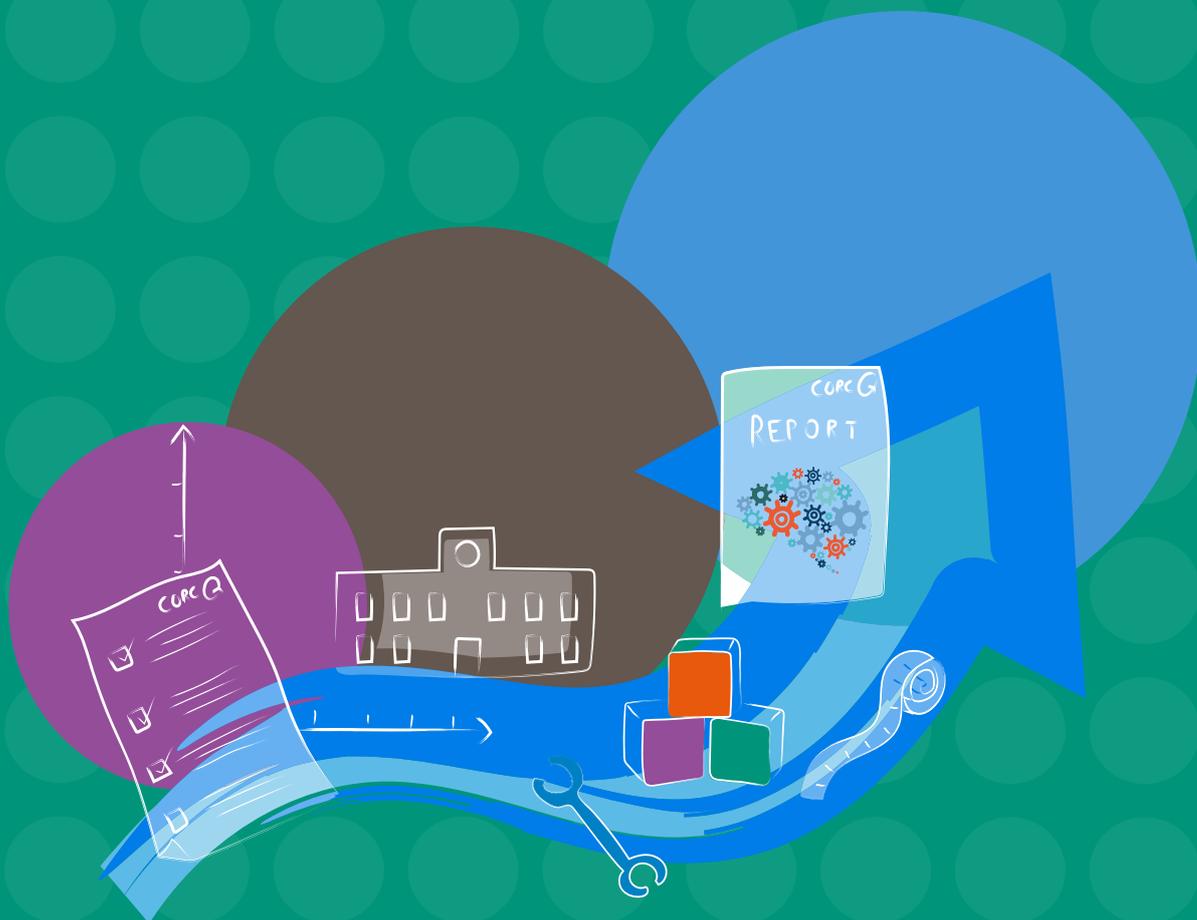




A project of



Wellbeing measurement for early years settings



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Supporting staff

The simplest way to understand what early years staff need to support their mental health is to ask them. However, most settings do not regularly survey staff to establish their levels of wellbeing. We would recommend that, at a minimum, early years settings should be carrying out annual wellbeing surveys in order to better understand as a minimum:

- How staff are feeling
- What is driving good and poor mental health (including asking staff how they feel about work practices, culture, engagement and management)
- How supported staff feel
- Whether staff feel equipped to support young children in their settings with their mental health
- Any additional support they need for their mental health and wellbeing.

This document focuses on how to use measurement tools to understand the wellbeing of your staff so that you can provide them with the support they need.



It is important to point out that an annual survey has limitations - only capturing a brief snapshot of the entire year. Introducing regular surveys and creating opportunities for dialogue can significantly increase the ability of an early years setting to understand and improve staff wellbeing.

