schools primarily chose to access RISE to help meet the mental health needs of students and for over three-quarters, these needs are being met by the provision of a tailored programme of relevant support. In particular and most crucially they highlighted that students have benefited from the support, resulting in improved mental health, thus avoiding the need for referral to higher level services.
- They also cited staff being upskilled and supported. Having personalised support for students in a setting in which they feel comfortable and a practitioner assigned to the school has also worked well.
- These positive experiences are reflected in the fact that all but one school intend to access support from RISE in the future.

Demand for services

- Overwhelmingly schools would prefer support on a smaller scale in the form of one-to-one or small group work as opposed to a whole-school approach and this is reflected in the support they have taken up.
- Schools have been offered a range of support although there appears to be some inconsistencies around what schools state they have been offered, taken-up and would like in the future.
- One-to-one support has been offered most frequently and most frequently taken up.
- The whole-school approach has been offered least frequently and there has been the least demand for this alongside staff support. However, five schools who were not offered a whole-school approach have requested this type of support.

What could the RISE programme be doing differently?

- Six schools (21.4%) felt that the RISE programme is not meeting their needs. They felt that the amount of time practitioners can offer support is too limited, restricting the number of students they can support.
- They requested more sessions and a long-term plan of support to last longer than one term. One school also requested more one-to-one support as opposed to whole-school and more timely support at time of need.
- These issues were also highlighted when all schools were asked to identify areas where improvements could be made to the service RISE provides. Nearly 40% requested that the programme runs continuously, more frequently than one term per year, or for workers to spend more time in school during the support period.
- They would also like more communication from practitioners between the yearly support periods.
- Several schools requested changes to the referral process to enable referral at time of need and a reduction in the information needed for small group work sessions.
- Sharing online resources for staff was also requested alongside information leaflets to share with parents about support their child may be accessing.

- Schools also identified topics they would like covered with their students, the provision of drop-in sessions for both students and staff and the opportunity to have support from RISE in the future.

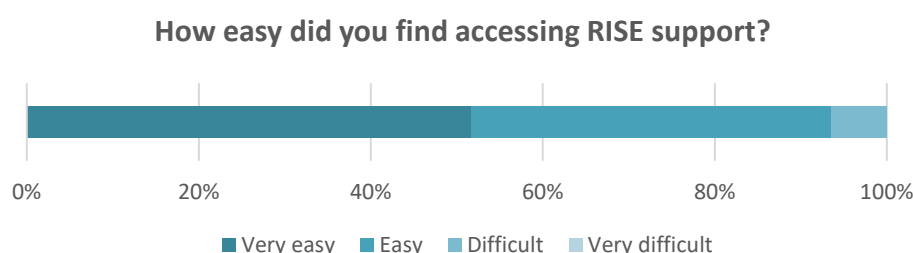
Detailed feedback of RISE services

Support provided

- When initially set up in 2019 the RISE programme was managed by NHS Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust and offered a mixture of one-to-one support and small group work to pupils from the summer 2019 school term.
- Since autumn 2021 The Children's Society has managed the programme, with the service offering a whole-school approach.
- Schools responding to the survey have used the service:

RISE support period	No. of schools*
Between summer term 2019 and end of summer term 2021	5
Autumn 2021 onwards	28

*4 schools have used the service in both periods



N=29

- 51.7% of respondents found it very easy and a further 41.4% reported that it was easy to access support from RISE. They appreciated that:

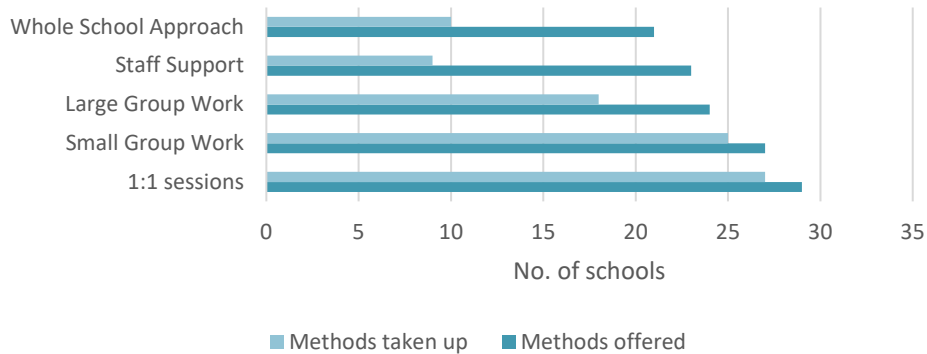
Reasons for positive rating	No. of responses
Staff were easily contactable and supportive	11
The enquiry process was easy	2
Prior meetings were held to plan the programme	2
Overall easy access	1

“Recommendation from another school, accessed the website, expressed interest and had a very prompt response.”

“Initially easy, practitioner made contact and sessions were planned.”

