

## Guidance

# Senior mental health lead training

Find out how your school or college can apply for a grant and access DfE quality assured training to help develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

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From:

[Department for Education \(/government/organisations/department-for-education\)](#)

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## Applies to England

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## Overview

The Department for Education (DfE) is offering a grant of £1,200 for eligible state-funded schools and colleges in England to train a senior mental health lead to develop and implement a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. This training is not compulsory, but it is part of the government's commitment to offer this training to all eligible schools and colleges by 2025.

Eligible schools and colleges are now able to apply for a senior mental health lead training grant to commence training by 31 March 2024. Grants will be provided to cover (or contribute to) the cost of attending a quality assured course, and may also be used to hire supply staff while leads are engaged in learning.

There are 2 forms you must fill out to complete your application and receive your grant:

- [Form 1 \(https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads\)](https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads) – the initial application form to check your eligibility and reserve your grant
- [Form 2 \(https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads-confirmation\)](https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads-confirmation) – the second stage of the application process, where you upload evidence of having booked a DfE quality assured training course so we can pay your grant

## What the training covers

The [learning outcomes for senior mental health lead training \(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/995681/Learning\\_outcomes\\_for\\_senior\\_mental\\_health\\_leads\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_colleges.pdf\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/995681/Learning_outcomes_for_senior_mental_health_leads_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf) (PDF, 172 KB, 9 pages) are aligned with the principles of Public Health England (PHE) and DfE's [promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing).

Research indicates that taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing leads to improved emotional health and wellbeing in children and young people, and greater readiness to learn. Schools and colleges that have taken this approach often report improved attendance, attention, behaviour and attainment.

You can reflect on your setting's existing approach to mental health and wellbeing using the following:

- the National Children's Bureau (NCB) [preparing for recovery: self-review and signposting tool \(https://schoolswellbeing.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/wellbeing-mental-health/mental-health-and-wellbeing-secondary\)](https://schoolswellbeing.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/wellbeing-mental-health/mental-health-and-wellbeing-secondary)
- an approach developed by Oldham Council, [the whole school and college approach to emotional health and mental wellbeing \(https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200807/mental-health/1795/the-whole-school-and-college-approach-to-emotional-health-and-mental-wellbeing\)](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200807/mental-health/1795/the-whole-school-and-college-approach-to-emotional-health-and-mental-wellbeing)

- [Leading Change \(https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/5-steps-to-mental-health-and-wellbeing/leading-change/\)](https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/5-steps-to-mental-health-and-wellbeing/leading-change/), developed by the Anna Freud Centre
- the Charlie Waller Trust's [college mental health self-evaluation tool \(https://charliewaller.org/what-we-offer/colleges/cmet\)](https://charliewaller.org/what-we-offer/colleges/cmet)

## Who the training is for

Schools and colleges that claimed a grant between 1 September 2021 and 31 March 2023 are not eligible to apply for another grant. This includes academy converters where a claim was made by the predecessor school.

State-funded schools and colleges in England, including those in receipt of ESFA pre-16 revenue, high needs block, or 16 to 19 programme funding are eligible to apply for a grant. Further information and a list of eligible setting types is available in the [conditions of grant \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding/senior-mental-health-lead-training-conditions-of-grant-for-the-2023-to-2024-financial-year\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding/senior-mental-health-lead-training-conditions-of-grant-for-the-2023-to-2024-financial-year).

Independent settings with fee-paying pupils and students are not eligible for a grant but may access DfE quality assured training independently.

Apprenticeship providers are not eligible to claim a grant but they too may access DfE quality assured training independently.

All eligible education settings can benefit from senior mental health lead training. Courses are available to meet the learning needs and preferences of senior leads, whatever their level of experience, type of setting or location.

### Identifying a senior mental health lead

Schools and colleges can decide who is best placed to take on the role of senior mental health lead and undertake the training, as every setting's circumstances are different. Training could be for your:

- headteacher
- deputy headteacher
- member of the senior leadership team (SLT)
- if not a senior leader, an appropriate member of staff, working with colleagues, who is empowered to develop and oversee your setting's whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing

If your senior lead is not a member of your school or college SLT, you will need to consider whether the individual has the authority, capacity and support to influence and lead strategic change within the setting.

Eligible settings are able to claim only one grant, so, when choosing a senior mental health lead you should take into account succession-planning and career

development plans. This will help ensure your senior lead has sufficient time and capacity to meet the conditions of the grant, including completing training and implementing a sustained whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

## Existing mental health leads

Existing mental health leads, or someone who has undertaken other mental health and wellbeing training, can still be nominated for this training.

The grant must be used on DfE quality assured training to help develop or introduce your whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. Existing senior leads might wish to:

- develop or refresh their knowledge and skills in specific priority areas
- get more advanced training
- get a relevant qualification

## Mental health support teams (MHSTs)

If you are already working with an [MHST \(https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/trailblazers/#\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Support\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/trailblazers/#_Mental_Health_Support), your nominated senior lead can also be your MHST coordinator, responsible for liaising with the team, or can be a different member of staff.

