

Trainee Wellbeing Policy (CTTC 18)

1. Introduction

This policy sets out CTTC's commitment to promoting and supporting the wellbeing of all trainees within an inclusive, respectful and supportive training environment.

Inclusion is a central principle underpinning this policy and the wider Initial Teacher Training (ITT) curriculum. CTTC is committed to ensuring that all trainees, regardless of background, personal circumstances or individual needs, are able to fully access, participate in and succeed in training.

We recognise that wellbeing and achievement are closely linked. Our approach is both proactive and responsive: we design our training programme to minimise unnecessary pressures and barriers, while also providing timely and personalised support where needed.

This policy outlines:

- CTTC's commitment to trainee wellbeing and inclusion
- Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders
- Processes for identifying and supporting wellbeing needs
- The range of support available to trainees
- How wellbeing is monitored and used to inform ongoing improvement

This policy applies to all trainees and should be read alongside other relevant policies, including attendance, equality and diversity, safeguarding and assessment.

1.1 Policy statement

CTTC is committed to:

- Promoting positive wellbeing for all trainees through an inclusive and supportive training environment
- Embedding inclusion as a core principle across the ITT curriculum, mentoring and assessment processes
- Creating an open culture in which trainees feel safe to discuss wellbeing without fear of judgement or stigma
- Identifying and responding proactively to factors that may impact trainee wellbeing, including workload, personal circumstances and contextual factors
- Designing training to anticipate and reduce barriers to participation and success
- Providing timely, appropriate and personalised support, informed by professional judgement and, where appropriate, external advice
- Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented consistently
- Ensuring consistency across the partnership so that all trainees experience equitable support regardless of placement context

CTTC will fulfil its legal obligations under health and safety and equality legislation and will take reasonable steps to reduce risks to trainee wellbeing through effective training design, mentoring and support systems.

2. Scope of Wellbeing

CTTC recognises wellbeing in its broadest sense. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Hormonal health (including menopause and perimenopause)
- Neurodiversity and SEND
- Personal and family circumstances
- Financial wellbeing

Wellbeing needs may fluctuate over time. CTTC adopts a flexible, personalised and responsive approach, recognising that different trainees may require different forms of support at different points in their training.

3. Inclusive Training Design

CTTC adopts an inclusive, evidence-informed approach to the design and delivery of its ITT curriculum.

This includes:

- Sequencing training to reduce cognitive overload and support secure knowledge development
- Providing clear, structured guidance and modelling
- Ensuring expectations are explicit and proportionate to the stage of training
- Anticipating common barriers to participation and learning, including those linked to SEND, neurodiversity and prior experience
- Providing access to training materials in advance where appropriate
- Avoiding unnecessary workload and duplication

This anticipatory approach reduces the need for reactive intervention and ensures that inclusive practice benefits all trainees.

4. Key Wellbeing Areas

Mental health

CTTC recognises that mental health is a key component of overall wellbeing and can impact trainees' experience of training, performance and professional development.

CTTC is committed to:

- Promoting a culture where mental health is openly discussed and supported

- Reducing stigma and encourage early help-seeking
- Providing a safe, respectful and supportive training environment
- Ensuring staff are able to recognise and respond to emerging needs

Support may include:

- Regular check-ins through mentoring and assessment processes
- Access to Professional Tutors, Lead Mentors, Lead Subject Mentors and mentors for support and guidance
- Referral to occupational health where appropriate
- Access to external support services
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments where mental health is impacting training

CTTC recognises that mental health exists on a continuum, and trainees may experience fluctuating needs. Support will therefore be personalised, responsive and reviewed regularly.

Trainees are encouraged to speak to a member of staff they feel comfortable with if they are experiencing difficulties, so that appropriate support can be put in place.

Neurodiversity

CTTC recognises that many trainees may be neurodivergent, including (but not limited to) those with ADHD, autism, dyslexia or dyspraxia.

