



New  
**Philanthropy**  
Capital

## 3 in 4 children with mental health problems not receiving adequate treatment

**Press release: embargoed until 00.01GMT on 24 November 2008**

*London, UK*—Britain's youth is suffering from mental health problems with 3 in 4 not receiving the treatment they need.

*Heads up*, a report published today by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), the charity think tank, reveals that the lack of available treatment costs society millions of pounds and leaves charities to pick up the pieces.

NPC found that in England conduct disorder—a severe psychiatric disorder in children and adolescents—costs society £1.5bn every year. This takes into account the costs to the criminal justice system and the NHS, education and social care costs, and lost earnings. Conduct disorder leads to truancy and exclusion from school, crime and antisocial behaviour—some of the UK's most pressing social problems.

By expanding treatment to reach all children with conduct disorder, NPC estimates that cost savings of £244m to £376m a year could be achieved.

The scale of the issue is startling and poorly understood: many people assume that children's mental health problems are just growing pains or teenage angst. Yet 1 in 10 young people in the UK are affected by mental health disorders, and three-quarters of adults with a disorder, also had one in childhood.

'Helping children at an earlier stage stops troubled kids from becoming troubled adults. It can save individuals and families years of distress, and the state millions of pounds,' says Martin Brookes, Chief Executive of NPC. 'Charities support young people suffering from problems such as depression, eating disorders and self-harm who would otherwise be left out in the cold.'

Last week, the Government published an independent review of CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), which revealed that, despite some improvements, mental health services are overstretched and there are 'unacceptable variations' in the quality of provision between regions and within local areas.

NPC found that charities play a vital role by providing accessible and timely support for vulnerable children, carrying out research into young people's needs, and campaigning to change policy and public perception. However, their work is often overlooked: it was barely discussed in the CAMHS review, and children's mental health charities have a lower profile and receive less funding than charities in other sectors.

'This needs to change. Increasing mental health problems in children and overstretched services mean charities are taking on more work,' says Benita Refson, Chief Executive of The Place2Be, a charity discussed in *Heads up* that provides school-based counselling for children in 146 schools. 'People are beginning to realise that mental health issues lie

Registered  
charity  
No 1091450

New Philanthropy Capital, 3 Downstream, 1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG  
Tel 020 7785 6300 Fax 020 7785 6301 Email [info@philanthropycapital.org](mailto:info@philanthropycapital.org)  
Website [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org)

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 4244715. Registered address as above.

behind many of society's problems, but charities need increased support and recognition to meet rising demand', she added.

Providing a child with counselling at school costs The Place2Be less than £100 per year. NPC estimates that stopping a teenager from being excluded from school saves the education system £20,000: over 200 times the cost of counselling that could prevent the mental health problems and poor behaviour that may lead to exclusion in the first place.

-Ends-

For further information about NPC, its research reports and charity recommendations, or to arrange an interview or request pictures, please contact:

Sue Wixley, NPC

Email: [SWixley@philanthropycapital.org](mailto:SWixley@philanthropycapital.org)

Tel: +44 (0)207 785 6317 M: 07932 688 431

For a copy of the report go to

[http://www.philanthropycapital.org/research/research\\_reports/health/child\\_mental\\_health.aspx](http://www.philanthropycapital.org/research/research_reports/health/child_mental_health.aspx)

#### Notes to Editors

1. New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) is a charity that maximises the impact of donors and charities—it does this through independent research, tools for charities and advice for donors. Its research guides donors on how best to support causes such as cancer, education and mental health. As well as highlighting the areas of greatest need, NPC identifies charities that could use donations to best effect. Using this research, it advises clients and their trusted advisors. For further information see: [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org).

2. NPC develops a detailed understanding of social problems by talking to policy-makers, practitioners, academics and other experts. Its charity recommendations are arrived at after visiting and analysing charities across the sector, looking at five key criteria: the charity's activities, results, sector impact, leadership and finances.

3. The report *Heads up* is the product of eight months of detailed desk research and consultations with more than 50 experts (including academics, policy-makers, mental health professionals and charities). NPC currently recommends ten charities that are working on children and young people's mental health issues. Case studies for two of these—The Place2Be and beat—are provided below. The other eight charity recommendations are: Samaritans, Youth Access, The Brandon Centre, Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, Family Action, Beatbullying, Chance UK, and the NSPCC's ChildLine. The charity recommendations and full report can be downloaded from [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org).

4. The report looks at the mental health of children and young people from 0-25 years old. The 3 in 4 statistic refers to children and young people who are eligible for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, ie, those up to the age of 18. It is taken from a 2006 report published by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health. The 1 in 10 statistic for the prevalence of mental health disorders covers 5-15 year olds and comes from a study published by the Office for National Statistics in 2004. Prevalence statistics for the whole 0-25 year old age group are not available.

