



WIGAN MHST

Newsletter

Issue 14: January 2026



eventbrite

Click the logo above to follow us on eventbrite and stay up to date with our upcoming events and parent workshops. Please encourage parents and carers to follow us too!

Padlet

Click the logo above to access the MHST Padlet for useful information, signposting, referral forms, and previous issues of the newsletter.



Click the image above to share your feedback on the MHST newsletter. We'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions!

Happy New Year and welcome to Issue 14 of the Wigan MHST newsletter! We hope you have all enjoyed a fun and restful break.

In this issue we will be exploring more complex presentations including Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Emetophobia (vomit phobia). We will take a look at the common signs and symptoms and the recommended support for these difficulties. We are also continuing with the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' series, focusing on the ways we can connect with others. February marks Children's Mental Health Week and this year's theme is 'This is My Place.' In this feature, we will be thinking about the importance of having a sense of belonging, and ways to develop inclusive environments for children and young people.

We will also be introducing you to one of our wonderful EMHPs, Ella, who recently joined our team. In this issue you will also find our regular features shining a spotlight on the opportunities available through participation, upcoming events, this month's whole school approach offer, and useful signposting.

Parent Survey: Family Hub Workshops

We are looking to gather feedback from parents and carers regarding the workshops we offer at the Family Hubs. We are keen to learn more about parents' preferred locations, times, and topics, and to understand more about any barriers to parents



accessing the workshops. The survey can be accessed [here](#). We would love it if you could share this with parents and carers.

THIS MONTH'S WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH OFFER

- Exam stress workshops
- Low mood workshops

Contact your school's allocated practitioner to find out more.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

What is OCD?



Obsessions - Distressing and intrusive thoughts that something 'bad' could happen, or the thought that they may be anxious unless they complete a specific action.

Compulsions - The act or ritual that the person has to complete in order to stop something 'bad' from happening or to relieve the anxiety.

Fact and Fiction



OCD isn't just the need for something to be clean! It can present in lots of ways, from needing to repeat motions such as tapping, through to really tricky obsessions that the person is going to do something bad unless they avoid the situation or complete a compulsion.

National Institute of Health suggest that OCD could affect as many as 3 in every 100 children.

Signs and Symptoms



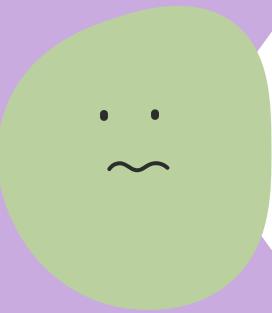
If you observe a young person completing behaviours such as hand washing, repeated checking or engaging in the same behaviour as a ritual (particularly if they don't 'want' to but 'need' to). Consider if the young person has routines that need to be completed or they 'won't feel right' unless it is done or 'something bad could happen'. You see a young person not engaging in activities because of intrusive thoughts.

Support



Although OCD can be a challenge, through the use of exposure or behavioural experiments the impact of OCD can be managed. There are useful links such as '[Young Minds](#)' and '[Anna Freud](#)' to offer a better understanding of OCD, along with support for parents and guardians. If your young person is accessing a school which has MHST provision, a referral can be completed to the MHST team to explore if cognitive behavioural therapy would be suitable.

EMETOZOIA



Emetophobia is the fear of being sick or seeing others being sick

Whilst vomiting is an unpleasant experience which no-one likes, emetophobia is more than a dislike of being sick. It can be a significant difficulty which interferes with every aspect of every day life, potentially leading to feelings of isolation or hopelessness.

Signs and Symptoms

Safety behaviours such as carrying water with them everywhere, repeatedly checking best before dates, seeking reassurance, or washing / cleaning excessively.

Avoidance behaviour. For example, they might avoid travelling on certain forms of transport, eating certain foods, being around others who may be sick or have been sick.

