

Supporting mental health in schools

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SUMMARY: A proposed mental health service in schools is criticised for lacking a rationale, no pilot stage, unintended consequences, and creating an opening for privatisation.

KEY WORDS: mental health in schools, prevention, school mental health worker, stigma, medicalisation

In January 2019, the UK Government began funding training for a new type of mental health worker based in centres linked to schools. Seven university training providers have been named, and the new support teams will begin work at the end of this year. This article examines the stated rationale for the initiative and considers various interpretations of the Government's motivation for this considerable investment of new resources.

The rationale: Green Paper, December 2017

The Green Paper (UK Gov, 2017) covers several policy areas but I will consider only the proposed new service. Given the obvious importance of child mental health, and dissatisfaction with its provision (Centre for Mental Health, 2016, Children's Commissioner, 2019), the general aims of the proposal are welcome: early intervention and prevention, consistency of provision across the country, and

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