

## ‘Improving Mental Health for students on limited budget’

Mrs Theresa May’s 2018 Green Paper on transforming children and young people’s mental health committed to a radical £300 million shake-up of support in schools. The government promised its plans would tackle the “burning injustice” of mental health illness. In the paper it states that there will be a ‘4-week waiting time for specialist NHS services’ covering 20 to 25 per cent of the country by the end of 2022-23. In a January report, former children’s commissioner Anne Longfield found that only 20 per cent of children referred to services started treatment within four weeks in 2019-20.<sup>1</sup>

In 2017, Mrs May also promised a £200,000-a-year scheme MH training for every secondary school over the next three years to “make a real difference to children’s lives”. It was part of a key manifesto promise to improve mental health support in schools. But not all secondary schools have completed the training.<sup>1</sup>

However, the fact remains that while these children and young people are waiting to be seen by counsellors or trained school staff, there is an imminent need for suitable and effective intervention to be in place. Having the awareness of mental health as covered in PSHE lessons is important but how do they actually know how to take care of their state of MH??? In serious cases 4 weeks waiting maybe too late...

I have discussed in a previous blog [‘How can we support students with mental health problems?’](#) about how easy an intervention is and how important and necessary it is before the issue becomes too difficult for them. [The SEJ](#) is a simple, timely and effective prevention tool that anyone can learn to apply in every situation in any area of life. You learn it once and apply it straightaway and the result is a life enhancing change for the individual who is using the process.

Most ‘therapies’ such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy offered to students and pupils address one specific situation and it takes 8-12 weeks with repeated sessions with a counsellor. The SEJ is a transferrable lifelong skill that once learnt can be applied immediately in any area of the person’s life without the reliance on external support. The cost to the educational setting in offering the SEJ is insignificant compared to the benefits in the long term.

I have shared with you in previous blogs the success of embedding [the SEJ](#) into the HEI Skills curriculum. The cost was minimal to the students as it was offered as a mandatory life skill for their transition into university. It was applicable in every area of their life from their personal wellbeing to university career. Not only that but the skill they have learnt in addressing their own wellbeing is a lifelong skill they can take with them even after leaving the university. In terms of the benefits per student it would be priceless; since the question is not about how much the intervention costs to the educational setting, but the value of a student’s life. When we consider this, there is only one answer isn’t there.

1. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/is-the-government-fulfilling-its-300m-mental-health-promises/>

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