- Two schools reported difficulties in accessing RISE support with one stating that, “It seemed to be disjointed in comparison to the previous year.”

Delivery methods offered and taken up

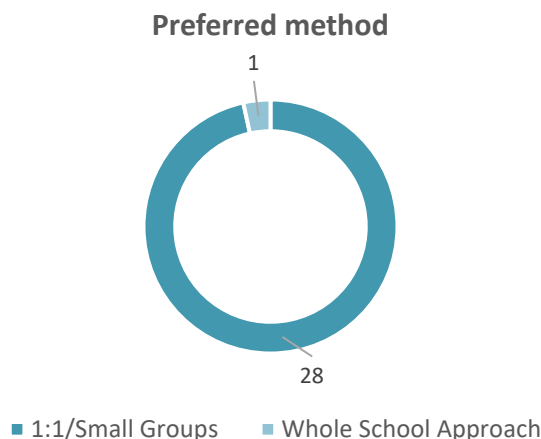


N=29

- Schools reported being offered a range of support. One-to-one sessions have been offered most frequently and schools have been most likely to take up this delivery method.
- Despite being offered to around three-quarters of schools, there has been less uptake of the whole-school approach delivery method and staff support work.

Support requested

- Schools were asked whether there were other methods of delivery they would like to have been offered and a number requested support that they had already been offered. However:
 - Five schools who had reported not being offered a whole-school approach requested this support.
 - One school requested some large group work.
 - One school requested staff support.
 - A further two schools asked for a greater proportion of the support to be one-to-one sessions.
- Schools were asked which method they preferred between one-to-one/small group work and a whole-school approach:

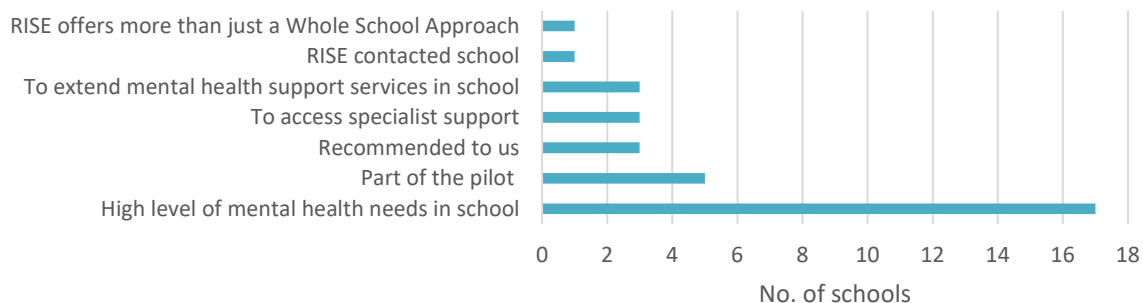


N=29

- All but one school would prefer support in the form of one-to-one or small group sessions as opposed to a whole-school approach.

Experiences of using RISE

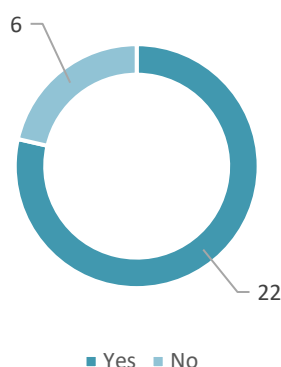
Why did your school choose to access RISE?



N=28
Schools could give more than one answer

- Over two-thirds (17) of schools have accessed RISE in order to help meet the mental health needs of their students.
- Five schools took up support as part of the initial Trailblazer pilot project.
- RISE was recommended to three schools by social workers and the Children and Young People's Service.

Does the support RISE provides meet the needs of the students in your school?



N=28

- Twenty-two schools (78.6%) felt that the support provided by RISE meets the needs of students at their school.
- Six schools (21.4%) said that RISE does not currently meet the needs of the children in their school.
- Those who felt it met their needs cited the following reasons:

Reasons for meeting need	No. of responses
Good that it is tailored/targeted support	6
Provides a good service and support on relevant topics	4
Supportive staff	2
Offers an appropriate level of support	1
Children are engaging well in sessions	1

“Strong focus on topics that affect children: emotional regulation, friendships, transitions etc.”

“Support was bespoke to our school and planned out with children in mind and to meet the current presenting needs and issues.”

“Our Educational Mental Health Practitioner was great. She listened to the issues we felt our children had and the behaviours we were seeing and then tailored the term of support around them. She also provided advice and support for staff, not least through a series of whole-school assemblies which demonstrated the ideas she felt would be helpful. The 1:1 sessions she offered for a Year 5 child were particularly well received and the family commented on how positive an impact the sessions had had.”

- Two schools despite stating that it met their needs, felt that they needed more resource from the programme in terms of spending longer in their school or supporting a greater number of students.
- This was echoed in the views of the six schools who felt that RISE did not meet their school’s needs.

