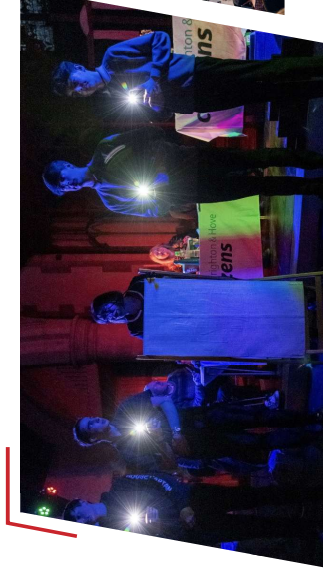


2. MENTAL HEALTH

"My experience of seeing a School-based Counsellor was a really positive thing for me. Seeing them made it possible to slowly work through everything and gain some confidence in myself."

ELLIOT, PUPIL FROM TYNE AND WEAR CITIZENS



OUR TRACK RECORD

- Successfully piloted school-based counselling in five schools in Tyne and Wear, with an evaluation showing a positive impact on students and staff.**
- Won increased funding for Mental Health Support Teams and new Virtual Waiting Rooms for those on long mental health waiting lists in Brighton and Hove.**
- Trained hundreds of local leaders from civil society institutions across South London to become Mental Health Champions, supporting thousands of people through local 'Be Well' Hubs.**

Campaign overview

When we listen in communities across the country, we hear time and again how worried people are about their mental health and how hard it is to access support. This is especially true when it comes to young people who are struggling with unprecedented levels of mental health need.

by trained professionals, would get back on track emotionally and academically and avoid needing more specialist support in the future.

Targeted support would alleviate some of the pressures the NHS is under and relieve teachers and support staff from having to deal with issues they are not qualified to address.

How are people in our communities affected?

Fi is a Year 12 student attending college in Brighton. Over the past couple of years, many of their close friends suffered from poor mental health. Sharing their issues overwhelmed Fi's mental health and they developed depression. Subsequently, Fi spent over a year feeling miserable; believing that they were the one who had to help their friends get better.

Thankfully, Fi's school is a place where people are encouraged to speak out so Fi had several staff members who they could talk to about available support. Consequently, they received several counselling sessions from a trained therapist, which was paid for by the school. The sessions focused on how Fi felt overwhelmed emotionally. The psychotherapist gave Fi specific strategies

to help with their mental health. Freeing and reassuring them that their feelings were not only normal for someone taking on the stresses of others but something that could be supported by expert counselling.

Kevin is a Year 13 student attending school in Newcastle. He suffered multiple adverse childhood experiences, suffered intense family grief and was poorly fostered. This affected his attendance and attainment at school.

This came to a head at secondary school and his school attendance fell to 47 per cent. During his programme of in-school counselling he was able to address the depression and anger rooted in his early years' experiences: "It's the one and only place that I can just talk about me."

Since ending counselling his attendance rate at school has risen to over 90 per cent. He has also made academic progress and has recently completed a full roster of GCSE examinations. Consequently, he will be starting Year 13 this year - something that was in question two years ago. Kevin no longer needs to attend counselling and knows that, if needed he can ask to be referred to counselling again.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS WE THINK MIGHT HELP?

1. Statutory provision of counselling in English schools, secondary schools and Further Education colleges.
2. Ensure the counselling is provided by those trained on a nationally recognised course, registered with a professional body for ethical oversight, training and supervision, and experienced in working with primary school-age children.
3. Ensure the provision is school- and college-based and 'whole school and community oriented' so it is sensitive to the child's family dynamics, the impact of social determinants and the demography of the school catchment area.
4. Integrate the counselling provision with other key stakeholders: Mental Health Leads, Family Liaison Officers, senior management team, and external agencies (Social Services, Police, Local Education Authority).
5. Enable Mental Health Trusts to work with schools and community institutions to strengthen local support networks around families and enable young people to identify and tackle the causes of mental ill health.

