

Grown up? Transition to adulthood

A spotlight on young people's mental health

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WHO WE ARE



Centre for Mental Health is an independent charity.

We take the lead in challenging injustices in policies, systems and society, so that everyone can have better mental health.

By building research evidence to create fairer mental health policy, we are pursuing equality, social justice and good mental health for all.

Young people's mental health

There has been a continuous rise in mental health problems among children and young people in recent years.

- ◎ One in five 8–25-year-olds report a mental health problem
 - This figure rises to nearly a quarter (23.3%) of all 17- to 19-year-olds.

(NHS Digital, 2023)

Inequalities in young people's mental health

According to research, some groups of children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems.

This includes those:

- ⊙ living in poverty
- ⊙ who identify as LGBT+
- ⊙ from racialised communities
- ⊙ with learning disabilities and/or neurodevelopmental conditions
- ⊙ with disabilities or physical health conditions
- ⊙ with caring responsibilities
- ⊙ with a parent with poor mental health

How are these challenges currently manifesting?

What we see

- ⊙ Education – ‘non-attendance’ and ‘behaviour out of control’
- ⊙ Employment – ‘economic inactivity’ and ‘fit note culture’
- ⊙ Digital – social media and smart phone ‘addicts’.


What might be behind this

- ⊙ Rising complexity and trauma – unmet needs
- ⊙ Unequal society - the poverty and mental health nexus and discrimination
- ⊙ Young people feel disillusioned – not seen or heard.

Insights from young people gathered through our research

Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition

NOT IN SCHOOL
THE MENTAL HEALTH BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



Executive summary

School attendance is at the centre of public, sector, and government discourse. This is likely due to the increase in persistent and severe absence, particularly following the pandemic. One in five children are currently persistently absent from school and in 2022/23 150,000 children were considered to be severely absent. A child or young person's school attendance is impacted by a complex interplay of factors, including but not limited to poor mental health, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), poverty, bullying, racism, discrimination, and caring responsibilities. Evidence suggests that children experiencing these issues are more likely to be absent from school. While these factors may not always prevent a child or young person from attending or taking part in some form of education, the lack of proper identification of need and subsequent support act as significant barriers to attendance.

Systemic and school-based barriers may also drive school absence, including the inaccessibility of timely mental health support and the use of sanctions. The Government has introduced several programmes, initiatives, and guidance over the last year to address the 'attendance crisis'. These have led to improvements in some areas, although results are inconsistent and often do not address the underlying causes of absenteeism, such as mental health difficulties, unmet SEND needs, and rises in child poverty.

Some of the Government's initiatives to support and maintain high levels of attendance have included attendance toolkits, mentors, hubs, and the formation of an 'attendance alliance' of professionals to monitor and provide guidance. Alongside these initiatives, there has also been an alarming increase in the use of fines to address non-attendance. Despite evidence suggesting that sanction-based approaches such as these are harmful to parents in an already challenging time, the Government has brought fines under a national framework to help tackle inconsistencies in use and has also increased the cost of fines.

While some of the initiatives, such as the attendance mentor programme, have been impactful on an individual pupil or family basis, most of the approaches fail to adequately consider or account for the wider determinants which may drive school absence. We recommend a range of alternative approaches that may encourage attendance and provide the necessary support for children, young people, and families.

BRIEFING



Centre for Mental Health

A voice for change
Young Changemakers tackling mental health inequalities in racialised communities

Dr Huang Le, Ashleigh Onabajo, Pleasant Adesiyun, Tariq Jones and Elliot Busari

Summary

Young Changemakers is a programme created by UK Youth, The Diana Award and Centre for Mental Health to equip young people with the tools to produce youth-led social action projects aimed at tackling mental health inequalities in racialised communities. This briefing identified some issues regarding the mental health of children and young people from racialised communities, including:

