



Wellbeing Investments in Schools and Employers (WISE) Study

Schools Information Sheet

Summary: We would like to invite your school to participate in our study which aims to understand the processes by which schools invest in mental health and wellbeing promotion. By investment we mean dedicate resources such as time, funding, infrastructure changes, activities for staff or pupils related to mental health and wellbeing, such as a wellbeing assembly series over a term. This information sheet provides further details about the study and what would be required of your school as a participant. This is so you can make an informed decision as to whether you would like your school to take part.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us using the contact details provided at the end of the information sheet.

Why is this research important?

Schools are taking increasing responsibility for mental health and wellbeing promotion. Although ‘evidence’ is often provided by researchers on what activities might be most effective or value-for-money this is not always well connected to schools’ needs. By better understanding, in detail, how schools make resources-allocation decisions in the real world, we will build a picture of how they can be best supported to invest in mental health promotion effectively and equitably.

Who is carrying out the research?

This study is being carried out by a research team at the University of Birmingham. It is funded by the Wellcome Trust (a leading health charity, with a particular focus on mental wellbeing).

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has received ethical consideration by the University of Birmingham for “Wellbeing investments in schools and employers (WISE Project) – schools work package” ERN_21-1687

Why have we been invited to participate?

Your school has been invited to participate in this study because we have identified you as a school that has prioritised investment in mental health and wellbeing promotion.

What would taking part involve?

If you agree for your school to participate in this study, our research team would work closely with you to collect the following types of information.

- a. **Short Survey** which would include questions about the mental health and wellbeing promotion activity in your school.
- b. **Individual interviews** with a mix of key staff with valuable knowledge about mental health and wellbeing promotion, which may include, for example, members of your Senior Leadership Team, Head of School Improvement, Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Officer, Health and Safety Officer, Mental Health Lead or Governors. As part of these interviews, we would like to explore the process of how spending and staffing decisions are being (and have been) made in your school in relation to mental wellbeing. This would also include an optional possibility to be recontacted for a follow-up interview.
- c. **Sharing documents** which would help us to understand better how your school makes decisions and invests resources in mental health and wellbeing promotion.
- d. **Observations** of some meetings that relate to mental health and wellbeing activity, spending and staffing, or school site visits, both where possible and appropriate.

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part in this study. Should you change your mind about your school's participation in the study, you can withdraw from the study at any time, though we would wish to know about any withdrawal as soon as possible. Given the uncertainty posed by COVID-19, we can be flexible about when data are collected and the ways in which that happens; we aim to work with your schedule.

If you decide to withdraw your school from the study, please contact a member of the research team whose details are provided below. There will be no consequences to withdrawing from the study for your school, and you do not need to tell us why you no longer wish your school to take part in the study.

When will the survey be requested?

The survey link will be sent via email soon after you have agreed to be a case study school and we have agreed a 'start date.' It will take around 10 minutes to complete, ideally by someone who knows your health and wellbeing strategy well. It focuses on your application of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing promotion at your school. You can find more information on the whole school approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing [here](#).

When and where will the interviews take place?

The interviews with staff will ideally take place face-to-face at your educational setting, but other possibilities are by telephone, or virtually via zoom or MS Teams, depending on what works best for interviewees and any possible COVID restrictions in place at the time of interview. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. COVID requirements for school admittance will be adhered to by researchers.

What types of documents will you request?

Documents may include your school vision, mission, values statements, Governor's meetings minutes, Covid-19 catch up strategy, agendas and budget reports, audit information, and similar.

What observations will you do?

Observation of meetings, events, and educational setting will be requested throughout the period of the case study, where possible, in keeping with the school policies and preferences, and only where observation relates directly to the objectives of the study. This could include meetings between staff and/or affiliated groups such as governors about the active planning of wellbeing-related events, such as a school assembly related to wellbeing. The researcher could also attend the setting to observe the effects or impact of an investment decision. Setting observation will be overt and accompanied by a school staff member.

