

HeadStart Kent - Training Offer

Since 2016, [HeadStart Kent](#) have provided an extended [training offer](#) for all professionals working with children and young people across the county. Training is co-created, delivered in partnership and evaluated by cross-sector experts, including the NHS, Kent County Council and voluntary and community organisations. Training has been delivered in various locations across the community, such as youth clubs, schools and football grounds to reach as many different professionals as possible. Predicted training reach has been exceeded, year-on-year, since the programme began. Up to July 2021, 6,276 school and community-based professionals received training from HeadStart Kent, surpassing their estimations by over 2,000. This is reported alongside an increase in professionals applying for direct HeadStart support for their young people, such as through the [Pay It Forward](#) and [Talents and Interests grants](#),¹ as well as increasing numbers of young people training as [peer mentors](#) through HeadStart.² A systems change evaluation [report](#) published by HeadStart Kent, for the same year, presents evidence of the impact of the strategic steps taken across the programme for school and community systems change. It indicates that the work delivered by HeadStart Kent has correlated with improved whole systems approaches to young people's mental health and wellbeing across educational and community-based settings, and a successful contribution towards fulfilling the principles laid out in Public Health England's [Whole School Approach](#), in many of Kent's schools.

Resilience and trauma trainings

HeadStart Kent deliver two types of training with a focus on the topic of resilience.³ The first, [Resilience and Trauma](#) training, which is a 90-minute long course to build professionals' understanding of what is meant by resilience and trauma, learn about how stress and trauma impacts a young person's resilience, the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the neurobiology of trauma and stress, and how

¹HeadStart Kent. (2019). *Training summary report*. Retrieved from: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/about-headstart-kent/research-and-evaluation/training-summary-report-june-2019/>.

² HeadStart Kent. (2019). *Training summary report*. Retrieved from: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/about-headstart-kent/research-and-evaluation/training-summary-report-june-2019/>.

³ Although HeadStart trainings as a whole aim to promote resilience in different ways.

professionals can work proactively to support young people affected by trauma and other acute stress experiences. Secondly, [Resilience Conversation training](#), which equips any professional working with children and young people how to have a [resilience conversation](#).

Resilience conversations consider resilience across six areas: feeling secure, friendships, talents and interests, emotions and behaviours, and health, adapted from Daniel and Wassell's original (2002) [6 domains of resilience](#). The conversation enables professionals to map, with young people, in which areas of their lives they demonstrate high levels of resilience and in areas which they would like to develop further. Action plans are developed and it is agreed how a young person can access support and, where relevant, be signposted to other services that can help develop strategies and build resilience. The training is open to all professionals in Kent who work with children and young people, but has been promoted to school, local authority, voluntary and community sector and Kent County Council staff in particular.

In addition, the [Kent School Award for Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing](#), was designed as a way of verifying that the Resilience Toolkit has been implemented in such a way that it supports the guidance by Public Health England. Kent schools apply for and provide evidence that they meet set criteria relating to resilience and emotional wellbeing in order to achieve the award. These include:

- Creating a safe environment where talking about resilience, emotions, mental health and difference is encouraged, celebrated and communicated across the school community
- Students, staff, parents/carers and the wider community understand resilience and how it supports the promotion of emotional health and wellbeing
- Schools have a Resilience and Wellbeing Action Plan based on the needs of students, staff and community, which supports their emotional health and wellbeing

As of January 2022, 43 Kent schools had successfully evidenced having embedded resilience approaches and principles throughout their school practice, culture and environment, and achieved the award.

'The fantastic work staff do in partnership with HeadStart Kent to support pupils' emotional health and wellbeing, and build up their resilience, gives them the best possible start in life, and prepares them for their journey into adulthood and the world of work or further or higher education. Well done to everyone involved' – Kent councilor awarding a Kent School Award for Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing⁴

'It's having that language of resilience in learning, which crosses over to the resilience in emotional wellbeing as well. So that, in itself, has really helped to have that commonality of language' – Kent school staff member

In years 2019 and 2020, school staff completed the [teacher self-efficacy survey](#), in which they were asked to rate how much they agree or disagree with statements relating to their ability to teach, their relationships with their pupils, their confidence to perform broader work-related tasks and their confidence in coping with wider system constraints and work challenges. In 2019, 86% of teachers agreed that they could successfully teach 'difficult' students, which increased, by an overall percentage of 8.3%, to 94.3% of teachers in 2020. Likewise, 77.3% of teachers agreed, in 2019, that they could develop creative ways to cope with system constraints compared to 83.4% of teachers in 2020. All school staff agreed, either strongly or moderately, that they have a positive influence over their students' personal and academic development.⁵ Over 95% of school staff felt that they were able to maintain positive relationships with parents, were confident in composure and teaching well, were capable of addressing students' needs, and could successfully teach 'difficult' students.⁶

