{YOUR FULL ADDRESS}

{YOUR POSTCODE}

{DATE}

Dear [MP NAME],

My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am a constituent of [YOUR CONSTITUENCY].  I am writing to you today because I am concerned about the lack of access to early mental health provision and NHS mental health services for children and young people.

This is something that’s particularly important to me because [I HAVE/ MY CHILD HAS/ MY STUDENTS HAVE/ MY FRIEND HAS] been unable to access the support [I/THEY] need. [EXPAND WITH PERSONAL EXPERIENCES]. [I/THEY] have been waiting for [INSERT NUMBER OF WEEKS] weeks for [AN ASSESSMENT/ TO RECEIVE TREATMENT/ AND HAVE BEEN REFUSED HELP].

In [MY/ MY CHILD’S] school or college [AMEND OR DELETE: THERE IS CURRENTLY A WAITING TIME OF (INSERT THE NUMBER OF WEEKS) TO SEE THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR/ THERE IS NO SCHOOL COUNSELLOR OR LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION].

I am unlikely to be your only constituent who is affected by mental health problems. Data from NHS Digital shows that one in six children and young people aged 7 to 16 had a mental health problem in 2022 compared to one in nine in 2017.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the government says an extra £79 million was invested to expand children’s mental health services, including enabling around 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services, 2,000 more to access eating disorder services, and accelerating the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The current waiting times and the lack of access to help tell a different story. In 2021/22, 1.2 million new referrals for under 18s experiencing mental health problems were made to NHS England Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services, an increase of 41% since 2021.[[3]](#footnote-3)

It is estimated that 250,000 children and young people referred to specialist NHS children’s mental health teams are refused treatment as their conditions were seen as not severe enough. Every pupil that does not receive the mental health support they need, costs the school and local council £210m a year in extra support, which is mostly borne out by the schools.[[4]](#footnote-4) Figures also show there was a £325 million drop in annual spending on children’s services between 2010-11 and 2019-20 and a 48% decrease in local authority spending on early intervention services in the same time period.[[5]](#footnote-5)

To stem early mental health problems, of which The Children’s Commissioner estimates 1 million children would benefit from, the government has said support teams will reach 35 per cent of schools by this year.[[6]](#footnote-6) The government’s strategy to support young people’s mental health is not ambitious enough and is letting down our generation.

**I am asking you to take the following steps to support my concerns.**

Please hold the government to account and ask a question in parliament as to why children’s and young people’s mental health is not a priority, and why so many cannot access the specialist help they desperately need and deserve.

Please also show your support to young people’s mental health by posting about Youth Mental Health Day on 19 September with the hashtag, #stem4YMHD. The theme this year is #BeBrave. Please be brave on our behalf – for more information visit [youthmentalhealthday.co.uk](https://stem4.org.uk/youthmentalhealthday/).

We are also inviting you to meet the pupils at [OUR/ MY CHILD’S - INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL OR COLLEGE] to discuss, and see first-hand, why children and young people’s mental health should be more of a priority for this government.

Please do keep me informed of any progress made. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

[YOUR NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS]

1. NHS Digital (2022) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2022 - wave 3 follow up to the 2017 survey [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Department of Health and Social Care, £79 Million to boost mental health support for children and young people, March 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. NHS England, Mental health referrals by age 2019/20 and 2021/22, January 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Franklin, J (2021) The impact of waiting lists for children’s mental health services on the costs of wider public services. Pro Bono Economics [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Williams, M. Franklin, J. (2021) Children and young people’s services: Spending 2010-11 to 2019-2020. London: Pro Bono Economics [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Children’s Commissioner (2019) Early access to mental health support. London: Children’s commissioner [↑](#footnote-ref-6)