What can you do? – Find out more about how you can get involved with the project

Going around the country – All over the UK, young people are coming together to tackle stigma
Eva Brock (Meet the panel, p.6)

“I've been involved with Time to Change since February 2012, when I joined the Young People's Panel after volunteering for Eating Disorders charities. I wanted to be involved with the magazine as I am passionate about writing, and about making a change to the way in which we view mental health – this article combined these passions, and gave me the opportunity to do both.”

Justyna Wichowska (How does the project work p.8)

“I became interested in the campaign when I started working as a part time receptionist at Mind in 2010. I graduated last year and since August 2012 have been working in the Central Management Team of Time to Change. However, in this issue I’m stepping in with my ‘young person’s’ hat on.”

Eva Mannan (School profile, p.10)

“I decided to get involved with Time to Change 2 years ago when I saw an opportunity to be a part of the young advisory panel from another charity I am a part of. I was keen to get involved as the topic of mental health is very close to my heart and it’s something I am really passionate about. I thought it would be a great idea to write an article about it, in relation to school projects because, as a student I believe it is something that schools should encourage students to understand.”

Jane Allen (My story, p.14)

“I have supported Time to Change since the campaign began, but I became more involved in 2011 through volunteering at a roadshow event. I later trained as a co-trainer and involvement worker as part of the young people’s team. I have a degree in psychology and am currently studying mental health at postgraduate level.”

“…I wanted to be involved with the magazine as I am passionate about writing, and about making a change to the way in which we view mental health.”

For this edition of Speak Out, we’ve brought together a group of young champions to act as our guest editors and contributors. Our editorial team have been part of our Young People’s Panel (see p.6) for the last two years, so they’re well versed in how Time to Change works. As well as this, they’ve all done their bit to challenge stigma and speak out about their experiences.

They introduce themselves and tell us a bit about why they wanted to work on the magazine…
Time to Change Director Sue Baker gives her perspective on what’s been happening across the programme over the last three months.

Update from Sue Baker

This year, it’s encouraging to see a real focus on stigma and raising awareness about mental health in colleges and at university freshers’ fairs across the country. We want to see more opportunities for this new, younger, generation to speak out and raise awareness amongst their peers.

This is why part of our programme is dedicated to challenging the discrimination faced by younger people who experience mental health issues. For the past 18 months, we’ve been piloting a campaign for children and young people in the West Midlands. This work has now come to a close and we’re ready to move on to our second pilot site in Kent and the South East. The results from our first pilot are very promising, turn to p.5 to find out more.

I’d like to say a big thank you to everyone who has been involved in our children and young people work in the West Midlands. The contribution of parents and teachers to the campaign has been invaluable. Parents were integral to making the first pilot a success, with over 500 taking part in our recent parents’ research, sharing experiences of talking about mental health with their children.

But most of all, I’d like to say a special thanks to all of the young people who have worked with us so far. From our Young People’s Panel members, to young champions speaking out, bloggers who’ve shared their experiences on our website, and volunteers at our young people’s Village events, they’ve all made a huge contribution. Thanks for all your hard work.

At the time of writing, we’ve just finished hosting the first annual meeting of the global anti-stigma alliance. Representatives from anti-stigma programmes across the world came together in London this September to share learning and good practice from their work challenging discrimination. A key focus of seven of these national programmes is on children and young people.

More than ever we are able to see the power we have when we join our voices together, as we saw from the response to Tesco and Asda’s offensive “mental patient” and “psycho ward” Halloween costumes. There was a public outcry over the costumes, with hundreds of people with lived experience of mental health issues posting pictures of themselves in their real-life “costumes” on Twitter. The two supermarkets were forced to withdraw the costumes from sale and issue public apologies. This just goes to show how much of a voice and influence we as a social movement can have when we join forces. It also shows how the public mood in relation to what and what isn’t acceptable has changed.

