

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to welcome you back to a new school year and, in particular, to offer a warm welcome to all new and acting headteachers in the county.

What is my role?

- To provide confidential personal and professional support to headteachers and acting headteachers
- To work alongside professional associations, NCC personnel and other agencies to promote headteachers' well being
- To develop support networks for headteachers
- To contribute to the future development of the Norfolk Well Being Programme

In the coming year, I will be working on four new projects to promote well-being:

1. Well-being of partnership headteachers

The number of partnership schools in Norfolk has increased to 12. Often 2 (or more) small primary schools, not too far apart, share the same headteacher. This arrangement can benefit pupils and staff, maximising opportunities for collaboration and sharing expertise and resources. However, leading and managing 2 or more schools brings its own challenges and I am working with heads to research factors that affect the success of the partnership. I plan to produce a short report –'a blueprint for success' which will be useful for prospective heads and governors.

2. Well-being resources pilot

10% of heads from all phases of education have agreed to trial some free on-line resources based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). CBT demonstrates that what a person thinks about a situation or problem may affect how they feel physically and emotionally, and may also alter what they do. If the feedback is positive and heads find that their emotional and psychological health has benefited, it can be recommended to all Norfolk heads and other colleagues. If there are any other heads who are interested in learning more about the project or who wish to take part, please contact me.

3. Children's centres and heads' well-being

Sharing expertise can reduce workload. There are a number of heads who have overseen the building of, and are now running, a children's centre on their school site. They have a wealth of experience and can offer support and guidance to heads in the future tranches. I will organise a self-help group if colleagues think that it would be useful.

4. Explore training opportunities to develop heads' well-being

Data gathered anecdotally and from the national Well-Being Programme suggests that the most successful heads often compromise their own well-being and effectiveness in order to minimise the impact of changes on their staff.

A number of authorities access well-being training for heads and I'm liaising with them and some of their headteachers to assess its impact, prior to exploring whether Norfolk could do the same.

Suggestions for promoting staff well-being

The Well-Being team is often asked if we know of people who will come into school to promote staff well-being. Below are two I have experienced.

Workplace therapies

Sarah Woodrow, of Stressless: Corporate Complementary Therapy, wants to provide employees with the opportunity to access a range of treatments during their working day to improve their general health and well-being.

Sarah came to my home to demonstrate the four therapies she can provide – neck & shoulder massage, Indian head massage, stone therapy massage and hydrotherm, a massage performed whilst laying on a mattress filled with warm water. Each treatment is carried out fully clothed and lasts for 20 minutes.

Sarah works with companies in a variety of flexible ways. Some pay for the therapies in company time whilst others arrange for Sarah to attend and staff book and pay for their own sessions. Sarah welcomes the opportunity to visit schools and offers a free trial session so that you can see the treatments in action, hear about the benefits they could bring and how much space is required etc. She can be contacted on 01263 711266 or 07765556243.

At an INSET day last January, Hellesdon High School offered its support staff the opportunity to try taster sessions of deep tissue massage, sports therapy and relaxation. Andrew Marshall of 'feelingood' who led the session says clients report a decrease in physical tension almost immediately. There was the opportunity to book further sessions at reduced rates with Andrew Marshall at his Norwich practice.

I attended the session and spoke to the school's well-being facilitator, who had arranged the morning. He said this was the second opportunity for staff to experience physical well-being following a day organised by Adult Education during which staff could try aromatherapy, reflexology and art therapy.

Andrew can be contacted on 01603 768007 or rufelingood@hotmail.co.uk

If your school has used other providers successfully perhaps you could pass on their details to the well-being office.

I am looking forward to meeting many more colleagues during the year as it's taking quite some time to visit over 450 schools. If I can be of any support to you at all, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Julia

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