



One Good Adult: Job Description

Engagement Activity with Children and Young People
(April – May 2022)

Final Report



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Introduction

The 'One Good Adult' Project

In April 2022, Children in Scotland was asked by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the Mental Health Directorate at the Scottish Government to work with children and young people to review and finalise the One Good Adult job description and create new resources to bring this job description to life.

The One Good Adult job description was originally created as part of a Scottish Government engagement project with a group of young people before the pandemic, but the link with this group has now been lost.

The One Good Adult job description will form a key part of an online resource linked to the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework for the Scottish Workforce. The Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out the levels of knowledge and skills required by professionals to deliver wellbeing and mental health supports and interventions within the framework of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

Approach

Recruitment

The tight timescale for this project meant there was not sufficient time to do an open recruitment call for this project. Children in Scotland therefore reached out to a wide range of children and young people who currently or had recently worked with us to offer them the opportunity to take part in this engagement work.

We reached out to children and young people aged 8-25 from a range of diverse backgrounds. Thirteen young people got back to us and, although not all of them could attend every session, 12 of these children and young people participated in project. The participants ranged in age from 12 to 24 years and were from seven local authority areas.

Mental health can be a sensitive topic to work on for children and young people but is an area that many of the children and young people we work with are interested in and committed to. Several of the young people who joined the project had previously shared their views on mental health and wellbeing on previous Children in Scotland projects and were keen to be involved in shaping the One Good Adult job description and resources.

Delivering engagement sessions

The group met over four sessions between April and May 2022. We decided to hold all these sessions online due to the short timeline and to increase accessibility of the project to young people from across Scotland. All the sessions were held on Wednesday afternoons after the school day had finished. We have found this is one of the best times to engage with children and young people.

Children in Scotland has an established approach to engagement work with children and young people, which has been adapted to an online environment. As standard practice, part of the first session with the group focused on developing a 'group agreement' which helped to create a safe and respectful environment. Throughout the project delivery, staff helped to foster trusting relationships through icebreakers, group discussions and creative activities. We also used interactive online tools such as Jamboard to support accessibility and young people's engagement.

Introducing the topic – what is mental health?

During the first session, the group focused on defining mental health and discussing why it is important. After introducing the One Good Adult project, we gave participants some time to write or draw their own definitions of mental health. Young people then shared their definitions and we had a group discussion on the back of this. The group covered several key themes in their definitions of mental health and the resulting discussion:

- Mental health is about how you feel and how that affects your life.
- A range of different things can impact your mental health including internal and external factors. For example, your biology, the pandemic, being bullied and relationships with family and friends.
- There are some things you can do to improve your mental health (like going for walk or taking medication) and some things you can't change.

Some of the group's definitions of mental health can be found below.

“Mental health is the health of your mind and how happy and healthy you are on the inside. Mental health problems can be caused by many different things.”

“I would say mental health is how you feel inside your head, like emotions or feeling calm in your head. It can be affected by internal and external factors such as environment or how you feel about yourself.”

“Mental health affects how you are feeling. It can make you feel both sad and happy”

“Mental health is how you feel personally on a day-to-day basis. [It] impacts how we react to situations. A factor which can influence mental health is friends and social life.”

This activity helped Children in Scotland staff to identify participants' understanding of mental health, their level of interest in the topic and how important they felt it was to their day-to-day lives.

Introducing the concept of 'One Good Adult'

Following our initial discussions about mental health, we decided to introduce the concept of 'One Good Adult' by asking participants 'who you might go to when...?' to explore who offers the group members support at different times of their lives.

This exercise included scenarios linked to both physical and mental health. For example, we talked about who might you go to when...

- You think you have broken your toe?
- When you are worried about schoolwork?
- You want to share your good news (e.g. good grades?)
- When you are worried about a friend?

The group identified lots of different types of people (and places) in their lives who support them. These included parents, friends, local doctors (GPs), siblings, specific education staff (including school teachers, inclusion teachers, school therapists), pets, social media and the internet.

