

Introduction to the Ealing **Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) Scale Up Programme**

Funded by the DfE and managed by
What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC).

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Background

- In June 2020 Ealing submitted a proposal to the What Works for Children's Social care Team, to be included in the Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) scale up programme. In July 2020 we were delighted when informed that we had been successful in our bid.
- The SWIS programme in Ealing will run for one academic year from September 2020 to July 2021.

Overview of the Social Workers in School (SWIS) Scale Up Programme

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1. Aims & Core Principles of the SWIS Programme

Aims

- The Social Workers in Schools programme aims to embed social workers in secondary schools to reduce referral rates to children's social care (CSC), and reduce the numbers of Section 17 or Section 47 investigations.
- With the overarching aim of reducing the number of children in care, and improving educational attainment.
- It is hoped that SWIS will also promote better inter-agency working between schools and the children's social care system.

Core Principles

- Social workers will be attached to one secondary school each, and may work with feeder primary schools.
- Social workers should be physically based in schools as much as possible, and integrated into the life of the school.
- Social workers will be employees of the local authority, and should retain regular supervision, contact and training from the local authority.
- Social workers should be conducting statutory social work as the main focus of their work, holding cases and working with children and families from their school.
- Social workers should also work with staff in the school to develop a deeper understanding of safeguarding and child protection, and to increase mutual understanding of the goals and ways of working of both schools and social care.

2. School Selection

The WWCS has structured the school selection and associated evaluation as follows:

- Ealing has nominated 16 schools with a range of data for each school.
- From which 8 will be randomly selected by the independent evaluator (Cardiff University) to receive a SWIS social worker (**The Intervention Group**) *SWIS Social workers can also work with associated 'feeder' primary schools, although efforts should be made to ensure that workloads are manageable and that social workers are able to spend a sufficient proportion of their time in the secondary schools.*
- The remaining 8 schools will form the '**The Comparison' group**, who will play a very important role in the trial and enable the evaluators to confidently say whether social workers in schools make a positive difference to outcomes.

3. SWIS Programme Timeline

July 20	Ealing SWIS Project application confirmed as successful
Aug 20	16 schools nominated to WWCS
Late Sept 20	Independent Evaluator informs Ealing of the 8 nominated schools to receive a SWIS Social Worker and publishes trial protocol
Early Oct 20	Project governance, monitoring, reporting and financial frameworks established.
Early Oct 20	SWIS Social worker/team recruitment completed
Late Oct 20	Project goes live. SWIS social workers begin induction in 8 allocated schools and work begins.
Ongoing	Monthly SWIS Project Management Board & termly monitor progress & report to ELP and CLC.
Ongoing	External evaluation process aligns with local monitoring and reporting systems
Late July 21	SWIS project finishes. SWIS team completes school placement
Aug 21	External Evaluator-Interim report on outcomes
June 22	Final report to include educational outcomes

4. Key lessons from the original pilot

4a. What worked well and what needs improvement

- The SWIS Scale-up is the continuation of a programme of work that began with three pilots in Lambeth, Southampton and Stockport in 2019.
- The results of these pilots suggest that the intervention is positively received, and has produced indicative evidence of a positive impact on case escalation in children's services

What worked well	What needed improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where it was felt social workers were a good fit, integration into the school• Having a social worker physically present and visible in a school• Drop-in services for parents or staff• Informal work with young people and families, advice and signposting to services etc.• Advice and discussions with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication around duties and differences in organisational culture• Carrying over of existing caseloads• Clarification of roles / duties• IT issues• Access and physical availability of space in schools

4b. Key pathways to success

Enhanced school response to safeguarding issues

- Regular communication between the social worker and school staff, and that the social worker's expertise and contribution is acknowledged and welcomed by the school.
- The social worker can give advice and support to school staff, which increases their confidence in safeguarding issues, and improves the quality of school referrals.
- The social worker can also identify common issues in the school and challenge current ways of working.
- This increases the likelihood that school staff will take a young person's wider circumstances into account, improving the service they receive.

Improved relationships between social worker and young people

(may be more relevant for secondary schools)

- Frequent interactions with the social worker enable the young person to trust the social worker and to feel understood and supported.
- This can lead to improved school attendance and participation, better management of a young person's risks and improved outcomes.