CTTC adopts a strengths-based and anticipatory approach, recognising that inclusive strategies benefit all trainees.

CTTC is committed to:

- Creating an inclusive training environment where differences are recognised and valued
- Embedding inclusive strategies within training design
- Supporting trainees through appropriate and reasonable adjustments

Support may include:

- Adjustments to how training content is delivered (e.g. access to materials in advance)
- Flexibility in how trainees demonstrate understanding
- Support with organisation, workload management and routines
- Clear, structured communication
- Access to occupational health or specialist advice where needed

Trainees are encouraged to discuss any needs with their Professional Tutor, Lead Mentor, Lead Subject Mentor, mentor or CTTC staff so that appropriate support can be put in place.

Menopause and Hormonal Health

CTTC recognises that menopause and perimenopause can have a significant impact on wellbeing and training experience.

Symptoms may include fatigue, anxiety, sleep disruption, difficulty concentrating and changes in mood.

CTTC is committed to:

- Promoting an open and supportive culture where menopause can be discussed without stigma
- Ensuring staff understand how menopause may impact training
- Considering reasonable adjustments where appropriate, such as:
 - flexibility in workload or deadlines
 - adjustments to timetables
 - access to rest spaces
 - additional wellbeing support
- Providing access to occupational health where needed
- Handling all discussions sensitively and confidentially

Trainees are encouraged to discuss any needs with their Professional Tutor, Lead Mentor, Lead Subject Mentor, mentor or CTTC staff so that appropriate support can be put in place.

Workload

CTTC recognises that workload is a significant factor in trainee wellbeing. The programme is designed to be rigorous but manageable, with careful consideration given to the balance between training, teaching and personal time.

CTTC will:

- Monitor trainee workload through regular assessment and mentoring processes
- Ensure expectations are clear, proportionate and appropriate to the stage of training
- Avoid unnecessary workload and duplication
- Respond where workload is impacting wellbeing

Mentors and staff will:

- Support trainees to prioritise effectively
- Provide clear guidance on expectations
- Adjust expectations where appropriate

Trainees are encouraged to raise concerns about workload early so that adjustments can be considered.

Financial Wellbeing

CTTC recognises that financial pressures can impact trainee wellbeing and engagement with training.

Where appropriate, CTTC will:

- Signpost trainees to available financial support
- Consider the impact of financial pressures when discussing wellbeing and support needs
- Take a sensitive and understanding approach where financial concerns are raised

Further guidance can be found in the CTTC Hardship Policy.

5. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 It is the responsibility of the **Steering Board** to:

- Monitor and review policies and procedures which safeguard the health, safety and welfare of trainees and ensure they are implemented in a fair and reasonable manner and in a way which promotes positive mental health;
- Consider the impact of policies and decisions on trainees and seek to minimise any potential negative impact on mental health;
- Ensure effective support is available to the Consortium Directors to facilitate their own positive mental health and wellbeing;

3.2 It is the responsibility of the Consortium Directors to:

- Ensure that full attention is given to trainees' health, safety and welfare and to develop systems of training to minimise risks to their mental health and wellbeing;
- Act as role models to encourage healthy behaviours e.g. taking regular breaks, not working excessive hours and maintaining a healthy work life balance;
- Ensure trainees understand their role and receive the required support from Professional Tutors, Lead Mentors, Lead Subject Mentors and Mentors;
- Monitor and be aware of the early signs of poor mental health and take action as appropriate;
- Ensure trainees are aware of support and assistance available including counselling and occupational health advice and guidance;
- Be familiar with relevant policies and procedures on equality and diversity to ensure any inappropriate behaviour e.g. bullying and harassment is handled appropriately and staff are supported;
- Ensure assessment procedures are carried out effectively to ensure targets and objectives are clear, to identify any issues with workload and/or demands on the trainee and provide support where necessary.
- Implement procedures fairly, sensitively and confidentially.

