

## SAMH'S VIEW:

# COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

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**ABOUT THE SAMH'S  
VIEW SERIES**

SAMH's View statements set out SAMH's position on a particular policy topic. They are produced by the Public Affairs team.

## Context

The Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland 2018-2019 committed to investing £60 million in additional school counselling services.<sup>1</sup> This will include 350 school counsellors and 250 school nurses to support the wellbeing of pupils. Children and young people in Northern Ireland and Wales have had access to school-based counselling since 2007 and 2008 respectively.

## Key points

- In Northern Ireland school based counselling was introduced in all post primary schools in 2007 and in Welsh secondary schools from 2008.<sup>2</sup>
- In England the Department for Education has issued guidance stating that over time, all schools should make counselling services available to their pupils.<sup>3</sup>
- An evaluation of schools-based counselling in Wales showed that counselling was associated with significant reductions in psychological distress across each of the areas in which it was introduced.<sup>4</sup>
- Other organisations, such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy<sup>5</sup>, the Scottish Children's Service Coalition (SCSC)<sup>6</sup> and Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights<sup>7</sup>, support the provision of counselling in secondary schools.
- More than 250,000 children in Scotland have no access to school-based counselling services, and fourteen local authorities have no on-site counsellors.<sup>8</sup>
- Based on costs from England, SAMH estimates that providing counselling in all Scotland's secondary schools would require an initial investment of £9m.



## SAMH calls for:

- By 2020, counselling services to be provided across Scotland's secondary schools.

## Further detail:

### OFFICIAL GUIDANCE

- Scottish Government, [Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027](#)
- Scottish Government, [The Mental Health of Children and Young People, 2005](#)
- UK Government, [Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future, 2015](#)
- Welsh Assembly Government, [School-based Counselling Services in Wales a National Strategy, 2008](#)
- Northern Ireland Executive, [Independent Counselling Service for Schools \(ICSS\), Handbook, 2012](#)
- Scottish Government, [Delivering for Today, Investing for Tomorrow, 2018](#)

### SAMH RESEARCH

- [In Their Own Words: the mental health of children and young people in Scotland \(2016\)](#)

### FURTHER INFO

- Prof Mick Cooper, University of Strathclyde, [School-based counselling in UK Secondary Schools: A review and critical evaluation, 2013](#)
- BACP, [School Based Counselling For All, 2015](#)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government, [Delivering for Today, Investing for Tomorrow](#), September 2018

<sup>2</sup> Prof Mick Cooper, University of Strathclyde, [School-based counselling in UK Secondary Schools: A review and critical evaluation](#), 2013

<sup>3</sup> Department for Education, [Counselling in Schools: a Blueprint for the Future](#), 2016

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government, [Evaluation of the Welsh School-Based Counselling Strategy](#), 2011

<sup>5</sup> BACP, [Media release 31/03/17](#)

<sup>6</sup> SCSC, [Manifesto for the Scottish Local Authority Elections May 2017](#), 2017

<sup>7</sup> Together, [Scottish Schools lacking mental health provision](#), 2017

<sup>8</sup> BBC Investigation, [School Counselling Support "Patchy"](#), August 2017