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E-petition 176555 relating to mental health education in schools

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Summary

E-petition 176555 relating to mental health education in schools, will be debated in Westminster Hall on 6 November 2017. Starting at 4:30pm, the debate will last 90 minutes.

This petition calls for the Government to make mental health education a mandatory part of primary and secondary education. At the moment, schools decide whether, and how, to provide such support, and there are concerns that support is better in some areas than others.

The Government responded to the petition, noting that schools are encouraged to teach about mental health in Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) and that the PSHE Association, with Government funding, has produced a guide on preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing. Since then, the PSHE association has also published a programme of study, which includes mental health at key stages 4-5 and social media at key stages 2-5.

In January 2017 the Prime Minister announced that all teachers in England will, after 3 years, receive mental health first aid training. In February 2017, the Government also released the results of a pilot in which better links were created between schools and child and adolescent mental health services. The Government has committed to expanding this pilot.

A green paper on children and young people's mental health is expected later this year.

Contents

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

Schools are able to decide on the provision of mental health support for their pupils. Schools are not required to report centrally on the services they provide, but it has been estimated that 70% of secondary schools and 52% of primary schools in England offer counselling services.[1]

The Government wants to increase teaching about mental health in schools, as well as improving access to mental health support in schools and referrals to more specialist services.

Education Minister, Nick Gibb, said in a recent debate that the Government "want to ensure every child is taught about mental wellbeing", including being taught about the risks of the internet and its potential impact on mental health.[2]

A green paper on children and young people's mental health is due to be published by the end of 2017, which will set out plans to improve services in schools, universities and for families.

> […] in the upcoming Green Paper on children and young people's mental health, there will be an expansion of some of the work that has already gone on around providing mental health first aid and various other things in schools […] [3]

The Government has reiterated that although schools play an important part in promoting mental wellbeing, teachers are not mental health professionals, and need backing from a range of specialised services.[4] There has been work to strengthen partnerships between education providers and mental health services, through a new pilot linking schools with single points of contact in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). The Government has said the pilot has led to improvements in higher quality and more timely referrals to specialist services for pupils.[5] The pilot initially reached 255 schools, and will be extended to 1,200 schools. The Government will also be looking at building on this work in the forthcoming green paper.

Concerns have been raised that provision of mental health support in schools is currently patchy. This was noted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in a recent review of CAMHS services. The CQC noted that when pupils can access high-quality counselling through their schools, it can be an effective form of early intervention. However, the CQC said it is not always available, and in some cases there are concerns about the quality of support on offer.[6]

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[1]   Care Quality Commission, Review of children and young people's mental health services; Phase one report, October 2017, p23
[2]   HC Deb 4 July 2017 c1036
[3]   HL Deb 30 October 2017 c1160
[4]   PQ 501 on schools: mental health, 4 July 2017
[5]   PQ 501 on schools: mental health, 4 July 2017
[6]   Care Quality Commission, Review of children and young people's mental health services; Phase one report, October 2017, pp23-24

Further detail is provided in this debate pack and in the House of Commons Library briefing on Children and young people's mental health – policy, CAMHS services, funding and education (June 2017).

1.1 Prevalence of mental health issues among children and young people

It is estimated that one in ten children between the ages of 5 and 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder.[7] The Mental Health Policy Group, an alliance of mental health bodies, made the same estimate in 2014; further, it reported that 75% of children and young people experiencing a mental health problem were thought to not access any treatment.[8] New prevalence data, commissioned by the Department of Health, is due to be published in 2018.

1.2 Government policy on mental health support through schools

In January 2017, during the Prime Minister's speech at the Charity Commission annual meeting, it was announced that every secondary school in England will be offered mental health first aid training. The programme, which includes an investment of £200,000 in Government funding in its first year, will start with 1,000 staff and extend in years 2 and 3 to cover every secondary school in England. Teachers and staff will receive practical advice on how to deal with issues such as depression and anxiety, suicide and psychosis, self-harm, and eating disorders.[9]

In December 2015, the then Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan, announced pilot areas across the country to improve mental health services for children in schools. The Mental Health Services and Schools Link Pilots tested a named single point of contact in 255 schools and in 22 pilot areas, to enable more joined-up working between schools and health services. The pilots received a £3 million investment, jointly funded by the Department for Education and NHS England.[10] The Government have committed to an expansion of the pilot to a further 1200 schools and colleges.

An evaluation of the pilots was published in February 2017. The report was positive about the impact of the pilots, but raised concerns about the resources available for rollout nationwide:

> At a national level, the pilot programme very much demonstrates the potential added value of providing schools and NHS CAMHS with opportunities to engage in joint planning and training activities, improving the clarity of local pathways to specialist

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[7]   Green,H., Mcginnity, A., Meltzer, Ford, T., Goodman,R. 2005 Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain: 2004. Office for National Statistics.

