

2018

Schools Mental Health Survey



John Healey MP

Wentworth and Dearne Constituency

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INTRODUCTION: John Healey MP

Earlier this year a GCSE student from one of our local secondary schools wrote to me about her impending exams, recent changes to the schools system and the impact these are having on students in her school. She was very concerned about the “heightened stress and increase in mental health issues” that the changes have caused. I have increasingly heard such stories – from students and staff – on my regular visits to schools.

A recent study by the National Education Union supports this in suggesting that testing exams, as well as family issues and pressures in class, are having a big impact on the mental health of students; two-thirds of staff have seen a major increase in support provided to help students with mental health problems¹. While the Education Support Partnership says it is dealing with an increasing need for emotional support from staff; a rise of 38 per cent last year in Yorkshire alone².

Mental health problems can blight childhood and adolescence, as well as damage good learning but the evidence also shows that such problems often continue into adult life, unless properly treated; half of adult mental health problems (excluding dementia) start before the age of 14, and three quarters begin before the age of 24³.

I wanted to try and get the best possible information about the mental health concerns affecting our local schools, especially at this time when everyone in education is already under a great deal of pressure. So I wrote to ask all schools across the Wentworth and Dearne constituency to help by taking part in this schools mental health survey.

All eight of our secondary schools responded, as did 19 of our 34 primary schools. I am very grateful to these schools, and to the staff that made the time to provide the information. I also offer a big ‘thank you’ to James Bolton, who has worked with me on this survey project.

This report sets out the results of the survey. It confirms the mental health crisis in our schools and establishes a strong local evidence base that I will now use to press – both locally and nationally – to improve the support available.

¹ <https://neu.org.uk/latest/pressures-school-making-pupils-suicidal-%E2%80%93-neu-survey>

² <https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/about-us/press-centre/sharp-rise-teachers-calling-helpline>

³ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-children-and-young-people>

I plan to press the conclusions with Ministers, promote the case for a counsellor in every school and work with teachers' unions for better staff access to counselling support. I will work to promote a better understanding of the mental health crisis in our schools and the urgent need to improve the help available for students, staff and schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Healey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

JOHN HEALEY MP

October 2018

Key findings:

Students

- Every school reports an increase in the number of students with mental health problems over the last five years
- Three quarters of schools say the students' problems have become more severe over the last five years
- All schools referred more than 10 students to external specialist support last year; three quarters referred more than 20 students
- Half of schools offer access to a full time counsellor; one offers part time access; and three (38%) do not have a counsellor in school

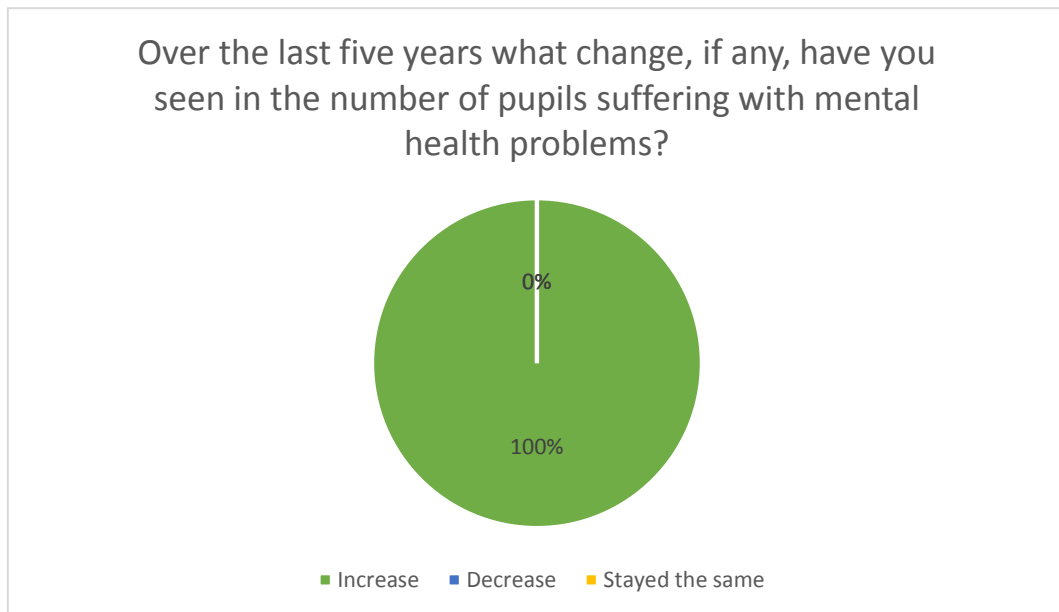
Staff

- Half of schools report mental health problems for staff have become more severe over the last five years
- All schools referred at least five staff members to external specialist support last year; one in four referred more than 10
- Half of schools have no access to counsellors for staff in school