We discussed why some people were good to speak to and other people were not. The comments about people who were good to speak to included:

“You can trust them, and they make you feel comfortable and welcome”

“Someone you can get on with”

“Someone you trust to keep anything you say to themself”

“Their attitude”

“Because she lets me vent”

“They are invested in you. They have shared your journey”

“[They are] transparent and let you know your options - not trying to hide anything from you”

Leading on from this, the group completed a Jamboard activity called 'Head, Hands and Heart'. This activity specifically focused on professionals who support young people and their mental health (e.g. education staff, healthcare workers, youth workers, etc.). The group added their thoughts about what these adults do to make them feel happy and safe. The Jamboard covered three areas:

Head – What do these adults know?

Hands – What do they do?

Heart – What are they like? What personality do they have?,

Significant themes around trust, understanding, kindness, listening, and being treated equally came up in these discussions. Some of the young people also shared negative experiences of not being heard, listened to, or acknowledged by professionals.



'Head, Hands and Heart' Jamboard activity from the first session

At the start of the second session, we reviewed the Jamboard from the 'Head, Hands and Heart' activity. This allowed us to update young people joining for the first time and refresh everyone's memory about what we had been talking about. As we discussed the activity, it generated more comments from the group about the key attributes that make a good adult.

“They talk and share about themselves - [they are] not just there trying to quiz you”

“They make you feel like another human”

“Warm, calm, put you at ease, welcoming”

“They make sure you feel comfortable”

“If you have met them with one of your parents or another adult, they don't just talk to the adult”

“Don't talk as if you are not in the room”

“Treat you as an equal”

“Give assemblies so I am aware they care about issues such as bullying or wider mental health”

Discussing the 'One Good Adult' job description

The 'Head, Hands, Heart' activity lead us on to a discussion about the 'One Good Adult' job description.

Firstly, we talked as a group about job descriptions and whether any of the participants had come across them before. Most of the young people knew that a job description is something used to explain what a job is about and the skills and experience someone needs to have to do that job.

Children in Scotland staff showed the group the 'One Good Adult' job description and explained that we would be reviewing each of the points to get their feedback about what they liked and disliked. To add some creativity to the session and make the review process fun and interactive, we gave participants some time to draw cards or make up their own way of voting for what they 'liked', 'disliked' or were 'unsure' about from the job description. We listened to a 'happy playlist' of music that the group had created in their icebreaker during this creative activity.

Over the course of the second and third sessions, we went through each point in the 'essential criteria', 'desirable criteria' and the 'skills and experience' sections of the job description. The group voted on and discussed each point in turn.

The young people were very engaged throughout this process. They provided clear and constructive comments as well as suggestions for changes that could be made. They were also given the opportunity to suggest additional points or key issues that they felt were missing.

In general, the members of the group were very positive about the job

description and quickly picked up on the words they thought were powerful and important.

The group also had specific comments about the wording of the job description. In some sections, participants felt the wording was too direct and in others they felt wording was too ambiguous. They were passionate about making the job description friendly, clear, practical, and understandable to children, young people and adults.

The original job description can be found below, along with some specific comments that the group made during the sessions.

Essential Criteria

- 1. You must be authentic, calm, approachable and welcoming. You encourage help-seeking.**

What the group liked:

"[They are] all important"

"Taking the first step to get help is difficult so you need to be approachable, and all the other things listed"

What the group were not sure about:

The group had comments about the word 'help-seeking':

"Less sure about help-seeking...what does help-seeking mean?"

"Not sure you should always be 'help-seeking' - you should "encourage young people to get help if they need it"

"Maybe it should say: you should encourage self-empowerment."

- 2. You must ask direct questions and also actively listen and clearly explain any actions you will take as a result of the conversation.**

There were lots of positive votes but some 'unsure' votes.

What the group were not sure about:

The group had a lot of discussion about the word 'direct'. Some comments included:

"The word 'direct' is a bit strong. Should be more subtle?"

"don't ask sneaky questions...something more positive could be 'clear' or 'transparent'"

"I think it comes across a bit harsh"

"Don't ask personal questions – [you] might not want to tell that person"

"Not pressuring you to say something you don't mean."

- 3. Notice when children and young people might be struggling and ask if you can help**

What the group liked:

There were lots of positive votes.