Using an anonymous survey can help people to feel comfortable sharing their views. If your setting has fewer than 10 staff, then it is difficult to ensure responses remain anonymous and this needs to be made clear when sharing the survey. Whatever the size of your setting, you should discuss the survey with your staff to gauge their level of comfort with it, particularly in a smaller setting, in case staff feel concerned about their views being identified.

Wellbeing measurement for early years settings

Staff Survey

Wellbeing measurement for staff working in early years settings is integral to promoting a whole-setting approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Most early years staff enjoy their work, but it is challenging and at times stressful. For staff to be successful, we need to make sure that their mental health and wellbeing are effectively supported. Promoting staff wellbeing tends to better equip them to support the wellbeing of the children they work with and build trust and motivation, which is crucial for a well-functioning early years setting.

OFSTED'S NEW EDUCATION INSPECTION FRAMEWORK (EIF) identifies the wellbeing of staff as one of the criteria that inspectors will examine. This means that leaders are expected to be aware of the pressures on their staff, consider their workload, their professional development and that they are supported on wellbeing issues.

In most cases the responsibility of a staff survey will fall to the leaders of a setting. This confidential staff survey helps to measure and monitor progress and enables early years settings to focus on the tangible and practical actions they can take to support a whole setting approach to mental health and wellbeing. The questions are grouped into three sections which ask about staff wellbeing, the work culture and attitudes towards wellbeing, and knowledge and confidence around supporting the emotional health of children aged five and under.



HINT

Allocate time for staff to complete the survey, at a scheduled meeting or INSET day. This shows commitment to staff wellbeing and will help maximise response rates.

Early years settings may want to use the whole survey or to select sections from it, depending on priorities and needs:

SECTION 1 is about staff wellbeing. The questions ask about how the member of staff has been feeling recently. It uses two established questionnaires that have an evidence base that shows them to be valid (i.e. they measure what they intend to measure, avoiding bias) and reliable (they give the same result each time if each characteristic is the same, avoiding inconsistency). Using an established questionnaire means you can benchmark your responses against existing research, allowing you to contextualise what you are seeing in your setting.

SECTION 2 focuses on the setting's attitude to staff wellbeing and the culture within the setting. These questions have been used within research projects to explore the effect that work and the work environment have on staff wellbeing as well as how staff access support.

SECTION 3 asks questions about staff knowledge of children's emotional health and their confidence to provide support to the children and families they work with. These questions are taken from surveys and questionnaires that have been used in large scale studies and have been chosen to provide information to setting that they are able to respond to through training and support.

How might you use the survey

1. ANONYMITY

The survey is designed to be used anonymously to ensure staff feel able to respond honestly. When sharing results, give thought to how you protect participants' anonymity. For example, if only a small number of respondents answer a question in a particular way, you may inadvertently identify individuals when you report this. Use a less precise indicator like 'less than 5' where numbers are small.

2. WHEN TO CARRY OUT A SURVEY

Your survey results may vary according to the time of the year. For example, you may choose to survey in September when children first attend the setting, when stress levels may be high. Asking staff to complete a survey in the summer might allow them to reflect on the successes and challenges while allowing for scope for meaningful change for the next academic year.

3. SHARING SURVEY RESULTS

Results can be a useful starting point for discussions and action planning. Sharing and discussing findings openly with staff and providing a safe space for reflection can encourage staff contributions in both exploring issues and identifying solutions.

4. EMBEDDING YOUR FINDINGS

Once you've shared results you may wish to think how to embed the findings in your planning process. For example, you could dedicate a half-termly meeting to the findings and include mental health and wellbeing as a standing item at meetings or use professional development sessions for deeper discussions. Action that you identify from the survey can also be embedded in your planning cycle and your Education Improvement Plan.

5. REPEATING THE SURVEY

Repeating the survey on a regular basis can help early years settings to see change. You may want to repeat the whole survey or just one or two of the sections. By comparing the results at different time points, settings can monitor whether actions are having the intended impact. You may also be able to spot emerging issues.

6. COMPARING YOUR RESULTS

Comparing your results with other results can provide context for the responses from your staff team. The established questionnaires used in Section 1 mean that these results can be compared with other studies and research. If you know other settings who are using this survey, you could share your results and work together to identify strengths and challenges.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

This survey was developed by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC) and the Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU), both based at the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families.

