

# £79 million to boost mental health support for children and young people

- Nearly 3 million children in England to be supported by mental health support teams in schools
- Around 22,500 more children and young people to access community mental health services
- 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services

Young people have been uniquely impacted by the pandemic and lockdown, with NHS research suggesting 1 in 6 may now have a mental health problem, up from 1 in 9 in 2017.

The number of mental health support teams in schools and colleges will grow from 59 to 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. Mental health support teams work in a variety of ways, including enabling children to text their local mental health support team, with a health professional responding within an hour during the school day offering them advice, or providing families with tips on how to spot that the children and young people are struggling with their mental health.

The teams also help staff within schools and colleges to provide a 'whole school approach' to mental health and wellbeing through training sessions for parents or workshops for teachers.

Throughout the pandemic, these teams have continued to work virtually, providing vital support for young people during lockdown. Schools have hailed their success in supporting both students and staff. In Kent, teams have provided 20-minute telephone counselling sessions for parents struggling with the competing demands of life under lockdown, alongside virtual drop-in sessions for school staff on how to support children with their mental health.

Access to community mental health services will also be expanded, giving 22,500 more children and young people access to help and support by 2021 to 2022 – including talking therapies and cognitive behavioural therapy.

This accelerates the commitment to expand services as part of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#), which will see an additional 345,000 more children and young people access mental health services by 2024.

As we near step one of the [roadmap](#), with schools returning from Monday, the government has expanded the support available to children and young people who may be suffering from poor mental health as a result of, or exacerbated by, the pandemic.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Over the last year great focus has rightly been placed on our

physical health, but I am incredibly conscious of the impact the pandemic has had on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Children and young people have been particularly impacted by disruption to their routine, education and social lives and I am committed to doing all I can to ensure mental health support is there for those who need it.

Our response to this global pandemic will not only treat the public health threat of coronavirus but ensure our clinicians have the resources to respond to the long-term impact on people's mental health, to provide support to everyone in their hour of need.

Children and young people facing a mental health crisis will continue to get support through 24/7 crisis lines and will benefit from additional funding to support follow-up crisis treatment at home where necessary.

Eating disorder services for conditions like anorexia and bulimia will also be accessible to an additional 2,000 children and young people in the community. This follows NHS England's plans to expand rapid access to specialist NHS treatment for young people with eating disorders across England, aiming to contact patients within 48 hours and beginning treatment as soon as 2 weeks later.

Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Nadine Dorries said:

This has been an exceptionally difficult year, especially for our children and young people, and we know it is having a real impact on mental health.

This additional funding will mean children who need to can access services in the community, as well as providing early intervention in schools.

I am committed to supporting everyone's mental health and wellbeing, and doing everything we can to ensure young people who need help, get help.

Children and young people's mental health services have remained open throughout the pandemic, adapting to deliver services remotely where appropriate.

NHS Mental Health Director Claire Murdoch said:

The pandemic has turned our lives upside down and hit children and young people particularly hard.

NHS mental health services have worked around the clock, proactively reaching out to and caring for children and young

people despite challenging circumstances – and we stand steadfast in our commitment to continue to improve mental health care for each and every one of them.

This funding announced as part of the Spending Review last November will now support NHS England's work to increase the number of mental health support teams in schools and colleges to 400 by 2023, and growing community services to treat more children and young people than ever before.

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind said:

It's positive that the UK government have confirmed that £79 million of the previously announced £500 million investment in mental health has been allocated to support children and young people's mental health. With schools re-opening in England next week, the commitment to having better mental health support for pupils cannot come soon enough.

We know that high levels of poor mental health and problems accessing mental health services were a problem for many children and young people even before the pandemic, and that coronavirus has disproportionately affected younger people. Over the past year, our young people have faced a whole load of additional challenges, including school closures, loneliness and isolation, and the knock-on effect of the recession causing problems for families such as debt, unemployment, housing and access to benefits.

There is still lots more work to be done to ensure that every young person gets the support they need for their mental health. But this is a positive step forward in cementing mental health at the heart of recovery from the pandemic and beyond.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

For many young people this pandemic has amplified the feeling of lack of control, which can have such a huge impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

This additional funding will be absolutely vital and the new mental health support teams will enable even more children and young people to get the support they need quickly. It builds on the expert training programme we've introduced for school and college staff and our Mental Health in Education Action Group to address the mental health issues young people are experiencing and improving the help available.

This challenging time may be turbulent, but our commitment to improve mental health support remains firm and we are prioritising

this as more pupils and students return to face-to-face education next week.

To help children and young people, their parents and carers manage their mental wellbeing, deal with stress and tackle issues like anxiety and uncertainty, Public Health England has a series of dedicated resources on the [Every Mind Matters website](#).

This includes tips on self care and dealing with change.

Dr Alex George, government's Youth Mental Health Ambassador, said:

This funding will make a huge difference to young people's lives, and I am so pleased to see this level of commitment from the government and the Prime Minister.

The mental health support teams in schools, together with the child and adolescent mental health services are vital sources of support, and I will continue to work with the government on supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

Education staff will be supported to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a result of COVID-19 as they return to school by the Wellbeing for Education Return programme backed by £8 million, and free online psychological training modules on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by emergencies or crisis situations.

This funding forms part of the £500 million for mental health announced at the 2021 to 2022 spending review.