



# News Release

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## **OVER HALF OF PARENTS SAY THEIR CHILDREN'S MENTAL WELLBEING HAS BEEN ONE OF THEIR BIGGEST WORRIES DURING COVID**

**PHE LAUNCHES NEW MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS**

- New Public Health England (PHE) data shows that over half of parents surveyed said the mental wellbeing of their children has been one of their biggest worries during COVID<sup>1</sup>
- Research shows that COVID has caused an increase in anxiety in young people,<sup>2</sup> and a third of children report being more worried, sad and stressed than before lockdown<sup>3</sup>
- PHE's new Better Health - Every Mind Matters campaign offers NHS-approved tips and advice to empower parents and carers to look after their children's mental wellbeing, with the support of the nation's leading mental health and children's charities
- A short film illustrated by artist **Charlie Mackesy** and featuring a host of well-known parents including, **Davina McCall, Marvin Humes, Katie Piper, Sean Fletcher and Edith Bowman**, is released today, encouraging parents and carers to visit the Every Mind Matters website

Most families have experienced upheaval in their daily lives during the pandemic. With children and young people now back at school or college, PHE's new campaign provides NHS-endorsed tips and advice to help children and young people's mental wellbeing, and equip parents and carers with the knowledge to support them.

Research reveals that the coronavirus outbreak has caused an increase in anxiety in young people.<sup>2</sup> What's more, over two-fifths (41%) of children and young people said they were more lonely than before lockdown and more than a third said they were more worried (38%), more sad (37%) or more stressed (34%).<sup>3</sup>

New PHE survey data found that two thirds of parents say their children's behaviour has changed since the start of the pandemic (69%) and when asked their top three worries around coronavirus, over half (52%) said the mental wellbeing of their children topped the list of their biggest worries.<sup>1</sup> As we adapt to a new normal many parents and carers anticipate their children will experience new stresses. This includes facing the challenges of

1 Survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of Public Health England. Total sample size was 2,559 parents in England who have children aged 5 to 18. Fieldwork was carried out online between 4th to 11th August 2020.

2 Levita L, Gibson Miller J, Hartman TK, Murphy J, Shevlin M, McBride O, and others. Report 1: Initial research findings on the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of young people aged 13 to 24 in the UK. Non-representative sample of 2,000 children and young people aged 13 to 24, collected 21 to 29 April 2020

3 Barnardo's. Generation lockdown: a third of children and young people experience increased mental health difficulties. 2020. [Sample of 4,283 young people aged 8-24, weighted to be representative of all -24 year olds, GB. Collected 15 May-2 June 2020.]



catching up with missed education, starting new schools or colleges and building relationships with friends again.

Nearly a quarter of parents surveyed say that not knowing what action to take has prevented them supporting their children's mental wellbeing (22%), and more than a third (38%) want more advice on how to support their mental wellbeing when returning to school.<sup>1</sup>

The new advice available on the [Every Mind Matters website](#) has been developed in partnership with leading children and young people's mental health charities, including Young Minds, The Mix, Place2Be and The Anna Freud Centre. It is designed to help parents and carers spot the signs that children may be struggling with their mental health and support them, and also provides advice that can help maintain good mental wellbeing. In addition to the advice for parents and carers the site also provides tools to help young people build resilience and equips them to look after their mental wellbeing.

To engage parents and carers a powerful short film has been created featuring a number of celebrity parents including **Davina McCall, Marvin Humes, Sean Fletcher, Katie Piper and Edith Bowman**, reading extracts from best-selling author Charlie Mackesy's book, '*The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse*'. The emotive extracts all touch upon mental health and aim to encourage parents to visit the Every Mind Matters website.

**NHS's Top 5 Tips for supporting children and young people's mental wellbeing as they go back out into the world (please view all tips on the Every Mind Matters website)**

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1. **Be there to listen:** Ask the children and young people you look after how they are doing regularly so they get used to speaking about their feelings
2. **Stay involved in their life:** Show interest in their life and the things that are important to them
3. **Support positive routines:** Be a positive role model and support positive behaviours including regular bedtime routines, healthy eating and getting active
4. **Encourage their interests:** Being active, creative, learning things and being a part of a team are all good for mental health. Support children and young people to explore their interests
5. **Take what they say seriously:** help the children and young people you look after feel valued in what they say and help them work through difficult emotions.