We want to keep up this momentum in the run-up to the next big advertising burst we are planning in early 2014. We’ve now set a date of 6 February (mark it in your diaries!) for a “Time to Talk Day” (p.16). We’d like for everyone to join us in focusing activity on one day to help spread the word that it’s time to talk about mental health.

Register your interest online at www.time-to-change.org.uk/talkday

22.

Sue Baker
Director, Time to Change

Where we have been and where we are going

The children and young people’s programme is a three-year pilot delivered in two 18-month periods. The first half, which ran in the West Midlands (from April 2012 to September 2013), has just come to an end. The aim was to challenge stigma faced by young people affected by mental health problems. We worked closely with local schools to run an educational programme delivered by young people with experience of mental health problems.

The results from this 18 month pilot have shown that in Birmingham there has been a 1.3% improvement in attitudes of 14 to 18 year olds and a remarkable 6% reduction in discrimination. On top of this, half of all young people surveyed agreed that attitudes have changed around mental illness in Birmingham.

As part of our new national pilot work to take key elements of Time to Change to 25 secondary schools, across five regions of England between September 2013 and March 2015. Having completed work in London, we will then recruit a further five schools in the North East from January 2014 to March 2014.

After the success of the first pilot site, we will be bringing the campaign to Kent and the South East to begin our second pilot site in October 2013. As well as working closely with schools we will be looking to fund community-based projects that change attitudes and behaviour among young people.

We are working with five secondary schools in London during this term (September to December 2013). The Time to Change team will support staff and students to create and implement an action plan of campaigning and activities from January for a year.

We want to see more opportunities for this new, younger, generation to speak out and raise awareness amongst their peers.

Following our national work in London and the North East, we will be recruiting and working with an additional five secondary schools in the East of England from April to July 2014.
Meet the Panel

The Time to Change Youth Panel is a diverse group of 16-25 year olds, many of whom have experienced mental illness first-hand, or through the experience of family and friends. The majority have experienced stigma and discrimination; but whatever the case, all are passionate about making a difference to the way that we view mental health.

Youth panel members are integral to driving the campaign forwards. Their work includes consultation on materials such as the Stand Up Kid film, developing resources for the website, and assisting at pop-up villages by sharing their stories. Here, panel members Georgia, Moira and Akil share their experiences of stigma and discrimination, and talk about what it means to be members of the youth panel.

When I went to my first Youth Panel meeting I was quite overwhelmed, as I didn’t know very much about the panel - but upon arriving I felt immediately welcomed and comfortable. There were so many lovely people to meet, and we discussed interesting, important and relevant issues. I was inspired to commit to the panel after this, as my first meeting had been such a success.

The Youth Panel is a really important part of Time to Change - it provides an opportunity for young people to get involved with a campaign that creates an impact and makes a difference. Although I’ve been lucky enough to avoid direct stigma and discrimination, there are still things that I’d like to change. My peers at college are quite ignorant to mental illness, and as a result of this, I wouldn’t choose to talk to them about my own problems, as I don’t feel that they’d understand.

At the moment, I write a lot of songs about my personal experiences, and always hope that there are people listening who will connect to the music and feel inspired to share their stories. I showcased some of these at a Time to Change Village in Birmingham last year. Time to Change has helped me to find a voice, and more of a reason to fight the stigma and discrimination of mental illness.

I joined the panel because I know what it’s like to be discriminated against, and I wanted to help to end this for other people. Being a member of the panel has had some really positive outcomes for me; I’ve travelled to places I never thought I’d go, and done things I never thought I’d do! The most memorable of these was definitely when I delivered a testimony at the Birmingham launch event. I’m not particularly confident about public speaking, so I was really nervous before giving the speech, but afterwards I felt really proud, and so pleased to be part of making a difference.

I received treatment about a month before I sat my A-level exams, and if it wasn’t for this, I don’t believe that I’d have been successful in my application to University. The medication that I started on provided an effective new coping mechanism which helped me to focus, and worry less about the opinions of my peers. Sometimes people don’t have the strength to cope without medication or therapy, and Time to Change can help people to understand this.