“I think it was just nice”

What the group were not sure about:

“Good idea but not developed enough”

“A little more detail would be good”

“Brilliant idea but maybe a bit vague”

“I’m not sure all adults could do this – for example, if you are a janitor will you be able to this”

“Maybe not essential”

- 4. You must be kind! Respect the young person and their lived experience. Take their concerns and worries seriously.**

What the group liked:

All positive votes.

There was a bit of discussion about what was meant by lived experience.

What the group were not sure about:

One young person commented that *“maybe [it should be] going beyond respect...perhaps ‘understanding’”*.

- 5. Recognise that all children and young people are individuals. The person in front of you may need a tailored approach and supports.**

What the group liked:

Mostly positive votes, one unsure.

The group liked the emphasis on the ‘individual’ in this statement.

What the group were not sure about:

One young person commented on the phrase *“tailored approach”* – They suggest maybe change the wording of tailored for a *“different”*, *“personalised”* or *“individualised”* approach.

“A little more detail would be good”

- 6. Trust – demonstrate that you’re a person worthy of trust. Trust that the individual in front of you knows themselves, don’t patronise them!**

What the group liked:

All of the group gave this positive votes.

The group picked up on the word ‘trust’ and had comments about how important trust is:

“You can’t have a good relationship with someone if you don’t trust them”

“Trust is important – you can’t really have a person you can share things with if you don’t trust them”

“If you are going to spent time with someone, you need to trust them”

“Trust is important.”

7. Be open-minded and fair. Don't jump to conclusions or judge

What the group liked:

Everyone voted positively for this.

What the group were not sure about:

There were some comments about the word 'fair':

“What they mean by ‘fair’ mean – does that mean just treating everyone the same?”

“Goes against being an individual maybe?”

Desirable Criteria

1. Be positive! Be hopeful about the individual you're talking to as well as about the support you can offer them.

This had a mix of positive and unsure votes.

What the group liked:

The young people really latched onto the word hopeful and liked the idea of *“being hopeful about the individual”*

What the group were not sure about:

The group were generally not sure about the emphasis on 'Be positive!' Some suggested taking it out. They commented:

“Positive could be dismissive”

“Sometimes you don't want someone being positive when you are feeling sad.”

2. Use humour.

This had a real mix of positive and unsure votes.

What the group liked:

One of young people said: *“humour isn't always suitable, but it can brighten up a situation”*

What the group were not sure about:

A number of the young people were not sure about this statement, when we asked why they commented:

“People's sense of humour is different”

“Sometimes humour can offend people”

“Don't expect people to laugh at everything and make sure that nothing is in any way offensive”

*“Not suitable for all situations and need to be aware when you use it”
“People’s sense of humour can be different to each other – might stop someone connecting with you.”*

3. Offer realistic, helpful advice.

What the group liked:

The group really liked this statement. Comments included: *“Yesssss”* and *“Being realistic is key”*

4. Help young people relax by being friendly and putting them at ease.

The group also really liked this statement and had no comments or changes.

Skills and Experience

1. You engage with children and young people from all different backgrounds and experiences.

What the group were not sure about:

Some members of the group really liked this concept but some were worried it might stop professionals being ‘good adults’ if they did not have this experience. They identified that not all adults would have had experience with young people from all different backgrounds:

“What does it mean? Not very clear. You should support young people regardless of differences”

“[It] shouldn’t stop [people] engaging just because you don’t have the experience”

“Young people might be hard to reach – digitally excluded.”

2. You understand that children and young people all have mental health just like everyone has physical health and may need support with this.

The young people really liked this.

What the group liked:

“😊 Good that they should be able to understand and be aware that everyone has mental health”

“[This is] really important especially word ‘understand’ – not just saying yes.”

3. You know we all have emotions, feelings, thoughts and moods that may affect our mental health, and that is perfectly normal

What the group liked:

“Like the part about how it’s ‘perfectly normal’, it’s reassuring that people will understand it’s normal”

What the group were not sure about:

“Good – but worded a bit differently.”

“Maybe ‘you understand that we all have...’ ‘Know’ is a bit direct.”

