**UCL Collaborative Social Science Domain  
   
Social Science Plus   
Pilot Project Outcomes Report**

**Project Title**A feasibility study for implementing Mental Health Support Teams in Further Education Institutions

**Amount**£11,000

**Academic Year**2019-20

**Social Science Principal Investigator**Professor **Jane Hurry,** Professor of Psychology of Education, Psychology and Human Development, Institute of Education

**Co-Investigator(s)**

*Non-Social Scientist Co-Investigator:*

Professor **Jessica Deighton,** Professor in Child Mental Health, Psychology and Language Sciences, Brain Sciences, SLMS

**Additional Collaborators (include academic and non-academic partners both UK and international)**

**Academic collaborators**

Vivian Hill (Educational Psychologist, Chair, Educational and Child Psychologists, British Psychological Society)

Professor Tony David, Institute of Mental Health, UCL

Dr Laura Crane, Department of Psychology and Development, IOE

Professor Emla Fitzsimons, Department of Social Science, IOE

Dr Praveetha Patalay, Joint appointment between the MRC Unit of Lifelong Health and Ageing, UCL Faculty of Population Health Sciences and Centre for Longitudinal Studies, IOE

Dr Daniel Hayes, Evidence Based Practice Unit, UCL and Anna Freud Centre

Dr Melissa Cortina, Evidence Based Practice Unit, UCL and Anna Freud Centre

**External partners**British Psychological Society (Expert Reference Group for the mental health of children and young people)

Association of Colleges (AOC)

**Project outline** *(about 150-200 words)*

The last 10 years have witnessed a rapid increase in young people with mental health problems. Adolescence is a critical period, defining subsequent career, educational and health trajectories. A principle government response to young people’s mental health needs Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), currently target schools. However, the FE sector has high levels of need: approximately 20,000 14-15 year olds attend FE to follow vocational courses, they are often disaffected and disengaged from school; FE students are more socially disadvantaged than their peers in schools; FE supports the learning of new arrivals to the UK, those leaving care, young offender institutions and mental health inpatient services.

Following the green paper, *Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health (2017)*, Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) are being introduced to support schools in meeting pupils’ mental health needs. This pilot study intended to address three key challenges for this initiative: i) cross-disciplinary collaboration; ii) evidence-based practice; iii) the inclusion of the Further Education (FE) sector. Some adaptations to the research questions were necessary due to Covid lockdown of colleges:

1) What is the current provision for student mental health in FE sites?

2) What is the feasibility of implementing MHSTs, in collaboration with Educational Psychologists (EPs), in FE contexts? The key areas of focus for feasibility studies were:

Acceptability

Demand

Implementation

Practicality

Adaptation

Focus, rationale and societal relevance

**Main findings** *(about 150-200 words)*

*Please use short bullet points for each finding*

* Demand for mental health (mh) support in FE estimated to be high due to the demands of transition to a more adult style institution with greater student independence and less adult support.
* Current mh provision very variable but generally particularly challenged for post-sixteen students with complex needs (eg. looked after young people, autism).
* Post-sixteens go to adult specialist services rather than CAMHS and this has implications for the implementation, practicality and adaptation of MHSTs in FE colleges as MHSTs are networked with CAMHS.
* FE colleges are keen to have more staff training for mh and greater access to specialist services, indicating acceptability of MHSTs or equivalent in the FE context.
* EPs particular contributions to an MHST would be: in the support of students with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), for example students with learning difficulties, autism or mh issues, and in the systemic approach which is central to EP practice, including close working and up-skilling of staff, with parents and with social workers and other community agencies.
* Regarding rationale and societal relevance this pilot contributed to evidence of the marginalisation of FE colleges in supporting the mh needs of young people against a backdrop of an important point of transition to adult independence.

**Key achievements and impacts (academic and non-academic), media coverage, etc** *(about 150-200 words)*

*Please use short bullet points for each achievement/impact*

* Four trainee EPs successfully completed 1st year reports on aspects of the project.

**Detail your plans for external funding application(s) (funder, scheme, date of application, amount, outcome (if known) etc)**

The original project was compromised due to Covid and the closure of FE colleges over the data collection period. We plan to engage a trainee EP in collecting further data directly from FE colleges as the focus of their doctoral thesis which will support external funding application.

**Next steps**

* Trainee EP to pick up data collection as outlined in the original project as the focus of their doctoral work.
* Joint planning between Jess Deighton’s team in the Anna Freud Centre and Vivian Hill’s team in PHD in carrying forward the implementation and evaluation of MHSTs in FE.

**Expenditure summary. You may forward a separate spreadsheet summary if you have the details in that form**

Vouchers for participants/colleges: £6,750

Transcription services for interviews: £1,850.21

Total expenditure: £8,600.21