

News release



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EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

A student-led mental health initiative is empowering young people to take control of their online wellbeing.

Mind in Berkshire has partnered with the Mental Health Forum at Kennet School in Thatcham to develop practical resources exploring the impact of digital life on mental health.

Student voices are at the heart of the project, ensuring young people's real experiences are reflected and supports their wellbeing in an increasingly connected world.

Drawing on their lived experiences, students created an interactive and relatable webinar, *Digital Balance: Caring for your Mind Online*, to help their peers better understand both the opportunities and challenges of being online, with a particular focus on the positives and negatives of social media.

The film and teaching resource, created by young people for young people, explores the positive aspects of being online including connection and community; creativity and self-expression; access to emotional support and mental health resources; and cultural awareness and empathy. It also explores the risks young people face such as social pressure which can cause anxiety; excessive screen time; distraction; exposure to harmful content and privacy concerns.

Students recognised that navigating the online world can be overwhelming. During this project they defined what digital wellbeing means and stressed the importance of taking care of both their mental and physical health while using devices.

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To support their peers, the students developed the *5 Ways to Digital Wellbeing*:

- **Be active** - Take regular breaks, spend time outdoors, and balance screen time with physical activity
- **Stay safe** - Filter inappropriate content, avoid online conflict, and speak to a trusted adult if something feels wrong
- **Set limits** - Monitor screen time, establish personal boundaries, and practice mindful, intentional use of technology
- **Keep learning** - Use digital platforms for education and share what you learn with friends and family
- **Be kind** - Offer support to others online and encourage those struggling to seek help

Posters highlighting these tips are available for download by visiting the [Mind in Berkshire website](#). You can also view the webinar on [Mind in Berkshire's YouTube channel](#).

Thanks to funding from The Greenham Trust through West Berkshire Council, the students' ideas have been transformed into a lasting resource that will be shared with schools across the West of Berkshire, with the potential to reach thousands of young people.

Jess Willsher, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Mind, said: "This project gives young people a real voice in shaping mental health support for their peers. We're delighted to have worked with the Kennet School to co-create these digital resources with students, breaking down stigma, and providing safe spaces for open conversations."

Anna Gillies, Volunteering and Involvement Manager at Oxfordshire Mind & Mind in Berkshire, said: "This project highlights the strength of young people taking the initiative to support one another online."

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“Discussions about mental health often focus on adult perspectives, but by listening to other students share their experiences, young people can feel less isolated and find it easier to talk about mental health issues.

“By distributing these resources throughout West Berkshire, we aim to reach thousands of students and make mental health support engaging, relevant, and accessible for everyone.”

The Kennet School said: “Kennet School continues to value the partnership with Mind in Berkshire. Our pupils are deeply committed to supporting every member of our school community by raising awareness of key wellbeing issues and highlighting the support available.

“This series of webinars is the result of a fantastic collaborative effort with Oxfordshire Mind, Mind in Berkshire and Kennet’s Wellbeing Forum. Under the guidance of Mr Joyce and Anna Gillies from Oxfordshire Mind, our pupils have embraced the challenge and produced a set of thoughtfully planned, and confidently delivered webinars. We are delighted with the outcome and incredibly proud to share a resource that will offer meaningful support to young people.”

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

1. More from Andrea Jenkins, Communications and Events Manager at Mind in Berkshire, on communications@mindinberkshire.org.uk or by calling: 07871 729945.
2. Mind in Berkshire is a partnership between two mental health charities, Oxfordshire Mind and Buckinghamshire Mind. We’re working together to increase mental health support for people across Berkshire. Our Berkshire-based teams are focused on their local area, which means we understand our community. Oxfordshire Mind delivers services in the West of the county (Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire) and Buckinghamshire Mind across the East (Slough, Bracknell Forest, and Windsor & Maidenhead). We’re part of the Mind Federation. So, we can draw on expertise from over 100 local Minds across England and Wales, as well as from National Mind.