4. You know that intersectionality is important, and you recognise that individuals aren’t defined by one aspect of their life or experience

What the group were not sure about:

There was a good discussion about the term intersectionality. Quite a lot of the group didn’t know what it meant. Most of the group thought the word should be removed, however one member thought it was important that the word stayed in. Comments included:

“What does ‘intersectionality’ mean?”

“I think that word should be changed because we want people to understand the job description”

“You could use a ‘jargon buster’ if the word has to stay”

“‘Connection’ could be used instead?”

“Remove first part of sentence maybe?”

“I think it is very important to retain intersectionality or replace with a description of it.”

5. You are informed about gender and sexuality. You consider the ways it can impact wellbeing and mental health

What the group were not sure about:

The young people were a bit unsure about this section and thought it needed some changes. They felt there was maybe other things beyond gender and sexuality adults working with or alongside children and young people should be informed about including disabilities, racial discrimination and being home educated. They also felt it was more about wanted to learn than being informed. Comments included:

“Very basic – feels like it’s been copy and pasted”

“Yes, it would be nice that they are informed but if they are not informed that they are able to look into it. We don’t want to put adults off supporting them if the young person has trust in them”

“Bit narrow.”

6. You understand what a difference positive relationships can make and you want to be a trusted, reliable adult for children and young people

What the group liked:

The young people like the phrase ‘you want to be’. One young person saying *“if you want to be, you will be better at it”*.

What the group were not sure about:

The young people were unsure about the wording. They felt the sentence was maybe covering two different things and suggested separating it out.

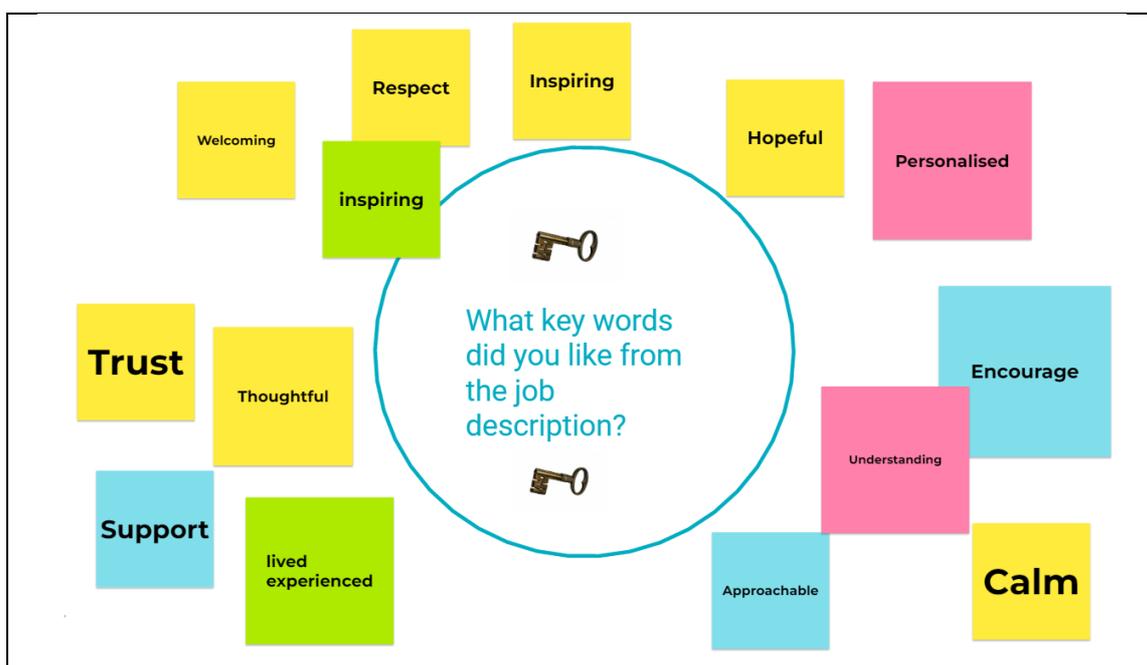
All the participants' comments, feedback and suggested changes were collated over sessions two and three. Children in Scotland staff then created and shared a redraft of the job description, based on everything the group told us. This redraft was shared with the group in advance of the final session so participants had time to consider all the changes that had been made. In session four, the group went through the redrafted job description point-by-point. Further comments were incorporated and a final version was agreed by the group (see Appendix A).

