

One in three teachers fears harm for pupils waiting for mental health treatment

- **On average 3.3 pupils per class now have a mental health issue**
- **Nearly half of pupils can't access the mental health treatment they need**
- **Two in five teachers describe their school's mental health provision as non-existent or inadequate**
- **Two in three schools use existing education and pupil premium budgets to fund mental health services, while 7% rely on parents to fundraise**

Over a third of teachers have feared that a pupil will come to harm while waiting for mental health treatment, new figures show.

The survey of 300 teachers by the teenage mental health charity stem4 reveals the extent of the crisis in British schools. Nearly four in five (78%) teachers say at least one of their pupils has experienced a mental health issue over the past year. The results suggest that an average of 3.3 pupils per class has experienced a mental health issue recently.*

One in seven teachers (14%) say that at least one of their pupils has experienced suicidal thoughts and behaviours over the past year. Two thirds (66%) say a pupil has suffered anxiety, while almost half (45%) have witnessed a student with depression. Other common problems include eating disorders (30%), self-harm (28%) and addiction (10%).

Yet the teachers told the survey that just under half (46%) of students are unable to access the mental health services they need to make a recovery, with only one in five (19%) saying all these students were getting the treatment they needed. One in five (22%) say pupils needing specialist treatment typically had to wait more than five months for an appointment, and more than a third (36%) had feared at some point that a pupil would come to harm while waiting for treatment.

Nearly one in ten (9%) described their school's mental health provision as 'non-existent', with 30% saying it was inadequate or very inadequate. Four in ten (40%) of the state schoolteachers surveyed say the need for mental health services has increased over the past year. Over half (52%) of all respondents believed family difficulties were contributing to their students' problems while other common causes were exam stress and the emotional impact of bullying, both cited by 41%.

The findings will be discussed at a stem4 conference for education professionals at the Ark Putney Academy on Thursday June 28th 2018. Dr Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and CEO of stem4, said: "Schools face huge challenges in dealing with mental health issues in their students, and teachers are on the front line. They witness first-hand the devastating impact of pressures such as exam anxiety, bullying, and family problems. The consequences of these problems are serious, often life-threatening, and teachers are desperate to help. Yet at a time when the need for preventative, early intervention and specialist services are soaring, schools are finding it increasingly difficult to provide the help their pupils need. There's an urgent need for better support mechanisms in schools, as well as decent funding for the range of mental health services children and young people need. Only then can teachers be confident that their students' mental health is being cared for appropriately, freeing them to provide the educational input and support needed."

The survey, which covered primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges in both the state and independent sectors across the UK, paints a picture of patchy or inadequate mental health provision. Over a quarter (26%) of the teachers say their school has no budget at all for mental health services.

Little over a third (35%) say their school offers pupils one-to-one counselling, and only three in ten (30%) say students have the opportunity to learn about mental health issues in PSHE lessons. Only 30% of teachers say they have received adequate training to be able to deal with mental health issues, while 27% have received no training at all.

Current Government proposals to improve mental health provision for young people include funding for a senior mental health lead in every school. The stem4 survey shows that currently only 36% of schools have a teacher designated as mental health lead.

Dr Nihara Krause added: “Whilst the Government has put forwarded proposals to address the growing mental health problem among children and young people, these initiatives will only be available in 20% of schools by 2023, with the full role out for a designated mental health lead in each school anticipated to be completed in 2025. This is woefully inadequate in addressing current need.”

Despite the growing need for a range of specialist services, less than a quarter (23%) of teachers expect their school’s mental health budget to increase for the next academic year. One in six (17%) believes it will decrease.

With only one in five (20%) teachers saying their schools receive additional mental health funding from the Department of Education, schools are turning to alternative sources to pay for services. Fourteen per cent of teachers say their school uses money from its free school meals budget, 17% use pupil premium funding, 36% divert funds from their existing education budget, and 7% have undertaken fundraising, such as seeking donations from parents.

The research will be discussed at a stem4 conference for education professionals at Ark Putney Academy on June 28th 2018. It will explore the current government proposals and share best practice on mental health initiatives in schools.

* On average teachers say 3.3 pupils per class has experienced a mental health issue recently: 3 children in primary schools; 3.7 in secondary schools, and 3.1 in further education colleges.

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the survey

Total sample size was 300 teachers working in primary and secondary schools , and further education colleges in the UK. Fieldwork was undertaken between 4th and 8th June 2018. The survey was carried out online

Teacher's comments...

"Mental health is an increasing problem and needs to be seriously tackled and not brushed under the carpet. Some of the pupils I've had to deal with have told me things that have broken my heart."

"As a teacher and a mother of a daughter who has self-harmed, attempted suicide, has depression, and autism, the service provided is dire."

"If mental health was an iceberg... our level of support would only touch the tip!"

"Mental health issues in schools is becoming unmanageable"

"It's awful"

"Mental health in schools is not being taken care of or seen as a problem even though it clearly is."

"Needs more funding & support so that pupils who need help can get it."

About the stem4 conference

'Mental Health in Children and Young People: A Whole School Approach',
Stem4, education professionals conference
Thursday 28th June 2018, 5pm
Ark Putney Academy, London SW15 3DG

Topics to be discussed:

- An overview of mental health issues affecting children and young people
- Discussion of the new government proposal 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision'
- Teaching mental health topics in school - content, sensitivities, relevance
- Effective strategies that help build student well-being and those presenting with mental health issues in a classroom setting
- Sharing examples of best practice of mental health initiatives in schools
- What comprises of an effective mental health intervention team in schools
- Supporting teacher mental health

Expert speakers include:

- Dr Nihara Krause, CEO and Founder, stem4, Consultant Clinical Psychologist
- Alison Downey, Principal, Ark Putney Academy
- Kathryn Pugh, Deputy Head of Mental Health, Children and Young People's Mental Health Programme Lead, NHS England
- Julia Manning, Founding Director, 2020Health
- Dr Dale Bartle, Academic and Professional Tutor, Educational Psychologist, Cardiff University
- Nigel Atter, Policy Advisor, British Psychological Society
- Gabrielle Rowles, Senior Training Coordinator, Boing Boing
- Helen Kitching, Head of Psychology, Gildredge House School
- Paul Fitcher, Head of Rhetoric and Pastoral Lead, Wimbledon College
- Victoria Gallagher, Head of Inclusion, St Cecilia's School

- Sthen Wiseman, Head of PHSE, Kings College School
- Zuzanna Ludzik and Karima Abdou, Young Advisors Team, Anna Freud Centre
- Joe Stone, Social Worker and Trainee Family Therapist, CAMHS in schools service