Reasons for not meeting need	No. of responses
Need more sessions/time	4
Pre-booking time is restrictive	1
School already does whole-school work – need more one-to-one sessions	1

- They requested more sessions, to meet their increasing needs and deal with ongoing or longer-term problems.
- One school also highlighted that having to book time in advance means that “support at the point of need” is difficult, particularly when RISE staff are not easy to contact.

[Schools need] “Relationship building with school staff. Visible workers. To refer at time of need for individual children.”

“The worker in school only has one half term so the child has to build new relationships if the work hasn’t naturally finished.”

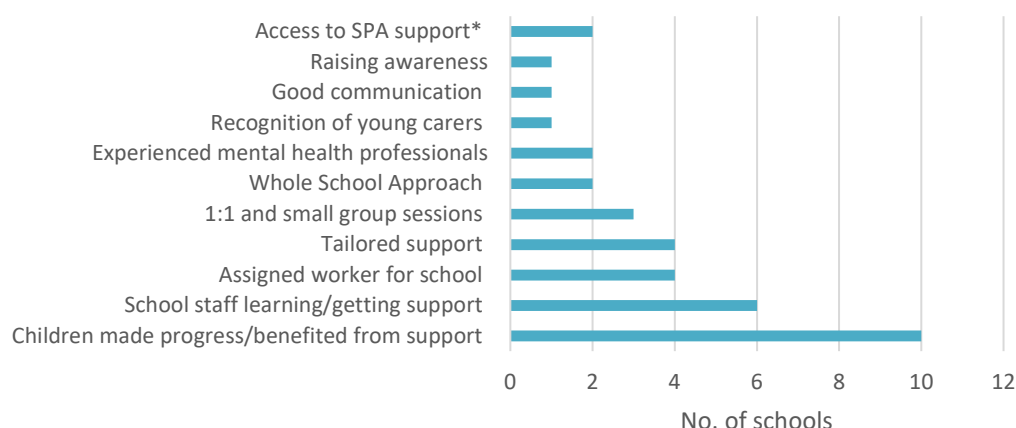
[Need more] “1 to 1 support for young people.”

“There does not appear to be a long-term strategy about how to best engage schools and no long-term planning...one half term of support was not enough to make a lasting impression or sustainable change.”

“We could have more sessions. That would be really handy for our school as we have lots of ongoing issues we are dealing with.”

- Twenty-five schools identified positive aspects of the RISE service.

Positive aspects of RISE service



N=25

*SPA – Single Point of Access

- Most frequently mentioned was the positive progress students have made resulting in improved mental health and, “a happier child.”
- Staff have also appreciated the support they have received and the learning they have developed.
- Tailored support and having one assigned worker to the school was also highlighted.

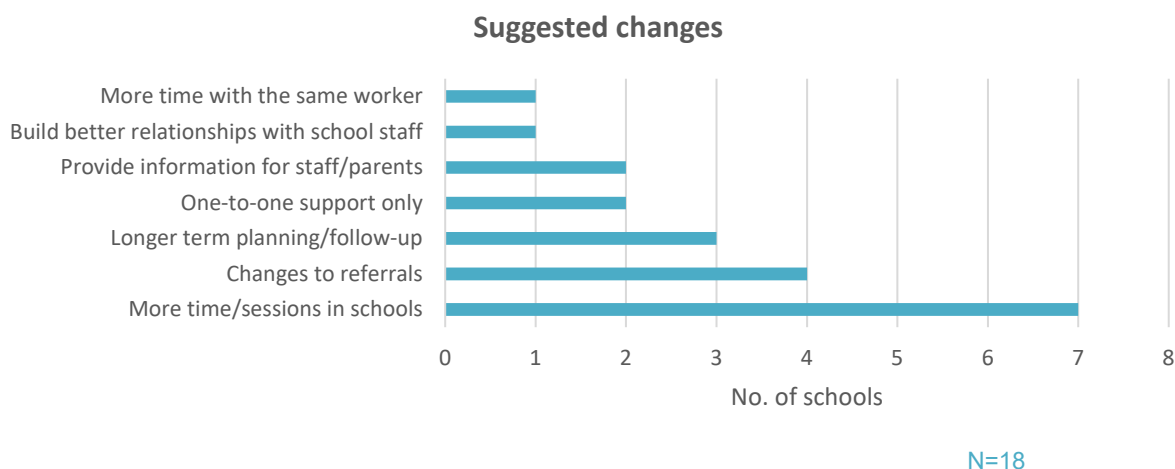
“We felt that children made lots of progress during their sessions. As Mental Health Lead I also learnt new strategies from talking to RISE professionals.”

“In-school support - this makes a big difference to many of our children. We also feel that some of the children seen by [a worker] would otherwise have ended up being referred to the Single Point and on a waiting list, but instead they have been given rapid support and the downward trend in their well-being has been arrested.”

