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Wigan Mental Health Support Team Parent Newsletter

Issue 2: November 2026



eventbrite

Click the logo above or scan the QR code below to **follow Wigan MHST on eventbrite** and stay up to date with our upcoming events and parent workshops!

Welcome to the second issue of the Wigan MHST parent newsletter!

In this issue we are excited to welcome our new starters to the Wigan MHST! We have many new starters this academic year and they are all looking forward to building relationships with their schools and supporting children and young people, as well as the families involved in their care. We are thrilled to have such an amazing team in the Wigan MHST and we hope you welcome them as wonderfully as you have done with all our other team members!

See what our young people really think about Wigan MHST in the first of a our new series of reviews describing their experience working with the team.

We have also included some handy tips and advice on how to look after your wellbeing as we move into the winter months and look ahead to Christmas.

And don't forget our regular features:

- Highlighting upcoming mental health events
- Useful signposting



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MY EXPERIENCE OF WIGAN MHST

The first of a series of reviews by some of the young people who have worked with Wigan MHST.



WHAT WAS IT LIKE BEFORE WIGAN MHST?

Before I received support from Wigan MHST, life wasn't very easy for me. I struggled with family problems, school problems and overall mental health problems. Having so much going on at once felt overwhelming.

I had a certain teacher I spoke to every time there was a problem and soon enough she referred me over to MHST. I was happy with joining them because having the opportunity to speak to someone who would listen and try their hardest to understand me sounded like just what I needed. Nobody at home could so having someone from MHST being able to help sounded perfect for me.

WHAT WERE YOUR SESSIONS LIKE?

When I joined MHST the first session was amazing.

My practitioner helped me feel comfortable, welcomed and at ease. She created a safe space for me where I felt listened to and understood.

At first opening up wasn't always easy for me, but as each session went by, I found myself feeling more like I could trust my practitioner. I gradually built trust with the person supporting me and felt like I could share a little bit more each time.

I didn't realise it at the time but in this stage my mental health boosted sky high.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE AFTER WORKING WITH WIGAN MHST?

At the end of my sessions I was deeply upset. I came to the realisation that [my practitioner] was the only person I felt comfortable talking to so now that I had lost her it wasn't very easy. But I was given all the resources that we used throughout my time and now if my mental health lowers again I find where we covered that section and I can help myself.

I feel better equipped now to deal with difficult situations and manage everything.

I am so happy that I went to all those sessions with MHST and so grateful that I got to receive that help. Overall, my experience was extremely positive, and I believe the support I was given truly made a genuine difference for my mental health.

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COPING OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD



Coping strategies to help your young person look after their wellbeing over the festive period.

Christmas is often referred to as the most wonderful time of the year. However, for some, it can bring about its own challenges. It's quite common for people to struggle with Christmas for many different reasons; whether they're struggling with loss, uncertainty, change in routine, worries about food or difficulties in their relationships. Here are some strategies to help young people look after their wellbeing at what can be an overwhelming time.

STICK TO SIMPLE ROUTINES



Routine can become a stranger at Christmas time, and this can become unsettling and confusing, particularly for those who are neurodiverse. If this is distressing for young people, encourage some basic routines to add some normality. For example, sticking to the same bedtime, or waking up at the same time everyday. Perhaps, the same morning or bedtime routine. This can create some stability. Whilst Christmas is a time of tradition, there is nothing wrong with changing some of these if it makes the Christmas period easier. For example, if Christmas dinner is distressing, there is no rule that says you can't have chicken nuggets and chips!

PLAN AHEAD AND COMMUNICATE

Young people might find it helpful to have a conversation with family, letting them know what they find difficult about the Christmas period, so the family can plan ahead together, to anticipate any barriers and problem solve in advance. This can help alleviate stress or conflict. Young people may find it helpful to agree on an emoji which they can send to their caregivers via text if they are struggling.



FOCUS ON THE PRESENT, NOT THE PRESENTS!

Young people can practise breathing, distraction or grounding techniques to help calm their fight, flight, freeze response. Christmas can be very fast paced and chaotic at times, so this can help young people to slow down and recognise that they are safe in that moment.

SELF-KINDNESS



Christmas is a time for giving and kindness, and this includes being kind to yourself too. Encourage young people to take some time for themselves to recharge and do what makes them happy.



AVOID SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media will tell you that you need matching pyjamas, a room piled with presents, a picture perfect living room and instagrammable Christmas market photos to have the perfect Christmas. Comparing ourselves to others on social media can have a negative impact on our mood and set unrealistic expectations. Remind young people that social media doesn't tell the whole story, or encourage them to stay away from social media over the festivities if you notice that it has a negative affect on their mood.

Make a self-care stocking, filled with your child's favourite things to help comfort and ground them if they are feeling overwhelmed. Use sensory items to complete the 54321 grounding technique.

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GET TO KNOW OUR NEW STARTERS!

