



Place2Be:
Our Impact

The children's mental health charity Place2Be has for the past 25 years provided in-school support and training to improve the emotional wellbeing of pupils, families, and staff in primary and secondary schools.

We focus on supporting the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people, during the crucial formative years of their lives. We are passionately committed to ensuring that pupils do not become a self-fulfilling prophecy of their postcode or family circumstances. We aim to equip them with the skills to cope with life's challenges, enabling them to focus on their studies and realise their full potential.



"Place2Be have been pioneers in this 'whole school approach' because mental health is everyone's business and early intervention is key. I have had the privilege of seeing their achievements for myself, and these are genuinely impressive. Their support not only for children, but for parents and teachers too, results in fewer young people needing referrals to people like me. Inspirational is a much over-used word, but Place2Be's work is indeed just that."

—
PROFESSOR SIR SIMON WESSELY

Regius Professor of Psychiatry, King's College London
and President, the Royal Society of Medicine



"Sometimes you feel like a volcano erupting. But if you come to Place2Be you can cool down."

—
BOY AGED 8

"I like it in Place2Be. I feel safe here."

—
GIRL AGED 6

I got to live my childhood again

We support more than 600 primary and secondary schools across England, Scotland, and Wales, helping over 364,000 children and young people. Much more could be done. Over 350 schools commission Place2Be to work in partnership with them as part of a whole-school approach to mental health.

Each partner school we work with has a Place2Be School Project Manager, who is an experienced clinician and is supported by a team. We annually train more than 1,000 child counsellors, gradually building a professional body which specialises in working with children and young people.

As well as individual and group counselling, we offer therapeutic support for parents and carers, and training, support and advice for headteachers and school staff.

¹ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2017/2017#key-facts>

² <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/A0/273EE3/MHCYP%202017%20Trends%20Characteristics.pdf>

³ <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/childrens-mental-health-briefing-nov-2018.pdf>

⁴ In England, Clinical Commissioning Groups overall spent £641 million in 2017/18, with a rise from £49 per head in 2016/17 to £54 in 2017/18 on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/childrens-mental-health-briefing-nov-2018.pdf>

12.8%

Of 5-to-19 year-olds "had at least one mental disorder."

More than half

Of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14.

1 in 10

boys aged 5-19 with a mental health condition are excluded in some form from school.

More than 90%

Of headteachers we surveyed in 2017 said that pupils now bring more worries into school than they did five years ago.

Why is Place2Be necessary?

In 2018 a government survey of the mental health of children and young people in England found that 12.8% of 5-to-19 year-olds "had at least one mental disorder."¹ The rate of mental health disorders in children and young people is rising – from 9.7% in 1999, 10.1% in 2004, and 11.2% in 2017.² According to the Children's Commissioner for England,³ while central and local government spending on children's and young people's mental health is generally increasing,⁴ many children need this kind of support yet are falling through the cracks. Place2Be offers much-needed support to those children and young people who, for whatever reason, might not be otherwise helped to overcome their individual problems.

Children receiving our support are more likely than other pupils at their school to be eligible for Pupil Premium and free school meals. They are also more likely to have special educational needs, have English as an additional language, to be 'looked after' and on a Child Protection Plan.

There is a substantial funding gap when it comes to helping those children and young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

More than half of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14, and 75% has developed by the age of 18. Among teenagers, rates of depression and anxiety have increased by 70% in the past 25 years. More than 90% of headteachers we surveyed in 2017 said that pupils now bring more worries into school than they did five years ago.

A cohort of 10/11 year-olds we sampled reveals that almost two-thirds worry "all the time" about something to do with their school, home or themselves.