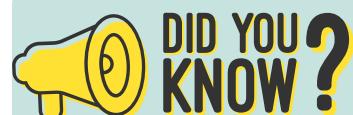
You may notice weight loss from avoidance of eating or restrictive eating, injuries from excessive cleaning, avoidance / safety behaviours.

Physical symptoms: fast heart rate, changes in breathing, nausea, light-headedness.



Support

[Click here](#) to visit the Young Minds website and read about young people's experiences of emetophobia and the support they have accessed. Wigan MHST can offer CBT for emetophobia. If you know a young person who experiences these symptoms, and they meet the MHST criteria, you can consider making a referral to our team.



It is estimated that 8% of the population (that we know of) experience emetophobia.

THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

CONNECT



Having positive relationships helps our brain to produce chemicals (dopamine, serotonin and endorphins) that make us feel happy!

Connecting with family, friends and people who are important to us in our lives gives us a sense of belonging, which is really important for our mental health and wellbeing.

Ways we can connect with others:

-  Spend time with family or friends by doing a fun or relaxing activity together, whether it's cooking a meal, playing a game or going for a walk.
-  Join a club, team or volunteer inside or outside of school/college, to meet people with similar interests.
-  Make a playlist of your favourite songs and share it with your family or friends.
-  Send a message to a friend or engage in shared interests together such as online gaming.

How can you connect with someone today?

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

9TH - 15TH FEB 2026



From 9th to 15th February 2026, schools across the UK will come together to celebrate Children's Mental Health Week, organised by Place2Be. This year's theme, "This is My Place", focuses on helping children and young people develop a strong sense of belonging - in their classrooms, playgrounds, and communities.

A sense of belonging is vital for mental wellbeing. When children and young people feel accepted and valued, they are more likely to thrive emotionally and academically. This week is an opportunity for schools to create spaces where every child and young person feels they belong.

Why Get Involved?



- **Promoting Wellbeing:** encourages conversations about mental health and belonging.
- **Strengthens Community:** builds connections between pupils, staff, and families.

How Can Your School Take Part?

- Host a themed assembly or classroom discussion on what "This is My Place" means to your pupils. This could even involve Mental Health Ambassadors if your school has them!
- Encourage creative expression through art, writing, or music projects.
- Share stories and celebrate diversity within your school community.
- Access Free Resources: Place2Be offers a wide range of free activities, lesson plans, and assembly guides to make participation easy and impactful - there are even resources for parents and carers! Check out their website on <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/childrens-mental-health-week/>



OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH PARTICIPATION



Speaking to other young people

Our Participation Champions have returned to their old schools/colleges to speak to students about their first hand experience of accessing MHST and the opportunities they've had through participation.



Youth Interview Panels

Our Participation Champions are integral in our recruitment process. Taking part on our youth panels they ask their own interview questions and then score our potential candidates. This involves young people in decision making whilst also developing their confidence and skills set.

Deliver Training

A few of our Participation Champions received Interview Skills Training from Youth Leads UK in October 2024. Since then they have had a lot of experience of interviewing and have now developed their own training that they deliver to any new Participation Champions.

Resources

Our young people design and create resources from posters, to videos to newsletters. These promote MHST and help to support other young people.



Team Away Days

A highlight of our Team Away Days is having the young people we've supported speak about their experience of MHST. It's so heartwarming to see and hear how far they've come in their journeys.



Deliver Training

Our Head of Operations values children and young people's voices and ideas and so invites them to join our Engagement & Participation Strategy meetings. This allows them to share their ideas and make changes at a higher level. Some of our Participation Champions are even being trained to co-chair meetings.

As Wigan MHST changes and develops, we want children and young people to be at the heart of decisions that are made. By getting involved, young people can share their experiences and ideas, helping to shape our service to better meet their needs and the needs of others like them. Participation provides a platform for children and young people to share their voices in a safe space where they can connect with others. It builds their confidence and makes a difference in their journey, the community and the future of mental health services.