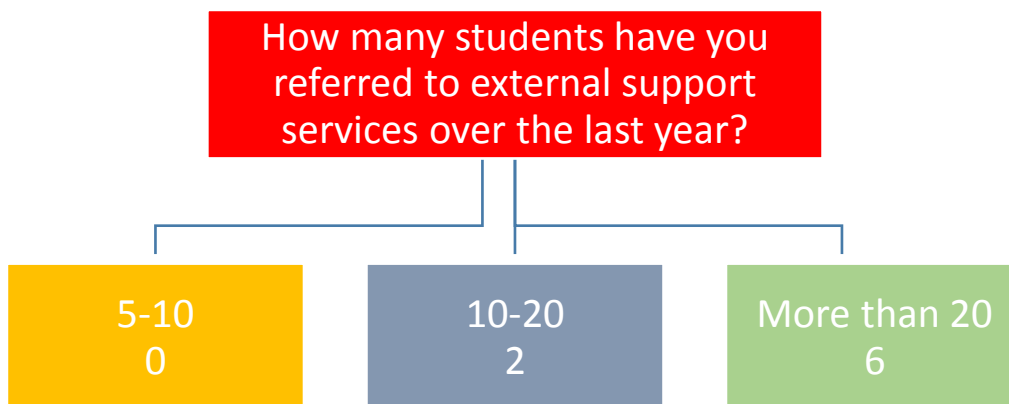
Students

8 out of 8 secondary schools in the Wentworth and Dearne constituency returned the Schools Mental Health Survey.

All secondary schools say there has been an increase in the number of pupils suffering with mental health problems over the last five years.



6 out of 8 secondary schools say that the severity of the mental health problems they have been dealing with in relation to students has become more severe over the last five years.

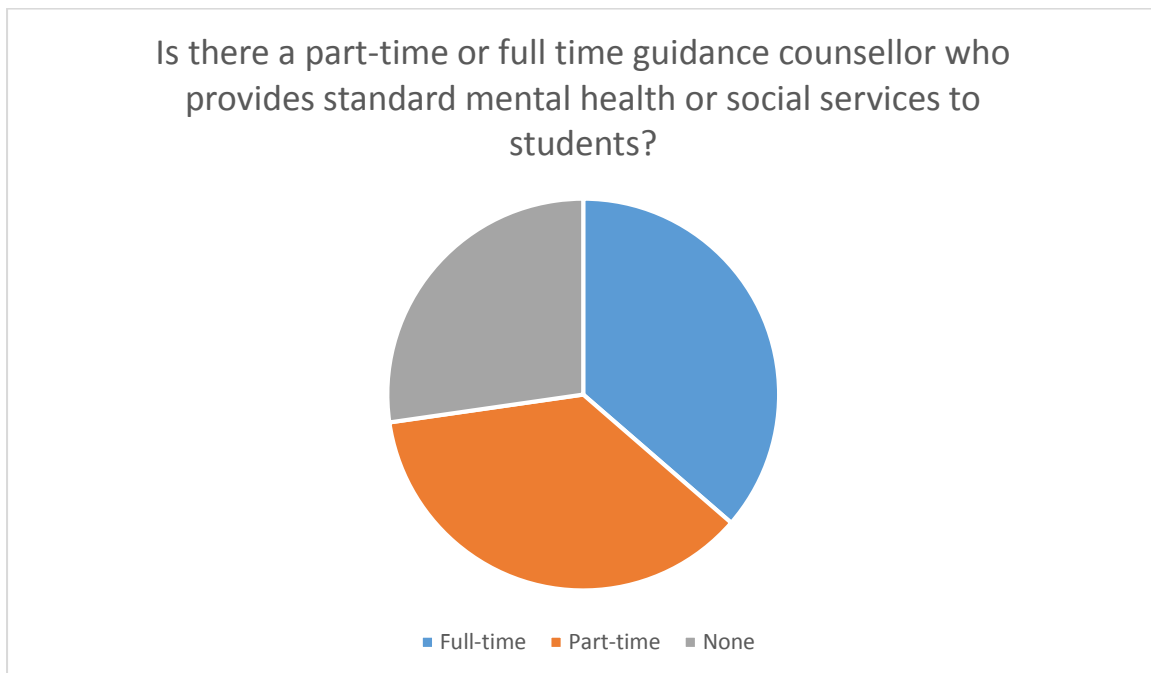


The majority of secondary schools say access to external support is a major challenge with regards to mental health. Other challenges secondary schools say they face include:

- Lack of time to deal with problems due to pressures of curriculum
- Number of pupils with mental health concerns
- Parents with needs
- Depth of issues faced by school staff
- Length of time when dealing with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Parents not recognising problems
- Lack of funding

6 out of 8 secondary schools across the constituency have a designated mental health leader.

3 out of 8 secondary schools have no access to a guidance counsellor. 4 have access to a fulltime guidance counsellor with 1 providing access to a part time counsellor.



Four secondary schools provided information on the hours counsellors spend at school per week. Access and availability vary considerably, from one hour a week to over 30 hours (and seeing 35+ students each week).

5 out of the 8 secondary schools provided figures for the number of pupils counsellors see each week. 2 said more than 10, 2 said more than 20 and 1 said fewer than 10.

