

**“Lockdown 2 Must Prompt Urgent Review of Children’s Mental Health Spending”
Warns Leading Clinical Psychologist Dr Krause**

As new NHS figures show steep rises in long term mental ill-health in young people since COVID-19, Clinical Psychologist & Founder/CEO of stem4 teenage mental health charity, Dr Krause calls for an urgent spending review.

NOVEMBER 2020, LONDON: Restrictive measures taken to mitigate COVID-19 transmission, such as lockdowns, come at a large long-term cost to the mental health of young people, new statistics show. Figures from [NHS Digital](#) demonstrate that the number of young people from 5-16 years presenting with a probable mental disorder has increased from 1 out of 9 in 2017, to 1 out of 6 in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic. Dr Krause calls for this information to be met with an urgent review by the government into mental health spending for young people; “Pre-existing commitments to increase funding for young person’s mental health services will be nominal when accounting for this stark increase in demand, which is set only to escalate further after a second lockdown. Just as we seek to protect the medically vulnerable from the crisis of COVID-19, there is compelling and real evidence we must view young people as a group equally as vulnerable to a national health crisis, or risk an explosion of long-term mental ill-health.”

With the NHS digital study revealing 27.2% women and 13.3% young men in the 17 to 22 age group also identifying with probable mental disorder, Dr Krause emphasises the need to prevent further cases in a slightly older age group too; “With the additional stressful experiences young adults have experienced through disrupted schooling, cancelled exams, inaccurately predicted exam results, university lockdowns and now lockdown 2, urgent focus is needed on preventing these circumstances leading to long term damage. Early intervention is vital, and although the government previously committed additional funds to NHS mental health services, these funds will not honour the aim of lessening the long-term impact of mental health if the proportion of young people needing help continues to rise. If demand is growing as these statistics and circumstances suggest, a review into how supply and support can be increased is crucial.”

Not only will a second lockdown see further cases of long-term mental ill-health emerge, it may also act as a catalyst for the increased severity of cases for those with existing mental ill-health. Indeed, the NHS report revealed there were higher levels of negative changes in

circumstances for families with young people with a probable mental disorder. Those with a mental disorder are also eight times more likely to report feeling lonely. With a second lockdown likely to again escalate negative circumstances, loneliness and family discord for those children already vulnerable, Dr Krause once again stresses the urgency of a spending review to support young people; “Isolation and quarantine measures will be grossly counterproductive for a young person with existing mental ill-health if isolation at home means more exposure to risk factors. To mitigate the risk of an imminent crisis, a spending review to keep children and young people safe and to support families under strain is immensely pressing.”

Dr Krause is available for interview, further comment and opinion pieces on the NHS digital statistics, COVID-19 response & mental health in young people.

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About stem4: Founded by Clinical Psychologist Dr Nihara Krause, stem4 is an award-winning charity aimed at supporting the positive mental health in teenagers. With 1 in 8 children and young people aged between 5-19 presenting with at least one diagnosable mental health condition*, stem4 works to enhance early understanding of mental illness and signpost towards prompt action and intervention.

In order to carry out this mission, the charity educates individuals, parents, teachers and communities through the provision of interactive conferences, digital educational resources such as 'Head Ed' and a comprehensive website. Further, the charity has identified the widespread use of mobile phones as a potential means for change, resulting in the development of apps such as 'Calm Harm' for dealing with urges of self harm, 'Clear Fear' to help with anxiety and 'Combined Minds' for family and friends of those dealing with mental ill health. stem4 are also founders of Youth Mental Health Day, an annual campaign that encourages understanding and awareness of mental health in young people, enabling them to live happy and healthy lives all year round.

*(NHS Digital 2017)

Website: Please see website for more information www.stem4.org.uk

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Sources: [NHS Digital](#) report