PARENT WORKSHOPS

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH PARENTS AND CARERS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO [CLICK HERE](#) TO BOOK TICKETS FOR OUR PARENT WORKSHOPS



STRESS AND PERFECTIONISM WORKSHOP



We are offering a practical workshop designed to help parents and carers understand the impact of stress and perfectionism on children and young people. The session will explore common signs of stress, how perfectionist tendencies can affect wellbeing, and provide strategies to combat ideas around perfectionism and support resilience and healthy coping.



This is a great opportunity to gain insights, ask questions, and learn tools that promote balance, especially for any children or young people who are always striving for "perfection."

STAY TUNED

Further details of our upcoming Stress and Perfectionism Workshops will be shared with schools and colleges shortly. Please keep an eye on your emails for updates.

Parents and carers can also follow our [Eventbrite](#) page to be notified of  upcoming events.

MEET OUR NEW EMHP!



My name is Ella, and I'm excited to join Wigan MHST as an Education Mental Health Practitioner. I qualified as an EMHP in 2024 and previously worked with Liverpool MHST.

I've been lucky to work in a variety of roles supporting children in different settings, and I truly love helping young people grow, thrive, and feel happier and healthier.

Outside of work, I enjoy scenic walks with my black Labrador, Lenny, listening to music, travelling, and cooking.

It's been wonderful meeting the young people and school staff so far, and I look forward to getting to know them and the team even more as we work together.

EVENTS



CHECK OUT THIS HALF TERM'S IMPORTANT
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS EVENTS



19TH JANUARY 2026



BREW MONDAY

In January there is often talk of 'Blue Monday', but instead, **Samaritans** are saying 'out with the blue and in with the brew.' They are encouraging people to catch up over a brew and some biscuits, to talk to each other, and to simply ask 'how are you?' Samaritans are helping to highlight the importance of human connection and the positive effects of reaching out to people to show them they are valued. More information and resources can be found [here](#).



17TH FEBRUARY 2026



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY

This is a chance to really make someone's day! On 17th February you are encouraged to engage in selfless acts, to show kindness towards others, and to bring a smile to someone's face. Being kind to others not only helps them to feel good, but it can also improve your own wellbeing. The Mental Health Foundation have some great ideas for random acts of kindness that you can try on their [website](#). The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation also offer some great, [free resources](#).

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH



After receiving their mock exam results, and with GCSEs creeping ever closer, you may start to identify students who are struggling to cope with the stress. We can offer Exam Stress Workshops to explore the reasons our body feels stress, what happens when we experience too much stress, and coping mechanisms that can be used to ensure a healthy work/life balance in the build up to exams. If this is something which you feel may benefit your school, reach out to your school's allocated MHST practitioner.

SIGNPOSTING SPOTLIGHT



SENIOR MENTAL HEALTH LEADS PEER NETWORK UPDATE

The Wigan Senior Mental Health Leads (SMHL) peer network, which has previously operated online, held its first in-person meeting on 12th November 2025 at Aspull Church Primary School.

The meeting brought together a highly engaged group of SMHLs to explore how staff peer supervision and listening programmes could be developed and embedded within educational settings to enhance staff wellbeing. Attendees also shared and celebrated examples of effective practice from across local schools. Feedback from the session was very positive, with participants leaving equipped with new ideas and reflections to take back to their own schools.

The network plans to continue building on this work, with future sessions set to revisit staff peer supervision and listening approaches and examine practical strategies for implementation within education settings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING 2026

Online (Teams): Wednesday 21st January, 1:30–2:30pm

In-person: Wednesday 11th March, 9:30am–12:00pm at Hope School

MUST DO!

All SMHLs in Wigan are warmly invited to join these sessions.

Please contact the Educational Psychology Service by emailing EP_Admin@wigan.gov.uk to receive the invitation and book a place.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Self-Esteem

Body Dysmorphia