Youth Mental Health First Aid

HeadStart Kent have also delivered a number of other evidence-based training programmes which have proved successful over the years. [Maidstone and Mid-Kent Mind](#) were commissioned by HeadStart Kent to deliver [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) (YMHFA), and have been providing this training since 2017. This training has been

⁴ Kent Media Hub. (2019). *Schools award for resilience and emotional wellbeing*. Retrieved from: <https://kccmediahub.net/schools-award-for-resilience-and-emotional-wellbeing745>

⁵ HeadStart Kent. (2020). *HeadStart Kent 2019/20 year-end report: systems change in school and community approaches to young people's mental health*. Retrieved from: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/about-headstart-kent/research-and-evaluation/headstart-kent-2019-20-year-end-report-system-change-in-school-and-community-approaches-to-young-peoples-mental-health/>.

⁶ HeadStart Kent. (2020). *HeadStart Kent 2019/20 year-end report: systems change in school and community approaches to young people's mental health*. Retrieved from: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/about-headstart-kent/research-and-evaluation/headstart-kent-2019-20-year-end-report-system-change-in-school-and-community-approaches-to-young-peoples-mental-health/>.

delivered in a range of different formats: an introductory hour-long session, a half day training or a two-day training that qualifies participants as Youth Mental Health First Aiders. The free training aims to equip practitioners and parents and carers with practical skills to spot triggers and signs of mental health issues, knowledge to help a young person recover by guiding them to the right support, and tools to look after their own mental wellbeing, and has been very popular and is delivered in schools to ensure that school staff attendance isn't hindered by location. Participants have fed back that the training improved their knowledge of young people's mental health, and that they felt confident in being able to apply what they learnt to their work. In the first year of delivery, a total of 138 staff were trained in the half-day YMHFA training, and 98% of all attendees rated the course either 'very good' or 'good'. 62 staff were trained in the 2-day, intensive YMHFA training. 87% of those participants rated the training as either 'very good' or 'good', and 92% of attendees stated that the training would either be 'very useful' or 'useful' in their work with young people. The CCG has funded 10 train the trainers for YMHFA which has enabled the programme to be sustained post the HeadStart programme.

'It's the building up of the resilience of staff as well. I think they'll then be able to pass that on to the students who are vulnerable because the training we'll get will enable us to be that little bit of a support system. Even if we're not counsellors or doctors or psychotherapists we've got that little bit of enhanced knowledge that will support us' – School staff member

Mindfulness training

In 2017, HeadStart Kent commissioned an organisation called [Social Sense](#) to deliver [Mindfulness Training](#). The training has been open to everyone in Kent working with children and young people, and is delivered via a three tier offer:

Level 1: Mindfulness Awareness Course; introduces practitioners to the concept of mindfulness and helps them understand how it can benefit them and those around them.

Level 2: Mindfulness Intensive approach; practitioners explore and practice mindfulness-based techniques. Practitioners are introduced to the Kent Mindfulness curriculum

resources for young people, specifically designed by HeadStart Kent, and are invited to join a Mindfulness Community of Practice.

Level 3: Mindfulness Train the Trainer; practitioners who want to learn how to train other practitioners who work with children and young people in mindfulness. Participants must have completed the Level 2 course, be able to evidence how they incorporate what they have learnt in their practice and their personal life, and, if they work in a school, they must explore and explain how their training will benefit the whole school.

Evaluation assessment of the Mindfulness Training in 2018 found that 100% of all 572 participating delegates rated the course either very good, good or satisfactory.⁷ 63% of participants worked in either a primary, secondary or special school, and, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 indicates no knowledge and 10 indicates high knowledge of mindfulness, average participant scores increased from 5.63 to 7.85 from the beginning to the end of the course.⁸

'I've learned a great deal and now need time to embed and practice; highlight reflective and practical techniques, excellent facilitation. I am currently developing leading on yoga in my school' – Mindfulness Training participant

'My previous knowledge was greatly increased through this course. Both facilitators were very knowledgeable and passionate about their subject, great resources – book and audio links are high quality, beautiful venue, perfect for the subject. I'd like to share the benefits I've gained from this course' – Mindfulness Training participant

⁷ HeadStart Kent. (2018). *Mindfulness Training in Kent: annual review*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dde2a40abd04ecb62687b3/t/5c18f4a3758d46c88fd6fed4/1545139374616/HSK+Year+1+Impact+Report+v4.pdf>.

⁸ HeadStart Kent. (2018). *Mindfulness Training in Kent: annual review*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dde2a40abd04ecb62687b3/t/5c18f4a3758d46c88fd6fed4/1545139374616/HSK+Year+1+Impact+Report+v4.pdf>.