[8]   Mental Health Policy Group, A manifesto for better mental health, August 2014

[9]   Gov.uk, PM: mental health training for teachers will "make a real difference to children's lives", 27 June 2017

[10]   Department for Education, Hundreds of schools benefit from £3m mental health investment, 3 December 2015

mental health support, and establishing named points of contact in schools and NHS CAMHS. At the same time, the evaluation has underlined the lack of available resources to deliver this offer universally across all schools at this stage within many of the pilot areas. Given the pilots show that additional resources would need to be allocated locally to deliver the offer universally across all schools, further work is needed to understand how sustainable delivery models can be developed.[11]

In March 2015 the Government published a blueprint for school counselling services[12], which provides schools with practical advice on how to deliver high-quality school based counselling.[13]

In June 2014, in consultation with head teachers, the Department of Health published non-statutory guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools.[14] This advises schools on identifying and supporting pupils whose behaviour suggests they may have unmet mental health needs. The guidance provides information on:

- how and when to refer to CAMHS
- practical advice to support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- strengthening pupil resilience
- tools to identify pupils who are likely to need extra support
- where and how to access community support

In March 2014, the Department of Health funded a website called MindEd to help professionals who work with children and young people to recognise the early signs of mental health problems. In response to a PQ in May 2014, the then Minister for Care Services said:

> The Department funded the MindEd website which will help anyone working with children, including all school staff, to spot the signs of mental health problems in children and help them get the support they need. Spotting the signs of mental health problems early in children and young people is essential to prevent problems from escalating and continuing into adulthood.[15]

1.3 PSHE education

What is PSHE?

The PSHE Association defines personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) as:

> …a planned programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future.

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[11] Department for Education, Mental Health Services and Schools Link Pilots: Evaluation brief, February 2017,p7

[12] Department for Education, Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future, 17 February 2016

[13] PQ 1025 [on Mental Health Services: Young People], 8 June 2015

[14] Department for Education, Mental health and behaviour in schools, June 2014

[15] HC Deb 6 May 2014 c137W

What provision do schools have to make?

PSHE is a non-statutory subject, but the Government expects all schools in England to make provision for it.

In September 2013, following an internal review, the Department for Education issued new guidance on PSHE, which makes clear that it is largely up to schools to determine what is taught; it also states that the then Government did not intend to publish new non-statutory programmes of study for PSHE.

The Government provides funding to various bodies, principally the PSHE Association, to support the teaching of PSHE.

Children and Social Work Act 2017: statutory PSHE?

In March 2017, the Education Secretary, Justine Greening, announced her intention to put Relationships and Sex Education on a statutory footing. She also announced her intention to create a power to make PSHE statutory in future, following further work and consultation.

The *Children and Social Work Act 2017* provides for PSHE to be made statutory at all schools in England through regulations.

No timescale of when PSHE might be made statutory has been provided.

PSHE Association programme of study

The PSHE Association has published its own programme of study for PSHE, covering Key Stages 1-5.

The programme includes focus on a variety of areas, including diversity and equality, relationships of different kinds, personal financial choices, drugs education, the importance of respecting and protecting the environment, and people's rights and responsibilities as members of families and other groups, and as citizens.

- **Mental health** is part of the PSHE Association programme of study at Key Stages 4 and 5 (ages 14-18), covering issues such as the maintenance of personal wellbeing, and supporting others with mental health problems.
- **Social media** is also part of the programme, during Key Stages 2-5 (ages 7-18), with relevant topics including bullying via social media, the potential distorting effect of social media on information, and the impact of sex in social media, such as from the sharing of explicit images.

Further information is available in the Library briefing Personal, social, health and economic education in schools (England), CBP 7303.

1.4 Joint Education and Health Committee inquiry on children and young people's mental health – the role of education (2017)

Following the two recent reports on children and young people's mental health by the Health and Education Committees, late in 2016 the two

Committees started a [joint inquiry](#) into education and children's mental health. They considered the co-ordination between health and education services, the success of early intervention and prevention in schools and colleges and the impact of budget pressures. They also examined how far teachers should go to support children who are experiencing mental health problems and whether further training and skills are required. The role of Ofsted and the influence of social media, including whether technology companies need to take more responsibility for cyberbullying and other online threats, were also scrutinised.

