

SNP letting down hundreds of youngsters with mental health problems each year

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Research has revealed that hundreds of children every year are receiving mental health treatment in unsuitable wards.

The release of the worrying statistics come ahead of the publication of the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy this week.

It has previously been advised that all youngsters in need of acute mental health support should be treated in one of the specialist children's mental health wards across the country.

However, between 2007 – the year the SNP came into power – and 2015, a massive 1,840 children and adolescents were admitted to non-specialist beds. The total of 248 recorded between 2014/15 shows that the number of youngsters unable to receive treatment in these specialist units remains frighteningly high.

The Scottish Conservatives are calling for the SNP to start treating the issue of mental health with greater seriousness, and ensure that there are enough inpatient beds for children and young people across Scotland.

Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

"This is yet further evidence of the SNP government's lack of attention in regard to mental health.

"It's worrying to see so many children with acute mental health problems not being given treatment in the most appropriate environment.

"Mental health issues are now more apparent than ever and it's only right these youngsters receive the specialist care that will give them the best possible chance of a speedy recovery.

"The SNP has to provide more support for these vulnerable people in its upcoming mental health strategy, and this means investing in children and adolescent mental health services."

Miles Briggs PQ and table of number of children and adolescents being admitted to non-specialist beds between 1999 and 2015:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Number-of-children-and-adolescents-non-specialist-beds.pdf>

Scottish Conservative mental health policy:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Scottish-Conservative-Mental-Health-Policy.pdf>

Press release: Big fines for two Kent anglers caught fishing without a licence

The 2 illegal Kent anglers had their day at Maidstone Magistrates Court last Thursday (23 March), with one of them now having to pay out over £600.

Bill Haythorpe of Yalding, Maidstone was caught at Monk Lakes, Staplehurst on 18 August 2016 and fined £440 for 2 offences (fishing without a licence and failing to state his address) plus £127 costs and £30 victim surcharge leading to a total bill of £597.

Ryan Zuczok of Chatham was caught fishing without a licence on the Medway in Maidstone on 20 August 2016 and fined £440 plus £127 costs and £44 victim surcharge, a grand total of £611. This was the second time Mr Zuczok was apprehended within a month. He had previously been caught on 23 July 2016, also on the Medway. Neither Mr Haythorpe nor Mr Zuczok entered a plea.

Environment Manager Dave Willis said:

We are seeing higher and higher fines for fishing without a licence. It makes no sense to have the embarrassment of a court visit, a criminal conviction and a bill for over £600 when an annual licence is just £30 (post 1 April 2017). We think these cheats will think twice before picking up a rod illegally again and if they don't, our officers are ready and waiting.

The money from licence sales supports fish, fisheries and fishing, and protects the future of the sport. A small number of anglers refuse to buy a licence, cheating the sport and their fellow anglers. For the minority who

flout the rules, the most common offence is fishing without a valid licence. Fishing without a valid licence could land you with a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal record.

Dave Willis added:

Last Thursday was a good day for the near million anglers that fish legally every year, respecting each other and the sport. There really is no excuse; if you don't have a licence, pick one up from the post office or online, before we pick you up.

In Kent, South London, Surrey and East Sussex, since April 2016 our fisheries enforcement officers have checked 4,252 licences and reported 269 people for fishing illegally.

Last year, in England, the Environment Agency checked over 62,000 rod licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences, resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

From 1 April 2017 a full rod licence costs from just £30 (concessions available) and a junior rod licence (for 12 to 16 year olds) is free. You can buy your rod licence from your local Post Office or by phoning 0344 800 5386.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries, and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including: protecting stocks from illegal fishing, mitigating pollution and disease, restoring fish stocks through restocking, control of invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

To help crack down on unlicensed fishing the Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal activity by calling the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

For more information, contact the press office on 0800 141 2743.

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Minister launches hunt for 2017 Apprenticeship Awards Cymru stars

The Minister selected Crimewatch Alarms Ltd and CW Electrical, a Newport-based electrical contractor and security and fire alarms specialist, as a shining example of what can be achieved by a business that invests in apprenticeships to develop a highly skilled workforce.

She's hoping that many similar companies across Wales will apply for this year's coveted awards, which are launched by the Welsh Government in partnership with the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW). The awards are sponsored by Pearson PLC and supported by media partner, Media Wales.

Application forms are available to download from the [NTfW's website](#) (external link) and the closing date is **noon on June 23, 2017**.

Finalists in 11 categories will be shortlisted for awards, which will be presented at a high-profile ceremony to be held at the Celtic Manor Resort, Newport on October 20, 2017.

Crimewatch Alarms Ltd and CW Electrical is a family run business that has made training and development its top priority since it was formed by managing director, Harry Meese, 31 years ago.

