

**STOP.
BREATHE.
THINK.**

2022/23 IMPACT REPORT





3,004 young
people
supported

Worked with
127 partners

17,230
therapy
sessions
provided

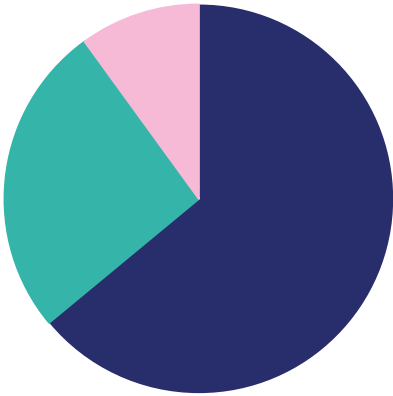
Our vision is for every child and young person to have someone to talk to. Without barriers, without stigma and without the wait.

Our mission is to support children and young people's mental health nationally by making personalised counselling accessible, available and affordable.

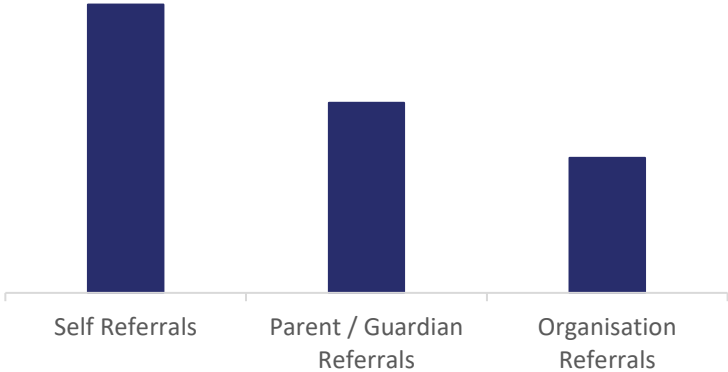
In the last three years, the likelihood of young people having a mental health problem has increased by 50%. Furthermore, 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, 70% of children and young people who experience poor mental health have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age and young people aged 16-24 were found to be less likely to receive mental health treatment than any other age group.

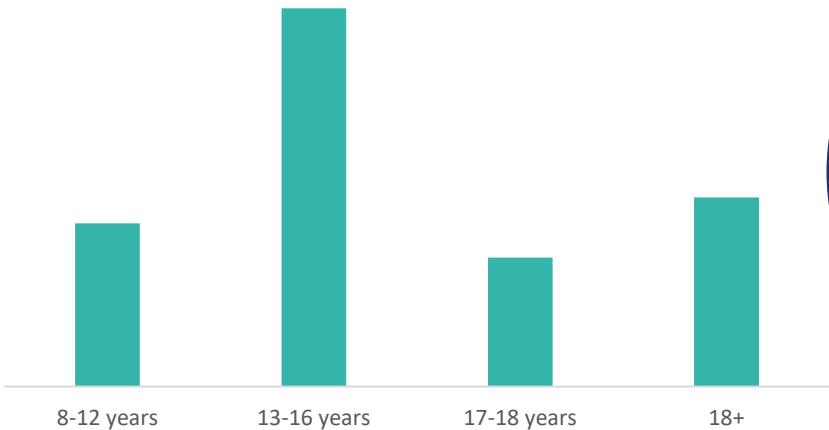
Stop.Breathe.Think was founded in response to this growing and urgent need for greater access to mental health support for children and young people across the country. We are proud to have supported young people nationally over the past year, getting them the help they need, without the wait.



■ Female ■ Male ■ Other



97% of children and young people accessed the service completely free of charge



1,108 young people supported via our 24-hour text service in partnership with Shout.

Our aims are to:

Build a better tomorrow for children and young people.

Engage children and young people to access counselling through a personalised and youth-centred approach.

Provide professional and friendly safe spaces online for children and young people to talk and be heard.

Empower children and young people with the skills and strategies to manage challenges and live happy and healthy lives.

Connect the social care, healthcare and education sectors with our service to provide better mental health support nationally.

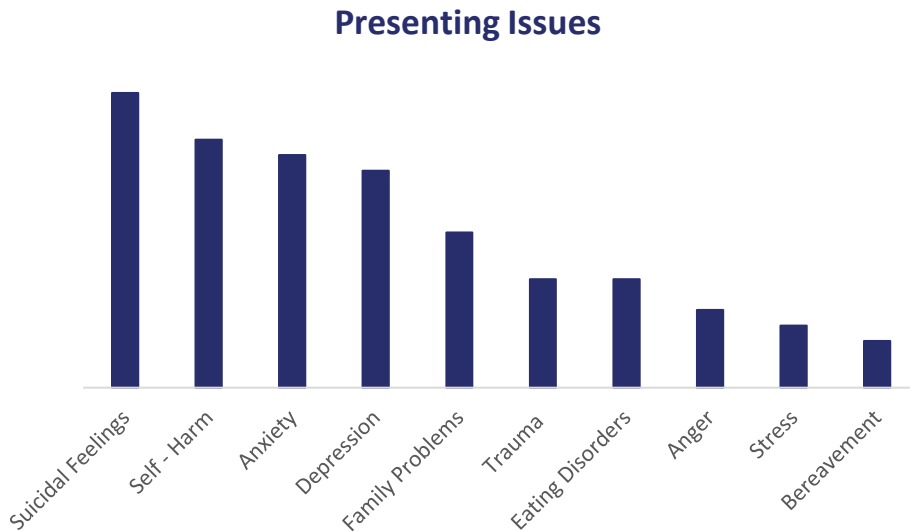
Ensure a common language to share outcomes across sectors supporting children and young people.