The Committee's report[16] welcomed the Government's commitment to make PSHE mandatory in schools and colleges, and called for the promotion of well-being to be embedded throughout the education system. They also noted that strong partnerships between the education sector and mental health services improve the provision for children's mental health and well-being. However, the report raised concerns about significant variation in the quality of the links between schools and colleges and CAMHS and in the level of financial support. Their report included the following specific recommendations:

- Schools' approach to mental health and well-being should be properly taken into account and reflected in Ofsted's inspection regime and reporting.
- The Government should strengthen mental health training and continuing professional development for teachers to ensure they are properly equipped to recognise the early signs of mental illness in their pupils and have the confidence to be able to signpost or refer to the right support.
- The Government should commit sufficient resource and build on the CAMHS link pilot to ensure that effective services can be established in all parts of the country.
- While recognising the important role of parents and social media providers, schools and colleges should help children and young people develop the skills and ability to make wiser and more informed choices about their use of social media.

The Government provided its response in September 2017.[17] The Government welcomed the Committees' focus on the role of education in mental health, and said it is important that children are taught about the risks of social media, and the potential impact on their mental wellbeing. The Government will be considering how relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE), and PSHE can contribute to what pupils are already taught about internet safety as part of the curriculum.

The Government agreed with the Committee that it is important for teachers to understand mental health issue and be able to identify

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[16]   For the full report, see House of Commons Education and Health Committees, _Children and young people's mental health – the role of education_, First Joint Report of Session 2016–17, HC 849.

[17]   Children and young people's mental health—the role of education: [Government Response to the First Joint Report of the Education and Health Committees of Session 2016–17](#)

where pupils might have an underlying mental health problem, and noted a new initial teacher training framework, published in July 2016, which includes specific detail on mental health, in order to fulfil the commitment that every secondary school in the country will be offered mental health first aid training.

1.5 Care Quality Commission: Review of children and young people's mental health services

In January 2017, the Government commissioned the Care Quality Commission to carry out a major thematic review of children and adolescent mental health services across the country, with input from Ofsted. The first phase of the review was published in October 2017. It noted the positive impact that schools and teachers can have in supporting the mental health of pupils. However, the CQC raised concerns about the quality and availability of mental health support in schools:

> There is wide recognition of the vital role that schools play in supporting the mental health of their pupils. From tackling bullying, to identify in the early signs of mental health problems, to promoting wellbeing through all aspects of school life, schools are well-placed to support children and young people with their social, emotional and mental wellbeing. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are also important, as teachers may be among the first adults to notice the signs that a child or young person's mental health is deteriorating.

> Some sources suggest that schools are doing this well in some areas, and many schools offer mental health services in the schools environment. Around 70% of secondary schools and 52% of primary schools in England offer counselling services. When children and young people can access high-quality counselling through their schools, it can be an effective form of early intervention.

> Schools-based mental health support is valued by children, young people, their families and carers, but it is not always available. A lack of support in schools is one of the key concerns that children and young people have raised. Children and young people say they want schools-based counselling to be available and they want it to be offered in a more flexible way. For example, some children and young people would prefer online counselling support, and some would like counselling sessions to be offered outside of normal school hours so it does not have a detrimental effect on their participation in lessons and other school activities.

> Even where support is available in schools, there are concerns about the quality of support on offer. School leaders report they do not always have the expertise or time to assure themselves that the schools-based counselling services they commission offer high-quality support.

> Many children and young people want schools to offer more information and education about mental health, earlier on in pupils' school years.

> They want schools to take action to reduce stigma and improve teachers' and pupils' understanding of mental health problems so

that they can identify and act on the early signs of poor mental health.[18]

1.6 Sector commentary on school-based support for mental health issues

In November 2016, the Education Policy Institute's (EPI) Independent Commission on Children and Young People's Mental Health published a new report, Time to deliver.[19]

In relation to schools this called for a "high profile, national government programme to ensure a stronger focus on mental health and wellbeing within schools." This, the Commission said, should include:

- Evidence-based training for teachers.

- A trained lead for mental health and wellbeing in every school, college and university.

- Schools, colleges and universities adopting the WHO recommended Whole School Approach model.

- Within its existing framework categories, [school inspectorate] Ofsted having regard to wellbeing in any inspection of a school or college.

- Mandatory updated high quality, statutory PSHE [personal, social, health and economic education] in all schools and colleges, with dedicated time for mental health.[20]

In April 2016, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) argued that secondary schools were facing a "perfect storm" and were being forced to "pick up the pieces" in terms of pupils' mental health. It said that in 2016, "90 per cent of secondary school head teachers reported an increase in rates of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression among their pupils over the previous five years." Secondary schools, it said, were ideally placed to act as "the hubs from which early intervention provision is delivered by health professionals, alongside wider provision elsewhere in the community". However, it was critical of the Government's planned transformation of mental health services for children and young people, saying that the changes had "so far failed to give schools the central role that was envisaged."[21]

1.7 Suicide prevention in schools

This section briefly sets out the role of educational institutions in helping to prevent suicide.

