

PE2091/B: Provide funding to have a CAHMS worker and a nurse based within Scottish high schools

Scottish Government written submission, 23 July 2024

The Scottish Government would like to begin by thanking the Committee for the opportunity to further respond to petition **PE2091**, submitted by Ms Solman, on behalf of the 'Stand with Kyle Now' Charity. In this response we will provide further information on the specific points raised by the Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2024.

Evaluation of the provision of counselling in secondary schools

Your letter asks how the provision of counselling through secondary schools is evaluated. The Scottish Government commissions six-monthly reports from local authorities on school counselling services which asks for the number of young people accessing counselling, broken down by gender and year groups. The reports also seek information on outcomes, inward and outward referrals as well as the issues young people are presenting with. A summary of the reports can be found at: [Access to counsellors in secondary schools and children and young people's community mental health services – summary reports - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/counselling-in-secondary-schools-and-children-and-young-peoples-community-mental-health-services-summary-reports-2023-24/).

Within the reporting form, authorities are encouraged to share additional information, such as information on waiting times, if they have that data available. Although some authorities have reported that services are at capacity, no concerns have been raised about young people's needs not being met. It is worth reiterating that school counselling is just one a range of services that local authorities have in place to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We published guidance to support local authorities in implementing the service, available at: [Access to counselling in secondary schools: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/counselling-in-secondary-schools-guidance-2023-24/). The guidance makes clear that education authorities are responsible for establishing and managing their services, which would include how CAMHS referrals are monitored in schools.

Monitoring of CAMHS referrals in secondary schools

The Scottish Government does not hold any information on or monitor data regarding CAMHS referrals in schools. CAMHS referral statistics are aggregate numbers which means it is not possible to identify the source of individual referrals.

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland's 2023 report on counselling in schools

With regard to the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland's (CYPCS) report, the Scottish Government and COSLA representatives attended a meeting with the CYPCS Young Advisors last Summer to discuss the report and recommendations. Some of the Young Advisors then attended the School Counsellors' Co-ordinators Network in October, to discuss selected

recommendations in more detail with the local authority leads who co-ordinate the services.

In January, Ms Todd, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport wrote to Ms Killean, the Children and Young People's Commissioner, to confirm that the Counsellors' Co-ordinators Network will work collectively over the course of this year to consider the recommendations. The Network meets quarterly, and officials are ensuring each agenda includes a focussed discussion on the recommendations, sharing of best practice and drawing in expertise where appropriate. This allows more in depth, meaningful discussions to take place and support an on-going improvement cycle for school counselling services across Scotland.

Provision of school nurse services in primary and secondary schools

The additional funding for school nurses provided by the Scottish Government made provision for all health boards to recruit additional school nurses. It is for health boards to decide where in their locality this provision is deployed to meet the needs of their children and young people. The Scottish Government has undertaken a survey of frontline school nurses and health board school nursing services to better understand how the transformed role has been implemented across Scotland's health boards. The report of those survey responses will be published soon, and a copy sent to the Committee.

The Scottish Government would like to thank the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee for the opportunity to provide further information on the topics raised in the petition. We hope that the information outlined above provides the Committee with the details they need to appropriately consider the petition.

Mental Health Directorate