Being named Small Employer of the Year in 2016 was the company's first major award since the SME Award 2007 from Constructing Excellence Wales and has been a springboard for significant business growth.

"Entering last year's Apprenticeship Awards Cymru was one of the best things we have ever done,"

said director Rachel Meese-Kendall.

“It has taken the company to another level and created lots of opportunities for us. I was advised by one of the judges, a former award winner, to take every opportunity that was given to us and that’s what I’ve done.

“Winning the award has thrown us into the limelight and improved our business turnover. Due to extra work, we have recruited three more staff and are taking on three new apprentices from a local school in September.”

The company now employs 39 staff, with another new job in the pipeline. There are five apprentices currently on the books and another two trainees are soon to progress to apprenticeships.

The company mainly works for large residential landlords and development companies across South Wales, but it is now expanding into England.

Rachel explained that the company had planned for business growth, due to an upsurge in the building industry, by ensuring that its workforce is multi-skilled. Former apprentices who have grown with the business make up around 70 per cent of their operative team.

The company works with training provider Coleg QS to provide the best training possible for not only its own workforce but also apprentices employed by other contractors and clients.

Delighted that the company was continuing to reap the rewards of investing in apprenticeships, Skills and Science Minister, Julie James said:

“Developing skilled people is vital for our economy and Crimewatch Alarms Ltd and CW Electrical is a shining example of the business success that can be achieved by investing in and developing the workforce.”

The Minister added:

“More employers across Wales are recognising the value of our successful apprenticeship programme and the need to raise higher level skills in order to address skills gaps and respond to industry changes.

“The Apprenticeship Awards Cymru provide a perfect platform for us to celebrate the achievements of the programme through our star apprentices, employers and learning providers whose stories never cease to amaze and inspire.”

The awards recognise learners, employers and training providers across Wales, who have excelled on the Welsh Government’s Traineeship and Apprenticeship

Programmes.

The Apprenticeship Programme is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund.

In the employability category, there are awards for Traineeship Learner of the Year for Engagement and Level 1. There are also awards for the best foundation apprentice, apprentice and higher apprentice of the year.

The business category includes awards for small (1 to 49), medium (50 to 249), large (250 to 4,999) and macro (5,000 plus) employer of the year, while work-based learning practitioners will compete for assessor and tutor of the year.

News story: Broadband providers drop cancellation fees for Armed Forces personnel

The commitment from the UK's biggest broadband providers representing 95 per cent of Britain's broadband market comes into force immediately, and will benefit tens of thousands of Forces households in the UK and abroad.

The change agreed to under the tenets of the Armed Forces Covenant includes BT, EE, Plusnet, Talk Talk and Virgin Media, who have all committed to treating military personnel fairly when cancelling their contracts.

Up until now, members of the Armed Forces who are deployed overseas or to different parts of the UK not covered by their provider could be forced to pay a cancellation fee. They will no longer have to face this cost and be disadvantaged due to the mobile nature of service life.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster, said:

Our Armed Forces are sent all over the world and across the country to help keep our country safe and they should never be at a disadvantage because of this. The removal of cancellation fees by leading broadband providers is yet another example of the Covenant in action, which is making sure our brave personnel are treated fairly. It's a welcome move and we're looking forward to seeing what more British businesses can do to support our military.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or have previously served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged by their service. Delivery partners

include businesses and trade bodies, charities and community organisations, local authorities and government departments.

BT Chief Executive Gavin Patterson, said:

Armed Forces personnel play a vital role protecting our country, whether serving overseas or stationed away from home in other parts of the UK. That's why we're committed to ensuring they don't have to pay for broadband or TV services they can't access, when they find themselves in this situation. Whether it's through today's announcement, our hiring of ex-armed forces personnel, or through our work with Reservists, BT, along with our fellow signatories are proud to support our country's military personnel.

TalkTalk Chief Executive, Dido Harding, added:

We recognise that service personnel and their families face unique challenges, not least due to the fact they are regularly posted to new locations all over the country and abroad, often at short notice. TalkTalk was the first ISP to recognise how tricky this can be and offer free disconnections for service personnel moving overseas, and we're delighted that the rest of the industry has followed suit.

Today's announcement follows previous Covenant pledges by UK businesses to support personnel when they are posted overseas.

Last year, the UK's largest insurers and brokers allowed personnel and their families posted abroad to keep their No Claims Bonus for up to three years, and also waived cancellation fees.

47 of the UK's high street banks and building societies also committed to letting personnel posted overseas and around the UK rent out their homes without facing higher mortgage costs or having to change to a buy-to-let mortgage.