



News Release

stem4

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New strategy and funding needed to meet increased and escalating demand for mental health services for our nation's children and young people

- **Over 100,000 British young people use and download stem4's library of mental health apps between July and September 2021**

Dr Nihara Krause, consultant clinical psychologist, and founder of youth mental health charity stem4, comments on the Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2021 survey, published by NHS Digital:

"These figures demonstrate the devastating impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health. What we are now seeing is a continuous decline, with the severity of cases increasing, in direct response to a lack of access to appropriate mental health services from pandemic related causes, specifically for anxiety, depression and eating disorders.

"Mental ill health in young people has now reached an unprecedented scale, and these figures will continue to rise further unless action is taken. It's not enough to rely on charities to meet this growing urgent unmet need brought about by the problems of the pandemic. We need additional funding to meet what was an already underfunded and failing system, together with new, innovative, and safe ways to meet this need.

"stem4's own data and research support these NHS digital survey findings. Since the start of the pandemic 455,000 British young people, aged between 12 and 25, have downloaded and used our mental health apps. But when schools, colleges and universities closed their doors at the end of the summer term this year, over 100,000 young people used our apps to manage their symptoms of anxiety (34,000), depression (6,800), eating disorders (2,800), and to stem the urge to self-harm (65,000). Only 41% of these young people are able to access any form of help or treatment.

"Although stem4's four NHS-approved smartphone apps are based on evidenced-based strategies, they are intended to help young people in the community, in the treatment of and recovery from, their mental health difficulties. They are not a replacement for treatment.



“We urgently need to prioritise children and young people’s mental health and put in place appropriate funding to support the expansion of children and young people’s mental health services, both in the community and in schools. At the same time, we need more funding for more in-patient beds, specifically for eating disorders. But it is essential that early intervention focus does not drop-off the agenda, by only prioritising access and funding to services for severe cases.

“It’s only right that young people and parents are able to access timely help and mental health treatment when they need it, and not when the government decides they can have it.”

stem4’s apps — are free to use, and do not collect any personal data. They include:

- **Clear Fear**, which uses the evidence-based treatment Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to help manage the symptoms of anxiety. (111,900 users from March 2020 to September 2021)
- **Calm Harm**, which uses the basic principles of an evidence-based therapy Dialectic Behaviour Therapy (DBT) to help manage the urge to self-harm. (309,000 users from March 2020 to September 2021)
- **Combined Minds**, which uses a Strengths-Based approach that has been shown to be effective in recovery, providing practical strategies for families and friends to support teenage mental health. (20,024 users from March 2020 to September 2021)
- **Move Mood**, which uses evidence-based Behavioural Activation Therapy (BAT) to help improve low mood and manage the symptoms of depression. (14,700 users from March 2020 to September 2021)

For more information, regional breakdowns and case studies, contact:

Penny Lukats

Director

SENSO Communications

Mobile: +44 (0) 7775 992350

Email: penny@sensocommunications.com

About stem4

stem4 is an award-winning charity that supports teenagers with their mental health. It provides evidence-based education, builds resilience, enhances motivation to change, and provides signposts to ensure early intervention and action. stem4 focuses on commonly occurring mental health issues in teenagers including eating disorders, anxiety, depression, self-harm and addiction.

The charity works with students, parents and teachers in secondary schools and colleges, and with health professionals such as GPs and school nurses through its conference programme and through digitally-delivered workshops and lesson plans suitable for PHSE in schools. **stem4** is also included in the Royal College of GP toolkit.

www.stem4.org.uk