- Negative perceptions towards mental health support and care:** Young people from racialised communities were more likely to expect bad experiences from mental health services and less likely to trust and seek formal support
- Limited and involuntary pathways to mental health services:** Children and young people from racialised groups were more likely to access child and adolescent mental health services through compulsory than voluntary care pathways. Overall, they were also less likely to access services and were overrepresented in inpatient settings
- Lack of mental health awareness:** Various studies across the UK showed that children and young people from racialised communities reported poor awareness around mental health and available supporting services
- Lack of culturally appropriate support:** Data shows an urgent need for the development and implementation of culturally sensitive, readily accessible mental health information and support tailored to children and young people from racialised communities. This in turn can encourage help-seeking behaviours and produce better health outcomes for these young people
- Mental health stigma:** Higher levels of stigma among people from racialised communities have been observed globally. Given the disproportionate exposure young people from racialised communities face to many of the known 'risk factors' linked with mental health problems, addressing stigma is essential to ensure children and young people from these populations can access and receive help when needed.

UK YOUTH

REPORT

Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition

Centre for Mental Health

Making the grade



How education shapes young people's mental health

Kadra Abdinasir

The Health Foundation

Behaviour and mental health in schools

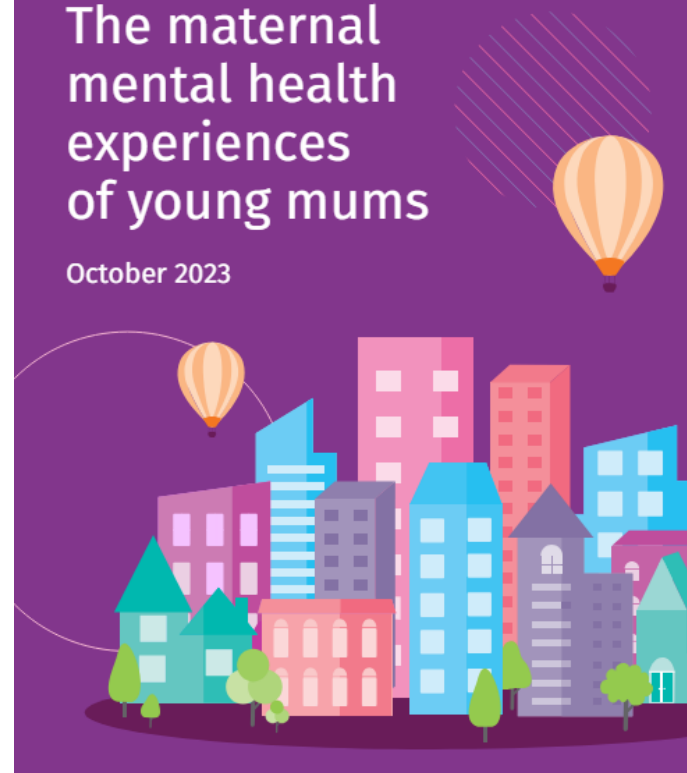
Authors: Charlotte Rainer, Huong Le and Kadra Abdinasir



**Children & Young People's
Mental Health Coalition**

The maternal mental health experiences of young mums

October 2023



The impact of transitions on young people's mental health

- ◎ Poor transitions in young people's mental health a perennial issue:
 - Fear of the unknown and facing new challenges
 - Academic and career pressures
 - Financial pressures
 - A cliff-edge of support – particularly challenging for those with pre-existing mental health problems
 - Difficulty navigating the system/s
 - Limited care and treatment options

What can we do about this?

- ⊙ A cross-government long-term strategy for mental health that takes a life course approach.
- ⊙ A truly comprehensive 0 to 25 mental health pathway – from prevention through to crisis care.
- ⊙ Whole educational approaches to mental health.
- ⊙ Early support hubs for young people based in the community. #FundTheHubs campaign.

...Towards a Mentally Healthier Nation

We're calling on MPs and parliamentary candidates to build a
MENTALLY HEALTHIER NATION

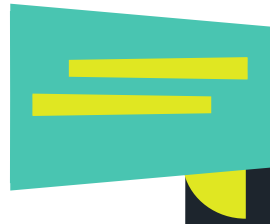


- Address the causes of mental ill health
- Eradicate mental health inequalities
- Ensure timely access to local services



A MENTALLY HEALTHIER NATION
TOWARDS A 10-YEAR, CROSS-GOVERNMENT PLAN
FOR BETTER PREVENTION, EQUALITY AND SUPPORT

THANK YOU



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