CORC and EBPU have significant experience of surveying young people and staff in a range of contexts. If you'd like to know more about what we do, then visit our website.

If you are considering using this survey as part of a larger piece of work, then we'd be interested to hear from you.

Email us at:
measuringwellbeing@annafreud.org



WMfS staff survey: section 1(a)

Staff wellbeing and perception of stress

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

Statement	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	<input type="radio"/>				
I've been feeling useful	<input type="radio"/>				
I've been feeling relaxed	<input type="radio"/>				
I've been dealing with problems well	<input type="radio"/>				
I've been thinking clearly	<input type="radio"/>				
I've been feeling close to other people	<input type="radio"/>				
I've been able to make up my mind about things	<input type="radio"/>				

USING THE RESULTS

Using an established questionnaire means existing research can be used as a benchmark to contextualise the results.

By repeating the survey, early years settings can see whether staff wellbeing is improving and whether feelings of stress are reducing.



SCORING OF SECTION 1(a)

Section 1(a) is using a validated measure - Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS). Please see Page 12 for Terms of Use.

Each response is given a score from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time). These are added together to give a 'raw score'. The lowest possible raw score is 7. The highest possible raw score is 35. Higher scores indicate higher wellbeing.

Converting the raw score into a 'metric score' means you can compare your results with results from research using these questions. For example, [a study](#) of adults in 2017 showed a mean SWEMWBS score of 23.7 for men and 23.2 for women in the general adult population in England.

[Use the table here](#) to convert your raw scores into metric scores. [Visit this page](#) for more information on the SWEMWBS.

WMfS Staff Survey: Section 1 (b)

Staff wellbeing and perception of stress

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate.

Statement	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	<input type="radio"/>				
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	<input type="radio"/>				
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	<input type="radio"/>				
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	<input type="radio"/>				
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	<input type="radio"/>				
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	<input type="radio"/>				
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	<input type="radio"/>				
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	<input type="radio"/>				
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	<input type="radio"/>				
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	<input type="radio"/>				

USING THE RESULTS

Using an established questionnaire means existing research can be used as a benchmark to contextualise the results.

By repeating the survey, early years settings can see whether staff wellbeing is improving and whether feelings of stress are reducing.



SCORING OF SECTION 1(b)

Section 1(b) is using a validated measure - the Perceived Stress Scale. Please see Page 12 for Terms of Use.

Each response to the questions of the Perceived Stress Scale are given a score. Questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 and 10 are scores 0 (almost never) to 4 (very often). And questions 4, 5, 7, & 8 are scored in reverse from 4 (almost never) to 0 (very often). You get a total by adding up the scores for each item.

Individual scores on the PSS can range from 0 to 40 with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress.

- Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress.
- Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress
- Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress.



WMfS staff survey: section 2

Wellbeing measurement for early years staff

Below are some statements.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience generally.

Statement	Answers
My work has a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing.	<input type="radio"/> All of the time <input type="radio"/> Often <input type="radio"/> Some of the time <input type="radio"/> Not at all
I feel valued in the work that I do.	<input type="radio"/> All of the time <input type="radio"/> Often <input type="radio"/> Some of the time <input type="radio"/> Not at all
This organisation values diverse opinions and ideas.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly disagree
In my setting, staff are encouraged to speak openly about their mental wellbeing.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
Have any of the following caused you to feel stressed or unhappy at work over the last 2 weeks (select as many as apply)?	<input type="radio"/> How your performance is judged (for example, observation, assessments, inspections) <input type="radio"/> Workload <input type="radio"/> Work-life balance <input type="radio"/> Relationship with parents and carers <input type="radio"/> Relationship with colleagues <input type="radio"/> Relationship with senior leadership team <input type="radio"/> Concerns relating to children's wellbeing - e.g. mental health, safeguarding and behaviour <input type="radio"/> Business pressures such as funding shortages <input type="radio"/> Concerns about working conditions or pay <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify below) <input type="radio"/> I have not felt stressed or unhappy at work over the last two weeks

Statements to continue on next page.