Students report a wide range of causes at the roots of their mental health problems including:

- Sexuality/gender
- Social media
- Family
- Peers
- Exams
- Appearance
- Suicidal feelings
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Lack of self esteem

Provisions secondary schools have in place to help pupils deal with mental health problems include:

- Access to CAMHS
- Drama therapy
- Wellbeing assemblies
- Counsellors
- Pastoral team support
- Inclusion strategy
- Mentor support
- Psychotherapist
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education
- Mindspace
- TADS (Therapies for anxiety, depression and stress)

Schools believe that action must be taken on many fronts, and that responsibility for responding to students' mental health problems lies with the school, local agencies and the Government, but all regarded action by Government as essential.

The range of action that secondary schools believe needs to be taken includes:

School – More time for staff and mental health lead; better understanding of social, emotional and mental health policy; equal focus on mental health/wellbeing and exam results; more support staff

Local Authority – Increased agency support for schools; create more provision; engagement with local youth; funding for counsellors; increased family work

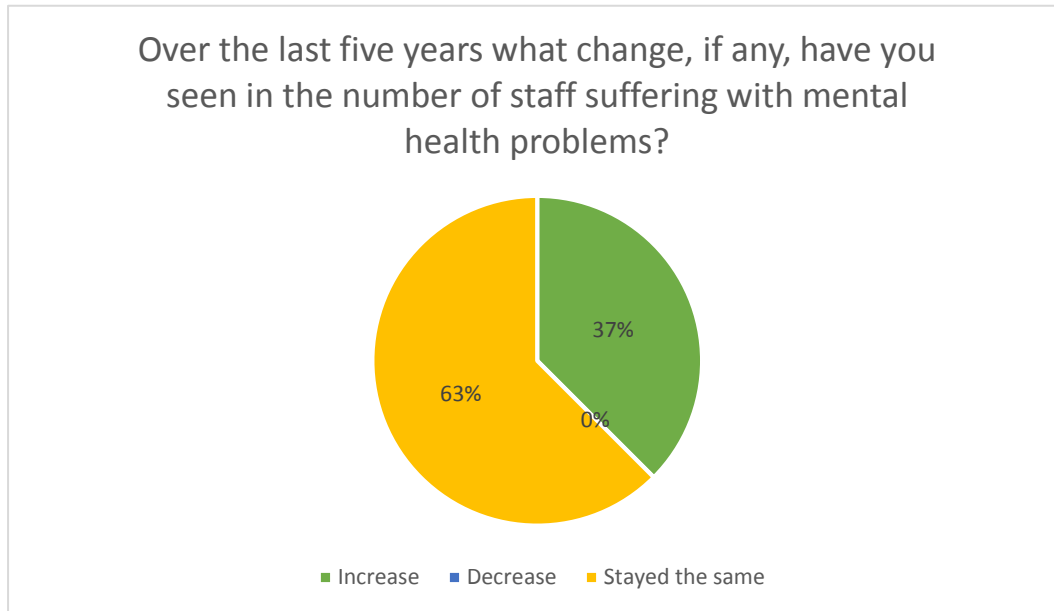
Local NHS – Increased support and more skilled professionals; provide a school link; deeper understanding about what CAMHS can offer; better CAMHS services; shorter waiting lists; better clinical support; support in emergency situations; more understanding from ALL staff

Government – Provide funding and policy to have mental health workers in school; look at wider picture of cuts to services and overall cost to society; targeted funding for mental health support; more funding for children's services; provide funding for efficient and affective service; changes to pressures in education system

Other Comments - Teaching staff no longer just teach they are expected to do a lot of counselling and support; more emphasis needed on family.

Staff

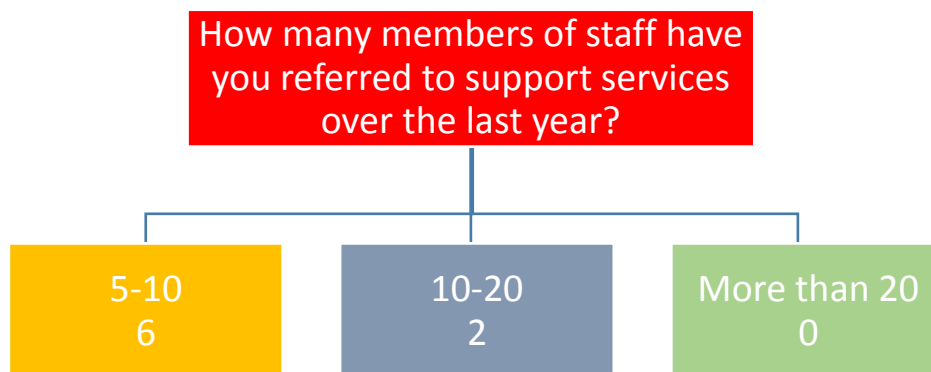
3 out of 8 schools say there has been an increase in the number of staff suffering with mental health problems over the last five years. 5 out of 8 schools say figures have stayed the same.