"A year 6 boy was referred for one-to-one counselling for three months. He had quite severe anger and violent outbursts, mainly aimed towards his mother. This boy spoke about hurting himself, was very emotional due to separations and family disputes and was angry, which had a negative effect within the classroom and on the boy's learning. His counsellor worked through his anger issues and ways to control the anger and talked through what was causing the anger. Three months into the therapy his parents were extremely happy that the violent outbursts had stopped and the boy was using other ways to control his anger. He was able to talk more rather than to act out in rages. The boy is very self-aware and he feels very proud that he now sees himself dealing with his emotions better."

— PLACE2BE SCHOOL PROJECT MANAGER

We believe children in all schools should have the chance to access high quality, effective and evidence-based mental health support. We give childhood back to children, not just because it's a nice thing to do, but because it can prevent further costly damage to our society.

When I felt stressed you were here

The children we help defy neat and simple categorisation. They may have experienced anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, uncontrollable mood swings and sexual or physical abuse. They may have special educational needs. They might be 'looked after' children; that means they have been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours. Perhaps they are subjects of a child protection order, which is issued by a court to protect them from abuse and/or violence. Typically, they are economically deprived: almost 50% of children who have Place2Be counselling receive free school meals.



"Place2Be is an invaluable resource and I couldn't imagine our school without it now. Pupils and families are able to use this to benefit many aspects. These include attitudes to learning becoming more positive; self-esteem being raised; pupils being able to manage their anger and emotions better as well as knowing that it is OK to take time to think and reflect. Pupils find the team of Place2Be staff extremely approachable – with the evidence of this being how many of them opt into self-referral at break and dinner times."

—
HEADTEACHER, SALFORD

Place2Be works with thousands of children and young people every year. In 2018/19:



Our job is to help

We do that by placing trained and experienced counsellors in schools, assisting headteachers, staff and parents to help children who are stressed, anxious, unhappy, suffering, and failing to fulfil their true potential. We work on a one-to-one, intensive basis with individual children and young people, giving them, their teachers and their parents, the kind of devoted and supportive attention that – in many cases – they have never before received. We also work in group sessions, providing a safe space where children can speak openly about their feelings.

We talk, listen, and use creative play to help the children to think through whatever difficulty they bring to our mental health professionals. This kind of work is profoundly welcomed by our children. We form trusting relationships with those connected to the individual child – the teachers, the carers, the parents and guardians, and support workers from other agencies.

Through our 'Mental Health Champions' programme we provide training and support for class teachers and school leaders, assisting them to develop greater awareness of the impact of mental health issues on the lives of the children they teach. This programme consists of four half-day workshops during the academic year. It helps participants to build their own capability, confidence and capacity to understand and respond to the mental health needs within their school community.



"Milly, a Year 5 student, had been diagnosed with clinical anxiety. She wasn't sleeping well and would regularly wake up with panic attacks. In the sessions she was very nervous and reserved at first; often mentioning the things that her mum had told her she shouldn't talk about. As the weeks went by though her confidence and independence in the room gradually grew, and before long she seemed to be doing whatever she wanted to, and not influenced by anything from outside the room. Milly's sessions ended after a year. She felt prepared for this, and in the post-intervention interview her mum expressed a lot of gratitude for the service and said Milly's problems have become significantly better since beginning counselling."



“For every £1 invested in Place2Be there is a net return to our society of £6.20.”

⁵ *The chance of a lifetime: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health* – <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/resource/policy/SCMHThechanceofalifetime.pdf>

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728894/impact-assessment-for-transforming-cy-mental-health-provision-green-paper.pdf

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728894/impact-assessment-for-transforming-cy-mental-health-provision-green-paper.pdf

⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575632/Mental_health_of_children_in_England.pdf

* Based on comparing the responses of Teachers and Parents to the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire completed before and after the child received counselling.

