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MEDIA RELEASE

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Children's mental health funding not going where it should be - YoungMinds

Analysis released today by YoungMinds has revealed that many local health bodies are diverting some of the new funding they have received for children's mental health services to other priorities.

In 2015, the government pledged an extra £1.4 billion over five years to "transform" Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Research undertaken by YoungMinds into the responses of 199 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) from Freedom of Information requests has revealed that:

- **Fewer than half of the CCGs who responded were able to provide full information about their CAMHS budgets.** If CAMHS services are to improve, there needs to be far greater accountability about where money is being spent. [1]
- **In the first year of extra funding (2015-16), only 36% of CCGs who responded increased their CAMHS spend by as much as their additional government funds.** Nearly two-thirds (64%) of CCGs used some or all of the extra money to backfill cuts or to spend on other priorities. [2]
- **In the second year of extra funding (2016-17), only half of CCGs (50%) who responded increased their CAMHS spend by as much as their additional government funds.** The other half (50%) are using some or all of the extra money for other priorities. [3]

Sarah Brennan, Chief Executive of YoungMinds, said:

"After years of cuts, the government's recent investment in children's mental health services was hugely welcome, and we should now be witnessing significant improvements across the country. But the reality is that the situation varies

enormously from one area to the next. While some CCGs have made big increases in their spending, it's deeply concerning that so many others are using some of the new money to backfill cuts or to spend on other priorities.

"It is also alarming that half of CCGs can't provide full information about their CAMHS budgets. If they aren't properly tracking how much money they are spending, it is impossible to say whether services are improving.

"Jeremy Hunt has described CAMHS as the single weakest area of NHS provision, so it is vital that all the new money is spent where it was intended – on creating better services with a greater focus on early intervention."

Recent research has revealed the pressure that CAMHS services are under: waiting-times for assessments vary from a few weeks to more than a year, while around a quarter of children who are assessed are turned down for treatment, often on the grounds that their problems are "not serious enough". In total, around three-quarters of children and young people with mental health problems do not get the help they need. [4]

Janice, whose daughter is being treated by CAMHS, said: "Trying to get help for my daughter has been so frustrating. You have to wait and wait and the longer you are waiting the worse the problems get. When my daughter was self-harming, CAMHS had nothing to offer. She has now been on a waiting list for over a year with no support.

"When you do get treatment, it's not consistent and there's no follow-up. I have learned to call and nag continuously. It is exhausting and impacts on the whole family."

The government has invested an extra £1.4 billion until 2020, in order to "transform" CAMHS in line with the recommendations of the 2015 Future in Mind report. Despite huge public concern about children's mental health, CAMHS currently accounts for just 0.7% of NHS spending, and around 6.4% of mental health spending.

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YoungMinds is the UK's leading children's mental health charity committed to improving the mental health and emotional well-being of children and empowering their parents and carers. For further information go to www.youngminds.org.uk

Notes to editors:

1. YoungMinds contacted 209 CCGs asking for comparative data. We received responses from 199 CCGs, but only 89 provided full comparative data on total spend and the additional investment they had received from the Government for 2014/15 and 2015/16. Only 78 CCGs provided full comparative data for 2016/17.
2. Of the 89 CCGs that provided comparative data for 2014/15 and 2015/16, only 32 increased their budgets by as much as, or more than, they received through

additional government investment. 57 CCGs did not increase their budgets to reflect the additional investment.

3. Of the 78 CCGs that provided comparative data for 2014/15 and 2016/17, 39 increased their budgets by as much, or more, than they received through the additional government investment. 39 CCGs did not increase their budgets to reflect the additional investment.

4. See CentreForum State of the Nation report. [<http://bit.ly/2eXebmu>].

5. YoungMinds analysis is based solely on the expenditure that CCGs have self-identified for CAMHS services, including the money that they have identified as having received to deliver the Local Transformation Plans, access and waiting times standards on eating disorders, and to implement CYP IAPT.

For further statistics about children and young people's mental health visit <http://bit.ly/1ko9zRG>

YoungMinds Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544

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