



Young People's Rights Review

Emily Harle MSYP - Mental Health

Hi I'm Emily Harle, representing Angus South. After online and face-to-face consultations with over 100 young people in my constituency, access to Mental Health services was highlighted as a severe rights issue affecting those in Angus.

In consultations, my constituents reported shockingly long waiting times for treatment, due to the lack of funding devoted to this sector. One constituent did recognise that more young people in Angus are reaching out to these services. But given that the services aren't efficient in responding with this increased demand, many who attempt to access support simply don't get the help they need, and their mental state may decline whilst stuck on a waiting list.

Additionally, some constituents reported accessibility issues, as they need to travel across the constituency simply to get to an appointment. This cuts off vital support from people who have difficulty accessing or affording transport. Everyone has mental health, so why can our services only be utilised by the lucky few?

So I'm eager to welcome the Government's implementation of the Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 in 6.13 of its draft Children and Young People's Rights Action Plan, as it aims to improve accessibility of mental health services for those in the most marginalised situations.

However, since many young people's deteriorating mental states remain unnoticed, **I think it is important to include a specific action ensuring that young people have strong mental health support within educational settings, whether this means implementing improved teacher training, or placing mental health professionals within educational environments.** On the latter point, we have been advocating for a minimum level of service provision in schools for two years since our last campaign on mental health, Speak Your Mind. Support at school would ensure that those who have difficulty accessing services still have adequate support within their place of education.

Two years ago, the UN Economic and Social Rights Committee recommended that the accessibility, availability and quality of mental health care must be ensured. With this in mind, every young person should have access to quality mental health services, and nobody should be reduced to a mere scribble on a waiting list while their mental state declines. Support for mental health should never be an afterthought.

Thankyou all for listening!