



Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Response to The Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee call for evidence on mental health

17th August 2016

Q 1, 2, 3, 4

We have some general concerns about access to CAMHS services, we know from our members and wider networks that children and young people often wait long periods to get the right support. We know that services promoting early intervention and prevention face cuts in funding and there is an over reliance on the medical model. There appear to be disparities around eligibility criteria in different NHS areas and the services available to young people. Therefore it is often difficult for young people to access support when they first experience issues with their mental health. We know of incidents where children and young people are told that they are not ill enough to warrant access to support and treatment. We know that in many areas children and young people are not able to access independent advocacy, which they have a legal right to do so through the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. The [Advocacy Map 2014](#) edition highlights the lack of advocacy provision for children and young people across Scotland.

We would like to see more investment in preventative services including independent advocacy and other services in the community, with a focus on outcomes for individuals and groups. We would like to see a focus on a human rights based approach to mental health services so that services provide support and help that is focussed on the needs of the individual, their recovery and their personal outcomes.

Q 5, 6, 7

It is difficult to comment on the last Scottish Government strategy on mental health as there has not been any evaluation of it. A number of third sector organisations were involved in key reports around the various commitments but we are not aware of any response from the Scottish Government on these reports and recommendations.

The SIAA are members of the Scottish Mental Health Partnership (SMHP) which has produced a [briefing paper](#) outlining a long term cultural shift in mental health provision in Scotland. The SIAA believes that the next mental health strategy needs to reflect the vision outlined by the SMHP, needs to have a human rights based approach and focus on outcomes for people and communities. The next mental health strategy needs to be co produced with people with lived experience of mental health issues.

We would urge the Committee to meet with people who use services and hear first hand about what they find useful in mental health services and what improvements they would like to see in Scotland's future mental health provision.

For more information contact:

Shaben Begum, Director

Shaben.Begum@siaa.org.uk

0131 524 1975

www.siaa.org.uk