



Request for Proposals (RfP): Mental Health & Wellbeing Learning Partner (2023–2028)

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **18.00 (6pm) on Monday 15 May 2023**. Submissions should be sent to grants@mercercs.co.uk by this deadline.

If you have any queries about the tender process, or if you would like to speak to us about the requirements, please email grants@mercercs.co.uk

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing funding programme is funded by The Mercers' Charitable Foundation (registered Charity number 326340) of which The Mercers' Company is the corporate trustee.

Background to the Mercers' Company and Young People and Education Programme

The Mercers' Company is a livery company focused on being a philanthropic force for good. Each year we aim to distribute £15 million to charitable causes. Our giving is focused on [Young People & Education](#), [Older People & Housing](#) and [Church & Communities](#). This allows us to create positive change across generations, giving those we help the chance to live a fulfilling life now and in the future.

The [Young People and Education Programme](#) aims to help young people achieve a good start in life, have strong mental health and feel supported through challenging transitions.

We have recently developed an Impact Framework (Appendix 2) with three key outcomes: improving people's lives; making organisations stronger; and contributing to wider social change. It is expected that the learning partner's findings would feed into this overarching framework and help us to track our progress against achieving these outcomes.

Summary of requirement

We wish to appoint a dynamic and creative learning partner to help our [Associated Schools and Colleges \(ASCs\)](#) support Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) in their settings, and, support our new MHWB Community Project grantees to reflect on their work and capture the impact.

This learning partner will work with us, our ASCs, and grantees to help them reflect on, and improve, their work throughout their funding term. The three key areas are:

- Support our ASCs to develop/finesse and embed a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Help our ASCs to evidence, and evaluate, the learnings from their Mercers' funded MHWB projects so the projects are sustainable when our funding ends.
- Draw out key themes and learnings from our MHWB Community Projects to capture the impact and support systemic change.

This work is expected to be a long-term engagement starting in the summer of 2023 and ending in the autumn of 2028.

Background

In 2016 we started working with the Anna Freud Centre to support our ASCs to better understand their pupils' MHWB via a survey approach and support with evaluating MHWB interventions. This work came to an end in late 2022. Most ASCs participated with at least one element of the programme and found it beneficial. You can [read more about the work undertaken by the Anna Freud Centre here¹](#).

Due to the success of this work to date, and the increased need in this area, further funding has been allocated to support MHWB under our Young People & Education Framework 2023-2028. Our MHWB programme comprises three strands of support.

- Strand One builds on the Anna Freud Centre work to support our ASCs to develop, and embed, a preventative, whole-school approach to MHWB support in their settings. This will be done by the appointed learning partner.
- Strand Two comprises funding for each ASC to run, or continue running, a MHWB project over three academic years, with most starting in 2023/24. These will look different in each ASC setting².
- Strand Three is a new programme strand called 'MHWB Community Projects'. This will fund organisations supporting young Londoners in marginalised communities, with complex multiple needs, who are not receiving support via educational settings and/or CAMHS.

Brief

We are looking to appoint a learning partner to work collaboratively with us, our ASCs, and 'MHWB Community Project' grantees across five years. We are open to a range of approaches but wish to jointly agree the scope of the work and shape the project plan. Our overall aim is for this work to support our ASCs and grantees to optimise their MHWB offers whilst bringing together the learnings to identify common themes that may benefit the wider sector. Learning and dissemination events will be held throughout the grant period.

¹ A few ASCs were also supported with individual evaluations. These are not publicly available but will be shared with the appointed learning partner.

² Applications for ASC MHWB Projects are currently being assessed. A full list of new / continued projects will be made available to the appointed learning partner.

ASCs support (covering Strands One and Two)

The ASCs are a mixture of independent and state-maintained schools and colleges. Eight in London, four in the West Midlands, and four in the South of England. Each ASC will be at a different point in terms of their current MHWB activity. Therefore, the appointed learning partner will need to take a bespoke approach to:

- understand what each ASC would specifically like support with and determine a clear action plan for a preventative, whole-school approach to improving their setting's MHWB between academic years 2023/24 and 2027/28
- baseline their current MHWB landscape and agree a list of impact measures, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to measure progress throughout the duration of the programme.
- address arising areas of need, this could be via signposting to useful resources.
- get the most from their Mercers' funded MHWB projects and evaluate the impact of these.
- embed changes to ensure longer term sustainability (i.e. incorporate learnings into business as usual via policies and practice).
- capture and share best practice with other school/college settings.

MHWB Community Projects support (covering Strand Three)

The first cohort of four grantees³ has been selected via the [London Funders Propel Fund](#). They commence work in May 2023 for three years. Three smaller grants were also awarded, for one year, to projects exploring systemic issues around young people's MHWB.

As these projects will also be part of Propel's own learning activity (facilitated by [IVAR](#)) this work will only focus on MHWB (which is a Mercers' objective, not part of Propel). Therefore, the appointed learning partner will need to take a light touch approach to;

- help grantees reflect on their MHWB work, and how it can be refined and improved.
- facilitate learning between the cohort/s, i.e. identify best practice sharing / collaboration opportunities.
- identify any key emerging themes, i.e. the link between healthy relationships and MHWB,
- help grantees think about how they can better evidence the impact of their work.

A second cohort of 4 -6 grantees will be recruited in late 2024, to commence work in 2025. Learning from the first year of delivery will be taken into account when recruiting the second cohort.

Expected outputs (we welcome ideas from bidders on what else might be useful).