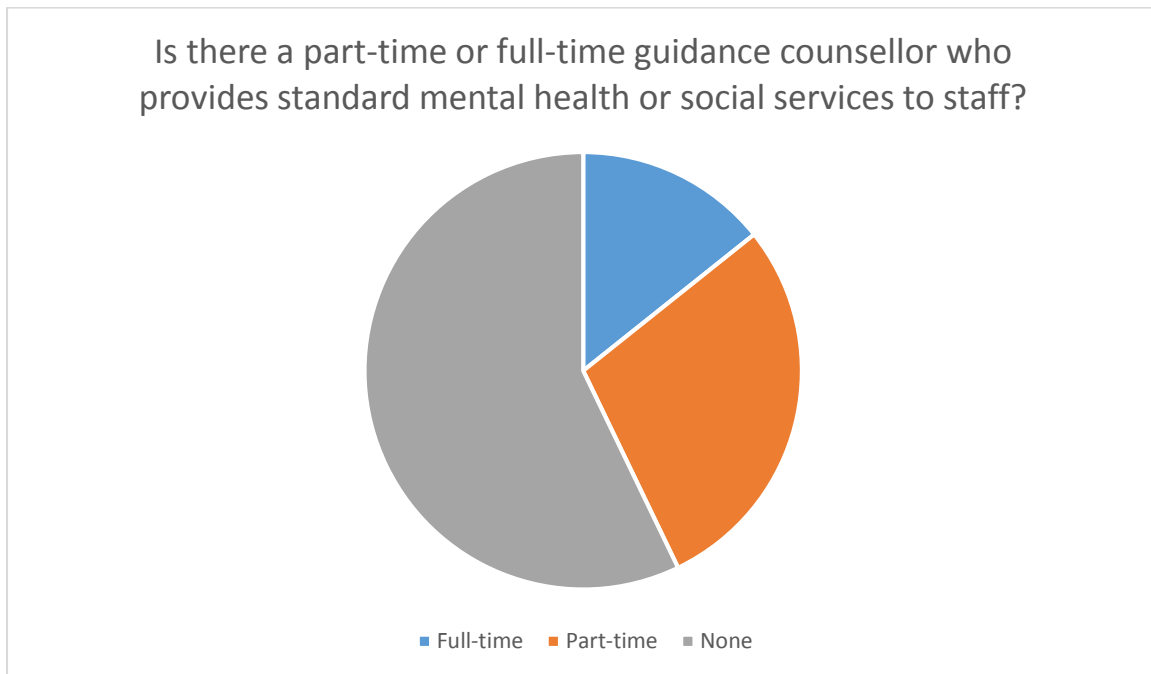
However, 4 out of 8 secondary schools say the severity of mental health cases relating to staff have become more severe over the last five years. 3 out 8 say cases are the same with 1 school not stating.

All schools have referred staff to external specialist support services for mental health problems in the last year.

6 out of 8 schools have referred 5-10 members of staff to support services over the last year; 2 schools have referred 10-20.



4 out of 8 secondary schools have no guidance counsellor available to staff. 2 schools have access to a part time counsellor, 1 full time and 1 school did not state.



Other provisions in place to help staff deal with mental health problems include:

- Peer support
- Referral to outside agencies
- Mental health and wellbeing policy
- HR Support
- National support days
- Union links
- SLT support

Family, workload, peers and relationships were all commonly cited as causes of mental health difficulties. Dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour from pupils, dealing with student mental health problems, anxiety, overwhelming feelings of stress and burnout are also reported as causing mental health problems for students and staff.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Key findings:

Students

- Every school reports an increase in the number of pupils with mental health problems over the last five years
- 4 in 5 of the schools (79%) say the mental health problems they deal with have become more severe over the past five years
- Every school has referred at least 5 pupils to support services during the last year; almost half (42%) have referred more than 10 pupils
- Over half (53%) of schools have no designated mental health lead
- Two thirds (68%) have no access to a counsellor in school for pupils

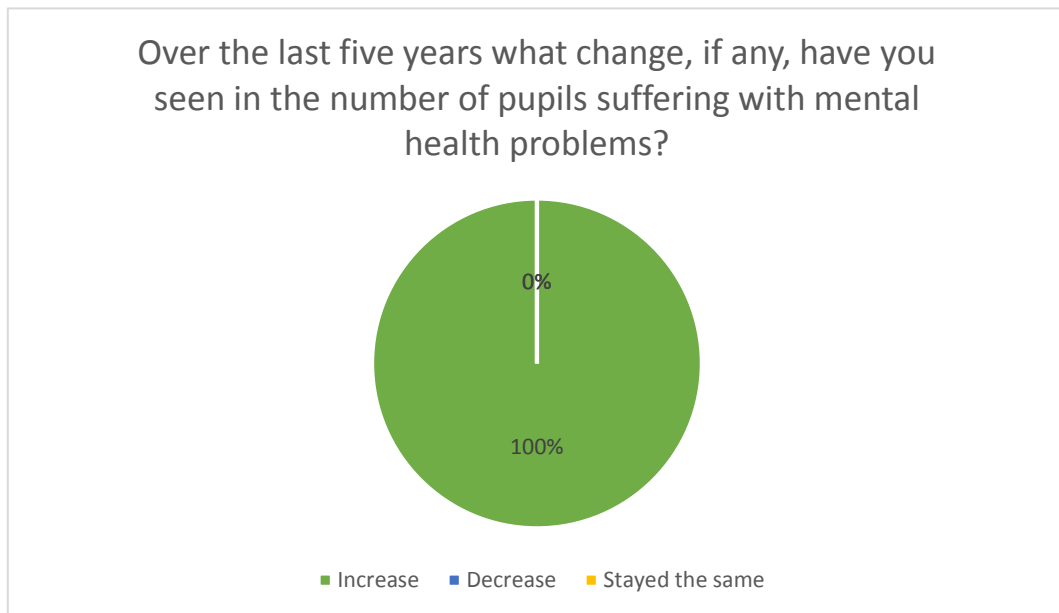
Staff

- Over half (58%) of schools report an increase in the number of staff with mental health problems over the last five years
- Only 1 in 10 have access to counsellors for staff

