



# **Mental Health and Well-Being Policy**

**Mental Health and Well-being Policy  
for  
St. Mary's C.E. Primary School**

<b>Agreed by the Governing Body:</b>	October 2024
<b>Date for review:</b>	October 2027

## **1 Rationale: Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important**

Compassion forms a basis for all we do at St Mary's. At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community, this includes pupils, staff, parents and carers, every day. We recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy."

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupil well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

At St Mary's School, we understand the importance of effective pastoral support and the positive impact this can have on the child and the family as a whole. As an inclusive, Christian community, we are a caring school that nurtures our children to reach their full potential. We celebrate their unique special worth, not only the child's academic achievements but also their happiness and their well-being.

Our Vision is 'Growing and learning together to be our best, inspired by Jesus' love'.

Our values enhance and enrich our vision; we celebrate excellence through Endurance, Wisdom and Service and encourage compassion through Friendship, thankfulness and Forgiveness.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where:

- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being – see (5) below for further details.

## **2 Purpose of the Policy**

This policy sets out:

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems worsening
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

### 3 Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

***... a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.***

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

### 4 Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Acceptable use and e-safety, Anti-bullying, Attendance and Punctuality, Behaviour, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Children with medical conditions, Equality Policy, Exclusion, Health and Safety, Keeping St Mary's safe from abuse, Pupil Voice, Relationships and Sex Education and SEND.

Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider ***behaviour to be a message***.

### 5 A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, working with the Anna Freud Centre using their evidence-based framework '5 Steps to Mental Health and Well-being' which includes:

#### Leading Change

- Preparing for change
- Ensure there is a robust mental health and wellbeing policy
- Demonstrate commitment in our school improvement plan
- Signpost information for Governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers

#### Working together

- Establish a Mental Health Action Group
- Improve working in collaboration with Mental Health services
- Include staff, parents and carers in decision making
- Engage with all parents and carers

#### Understanding needs

- Identify pupils at risk
- Measure pupil wellbeing
- Develop and measure interventions

#### Promoting Wellbeing

- Integrate mental health and wellbeing across our curriculum and culture
- Establish a peer support program in our school
- Create a safe environment for pupils and staff

#### Supporting Staff

- Conduct a confidential annual staff wellbeing survey
- Provide training for staff with responsibilities for mental health and wellbeing.
- Promote staff mental health and wellbeing
- Ensure support structures are clearly identified and signposted.

We aim to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise by:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. promoting the 'stop I don't like that' from Reception to Y6.
4. helping pupils to be resilient learners
5. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
6. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
7. effectively working with pupil parents and carers

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

## 6 Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The school's Mental Health Team (*SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Leads, School Counsellor, ELSA, the Mental Health Action Group, Governor*)

- lead on and work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the PSHE Leader and PATHS school coordinator on teaching about mental health

- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- leads on and makes referrals to services with regards to mental health

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- School Counsellor
- ELSA
- LA Mental Health Team running non-therapeutic interventions
- School nurse
- CAMHS core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- Vulnerable pupils' individual mentors
- Key staff in school with wellbeing responsibilities

## **7 Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health**

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

*Pupil led activities and assemblies:*

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Pupil voice is valued and encouraged through the Worship Ambassadors, School Council, Eco Council and B-Buddies

*Transition Support*

- Support for vulnerable children, for example social communication groups
- Welcome new joiner meetings for parents and children
- Key adults may support transitions between three sites
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Key Adults may support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

*Class Activities*

- Worry boxes
- Kindness/Compliment Boards
- PATHS pupil of the day
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Yoga
- Safe spaces
- Talking
- Sensory Room

*Whole School*

- Working with Anna Freud and their Schools in Mind resources.
- Staff Survey, focus groups
- We are a PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) accredited school: empowers children to develop social and emotional learning

- Family group – support for families; emotional, behavioural, working together, supporting one another.
- Mentoring scheme for Pupil Premium and other vulnerable children
- Collective Worship themes
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school

### *Small Group Activities*

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Club support- Mindful Masters
- Safe Spaces, including the Bevan Room for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming

### *Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being*

- Through PSHE using PATHS and RSE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health, help reduce the stigma of mental health problems and learn to explore feelings:

PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) – an evidence based social and emotional learning program that teaches pro-social skills, emotional understanding, social problem solving and self-control. It covers 5 domains of social and emotional development:

Self-control  
 Emotional understanding  
 Positive self esteem  
 Relationships  
 Interpersonal  
 Problem solving.

and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education), the RSE units are:

Healthy and Happy friendships  
 Similarities and differences  
 Caring and responsibility  
 Families and committed relationships  
 Healthy bodies, healthy minds  
 Coping with change

### **Our approach is to:**

- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated
- Seek external support where necessary

## **8 Early Identification**

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- being an Attachment Aware School

- working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- working with the School's mental health team
- home visits in Reception to identify needs
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room, attendance and weekly Behaviour Forms / Anti-Bullying Forms, restorative justice.
- using CPOMS to track children identified as having difficulties
- pupil surveys during the school year
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Leads
- worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'
- drop-ins with School Nurse or Educational Psychologist
- SEND Parenting Emotional Support service

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Team or Child and Family Well-being Practitioner.