“Pupils have had the benefit of working with a trained RISE worker on key topics. RISE have upskilled staff to be able to support children better and provided resources and advice for school which can also be passed on to parents. Being able to access 1:1 support via SPA for children who either continue to need support or we have identified a need after our RISE workers allocated term with us has been a huge support.”

“The variety of input offered. We have had whole classes benefitting and individuals, plus advice for myself as Mental Health Lead.”

- Eighteen schools suggested changes that could be made to the service provided by RISE.



- Most requested was for the service to run either continuously, more frequently than one term a year, or for workers to spend more time in school during their support period.
 - There was acknowledgement that this would require longer-term funding from Government, but it was felt that continuous support would benefit students.
 - Even if this were not possible it was also felt that there could be more communication from the RISE Team between each annual support period.
 - There was also a request for the practitioner to spend more time with individual students to ensure their support needs are met before the end of the period.

“I know this is impossible currently but give us more time each school year than one term - the one term is invaluable; we just want more of it.”

“Children to have longer periods (weeks) with the support workers. Some finished quickly as the worker in school only has one half term, so the child has to build new relationships if the work hasn't naturally finished.”

- Changes to the referral process were requested to enable a referral at time of need and a faster process.

“The referral forms for group sessions are very time consuming; the amount of information required for each child's referral was very time consuming. Referrals for pupils having 1:1 support or group were the same, could this be smaller than the 1:1 referral forms?”

- Two schools also requested resources for their staff and parents in the form of:

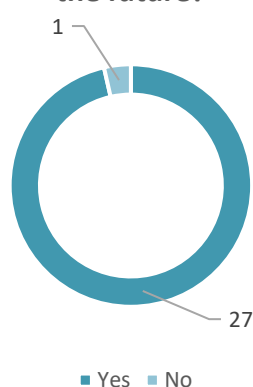
“Links to resources/literature for staff.”

“A little leaflet for the small group work i.e. friendships, detailing the types of work that would be carried out within the small group and strategies that could be used. This could then be shared with staff and parents so that all are aware of the content so that both teachers and parents could support too.”

- Ten schools suggested additional support they would like to see the RISE Team provide.
 - o Topics to cover
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Low self-esteem
 - Transition (in summer term)
 - o Provide drop-in sessions for:
 - Students with ad-hoc needs/issues
 - Staff to seek advice on how to support children
 - o Resourcing
 - Offer as much time in school as possible
 - Signpost online resources for parents
 - Provide more on-to-one support
 - Opportunity to have RISE support again in future
 - o Support with assemblies

Future use of RISE

Do you plan to continue to access support from RISE in the future?



N=28

- All but one school plan to use RISE services in the future if they are available to them.
- Reasons given for future use were:

Reasons for future use	No. of responses
Really value and benefit from RISE support services	7
There is a big demand for RISE services	4
Programme works well	2
Want to ensure students coming up through the years have that support	2
Good experience of RISE staff	1
Good interim support until child is seen by CYPS	1

“Because they are an invaluable resource...RISE offers, amongst other things, a vital support to young people who may not be at the level of CYPS.”

“It supplements the offer that we have in school with high quality work by experts.”

"It is a service which we need and without it children would have to wait a lot longer for any early intervention to occur."

"There are many children who need this support and they feel comfortable when it happens in school."

- The school who said they were not planning to use RISE did qualify that depending on the services being offered, they may come back to it in the future. They would like one-to-one support for children when the child presents.

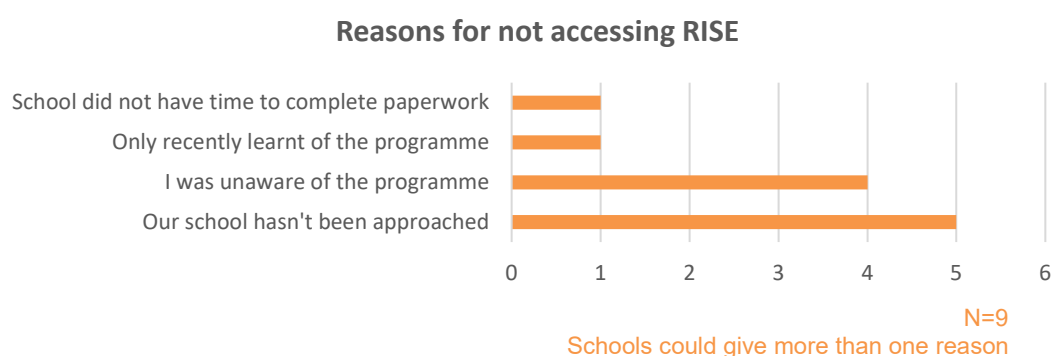
No experience of RISE services

- Ten schools who had not used RISE services also provided some feedback (one was about to start receiving support in June 2022).

Barriers to access – Schools have not accessed the RISE programme as they have not been approached to take part in it or were unaware of its existence ahead of this survey being circulated.

