

BRIEFING NOTE – MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE THURSDAY 09 JULY 2015

SCHOOL COUNSELLING IN ENGLAND

- Studies have shown that ten per cent of 5-16 year olds in Britain have a mental health problem and there has been a lot of interest recently in children and young people's mental health.
- In addition to the much needed changes to CAMHS there is another important provision that deserves attention and that is school counselling.
- Counselling is an effective early intervention strategy for young people experiencing problems. Evidence from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and academic partners demonstrates that school-based counselling is associated with improvements around family issues, bereavement, eating disorders, bullying and relationships as well as other emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, including anger management.
- Early and easy access to counselling in schools helps prevent mental health problems developing or becoming more serious, and helps to build up trust and confidence to enable young people to access more specialist services if required.
- Counselling in schools is very much appreciated by Head teachers, staff and pupils and in addition to supporting the emotional wellbeing of pupils, it has been shown to improve young people's confidence and self-esteem as well as their attendance, attainment and behaviour.
- In Northern Ireland and Wales, all secondary school children already have access to a counsellor in their school: in Wales it is seen as so important it is enshrined in legislation. However in England provision is patchy and many children do not have access to a school counsellor. It is a postcode lottery.
- **Question - Is the Minister aware of the Welsh Government's evaluation of school counselling and does he agree with me that England's children deserve the same support as their peers in Northern Ireland and Wales? What will the Government do to ensure universal coverage of school counselling across the country?**