Increased collaboration between social worker and school staff, and parents

(more relevant for primary feeder schools)

- If the social worker gets to know and understand the family and parents perceive them as independent of the school, then relationships between the school and parents can be improved.
- As a result, parents are more likely to feel supported and have confidence in joint support offered by the social worker and the school, and parents have a better awareness and understanding of a referral, if one is made.

4c. Integration into schools and fostering good relationships

Integration into schools

- It is recommended that social workers should be embedded in schools as far as possible. This means being based primarily in their allocated secondary school and having access to the school in the same manner as teaching staff. They should also have access to space where they can work, and where confidential meetings or discussions can take place. As far as is practical, social workers have their own 'office' space in the school.
- It is also recommended that during the course of this project social workers have regular formal and informal contact with school staff, children and families, becoming part of the fabric of the school.
- This intervention should be delivered face to face (wherever possible). There should be both individual sessions and group sessions. These can be arranged formally, i.e. at a set time and place, or via timetabled drop-in sessions; or informally, where social workers make themselves available to be sought out by staff or young people during the school day.

- Good IT access, including Wi-Fi, is essential.

Fostering good relationships

- CSC and Schools are very different environments, with different cultures, therefore open and honest communication is important to the success of this intervention.
- Relationship building is key to social work, and this is no different. Building strong and positive relationships with school staff, in particular the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s), Designated Teacher(s) and children and families will ensure the success of this project.
- Regular meetings with social workers and school staff can help with this, as well as social workers being involved in staff meetings and staff social events.
- In case of sickness the local authority will provide duty cover.

5. SWIS Social Worker Role Clarity

1. Carry out statutory social work

The main focus of the SWIS Scale-up is to carry out **statutory social work**. Social workers will have an allocated caseload of children who have been referred to Children’s Social Care (CSC) and have met the local authority’s threshold for a service ranging from those who are children in need to those who are children looked after.

2. Preventative role

However, due to the opportunities that will arise from social workers being based in school there may be an aspect of the role that could be described as **preventative**; this may include advising staff, families and young people when they have concerns that they would like to discuss, or working with siblings in the family not considered as meeting threshold.

Not an Early Intervention role

The SWIS team preventative role should not be confused with Early Intervention work which should continue to be provided as a separate service and would include Team Around the Child and completing Common Assessment Frameworks.

Examples of statutory social work	Examples of preventative work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a caseload of children who may be subject to a child in need service, on a Child Protection plan, or Children Looked After. • Carrying out assessments in line with local authority procedures. • Working with the Youth Offending Team to support children who are involved in antisocial or criminal behaviour, if applicable to the specific school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together with the school to build better relationships with families and better understand their needs. • Working with feeder primary schools that siblings attend or multi-agency working to support an integrated family approach. • Providing an educative component, where the school learns from the social worker’s expertise in terms of safeguarding issues and referrals

6. Nominated and Comparator School List

The External Evaluators from Cardiff University have now randomly selected the eight schools to receive a SWIS Social Worker, with the remaining eight schools playing an important role as the comparator group.

We appreciate that there may be some disappointment if you were not selected to receive a SWIS Social Worker, but you will be playing a vital role in the measurement of the effectiveness of Social Workers embedded in schools.

Schools selected to receive a SWIS Social Worker	Schools selected to be within the Comparison Group
Brentside High School	Featherstone High School
Villiers High School	Ark Acton Academy
Greenford High School	Drayton Manor High School
William Perkins CE High School	Alec Reed Academy
Northolt High School	Dormers Wells High School
The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls	Elthorne Park High School
Cardinal Wiseman Catholic High School	Twyford CE High School
Ealing Alternative Provision	Belvue School

7. Next Steps in Ealing

Recruitment of SWIS Social Workers

- We are currently undertaking the recruitment of the SWIS Team and to date the following posts have been confirmed.
One Team Manager and seven of the eight SWIS Social Worker Posts

Agreements, governance arrangements and School Induction

- We will establish a governance structure which includes a SWIS project working group, including school representatives, which will meet on regular basis and a wider SWIS Steering Group which will meet each term.
- We are preparing a SLA for all 16 schools to ensure we have clarity and agreements on expectations and responsibilities related to SWIS before we work in partnership to deliver the programme.
- We also wish to ensure that there is an agreed induction and embedding process in the school for the SWIS Social Workers and will be seeking your opinions on how best this can be achieved.