Planning resources

In addition to reviewing the One Good Adult job description, the group had been asked to create resources to bring the job description to life. Children in Scotland staff ringfenced time for discussing, planning and developing resources in sessions three and four.

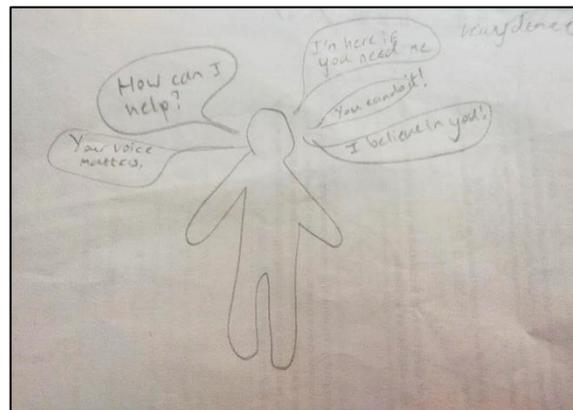
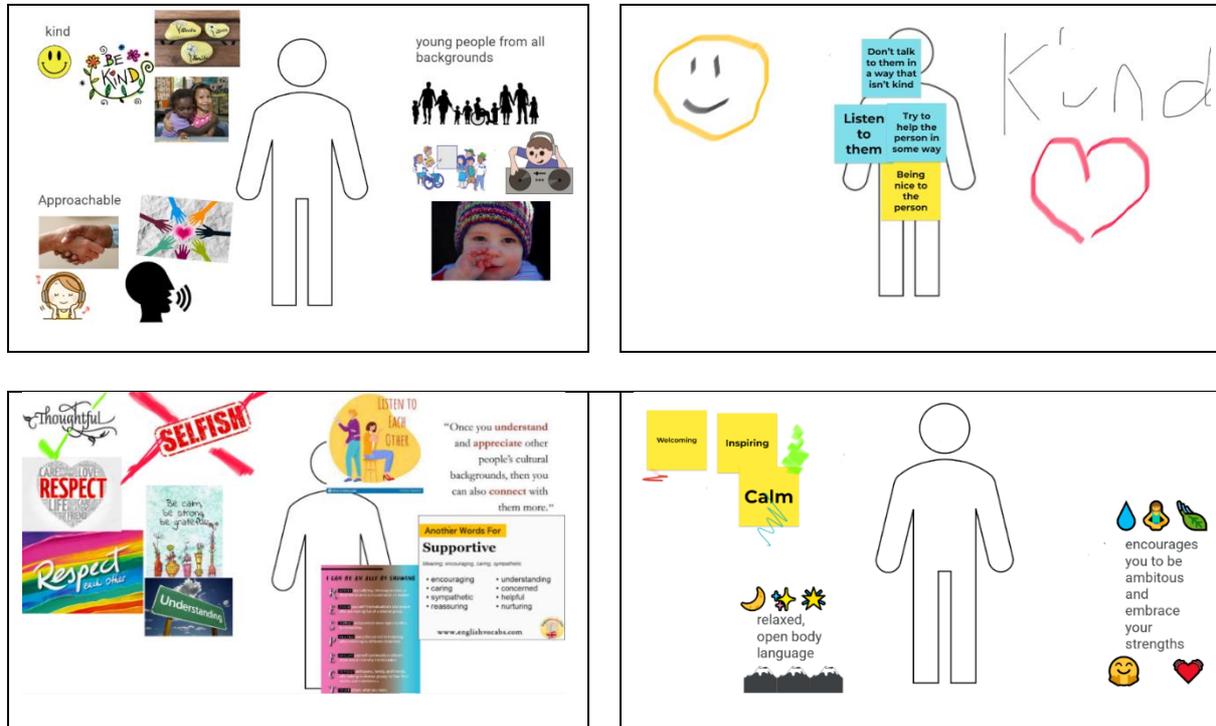
During group discussions in sessions one and two, a number of important words had been highlighted several times. Children in Scotland staff decided that focusing on key words from the job description would be a good starting point for discussions about additional resources.