I think that schools are the best place to start in making changes. It’s especially at school level that there are people who choose to make life uncomfortable for peers who are already going through so much. This is often because mental vulnerability is visibly apparent in words, actions or physical appearance. However, if people know the true facts about mental illness, and the severity of how it can affect each person, they will have the capacity to stop stigmatising.

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How does the Children and Young People’s Project work?

You may know that Time to Change does targeted work with younger audiences, but how do we actually do this? Justyna Wichowska explains how the Time to Change Children and Young People’s Project uses a variety of tools and methods to raise awareness about mental health stigma and discrimination.

In any group of 10 children and young people, one will have a mental health problem and is likely to experience stigma and discrimination, because of this. This statistic has repeatedly surprised pupils and teachers in the schools that Time to Change has worked with.

Time to Change has adapted the programme created for adults to fit the needs of a younger audience, specifically targeting people aged 14-18. We aim to change the attitudes and behaviour of young people towards their peers with mental health problems, as well as to educate a new generation, to help stamp out stigma in the future.

Our first pilot campaign has just finished in the West Midlands with a focus on Birmingham, and our second pilot in the South East with a focus on Kent & Medway started in October 2013. In addition to this, as a result of new funding Time to Change has been awarded by the Big Lottery Fund, we will be taking some elements of the pilot campaign and delivering them nationally in 25 secondary schools in five different regions across England. Our first region will be London, followed by the North West.

Advisory panels

The input of key stakeholders such as young people, parents and youth professionals/volunteers is essential to the programme on every level. We want to build a social movement through their leadership and most suitably tailor the campaign to young people’s needs. For this reason, we set up three advisory panels to bring us closer to the views of young people with and without mental health problems, their parents and youth organisations. The panels steer our work through their quarterly meetings, during which the members discuss various issues related to current activities of the Children and Young People’s Project.

Social contact for young people

Time to Change has based the core of its activities on the theory of social contact. Social contact is where a conversation between two people can help challenge one person’s preconceptions about the other. The Time to Change Villages are a powerful example of social contact. The specially tailored pop-up events which have visited many towns in England to get communities talking about mental health. Villages take place in central and crowded places and attract passers-by with a set of themed marquees, mirroring what you can find in the town: a cinema, performance space, café, post office. Once drawn to the Village by free activities, the audience are approached by our volunteers with lived experience who start conversations about mental health and tell their stories. Negative attitudes can be challenged and discriminatory behaviour changed when people with and without mental health problems are brought together and engaged in a dialogue.

In Birmingham we found that young people want different experiences to adults, and thus whenever we take the Village set into schools, we adapt it for young people’s needs. A range of fun activities and features are more important to catch their attention. We create spaces for performances, offer young people the opportunity to play our knowledge-based, and mental health-themed Play Station 3 game; free popcorn is served outside of the cinema where the Stand Up Kid film is played followed by a group discussion; and a pledging station gets pupils to think about the one thing they could do to end mental health stigma and discrimination and to write it down as their personal Time to Change pledge.

Notwithstanding its entertainment value, bringing together young people with and without personal experience of mental health problems in a meaningful conversation remains the core aim of the young people’s village.

Our team of young volunteers are there to approach pupils and share their personal stories. Before the event, volunteers have a full day of training on how to engage in social contact and assist on the day.

Digital media

In 2012 we made Stand Up Kid, an award-winning campaign advert which has by now hit over 283,545 views on YouTube. (“Tools and resources” on page 15 for more information). The film features prominently on the home page of the Young People’s section of the Time to Change website. The section explains what stigma is and how young people can challenge it by learning about mental health, listening and talking. Importantly, young people with mental health problems can write blogs on taking about mental health and their personal experiences.

