

10 Key Facts about Children and Young People's Mental Health in NI (26.03.19)

1. There has never been a study of the prevalence of poor mental health in Northern Ireland. It is estimated that more than 20% of young people are suffering significant mental health problems by the time they reach 18 and 1 in 6 young people have a mental health need at any time.¹
2. Suicide rates in NI are higher than any other part of the UK.² NI is currently without an updated suicide prevention strategy due to the political impasse.
3. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15, self harm presentations to A&E among 15-19 year-olds increased by 30% and 29% among males and females respectively.³
4. Rates of prescribing of medication for mood and anxiety continue to rise across the population, with large inequality gaps between the most and least deprived areas.⁴ In 2017, 12,765 prescriptions were given to 2,706 under 18 year olds, a proportion of whom were under 12 years of age.⁵
5. In 2016, 35% of 11–16 year olds surveyed in NI had concerns or worries about their mental health. Of these, 61% did not seek help from anyone.⁶ There is an average 10 year delay between young people presenting first symptoms and getting help.⁷
6. The mental health system in NI is struggling to meet the growing scale and complexity of need within children and young people.⁸ During 2015/16, 42% of young people referred to Step 3 CAMHS were not accepted (regional average).⁹
7. The Independent Counselling Service for post primary schools has reported an increase in the number of children experiencing self harm, mental health and neglect issues. While counselling services are free at the point of use in post-primary schools and EOTAS centres the demand is greater than the available provision.¹⁰
8. It is estimated that over 40% of children in NI are living within families who have high or moderate experience of the conflict, which can impact those with no direct experience- a phenomenon called 'trans-generational impact'.¹¹

9. Those who have experienced persistent poverty have 3 times (30%) more chance of having a mental health problem by the age of 11yrs old, than those that have never experienced it (10%).¹² 27% of children and young people were living in relative poverty in 2016/17.¹³

10. Less than 1p in every pound of the overall health budget in NI is invested in children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services.¹⁴ This is despite children and young people comprising almost 25% of Northern Ireland's population, adolescence being peak years of onset of mental health problems and prevalence of poor mental health 25% greater than other parts of the UK.¹⁵

Access to Data and Monitoring

Statistics are based on the most up to date data available. It is not always easy to access mental health statistics from NI to understand patterns or change, or to be able to make comparison with other countries. In some cases there can be significant delays in data being published. For example, there can be a delays of up to 1 year in the recording of death by suicide in NI due to the registration process, this is compared to 8 days in Scotland. Self Harm Statistics have not been published in NI since 2014/15.

¹ DHSSPS (2010) Delivering Excellence, Achieving Recovery, A professional framework for the mental health nursing profession in NI 2011-2015, available from <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/delivering-excellence-supporting-recovery.pdf>

² Suicide statistics report- Latest Statistics from UK and Republic of Ireland, Samaritans Sept 2018, <https://www.samaritans.org/about-us/our-research/facts-and-figures-about-suicide>

³ Self Harm Registry 3 Year Report- 2012/13-2014/15, <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/northern-ireland-registry-self-harm-three-year-report-201213-201415>

⁴ HSCB & PHA Draft Commissioning Plan 2018/19

⁵ Still Waiting- A Rights Based Review of Mental Health Services and Support in NI, NICCY 2018. <https://www.niccy.org/stillwaiting>

⁶ Young Person Behaviour and Attitude Survey NISRA, 2016

⁷ Missed Opportunities: A review of recent evidence into children and young people's mental health, Centre for Mental Health 2016

⁸ *ibid*, 5

⁹ CAMHS Update to NI Commissioner for Children and Young People, HSCB, Oct 2017. https://www.niccy.org/media/3111/20171106_camhs-updatefinalhscb.pdf

¹⁰ An evaluation of the effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well-Being support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres, ETI, 2018 <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-effectiveness-emotional-health-and-well-being-support-pupils-schools-and>

¹¹ Commission for Victims and Survivors (2015) Towards a Better Future (pg 36)

¹² The Lancet (2016) Child poverty continues to rise in the UK, Vol 388, pp.747

¹³ NI Poverty Bulletin 2016-17 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-poverty-bulletin-2016-17>

¹⁴ *ibid*, 6.

¹⁵ Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability, DHSSPS, 2006, <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/bamford-published-reports>