The Suicide Prevention Strategy for England

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[18] Care Quality Commission, Review of children and young people's mental health services; Phase one report, October 2017, pp23-24

[19] EPI, Independent Commission on Children and Young People's Mental Health, Time to Deliver, November 2016.

[20] Ibid, pp9-10

[21] IPPR, Education, education, mental health: Supporting secondary schools to play a central role in early intervention mental health services, May 2016

The [Suicide Prevention Strategy for England](#) identifies children and young people as a group for whom "a tailored approach to their mental health is necessary if their suicide risk is to be reduced."[22] The strategy states that an effective school-based suicide prevention strategy would include:

1.   a co-ordinated school response to people at risk and staff training;

2.   awareness among staff to help identify high risk signs or behaviours (depression, drugs, self-harm) and

3.   protocols on how to respond;

4.   signposting parents to sources of information on signs of emotional problems and risk;

5.   a clear referral routes to specialist mental health services.[23]

The strategy adds that "appropriate training on suicide and self-harm should be available for staff working in schools and colleges".[24]

Noting that interventions at a community level after a suicide can help prevent copycat and suicide clusters and ensure support is available, the strategy states that this approach may be used in schools, colleges and universities. It then highlights the Samaritans' Step-by-Step post-suicide intervention service for schools across the UK, whereby Samaritans branches provide guidance and information on the impact of suicide on school communities, and ways to promote recovery and prevent suicide clusters.[25]

Third progress report of the Suicide Prevention Strategy

The [third annual progress report](#) of the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England was published in January 2017. The report emphasised the "key role" that schools and colleges have to play in promoting good mental health for children and young people. It then highlighted Government proposals and actions in this area, including:

•   Providing mental health first aid training in schools

•   Expanding [pilots](#) to establish single points of contact for mental health to more schools.[26]

•   Funding the PSHE Association to produce guidance on teaching about mental health problems

•   Providing funding to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

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[22]   HM Government, *Preventing Suicide in England: A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives,* September 2012, p6.
[23]   As above, p22.
[24]   As above, p17.
[25]   HM Government, *Preventing Suicide in England: A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives,* September 2012, p41.
[26]   Department of Health, *Preventing suicide in England: Third progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives,* January 2017, p23. See [Mental health services and schools link pilot: evaluation](#) for further information on the initial pilots.

The progress report additionally stated that the Department for Education (DfE) had been looking at what good peer support for mental wellbeing looks like in schools, colleges, community groups and online. It added that the Government would also be analysing suicide rates of people at university to explore any lessons to be learned and increase awareness of suicide risk and mental wellbeing.[27]

Safeguarding in schools

The suicide prevention strategy notes that preventing suicide in children and young people is closely linked to safeguarding and the work of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

A parliamentary question in 2015 asked what steps the Government had taken to reduce the incidence of suicide in schools. With regards to what schools should do where they have immediate concerns about a risk of suicide, the response stated:

> Where schools have immediate concerns about the risk of suicide, their safeguarding role is set out in our statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education. This emphasises that schools should have a designated senior lead, with responsibility for the handling of safeguarding concerns, in place. Where schools have immediate concerns about the risk of suicide, an immediate referral should be made to children's social care.[28]

The safeguarding guidance also applies to sixth form colleges and general further education colleges and relates to their responsibilities towards children under the age of 18.[29]

Further information on the safeguarding responsibilities of schools in England is set out in the Library Briefing, Safeguarding in English schools.

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[27] Department of Health, *Preventing suicide in England: Third progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives*, January 2017, p23

[28] PQ 228146, 23 March 2015.

[29] Department for Education, *Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges*, September 2016, p3.

2. Sector comment

Support in schools

Children's mental health green paper 'to feature joint-working duty', *Children and Young People Now*, 24 October 2017

- An article considering the green paper on children's mental health, due for release later this year. For further comment, see the article Mental health paper must join up provision, Children and Young People Now, 26 September 2017

Kitemark set to show schools taking mental health 'seriously', *Times Educational Supplement*, 3 October 2017

- Leeds Beckett's Centre for Mental Health in Schools has proposed a kitemark awarded for effective mental health strategies

Government puts £200k behind plan for mental health first-aiders in every secondary, *Times Educational Supplement*, 27 June 2017

- Following the announcement of £200,000 to train 3,000 teachers on dealing with mental health issues amongst pupils, this article looks at some of the detail and commentary.

