

# School children in Scotland should have access to counselling

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Counselling services in Scotland's schools should be on a par with other parts of the UK, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Speaking at First Minister's Questions today, leader Ruth Davidson cited evidence from the Scottish Association for Mental Health that youngsters in Wales and Northern Ireland have guaranteed access to schools-based counselling.

She urged Nicola Sturgeon to offer similar guarantees for pupils north of the border.

The question on the mental health of children came following the Manchester terror attacks, which targeted young people leaving a concert on Monday night.

In a mental health paper published last year, the Scottish Conservatives called for the idea of school champions and counsellors to tackle mental health challenges facing young people.

Ruth called on the Scottish Government to examine the possibilities of this scheme.

## **Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:**

"It would not have been right, in my judgement, to use today to indulge in the knockabout of an election campaign.

"But I also believe that we best show our contempt for the tactics of terror by going about our business of practising the very democratic values that the bombers seek to destroy.

"So with the welfare of young people at the forefront of our minds, it's right we find the best ways to support school pupils who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

"We often talk about money and resources when discussing these issues, but there are other factors too. "SAMH points out children in Wales and Northern Ireland have guaranteed access to schools-based counselling, while those in Scotland could be missing out.

“This is something we have called for in the past, and I urge the Scottish Government to examine this approach too.”

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For more on SAMH’s calls for mental health counselling in schools, visit:  
[https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/SAMH\\_View\\_-\\_Counselling\\_in\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/SAMH_View_-_Counselling_in_Schools.pdf)

To see the Scottish Conservatives’ paper on mental health, visit:  
<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Scottish-Conservative-Mental-Health-Policy.pdf>