In particular, Consortium Directors must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to trainees' health and wellbeing by:

- having regard to the resources available in the Department for Education school workload reduction toolkit (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit>) and using such resources as appropriate;
- ensuring induction processes are robust and thorough;
- ensuring that trainees know who to approach with problems concerning their training or placement school;
- Appointing a Wellbeing Lead at CTTC to provide support and guidance to trainees.

3.3 It is the responsibility of all trainees to:

- Take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking);
- Comply and co-operate with the sickness absence management procedure where they are absent due to mental ill health, including the sickness absence reporting procedures;
- Inform their Professional Tutor, Lead Subject Mentor, Lead Mentor or Mentor in general terms as soon as reasonably practicable of any mental health issues (both where the issue arises from an external source or if they believe the training environment poses a risk to their health) Any health-related information disclosed will be treated in confidence;
- Ensure medical or other mental health advice and/or treatment, where appropriate, are received as quickly as possible.

6. Support Process

CTTC operates a clear and staged process to ensure that wellbeing needs are identified early and supported effectively.

Step 1: Identification

- During recruitment, induction or training
- Through disclosure or emerging concerns

Step 2: Information Gathering

- Pre-course health questionnaire
- Initial discussion with relevant staff

Step 3: Occupational Health (where appropriate)

- Referral for professional advice
- Recommendations for adjustments

Step 4: Support Planning

- 1:1 meeting with Professional Tutor or Lead Mentor
- Identification of barriers and support strategies
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities

Step 5: Additional Support (if required)

- Involvement of Wellbeing Lead
- Development of formal support plans (e.g. HCP/PSP)
- Agreed review points

Step 6: Review and Ongoing Support

- Regular monitoring through mentoring and assessment
- Adjustments reviewed and adapted as needed
- Outcomes used to inform wider improvements to provision

This process is underpinned by early intervention, confidentiality and personalised support.

7. Promoting Wellbeing

7.1 Occupational Health

Occupational health professionals will provide support to CTTC to help trainees stay in training, or to return to training. This may include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them continue to train.

Occupational health professionals will provide guidance and support for trainees returning to training after absences related to mental ill health or ill health, and work with GPs and Consortium Directors on possible adjustments/adaptions to the training environments/arrangements to assist with a successful reintegration into programme.

Occupational health professionals may also provide guidance and support on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions.

7.2 Training and communications

CTTC is committed to providing all trainees with appropriate training on mental health awareness and strategies to support positive mental health as part of the delivered curriculum.

Professional Tutors, Lead Subject Mentors, Lead Mentors and Mentors will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that trainees have the necessary skills as they progress through the course.

Professional Tutors, Lead Subject Mentors, Lead Mentors and Mentors will receive appropriate training and support to enable them to manage trainees who have mental ill health issues and to assist them to spot the signs of possible mental ill health at an early stage and identify appropriate support.

7.3 Trainee concerns and absence from work due to mental ill health

If trainees believe that they are suffering from poor mental health resulting from an external issue or that their training, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should speak to a Consortium Director. The discussion may cover external factors causing poor mental health or internal factors such as workload issues, poor relationships with colleagues or training needs.

Where a trainee is absent from training due to mental ill health, CTTC will maintain regular, open and meaningful communication with the trainee by an agreed method and at agreed intervals. The trainee must continue to follow the absence reporting requirements.

CTTC may, as appropriate, make a referral to an occupational health advisor where a trainee's absence or other issues indicate a potential mental health concern. In certain circumstances, particularly those involving stress or depression, a referral should be made as early as possible, usually after two weeks absence from training, as evidence suggests that early intervention increases the chance of a successful return to work.

Where a referral is made, the trainee will be advised of the process and the reasons for the referral. Discussions between trainees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health advisor is likely to provide a report on the trainee's fitness to train, and any recommended adjustments/adaptations to the working environment.

4.4.1 Co-operating with a referral to an Occupational Health Adviser

Trainees are obliged to attend appropriate appointments with an Occupational Health Adviser.