Mental Health training for secondary school staff, National Union of Teachers, 27 June 2017

- Comment on the £200,000 of funding to help teachers understand and identify mental health issues in children, noting that exam-related stress and the lack of clinical help outside of school need to be addressed.
- Similar comments were made by the NUT on 9 January 2017, following the Prime Minister's announcements: see Mental health well being of children and young people

Mental health training for secondary teachers a welcome first step, says NAHT, National Association of Head Teachers, 27 June 2017

- Press release following the announcement that secondary school teachers will be offered training in mental health

Assembling the perfect team to protect at-risk pupils, *Times Educational Supplement*, 16 June 2017 [available via Nexis News]

- An article arguing that "breaking down barriers between schools and mental health services is essential"

Education funding crisis is hitting mental health support, Association of School and College Leaders, 2 May 2017

- Includes link to a survey which suggests that schools have had to cut back on mental health support services

Government must review the effect of budget reductions on mental health provision, says NAHT, National Association of Head Teachers, 2 May 2017

- Following the publication of the Health and Education Select Committee report, Children and young people's mental health — the role of education, the article welcomes its conclusions, in particular the fact that cuts in funding are leading to less in-school mental health support.

[Top Ofsted rating should reflect good mental health support, say experts](), *Children and Young People Now*, 15 March 2017

- Leading mental health experts have told MPs that Ofsted should analyse schools' efforts to tackle mental health problems

[A silent epidemic,]() Association of School and College Leaders, 18 March 2017

- Surveys are showing an increased awareness of mental health issues but the specialist services required to deal with the problem are not available

[Half of schools struggle to get mental health support for pupils](), National Association of Head Teachers, 10 February 2017

- Includes link to a survey on schools' experiences. The survey looks at how often a school struggles to find the right out-of-school support, and what barriers they face in doing so.

[Mind's Response to Theresa May's speech](), Mind, 12 January 2017

- The charity Mind welcomes the mental health first aid training for teachers but emphasises that the NHS must also receive support

['Teachers are constantly forced to fill the void as the gaps in children's mental health services grow'](), *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 January 2017

[Young people need better access to specialist mental health support](), Association of School and College Leaders, 9 January 2017

- Press release following Government announcement that mental health first aid training will be offered to all teachers. This article argues that while this may help, ultimately it is the availability of support outside of school that causes the most difficulties

[Survey of Schools' Work with Child and Adolescent Mental Health](), *Children and Young People Now*, 7 June 2016

- Considers a survey carried out in schools about their provision of mental health support. This gives an idea of different training and teaching strategies are used and to what extent they are used.

[School leaders voice concerns over children's mental health care](), Association of School and College Leaders, 5 March 2016

- Contains link to survey which looks at how schools are experiencing mental health issues. The figures indicate that cases are rising and that many schools do offer support. However schools find it difficult to find a place for a pupil in local CAMHS

[Susan Young - Education Otherwise](), National Association of Head Teachers, 11 February 2016

- Commentary on how exams are one of the causes of mental health problems. The author argues that prevention is better than a cure for such concerns, through teaching PSHE, for instance. But the author also highlights that schools are not the only problem.

Factors impacting on children's mental health

Mental health green paper will tackle risks of social media, Schools Week, 24 October 2017

- Schools Week reports that the green paper on children's mental health will consider how children can be taught to handle social media

New GCSEs are increasing stress and anxiety, Association of School and College Leaders, 24 August 2017

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Students in Exam Factories, National Union of Teachers, 15 April 2017

- Also include link to an independent study, commissioned by the NUT, on the pressures caused by exams on pupils

3. Press articles

E-petition

Compulsory Mental Health Education Is Essential In Schools, *Huffington Post*, 23 October 2017

- An article by one of the people behind the e-petition

Mental health education 'should be compulsory in schools', *iNews*, 9 May 2017

- An article about the petition

Articles about mental health support in schools

Make PSHE lessons compulsory to reduce 'worrying' levels of self-harm among pupils, urge researchers, Independent, 30 August 2017

- This article summarises research from the University of Hertfordshire which outlines how important PSHE lessons can be for improving children's wellbeing. The original journal article is called Self-harm in adolescence: protective health assets in the family, school and community

Teachers Getting Training To Deal With Pupils' Mental Health Issues, *Huffington Post*, 27 June 2017

- Published after the announcement of £200,000 of funding for mental health first aid training for teachers, this articles outlines where this will be rolled out initially, and summarises some comments

May needs to put young people's mental health at the centre of policy, *Times*, 22 June 2017 [Available via Library subscription]

- An article calling for mental health to be part of teacher training and allowing "local councils to top slice 6.5 per cent of the pupil premium to ensure every school has mental health support available to pupils"

Mindfulness and wellbeing lessons can make school pupils even less happy, experts claim, *Independent*, 30 May 2017

- Some experts fear that "the younger generation are being brought up to think of happiness as something that cannot be inherent, but must be taught." They are also concerned that there are risks, particularly for children who had experienced trauma.