Students

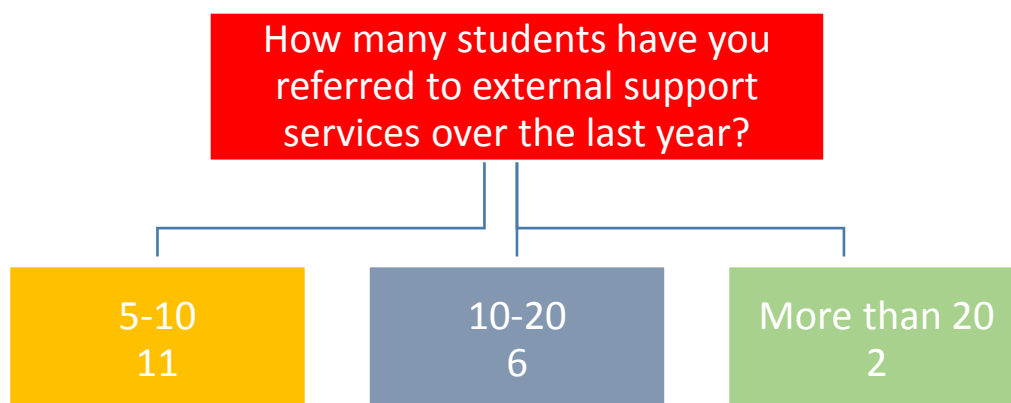
19 primary schools out of 34 (56%) returned their surveys.

All 19 schools say they have seen an increase in the number of pupils suffering with mental health problems over the last five years.



15 primary schools say the cases they are dealing with have become more severe over the last 5 years and 4 say the severity has stayed the same.

All primary schools have referred at least 5 pupils for speciality support in the last year with 2 schools referring more than 20 students to external services.

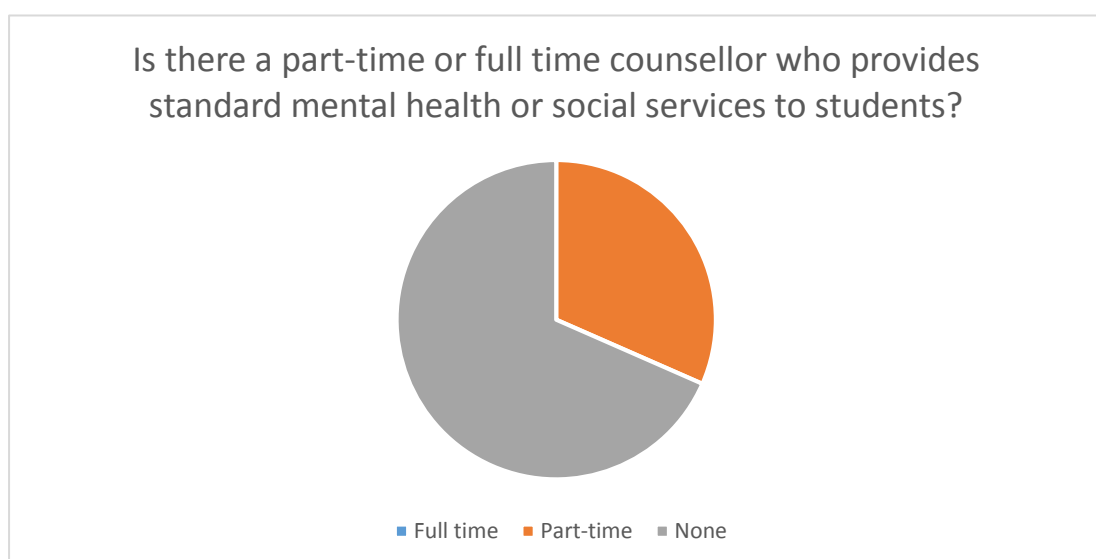


The major challenges primary schools say they face with regards to mental health of pupils include:

- Funding
- Access to qualified support
- Training for staff and parents to spot signs
- Technology
- Family acceptance
- Pathways with CAMHS
- Long waiting lists for services such as CAMHS
- Support for parents
- Increasing numbers of children with very specific needs entering education without Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
- Significant, violent and challenging behaviours
- Lack of staff training
- Pressures on budget
- Anger issues increasing
- Staff numbers
- Lack of strategy to intervene
- Parents with mental health problems

Only 8 schools (42%) have a designated health leader with 10 confirming they do and one school not stating.

13 of the 19 schools surveyed have no access to a guidance counsellor, whilst 6 have access to a part time guidance counsellor.