<p>If is felt stressed or worried at work, I would be most likely to seek help from (select as many as apply):</p>	<p> <input type="radio"/> Line manager or supervisor <input type="radio"/> Another senior member of staff <input type="radio"/> A colleague in a similar role to myself <input type="radio"/> My GP <input type="radio"/> A mental health professional (e.g. a counsellor, over the phone or face-to-face) <input type="radio"/> A friend or family member who does now work at my setting <input type="radio"/> Nobody <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> I have not felt stressed or unhappy at work over the last two weeks </p>
<p>If I approached my manager with concerns about my mental wellbeing, I am confident that I would be well supported.</p>	<p> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly disagree </p>
<p>My school / college senior leadership team takes active steps to support the mental wellbeing of all staff.</p>	<p> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly disagree </p>
<p>Which of the following types of initiative do you feel would be most valuable to improving your mental wellbeing at work?</p>	<p> <input type="radio"/> Increased information and awareness about staff mental wellbeing <input type="radio"/> Training to improve your knowledge and confidence about supporting mental health <input type="radio"/> Peer support <input type="radio"/> Access to professional mental health support <input type="radio"/> Time off and flexible working schemes <input type="radio"/> Reduction in workload <input type="radio"/> Limiting working hours <input type="radio"/> More/better supervision from managers <input type="radio"/> A physical environment that promotes wellbeing and includes space where staff can take time out <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify below) </p>

USING THE RESULTS

The results from this section could be used to identify improvement targets and develop an action plan. The responses could help identify specific steps that could be taken that could improve staff wellbeing or reduce stress.

Participant responses may also suggest how well supported staff are feeling and identify where support could be improved.

Repeating the questions in this section could provide evidence of progress towards targets.



WMfS staff survey: section 3

Staff knowledge and confidence in relation to the emotional health and wellbeing issues in children aged five and under

To what extent would you agree/disagree with the following statements about your knowledge of children's emotional mental health and wellbeing?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel equipped to identify signs and symptoms that may be linked to an emotional health difficulty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appropriate support to identify emotional health difficulties in children aged five and under is available for all early years staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to help children aged five and under with emotional health issues access appropriate support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of risk factors and causes of emotional difficulties in young children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know the things I can do as a member of staff to promote and support emotional wellbeing of children aged five and under.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know the procedure to follow in my school or college when a child aged five and under presents with an emotional health difficulty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Statements to continue on next page.

<p>How confident do you feel about supporting children that are experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing?</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Very confident</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Quite confident</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not very confident</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not at all confident</p>
<p>How confident do you feel about talking to parents and carers about the mental health and difficulties of children in your setting?</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Very confident</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Quite confident</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not very confident</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not at all confident</p>

USING THE RESULTS

These results could be used to evaluate the professional development needs of the staff team and identify priorities for support and training.

Asking these questions regularly can show the impact of professional development.



Terms of use

SHORT WARWICK EDINBURGH MENTAL WELLBEING SCALE (SWEMWBS)

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If you produce any documents outlining your SWEMWBS results (e.g. reports, presentations) you need to reference SWEMWBS as above.

FURTHER READING:

Stewart-Brown, S., Tennant, A., Tennant, R., Platt, S., Parkinson, J., & Weich, S. (2009). Internal construct validity of the Warwick-Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale (WEMWBS): A Rasch analysis using data from the Scottish health education population survey. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 7(1), 15–22.

THE PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

Permission for the use of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) "is not necessary when use is for nonprofit academic research or nonprofit educational purposes".

FURTHER READING:

Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 385–396.

Cohen, S., & Williamson, G. (1988). Perceived stress in a probability sample of the United States. In S. Spacapan & S. Oskamp (Eds.), *The social psychology of health: Claremont symposium on applied social psychology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

About the Anna Freud Centre

The Centre is the leading national charity supporting young minds through innovative therapeutic practice, training and research. Our vision is a world in which children, young people and their families are effectively supported to build on their own strengths to achieve their goals in life.

www.annafreud.org

About CORC

Founded in 2002, CORC is a learning collaboration of child mental health providers, schools, professional bodies and research institutions across Europe and beyond, committed to using outcome and feedback data to improve child and youth mental health support, services and systems. CORC holds data relating to mental health and wellbeing outcomes of more than 400,000 children and young people in the UK, representing the largest data set of this kind worldwide. The CORC team provide a range of support for the collection, analysis and reporting of data and the use of data to improve services.

www.corc.uk.net

About EBPU

The Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU) is a child and youth mental health research and innovation unit based at UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences and the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. EBPU bridges cutting edge research and innovative practice in children's mental health and wellbeing. EBPU are committed to finding the best ways to use measurement of wellbeing to enhance support for children and families.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence based practice unit](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit)



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