These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- drug or alcohol misuse
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures are followed including a referral to outside agencies. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

### **Verbal Disclosures by Pupils:**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Inclusion Manager/Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.



## Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils:

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message. Unusual behaviours are recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads who may take advice from the Single Point of Access (SPA).

## Confidentiality:

All disclosures are recorded on CPOMS, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps. The information is shared on a need to know basis.

## Assessment, Interventions and Support:

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads and recorded. They then carry out an assessment to identify the level of need, ensuring that pupils get the support they require, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Need</b></p> <p>The level of need is based on discussions at the regular meetings/panel with key members of staff</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Evidence-based Intervention and Support</b> - the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils</p> <p><i>For example</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Monitoring</b></p>
<p>Highest need</p>	<p>CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies</p> <p>School mental health service 1:1 support</p> <p>Educational Psychologist involvement</p> <p>External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group work</p> <p>If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy.</p>	<p>All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The needs of the pupils</li> <li>• How the pupil will be supported</li> <li>• Actions to provide that support</li> <li>• Any special requirements</li> </ul> <p>Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire</p>
<p>Some need</p>	<p>Access to in school Nurture Room or Safe Space, or Child and mental health Practitioners.</p> <p>1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for</p>	<p>Multi-agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers</p>

	life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends	<p>Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate</p> <p>Discussion, advice and support in Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) core hours for key staff</p> <p>An electronic log is kept via CPOMS and there are bi-weekly SLT meetings where safeguarding is an agenda item.</p> <p>Weekly staff briefing</p>
Low need	General support e.g. Lunch Club, class teacher/TA, Child and Family, Mental health team 'Check-in'.	

## 9 Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupil's provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCO or Safeguarding Leaders following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Specialist Service	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
School Counsellor	Accessed through Headteacher, SENCO, Teacher.
ELSA	Accessed through the Headteacher, SENCO, Teacher.
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through the SENCO
Early Help Referral	Accessed through the SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Leads

## 10 Involving Parents and Carers:

### *Promoting Mental Health*

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

### **To support parents and carers:**

- we organise a range of Mental Health workshops accessing expertise from external services such as the emotional health consultant within Achieving for Children. Topics include themes such as Anxiety, Stress Management and Sleep.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our school website on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an Open-Door Policy
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.
- We have a parent and school governor on our Wellbeing Action Group to engage and work together with our whole school community.

**When a concern has been raised the school will:**

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information and places to seek further information (see Appendix 2 and 3)
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- agree an Action Plan
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

**11 Involving Pupils**

- we seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, School Council, surveys, class questions and discussions, suggestion boxes
- B Buddies are a group of children that support vulnerable children in the playground and around school.

**12 Supporting and Training Staff**

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and well-being and to be able to promote positive mental health and well-being, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help (see Appendix 3).

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics have been accessed through our in-school experts and Achieving for Children.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and well-being of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and well-being with staff well-being weeks and regular opportunities to engage in social events.

Annual staff survey and focus groups with the intention of making staff wellbeing a part of every day school life.

Staff have access to support from:

**Employee website access**

**<https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>**

### **13 Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the SLT and Wellbeing Action Group and reported to the Governing Body. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.

## **Equalities Statement**

St Mary's positively celebrates diversity and inclusion is core to its Christian ethos. The Governing Body recognises that no one should receive less favourable unlawful treatment than another on the grounds of gender, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. It is the Governors' aim that no-one at the School should suffer unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any of these grounds. The Governing Body is committed to embedding fairness and equality at the heart of the school community, and in all aspects of the school's policies, procedures and practices.

## Appendix 1

### Protective and Risk factors

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Specific development delay</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• SEND</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>• Humour</li> <li>• Problem solving skills and a positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long-term relationship</li> </ul>
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Negative peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Wellbeing support</li> </ul>
In the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider supportive network</li> <li>• Good housing</li> <li>• Improved standard of living</li> <li>• High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunities for valued social roles</li><li>• Range of sport/leisure activities</li></ul>
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## **Appendix 2**

### ***Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children***

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs  
Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for  
Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)  
Depression  
Eating Disorders  
Substance Misuse  
Self Harm

The DfE guide does not include specific information on suicidal thought

#### ***Suicidal Thoughts***

Young people may experience thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their lives. Some young people never act on these feelings but may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide without any apparent warning signs.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Where to get information and support**

*For support on specific mental health needs*

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk) OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Suicidal thoughts [Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

*For general information and support*

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)

[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health

*See St Mary's C of E Primary School web site for specific information about anxiety, bereavement, big feelings, coping, mindfulness, relaxation and wellbeing, coping, resilience, and links to other professionals to speak with.*

<https://st-marys.richmond.sch.uk/mental-health-and-well-being/>