7 primary schools provided information on the hours counsellors spend at school; these range from one hour to 2 days a week, and 40 hours per year.

6 schools provided figures for the number of pupils counsellors see each week. 5 said fewer than 10 and 1 said more than 20.

The main cause of pupils' mental health problems are:

- Family
- Peers
- Self esteem
- Exams/curriculum
- Appearance

Provisions primary schools have in place to help pupils deal with mental health problems include:

- Listening sessions
- Inclusion managers
- Mental health support worker (provides counselling)
- CAMHS
- Nurture groups
- Purchase of wider support from LA professionals
- Educational psychologist
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) delivering bespoke sessions
- Paid for MIND support
- Welcome room
- Learning mentor
- Behaviour support worker (working with parents and students)
- Inclusion team trained in mental health support
- Mindfulness activities
- Wellbeing research project
- TADS support (Therapies for anxiety, depression and stress)
- SEND (Special educational needs and disability) consultant
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health intervention strategies
- Family engagement team
- Support cards in classroom

Primary schools believe the main responsibility for responding to student mental health problems lies with the school, as well as local agencies; and all schools say there is action Government should take to help.

In particular, schools argued that primary school budgets need more funding from central government to help deal with mental health concerns, as schools are struggling to afford support staff when greater numbers of children need more focused help.

The action that primary schools believe needs to be taken includes:

School – easier referral process; support schools in action they take; additional staff training; teach students about good mental health practice; investment in specialist staff; complexity of needs require specialist training and support

Local Authority – More training for professionals

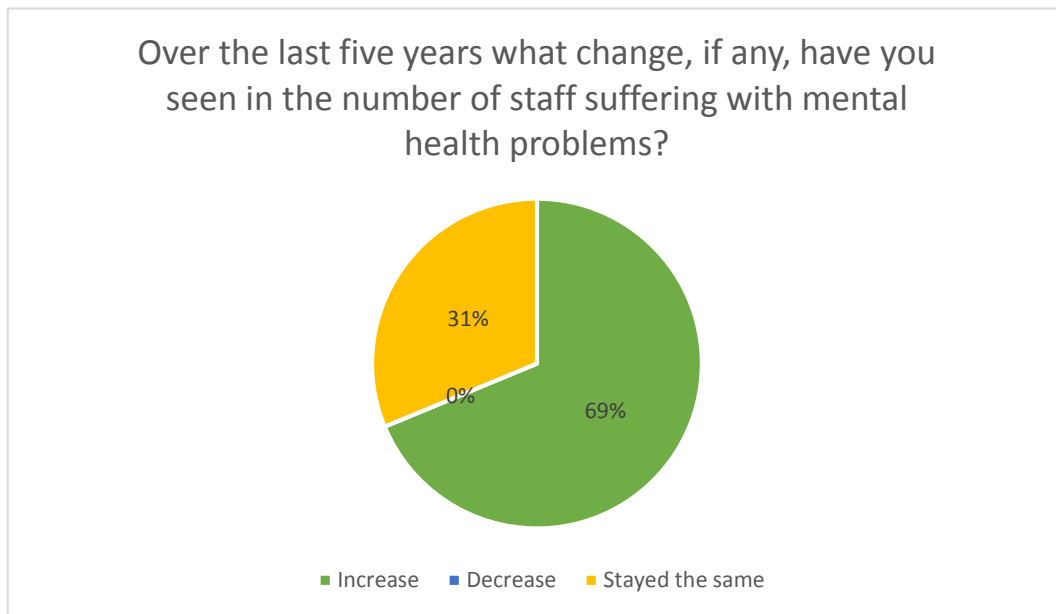
Local NHS – Improve CAMHS response times; increased understanding from GPs; specialist mental health workers to work with families

Government – training and funding on mental health problems; funding green paper proposals; better funding for CAMHS service; less pressure on students to meet targets; make under 5s health visitor assessments statutory; legislation to make statutory support available

Other comments – Funding is being cut causing waiting lists and more and more expectation on schools rather than professionals.

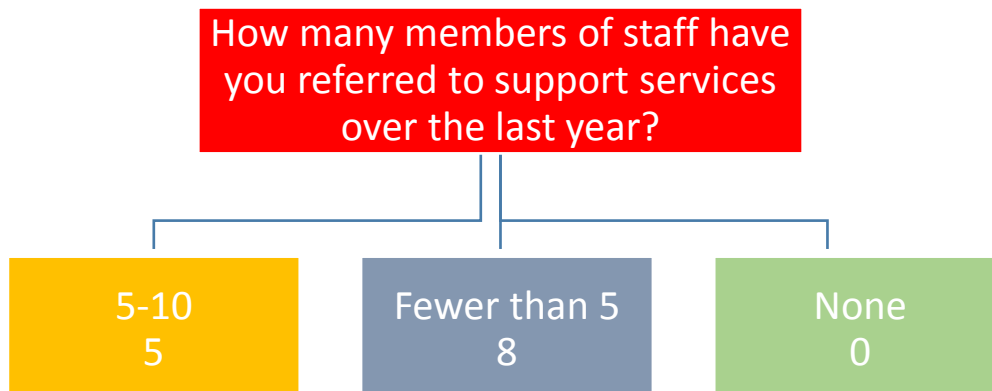
Staff

11 of the primary schools surveyed say there has been an increase in the number of staff suffering with mental health problems. 5 said the numbers had stayed the same with 3 offering no response.

