On 8 March 2015, the New South Wales Government announced that it would provide a total of $167.2 million over four years for a comprehensive package of support to promote positive student wellbeing.

The package includes $80.7 million to employ 236 additional school counselling service positions and $51.5 million of funding for wellbeing services, equivalent to an additional 200 student support officers.

From July 2016, every public school will receive a core allocation for school counselling services, which will be adjusted every three years.

**How was the methodology for the Core School Counselling Services developed?**
A stakeholder advisory group comprising education, parent and union representatives guided the development of the new methodology for core school counselling services. Stakeholder consultation feedback and current research were used to inform the model.

**What principles underpin the methodology?**
The methodology for the core school counselling services:
- is informed by current research, feedback from focus groups held across the state and NSW school and student data
- provides every school with a core school counselling allocation
- provides a school counselling allocation that reflects student need
- will be adjusted every three years
- will be aligned and fully integrated with RAM from 2017

**How is the core school counselling resource calculated?**
The core counselling allocation is based on student enrolment data and on indicators of student need.

**What enrolment data has been used?**
2015 enrolment data has been used to calculate the core school counselling allocation. A notional enrolment for each support class, including those in special schools has been applied. The enrolment data also includes every student enrolled in a departmental preschool.

**What are the indicators of student need?**
The indicators of student need are students impacted by disability and/or additional learning and support needs, disadvantage and location.
How is the indicator of need for students impacted by disability and additional learning and support needs calculated?
The Student Learning Needs Index (SLNI) has been applied as it is a broad measure of disability and additional learning and support needs. This approach is consistent with existing practice under the Every Student, Every School initiative and supports the Department to meet its obligations under the Disability Standards for Education, 2005. Students in Schools for Specific Purposes were allocated a notional SLNI.

How is the disadvantage factor of need calculated?
*The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents, Report of the Second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing* indicates there is a strong association between mental disorders and specific socio-demographic factors. Children and adolescents with parents and carers with lower levels of education and higher levels of unemployment had higher rates of mental disorders.

A specific index has been calculated by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and applied to reflect this research. This data is collected through the Enrolment Registration Number (ERN) system. This index correlates highly with other measures of disadvantage.

How is the location factor of need calculated?
The location factor measures remoteness using Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+). ARIA+ is a measure of service accessibility and remoteness derived from road distances between populated localities and service centres. ARIA+ is widely used across Australia and has become recognised as a nationally consistent measure of geographic remoteness. It is used within the allocation of the Department’s RAM funding to schools.

When will the core school counselling allocation commence?
Schools will be advised of their core school counselling allocation for 2016-2018 in December, 2015.

During Term 1 and Term 2, 2016, school counselling allocations to schools will remain unchanged. Additional school counselling staff will be progressively recruited.