"There were so many times when my councillor was the only person I was able to talk to and the way she understood me was comforting. I felt a strong connection through her caring words and am so grateful I got to talk to someone. Since it was online, I got over fears and barriers and told her stuff I'd never admitted to anyone before, she was very kind and understanding about it all." Young person

Impact

Suicidal thoughts and self harm accounted for the majority of the presenting issues from young people receiving treatment with us, with anxiety close behind.



Prior to counselling	
Anxious / Worried	87%
Stressed	69%
Sad	57%
Angry	32%
Overwhelmed	69%
Scared	33%

Following counselling	
Positive / Happy	30%
In a better place	51%
Managing my feelings	38%
Work to do but positive	45%
Seeking more help	20%
Still struggling	8%

This year, 92% of children and young people said they had improved mental health as a result of Stop.Breathe.Think.

Our counsellors felt that 93% of their service users had made progress and moved on positively with their mental health and wellbeing as a result of Stop.Breathe.Think.

Working in Partnership

Our partnerships enable us to reach and support children and young people who might be affected by the stigma of mental health in their communities, social or economic pressures, or would struggle to access a GP and get on a conventional NHS waiting list.

With that in mind we've developed partnerships that enable us to provide direct support to young people living in and leaving care, inner city children whose institutions suffer from underfunding, children in areas of high deprivation, or health services in which young people's immediate physical needs are being supported, but their mental health has not been a priority.

This year, we are proud to have partnered with primary and secondary schools nationally including Academy Trusts, colleges and universities and other charities including Diabetes UK and Sported. We have also built a number of partnerships with In-Care and Leaving Care teams to improve mental health support in their areas.

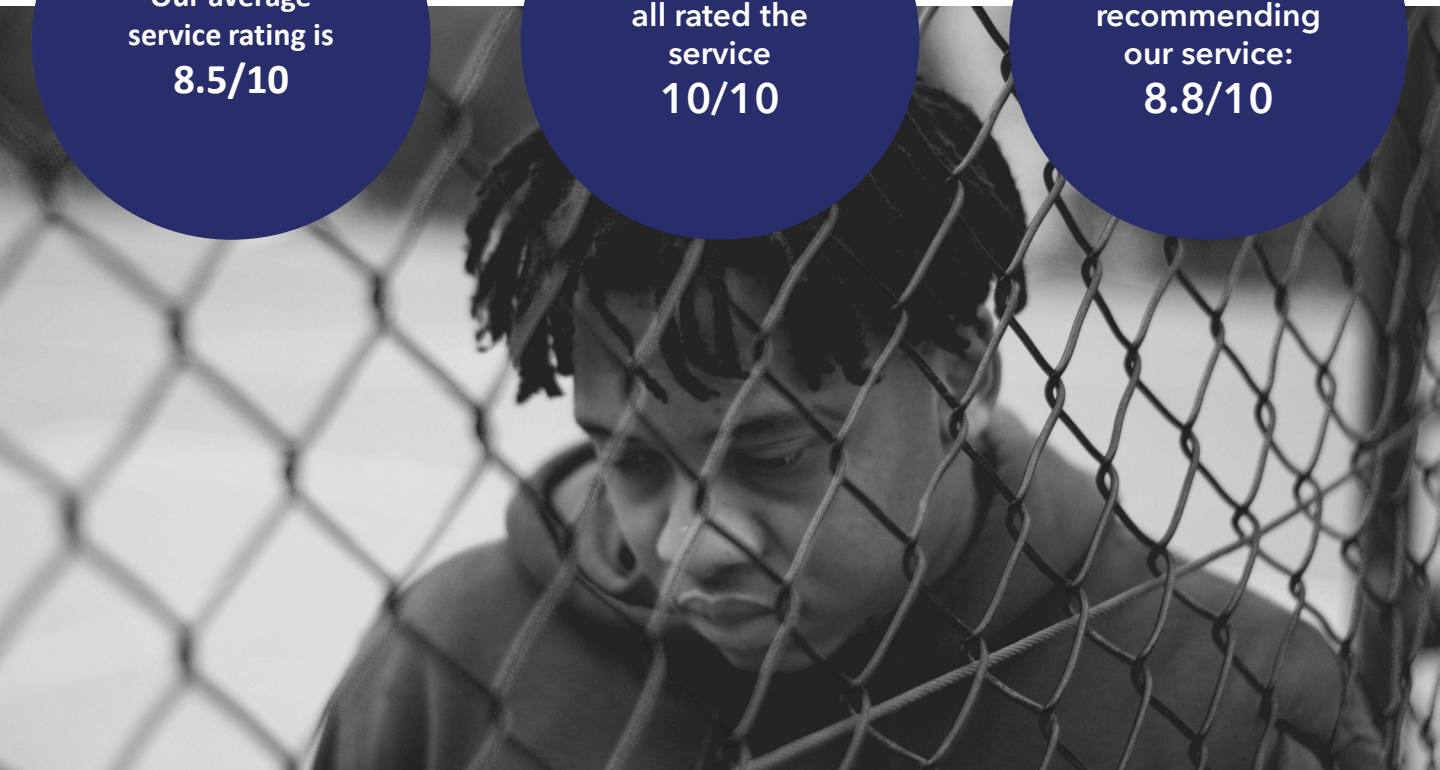
45% of looked after children (and 72% in residential care) have a mental health concern. Looked after children and care leavers are also between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide in adulthood. NSPCC 2020