After reviewing the job description for the final time, the group highlighted key words that stood out for them through a Jamboard activity.



Key words activity from session three

We then used a characterisation activity to give each young person the opportunity to interpret these key words in whatever way they wanted through drawing, writing or found images. Young people could do this via their own individual Jamboard or using their own pens and paper. Some of their creations can be seen below.



Characterisation activity from session three

After everyone had completed their characterisation activity, we spent time talking about what they had produced, including why young people had chosen certain words and images. Comments included:

"I used emojis and images like stars and mountains to show that adults should encourage young people to 'shoot for the stars' and to show that good adults

can inspire your ambition”

“I decided to write about things that a good adult might say... things like ‘I’m here if you need me’, ‘You can do it!’ and ‘your voice matters’.”

Through these discussions and activities we agreed a number ‘key words’ that the young people felt were particularly important for being a good adult:

- calm
- kind
- trustworthy
- good at listening
- hopeful
- understanding
- realistic
- approachable
- encouraging
- supportive
- respectful
- inspiring
- welcoming
- thoughtful

Following this activity, the young people discussed ideas for how to bring the job description to life and capture what they felt was most important about it. The group suggested using their direct quotes from the sessions, recording new audio clips, creating illustrations and graphics, using movement and images, and creating word clouds. A few of the young people mentioned a platform called Microsoft Sway which they had used at school. Participants agreed that this was a good way to present information in an interactive and engaging way. Children in Scotland agreed to create a draft Microsoft Sway presentation and share this with the group ahead of the next session.

Creating resources

Children in Scotland shared the draft Microsoft Sway presentation a few days before session four. The Sway presentation included a basic animation of the key words the group had highlighted, quotes and drawings that had been created in previous sessions, and the redrafted job description split into different sections.

Children in Scotland staff walked the group through the whole presentation, then led a group discussion focusing on the overall format and the individual elements of the Sway. We asked the participants to consider what they liked

or disliked about the Sway presentation and what they wanted to add, remove or change. We also asked them to consider how to make sure the presentation felt like something that was young-person led.

Feedback from the group was generally very positive. They felt the interactive nature of the Sway presentation, as well as the movement in the key words animation, made the job description more engaging. The group felt the Sway made the job description clearer, simpler and more understandable. They discussed that, although the screenshots of their Jamboards and their drawings were not very “professional looking”, they liked this because it made it clear this resource had been made by young people.

The group suggested some further changes and improvements including changing the colour and text, adding further images, including additional drawings and creating voiceovers to narrate different sections in their own words.

Participants and Children in Scotland staff worked together in the final session to record these voiceovers and create additional pictures and hand-written quotes. The children and young people who were unable to attend the final session were also contacted and shared their views and contributions via email. See Appendix B for a link to the final version of the presentation.

Conclusion

Children in Scotland staff were delighted with the engagement and energy the children and young people brought to this project. They were knowledgeable and forthcoming about mental health and had clear ideas about how professionals could be a ‘good adult’ drawn from their own diverse life experiences.

The ‘One Good Adult’ job description was a concept the young people could engage with, and they felt that the job description and their resources had the potential to make a positive impact for professionals working with and alongside children and young people.

Participants liked a lot of the original job description, and many key elements remained in the group’s final version. The group provided clear and constructive feedback about the job description and introduced some considered changes, making it clear to Children in Scotland staff that they didn’t want to make changes just for the sake of it. Participants were really pleased with the final version they produced.

Children in Scotland staff were also very happy with the group’s engagement and creativity in developing the resources. The group had strong ideas about

the format of the resources and came up with the idea of creating a Sway presentation to make it interactive and engaging for professionals. The use of the Microsoft Sway platform allowed the group to incorporate their voices, quotes and drawings to bring the job description to life in a way that was fully young-person led.