Future use – All schools not currently accessing RISE stated that they would be likely to use the service in the future in order to meet increasing mental health needs of individual students and to gain support around personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), or because they had been recommended the service by another school.

Reasons for not accessing RISE



- Schools reported not knowing about the programme or not having been approached.

Future use

- Schools stated that they would be very likely (66.7%) or likely (33.3%) to use RISE in the future.
- Reasons cited were:

Reasons for future use	No. of schools
Increasing mental health needs in school	2
Identified children who would benefit from this service	1
Long waiting times for mental health support elsewhere	1
Part of original pilot and would like to use again	1
Positive feedback from other schools accessing RISE services	1
Would like help with PSHE provision	1
Would like to access all available support to help students	1

Key themes of other mental health support

- All schools, regardless of their experience with RISE, were asked more generally about the issues their students were facing in school, any challenges or barriers to them receiving mental health support and also other mental health provision they had within their school.

Meeting need

- Schools identified a large range of other services they access to support their students' emotional wellbeing. CYPS, the Emotional Wellbeing Team and Counselling Services were most frequently mentioned.
- For almost two-thirds of schools this support is not meeting their needs. This is because waiting times for access to services are too long, having a detrimental effect on the student or that they simply need more support.

Barriers to accessing support

- Twenty schools indicated that they had students who were struggling to access the mental health support they needed.
- The main reason for this is waiting times once they are referred into a service, with some waiting over a year.
- Other infrastructural barriers to accessing support include a general lack of support/services available, teachers lacking the time to support mental health needs, issues with the referrals process and students living outside of the Gateshead boundary.
- Barriers to access due to the students' personal situation were also highlighted and include students who have poor attendance and time management, suffer from anxiety, struggle to concentrate or reject the offer of support as they do not feel it is for them.
- Some simply do not know where to go for support.
- Home life issues such as a lack of family support or parents having mental health needs themselves, parents not being able to pay for travel to appointments or counselling services were also identified.

Issues affecting emotional wellbeing

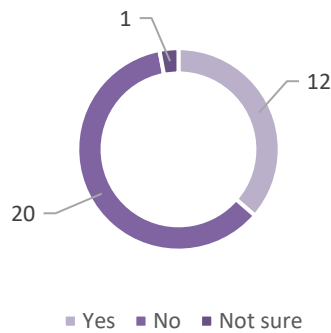
- Schools identified a wide range of issues their students need support around with the predominant one being anxiety in its varying forms.
- Other more frequently mentioned issues were low mood, friendships, online bullying and online access and low resilience.

Detailed feedback of other mental health support

- Schools reported accessing a variety of external services to support their students' emotional wellbeing.

Other wellbeing and emotional support	No. of schools
Children and Young People's Service	14
Emotional Wellbeing Team-Gateshead	11
School staff trained in mental health	9
Kalmer Counselling	8
North East Counselling Service	5
Single Point of Access Gateshead	5
Counselling service	4
Early help	3
Family support worker	3
Relax Kids	3
Use online resources e.g. Mentally Healthy Schools	3
Gateshead Schools Health and Wellbeing Service	2
0-19 service	1
Apple friends programme - Partnership for Children programme	1
Bereavement Counselling	1
Children North East	1
Clennell Children's Services	1
Deaf CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)	1
Educational Psychology Service	1
Full of Beans Programme	1
Gateshead SEND team	1
High Incidence Needs Team	1
JIGSAW PSHE	1
Local GP/Health Services	1
Northern Guild Child Support Therapies	1
REST interventions	1
Road Centre School Counsellor	1
School psychotherapist	1
Schools employs own counsellors	1
Social Services	1
Use charity services to support wellbeing	1
Young Carers Durham	1

Does this support meet the needs of your students?

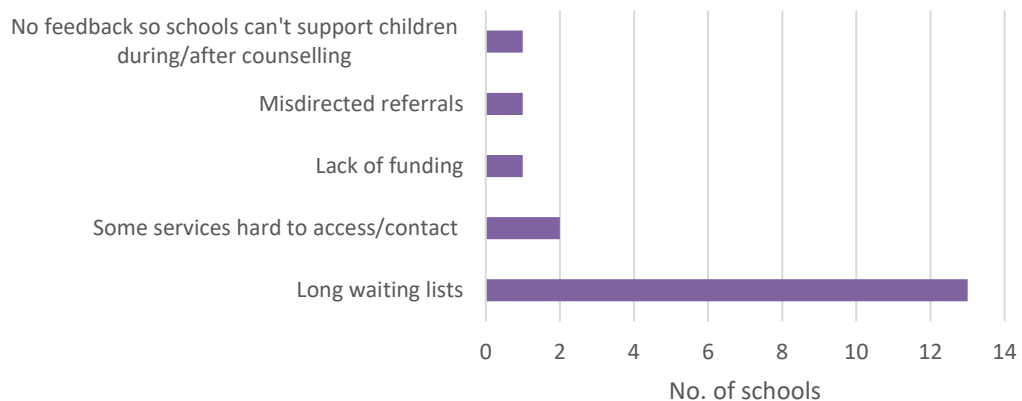


N=33

- Schools reported accessing a variety of external services to support their students' emotional wellbeing.
- 36.4% felt that services provided in their school do meet need but this was caveated with comments from four schools that school staff deliver some of this support or "do a lot to plug any gaps."
- 60.6% of schools do not feel that services meet need
 - o Seven schools requested more support.
 - o Nine schools highlighted waiting times to access support were too long.

