A whole school approach to mental health

Improving academic progress and behavioural outcomes in your school
The impact has been tremendous: individual pupils are supported to begin to make some sense of the traumas they have experienced, and can begin to make progress in school; parents can also access counselling, which facilitates better relationships with their children. Place2Be is an integral part of our school community and I can quite honestly say that we would not be without it.

Amanda Dawson | Head Teacher
Mellers Primary School
Nottingham | England
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About Place2Be

Place2Be is an award-winning charity and the leading provider of school-based emotional and mental health services across England, Scotland and Wales. Founded in 1994, we now have school-based teams across the UK, reaching 100,000 children.

In line with the Department for Education and Public Health England guidance, we take a ‘whole school approach’ through offering a flexible menu of services that support pupils, families, teachers and school staff. This approach helps us to become a trusted part of the school and the wider community, destigmatising the idea of seeking help.

What we do

- **Intervene early** – we offer a range of mental health services from self-referral to one-to-one counselling for children from nursery to age 14, building children’s resilience and giving them the tools to cope with life’s challenges
- **Improve attitudes to learning** – we support children whose emotional issues and behaviour impede their learning and often disrupt the learning of others, putting a strain on teacher and senior staff time
- **Deliver value for money** – we gather, analyse and use evidence to challenge and continuously improve our services, and to demonstrate that this support is good value and effective use of Pupil Premium funding
- **Train the workforce** – we also offer consultancy support, advice and training for teachers and school staff. We are a leading provider of specialist training and university-validated professional qualifications to those who work with children, helping to build capacity in school teams and local communities

Place2Be is set up in my school. I go there often when I can’t find my friends or sometimes when they argue with me. I go there.
Improving academic progress and behavioural outcomes in your school

The facts

Three children in every classroom have a clinically diagnosable mental health disorder

Half of all diagnosable mental health conditions start before the age of 14

Pupil’s emotional wellbeing at a young age can predict later academic progression and engagement in school (Department for Education)

Children are less likely to suffer from serious mental health difficulties in later life if they receive support at an early age

What is unique about Place2Be

• We work closely with school leaders to help them to identify their most vulnerable children, and to give those children the therapeutic support that they need
• Our flexible service means that pupils can also choose to speak to a counsellor themselves – on average over a third of children in primary schools use this every year
• We offer advice and support to the whole school community, including parents, teachers and school staff
• We have a clinical model of excellence devised through more than 20 years of experience and research providing counselling for children in schools
• Parents and children rate our service more positively on problem improvement and helpfulness than other services (Child Outcomes Research Consortium, 2014)
• Our service and effectiveness are closely monitored and evaluated, enabling schools to see positive results that contribute to achievement of inspection targets
How we support children and their families

Primary and secondary schools
Place2Be works in primary schools, laying a solid foundation for children early in their lives. We also work in secondary schools providing vital support as children make this potentially challenging transition.

A school-based team
The Place2Be school service is managed by a trained clinician known as a School Project Manager who fosters strong links with students, staff and the wider school community to help develop a ‘mentally healthy’ ethos within the school environment. The flexibility of our service allows the School Project Manager to respond swiftly to critical incidents, consult and advise on topical issues and meet the varying needs of pupils in close liaison with the Head Teacher and pastoral team.

As a school-based resource, the School Project Manager is also on-hand to engage with external agencies, support staff, contribute to school initiatives and provide timely evidence to governors on all issues relating to children’s mental wellbeing. The School Project Manager is also backed up by Place2Be’s core team who can provide a range of extra support, including on safeguarding issues, the needs of children and young people with Special educational needs and disability, and clinical supervision.

The referral and assessment process
Children are referred by teachers, their parents or carers, or other school staff, to Place2Be’s School Project Manager for an assessment. Place2Be only works with children whose parents or carers have given written consent. Because counselling takes place during school hours, the attendance rate is exceptionally high.

Targeted support
Once it is determined that a child would benefit from counselling, a counsellor meets with the child for weekly one-to-one sessions. Individual sessions can last from a school term to a whole academic year.

Place2Be’s trained counsellors work in the way that is most appropriate for each child. For younger children, this involves therapeutic approaches which encourage the child to express her or himself in non-verbal ways, for example through artwork and play.
Group work
We provide short-term group work on particular issues such as transition, bereavement, friendship or self-esteem, which has a positive impact on children’s behaviour, attendance and general wellbeing.

Universal support - building resilience
Our universal service, Place2Talk, is open to all pupils. Children can refer themselves, and come alone or with their friends to speak to a counsellor during lunch and break times. This solution-focused service is used by an average of over a third of children annually in schools.

