



Service Definition

Growing hearts and minds for the digital generation

HeadZone Emotional Literacy, Digital Safety & AI Education Platform

Framework RM1557.15 (G-Cloud 15) | Lot 2b - Cloud Software | HeadZone Group Limited, Co. 16811269 | DUNS 234293597 |
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1. Why HeadZone Exists - The Statutory Requirement and the Reality in Schools

From September 2026, all UK schools are required to teach children about change, loss, and bereavement as part of statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). This requirement recognises an important truth: children are experiencing loss, change, grief, and uncertainty earlier and more frequently than ever before.

However, in practice, this requirement places significant pressure on schools and teachers. Through direct work alongside children, families, and school staff, a consistent pattern emerged: children are encouraged to "talk about feelings" without structure; emotionally loaded topics are introduced without containment; teachers are expected to signpost children to external services that often have long waiting lists or no capacity; and safeguarding responsibility increases, but emotional tools do not.

This creates risk: children open emotional material they cannot yet process; teachers carry emotional and safeguarding responsibility they are not trained for; and parents feel anxious, helpless, and excluded. HeadZone was created to respond directly to this gap - not by replacing services, but by building emotional skills inside the child and providing structure inside the classroom.

2. The Wider Context - Issues Facing Children Today

Children today are growing up in a world shaped by increased exposure to death, illness, and family change; online spaces where harmful content is easily accessible; social comparison and identity pressure; digital grief, online loss, and persistent connection; and early exposure to AI without guidance or literacy. Emotional challenges are no longer occasional or isolated; they are embedded in daily life, both offline and online. Without emotional literacy, children internalise distress, act it out behaviourally, disengage from learning, or rely on crisis intervention later. HeadZone meets children in the world they inhabit - the classroom and the digital space - and teaches skills they can carry for life.

3. Founder Context - Lived Experience, Training, and Professional Practice

HeadZone was founded by Rukhiya Budden, an integrative psychotherapist and child mental health practitioner with over ten years' professional experience working alongside adults, children, families, and schools. HeadZone was developed following Rukhiya Budden's completion of specialist training with CBUK to deliver education on grief, loss, and bereavement to teachers in schools, during which she consistently observed high levels of overwhelm among teaching staff. These experiences exposed a clear gap between statutory requirements and the practical capacity of schools to deliver emotionally and digitally complex learning safely. HeadZone addresses this by meeting children in their digital space and providing a structured platform where teachers hold space for creativity, unconscious processing, and learning, while the system manages containment, safeguarding referral pathways, and emotional regulation.

4. The Inner Compass Heart Framework - Aligned to the OECD

HeadZone's educational spine is its own **Inner Compass Heart Framework** - an educational (not clinical) approach that helps children understand themselves, others and the world through self-awareness, empathy, perspective-taking, imagination, creativity and a secure sense of self. It operationalises the human capabilities the **OECD Learning Compass 2030** identifies as central to flourishing - creating new value, reconciling tensions and taking responsibility - rather than reducing a child to a wellbeing score. In an age of AI these human capabilities matter more, not less: HeadZone helps children **understand themselves before AI defines them** - ahead of the Government's curriculum reform embedding digital, media and AI literacy from 2028, and the growing expectation that every school holds an AI-use policy.

5. What HeadZone Is - Education, Not Therapy

HeadZone is an education platform. It does not diagnose. It does not treat. It does not provide therapy. Its purpose is upstream early-intervention emotional literacy, teaching children how to recognise emotions, regulate their nervous system, express themselves safely, and ask for help appropriately - supporting prevention and early intervention without turning classrooms into clinical spaces.

HeadZone sits firmly in the **early-intervention and prevention** space: a **whole-school, explicitly non-clinical** tool that builds skills *before* difficulties escalate, reaching every child early - including those with SEND - and working alongside, never in place of, clinical services.

6. The HeadZone Model - How a Lesson Works (Human in the Loop)

HeadZone changes the role of the teacher. Rather than becoming a first responder to trauma disclosures or a therapist without training, the teacher holds space while the platform contains, regulates and routes safely.