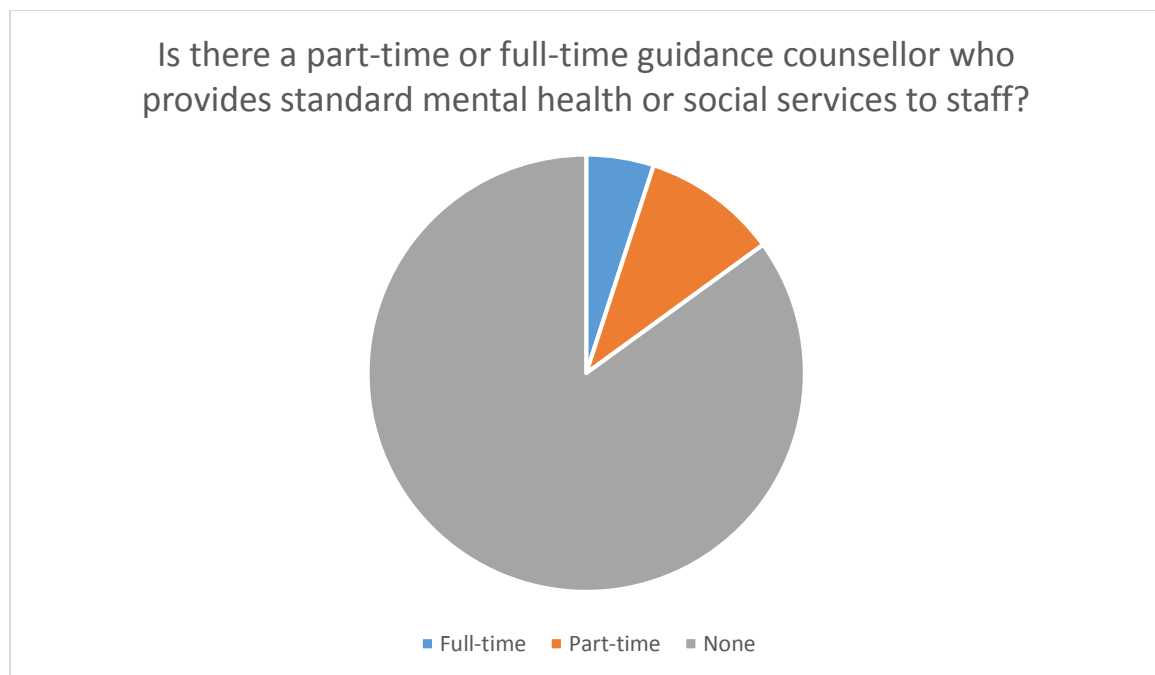


However, 4 primary schools say the severity of mental health cases relating to staff have become more severe over the last five years. 11 say cases are the same with 4 schools not stating.

5 out of 19 primary schools have referred 5-10 members of staff to external specialist support services last year; 8 schools have referred fewer than 5 with 6 schools saying they have referred no staff to support services.



Only 2 schools have access to a part time counsellor, while 17 out of the 19 primary schools have no staff counselling support available.



Provisions in place to help staff deal with mental health problems include:

- Confidential helpline
- Support through occupational health
- SLT support
- Access to Local Authority counselling services
- Mental health first aider
- Staff support network
- Inclusion managers
- Reduced workload
- Educational psychologists (from RMBC)
- Staff shout out boards to promote positivity
- Union support

2 schools say they have no provision at all in place for staff.

Family, workload and peers are highlighted as the main cause of mental health problems with staff. Complexity of need of families, child protection issues, illnesses e.g. cancer, child behaviour, data pressures and SATS results were also listed.

This report is evidence that our schools are struggling to cope with mental health concerns and provide this essential early intervention and support. All schools report an increase in the number and severity of students affected, yet many simply don't feel they have the expertise, funding, time or back-up to deal with the pressure. The mental health crisis is especially stark in our primary schools.

Action in our schools and to support our schools is essential, for the sake of current students and the future. One in four of us will experience a mental health problem at some point in our life and half of all mental health illnesses develop before the age of 14⁴. Around one in ten children have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, yet research shows that in 2015/16 just 8% of mental health budgets were spent on children and young people⁵.

The Government must lead. In December 2017, the Department of Health and Social Care published a green paper on transforming children and young people's mental health⁶. However, this was an early consultation document, not an action plan. It doesn't begin to measure up to either the scale or urgency of the problems. Many of the measures set out in the green paper are only pilots and Ministers have confirmed that most new forms of support will not be available until 2022/23⁷, when help with young people's mental health is needed now.

All political parties are pledged to give mental health the same priority as physical health, yet there are now 5 000 fewer mental health nurses than in 2010⁸ and more than 60% of NHS trusts saw cuts to mental health budgets between 2011/12 and 2016/17⁹. Furthermore, a review of the NHS Five Year Forward View has found that money intended for mental health has been used to plug funding gaps in the wider NHS¹⁰.