"It takes so long to get the support that the issue originally referred in has often either got worse or just led to a lot of stress and anxiety for the child, school and their family."

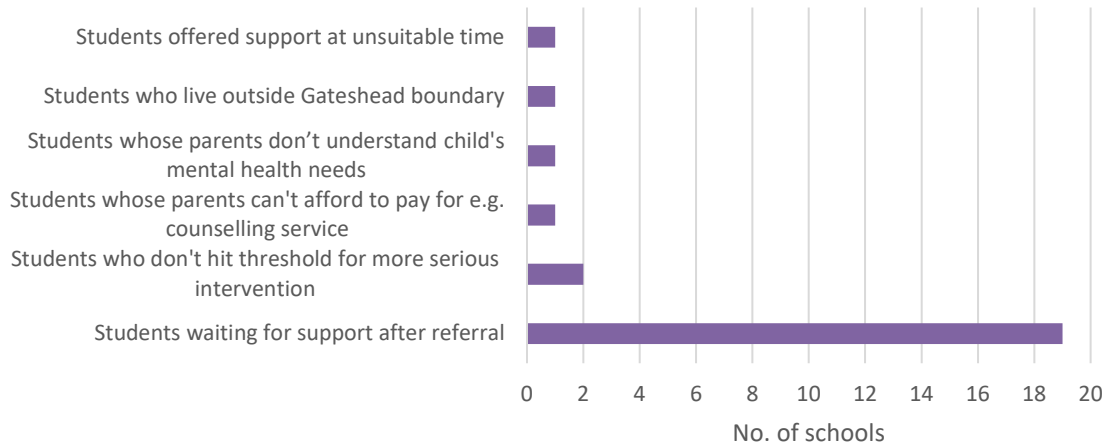
Challenges to accessing support



N=15

- Fifteen schools identified challenges they have had in accessing this support with long waiting lists once students have been referred most commonly mentioned.
- Ten schools did not have any challenges and one was unsure.

Reasons for students struggling to access mental health support



N=20

- Twenty-one schools (55.3%) indicated that they had students struggling to access support.
 - o For the majority waiting times from referral to assessment/support are the issue with schools reporting waits of several years in some cases.
 - o Children who do not hit the threshold for greater support also miss out.

"We have several pupils awaiting CAMHS, CYPS and Kalmer Counselling services due to long waiting lists. An additional barrier has been pupils who live out of the boundaries of Gateshead in County Durham."

"Yeah, lots of students struggling either through waiting lists etc. or issues with parents not supporting or seeing what we are seeing in school."

"Children who have been referred to CYPS are then left for considerable time without any external support whilst waiting times are vast."

"We have a number of children who are currently on waiting lists to be seen by CAMHS and CYPS."

"Several children need assessment of needs from CYPS and CAMHS and are waiting for almost 2 years."

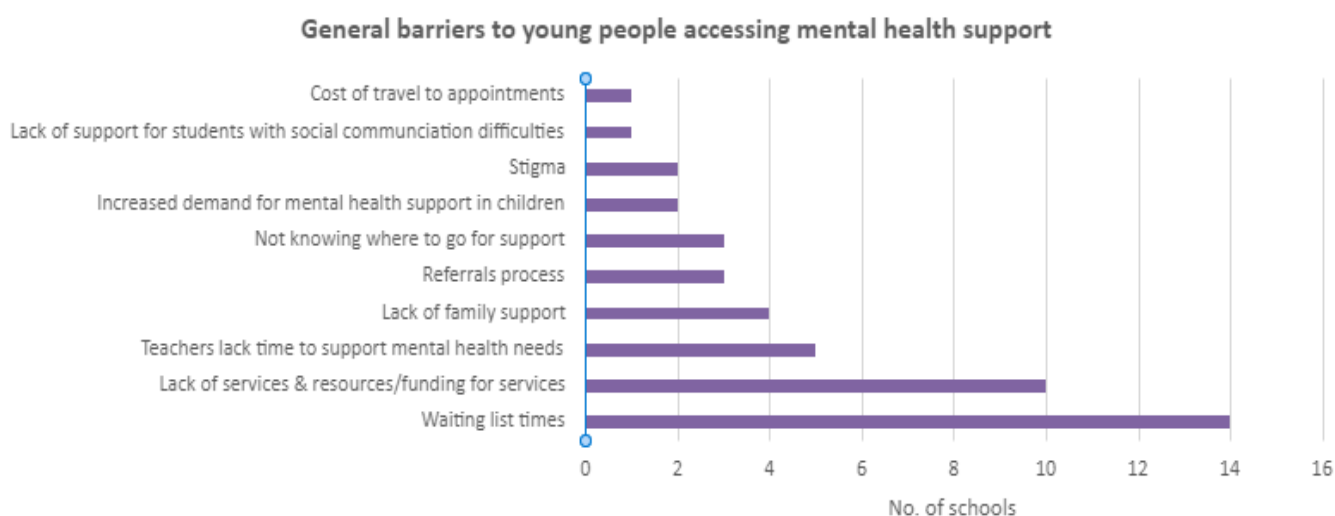
"[pupils who are assessed as] low level [are] maybe not hitting thresholds for emotional well-being team. Waiting lists are also huge which is causing ongoing issues in school."

