The comments below are a response to the inquiry launched by the Health and Sport Committee into child and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS). These brief comments, from services within Perth and Kinross Council dealing with young people, self harm and suicide prevention, are intended to supplement the fuller response from NHS Tayside.

**How children and adolescents potentially at risk of developing mental health problems are identified and how those problems should be prevented:**

Children and adolescents potentially at risk of developing mental health problems are identified through a wide range of services, such as General Practitioners, Paediatricians and within the education system. Training is given to assist in early recognition and early intervention.

**What obstacles there are in identifying children and adolescents with mental health problems and how they might be overcome:**

Obstacles include lack of knowledge regarding mental health issues for children and adolescents and perceived stigma discouraging parents from reporting difficulties.

Levels of resources and access to appropriate services can also be an issue with, for example, only two full time equivalent specialist working within Perth and Kinross Council.

**What action is being taken to facilitate early intervention and what else can be done:**

Perth and Kinross Council’s Education & Children Services are prioritising training, such as “Bounce Back” and the “I Can Programme” aimed at nurseries and pre-school.

Perth and Kinross Council has also continued to make “Choose Life” funding available for suicide prevention and to deal with self harm. A significant part of the £94K allocated in 2008/09 has been for counselling and support services specifically targeted at schools and young people and on additional work on the issue of self harm.

**How access to services and ongoing support can be improved:**

The work currently being carried out on self harm will be used to inform future services but availability of resources will continue to be an issue.

**What problems there are around transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services and how a smoother transition may be achieved:**
No additional comments.

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20th January 2009