Lessons are delivered through creative mediums - video, music, poetry and story - rather than slides. A lesson has two phases. First the teacher leads a short **whole-class engagement** on the whiteboard (a welcome video and a group exercise), so the class arrives at the topic together and the teacher sets the emotional tone. Pupils then **enter the portal for their own self-guided journey**, at their own pace, with the teacher present in the room. HeadZone runs in a **digital mode** (pupils on devices) or a **whiteboard/paper mode** for classrooms without one-to-one devices, and content never crosses between the primary and secondary phases.

This design keeps **AI use responsible and always human-in-the-loop**: the teacher facilitates, the school's DSL oversees safeguarding, and any AI-supported reflection routes a child to a real person when needed. Children are given choice, predictability and agency, reducing unconscious material related to death, loss or change spilling unmanaged into the classroom.

7. What HeadZone Offers - The Full Service

7.1 Curriculum-Aligned Emotional Literacy Modules (Age-Banded)

Modules are delivered in age-appropriate formats: Ages 5-7 play-based, visual, self- and teacher-guided; Ages 8-11 self-guided, structured reflection with creative processing; Ages 12-18 guided independence with clear boundaries. The initial module supports statutory learning on grief, loss, and change. **Tier 1 (Grief, Loss and Change) runs across a full academic year - Term 1 Death, Term 2 Change, Term 3 Loss** - available from September 2026; Tiers 2-4 are on the development roadmap.

7.2 Jannah & Pepo - Diverse Digital Grief Stories

Licensed Jannah & Pepo illustrated stories are embedded directly into sessions. The series begins with "The Healing Drum of Kenya", with a new story, "The Empty Chair", joining it, and is co-authored and narrated by their young co-author - an authentic child's voice. The stories reflect diverse cultures, families, and lived experiences, provide gentle entry points into difficult topics, and build empathy and emotional language. They are educational story prompts, not therapeutic interventions.

7.3 Animated and Creative Content - Meeting Children Where They Are

HeadZone uses animated, story-based and creative content to support focus and engagement, reduce cognitive load, and make emotionally complex learning accessible. For many children, animation and creative media create safety before language.

7.4 Guided Student Emotional Literacy Journey

Each self-guided session follows a predictable flow: join (class code and nickname); before check-in; simplified child-friendly psychological concepts; story time with mentalisation embedded in reflection questions; reflection prompt; Lifeline invitation; creative choice; creative activity; Inner Garden growth; breathing and grounding; after check-in; optional self-referral; completion acknowledgement; and session rating.

7.5 Lifeline Tool - Mapping Support

The Lifeline helps children identify past, present, and future changes, feelings, helpers, and values, building practical help-seeking skills.

7.6 Creative Processing Tools

Children choose from drawing, mandala colouring, writing prompts, symbolic or sandplay-inspired activities, and memory-based reflection. Choice protects autonomy.

7.7 Regulation and Grounding

Guided breathing and grounding exercises support nervous system regulation, emotional closure, and readiness to return to learning.

7.8 Child Self-Referral Autonomy

Children can choose to self-refer using a simple prompt, which routes safely to safeguarding pathways.

7.9 Digital Safety and AI Education (Tier 2 - roadmap)

HeadZone's roadmap extends the curriculum to digital safety and AI education - understanding online risks, recognising harmful content, knowing how to seek help, and developing safe digital boundaries. These modules are part of Tier 2 and are in development; Tier 1 (Grief, Loss and Change) is the module available for September 2026.

7.10 AI Support Check-in - a Space to Talk Things Through, with a Human Always in the Loop

The AI Support Check-in is a brief, self-reflective space for a pupil to talk things through, for secondary pupils in **Year 9 and above (age 13+)**, controlled at school-enrolment level rather than by pupil self-declaration. It is deliberately small: **up to four check-ins, each capped at five minutes**. It is built on OpenAI (gpt-4o) and processes **message text only, with no pupil identifiers**. Children are told clearly they are talking to an AI, not a person; it is explicitly **not** a counsellor, therapist, friend, or a substitute for a real person, and it does not diagnose, score, or give clinical advice - it helps a child explore their own understanding.

A human is always the final option. Every message is screened for crisis language (for example self-harm or suicide). If anything is detected, the tool immediately steps back - it tells the child it is not the right source of help - signposts **Childline (0800 1111), Shout (text 85258), 999** and a trusted adult or the school's DSL, and **the school's DSL is notified in real time**. The tool never counsels a disclosure and never promises confidentiality; children are told the check-in is monitored for safety.