5. NPC's calculation of the costs of conduct disorder in England can be found in the appendices to *Heads up*, published on our website: [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org). The calculation takes into account the costs to the criminal justice system and the NHS, education and social care costs, and lost earnings. NPC calculated the cost saving of £20,000 for stopping a teenager from being excluded from school for a previous report, *Misspent youth: The costs of truancy and exclusion* (2007), which can also be downloaded from [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org). It represents the cost to the education system alone.



New Philanthropy Capital, 3 Downstream, 1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG

Tel 020 7785 6300 Fax 020 7785 6301 Email [info@philanthropycapital.org](mailto:info@philanthropycapital.org)

Website [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org)

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 4244715. Registered address as above.

The broader costs are much higher: the average excluded child costs a total of £63,851 to society (including costs to the child in future lost earnings resulting from poor qualifications and costs to society in terms of crime, health and social services). A recent Office for National Statistics study found that having a persistent conduct disorder increased the odds of being excluded from school by 47 times. Children and young people with a persistent emotional disorder were also more likely to be excluded from school than their peers.

6. **The Place2Be** was established in 1994 in response to increasing concern about the extent and depth of emotional and behavioural difficulties displayed in classrooms and playgrounds. It works with 146 schools across the UK, supporting a child population of around 47,000, often in areas of great deprivation. For media enquiries, case studies and interviews call **David Meredith at The Place2Be on 07711 481 655 or email [david.meredith@theplace2be.org.uk](mailto:david.meredith@theplace2be.org.uk)**. For further information see [www.theplace2be.org.uk](http://www.theplace2be.org.uk).

7. **beat** is the leading UK charity for people with eating disorders and their families. **beat** is the working name of the Eating Disorders Association. Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that affect 1.1 million people in the UK. **beat** provides helplines for adults and young people, online support and a UK-wide network of self-help groups to help people **beat** their eating disorder. For media enquiries, case studies and interviews call **Mary George on 0870 770 3221 / 07804 589404 or email [media@b-eat.co.uk](mailto:media@b-eat.co.uk)**. For further information see [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk).

## 8. Case Studies

Luke's story (The Place2Be)

Ten-year-old Luke was the boy who always sat on his own at lunchtime. He had few friends, was sullen and disruptive in class, and frequently arrived at school late, if he turned up at all. Outside school, he had begun to hang out with older teenagers and had got involved in fire-setting and vandalism.

Luke could not look to his family for support. His mother had her own problems—she suffered from depression and panic attacks and was prone to drink heavily. His sister had been placed in care some years earlier, and his father, who was chronically ill, lived a long way away with a new partner.

It was obvious to Luke's class teacher that he needed help. She referred him to The Place2Be, a charity that provides school-based counselling services to children and their families. Luke began weekly one-on-one sessions with one of the charity's counsellors, which took place in the school's special Place2Be room. His teacher started to see visible improvements. 'Luke began to arrive at school on time every day,' she noted, 'and dropped into The Place2Be on his way to class to announce that he was in. This in itself seemed to be a source of pride for him.'

Rachel's story: in her own words (**beat**)

'My name is Rachel and I am 21, and studied French and German at University. I now have hope for the future. I am still recovering, but I hope to be well enough to be able to spend a year abroad in France and Germany for my course.

'I first developed issues with food 6 years ago. These got more serious when I went to college at the age of 16. I cut right down on my food intake, and by Christmas of that year, I was going without food for up to four days. While I was an outpatient at the unit, I wasn't to go to college, I wasn't allowed to see my friends, use public transport or go anywhere on holiday. I had to stay at home and be looked after because I didn't have the strength. It was really depressing for me, because I was feeling really low and I was not able to see my friends.

'However, I have been a **beat** member for 4 years now, and regularly use the message board, Helpmail service, the live chats arranged by the Youth Team and the magazine that **beat** sends me. I find it hard to speak to people on the phone about how I feel, so the range of services is really useful. Because services and treatment are so bad and patchy, **beat** is the only constant support that I have. I know that I can go to them and receive support from someone that is sympathetic and knows about eating disorders. Through them, I have been able to make friends through their youth services: most of my old friends from school have fallen away, because while I was suffering, it was very hard for them to be my friend.'



New Philanthropy Capital, 3 Downstream, 1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG  
Tel 020 7785 6300 Fax 020 7785 6301 Email [info@philanthropycapital.org](mailto:info@philanthropycapital.org)  
Website [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org)

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 4244715. Registered address as above.



New Philanthropy Capital, 3 Downstream, 1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG  
Tel 020 7785 6300 Fax 020 7785 6301 Email [info@philanthropycapital.org](mailto:info@philanthropycapital.org)  
Website [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org)

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 4244715. Registered address as above.