A Place for Parents
Free and confidential individual counselling is available to parents, grandparents and carers of children who are supported by Place2Be, as well as to others who are identified as being in distress or experiencing parenting difficulties.

A Place for Parents is delivered in the child’s school by a Place2Be Parent Counsellor, an experienced clinician, who works across schools in the local area. Parents are initially offered eight sessions, which can continue for up to a year following review. The work covers both personal issues and parenting skills, and helps parents to develop positive relationships with their children and the school.

Place2Be also runs parenting groups in children’s centres and open access courses in various locations around the country.

Parent Partnership
Parents and carers of children receiving one-to-one counselling are offered emotional support within the school community by School Project Managers through the Parent Partnership. Parents are offered up to five meetings over the period of the child’s counselling, and this has the dual task of improving the parent’s confidence in their parenting skills, and the quality of the parent’s relationship with their child.
Developing your team

Drawing on our depth and range of experience, we can help school staff to effectively manage emotional and behavioural issues. This not only reduces the time and attention that they spend away from their core teaching duties, but also has a beneficial impact on the emotional health and wellbeing of your team – resulting in improved morale and reduced stress.

Expert consultation and support

Our consultation service, ‘Place2Think’, is a practical, interactive and flexible service available to all staff in the school, including Head Teachers and senior leadership teams, NQTs, SENCos, Designated Child Protection Officers, Inclusion and Home School Liaison Officers, and other staff working with children with complex or challenging behaviour.

Delivered by an experienced Place2Be clinician, this service is available on a one-to-one or small group basis. The session offers an opportunity to discuss concerns, with a focus on behaviours and needs of particular children in participants’ care. We help your team to develop practical strategies to address any issues and build the resilience of the child or young person and participants.

Practical programmes tailored to suit your school’s needs

Place2Be offers a range of training programmes, grounded in the knowledge and evidence we have gathered through more than 20 years of working directly with children in schools.

Our training equips colleagues with a greater understanding and knowledge of child mental health and development, providing practical strategies for how this knowledge can be applied in the classroom and everyday school life.

We can create a bespoke programme of training tailored to the needs of your school. Our varied workshops run for between half a day and a day, with groups of 6 to 20 participants. It improves the confidence and skills of professionals to deal with children’s emotional needs and provides practical strategies for everyday use.

Very informative, good strategy planning, very practical and assisted my understanding of behavioural concerns.

Place2Think participant
Some of our popular workshops include:

- Resilience - Wellbeing without Words
- Using Games with Children
- Supporting Transitions
- Supporting Children in the Playground
- Counselling Skills
- Understanding Attachment
- Working with Parents & Carers

We also have a strong track record in designing programmes to meet particular training needs, including safeguarding and Special educational needs and disability.

Specialist support for Newly Qualified Teachers

“A third of Head Teachers thought that the NQTs they had recruited in the last two years were not well prepared to start working in a school. Classroom management and a poor understanding of child development were commonly cited as missing skills in NQTs.”

[Source: NAHT]

Place2Be has developed a unique package of training and support for Newly Qualified Teachers, School Direct and Teach First participants, known as the ‘Talented Teacher Programme’. The programme supports participants by applying their new knowledge, facilitating reflective practice and enhancing their own wellbeing as practitioners.

The programme consists of four training workshop supported by three Place2Think consultation sessions as part of a small group. This gives participants the chance to review the behaviour of the children and young people they work with, and also helps to boost Newly Qualified Teachers’ confidence.

In an independent evaluation of the training, 97% of participants reported that they felt confident that they could actively identify and address emotional issues in their pupils. They had also increased confidence in dealing with parents and with pupils’ behaviour, and the atmosphere both within the class and more broadly within the school improved greatly.
A commitment to quality and best practice

All of our school-based teams around the UK are supported by our organisation’s quality assurance processes.

Maintaining consistent high quality is vital. We have a series of interlocking measures in place to assure quality across our various activities, including safeguarding, counselling practice, school relations, training, management and governance.

Safeguarding

Place2Be follows schools’ child protection procedures, and works closely with the management team in a school to ensure that safeguarding issues are responded to appropriately and quickly. Volunteer Counsellors have supervision on a daily basis, enabling them to raise concerns, and any child protection issues are overseen at a senior level within Place2Be. It is not unusual for children to make disclosures in therapeutic work, or for staff and volunteers to identify signs that children are at risk. We have a clear process for responding to such concerns.

Special educational needs and disability (SEND)

Place2Be ensures our services are wholly responsive to the needs of children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

We have two Principal Educational Psychologists who have a key role in training our School Project Managers and counsellors on the implications of SEND and helping them to consider how they can best enable children with a range of SEND needs to access and fully benefit from Place2Be’s services.