It helped me through a hard time

Being deprived of a childhood is not just sad – it’s also wasteful. The financial cost to society of a disrupted and troubled school life runs into billions: £60 billion of crime in England and Wales is attributable to adults who had conduct disorders in childhood.⁵ Children with mental health disorders are 18 times more likely to be excluded from school than those without. When things go wrong at school or in the family, it’s miserable for all concerned. The trigger for disruption can come from any direction – bereavement, perhaps, or the onset of bullying, or a partnership breakdown, or abuse. Teachers are often at a loss to understand or explain this child’s behaviour. Disrupted schooling and exclusion can lead to wider, negative social impact, with the consequence that our society is less safe, less stable, less caring than it ought to be.

The socio-economic costs are considerable. We know that children aged 7–9 with conduct disorder are on average twice as likely to leave school with no qualifications; four times more likely to become drug dependent; six times more likely to die before the age of 30; eight times more likely to be placed on a child protection register; and twenty times more likely to end up in prison.⁶

Behavioural issues are the commonest reason for pupils being excluded from school in the UK, according to the Department for Education; yet exclusion is unlikely to reduce disruptive behaviour

as it fails to address underlying difficulties. Our research shows that of those students with fixed-term exclusions receiving counselling with Place2Be, there were positive impacts on their mental health and a significant reduction in the fixed term exclusions they experienced. Across the service, 64% of children had improved mental health according to teachers*, after Place2Be’s therapeutic support. Of those with the most severe needs, 49% had recovered sufficiently so that their needs were no longer severe. Parents also saw an improvement in their children: 70% of children had improved mental health after seeing a Place2Be counsellor and 51% no longer had severe needs.

The annual costs resulting from child and adolescent mental health problems are put at between £1.58 billion and £2.35 billion.⁷

In 2012/13 the NHS spent £700 million – 6% of its total budget – on child and adolescent mental health illness. This is clearly an insufficient amount for, as Public Health England in 2016 reported, “only 25% of children who need treatment receive it.”⁸ The Government has committed to raising this to 35% by 2020/21.

I don't hide under the table anymore

Charitable philanthropy is not just about winning over hearts and minds, but informing and persuading minds too. To be truly persuasive, we need to provide evidence that our work is making a difference.

During the 25 years Place2Be has been in existence we have consistently gathered quantitative as well as qualitative data – the views and opinions of children and teachers and parents – which demonstrate the powerful impact Place2Be has on their lives.

Measuring emotional and mental health outcomes is not easy. Among our tools, we use Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). This is a universally recognised and objective tool, approved by the Department of Health and Social Care and used in many countries besides the UK. The SDQ assesses the behavioural, emotional and social wellbeing of the children Place2Be works with before and after counselling.

Place2Be has also investigated whether improvements are sustained over time. Our follow-up study found that the improvements to children and young people's mental health after counselling are typically sustained one year later – according to both teachers and parents.

We asked the charity Pro Bono Economics (PBE) to assess the value for money for our mental health support in schools. PBE's analysis shows that for every £1 invested in Place2Be there is a net return to our society of £6.20. Getting a 520% return through "improved outcomes in the form of reduced rates of truancy, exclusion, smoking, depression, and crime, and also higher rates of employment and wages" is remarkably good value.⁹



GEORGE'S STORY

"When my son George was only eight years old, my husband was told he had just months to live. It was devastating for us all. I was at my wits' end and didn't know how to cope. I knew I had to do something but didn't know where to turn."

"Thank goodness a teacher at school had seen George behaving out of sorts and suggested I speak to Place2Be. Place2Be not only helped him express himself through making art and talking but are there at his new school too. Everyone should have someone like Place2Be to turn to. I believe this so much that I am training to become a counsellor myself."

⁹ Economic evaluation of Place2Be's Counselling Service in Primary Schools: a Pro Bono Economics report for Place2Be

70%

Of children record an improvement in wellbeing after Place2Be counselling.

68%

Of Place2Be-counselled students cause fewer problems in class.