⁴ https://www.who.int/mental_health/maternal-child/child_adolescent/en/

⁵ The independent House of Commons Library

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

⁸ <https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/more-work-and-investment-needed-in-mental-health>

⁹ <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases2018/mentalhealthtrustincome.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/16/money-earmarked-for-mental-health-diverted-to-balance-nhs-books>

MY PLEDGES AND ACTION PLAN

I want to see:

- 1 a counsellor for students in every secondary school, with similar shared support between local primary schools
- 2 staff in every school have access to counselling support too
- 3 better referrals, shorter waiting times and lower rejection rates for specialist mental health services beyond the school, such as CAMHS
- 4 closer working and better understanding between education, health and social services
- 5 Government give more urgent attention to mental health in schools, with funding to back the action required.

Nationally

I will:

- Press the conclusions of this Report with Ministers, the Labour Party and through Parliament
- Promote the case for a counsellor in every school
- Work with teachers' unions to promote the case for better staff access to counselling support

Locally

I will:

- Promote a better understanding of the mental health crisis in our schools and a case for more help being available
- Set up discussion between CAMHS and head teachers to foster better understanding and referrals
- Set up discussion between NHS, Council and head teachers to look at how mental health support for school students can be improved, including the case for a counsellor in every school
- Promote discussion of mental health problems among school governors

APPENDIX 1: Survey

LOCAL SCHOOLS MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY FROM JOHN HEALEY MP

NAME OF SCHOOL:

YOUR NAME:

POSITION:

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Information from responses to this survey will be collated and I will be happy to share a copy of the analysis with your school.

If you would like to keep up to date with any future action taken following this survey please tick here

Section 1.

Questions Relating to Students

Please circle where appropriate.

1. Over the last five years, what change, if any, have you seen in the number of pupils suffering with mental health problems?

Increase

Decrease

Stayed the same

2. If you collect such data, can you share the aggregate numbers to show any trend or pattern?

3. Has there been any change in the severity of mental health problems you have been dealing with in relation to students over the last 5 years?

Yes, cases are more severe

No, cases are the same

There has been a decrease in severity

4. What do you feel are the major challenges your school faces with regards to mental health?

5. What do pupils say is causing their mental health problems? (Circle more than one if applicable)

Family Exams/Curriculum Peers Appearance

Other

6. How many students have you referred to external support services over the last year?

5-10 10-20 More than 20

7. If other please state.

8. Does your school have a designated mental health leader?

YES NO

9. What provisions do you have in place to help pupils deal with mental health problems?

10. Is there a part-time or full-time guidance counsellor who provides standard mental health or social services to students?

FULL TIME PART TIME NONE

11. If your school does have access to a counsellor how many hours does the counsellor spend at school each week?

12. How many pupils does the counsellor see each week?

Fewer than 10

More than 10

More than 20

13. Where do you believe the main responsibilities for responding to student mental health problems lie? (Please rank 1 to 4, with 4 being most responsible and 1 being least responsible)

School (and Trust)

Local Authority

Local NHS

Government

Other

14. What action would you like to see each take to help?

School (and Trust)

Local Authority

Local NHS

Government

Other

15. Any other comments.

Section 2.

Questions Relating to Staff

16. Over the last five years, what change, if any, have you seen in the number of staff suffering with mental health problems?

Increase Decrease Stayed the same

17. If you collect such data, can you share the aggregate numbers to show any trend or pattern?

18. Has there been any change in the severity of mental health problems that you have been dealing with relating to staff over the last 5 years?

Cases are more severe Cases are the same Severity of cases has decreased

19. How many staff members have you referred to support services over the last year?

5-10 10-20 More than 20

20. What provisions do you have in place to help staff deal with mental health problems?

21. What do staff say is causing their mental health problems? (Circle more than one if applicable)

Family Workload Peers Other

22. If other please state.

23. Is there a part-time or full-time guidance counsellor who provides standard mental health or social services to staff?

FULL TIME

PART TIME

NONE

24. Any other comments.

Thank you for completing the survey. Please feel free to provide any additional information you feel would be helpful.

Please return to: john.healey.mp@parliament.uk or John Healey MP, 79 High Street, Wath-upon-Deerne, Rotherham S63 7QB

APPENDIX 2: List of schools

I am very grateful to the staff from the following schools that made the time to respond to my survey and provide the information on which this report is based.

Secondary schools:

Milton School
Wath Comprehensive School
Wickersley School and Sports College
The Dearne ALC
Swinton Academy
Saint Pius X Catholic High School
Rawmarsh Community School
Rotherham Aspire

Primary schools:

Kilnhurst Primary School
Brampton Cortonwood Infants School
Lacewood Primary
Kilnhurst St Thomas CE Primary Academy
Our Lady St Joseph Primary Wath
Ravenfield Primary Academy
Carfield Primary
Thrybergh Fullerton CE Primary Academy
Swinton Queen Primary School
Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School
Bramley Sunnyside Junior School
Brookfield Junior Academy
Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant School
Heather Garth
Brampton Ellis Primary
Highgate Primary Academy
Wickersley Northfield Primary
Wath Victoria Primary School