For our partner schools, we offer Educational Psychology-led consultation and standalone sessions with a SEND focus. Educational Psychology expertise can also be accessed by any school looking to commission bespoke training on all aspects of child and adolescent psychology, social emotional and mental health needs and SEND.
Clinical supervision
All of our volunteer counsellors receive same day onsite clinical supervision, to ensure that they can get expert advice on their cases, as well as support with any safeguarding referrals that may need to be made. In addition, our School Project Managers receive weekly or fortnightly clinical supervision from a senior member of the Place2Be team, to ensure that our services are quality assured from the moment they are embedded in the schools.

Training for staff and volunteers
Place2Be staff and volunteers are offered continuous professional development to support their clinical practice in schools – including around child protection and safeguarding, and most recently on the impact of parental drug and alcohol misuse on children’s wellbeing.

Evaluation and regular outcome reporting
Progress is reported to schools on an ongoing basis through a weekly meeting between Place2Be’s School Project Manager and their school contact. We also produce termly reports for each school, outlining the work that has been undertaken and outputs.

On an annual basis, we provide a detailed report including outcome data demonstrating the difference Place2Be has made in the school. We also hold an annual review meeting with the school-based team and a senior manager at Place2Be to provide an opportunity for reflection and feedback, as well as planning ahead for the upcoming year.

Place2Be is also able to provide bespoke reports in order to support school leaders, for instance in preparation for Ofsted inspections or Pupil Premium impact reporting.

Multi-agency work for onward referrals
The Place2Be School Project Manager is also available to attend multi-agency meetings including Team Around the Child meetings. They can also support with signposting to specialist services, and onward referrals, including for parents. Place2Be endeavours to work closely with CAMHS on the process for referrals, so that continued support is available for children and their families.
Impact and outcomes

Impact on Children

- Parents and children rate our service more positively on problem improvement and helpfulness than other services (Child Outcomes Research Consortium, 2015)
- A conservative assessment of the economic impact of Place2Be’s services indicated that for every £1 spent on early intervention support for children, there was a return on investment of £6 in terms of savings to society (Cost-Effective Positive Outcomes for Children and Families, Place2Be, 2010)

Place2Be offers a professional, personal and flexible model which can be tapered to strategic needs within a local area. Commissioners are particularly attracted to the clinical evidence base operated by Place2Be and the positive outcomes experienced by families from the most deprived areas of the Borough.

John Beckles | Children’s Commissioner | Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group
Commissioning the service

We tailor Place2Be’s menu of services to meet schools’ needs. The typical model is based on a team of five or more Place2Be personnel (both clinical staff and trained volunteers) delivering a range of services:

- Building resilience through self referral and whole class work
- Individual and group counselling for children
- Dedicated therapeutic support for parents or carers
- Bespoke training, individual advice and support for school staff
- Safeguarding support, training and guidance for Head Teachers and their staff

Many schools currently use the Pupil Premium to commission Place2Be in their schools. We subsidise our service through funding secured by Place2Be’s fundraising team, which has strong relationships with corporate sponsors, private donors and grant-making trusts.

Flexible funding and delivery models are available by negotiation for federations of schools, trusts, clusters and academies.

For schools that are new to commissioning, Place2Be can provide expert advice, guiding school leaders through a step-by-step process to assess needs and explore how to best meet these.

Place 2 Be is a safe and confidential environment where pupils can speak freely of what they are feeling and thinking.
Lennox* | Year 5

Lennox was referred for Place2Be counselling in Year 5 due to concerns about his behaviour and conduct at school. Perceived as highly intelligent, he presented issues including poor concentration, frequent absences and detentions, to poor concentration, low self-esteem and inability to take responsibility for his actions. He was also at risk of fixed term or permanent exclusion due to his aggression. Before his Place2Be intervention, Lennox scored level 2 in Maths and Literacy.

Lennox was the eldest of eight children; his mother was separated from his biological father. Social care was involved due to domestic violence and abuse. All the children were subject to a Child Protection Plan; other issues were substance and alcohol misuse by the adults in the family and overcrowding. Lennox was the main carer. His absence from school stemmed from the lack of clean clothes and his mother’s need for him to do the shopping, cooking, changing and putting his younger siblings to bed.

The aim of counselling was to offer Lennox a secure and reliable attachment with a counsellor, structure, consistency and containment. He was allowed to play and was given “space” for himself. Following one-to-one counselling with Place2Be, his Maths and Literacy scores improved considerably to Level 4 in both cases. His attendance at school moved from frequently absent to normal and satisfactory.