Visit: www.time-to-change.org.uk/youngpeople
Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School - Takes on tackling the stigma of mental health

By talking about mental health issues, we believe we can create a tolerant, understanding, open environment where students will seek help.

1. Why did you decide to begin the activities?
   Our school prides itself upon the pastoral care it provides for the students. As one in 10 young people will experience a mental health problem during their school years, rising to one in four during adulthood, this is an increasingly important area to be explored in schools. By talking about mental health problems, we believe we can create a tolerant, understanding and open environment where students will seek help.

2. How have you structured and approached these activities to make them educational and interesting?
   We have delivered assemblies across the Key Stages and, currently, guidance lessons focusing on mental health issues are being delivered to students in Years 7, 10 and 11. In Year 7, students undertake a module that focuses on emotional health and well-being. Year 10 focus is on eliminating stigma and discrimination and we use the ‘Train the Trainer’ resources for this module which we have adapted to suit the needs of our students.

3. How have you dealt with making the information for student’s user friendly?
   The lessons, in particular, use a variety of activities including paired, group and whole class discussion and give students the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding. In Year 11, guidance lessons focus upon stress and how to manage it more effectively. In all of our work we utilise ‘Time to Change’ films such as the ‘Stand Up Kid’ as well as video clips from the Time to Change website.

4. Have you organised any key events or workshops to get the message of mental health across?
   Twenty five Sixth Form students received training from members of ‘Time to Change’ in September 2013. These students have signed up to be mental health ambassadors within our school. Four of these young people have recently run a training session with Year 10 students filmed by and for BBC Breakfast. All of the students who received the initial training from Time to Change are now involved with awareness raising projects in tackling stigma surrounding mental health.

5. What did students like most about the activities?
   There was a positive response. Some are looking at establishing a pledge board in school; others are in the process of organising and producing posters to go around the school, whilst others are planning assemblies to deliver to the rest of the school community. They were interested in and fully engaged with all aspects of the training as their views were sought, they had time to develop and give their opinion and they came out knowing a great deal more about mental health problems.

As a 16 year old, educating young people on mental health is very close to my heart. Education is the key to end stigma in society today. This is due to various stereotypes being attached to mental health which makes it all the more difficult to tackle. Education will allow more people to reach out for support. Programmes like Bishop Vesey’s Grammar school will help to remove these obstacles and to end stigma and discrimination.
Jo Loughran, who heads up the Children and Young People’s Project, talks about ways that schools and practitioners can get involved in the campaign and what we have learned from the pilot so far.

We started off the campaign in the West Midlands. As a large city with a high population of young people, Birmingham has a great mix of rural and urban areas to allow us to deliver a range of activities that engage young people from lots of different communities. Here are some ideas of how you can engage your school, youth club or community:

• Discuss mental health a lot like it’s everyday and ordinary...because it is. Whether you’re a young person, a parent, a youth professional or volunteer working with young people, having a conversation about mental health, finding out more or hearing from young people with personal experience are all key ways to challenge stereotypical views of people with mental health problems.

Talking about mental health doesn’t need to be complicated and you don’t need to be an expert to start a conversation. We have lots of advice online for how you can start your conversation, with printable tips cards to keep with you in your purse or wallet. Visit www.time-to-change.org.uk/talk-about-mental-health/tips for more information.

• Book yourself and your colleagues onto our “Train the Trainer” sessions to learn about stigma and discrimination and how you might run a campaign in your school or community youth group.

• Spread the word

Digital media is seen as a hugely influential tool among young people in communicating with other young people. Time to Change has an existing pool of resources to help you spread the word in your local area. Whether it’s sharing our Stand Up Kid video (see p.15), getting involved on social media, or downloading our education materials such as our online interactive story. There are lots of quick and easy things you can do.

www.time-to-change.org.uk/young-people/how-can-i-standup-stigma

• Run an event

We promote events all over the country and provide a toolkit to help you run your own event. Conversations with people with first-hand experience of mental health problems can help to change perceived attitudes and preconceptions surrounding mental health.