Responsible-AI alignment. HeadZone's UK deployment is not within the scope of the EU AI Act; were it offered to EU users it would be a **limited-risk** system meeting the Act's **Article 50 transparency** duty, and it is clear of the **Article 5 prohibitions** - no manipulation or dark patterns, no exploitation of children's age-related vulnerability, and **no emotion recognition** (HeadZone performs no facial, voice or physiological affect detection). It is not high-risk under Annex III, as it makes no decisions about a pupil's education. HeadZone's practices are **consistent with the principles of the G7 Hiroshima Process International Code of Conduct (2023)** - safety-by-design, transparency about capabilities and limits, human oversight and privacy protection - and support schools in meeting the **ICO Age Appropriate Design Code** and the **DfE's 2025 generative-AI-in-education guidance**. The check-in is built on OpenAI in line with OpenAI's usage policies and Under-18 API guidance. HeadZone does not claim certification or endorsement by any of these bodies.

Designed for reach. Specialist in-school human services are essential but capacity-limited, reaching only a minority of England's schools, while every school must now teach change, loss and bereavement. HeadZone is designed to reach every child early and upstream, and to route to a human whenever it matters, complementing rather than replacing specialist services.

7.11 Inner Garden - Symbolic Emotional Growth

The Inner Garden is a private, full-screen living world each child grows over repeat visits. A tree grows through stages at every visit; children plant and tend decorations; and visiting creatures, the seasons, and day and night change over time - so a child sees their own change reflected both inwardly and in the world around them. The garden mirrors a child's reflection back to them in nature and connects their inner world to the living world. When a child completes their journey, a **real tree is planted in their name through Tree Nation**, and they receive its details and a completion certificate.

7.12 Tree Nation Partnership

Each child's engagement contributes to planting a real tree via Tree Nation, nurturing a felt reason to love and protect nature and connecting inner change to the living world. For the **Grief and Loss subject**, and recognising that teaching this subject surfaces need, HeadZone also **donates 10p to Child Bereavement UK for every pupil self-referral** surfaced - channelling funding into the specialist bereavement sector. The tree gift and this donation apply to the Grief and Loss subject and are reviewed for future tiers.

7.13 Role-Based Safeguarding Dashboards (DSL and SENCO)

Access is role-based. The **DSL dashboard** shows self-referrals, alert indicators, notes and actions, and a seven-year audit trail aligned with KCSIE. The **SENCO** has a separate, scoped view for SEND and wellbeing (SDQ) concerns, kept apart from DSL safeguarding casework. Teachers have their own view. A scoped **counselling-provider portal** lets a school's counsellor or an external counselling provider receive and act on referrals for that school, under the school's control.

7.14 Teacher Dashboard - with AI Assistant

Teachers can access modules, follow scripted lesson flows, create classes, launch sessions, and download printable packs, supported by an AI assistant for lesson preparation. No pupil progress tracking or scoring is provided.

7.15 Parent Portal

Parents can access curriculum information, guidance for conversations at home, and signposting resources. Children's work is not visible by default.

7.16 Space Wellbeing (optional add-on)

A self-led wellbeing space a child can enter with a space PIN, configured for a school's own support settings - for example **ACE provision, a Student Support Unit (SSU), SSM mentoring, SENCO spaces and tutor time** - for a brief private check-in and a safe route to ask for help. **Planned enhancement (roadmap):** self-led SDQ reflection that gently guides a child toward priority emotional-literacy modules.

7.17 Data Minimisation by Design

HeadZone is built to collect as little as possible. Children take part with a self-chosen nickname; a first name is held **encrypted** only so staff can identify a child for safeguarding; no dates of birth, addresses, NHS numbers, photos or videos are collected; and **no pupil identifiers are ever sent to any AI**. Minimisation is designed in, not added on.

8. Evidence from Our First Pilots

In July 2026 HeadZone ran its first two pilots at The Langley Academy (Year 7 and Year 9); **58 pupils took part**. Around 90% mapped a significant change or loss and two-thirds a bereavement; **55 pupils grew an Inner Garden**; **8 pupils used the private self-referral route** to ask a trusted adult for help; and pupils scored a mean of **80% on a grief-comprehension quiz**. This is early, single-school evidence, offered honestly rather than as proof of population-level effect.

