

Handwritten text in large type from:

Asylum

the radical mental health magazine

Volume 32, Number 2, Summer 2025

ISSN 0955 2030

Front cover

Photograph of a young person taking part in a demonstration, they are holding a cardboard placard above their head featuring an illustration of a dustbin and some text which reads:

Splish splash CAMHS is TRASH!

Inside cover

Colourful illustration of a person raising a fist and holding up a placard featuring a drawing of a heart and text which reads:

I love being young, unemployed, sad, disenfranchised and fucked over by society

Page 11

Hand written text in black marker pen on an egg shape cut from purple card, featuring an 'explosion' shape, which reads

WHAT DOES "RECOVERY" MEAN IF YOU'VE BEEN MAD THE WHOLE TIME?

A letter to Dr Alex George *A handwritten letter using marker pen*

To Dr Alex George,

My name is I am currently in an inpatient unit for my mental health, I've been under CAMHS pretty much all my childhood. I wanted to write to you as I know you advocate for the mental health system. As someone who is an inpatient and had a lot of knowledge about the services I was hoping you could help me change some things. Firstly as you're aware we need a lot more funding, with this funding we need more training for community CAMHS about ways they can help, noticing warning signs, different therapies, more knowledge on the different diagnosis/symptoms and how to treat/help/manage them before hospital or attempts happen. We need the funding for more staff in both tier 4 and community CAMHS and also to build more tier 4 hospitals as there is very few in each area with very long waiting lists meaning people are in extreme crisis waiting on a general ward which is not suited for a mental health patient as its mainly for physical health patients, if you're waiting for a tier 4 bed in the community then you decline and are still unsafe which puts pressure on carers and ends up with attempts or a death. With funding we can help eating disorder patients at the minute you have to fit a BMI to receive help which makes you believe you're not valid or worthy until you're extremely unhealthy and underweight.

Personally I asked for help but my weight for my height was 'healthy' , I then rapidly declined as I had no help at all, this led me to fitting their unhealthy criteria at this point, I didn't want help as I was far into my eating disorder, this led me to being ng tubed with endless restraints that traumatised me, this could of all be prevented if I got help when I reached out, rather than when I was dying, underweight and so mentally unwell. I feel to get help with any form of mental illness you have to be dying or dead when it's too late. With the funding the staff deserve a raise for saving our lives literally! I've lost a friend to suicide he managed to do this when he was an inpatient in a 'place of safety' this could of been prevented if there was regular reviews on hospitals and more training on suicide signs, funding for more staff as he needed 1:1 observation but they was understaffed and he was neglected by the

hospitals (junction 17) and more staff that have time to sit with patients rather than being so busy because there is no staff. I am so thankful for help and staff but so much of my life could have been prevented by early intervention better community support, more mental health units, more eating disorder awareness, more risk/warning signs of suicide, more therapies, more mental health teams, with different intensities depending on how deep in crisis you are! Please help change this.

From ...

(Name redacted), Hope unit, Bury, Pennine House

Please contact me for any more details.

Page 13

A letter to boris *A hand written letter*

Dear Boris Johnson,

I'm writing to you as a passionate and dedicated NHS worker. I am exhausted and infuriated at the state of mental health care provision for young people. The time for empty rhetoric is over. Young people are not getting the care needed - in 2021 this is shameful.

CAMHS is severely under-resourced. This costs lives and livelihoods. CAMHS needs to be cared for in order to care for young people. CAMHS needs ring-fenced, adequate funding to create services that are compassionate, creative, human and relational. This needs to happen now. We need commitment and action urgently. We owe it to young people.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Samantha (name redacted)
Hope and Horizon Unit, Pennine Care

Pages 14 and 15

Balmy Army March Photograph *Image shows a group of young people shouting and holding a large cloth banner, and cardboard placards, which read:*

No Excuse

Your email finds me SHIIIIIT!

ARE WE DONE WAITING YET?

Not gay as in happy, QUEER as in FUCK THE SYSTEM

Page 16

Portrait of boris *A pencil illustration of a headless chicken*

Portrait of boris, unknown, 2024.

