**Mental Health**

*noun*

“a person’s condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being”

There are many ways for young people living in Scotland experiencing difficulty concerning their mental health to seek professional help- but what are they?

The most well-known organisation is CAMHS (children and adolescents mental health society), and they can be reached through a referral by a doctor or teacher, or by their general helpline, **020 7089 5050. After a referral has been put in place, the maximum waiting time is eighteen weeks, and based off of the urgency of the request, which will be decided by whoever puts the referral in place.**

**The support for young people in Scotland has gotten increasingly better since the Mental Health Act of 2003, but still has a long way to go;**

* **half of teenagers with mental health and wellbeing issues try to cope alone**
* **a third of pupils said they are not confident enough to speak to a teacher**
* **70% of 11-16 year olds have experienced negative feelings in the past year, ranging from upset or unhappiness to anxiety, fear and unsafety**
* **11% of teenagers would describe themselves as unhappy overall**
* **18% would say that their worries and concerns were treated poorly when taken to a teacher**
* **¾ of teachers worry about pupil wellbeing in their spare time**
* **¼ of teachers would not know why and how to refer pupils when they need help**
* **and over a third of teachers said they had had no prior training to help pupils with their mental health**

With 10% of 5-16 year olds clinically diagnosed with mental health difficulties and potentially a number of children that go undiagnosed, and only 86% of young people describing themselves as happy overall and 66% saying their mental health related concerns were taken seriously, resources and funding are very limited for CAMHS and other similar organisations, and most people find themselves waiting for quite a while before receiving help, which can be devastating for people and their families.

We managed to call and interview a nurse from CAMHS:

“*Do you have contacts in different schools?*”

“Yes, we work with a lot of different schools.”

“*How do you find people who have mental illnesses and need help?”*

“We don’t actually provide any services for young people. We’re a campaigning charity, so the young people we work with will come to us. We will run campaigns that ask young people to come work with us, and we do that by various methods, such as on the internet, via different school programme and youth programmes, or different organisations that work with young people.”

“*How do you inform people about mental illnesses in your campaigns?*”

“The majority of our campaigning is done on the internet. We write petitions to send to the government, we do research on how ill mental health affects young people and how they get treated, and create campaigns off the back of that information and mostly push them out via online portfolios.”

“*If you weren’t a part of this company, would you still work as hard as you do to inform people of mental illnesses?”*

“Probably not. If I didn’t work here I don’t think I would be aware of how bad the problems were.”

“*So you think more people need to be made aware of this?*”

“Yes, definitely.”

We found that, as helpful as CAMHS are, they do not provide any services for young people with mental illnesses, though some may argue that their campaigning is very helpful in raising awareness about mental health. Either way, there is still a long way to go.

Mental health is a big issue and we hope that more charities, campaigns and companies that can provide help will be founded and support for young people will continue to grow and thrive in Scotland.

*By Kulsum and Katie*