• Sign the pledge

Individuals, celebrities and organisations all over the country are signing the Time to Change pledge as a public statement of their commitment to tackling mental health stigma and discrimination.

You can sign the pledge as:
• an individual adding your name to the Time to Change pledge wall means you’re part of a growing community of people who are pledging to tackle stigma in their own way.

• an organisation

sign the organisational pledge by creating a campaign action plan and working with young people to implement it. When you make a pledge we will encourage you to look at ways you as an organisation can support young people to raise awareness of mental health and reduce stigma and discrimination. This can be anything from training school staff or running workshops with your students to inspire them to challenge stigma and discrimination.

www.time-to-change.org.uk/how-to-pledge

Our research to date indicates that our work in Birmingham, using all these methods of raising awareness, has produced some promising results. When we asked young people with lived experience whether they felt people were taking mental health problems more seriously, 42% said yes, with 51% opening up more about their own mental health.

The second phase of this three year pilot has launched in the South East with a focus on Kent & Medway. If you would like to keep up to date with activities, sign up to our newsletter at www.time-to-change.org.uk/email-signup

We know that one in 10 young people will experience a mental health problem at some point in the lives. In a survey conducted by Time to Change, a staggering nine out of 10 young people said they had experienced stigma from others as a result of their mental health problem.

They said that they felt isolated and ashamed because other people didn’t understand what they were going through.

The sad fact is that three students in a class will have a mental health problem. The Children and Young People’s Project aims to improve the knowledge, attitudes and most importantly the behaviour of young people, so that others avoid experiencing the negative impacts of stigma and discrimination.

The focus of the programme is young people of secondary school age and above (up to 25 years of age) who are not close to the subject of mental health; they may not know someone with a mental health problem or have experienced symptoms themselves. We work alongside those with lived experience to get our messages out there. They are trained by us to co-deliver educational sessions, speak to the media and help to evaluate and guide our work. They really are at the heart of the project.

What can YOU DO?

The Children and Young People’s Project, talks about ways that schools and practitioners can get involved in the campaign and what we have learned from the pilot so far.
I would definitely say get involved

Zara hopes that her contribution so far has challenged the attitudes of those people who discriminated against her in the past. It’s also evident that Zara’s passion for raising awareness of mental health issues and the importance of handling them sensitively is not restricted to her work with Time to Change.

The early chapter of Zara’s story is sadly not an unfamiliar one. Diagnosed with a mental health problem at the age of 15, she felt too afraid to discuss her difficulties with her friends at school and relied on her parents and head of year for support. She experienced a lot of discrimination in school which stopped me from talking about my OCD, explains Zara.

It was quite by chance that Zara discovered Time to Change; working on a school project, she came across the website whilst researching attitudes to OCD. Inspired by the message of Time to Change, Zara gradually felt strong enough to tell her friends about her mental health problems and began to realise that the best way to tackle stigma is to talk openly. Zara was so inspired by the online presence of Time to Change that she volunteered to write about her experiences for teenage magazine ‘Shout’, in the hope that her honesty would help other young people struggling with similar difficulties, and enable those who may be unaware of the consequences of common misconceptions of mental health problems ‘to hear a story about stigma and how it can affect someone who is young’.

Feeling empowered from speaking out, Zara joined Time to Change’s Young People’s Panel. She wants to encourage more young people to make the Time to Change Pledge and become involved in the campaign. I think young people are really powerful in changing the stigma and attitudes for future generations, says Zara.

The media training provided by Time to Change gave Zara the knowledge and skills to be able to speak openly about her mental health problems. She will now be one of the many volunteers contacted by the campaign when a young person’s story or perspective on an event is requested by a television programme, radio station or magazine.