Appendix A

Finalised version of the “One Good Adult” job description

Job Description for a ‘Good Adult’

The children and young people of Scotland want to recruit ‘Good Adults’ to work with them and alongside them in a range of settings. This is the job description they have written:

Essential Criteria:

- You must be authentic, calm, approachable, and welcoming.
- You encourage and help young people to find support if they need it.
- You must be kind! Respect and try to understand children and young people and their lived experience. Take their concerns and worries seriously.
- You must ask clear questions, actively listen to children and young people’s answers, and explain any actions you will take.
- You demonstrate that you’re worthy of trust by doing what you say you will.
- You are open-minded and fair. You don’t jump to conclusions or judge.
- You recognise that all children and young people are individuals. The person in front of you will need a personalised approach and supports.
- You trust that the child or young person in front of you knows themselves. You ask for and listen to their views, and you don’t patronise them.
- You treat children and young people as your equal and talk directly to them.
- You offer realistic, helpful advice.

Desirable Criteria:

- You are hopeful about the individual you are talking to, as well as the support you can offer them.
- You encourage children and young people to embrace their strengths. You are enthusiastic and positive about what they can do.
- You notice when children and young people are struggling and know the next steps to take to help them.
- You know when to use humour, and when to be serious.
- You help young people relax by being friendly, caring and putting them at ease.

Skills and experience:

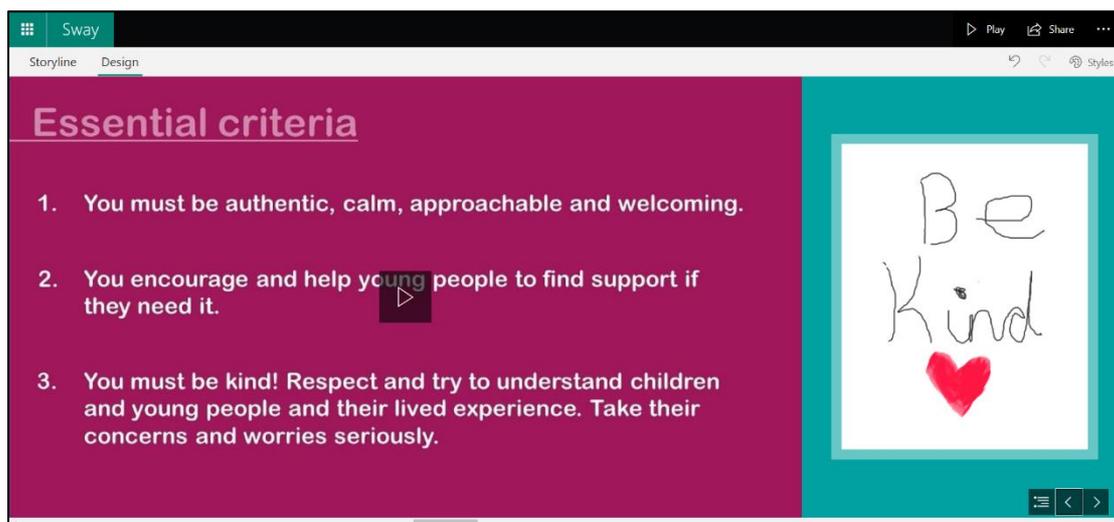
- You welcome children and young people from all different backgrounds and experiences.
- You understand that all children and young people have mental health, just like everyone has physical health, and sometimes they need support with this.
- You understand that we all have emotions, thoughts and behaviours that affect our mental health, and that is perfectly normal.
- You recognise that individuals aren't defined by just one aspect of their life or experiences.
- You want to learn about issues that affect children and young people's lives (including their experiences of gender, sexuality, disability, race and care). You consider the ways these experiences might impact wellbeing and mental health.
- You understand the difference that positive relationships can make.
- You want to be a trusted, reliable adult for children and young people, no matter what your job is.

How to apply: demonstrate these criteria to every child and young person you work with.

Appendix B

Resources produced by the group

Please click here to link to the 'How to be a good adult' Sway presentation:
<https://sway.office.com/5EjQcainT81c9Mba>



Screenshot of the One Good Adult Microsoft Sway resource