The website also encourages parents to complete a personal 'Mind Plan', a quick and free interactive tool offering adults tailored mental wellbeing advice. More than 2.4 million 'Mind Plans' have been completed since launch in October.

**Dr Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director and Director of Health Protection at Public Health England said:** "*Parents' and carers' relationships with their children are special and we want to give them the support they need. Being there to listen and encouraging them to explain how they feel can make a real difference to how children and young people cope with life's challenges. It can also help them develop effective skills to cope with their emotions.*"



**Minister for Mental Health, Nadine Dorries, said:** “*The effects of the pandemic on children and young people’s mental health have been challenging and it is vital we continue to do all we can to protect them and prevent long-term effects.*

“*Young people should feel encouraged to speak up, look out for each other, and ask for help. This campaign and these resources are a great way to access support and help parents to understand steps they can take to care even more for their children’s mental health and wellbeing.*”

**Professor Prathiba Chitsabesan, NHS England Associate National Clinical Director for Children and Young People’s Mental Health, said:** “*As young people go back to class, it’s understandable that while many will be excited to get back, some may also have concerns and anxieties about the new academic year, following the uncertainty and upheaval of Covid, which is why this important campaign is offering practical tips to help kids cope.*

“*Parents, carers, teachers and students should also be reassured that the NHS has been and will continue to be there for everyone with concerns about their mental health, whether through 24/7 crisis support lines, video and phone consultations, or face to face appointments.*”

**Emma Thomas, Chief Executive of YoungMinds said,** “*The coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact of the lives of children and young people across the country and many have struggled with social isolation, anxiety and fears about what the future holds.*

“*We know how important it is for young people to get early support for their mental health when problems first start to emerge. This is a welcome and much-needed campaign, and we hope that it will provide young people with the resources to support their mental health and to seek help if they need it. We also hope that it will ensure parents and carers have the tools to support their children’s wellbeing and help them adjust in the coming months.*”

**TV presenter Davina McCall said:** “*Children have missed out on so much during lockdown and like lots of other parents, I’ve wanted to support mine as much as I possibly can. As we’re starting to go back to normality and there’s still lots of uncertainty for our kids, it’s important we’re there for them through their ups and downs – communication is so important. For anyone that’s concerned or worried, or just want some tips on how to support them, please search Every Mind Matters.*”

The new Better Health - Every Mind Matters campaign will be supported through social media, radio and press activity, helping to reach audiences including parents and carers of children and young people (aged 5-18) and young people (aged 13-18).

Search Every Mind Matters for expert tips and advice to support children and young people with their mental wellbeing, or for more information, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

-ENDS-

**Notes to Editors**



For interviews or additional information, please contact:

- **PHE Press Office:** phe-pressoffice@phe.gov.uk / 020 7654 8400
- **freuds:** everymindmatters@freuds.com / 07734785798 / 07912515997

The final film is available here:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pg3bzw1pe0ubnkc/AADYHjHpXjS0pX230Wr\\_Lmbya/60s%20film?dl=0&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pg3bzw1pe0ubnkc/AADYHjHpXjS0pX230Wr_Lmbya/60s%20film?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

## FILM SCRIPT

**Marvin Humes:** ‘Sometimes I feel lost,’ said the boy.

**Davina McCall:** The past few months have been hard on everyone, including our kids.

**Katie Piper:** Isn’t it odd. We can only see our outsides, but nearly everything happens on the inside.”

**Marvin Humes:** “What is the bravest thing you’ve ever said?” Asked the boy.

**Edith Bowman:** ‘Help,’ said the horse.”

**Davina McCall:** Every Mind Matters will help you find what’s right for your kids

With tips and advice to help you support your child’s mental wellbeing during this time

**Davina McCall:** Whether it’s listening to them talk about the challenges they’re facing or helping them develop skills to cope with their emotion.

Supporting your children’s mental wellbeing can help boost their mood, feel good about themselves and be ready for life’s challenges.

**Edith Bowman:** “Sometimes I feel lost,” said the boy.

**Sean Fletcher:** ‘Me too,’ said the mole, ‘But we love you

**Davina McCall:** and love brings you home.”

**Davina McCall:** Visit Every Mind Matters today

## SUPPORTING CHARITY PARTNER QUOTES

**Professor Peter Fonagy, Chief Executive of the Anna Freud Centre said:** “Asking for help and getting the help you need are two of the most important steps anyone can take to support their own mental health and the mental health of others. This campaign will support parents who have real concerns about the impact of the coronavirus had on their children and give them the confidence to listen and encourage them to speak out about their feelings. In many cases this alone will help, in others it is the most important route to obtaining timely support with the stress and disruption to their lives caused by the pandemic. This campaign is a major contribution to promoting and protecting our children’s wellbeing.”

**CEO of The Mix, Chris Martin, said:** “For children and young people, coronavirus resulted in the withdrawal of the daily companionship of friends and the personal support provided by schools, health services and youth clubs that was vital to maintaining their mental health. At The Mix, we witnessed a frightening rise in contacts from those who felt overwhelmed by anxieties and fears that were magnified by the suffocating effects of isolation. As young people and their families face the fresh challenge of the return to school, it is essential that they have access to expert information and life-saving support they need to ensure positive mental health.”

**Clare Stafford, CEO of The Charlie Waller Trust, said:** “From our work supporting parents of children with mental health difficulties, we know how hard it can be. But with the right support, we also know how much parents can help. As a vital first step, they have to look after their own wellbeing. And they need to educate themselves about their child’s mental



*health difficulties – this can make a huge difference in helping them to cope and to support their child.*

*"Public Health England's 'Better Health - Every Mind Matters' campaign comes at a crucial moment, as children and young people return to school, college or university, or enter work for the first time. It harnesses the vital information and resources that Charlie Waller and other mental health charities provide."*

### **CELEBRITY QUOTES FOR EVERY MIND MATTERS**

Please see a table below of all celebrities who have shared their tips and advice for maintaining good mental wellbeing during this time:

Celebrity	Quote
<b>Sean Fletcher</b>	<i>"I want to make sure my children feel supported, now more than ever. My youngest is back at school for the new term and the new EMM advice is a fantastic reminder for all of us parents to check in with our kids and empathise with what they're going through."</i>
<b>Edith Bowman</b>	<i>"The past few months have been difficult one way or another for everyone, especially our kids. Being a parent is a constant learning experience, there is no right answer – it's what works best for you and your family. I'm proud to support this new campaign; we all want to make sure our children are supported in every way possible. For tips and advice, search Every Mind Matters."</i>
<b>Marvin Humes</b>	<i>"Many families have experienced an upheaval in their daily lives in some form over the last few months and, like many parents, we know this will have impacted our kids in some way. I'm backing this campaign because it's so important that parents have the support they need to look after their children and their mental wellbeing as we navigate the months to come."</i>
<b>Katie Piper</b>	<i>"At a time when the parenting rule book has been thrown out the window, I've wanted to ensure the best for my young family and their mental health. However, I haven't always been sure of how much to say or how to approach it. Parents need to have some reassurance of how best to handle children's mental health during a pandemic so we can make sure we're there for them as much as we can in the future."</i>

#### About Every Mind Matters:

- Every Mind Matters is supported by the following leading national charities: Young Minds, The Mix, Mind, Barnardos, Anna Freud, Rethink Mental Illness, Time to Change, Heads Together, Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, Place2Be, Shout 85258, Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition and Association for Young People's Health.
- [Every Mind Matters](#) provides simple NHS-approved tips and advice to help you take care of your mental health. If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please contact [NHS 111 online](#).



- Being active helps mental wellbeing and you can access free easy [ten minute work outs](#) from Public Health England, or try other exercise videos at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has tips for [keeping active at home](#).
- The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep.
- Visit the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools, if you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood.
- If you already have a mental health problem you can access [comprehensive guidance provided by Mind](#).