



Headspace's Graduated Attendance Support Model

**A Nimble, Community-Led Response for the
North Cotswolds**

Demand for community-based support continues to grow

148

Referrals Last Year

74

Currently Receiving Support

41

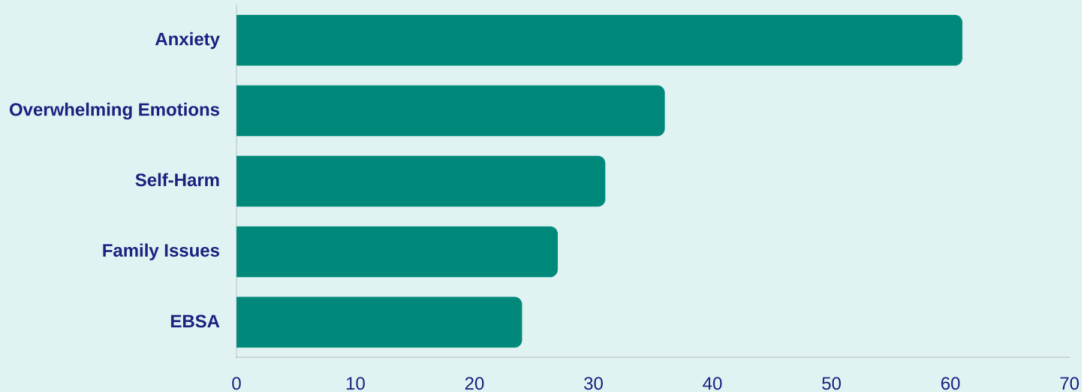
On Waiting List

Exclusive Focus: We work solely in the North Cotswolds, serving two mainstream secondary schools and their feeder primaries.

THE SUPPORT GAP

47 young people had **no other support** in place at the time of referral.

Top Presenting Concerns



Attendance difficulties are often the visible symptom

42%

Of our referrals identify as Autistic (35) or having ADHD (27).

The Masking Pattern: Parents report "emotional exhaustion" and meltdowns at home, while school sees a child who "looks fine."

YEAR 7

Attendance looks good. Coping through masking. School reports few concerns as the young person pushes through the transition.

YEAR 8

Increased anxiety and emotional exhaustion. Masking becomes harder. Growing attendance concerns begin to surface.

YEAR 9

Burnout becomes harder to sustain. Attendance deteriorates significantly. Mental health concerns increase.

"By the time attendance falls below 90%, the young person has often been struggling for months or even years."

Complementing clinical services through relational support

We are not an alternative to clinical services; we are the bridge that keeps young people engaged while they wait or when traditional settings feel inaccessible.

Our early intervention strategy combines **Wellbeing Groups** alongside **One-to-One Mentoring** to provide a flexible, relational response to emerging mental health challenges.

The Challenge

- Traditional clinical thresholds
- Long waiting lists for support
- Difficulty engaging with CBT
- Sensory/environmental barriers

Our Response

- Relational, activity-based mentoring
- Outdoor learning & creative arts
- Safe, low-pressure environment
- Focus on trust and regulation

"By combining group work and individual mentoring, we can reach young people early and adapt to their specific needs."

A coordinated pathway from prevention to re-engagement

Headspace's graduated model ensures that support is available at every stage of a young person's journey, intervening early to prevent disengagement.

PREVENTION

The Lantern Project

Transition support for Year 6 pupils

EARLY INTERVENTION

Wellbeing Groups & Mentoring

Relational support for emerging needs

TARGETED SUPPORT

EBSA Pilot Programme

Specialist support for school avoidance

RE-ENGAGEMENT

BBC CiN Outreach Mentoring

Intensive support for isolated young people

Wrapped Around Every Stage:

Parent & Family Support

Prevention: The Lantern Project

TARGET GROUP

Year 6 pupils preparing for the transition to The Cotswold School (TCS).

We are constantly monitoring and refining our methods based on direct feedback from students and schools.

WEEK 1: FINDING YOUR WAY

Scavenger hunt and orientation activities at The Cotswold School.

Helping students navigate the physical environment before the term starts.

WEEK 2: "HELP!"

Social stories and identifying support networks. Using the "Help Exchange" to normalise seeking assistance.

WEEK 3: CHALLENGE

Dealing with the new. Food Tech lessons and sensory challenges. Building resilience through managed exposure.

WEEK 4: RELATIONSHIPS

Friendship toolkit and peer feedback. Quick-connect activities to foster social bonds with future classmates.

"The earlier we intervene, the greater the opportunity to prevent attendance difficulties becoming entrenched."

PILOT STAGE

Intervening early when school avoidance emerges

Our EBSA scheme is currently at the pilot stage, allowing us to monitor outcomes and adapt to the evolving needs of the North Cotswolds community.

The Approach

- **Identifying the "Why":** Uncovering the sensory, social, or academic triggers behind the avoidance.
- **Collaborative Adaptation:** Working alongside schools to adapt environments and expectations based on individual needs.
- **Safe Space Re-engagement:** Providing a low-arousal environment at Headspace to rebuild confidence away from the school site.

"Our goal is to prevent the transition from 'struggling to attend' to 'fully disengaged' by addressing barriers early."

A new three-year programme for the most isolated

BBC Children in Need (2026–2029)

Dedicated funding to expand our outreach mentoring for children experiencing mental health challenges.

Core Programme Focus

Building Trust

Consistent one-to-one mentoring to help young people express feelings and develop coping strategies.

Reducing Isolation

Supporting young people to feel less withdrawn and more able to engage with everyday life.

Improving Wellbeing

Focusing on emotional wellbeing and confidence as a foundation for re-engagement.

Re-engagement

Taking steps towards returning to education, activities, and reconnecting with peers.

Impact Measurement: Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) and direct feedback from young people and parents.

Moving the conversation from data to needs

Focusing solely on attendance percentages can miss the early warning signs of burnout and masking in neurodivergent young people.

THE DATA

Attendance percentages, unauthorized absences, and "broken" patterns of school attendance.

THE REALITY

Anxiety, exhaustion, sensory overwhelm, and emotional dysregulation that parents describe long before the data reflects a concern.

OUR ROLE

To recognise those warning signs and provide support before disengagement becomes entrenched.

A Call to Action for Schools

"Refer early—don't wait for the attendance to drop to 80% to start the conversation. By understanding the child, we can find the solution."



"Attendance difficulties are rarely the problem—they are the symptom. By understanding the child, we can find the solution."

A Nimble, Community-Led Response

- ✓ **Listening-Based Model:** Developed from the needs of schools, young people, and referral data.
- ✓ **Nimble & Responsive:** The luxury of being able to adapt quickly to our community's evolving needs.
- ✓ **Effective & Efficient:** Applying for targeted grant funding to run projects that meet specific local gaps.
- ✓ **North Cotswolds Focus:** Exclusively serving our local secondary schools and their feeder primaries.

Contact Us

Headspace

Unit 6, Old Station Yard, Bourton Industrial Estate
Bourton-on-the-Water, GL54 2RZ
Email: admin@myheadspace.org.uk