

Southwark Governors' Association

Southwark Schools Human Resources

20th January 2026

New Men's Health Strategy

- The Government launched its plan to tackle physical and mental challenges faced by men and boys and reduce inequalities.

What the new strategy includes that affects schools / children

- As part of the strategy, the government is **expanding mental-health support in schools**, with the aim that by April 2026 an additional **900,000 pupils** will have access to mental-health teams.
- The strategy emphasises **mental health and suicide prevention among men and boys**, but its ambition to normalise talking about health and reduce stigma could start early — including through school-based support and outreach.
- The broader goals include tackling social and cultural barriers (e.g. norms about “toughness,” reluctance to seek help) that contribute to poor health outcomes for men. The strategy identifies that helping men and boys from a young age — including via “safe spaces” and support structures — will be key.

What this could mean for school staff (their workload, roles, opportunity)

- **More demand for mental-health support:** With more pupils having access to mental-health teams, school staff may need to coordinate with those teams — identifying pupils who might benefit, referring to services, or supporting follow-up.
- **Potential reduction in pressure on teachers:** Previously, many teachers and school staff had informal pastoral or wellbeing roles (e.g. supporting students with anxiety, distress, or behavioural issues). Expanded formal support could relieve some of that burden, allowing staff to focus more on teaching and less on being default “counsellors.”
- **New training and awareness expectations:** As part of efforts to reduce stigma and improve men’s health literacy — particularly around mental health — staff may be expected to help foster an environment where mental health conversations are normalised. They may need training to spot signs, encourage support-seeking, and handle disclosures sensitively.
- **Better support for male pupils (and possibly male staff):** Schools may become safer spaces for boys to talk about mental and physical health without shame, which could improve overall school wellbeing, attendance, engagement and reduce crises — benefiting both pupils and staff.
- **Opportunity to influence culture and attitudes early:** For school leadership especially, the strategy offers a chance to embed a more healthy and open culture around health and wellbeing — potentially positively shaping attitudes among young men before patterns of avoidance or stigma become entrenched.

Governors

Review and revise the wellbeing/mental health policy to take into account the plan for how the strategy's aims (especially mental health support for boys) can be addressed.

Risk assessment on staff workload completed.

Annual report on pupil wellbeing trends (with gender breakdown) and monitor whether interventions remain inclusive for all genders.

Confirm the school is engaging with external mental-health teams when they become available.

Approve any necessary policy updates relating to wellbeing, staff training, and referrals.

Safeguarding Governor to be briefed on this area.

Headteacher

Consider how the plan will integrate with existing pastoral structures.

Staff training.

Communication to parents drafted and shared.

Monitoring systems for boys' well-being indicators (attendance, behaviour, safeguarding).

Partnerships with external agencies established.

Useful links

About the strategy

- [Government unveils England's first ever Men's Health Strategy - GOV.UK](#)
- [Men's health: a strategic vision for England | CP 1432](#)

Suicide risk and the workplace: British standards institution guidance

- The British Standards Institution (BSI) has published the first **British Standard guide for employers focusing on addressing the risk of suicide** and the effect in the workplace.
- **Guidance on the employer's duty of care and the prevention of suicide** is also available from the Health and Safety Executive's website. This provides a shorter explanation of the steps an employer could take particularly to prevent work being a contributing factor in a suicide.

Southwark Mental Health First Aider and Suicide Awareness Courses

- Southwark Council has a programme of free training available between now and the end of March 2026. To book, please refer to the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/mental-health-courses-for-southwark-council-staff-3050959>

Supporting Staff and Building a Safe Workplace

- Schools have a responsibility not only to educate pupils but also to provide a safe, supportive workplace for staff. Issues such as misogyny, domestic abuse and sexual violence can have a significant impact on staff wellbeing, attendance and performance, and may also raise safeguarding concerns for pupils.
- [Southwark Council: Through Her Eyes campaign | Local Government Association](#)
- Southwark Council’s “Through Her Eyes” campaign is centred on tackling misogyny. The [campaign video](#) encourages men and boys to challenge their own attitudes and behaviours, and that of others. The key message is “see it, stop it”.
- Southwark have developed, with the help of a local school, a resource pack for schools and youth groups to use alongside the campaign video to aid engagement sessions about misogyny and sexual harassment. The hope is that the video will become an established resource within PSHE education for many years to come.

PSHE Resources

- You can download:
- [a lesson plan presentation \(PDF, 327.79 KB\)](#)
- [a guidance sheet for teachers \(PDF, 394.88 KB\)](#)
- There are also 3 worksheets:
- [worksheet 1 \(PDF, 62.97 KB\)](#)
- [worksheet 2 \(PDF, 121.63 KB\)](#)
- [worksheet 3 \(PDF, 123.65 KB\)](#)

School Action

- Clear expectations of professional behaviour, as set out in the code of conduct.
- Culture of challenging sexist language or behaviour between adults, not just among pupils.
- Ensure staff culture aligns with PSHE messages, so pupils see consistent role-modelling

Domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors to get specialist NHS help

- Domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors will have access to specialist NHS services across England, the Government has announced.
- The “steps to safety” initiative will be launched in every area of England by 2029 to “end the postcode lottery” in support for victims and survivors, the Government said, as part of its pledge to halve violence against women and girls in a decade.

School considerations:

- Clear signposting to external specialist services.
- Referral to occupational health, where appropriate.
- Reassurance to staff that support is available both inside and outside the workplace.

One Year On: The Positive Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment

This is a reminder of the key actions that Governing Boards, as the legal action, should take:

- Actively preventing sexual harassment, not just responding to complaints.
- Reviewing and updating policies, training and reporting processes.
- Addressing risk factors specific to school environments, such as power imbalances, lone working and mixed-age settings.
- This duty goes beyond having a policy in place. Schools should be able to show:
- Regular staff training and clear standards of behaviour.
- Visible leadership commitment to a respectful culture.
- Prompt and appropriate action when concerns are raised.

Thank you

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