9. Privacy by Design

HeadZone collects the minimum data needed and hosts it in the **UK**. Children sign in with a class code and a self-chosen nickname (with a password) and can be **remembered across visits**, so their Inner Garden and work persist. Other children see only the nickname; a child's **first name is held encrypted** and linked to the nickname on the class roster, so **authorised school staff (the class teacher and the DSL) can identify a child for safeguarding**. Dates of birth, addresses, NHS numbers, sensitive demographic data, photos and videos are **not** collected. All infrastructure and pupil data are UK-hosted (AWS London; database Neon, London). Two optional AI features (a 13+ reflection session and the teacher assistant) send **message text only** to OpenAI in the United States under UK-approved transfer safeguards (**IDTA/SCCs**); this text carries **no**

pupil identifiers.

10. Accessibility, Inclusion and SEND

HeadZone is designed to be inclusive and accessible: age-banded language, printable packs for offline delivery, compatibility with school devices, and a WCAG 2.1 AA design target. Its self-paced, choice-led format - predictable in structure, with no marking or comparison between pupils - suits children with **social, emotional and mental-health (SEMH)** needs and other additional needs, and it is used in inclusion settings such as ACE provision and Student Support Units. HeadZone supports a **whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing** and the school's **graduated response**: the SENCO has a scoped view for SEND and wellbeing (SDQ) concerns, and the platform surfaces need early (**early help**) while always routing to a human when it matters. HeadZone is an inclusive educational tool, not a SEND diagnostic or clinical intervention.

11. Security, Certifications, and Compliance

Area	Detail
Encryption in transit	TLS 1.3
Encryption at rest	AES-256
Staff authentication	bcrypt and TOTP multi-factor authentication
Access control	Role-based permissions
Penetration testing	Cyber Essentials Plus certified; independent penetration testing at least annually (first independent test in progress)
Data hosting	UK-hosted (AWS London; Neon, London). Optional AI features process message text via OpenAI (US) under IDTA/SCCs; no pupil identifiers are sent
Compliance	UK GDPR, KCSIE, ICO Age Appropriate Design Code, and safeguarding requirements

12. Support and Implementation (Buyer Onboarding)

HeadZone supports buyer onboarding for local authorities, multi-academy trusts, and schools through **one-click organisation activation**, onboarding-code issuance, and bulk activation for trusts and local authorities, with standard support channels as specified in the SLA. The platform is a single, centralised system, built for national-scale delivery: it is capable of supporting rollout across **over twenty-six thousand schools**, with access provisioned at organisation level through one-click bulk activation, so no child is excluded due to geography, school type, or local infrastructure. The underlying platform architecture is proprietary to HeadZone.

13. Safeguarding & Referral Pathways

HeadZone includes built-in safeguarding features with DSL referral pathways to appropriate external services.

DSL Referral Service	Description	Status
Place2Be	School-based mental health charity	Available
Kooth	Online mental wellbeing community	Available
Childline	Confidential counselling service for children	Available
Shout	24/7 crisis text line (text 85258)	Available
Winston's Wish	Childhood bereavement charity	Available
CBUK	Child Bereavement UK	Available
School Counsellor	Internal school counselling service	Available
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Available
Planned System Integration	Description	Status
CPOMS	Child Protection Online Management System	Planned
External referral pathways	Direct referral-pathway integrations with external providers	Planned

Note: System integrations are aspirational roadmap items, subject to partnership agreements and API availability from third-party providers. Naming an external service as a signposting destination does not imply any partnership with, or endorsement by, that service.

14. Future Modules and Roadmap

Planned educational modules include: Digital Safety; AI Education; Anxiety; Loneliness and Connection; Focus and Attention; Anger and Regulation; Belonging and Wellbeing; and age-appropriate Self-Harm Awareness. Planned platform enhancements include Space Wellbeing self-led SDQ reflection routing to priority modules, and the safeguarding integrations listed in section 13.

15. Pricing and Ordering

For full pricing details, please refer to the HeadZone Pricing Document or the G-Cloud Digital Marketplace listing.

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