"Some have been waiting for assessments for several years."

"Lots of children don't hit the threshold for CYPS intervention or are on long waiting lists and parents can't always afford to access something like Kalmer Counselling."

Other issues affecting access to services

- Schools were asked to identify other barriers that might affect access to services and 15 provided a response. Some cited personal reasons associated with the student whilst others highlighted infrastructural issues:
 - o Personal barriers
 - Poor time management
 - Poor attendance
 - Home life
 - Parental mental health issues
 - Pandemic related issues
 - Anxiety
 - Lack of concentration
 - Lack of self-confidence
 - Rejection of support – they don't feel it is for them
 - o Infrastructure barriers
 - Lack of services/funding to provide support
 - Lack of time for staff to develop skills/support students
 - Increasing demand for support
 - Increasing waiting lists
- Schools were also asked to identify any general barriers they feel young people experience around accessing mental health support.



N=26

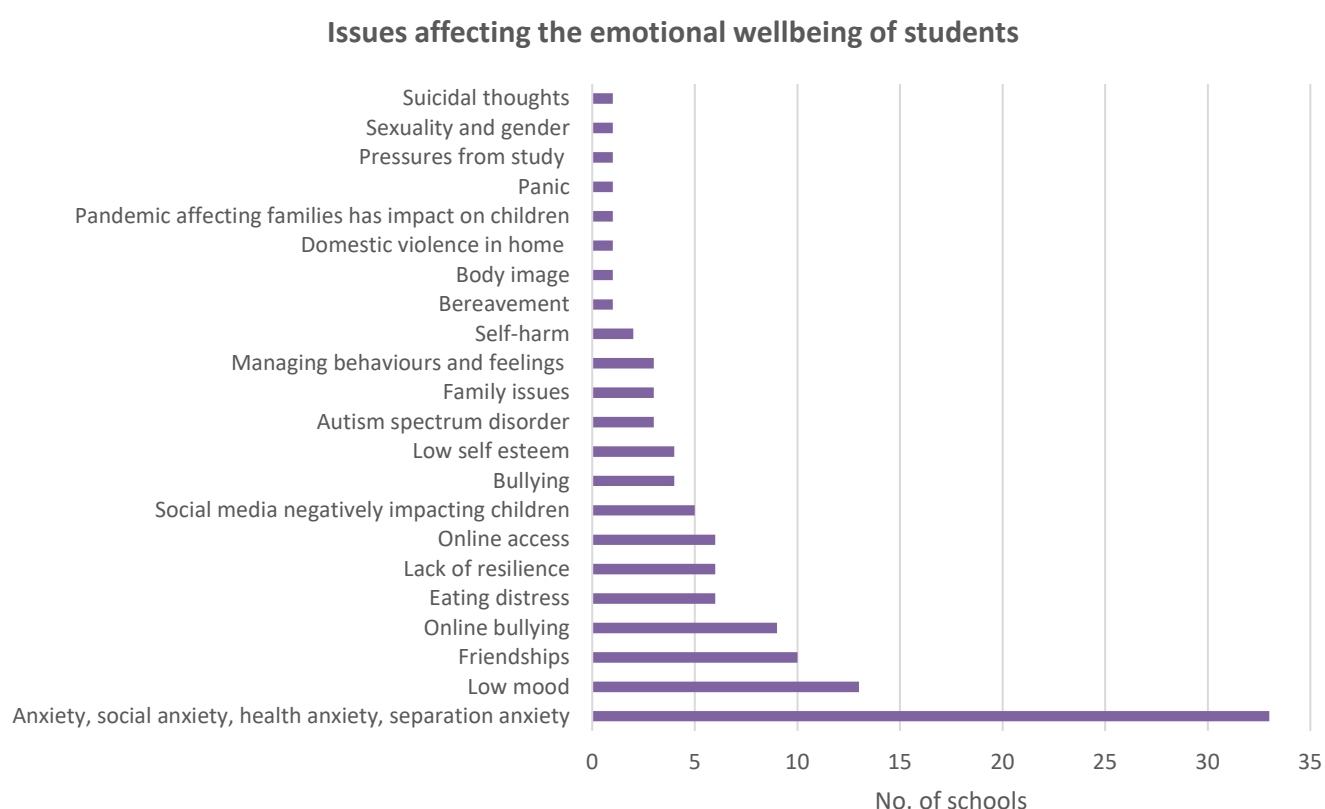
- As highlighted previously, long waiting times between young people being referred and receiving support was mentioned.
- A lack of services/resources available to young people due to a lack of funding is also a barrier to access.
- In terms of the school environment, teachers lack time to develop their mental health skills and support their students.
- For some there is a lack of support from within their family.

