

# **Mental health services for children and young people – Transcript**

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I'm Jenny George and we've recently published a report on children's and young people's mental health services.

The government has committed to parity of esteem between physical health and mental health. Parity of esteem means that a person is just as likely to get access to care if they have a mental health condition such as depression, as they would for a physical health condition such as diabetes. For children, poor mental health affects their chance at a good education and their chances in later life.

Our report found that the government's strategy to improve children's mental health services started from a low base, with only about a quarter of children who have a mental health condition able to access services.

One of the key themes in the report is about the limitations in data that the NHS currently has. The NHS is now working to improve this data about; the number of children with a condition and the number in proportion of children who can access services, and about the funding for those services. But significant limitations in this data has meant it's quite hard for the government to be able to actually see the progress that it's making.

We have particular concerns about slow progress in the NHS managing to recruit more staff so they can see more children. Although the government recognises the importance of improving children's mental health services, change is going to be quite slow. The current program aims to increase access from a quarter of young people with mental health conditions able to access services, up to a third. So there is going to be significant unmet needs still.