Schools cutting mental health services to plug funding gaps, warn MPs, *Guardian*, 2 May 2017

- Talking about the inquiry led by the Health and Education Select Committees, and how they have heard evidence to suggest that budget cuts usually led to cuts in mental health support services as a first port of call.

Offer mental health classes, schools told, *Times*, 17 April 2017 [Available via Library subscription]

- In an open letter to the newspaper, child psychologists and psychiatrists are calling upon schools to better educate children about mental health

[Mental health problems rife among teenagers but teachers lack skills to help,](#) *Observer*, 26 March 2017

- This article discusses the results of a poll of 500 secondary school pupils carried out by the teenage mental health charity 'stem4'

[Neglect of children's emotional wellbeing is a national scandal](#), *Times*, 10 January 2017 [Available via Library subscription]

- An article written by Norman Lamb MP supporting a 'whole schools approach' to preventing mental health problems

[Promoting Good Mental Health And Wellbeing In Schools](#), *Huffington Post*, 11 November 2016

- An article written by the General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers. It argues that "the government must look at how its policies are impacting on children, at how they are affecting schools. Schools need to be backed with increased funding for mental health programmes and space in the curriculum dedicated to teaching and promoting wellbeing."
- The author also argues that better training in schools and more services available outside of schools will be vital

Factors impacting on children's mental health

[Hunt challenges social media giants on cyber-bullying](#), BBC News, 1 November 2017

- According to the BBC, Jeremy Hunt intends to ask:
    — If they can share statistics on how often cyber-bullying happens on their platforms, and what form it takes.
    — If they have information on the number of underage users, and what can be done to prevent them accessing services.
    — Whether it is possible to identify unhealthy online behaviour among teenagers.
    — And take action to try to provide advice and support.

[Social media blamed for big rise in girls self-harming](#), Sky News, 19 October 2017

- Comments on a report finding that "between 2011 and 2014, reports of self-harm among girls in Britain aged 13 to 16 rose by 68%"

[The secret lives of children and their phones](#), *Financial Times*, 6 October 2017 [Available via library subscription]

- An article that looks at the many ways in which children use their phones and its potential impact, not just on their mental health

Tough new GCSE exams risk pupils' mental health, warn school leaders, *Independent*, 23 August 2017

The truth about children and social media, *Financial Times*, 14 June 2017 [Available via library subscription]

- An article looking at the recent report, #StatusOfMind (see further reading). The author highlights how social media is used by children to "find, crystallise and assert the most intimate parts of their identity"

Facebook and Twitter 'harm young people's mental health', *Guardian*, 19 May 2017

- Comment on a recent poll that suggests that Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Twitter all have negative impacts on children's mental health

4. Parliamentary material

Bills

Schools (Mental Health and Wellbeing) Bill [HL] 2017-19

- A Bill currently before Parliament. It aims to "make provision for state-maintained schools to promote the mental health and well-being of their pupils alongside academic attainment"

Debates

Children's Wellbeing and Mental Health: Schools, HC debate, 10 January 2017, 1WH – 25WH

Social Media and Young People's Mental Health, HC debate, 02 November 2016, cc426WH – 444WH

Young People's Mental Health, HC debate, 27 October 2016, cc460-520

Mindfulness in Schools, HC debate 06 September 2016, cc111WH-119WH

Mental Health Services in Schools and Colleges, HL debate, 9 July 2015, cc.324- 340

Parliamentary Questions

Oral Questions: Mental Health: Education, 10 October 2017, cc155-6

Oral questions: Mental Wellbeing, 20 March 2017, cc623-4

Written parliamentary questions

PQ 4960 [Mental Health: Children and Young People] 18 Jul 2017

Asked by: Ruane, Chris

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department in taking to improve mental health literacy among children and young people.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price

The Prime Minister announced earlier in the year that the Department for Education would be funding a series of random control trials on preventative practice in schools. We intend to test two different approaches to teaching mental health literacy as part of these trials.

PQ3922 [Mental Health: Young People] 13 Jul 2017

Asked by: Chalk, Alex

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps the Government is taking to (a) publicise adolescent mental health issues on the internet and (b) support the prevention of adolescent mental health issues arising from social media.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price

The Government works with the online sector and other stakeholders to address the impact of potentially harmful content online given that online harms can have a negative effect on individual's mental health.