I'll miss coming here and seeing you

One in eight (12.8%) children and young people aged between five and 19 had a mental disorder in England in 2017. This is around 1.25 million children and young people. Only one in four children and young people with a mental disorder are seen by a mental health specialist. More than 400,000 children and young people are not getting any professional help at all.¹⁰

As a society, we cannot afford to risk more than 400,000 young people growing up to become disaffected adults. This perpetuates the cycle in which issues in early life are ignored, leading to unhappiness, wasted opportunities, and huge economic costs, costs that will be a burden to all tax payers.



MARK'S STORY

—
Mark was referred to Place2Be following multiple bereavements. He said at one point "I'm very sad and lonely" and that "I'll always be poor and live in a cardboard box." Mark began to trust his counsellor and began eagerly to anticipate his sessions. The counsellor encouraged him to express himself creatively: he developed the 'MarkGram', a graph which showed his happiness. This went up and down over the weeks depending on events but was a very useful tool in reviewing his therapy and enabled him to see where improvements had been made. He created a 'video camera' from cardboard and asked his counsellor to film him. She acted as narrator, allowing his experiences to be heard, seen and validated. The counsellor worked very hard to prepare Mark for the ending of therapy as he had suffered so much loss in his life. She allowed him ample time to reflect on his work and how far he had come over their year together. Mark was able to recognise his own skills and to openly talk about them. "I'm a survivor, I'm good at technology, I will keep going." In his final session, even though it was incredibly hard for him to say goodbye, he drew his last MarkGram, with a score of 80%.

400,000

Children and young people are not getting any professional help at all.

Place2Be is doing what we can to reach those children and give them – and the adults and communities around them – the care and support they need. But we know that many children are still falling by the wayside, coping with their unhappiness and emotional challenges alone.

Over our next 25 years we want to ensure that children in all schools have access to high quality, effective, evidence-based mental health support. We see four ways in which we can achieve that:



Working with more partner schools



Building knowledge and skills for teachers and school staff



Training a mental health workforce



Innovating through research and contributing to the national agenda



QUOTES FROM THE CHILDREN WE HELP

—
I felt happy because I got to talk to someone.

—
It's good because you can tell things that you can't tell anyone else.

—
Now when I am in the playground and the classroom I don't feel angry and furious anymore.

—
It has helped but I wish the service could be at the Upper School as this is needed.

¹⁰ Royal College of Psychiatrists: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/parliamentary/rcpsych-briefing--children-and-young-people-with-mental-health-problems-and-access-to-nhs-treatments---copy.pdf?sfvrsn=2e924943_2

That school-based counselling services work and that they are extremely cost-effective is beyond doubt. The Department of Health and NHS England have set out clear evidence for the role of schools in promoting good mental health, and many schools are ready to play their part in this, by identifying children's needs and providing a centre of support.



"Place2Be, for my children – my children who live amidst thunderstorms – is like a rainbow: it means that there will be some light that is let in to their hearts."

—
HEADTEACHER

Yet the state sector cannot provide enough resources to meet this growing demand. Place2Be is helping to meet that need. With your help and donations, we can do even more.

