



# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH: THE FACTS

Children and young people's mental health has never been so high on the public agenda. But it's vital that we have the basic facts if we are to see realised our vision of better mental health for all children, wherever they live, whatever their background or class.



At any one time, a child or young person may be anywhere on a spectrum between being healthy and unwell. Many children move along the spectrum at different times.

**75% of adults** with a diagnosable mental health problem experience the first symptoms by the age of 24.

(Kessler *et al.*, 2005; McGorry *et al.*, 2007)

About **one in twenty** (4.6%) 5-19 year olds has a behavioural disorder, with rates higher in boys than girls.

(NHS Digital, 2018)



**70% of children with autism** have at least one mental health condition.

(Simonoff *et al.*, 2008)

People who identify as **LGBT+** have **higher rates** of common mental health problems and lower wellbeing than heterosexual people, and the gap is greater for older adults (over 55 years) and those under 35 than during middle age.

(Semlyen *et al.*, 2016)



**One in six** 7-16 year olds has a mental health problem.

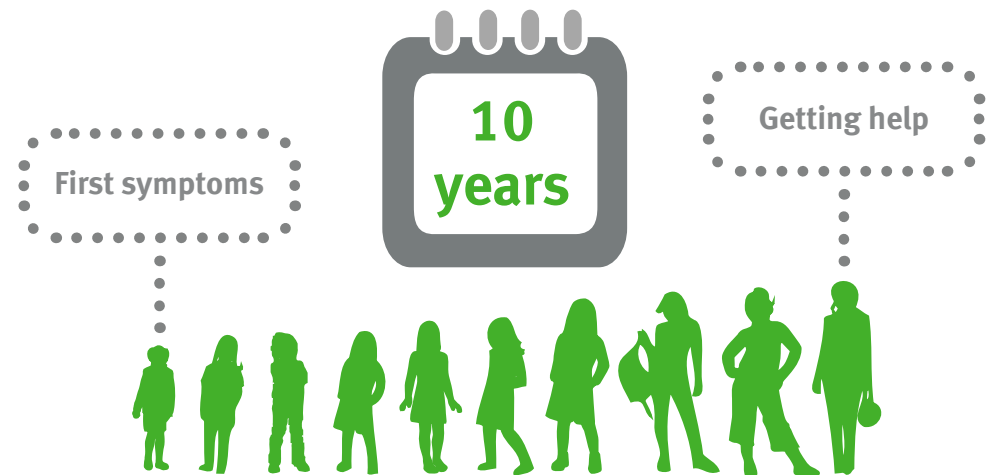
This is an alarming rise from one in ten in 2004 and one in nine in 2017.

(NHS Digital, 2022)

Common mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, are **increasing amongst 16-24 year olds**, with 19% reporting to have experienced them in 2014, compared to 15% in 1993.

They are about **three times** more common in young women (26.0%) than men (9.1%)

(McManus *et al.*, 2016)



There is an average **10-year delay** between young people displaying first symptoms and getting help.

Pupils who have a mental health problem are **more likely to be excluded** from school than their peers.

In 2013/14, **one in five students** with an identified social, emotional and mental health difficulty received at least one fixed period exclusion.

(Department for Education, 2016)

Research suggests that school exclusions are linked to **long-term mental health problems**.

(Ford *et al.*, 2017).



**3/4** of children in care have a diagnosable mental health problem.

**Two-thirds** of children with a mental health problem have had contact with professional services.



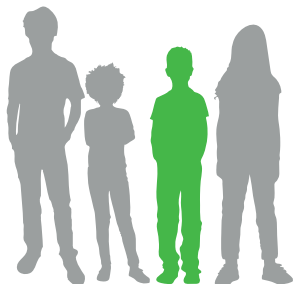
Teachers were the most commonly cited source (48.5%), followed by primary care professionals (33.4%), and mental health specialists (25.2%).

(NHS Digital, 2018)

Research indicates a **high prevalence** of self-harm in young South Asian women aged 16-24 years. (Lavis, 2014)

Only **just over a quarter** (27.9%) of children and young people who experience both a learning disability and a mental health problem have had any contact with mental health services.

(Emerson and Hatton, 2007 and Toms *et al.*, 2015)



Children from racialised communities are **less likely** than their white peers to access traditional mental health services.

(Education Policy Institute, 2017)

However, they are **twice as likely** to access mental health support via court orders (social care or criminal justice related orders).

(Edbrooke-Childs and Patalay, 2019)

**Refugees and asylum seekers** are more likely to experience poor mental health (including depression, PTSD and other anxiety disorders) than the general population.

(Mental Health Foundation, 2016)



Children from the **poorest 20%** of households are **four times** as likely to have serious mental health difficulties by the age of 11 as those from the wealthiest 20%.

(Morrison Gutman *et al.*, 2015)

Young people in the **youth justice** system are **3 times** more likely than their peers to have mental health problem.

(Mental Health Foundation, 2002).

Over **40%** of children in the youth justice system in England and Wales are from racialised backgrounds, and more than **one third** have a diagnosed mental health problem.

(Taylor, 2016)

Children and young people with a learning disability are **three times** more likely than average to have a mental health problem.

(Lavis *et al.*, 2019)



Suicide is the largest cause of mortality for young people under 35. Suicide rates have been increasing in recent years.

(Office for National Statistics, 2020)

Self-harm is more common among young people than other age groups. **25%** of women and **9.7%** of men aged 16-24 report that they have self-harmed.

(McManus *et al.*, 2016)

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If you’re struggling and would like to speak to someone, these organisations can provide support and advice:

**Childline:** 0800 1111 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) **Papyrus:** 0800 068 4141 / [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org) / [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

**The Mix:** 0808 808 4994 / [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk) **YoungMinds** has lots of information: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) and a parents’ helpline: 0808 802 5544