There are currently over 102,000 children who are looked after in England, increasing every year since 2010. Adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, or witnessing domestic violence can all impact on a child's developing brain and statistics show this results in much higher levels of mental health problems in this group than in the general population. Despite the statistics, changes specifically aimed at improving the mental health of looked after children have been slow to materialise. Stop.Breathe.Think wants to change that and be there for those who need our support.

Our average
service rating is
8.5/10

Organisations
all rated the
service
10/10

Likelihood of
recommending
our service:
8.8/10



What's next?

We know that mental health doesn't discriminate. The young people who had therapy with Stop.Breathe.Think in 2022-23 came from every kind of socio-economic background, or Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), spread almost evenly across the board. 30% were from the three most deprived areas, and 9% from the least deprived indices.

However, we also know that there is a discrimination in terms of access to mental health care.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence prioritises talking therapy as the first and main treatment for mental health support, with medication to be prescribed after or in monitored conjunction. However, our research using the IMD indicated some of the most deprived areas of the UK show a high use of mental health medication, indicating that young people, unable to wait months or years for free NHS therapy, are being prescribed pharmaceuticals as a way of getting by.

The number of 12-17 year olds prescribed antidepressants more than doubled between 2005 and 2017.

This research, indicates that young people aren't getting the right support. Our priorities to help address this are:

Accessible

This year, 13% of our intakes were from Black and diverse ethnic communities. Research by the Mental Health Foundation suggests that these young people face more barriers to getting support, such as increased stigma in their communities, language barriers, mistrust or feeling that white professionals don't understand. Our focus is to develop partnerships that provide access to youth ethnically diverse communities and to strive to ensure our counsellors are as diverse in their background and experience as our young people.

Available

One third of children referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services remain on waiting lists and do not receive the help they need - that's 250,000 children without support. Young people are also facing a postcode lottery over their care, with huge disparities in waiting times between NHS Trusts. Stop.Breathe.Think's priority is to ensure all young people facing mental health issues get early and fast access to mental health care, regardless of their situation. We are able to respond to referrals within 24 hours and make counselling available within 72 hours.

Affordable

In 2020, our nationwide research in partnership with Censuswide revealed that 4/5 young people are put off seeking mental health support due to costs. Since then, young people are tackling a cost-of-living crisis only making this situation worse. It's therefore essential we keep supporting those young people who are most affected and continue developing ways of reaching those who'd otherwise struggle to get help.

Acceptable

Between the ages of 15-24 in the UK, male suicides were three times more common than female suicides. Research shows men are far less likely to ask for help and are more affected by the stigma of seeking therapy. This year 28% of our service users were male. Some of our latest partnerships are focused on tackling this issue, working in tandem with youth organisations with a high proportion of young men, and who can promote the dialogue around mental health with us.

Thank you!

With your invaluable support we have been able to help hundreds of children and young people.

“My counsellor gave me the space and freedom to speak about anything and everything, there wasn’t a thing I felt ashamed to tell her, she was always there for me to help get things off my chest which is exactly what I needed.” *Young person*

"Stop.Breathe.Think has been the catalyst for change. I can't recommend it enough. My daughter is so much happier, she is so much better. This has had a ripple effect on the whole family as if you have ever experienced mental health problems of a family member, you will know that the whole family goes through it too." *Parent*

"This support has massively helped me. I am forever grateful for Carrie as she helped me to notice and understand emotions but also that it's okay to be upset and worried. She helped me to understand and deal with the things that happened in my life. I have never had someone listen and just understand. Having the vulnerability to say I need help was extremely hard but SBT has helped me so much." *Young person*

"Lorraine was so lovely. She gave me a safe space to explore my struggles without feeling judged. I felt I had someone on my side who cared. I didn't feel so alone." *Young person*

"I was actually quite sceptical, as I was in a position where I thought no one could help. In my first sessions I was so nervous and would cry throughout as I was just so afraid, but talking helped. I recieved trauma therapy which completely changed the whole thing, I am so shocked on how far I've come." *Young person*

"I felt like I couldn't breathe or smile or do anything without waves of doubt, regret and guilt over nothing and everything – now I can see a bright future. And I know I have a long way to go, but now I have the strategies to help me on my journey." *Young person*

"I wouldn't change anything, brilliant charity, and very much young person centred." *Referral Partner*