The Department has invested:

- £3 million in MindEd, an online training platform for professionals working with children and young people to recognise when a child needs mental health support; and

- £12 million between 2016-20 in Time to Change to challenge mental health stigma, which has reached 750,000 children and young people through social marketing campaigns and improved attitudes of over 4.1 million people in England.

Public Health England has also launched Rise Above, a website to build emotional resilience in young people to help deal with the pressures of growing up, including mental health.

The Government expect websites, including social media companies, to respond quickly to reports of harmful content/abusive behaviour on their networks.

The joint Department of Health and Department of Education Green Paper on children and young people's mental health will consider action to minimise the risks social media poses, whilst maximising its benefits. Work has started on the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport led cross-Government internet safety strategy which will give us the opportunity to consider issues of online safety for children and young people. We are considering how this will be taken forward under the Digital Charter.

PQ 677 [Children: Mental Health] 04 Jul 2017

Asked by: Rayner, Angela

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to publish its Green Paper on children's mental health.

Answering member: Nick Gibb

The Department for Education is working jointly with the Department of Health on a children and young people's mental health green paper, which we plan to publish by the end of the year.

PQ 70610 [Pupils: Mental Health] 20 April 2017

Asked by: McKinnell, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effect of the 11-plus exam of young people's mental health and well-being; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Edward Timpson

The Schools that Work for Everyone consultation outlined proposals for increasing the number of good school places available, including proposals to allow existing selective schools to expand and new selective schools to open. We proposed in the consultation that new and expanding schools should ensure that there are opportunities to join selective schools at different ages, such as 14 and 16, as well as 11. The consultation closed on 12

December. The government is considering the submissions received and will publish its response in due course.

Good mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the Department. We have high aspirations for all children and want them to be able to fulfil their potential, both academically and in terms of their mental health. There is a lot that schools can do to prepare pupils well to take tests and exams, and to help parents support their children. Good teaching is one of the most important factors in making sure that pupils feel ready. Good leaders know that positive mental wellbeing supports attainment, and make that part of the overall school ethos.

We want to look across the whole school system to identify where mental health provisions need to be improved, whether that is in schools or how we better connect schools into services that may be more specialised. We have supported schools by:

- Funding the PSHE Association to publish guidance and a set of age –appropriate lesson plans on teaching about mental health issues;

- Publishing of a blueprint for school counselling services which provides schools with practical, evidence-based advice on how to deliver high quality school-based counselling to all pupils;

- Issuing advice on behaviour and mental health which provides teachers with information and tools that will help them to identify pupils who need help, provide effective early support and understand when a referral to a specialist mental health service may be necessary; and

- Funding the development of MindEd, a free online resource which allows all those working with children and young people to access information on a range of mental health issues.

The Prime Minister's speech in January has further emphasised this Government's commitment to improve mental health for all children and young people and announced that the Departments for Health and Education would publish a green paper on CYP's mental health

The Green Paper aims to secure effective activity from prevention to provision of specialist support, at different stages and different settings across health, education and care settings, as well as access to services, and the role of social media.

PQ 55314 [Mental Health: Social Media] 07 Dec 2016

Asked by: Elmore, Chris

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has met representatives of any social media companies to discuss the effect of social media on child and adolescent mental health.

Answering member: Nicola Blackwood

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health has met with a range of technology companies. These meetings have covered a number of broad issues and have included some discussion around social media. A list of ministerial visits by Ministers from the Department is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-overseas-travel-and-meetings

The internet, keeping children safe online, promoting and protecting their mental health are areas of great concern not just to this Department but across Government as a whole; with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport leading on the policy of social media.

PQ HL2480 [Children: Social Media] 01 Nov 2016

Asked by: Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Prior of Brampton on 18 July (HL1279) and in the light of the recent report by NHS Digital concerning social media pressure and mental health, whether they will now conduct that research.

Answering member: Lord Prior of Brampton

The National Institute for Health Research and the Department's Policy Research Programme have no current plans to commission research into the possible mental and psychological impact on children of using Twitter and Facebook.

In their report, the Mental Health Taskforce recommended that the United Kingdom should aspire to be a world leader in the development and application of new mental health research. The Taskforce asked specifically that the Department, working with relevant partners, should publish a report by February 2017 setting out a ten year strategy for mental health research. The final ten-year strategy is planned for publication in February 2017 and will identify future needs in mental health research. This will include a specific focus on the mental health of children and young people.

PQ 47099 [Children: Social Media] 17 Oct 2016

Asked by: Chalk, Alex

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to educate parents and teachers of primary school-age children on the potentially damaging effect of social media on child and adolescent mental health.

Answering member: Edward Timpson

Children and young people's mental health is a priority for the Department and we recognise the importance of supporting parents and schools to help children use social media safely.

