

A guide to:

Family Support

What the Wellbeing Support Service is
and how it can help you and your child



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ABOUT US

The Wellbeing Support Service has been commissioned by The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) through The Primary Behaviour Service (PBS) of Hampshire Children's Services. The aim of the service is to support parents and carers of children and young people who are experiencing distressing or challenging behaviours.

PBS works with schools and families to help develop children's positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing. It is funded by Hampshire Children's Services.

Through the additional funding provided by the CCG, the Wellbeing Support Service – a new strand of PBS – is able to increase the support offered, so that health professionals are also able to make a referral if there is a further need for support at home, or if the school referral criteria are not met.

By providing early, targeted support through a child-centred approach, PBS aims to remove barriers to learning, help children get the most from their education and reduce exclusions. Alongside this, the Wellbeing Support Service can offer an early intervention service focussing on the family and the experiences of the child. It can help parents to make informed choices about the options of support for their child.

What will I have to do?

At first – just talk! Be as open and honest as you can when providing us information and have an open mind when listening to things we are suggesting. We will not be judging you, or your parenting – we just want to offer suggestions you might not have explored previously. Then, try the strategies we suggest, keep trying, even when they do not feel like they are working, and be kind to yourself. It takes a lot of hard work to be a parent *especially* when things are challenging. The most important thing is to talk, use the strategies that prove helpful and take one step at a time. We may offer several strategies and you may just start with one. That is ok! We will support you with reflecting on what is going well, as well as other things to try, and we will also make sure you have things explained or written down for you too if that helps.

Will what I say be reported to Children's Services?

The Wellbeing Support Service is part of Hampshire County Council's Children's Services and we will keep records of our contact with you. We will provide families with a safe space to talk and will offer you as much support as possible with your child and family.

Is there any other support available?

Yes, of course! The consultation is the first step in accessing more support so this process needs to happen first, but more support may come either from us continuing to work with you for a number of sessions after the initial consultation, or us signposting you to another organisation which may be able to better support your family.

Do you diagnose children?

No, we do not. We are not medical professionals. Our role is to support the family in understanding and finding ways to manage the needs of your child, not diagnose or make assumptions on any medical needs.

Will you write a report to CAMHS?

There will be a report written at the end of our involvement with you, but, as just mentioned, this will not comment on any medical needs of your child. The report will be sent to the professional who referred you originally and will detail some of the work we have done together and the issues explored. Your Parent Support Advisor will discuss this with you so please do ask any questions or let them know if you have any worries. You will be able to see the report and we would encourage your views within it.

HOW IT WORKS

To receive support from the Wellbeing Support Service, you need a referral from a Health professional. If you have not already been referred, the best person to contact is your GP, but it could also be a Health Visitor, Pediatrician, or any other Health professional with whom you may already have involvement.

When we receive the referral, we will call and speak to you. This initial 'phone call will only be short, just to arrange an initial consultation.

THE INITIAL CONSULTATION

The initial consultation will last an hour and will be held in a Primary Behaviour Service centre in most cases. At this stage, most of the discussion will be either us asking questions, or you telling us about your family.

It is important that during this consultation we can speak openly and without distractions. We will ensure it is held in an appropriate space to allow this, but this means you will need to ensure you have childcare for all children, and as far as possible are not distracted by other commitments, such as not being 'on call' for work or anything similar. We are, of course, human and life does happen, but this is a really important step of the process, so we appreciate families supporting this request.

It is also important to note that the initial consultation may be emotional. That is totally normal and we will fully support you if you find it tough; however, you may want to ensure that you give yourself some time afterwards to have a break and try not to book it in when you might need to rush off to pick up a child or go to another appointment.

WHAT NEXT?

Following the initial consultation, your Parent Support Advisor will take some time to consider all the information that has been discussed in the consultation and to look at what the best next steps might be for your family. You will then receive an email with an invitation to future sessions with an overview of how many and what type of sessions they are.

There will generally be three types of sessions:

- individual family sessions, in which the parent(s) or carers meet with a Parent Support Advisor to discuss situations in a similar way to the initial consultation but in more depth;
- group sessions, based on giving more information or strategies on a specific topic. Although these are group sessions, do not be put off! Group sizes are always relatively small, and they are very supportive;
- in some cases, there will be sessions held at the family home, which will often have content like the individual family sessions.

Each family is very different, so each family will have a specific plan devised jointly between the service and the family. The plan will always be reviewed as sessions progress, so you may find the plan from the initial consultation changes along the way. As it is so individual, there is no set timeline that you can expect, but it is worth remembering that, as an early intervention service, the support will be short-term and then if further support is required we may recommend you to a more long-term service.

Your Parent Support Advisor will discuss this process with you and always make sure you are happy with the sessions planned for you.