Page 18

What solidarity means to two 16 year olds

Text hand written in black marker pen on two separate egg shapes cut from purple card

Dear T

I'm so immensely proud of the journey that we've been on together. Thank you so much for just bring you and always giving me your amazing company. You make wee on the daily no matter what we are waffling about. It's so mad how I've made such a good friend for lives at such a weird time in our lives but I wouldn't change it for the world. I'll also miss our fatty patty sessions on the daily it's actually kept me going. You are the most genuine lovely girl I've ever met and I will always love you to the moon and back! Forever and always lots of love -

E xxx

Dear T

I think you are the most perfect human being ever. You are the most selfless, funniest, kindest person ever. You are beautiful both inside and

put, no word in the world can describe how much you mean to me and how much I love you. It feels like I have known you all my life and even though I hate being here so much you make it bearable. It is very unfortunate that we met under this circumstance but I would never change it if it means that I would never have met you. When I am around you I feel nothing could ever harm me. If I could give you the world I would because you deserve it. You are a very strong person; even after everything you have been through you continue to look at the positives of the world. Everyday you continue to mend my broken heart. Thank you for never giving up on me and showing life is sometimes worth living. I love you to the moon and back. Thank you for everything T

Love T

Letters between two young people, written on the day of discharge from a CAMHS ward in North West England, April, 2023

Page 20

A hand written letter in black marker pen.

Dear Boris nonsense,

I will start by saying you are an-a immense twat and I think you need a trim pal, I think you should invest more money into mental health services i.e. CAMHS. Since you made everybody crazy, CAMHS has become a long term journey for most people and this isn't an easy quick fix and staff should be paid more.

Bring back Freddy Mercury!!!!

Page 21

This is what a crazy person looks like

An illustration of a person wearing a facemask and holding a placard with the above text written on it.

Page 23

Hand drawn illustration of two snails with the word 'snail snail snail' repeated, as a trail, winding across the page.

Reform

A hand drawn illustration titled 'Reform' which features a bulldozer hitting a building titled 'Mental Health service', an image of people rebuilding it, plus 'Research', plus 'Policy'.

Page 25

THE FUTURE IS UNSTABLE

An illustration of a person sitting in a wheelchair wearing a 'madidas' t-shirt with their arms in the air, the above text is written across the image.

Page 28

A handwritten list

How do we make change? Charlotte + Ela

Hospital should be used only as a place of safety not recovery > no long admissions

Focus on prevention

You should not have to get worse before you get better

Care should be done with you not to you

Medication should be consensual and used in combination with therapy, not instead of

All selfharm should be treated as serious

Crisis admissions should be short, focused on recovery at home

Home treatment team should have one regular person rather than 50 strangers

Eating disorders should be treated as serious whatever the weight the person is at

GPs should have proper mental health training

All schools should have a trained mental health nurse. A properly trained one

You should not need a diagnosis to access support

Page 29

Handwritten text in black pen on an egg shape cut from purple card.

WHAT SHOULD THE PLURAL NOUN FOR A GROUP OF PSYCHIATRISTS BE? E.G. MUDER OF CROWS

Page 30

Beyond recovery - *A hand written poem, laid out across four horizontal perpendicular panels illustrated with seaweed like shapes.*

What does 'recovery' mean if I've been mad the whole time?

When the word 'recover' means to retrieve, or get back or regain.

I have every version of myself with me.

And not one of them has known sanity.

Madness has followed me because it is me.

And I am it.

I am.

And I think for me.

Its not about healing my mind so if functions how people say its supposed to.

Its about healing wounds inflicted by a world that, when it comes down to it...

Never wanted a mind like mine to survive.

But it has.

And so have I.

And thank goodness I didn't succumb to false recovery.

Where my mind would have instead been rewritten under the guise of wellness.

When it could have been expanded by healing in community.

By Ev

Page 31

Are you mentally unstable? *A colour photograph of a young person smiling, they are wearing pink ear defenders and a trans flag tied around their neck, they are holding a cardboard sign with the words 'ARE YOU MENTALLY UNSTABLE?' written on it.*

NO THOUGHTS, HEAD EMPTY *A drawing of a cat with big black eyes with an arrow pointing to it with the words 'full of caffeine' written next to it.*

Back cover

Waiting game *A digital collage of many different historical characters, some fantastical, in rows on a purple background, there are images of hand holding flowers, a gravestone, and a bird holding an olive branch in its beak. The words 'the waiting game' are laid out across the image.*