



Young People's Rights Review

Calum MacArthur MSYP - Mental Health

Hello there. I'm Calum MacArthur, this is Jack Norquoy, and we are Orkney's Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs).

Orkney's top result for the Rights Review consultation was overwhelmingly the right to better support for mental health. As part of the UNCRC, Article 24 is that you have the right to be as healthy as possible and the right to good healthcare.

Mental health came top in our results, but similar to the other high-ranking issues, there are contributing factors to this, including more support to the LGBT+ community, which is a prevalent issue in Orkney as many often feel that being in a smaller community there is more pressure of being judged.

Also, the right to protect against bullying abuse and neglect came high. In spite of continually being voted the best place to bring up children in the UK and to live, there have been recent high profile incidents of bullying in some of our local schools.

Confidence in service provision for sufferers of mental health difficulties were severely hampered in Orkney in June last year, when the records of 373 mental health patients were accidentally shredded.

In Orkney, despite declining CAMHS referrals in Scotland nationally, referral numbers here have risen in recent years. There have been a number of issues with mental health provision in Orkney, and since the end of 2016, there has only been one mental health nurse for over 300 people in the system.

This has meant Orkney has fallen behind in the 18-week waiting list target for CAMHS, nationally. It is more difficult to retain staff living in rural areas, and despite the Scottish Government's 2017-2027 mental health strategy having an action to support rural areas, thus far Orkney has not seen the full benefit of this initiative. **Serious work will need to be done to address our unique challenges with reduced staff and increasing referrals.** Also we have amongst the highest rates of suicide in Scotland.

Locally, myself and Calum have continued the work of SYP's Speak Your Mind campaign, proposing Orkney Youth Conference in 2016 on the theme of better mental health and wellbeing. The topic was also covered in the 2017 Youth Chamber debate, and has repeatedly featured at the top of the Make Your Mark consultation results in Orkney in past years, which just shows how aware young people are in Orkney of the challenges that we face.

It is clear that if we are to move forward and tackle these issues effectively, the voices of young people must be listened to throughout the process to find a

solution, which will only react to the current climate, to help to prevent these problems for future generations.