- Scoping Interviews with ASCs' key stakeholders to understand needs and wants. This could include Head / member of SLT, MHWB Lead, Teaching Staff, Other Staff, Pupils, Governors, Parents / Carers.
- Agreed bespoke plan of action with each ASC – this could be light touch or in depth dependent on ASC needs. It may include a Theory of Change / Action.
- Facilitation of termly peer networking sessions (at least one in-person) with the ASC MHWB Leads.
- Facilitation of bi-annual peer networking session (at least one in-person) with the MHWB grantee organisations
- Annual concise progress reports. These will cover how work is progressing against planned outcomes, highlight what's working well, what's not, and any changes made. (6 pages max)

³ A list of MHWB Community grantees can be found at Appendix 1. Full Project info will be shared with the appointed learning partner.

- Brief (20 mins max) presentation to members of the Young People & Education Committee about emerging findings and impact of work to date. (2/3 total across 5 years).
- A synthesis report of the impact of Mercers' funded MHWB projects in the ASCs, suitable for publication on our website. This should be concise and draw out any key themes and provide recommendations, and case studies, of what works in different settings.
- A synthesis report of the impact of MHWB Community projects (as above).
- A short final report, including an executive summary, which brings together the learning from the programme as a whole. Suitable to be published externally and accessible to a wide audience.
- Approx. two events to disseminate learnings from the programme. One event will likely take place halfway through and one upon completion. The format, and timing of these events will be determined in collaboration with the ASCs, MHWB Community Project grantees and the Mercers' Company.

Important notes:

- The above reporting outputs are anticipated to be the most useful for identified stakeholders. However, we are open to suggestions on reporting methodology.
- Accessibility, and useability, of content produced is key. We welcome simplicity of presentation. Any written content should be in Plain English and make appropriate use of visual content.
- One of our Impact objectives is to support system change in the areas we fund. We welcome ideas for how this might be achieved via the proposed work.

Skills and experience required

- a proven track record of evaluation, learning support and influence in the Mental Health and Wellbeing sector, and in relation to education.
- Knowledge of current national education policy/an understanding of school systems.
- An aptitude to undertake research that considers finding time with busy teaching/frontline staff and engaging child/young person and parent/carer voice.
- Proven experience of stakeholder management, effective communication, and engagement both in dealing with individual grantees and in the production of high quality, accessible reports.
- Flexibility to work with a dynamic programme and diverse cohorts of grantees where aspects of delivery may change in response to what is being learnt.
- Enhanced DBS checks in place for all staff and associates who might have contact with children / young people and procedures in place to keep staff informed of best practice in relation to safeguarding.

Proposals

Organisations interested in undertaking this work should provide a short proposal (max 6 sides of A4 in a font size of at least 11 pt) which should include:

- the name and contact details of the lead person submitting the proposal.
- your approach and methodology for delivering the work, including a headline timetable.
- how you will make any findings accessible for a wide audience.
- how you will use any learnings to influence the wider sector / policy makers / contribute to any evidence bases.
- an outline of your organisation's track record, expertise, and suitability to undertake the work (including examples of previous work produced).
- a budget outlining, fees, number of days (including day rates) and associated costs such as travel.
- short biographies of key project staff, including which elements they will be working on.
- confirmation of availability to attend an interview 6 June 2023. The interview will last a maximum of one hour, and likely include a max ten-minute presentation to 'bring your proposal to life'.

Timescales

The indicative timetable for the contract is as follows:

Key actions	Dates
Proposal return deadline	18:00 (6pm) Monday 15 May 2023
Clarification of proposals (if required) / invite to interview	No later than 26 May 2023
Interviews with shortlisted applicants	Tuesday 6 June 2023
Contract Award	By 16 June 2023
Contract Work Commencement Date	From July ⁴ 2023 (latest start 1 September 2023)
Contract Completion Date	On agreement of final report, ideally no later than end October 2028

Fee

We anticipate the cost of the work to be between £40,000 – £50,000 per year across 5 years (inclusive of VAT, if charged, and expenses).

The fee does not include the costs of the design of the final report or costs of any events held at Mercers' Hall, which will be met by us.

⁴ There may be an opportunity for the appointed learning partner to meet the ASC MHWB Leads at a Peer Networking meeting held at Mercers' Hall in late June / early July. Likewise, the Project leads for the 7 MHWB Community Projects.

Appendix 1: MHWB Community Project Grantees

MHWB Community Projects funded under the Propel Explore Fund, 1-year projects			
Organisation	Young People sub-focus	Location	Snapshot of project
Go Forward Youth	Care Leavers	North London	Research model of 'good' statutory relationships with care experienced YP
The Change Foundation	Intersectional needs	Pan-London	Pilot 'Mind Coach' model with community partners
Spectra CIC	Pupils in PRUs	Southwest London	Pilot therapeutic arts approach in PRUs

MHWB Community Projects funded under the Propel Deliver & Develop Fund, 3-year projects			
Organisation	Young People sub-focus	Location	Snapshot of project
African Community School	At risk of exclusion / gang association	Hackney	Bespoke mentoring, inc. education
Newham All Star Sports Academy	In low-income families	Newham	Community MHWB support via sports engagement
South London Counselling and Support Services	Racialised Communities	Southeast London	Clinically led MHWB support programme
Body & Soul	High suicide risk BAME & LGBTQ+	Pan-London	Suicide prevention programme

NB: These projects work in London communities via a mixture of approaches. Some take a primarily clinical approach to supporting MHWB via qualified practitioners, whereas others are upskilling staff/volunteers with MHWB knowledge to better meet the needs of their community. All have a focus on children and young people with unmet MHWB needs, most have a sub-focus on a particularly high-risk group and an expertise in this area. Most organisations are led by people with lived experience of the group they are serving and embedded in the community. Those that are less community-led have been included as they bring a particular expertise or innovative idea.

Philanthropy Impact Framework