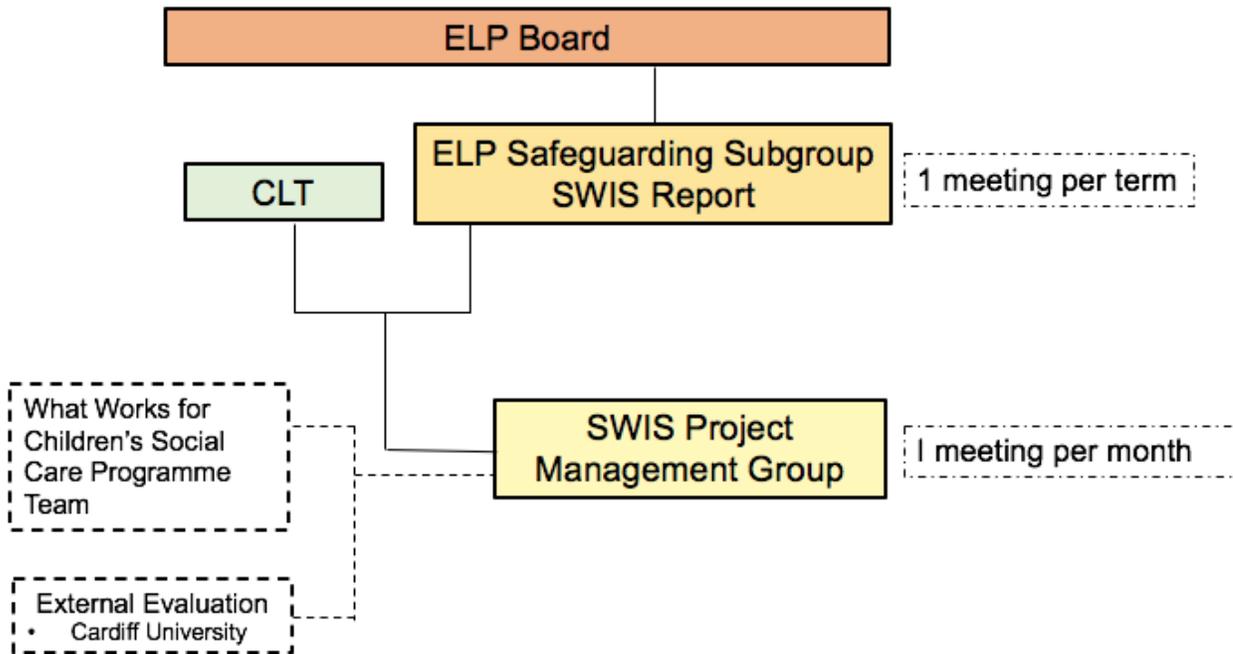
Action

- SWIS Governance established
- Progress communication to all Schools
- SWIS full team recruited
- SLAs distributed and agreed
- SWIS team induction in schools begins
- Half Term
- Induction completed and SWIS work commences

Target Date

- Week commencing 5th October
- Week commencing 5th October
- Week commencing 12th October
- Week commencing 12th October
- Week commencing 19th October
- 26th October-30th October
- Week commencing 2nd November

8. Ealing SWIS Governance Structure



Introduction

The SWIS model we are testing has been developed from a smaller pilot project.

The key factors in the success of the pilot were; good communication and positive relationships and the co-production of the programme between Schools and Social care.

Ealing SWIS Governance

On 07/10/20 the ELP Safeguarding and Wellbeing subgroup agreed to utilise their collective expertise to provide guidance and challenge in order to enhance the development and delivery of the SWIS programme and ensure that the learning is used to strengthen collaboration between schools and Social care.

SWIS Project Management Group

Representatives from Schools and Social Care will meet regularly to monitor the delivery of the project goals, identify and resolve risks and challenges to ensure the successful delivery of the SWIS programme.

9. Contacts

If you have any queries or would like any further information, please contact

Further Information

For further information please contact:

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