

Young Minds

I was delighted to host YoungMinds in Parliament, for an event where young people met with MPs discussed the benefits of whole school mental health and wellbeing approaches in supporting students' education. This was part of YoungMinds' #TellOfsted campaign, urging Ofsted to include mental health provision in schools as part of their assessments. Many schools do excellent work when it comes to wellbeing approaches, however too often they do not receive any recognition for this. Similarly, school leaders feel that the lack of focus on wellbeing within the current Ofsted framework and inspections programme, acts as a disincentive for them to prioritise wellbeing approaches, particularly when under financial constraints. The Health & Social Care Committee's report into transforming children and young people's mental health found that half of all mental health conditions first occur by age 14, and three quarters by age 24 – often with exam pressures and social media reported as key contributing factor, underlining the importance of schools' role in this issue. Tackling this threat to the happiness and wellbeing of young people, before it develops into a crisis, must see the Government focus on joining up services. Updating Ofsted's remit to include the work schools do to support the mental health of young people would be a welcome step in the right direction. I will also continue to press for an increase in the funding our schools receive as I'm very concerned about the shrinking of school curricula especially for arts subjects and the loss of counselling services