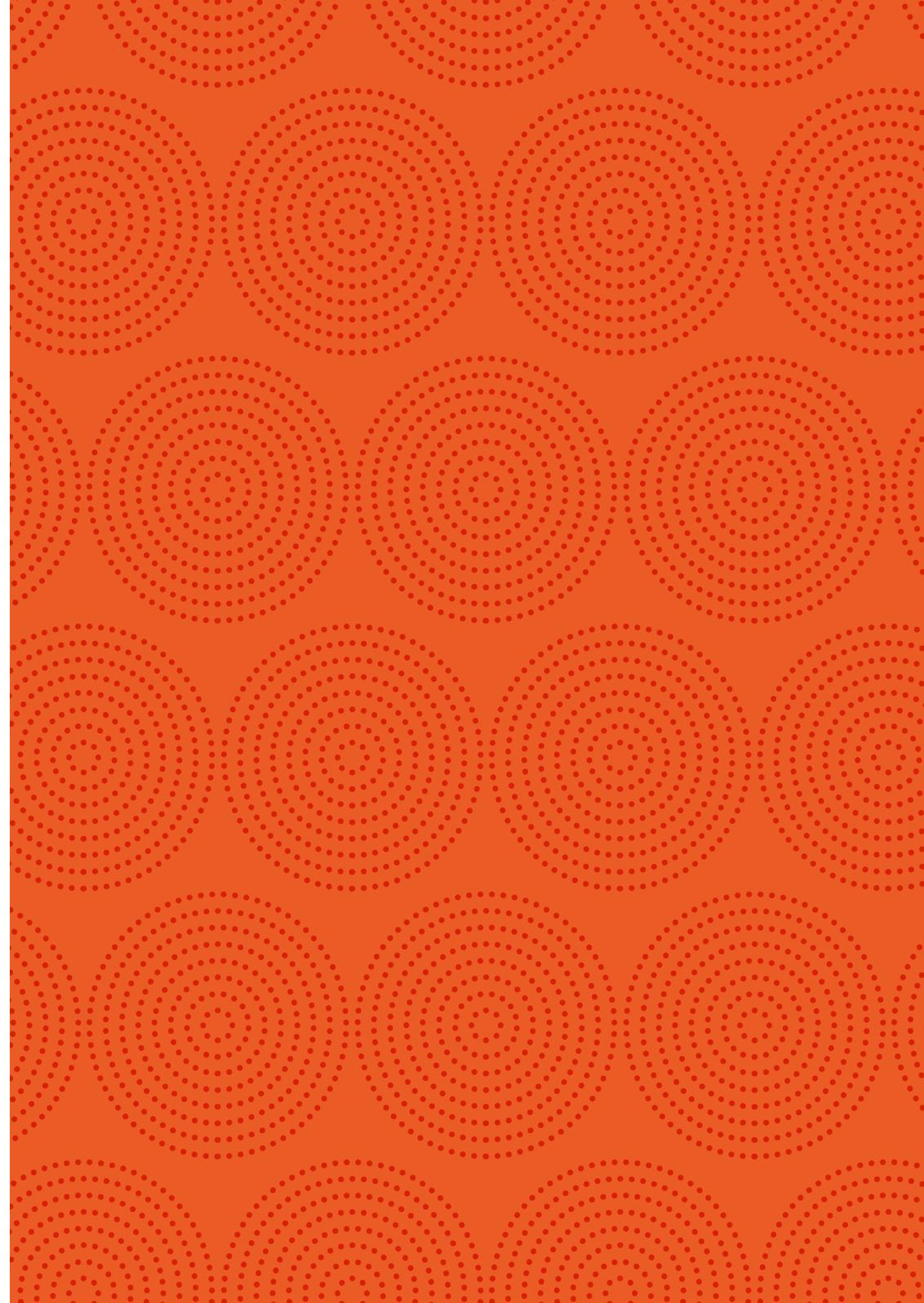


"If there was a mirror that allowed me to see a version of me that didn't go to Place2Be, I don't think I would want to see it, because I wouldn't want to know the type of person I could turn out to be."

—
21-YEAR-OLD MAN
Reflecting on Place2Be support received when he was 11 years old

If you want to learn more about our work, or examine any of our evidence, please go to place2be.org.uk

*The sub-headings in this document are taken from comments made to Place2Be by children we have helped. The names of the students and families who have worked with Place2Be have been changed to protect privacy.



Place2Be's valuable work is making a positive impact on the lives of thousands of children around the UK. Please help us to reach even more children and young people in the future.

place2be.org.uk

Royal Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cambridge

Health Service Journal (HSJ) Awards 2019

Mental Health Provider of the Year – Highly Commended

Place2Be is a charity registered in England and Wales (1040756) and in Scotland (SC038649), a Company limited by guarantee (with use of 'Limited' exemption), registered in England and Wales (02876150)

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