



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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Childline and Children's Mental Health

Thank you for contacting me about the provision of mental health services for children and young people.

I believe it is incredibly important to protect the health of children and young people in our society. In recent years we have made huge progress in understanding mental health issues, and I support the Government's efforts to transform children and young people's mental health for the better in coming years.

I am encouraged by the continued commitment of £2 million a year to the NSPCC to assist with the running of Childline. Those growing up in Britain today experience a range of ongoing pressures and risks in a changing world, and Childline provides them with a safe, supportive and confidential space in which they can improve their wellbeing. Over the years, more than 4.5 million children and young people have sought Childline's help and last year more than 295,000 counselling sessions were provided to children and young people.

Approximately 10 per cent of 5 to 16 year olds have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem. Between 2015 and 2020, an additional £1.4 billion is being invested to transform children and young people's mental health; this money will support clinical commissioning groups and various national programmes, including improving crisis support and expanding the workforce.

The Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper is a joint enterprise by the departments for health and education, which sets out ambitious proposals to improve mental health services for children and young people, together with over £300 million of funding. This will incentivise and support schools and colleges to train designated leaders for their pupils' mental health, and introduce new mental health teams, both of which will ease pressure on NHS mental health services.

I know how important counselling services are in schools. The Future in Mind report is being implemented to expand access to counselling in schools. This will see all areas in England draw up plans for the greater integration between mental health specialists, GPs and schools. Recent data suggest that 62 per cent of schools offer counselling services; I am encouraged to say that this figure continues to increase over time, and more pupils are able to gain access to effective mental support.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP