

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Changing attitudes and behaviours in young people



Impact series



Funded by

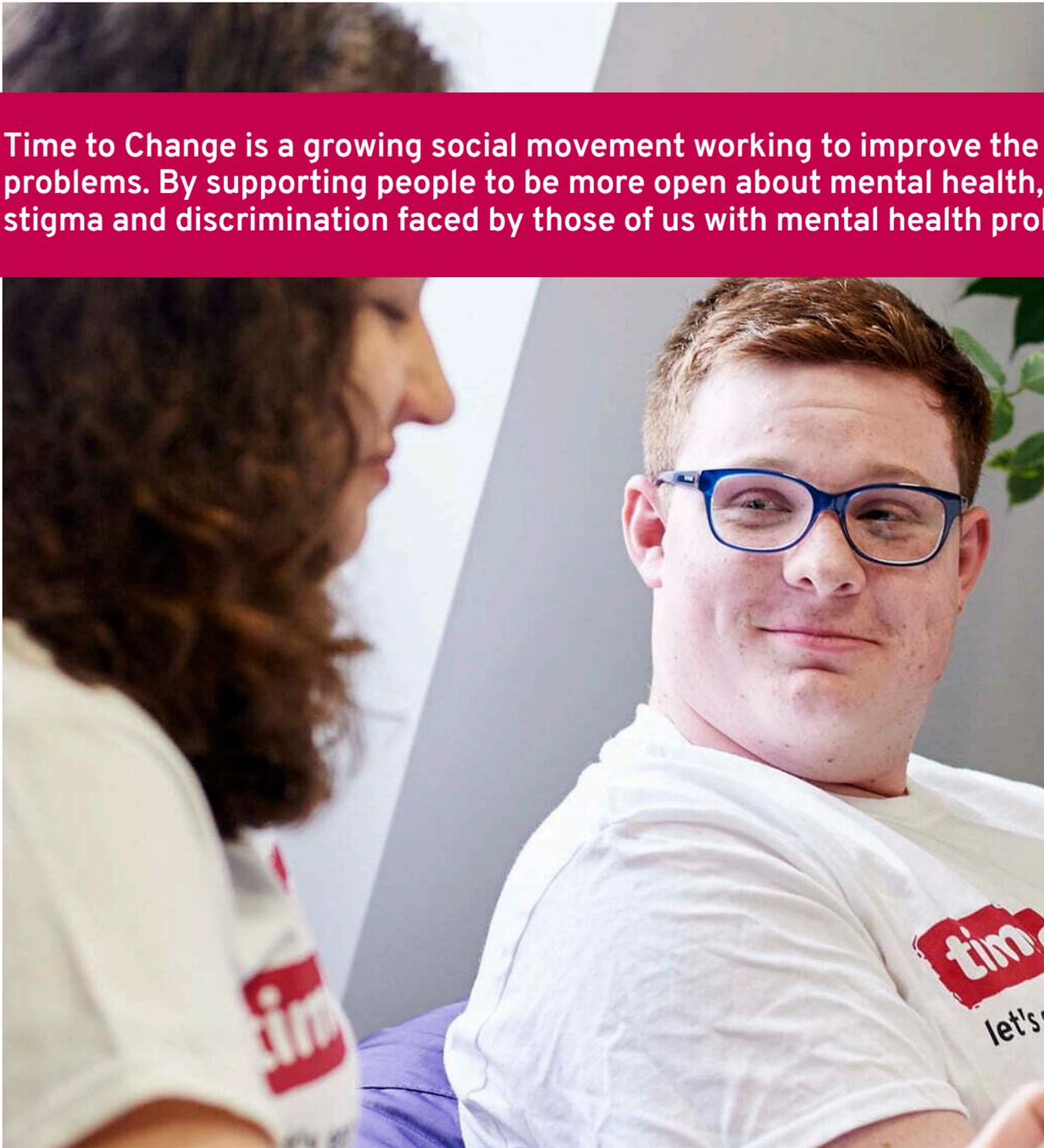


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Introduction



Time to Change is a growing social movement working to improve the way we all think and act about mental health problems. By supporting people to be more open about mental health, to talk and to listen, we aim to end the stigma and discrimination faced by those of us with mental health problems.

Since 2011 we have been working with young people, teachers, youth workers, parents and carers to support the next generation to be more open about mental health than any before. This work is part of our wider programme to change attitudes and behaviours to mental health problems in settings such as workplaces, communities and in the media. Meanwhile our national marketing campaign aims to inspire behaviour change among key target audiences.

Delivering behaviour change takes time, energy and resource. For more than 10 years we have worked with schools and youth sector organisations to create spaces where young people can speak freely about the topic of mental health, and their own experiences, without being made to feel isolated or ashamed. We are embedding a generational shift in attitudes and behaviours and our focus is on reaching young people aged 11-18, as we know that this is a crucial point at which they begin to develop their values.

We do this by:

- **Educating young people** to be there for their friends and supporting them and their parents and carers to have open conversations about mental health.
- **Empowering young people with lived experience** of mental health problems to challenge stigma and discrimination, through sharing their stories and campaigning.
- **Working with networks of schools and colleges** to ensure that improving attitudes and behaviours towards mental health is part of their mental health and wellbeing agenda.
- **Supporting schools, colleges and youth sector organisations** to run anti-stigma activities.

Our theory of change uses a multi-pronged approach to improve young people's attitudes and behaviours towards mental health.

By increasing young people's understanding and knowledge through our marketing campaigns, we encourage them to support friends who might be experiencing mental health problems and have open conversations about mental health. By empowering young people with lived experience of a mental health problem to share their stories, we raise awareness about the reality of living with a mental health problem and make this experience relatable. And through our work with schools, colleges and the youth sector we are able to reinforce these messages, while indirectly equipping key adults in a young person's life, namely parents and carers, teachers, school leaders and youth sector professionals, with the information they need to support young people to talk more openly and campaign for change.

We have found that when a young person's parents, school and online environments are all encouraging and demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours towards mental health, we see a lasting impact on the way they think and act about mental health.



**Educating young people
to be there for their
friends**

In this first strand of work, we use our behaviour change campaigns to encourage young people to be there for their friends and to have open conversations about mental health.



Our young people's behaviour change campaign is aligned to our adult campaign, and uses a 'Trojan horse' approach to introduce the subject subtly and appeal to young people's sense of wanting to be a good friend.

Our latest campaign centres on the message 'Ask Twice'. We know that sometimes people say they're fine when they're not, so the campaign encourages young people to ask 'how are you?' twice if they think a friend might be struggling with their mental health.

Our 2018 'Ask Twice' campaign analysis showed that 14% of 11-18 year olds had asked a friend how they were or listened to a friend as a result of seeing the campaign. A further 19% said that the campaign made them think about stepping in.

By pairing this simple ask with resources and tips, the campaign gives young people the tools they need to recognise when a friend is experiencing a mental health problem and to support them.

We use 'out of home' and digital channels to ensure our message reaches young people aged 11-18. This includes PR and media stories, social media content and work with celebrities and influencers. We also provide participating schools and colleges with assembly presentations and lesson plans to further reinforce the calls to action.

By coordinating the timing of our young people and adult behaviour change campaigns we are able to maximise the impact of both. This consolidated approach means that parents and carers are more likely to be aware of the campaign's messaging and reinforce the campaign aims with their children.



We have found that strategic partnerships can help to amplify the reach of our 'Ask Twice' message among young people. In 2019, we partnered with LADBible on a Rap Battle event, which reached over 11.6 million people via social media.



Empowering young people with lived experience

Through our network of Young Champions, we aim to empower young people with lived experience of mental health problems to challenge stigma and discrimination in their daily lives.



Young Champions are young people aged 16 to 25 with lived experience of a mental health problem from a diverse range of backgrounds. Since 2016 we have trained 148 young people to share their experiences in schools and other youth settings, as well as to campaign in their communities and online.

When Young Champions talk about their own experiences they are putting a name and a face to the concept of mental health problems, bringing it to life and making it relatable. This – as we know from social contact theory – is a hugely effective way to engender attitude change. Since 2016 our Young Champions have started 14,050 social contact conversations, helping thousands of people of all ages become more open to the topic of mental health.

Through these conversations, Young Champions are able to challenge stereotypes and change the way people think and act about mental health problems.

Social contact

At Time to Change, we define Social Contact as “Conversations that take place between people who have lived experience of mental health problems and those who may not”.

When people talk to each other and establish common ground, we know that prejudices and assumptions are often challenged and replaced with mutual understanding and respect.

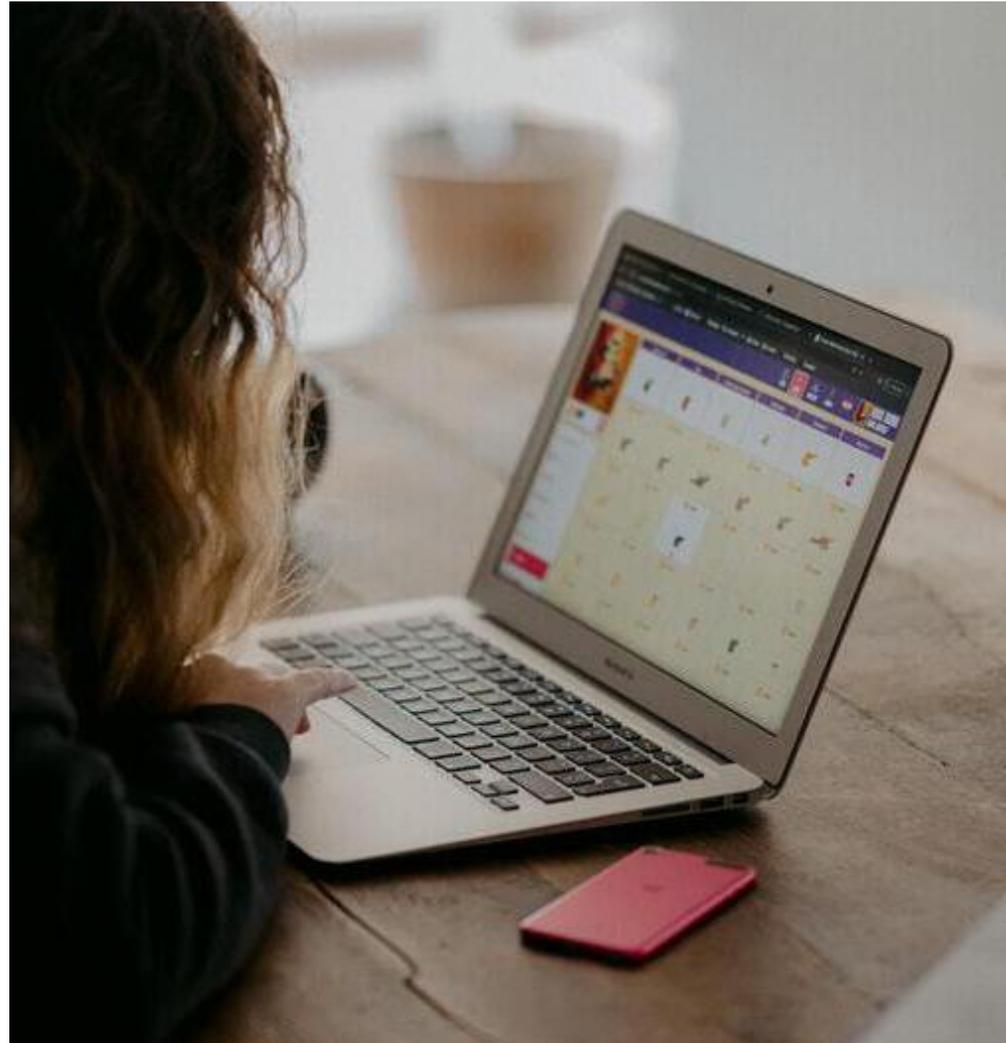
This can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviours.

To extend the reach of our Young Champions' stories we share a range of 'testimony' films to give voice to varied experiences.

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“On Time to Talk Day I shared a video about my experience of Bipolar on Facebook. I was in the middle of a depressive psychotic episode and it was a real step from my comfort zone. I got nearly 4,000 views and tonnes of messages from friends but also people opening up for the first time about their mental health.”

Time to Change Young Champion



We also have a panel of Young Champion Alumni who use their experiences to help train new cohorts of Young Champions and provide feedback on our resources and marketing campaigns.

Young Leaders groups across the country campaign amongst their peers in schools, colleges and youth settings, with support from our targeted web page and downloadable activities and resources.



**Supporting schools,
colleges and youth
sector organisations**

We work with schools, colleges and youth sector organisations to support them to deliver their own anti-stigma campaigns. We focus on delivering three main campaigns each year: our Action Plan, Time to Talk Day and our behaviour change campaign.

For each campaign, we provide resources, such as assembly presentations and lesson plans, which schools can easily roll out to increase their students knowledge about mental health, bust myths and start conversations.

We know that by engaging teachers and school leaders at strategic points in the year we can maximise our impact. For example, we send out our Action Plan during the summer term when schools are planning for the year ahead, encouraging them to map out different ways they will engage their school community with mental health in the coming year. We then send them tailored resources depending on which areas they want to focus on.

We aim to instil confidence that you don't have to be an expert to talk about mental health. All our resources are fully scripted because our research tells us that teachers fear lacking the 'right' words or specialist knowledge. We deliver training to school staff covering basic mental health awareness and the impact of attitudes and behaviours towards mental health on young people. We also provide tailored action planning support to help schools make an impact with their time and our resources.

Every year, over 2,000 schools and youth organisations sign up to get involved in Time to Talk Day, our schools Action Plan and our behaviour change campaign.

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“I know I've felt more secure in revealing my OCD diagnosis after my school ran events to raise awareness about it and other conditions”

Time to Change Young Champion

A woman with curly hair, wearing a blue cardigan over a floral top, is sitting at a desk and smiling at a man in a green and black striped shirt. She is looking at a black Lenovo laptop. The man is wearing glasses and is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background shows a window with a red frame and a potted plant.

Working with networks of schools and colleges

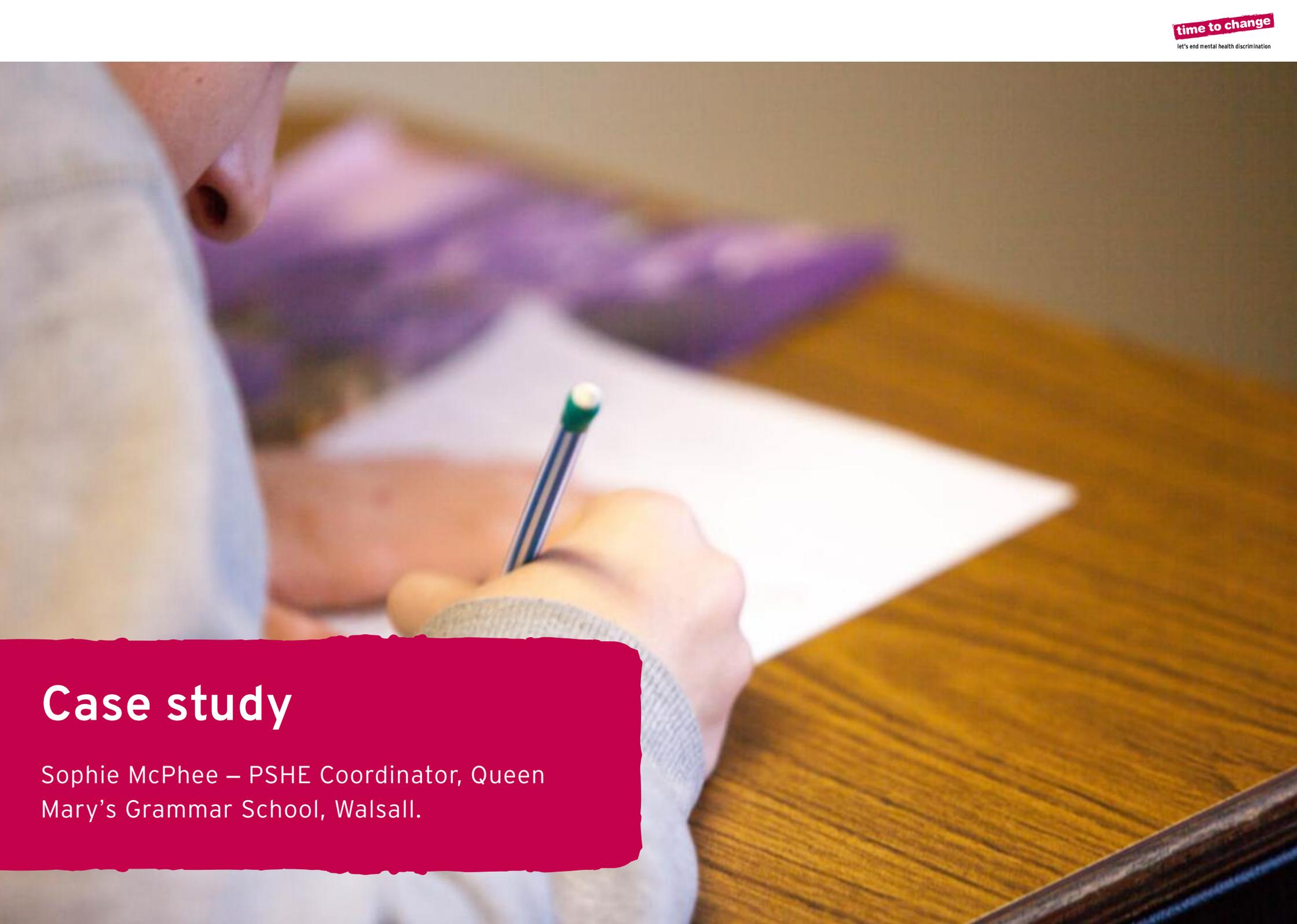
This strand of work focuses on developing partnerships with networks of schools and colleges to ensure that improving attitudes and behaviours towards mental health continues to be part of their mental health and wellbeing agenda.

We know that by identifying and fostering relationships with key stakeholders across the country we are able to reach a wider audience and amplify our message. These gatekeepers are often local authority leads or academy chain central staff, some of whom host regular network meetings for schools and colleges. They cascade our offer and resources to their networks, helping us reach schools and colleges who we don't yet have links with.

We are also able to share case studies through these networks, highlighting how schools and colleges can benefit their staff, students and parents by helping people to talk more openly about mental health. We find that case studies help to inspire involvement.

Since 2011 we have established and worked with 32 networks of school leaders across England, reaching 550 schools and 357,500 students.



A close-up, over-the-shoulder shot of a person with light skin and a grey sweater writing on a white sheet of paper. They are holding a blue and silver pen. The desk is made of dark wood. In the background, there is a purple folder or book. The lighting is soft and focused on the writing area.

Case study

Sophie McPhee – PSHE Coordinator, Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall.

Queen Mary's Grammar first engaged with Time to Change in 2016. With a driven head and supportive senior leadership team, the school worked with Time to Change across a number of projects including Time to Talk Day and Student Ambassadors.

Sophie, PSHE Coordinator at Queen Mary's, described how this initial engagement has grown over the years: "The school has marked Mental Health Awareness Week every year for the last four, hosting outside speakers and holding yoga sessions amongst other things."

Sophie has also set up her own mental health awareness project, Change Your Mind, which has now grown into a mental health and wellbeing personal development programme for year 12 students.

As part of this, Student Ambassadors go into local primary schools to speak about mental health: "We went into half of all Walsall primary schools last year and spoke to over 1,000 kids, this year we have more than 1,500 signed up."

Time to Change has remained a central part of their progress, offering staff and student training as well as talks and workshops. Sophie believes that the personal experiences and friendly faces at Time to Change are the main reason they have continued to work together.

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“Having people in who have suffered with mental health issues makes children realise that it's normal and that anyone can have them.”





Our top takeaways

Here are our top recommendations if you're looking to change young people's attitudes and behaviours:

1. Involve and empower young people

Invite young people's input and give them a platform to speak in other schools about their lived experiences. They're best placed to drive behaviour change among their peers, so give them the training, tools and ongoing support they need to do so.

2. Social contact is key

Hearing real and relatable experiences helps shift attitudes and increases people's resolve to take meaningful action. It doesn't have to be face-to-face; it can be through blogs, vlogs and other mediums.

3. You don't have to be an expert

Provide clear, scripted and interactive resources for teachers/youth professionals to use. And if you have the time and resource, co-produce them with teachers to ensure that you are providing the right amount of information.

4. Find gatekeepers

Find and nurture relationships with gatekeepers who can help to widen your reach and embed your campaign in communities.

5. Take a whole school approach

Lasting change comes through engaging everyone who sits around a young person, including teachers, parents, school leaders and peers. School leaders are well placed to make things happen across multiple levels.

6. On a shoestring?

If your budget is limited focus on working with young people with lived experience, use their input to guide your focus and their stories to help change behaviour and attitudes.



Thank you for reading