We have a large number of new staff members in the Wigan MHST who are looking forward to working with young people and all the people involved in their care.

PENNIE HAIGH



CHELSEA HODGE



JACOB BROWN



MARIA MCNULTY



ALICIA FOX



NATASHA HEATH-JONES



LYNDSAY MCCANN



SIOBHAN PHILLIPS



CHARLOTTE ARPINO



GEORGIA MCEVOY



ZOE GIBSON



ERIN BARKER



JESS HOGG



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PARENT WORKSHOPS AT THE FAMILY HUBS



CLICK HERE TO SEE OUR EVENTBRITE PAGE AND TO BOOK TICKETS FOR OUR PARENT WORKSHOPS

Wigan Borough family hubs

FOLLOW OUR EVENTBRITE PAGE TO GET NOTIFICATIONS FOR UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

SCAN HERE

This year our workshops will take place in the October, February and June half terms.
We will be focusing on:

- Inside the Young Brain - How to Guide your Child Through Big Feelings.
- Helping your Child Believe in Themselves.
- Big Moves, Big Feelings.

Save the Date

1 HELPING YOUR CHILD BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES

Self-esteem plays a key role in a child's emotional wellbeing, relationships and resilience. Explore ways to nurture your child's confidence; help them recognise their strengths; and support them through challenges. Leave with simple, effective strategies to help your child develop a positive sense of self and thrive both at home and in everyday life.

2 BIG MOVES, BIG FEELINGS

From new classrooms to new routines, transitions can bring excitement, uncertainty, and everything in between. Join us to learn practical tools for supporting your child through change, managing worries and helping them feel prepared, confident, and ready for what's next.

THIS YEAR WE WILL BE OFFERING WEBINARS DURING THE CHRISTMAS AND EASTER HOLIDAYS!

STRESS AND PERFECTIONISM

Understanding the impact of stress and perfectionism on children and young people. Providing strategies to help support resilience and healthy coping mechanisms.

ANXIETY

Understanding what anxiety is, where it comes from, and how it affects us. Exploring common symptoms of anxiety and considering how our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are connected. Sharing coping strategies and useful signposting.

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End THE STIGMA

EVENTS



Check out this half term's important mental health awareness events.

13TH NOVEMBER 2026

WORLD KINDNESS DAY.

World kindness day is a global event that encourages people to make a positive difference through acts of kindness and compassion. It provides an opportunity to promote empathy, inclusion and respect.

for more information CLICK HERE

16TH-22ND NOVEMBER 2026

NATIONAL SELF CARE WEEK

Self-Care Week is a UK wide annual awareness week that focuses on embedding support for self-care across communities and families. The Self-Care Week theme is "Mind & Body" whilst highlighting healthy eating.

for more information CLICK HERE

10TH DECEMBER 2026

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Human Rights Day provides opportunities to explore inclusion, belonging, equality, and children's rights, all of which are linked to emotional wellbeing and positive mental health.

for more information CLICK HERE

16TH-20TH NOVEMBER 2026

ANTI BULLYING WEEK

This year's campaign - Break the Silence - will encourage children, young people and adults to start conversations about bullying, speak up, listen and take action together.

for more information CLICK HERE

10TH DECEMBER 2026

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Christmas jumper day is a fun opportunity for children and adults to celebrate the festive season and support Save the Children.

for more information CLICK HERE

11TH DECEMBER 2026

UNICEF DAY FOR CHANGE

UNICEF Day for Change rallies support for vulnerable children worldwide. This initiative raises awareness and vital funds for humanitarian aid. Join the global effort to protect children's rights; ensure their access to education and health; and advocate for a brighter future.

for more information CLICK HERE

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SIGNPOSTING SPOTLIGHT

CLICK THE LOGOS FOR MORE INFO!

MENTAL HEALTH UK

Mental Health UK provides advice and support during the festive season.
This includes resources, festive activities and top tips to support the whole family during Christmas and New Year.

Scan the QR code or click the logo to find out more!

Mental Health UK

Bounce Forward

Targeted Education Support Service

SPECTRUM GAMING

LUMINOUS

Luminous is an NHS-Approved Parenting App for understanding children's behaviours. It provides parents and carers of children aged 3-11 with instant tools to support their child's mental health; reduce stress and anxiety and much more. It is powered by neuroscience and therapeutic play to reduce family conflict, improve wellbeing and restore calm.

Scan the QR code or click the logo to find out more!



MENTAL HEALTH & MONEY ADVICE

The Mental Health & Money Advice team help you understand, manage & improve your mental health and money issues. They provide money-saving ideas and how to approach Christmas in a budget-friendly way.

Scan the QR code or click the logo to find out more!

HUB OF HOPE
BY CHASING THE STIGMA

soluna by Kooth

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Mental Health & Money Advice

Anna Freud Mentally Healthy Schools

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Learn how to beat the January Blues with our low mood intervention.
Set realistic goals that you can stick to this new year.