## Before you apply for a training grant

Before you apply for a training grant, you should check you meet all the [eligibility criteria and terms for the training grant \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding/senior-mental-health-lead-training-conditions-of-grant-for-the-2023-to-2024-financial-year\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding/senior-mental-health-lead-training-conditions-of-grant-for-the-2023-to-2024-financial-year), including that you have:

- committed to develop or implement a whole school or college approach to mental health
- identified a senior mental health lead to oversee your whole school or college approach, and confirmed that they are available to commence training by 31 March 2024

## Applying for a grant

You can apply for a senior mental health lead training grant following these steps:

- 1 Eligible settings should complete the [first stage of the application process](https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads) (<https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads>) to reserve a grant. In this form, your eligibility will be checked and you will be asked to make a series of declarations as described in the [conditions of grant](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding/senior-mental-health-lead-training-conditions-of-grant-for-the-2023-to-2024-financial-year) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding/senior-mental-health-lead-training-conditions-of-grant-for-the-2023-to-2024-financial-year>).
- 2 You will receive confirmation that we have successfully received your application. This will tell you to book a DfE quality assured training course, to start by 31 March 2024. Keep evidence of your booking, as you will need this to claim your grant.
- 3 You must submit [the second stage of your application](https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads-confirmation) (<https://onlinecollections.des.fasst.org.uk/fastform/senior-mental-health-leads-confirmation>) to claim your grant – providing acceptable evidence of booking a DfE quality assured course. This completes your application, enabling us to process your claim for a grant.

In step 3, your evidence can be a scanned copy, screenshot or photograph of your confirmation email or invoice from your training provider. Your evidence must include:

- the title of the training course
- the start date
- the name of the training provider

You will have at least 3 weeks to submit the second form. If you do not submit within the deadline provided, we may release your place to other applicants to ensure grants do not go unclaimed.

If your setting is due to change status (for example, by converting to an academy), you may not be able to access the online forms. If this is the case, contact us at [MentalHealth.LeadTraining@education.gov.uk](mailto:MentalHealth.LeadTraining@education.gov.uk).

You can also contact us if you believe you are eligible to apply for a grant but are experiencing issues with the application form.

## Access DfE quality assured training

You can assess your specific learning needs and preferences and select the most suitable quality assured course using the online tool: [choosing a senior mental health lead training course](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/smhl) (<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/smhl>).

Contact details are provided in the tool to enable you to book your selected senior mental health lead course directly with a training provider.

## Providers of training

This grant can only be used to pay for [DfE assured senior mental health lead training courses](#)

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1145949/DfE\\_assured\\_senior\\_mental\\_health\\_lead\\_training\\_courses\\_March\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1145949/DfE_assured_senior_mental_health_lead_training_courses_March_2023.pdf)) (PDF, 313 KB, 33 pages).

Training providers wishing to provide grant-funded senior mental health lead training to schools and colleges can find out more through the [DfE contracts finder](#) (<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/fed4d328-7879-4bc2-8727-63ef178b7503>).

## When your grant will be paid

Once you have submitted evidence of your course booking in the second online form, we will review the information provided. We will then email you to let you know your application has been approved and confirm when you will receive your grant.

Payments will be made on a quarterly basis:

- to most settings on the last working day of June 2023, September 2023, December 2023 and March 2024
- to academies on the first working day of July 2023, October 2023, January 2024 and April 2024

When you receive your grant will depend on when you complete the second stage of your application. Maintained schools and maintained alternative provision settings will receive payment via their local authority, while all other settings will receive payment directly. This payment will be made alongside your regular funding and will appear as a separate line on that remittance.

## Programme evaluation

By applying for a grant, you are accepting that an appropriate DfE representative will contact you directly to ask that you participate in our programme evaluation. As a condition of your grant, we require you to provide feedback on your course, once completed, so we can understand how the training is supporting schools and colleges to develop their approaches to mental health, and how we can improve our offer.

We will contact you by email to request your contributions and keep our requests brief to minimise burdens on your time.

Your school or college will also be included on a publicly available list to enable health partners and local authorities to support take-up of this offer and the development of effective whole school or college approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

# Will there be further opportunities to apply for a grant?

If you are waiting to apply for a grant, we encourage school leaders to:

- consider your setting's commitment to a [whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>).
- identify a senior mental health lead to receive training to oversee your whole school or college approach in the context of wider special educational needs and disability (SEND), pastoral and safeguarding responsibilities
- consider the specific knowledge and skills your senior lead may wish to develop – they can complete a self-assessment to identify their specific learning needs and preferences using the online tool [choosing a senior mental health lead training course](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/smhl) (<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/smhl>)
- consider other professional development for the senior lead, the wider SLT and staff, including [National Professional Qualifications \(NPQs\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>). The [NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-frameworks-from-september-2021) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-frameworks-from-september-2021>) is for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading behaviour and pupil wellbeing in their school. Fully funded scholarships to undertake NPQs are now available for all state-funded schools, as well as state-funded 16 to 19 organisations.

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## Explore the topic

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