The Place2Be Project Manager also worked with Lennox’s estranged father who was given parent counselling and support. Although he wanted custody of his son, he felt overwhelmed and intimidated by the responsibility. With the support of counselling, he arranged for Lennox to live with him. The Place2Be Project Manager was aware that encouraging him to become a solid, consistent parent was the best chance for his son. Lennox was subsequently offered Place2Talk and a six-week therapy group to support his transition to secondary school.

* names have been changed
Adrianna* | Year 7

When Adrianna started the counselling intervention she was extremely unhappy and showed high levels of psychological distress. Her attendance was a serious concern; it had dropped to around 70%. She was being severely bullied which contributed to her not wanting to come to school. She presented as isolated, anxious and depressed. She spoke of many physical pains and illnesses. Adrianna had experienced a great amount of turmoil and trauma in her life. She had recently been homeless and had witnessed violence and discrimination towards her parents in her home country of Slovakia in the early years of her life.

Adrianna was supported by her counsellor to talk through and process her past trauma and to think about what she needed to support her in the present. The counsellor focussed on the past and painful issues but also resourced Adrianna to get her needs met in the here and now. The counsellor provided a safe and secure space built on trust and consistency which enabled Adrianna to develop a stronger sense of self.

As a result of Place2Be’s support, Adrianna’s attendance was above 90% throughout the academic year and at the end of her counselling was 94.4%. There were no concerns regarding her behaviour, academic achievement or for her socially.
What School Inspectors say about Place2Be

Counselling has been very successful in getting pupils with specific identified needs to re-engage with learning

Pupils’ emotional needs are met exceedingly well. Pupils have the opportunity to talk confidentially about anything that is worrying them with a trained Place2Be counsellor which pupils access during the day. A slightly more informal ‘Place2Talk’ allows pupils to discuss issues during break and lunchtimes. Pupils really appreciate this facility and are confident in knowing how to seek help, should they have any worries or need to explore their feelings.

Pupils show care and sensitivity towards those pupils who have additional difficulties or find behaving well a challenge. Pupils who benefit from the additional support provided in... ‘Place2Be’ readily explain how it has helped their behaviour, concentration or attitudes to work. This reflects the school’s focus on ensuring everyone has the same chances to succeed, and helps to foster good relationships.
What Head Teachers say about Place2Be

Experience has shown that the connection that Place2Be helps us to make with the children is a big reason why we’re seeing the positive results. Our number of exclusions has halved and Place2Be is part of the reason why.

Highfield Primary | Sunderland

Place2Be’s support has meant that some students who may not otherwise have coped have continued to access learning, and many children have gone on to achieve good results supported by their Place2Be intervention.

The Bridge Academy | Hackney

I am so pleased with how Place2Be has become embedded into our school. I often hear staff saying to children ‘why don’t you go and talk to Place2Be about that?’. Talking about emotional issues is now something we encourage all our children to do, and Place2Be has helped us to reach some of our most vulnerable families.

Childeric Primary School | Lewisham

Children’s life chances are literally turned around by having access to this fantastic provision.

Moorland Primary School | Cardiff

Place2Be has offered a tremendous support since it became operational last year. Many pupils and family members use it as a means of helping and advising them through difficult and challenging periods.

St Bartholomew’s Primary School | Glasgow
What others have to say about Place2Be

Place2Be’s work has been recognised with funding from the Department for Education and the Department of Health and from leading grant-making trusts. We have won a number of awards in recent years, including the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award and the Big Society Award.

The model of delivery developed by Place2Be, the high standard of monitoring and evaluation, its strategic insight, detailed and credible economic analysis and potential impact on the critical arena of early years development, all serve to showcase this as an exemplary initiative from which there is huge learning potential.

Public Health Wales Good Practice Scheme

The value and importance of Place2Be cannot be underestimated, this support means that these children have the opportunity to grow and develop into free thinking and caring children, notwithstanding their often sad home circumstances. The key stage at which this intervention occurs helps define who these children will become in later life as young adults and members of society.

Jon Boutcher  |  Deputy Chief Constable, Bedfordshire Police
A recognised and trusted provider

Contact

Please contact Place2Be to find out how we can help support your pupils to make progress in attaining their potential by helping promote positive mental health in your school.

Place2Be
13/14 Angel Gate
326 City Road
London EC1V 2PT

Telephone | 020 7923 5500
Email | development@place2be.org.uk
Website | www.place2be.org.uk

Royal Patron | HRH The Duchess of Cambridge
A school is accountable for the achievement of its pupils, both in their learning progress and in their attainment of agreed national standards. We want our children to be good learners, but they cannot achieve when they are burdened with unhappiness. The therapeutic approach of Place2Be enables our pupils to achieve well and the school to raise standards.

Norah Flatley | Head Teacher
Blessed Sacrament RC Primary School
Shoreditch | England