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A keen sportswoman, Zara ran the London Marathon to raise money for Mind, hoping that the inevitable questions from others about why she had chosen the charity would prompt more open discussions about mental health. She regards Time to Change as an excellent opportunity for young people to meet others who have had similar experiences of facing stigma and discrimination, but who may have very different stories to tell and plenty to learn from each other. When asked whether she would recommend volunteering, she replied ‘I would definitely say get involved’. Indeed, Zara hopes that her work with Time to Change is just the beginning. I’ve gained so much confidence in talking about mental health, I’ve also learned a lot about other mental illnesses that I hadn’t come across before. I’ve become far more confident in starting the conversation, she concludes.

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The early chapter of Zara’s story is sadly not an unfamiliar one. Diagnosed with a mental health problem at the age of 15, she felt too afraid to discuss her difficulties with her friends at school and relied on her parents and head of year for support. She experienced a lot of discrimination in school which stopped me from talking about my OCD, explains Zara.

It was quite by chance that Zara discovered Time to Change; working on a school project, she came across the website whilst researching attitudes to OCD. Inspired by the message of Time to Change, Zara gradually felt strong enough to tell her friends about her mental health problems and began to realise that the best way to tackle stigma is to talk openly. Zara was so inspired by the online presence of Time to Change that she volunteered to write about her experiences for teenage magazine ‘Shout’, in the hope that her honesty would help other young people struggling with similar difficulties, and enable those who may be unaware of the consequences of common misconceptions of mental health problems ‘to hear a story about stigma and how it can affect someone who is young’.

Feeling empowered from speaking out, Zara joined Time to Change’s Young People’s Panel. She wants to encourage more young people to make the Time to Change Pledge and become involved in the campaign. I think young people are really powerful in changing the stigma and attitudes for future generations, says Zara.

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Supermarkets forced to backtrack over offensive costumes

Major supermarket brands Asda and Tesco were forced to apologise and remove offensive Halloween costumes from sale this September following a public outcry.

Disgruntled customers quickly took to social media to voice their concern about the outfits, which were labelled ‘staggeringly offensive’ by Time to Change Director Sue Baker. Using the hashtag #mentalpatient, thousands posted pictures of themselves doing everyday things on Twitter to show the world their real-life ‘mental patient’ outfits. This sent the message loud and clear that it is no longer socially acceptable to stereotype people with mental health problems in this way.

Since then, Time to Change and Mind have met with Asda and Tesco and the leading supermarkets have agreed to start work on meaningful activity to combat mental health stigma and avoid a repeat of recent events. It is also hoped that both retailers will sign the Time to Change pledge.

Find out more about this story: www.time-to-change.org.uk/blog/showing-real-face-mental-health

Round-up – Time to Change around the country

What’s going on for Time to Change in autumn 2013?

Spreading the anti-discrimination message around the world

Anti-stigma programmes that are carrying out similar work to Time to Change across the globe came to London for a special meeting in September.

As part of the meeting Time to Change worked with Hollywood Actress Glenn Close and The Daily Telegraph to place a feature story that raised awareness of how damaging stigma and discrimination can be on a global level. The article also promoted the transatlantic export of the Time to Change film ‘Schizo the Movie’, which has been reworked by Glenn’s US campaign ‘Bring Change 2 Mind’. In the interview Glenn also shared her story as her sister and nephew both have mental health problems. She told the Telegraph “The best way for a person to change their behaviour towards mental illness to meet someone who is suffering from one.”

Save the date

What are you doing on 6 February?

As part of our January advertising campaign, we’re planning a “Time to Talk Day”, where we ask all Time to Change supporters and stakeholders to join together and show the world that it’s time to talk about mental health.

You will be able to use campaign resources to plan activity in your communities and workplaces. We’ll be sending out more details nearer the time, but for now, if you’d like to be a part of the day, you can register your interest on the Time to Change website: www.time-to-change.org.uk/talkday

What do you think?

Do you have any feedback about this issue? We’d love to hear any comments or ideas you have.

Email us at: magazine@time-to-change.org.uk

Next edition: The organisations’ issue