



**Believe in** *me*

## **Addressing the crisis in children and young people's mental health**

See our mental health advert at  
[barnardos.org.uk/campaigns/believe-in-me](https://barnardos.org.uk/campaigns/believe-in-me)

**Incredible** things happen  
when we believe in children.

**Believe in  
children**  
 **Barnardo's**

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# Introduction

Barnardo's has long warned that as a society we are sleepwalking into a mental health crisis. Childhood – including adolescence – has always been challenging, especially for the children Barnardo's supports. The children and young people who come to our services have often experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences and or trauma (ACEs) – such as abuse or neglect, growing up in a household with domestic violence, or having parents who suffer from addiction or mental health problems.

We know all these factors make it more likely that young people will develop mental health problems, which can stay with them into adulthood. Half of all adult mental health problems appear before the age 14, with three quarters, (75 per cent) of lifetime mental conditions present by the age of 24.<sup>1</sup>

**At Barnardo's our goal is to help children throughout the UK by supporting stronger families, safer childhoods and positive futures. Identifying children at risk of mental health problems, and helping them access the right support as early as possible, is vital to making this a reality.**



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1 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

# The facts

## In England:



**One in eight 5 to 19 year olds has at least one mental health disorder.<sup>2</sup>**

## Anxiety



**The numbers of 5-15 year olds experiencing emotional disorders (including anxiety and depression) has increased by 48% – from 3.9% in 2004 to 5.8% in 2017.<sup>3</sup>**

## Bullying



**It is estimated that in the year from April 2017 to March 2018, 17% of young people aged 10 to 15 in England were bullied in the previous 12 months in a way that made them frightened or upset.<sup>4</sup>**

## Cyberbullying



**A survey of Barnardo's practitioners found 79% said cyberbullying affects children**

**and young people's mental health<sup>5</sup>. This was a particular issue for the 11-15 year olds age range and some groups of children and young people were more susceptible to these impacts such as children in care, care leavers and young carers.**

**1 in 5** children between the ages of 11 and 19 have experienced cyber-bullying.<sup>6</sup>



**Children with an existing mental health disorder are approximately twice as likely to experience cyberbullying.<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/F6/A5706C/MHCYP%202017%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/754959/Bullying\\_in\\_England\\_2013-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/754959/Bullying_in_England_2013-2018.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/B51140%2020886\\_Social%20media\\_Report\\_Final\\_Lo%20Res.pdf](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/B51140%2020886_Social%20media_Report_Final_Lo%20Res.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/F6/A5706C/MHCYP%202017%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/F6/A5706C/MHCYP%202017%20Summary.pdf>

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# What needs to change in England

## Investing in mental health services

Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are in need of urgent and sustained investment, which could come from the £20.5bn a year NHS funding settlement. This would help ensure that all children have access to preventative and early intervention services, and reduce waiting times for the most intensive support.

## Focusing on well-being

The Department for Education and Ofsted should review reporting and inspections procedures to ensure that every school prioritises children's wellbeing and mental health alongside academic achievement.

## Making social media safer

- The Department for Education should ensure all children, young people and parents have access to education and guidance on safe social media use.
- The new Government should implement the regulation proposed in the Online Harms White Paper without delay (UK wide).
- The new Government should commission new research on the impact of social media on children, with a particular focus on vulnerable children, including those with multiple adverse childhood experiences, who are at greater risk of further harm.



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## Shannon's story

Shannon, 11, was referred to Barnardo's Harrow Horizons in December 2018 because she was repeatedly bullied at school.

As a shy and quiet girl she found that she was the target of one particular bully who then encouraged other students to be mean to her. Shannon said:

"I had jokes made about me and I was called fat. My glasses were broken. No one helped and I didn't really tell anyone.

"I also experienced racist, homophobic and transphobic bullying and was repeatedly picked on. I was called 'fat, bisexual and transgender' and everyday people would say things that would hurt me inside".

Through Harrow Horizons Shannon began having regular one-to-one counselling sessions with Kat, a counsellor at the service.

Shannon said:

**"Coming to Harrow Horizons helped me to have more of a voice so I could speak to someone and explain how I felt. Kat helped me to understand that it's not true the nasty things people say.**

**"She was really nice and did things to help such as activities, where I could paint how my life felt, and then paint what I wanted my life to feel like. We also used different cards placed on a table to explain how I felt and the reasons why".**

## About Barnardo's

We are the UK's largest national children's charity. Last year we worked with around **300,000** children, young people, parents and carers through more than **1,000** services.

Mental health and wellbeing is one of Barnardo's key priority areas. We provide specialist support to **40,100** children, young people, parents and carers through our mental health services, including in schools.

We also deliver trauma-responsive training to all our staff and volunteers across the UK, so we can continue to deliver excellent support that responds to the challenges faced by the young people who may have experienced trauma and need our help.

More information about Barnardo's work on children's mental health is available at [barnardos.org.uk](https://www.barnardos.org.uk) and our full report *Left to their own devices: young people, social media and mental health* is available at [barnardos.org.uk/campaign-with-us/childrens-social-media-and-mental-health](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/campaign-with-us/childrens-social-media-and-mental-health)

**“Mental health problems seem more serious, more young people with severe anxiety who don’t want to leave the house and are scared of being around other people, more young people talking about self-harm and thoughts of suicide.”**

Barnardo’s Practitioner, July 2019

View our advert and share it online to help us raise awareness of children’s mental health  
[barnardos.org.uk/campaigns/believe-in-me](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/campaigns/believe-in-me)

**barnardos.org.uk**

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