4.4.2 Disabled Trainees

There may be cases where the mental health issue could amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010. This will depend on the nature of the mental ill health and whether it has a substantial long-term effect on the employee's ability to carry out day to day activities. The legal definition of a "disability" is wide and Directors should seek advice from the CTTC's HR/legal advisers as to whether an employee falls within this definition. In such cases, the Consortium Director should seek HR/Occupational Health advice as early as possible.

4.4.3 Reintegrating trainees following absence

CTTC will take all reasonable steps to support a trainee returning from an absence due to mental ill health and to assist them with reintegration. The process of reintegration will differ depending on the length of absence and nature of their mental ill health and any treatment they are receiving.

8. **Record retention and data protection**

Any medical/health information concerning trainees collected will count within the "special categories of personal data" and as such will be kept confidential and stored securely in line with the CTTC's (CCHSG's) retention schedule in the "restricted access" section of the personal file.

Any personal data collected/recorded in line with this policy will only be processed in line with the CTTC's (CCHSG's) data protection policy/policy on processing special categories of personal data.

9. **Sources of information**

9.1 **Sources of information for trainees**

When a trainee is experiencing mental ill health, they may benefit from seeking external support. Trainees are encouraged to access external support where appropriate.

These include:

- Employee Assistance Programme from Education Support Partnership, a service subscribed to by the school and Trust which provides free confidential support, information and advice including counselling, financial, legal, management guidance and advice 08000 8566 148.

- Access to work can provide advice and an assessment of workplace needs for individuals, with disabilities or long-term health conditions, who are already in work or about to start. Grants may be available to help cover the cost of workplace adaptations that enable an employee to carry out their job without being at a disadvantage. These might be used to pay the costs of adapting equipment or buying special equipment for the employee, the cost of getting to work if they cannot use public transport and/or disability awareness training for colleagues. For more information, go to www.gov.uk/access-to-work
- Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. Their helpline and website provide information and support to empower anyone experiencing mental ill health and general advice on mental health-related law. For more information, go to www.mind.org.uk or call 0300 123 3393.
- NHS choices is a website that offers information and practical advice for anyone experiencing mental ill health. For more information, go to www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth
- Remploy offers a free and confidential Workplace Mental Health Support Service for anyone absent from work or finding work difficult because of a mental health condition. It aims to help people remain in, or return to, their role. For more information, go to www.remploy.co.uk or call 0300 4568114
- Rethink Mental Illness is the largest national voluntary sector provider of mental health services, offering support groups, advice and information on mental health problems. For more information, go to www.rethink.org or call 0300 5000 927.

9.2 Sources of information for Consortium Directors, Professional Tutors, Lead Subject Mentors and Lead Mentors

There are a range of organisations and programmes to help leaders.

These include:

- ACAS website provides information and guidance to help support and manage staff experiencing mental ill health. For more information, go to www.acas.org.uk/managingmentalhealth
- Employee Assistance Programmes can provide round-the-clock support for staff dealing with personal problems that might adversely impact their job performance, health, and wellbeing. This includes issues such as relationship problems, money worries and other pressures.
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England offers courses that can help managers and/or HR staff identify, understand and help a person who may be experiencing mental ill health. There is a MHFA Line Managers' Resource available at <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/resource/mental-health-first-aid-line-managersresource/>.

- Mindful Employer is a UK-wide, NHS initiative. It is aimed at increasing awareness of mental health at work and providing support for businesses in recruiting and retaining staff. For more information, go to www.mindfulemployer.net or call 01392 677064.
- Time to change can help organisations develop an action plan, set objectives and activities that will be undertaken to achieve them. For more information, go to www.time-to-change.org.uk
- Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. The Government's independent review, Thriving at Work, includes six core and four enhanced standards for how organisations can better support employees' mental health. <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/25263166/how-to-implement-the-thriving-at-work-mentalhealth-standards-final-guide-online.pdf>

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