To provide information to parents who are concerned about mental health the Department funded MindEd to set up a new site, MindEd for Families, which was launched earlier this year (http://minded.e-lfh.org.uk/families/index.html). This provides free on-line advice on a range of mental health issues affecting children and young people and includes a section on social media. Teachers can also find advice and training on mental health issues from the main MindEd site, which was funded by the Department of Health (https://www.minded.org.uk/). We are also continuing to provide funding to the YoungMinds parents helpline, a national service providing free, confidential online and telephony support, information and advice, to any parent/carer concerned with the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25.

One of the risks to mental health from social media use is cyberbullying. The Department has produced guidance for parents and teachers on cyberbullying, which can be found online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-

tackling-bullying. These contain advice and signpost further sources of detailed information and support – including for talking to children about social media use. We have also recently announced £4.4 million in funding for 10 projects to tackle bullying in schools. One of these is developing an online approach for reporting bullying to schools, including cyberbullying on social media.

To reflect the importance of keeping children safe online, e-safety is covered at all key stages in the computing curriculum. Children are taught: how to use technology safely and respectfully; how to keep personal information private; and where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet, or other online technologies. Schools are also able to teach pupils about the use of social media and to learn strategies for keeping physically and emotionally safe, including safety online, as part of their Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme of study.

The Department has issued statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education', which flags the potential safeguarding issues that school staff should be aware of, including online safety. The guidance clearly sets out the role all school staff have in safeguarding children and the actions staff should take if they have a concern about a child. As part of their induction all school staff should be provided safeguarding training, which should be regularly updated.

5. Further reading

Guides

Time to Change, a charity that aims to eradicate mental health discrimination has published a number of guides to teaching mental health.

The National Children's Bureau and thehttps://www.ncb.org.uk/partnership-well-being-and-mental-health-schools Partnership for Well Being and Mental Health in Schools have published A whole school framework for emotional well being and mental health, as well as corresponding supporting resources in October 2016.

Measuring and monitoring children and young people's mental wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges, Public Health England, May 2017

Place2Be offers therapeutic supports in the school environment. It publishes research based on its work and offers training for schools.

Guidance on preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, PSHE Association, 2017

The UK Safer Internet Centre has resources to help school staff teach children about being safer online.

Official publications

Briefing: Children's Mental Healthcare in England, Children's Commissioner, October 2017

Supporting mental health in schools and colleges, Department for Education, 3 August 2017

- Survey and case studies with schools on activities to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing

The mental health of children and young people in England, Public Health England, December 2016

The mental health of children and young people in London, Public Health England, December 2016

Future in Mind: Report of the work of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce, Department of Health, March 2015

The Department of Education has previously piloted ways of improving children's mental health in a school setting: for more information, see the final report of the UK Resilience Programme Evaluation or the Findings from the National Evaluation of Targeted Mental Health in Schools 2008-2011 (both published in 2011).

Research papers

Social media and children's mental health: a review of the evidence, Education Policy Institute, June 2017

#StatusOfMind, Royal Society for Public Health, 2017

- A paper looking at social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The authors call for:
    - Introduction of a pop-up heavy usage warning on social media – include the support from young people for each of these recommendations
    - Social media platforms to identify users who could be suffering from mental health problems by their posts, and discretely signpost to support
    - Social media platforms to highlight when photos of people have been digitally manipulated

Progress and challenges in the transformation of children and young people's mental health care, Education Policy Institute, August 2016

Children's Mental Health Matters Provision of Primary School Counselling, Place2Be, 2016

- Although focussed on commissioned mental health services within schools, this study also recommends that teachers are trained and that PSHE is used to help children

Mental Health Statistics, Young Minds, [includes resources from 2005 – 2016]

Exam Factories? The impact of accountability measures on children and young people, National Union of Teachers, July 2015

- Useful bibliography and chapter 6 looks at impact on emotional health and well-being

What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools? National Children's Bureau, 2015

- This research pulls together much of the previous literature on this subject and has a useful bibliography for future research.

The Connected School: A Design For Well-Being, National Children's Bureau, 2015

- A number of academic articles on "Supporting Children and Young People in Schools to Flourish, Thrive and Achieve"

Chris Bonell, Neil Humphrey, Adam Fletcher, Laurence Moore, Rob Anderson and Rona Campbell, Why schools should promote students' health and wellbeing, *BMJ*, 13 May 2014

Library and POST papers

Mental Health Service Models for Young People, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), October 2017

Children and young people's mental health – policy, CAMHS services, funding and education, Commons Library, June 2017

Library briefing Personal, social, health and economic education in schools (England), CBP 7303

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