“Lack of understanding from some adults and being put off by wait times. An issue for some of our families is getting to appointments which are on the other side of Gateshead - they tend to manage but it is difficult.”

- The referrals process was also highlighted:

“Students can wait many weeks for support. If they miss an appointment, they go back to the start of the referral process. These vulnerable people may miss appointments as they are anxious about what they will entail.”

- A lack of awareness of where to go for support was also mentioned.



- Various types of anxiety are the main concern of students.
- Low mood, friendships, online bullying, online access and resilience were also mentioned more frequently.

Recommendations

- The findings above provide a summary of the feedback provided by 39 schools.
- In response to this feedback the following recommendations are made to help inform future service provision.

Awareness of service

- Four schools were unaware of the RISE programme whilst three stated that they had not been approached to take up support.
 - It is suggested that processes are reviewed to ensure that all eligible schools are receiving a written invitation to learn more about the RISE programme and what it can offer.
- One school asked if they could have further support in the future.
- Schools who felt the service was not meeting their need cited that they needed more time/sessions.
 - Promotional materials should be reviewed to ensure they are explicit in explaining how schools can access RISE (including self-referral), the amount and length of support they will receive and how often they can access it.

Provision of service

- Nine schools who have not accessed the RISE programme indicated that they would like to do so in the future.
 - It is suggested that these schools are contacted as a priority.

Delivery methods

- Delivery methods offered have changed over the years and there were some inconsistencies in what schools state they have been offered, taken-up and would like to receive in the future.
 - To ensure that they are receiving the support they want and need, it is suggested that all schools receive the same offer and that this offer is restated to all (regardless of their past support needs) ahead of each cycle of support.
- Schools overwhelmingly prefer one-to-one/small group work support as opposed to a whole-school approach and this is evident in the services they have taken up.
 - If delivery methods are to be reviewed in the future one-to-one/small group support should be prioritised.
- There is however still support for the whole-school approach with five schools requesting this support.
 - It is suggested that these schools are contacted and discussions around this need take place.
- One school requested large group work and one, staff support.
 - Again, these schools should be contacted and their needs discussed.

Length of support

- Schools requested more resources in terms of the length of time they receive support; they would like it to be continuous or more often than one term per year or for practitioners to spend more time in the school during the support period.
 - It is expected that resource limitations will make increasing the amount of support difficult. Therefore to ensure that schools are getting the most out of this support and that expectations are being met, clear communication from the outset about what can be offered and the school's priorities around mental health support are vital.

- Several schools highlighted issues with the limited time period in terms of not being able to develop a long-term plan for mental health support and what happens if a child still requires support after the RISE practitioners are due to end their support period.
- There was also a request for some communication from practitioners outside of the support period.
 - o It is suggested that practitioners support schools to develop a longer-term plan that they could work on when the RISE support has finished.
 - o It is also suggested that consideration be given to building capacity into practitioners' work plans to allow for time to have regular contact with the schools they are not currently working in to discuss progress of long-term plans and any ad-hoc issues/support needs that are arising.
 - o If there are any students still requiring support at the end of term it is suggested that this capacity could also be used to support them until they are no longer required.

Referrals

- Several schools asked for changes to the referral process to enable referral at time of need and less paperwork for group sessions to enable more timely support.
 - o It is suggested that the referral process and information required are reviewed to ensure that support is provided in the most timely way possible.

Topics covered

- Schools highlighted a range of issues affecting the emotional wellbeing of their students.
 - o Review these issues to ensure that the RISE programme content meets the needs of students.

Resources

- There were requests from three schools for access to more resources in the form of information for school staff, leaflets for staff and parents explaining small group work and other online resources for parents.
 - o Develop a signposting list of online resources staff could access to help them with their understanding and support of mental health issues in school.
 - o Review information provided to parents and if necessary, develop some information sheets around the support children may receive in school from RISE. Also develop a list of online resources they could access to learn more about mental health.

Awareness of support

- Schools highlighted a range of other mental health support they access.
 - o It is suggested that this support is reviewed and circulated to practitioners to ensure that there is no duplication of service and they are aware of the range of services operating in schools across Gateshead.