**School Health Literacy training**

**Background to the project:**

The World Health Organisation defines Health Literacy as “the personal characteristics and social resources needed for individuals and communities to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about health”.

A study, which took place in 2015[[1]](#footnote-2), looking at people between the ages of 16 – 65 in England and found on average that 43% of the population was health illiterate and when numeracy was added in this went up to 61%. So that’s well over half the population not being able to fully benefit from the information available. Reading is on par with the national average and in Slough the numbers are even higher[[2]](#footnote-3). Local authority

This training was developed in late 2020 and early 2021, by the Library and Knowledge Services at both Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, with funding support from Health Education England. The project focussed on 16-18 year olds in Berkshire and aimed to:

* increase young people’s confidence in speaking up about their health and any questions they have
* encourage young people to seek appropriate support at the earliest opportunity before health concerns reoccur or become more urgent
* give easier access to health resources and training to support young people, their families and school staff
* increase NHS staff’s understanding of young people’s health information needs
* contribute to reducing missed medical appointments and improving patient experience through better use and understanding of health information

**Project Outputs.**

**Libguides site:**

The Libguides site is an online guide signposting young people to age-appropriate resources on general health and wellbeing, and on mental health. Signposting to local support services and youth organisations are included.

**The training sessions:**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21 the pilot training sessions primarily took place remotely via Teams, Google Classroom and Zoom. The activities were originally undertaken using Slido and the chat function.

There are two sessions. The first session covers health literacy in general and evaluating health information sources. The second session covers the practicalities of using health services, with a focus on building confidence to ask questions of healthcare professionals. The sessions are designed to last an hour each. During the pilot the second session was shorter due to the discussion element not taking as much time remotely. It is expected that in a face-to-face session it would last an hour. The sessions can be used in conjunction or independently.

The pack contents include:

* This introduction
* 2 PowerPoint Presentations
* 2 lesson plans

Activities can be used as originally planned however suggestions for other activities have been provided in the lesson plans. The PowerPoints and session content may be adapted but the credit statement must be retained.

**Feedback and suggestions for the Libguides site:**

We would welcome feedback on the school health literacy pack so it can be continually improved. Please email feedback and suggestions to library@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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1. Rowlands, G… et al. (2015) A mismatch between population health literacy and the complexity of health information: an observational study. British Journal of General Practice 2015; 65 (635): e379-e386. DOI: 10.3399/bjgp15X685285 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. University of Southampton (2016) Health Literacy Local Authority Tool. Available at: <http://healthliteracy.geodata.uk/> (accessed 3 August 2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)