What will be done with the information I provide?

The information provided through the case study approach will help us understand how different schools make decisions about investing in mental health and wellbeing promotion. The results of the study will be used to develop a report about our findings, a workshop for schools to understand the results and impact of the findings. In addition, to guide policymakers and researchers on how to inform, support, and resource mental health and wellbeing promotion in schools. We will also publish the findings in peer-reviewed journals for other researchers to use.

How will our school's information be kept confidential?

Pseudo-anonymisation is used in this study in order to enable information across all of the different forms of data collected to be linked across the case study site. This means documents, transcripts and field notes will contain identifiable data, but will be password protected. This is necessary in order to meet the project objectives and accurately process-trace the data across different data types: survey, interviews, documents, observations and routinely collected data. Because the nature of the interviews reflects school-level decision making processes, this information is considered low-risk. Pseudo-anonymisation of all data types described above are all password protected at the document level and only accessible to the researchers on this project, including the Principal Investigator. At the end of the project, all these data will be completely anonymised.

Interviews will be pseudo-anonymised by using school and individual-level IDs to organise data. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed by an external agency who has signed a confidentiality agreement with University of Birmingham. Information that interviewees share about other school staff will not be shared with those staff. Audio-recordings of the interviews will be kept in a secure folder on the University of Birmingham server for the duration of the project. Interview transcripts and recordings will be password protected at the individual document level in addition to the standard password access and two-factor authentication in the University system. Only members of the immediate research team will have access to the data in their non-anonymised state.

All identifying information we collect during the study such as from interview quotes or documents will be completely removed from any publications and reports – these final outputs will be completely anonymised. If photos are taken in the school as part of an observation (for example of a wellbeing gratitude wall) no individuals would be included in any photography, and publishing photographs would only occur with the express permission of the school Headteacher and/or study liaison. Specific details on each type of data collection:

- Survey information is collected at the school level only, using MS Forms and password protected. School names and identifiers will not be used outside the research team.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed by an external agency who has signed a confidentiality agreement with University of Birmingham; each interview will be given an ID and password protected. This information will not be shared with anyone outside the researchers conducting the collection and analysis and the project lead. Information that interviewees share about other school staff will **not** be shared with those staff (full information on interviews in interview information sheet).
- Documents collected will be password protected at the individual document level in addition to the two-factor authentication university staff undertake to access files. This data will only be accessible by the research team.
- Observational data confidentiality will be treated in the same ways as documents.
- Routine data provided as relevant to the study would be requested to be completely anonymised before receiving it.

In line with University of Birmingham's General Data Protection Law we will process your information in a lawfully, fairly, and transparent manner. We will only collect information we need for the legitimate purposes of our research. You can learn more about your rights under the General Data Protection Law here: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/privacy/index.aspx>.

What are the possible benefits of participating?

We will feed back detailed information about the decision-making steps in your organisation and how these compare to other schools. This could aid your future wellbeing investment decisions. We will also invite you to a workshop about the study findings and how these could be used. Finally, we will also provide an voucher as a thank you for your time. There is a wider benefit to society, in helping further our understanding of how schools invest in mental health and wellbeing promotion. By sharing your experiences, you will be addressing an important gap in knowledge and enable researchers to build a better picture of how schools make decisions and thus how they can be best supported in investing in mental health and wellbeing promotion.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

There are no risks associated with your participation in this study. We realise that your organisation is busy, and this will involve you giving up some time to work with us. There is no preparation needed although we would welcome any suggestions of documentation you can direct us to or share about the process of decision-making.

We are very grateful to you for considering participation in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the research team:

Professor Hareth Al-Janabi Institute Applied Health Research University of Birmingham	Camille Allard Research Fellow Institute Applied Health Research University of Birmingham	Dr Rebecca Johnson Research Fellow Institute Applied Health Research University of Birmingham
Email: H.AlJanabi@bham.ac.uk	Email: c.allard@bham.ac.uk	Email: r.johnson.7@bham.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet.