

## Media Release

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# **NEW MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE GET ON TOP OF THEIR EPILEPSY**

Epilepsy is not a mental health condition, yet children and young people with epilepsy are four times more likely to develop mental health problems than their peers.

During this Mental Health Awareness week, national charity Young Epilepsy is announcing an ambitious youth-led campaign to help children and young people living with the condition get the integrated support they deserve.

**#OnTopOfEpilepsy** campaign will focus on highlighting the link between epilepsy and mental health and will take the lead from young people affected by the condition to advocate for better support.

Mental health is often a forgotten element of epilepsy care and the charity's recent survey of young people with epilepsy (aged 11 to 25) revealed that less than half of all respondents had an opportunity to discuss the impact of the condition on their mental health with their healthcare providers.

18-year-old Daisy is a catering student who was first diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of seven. She explained: "There's a huge amount of stress that comes with having epilepsy, added to the stresses of normal life. My mental health also affects my epilepsy. Stress triggers more seizures, I don't eat when I feel down and that affects my epilepsy which then affects my mood. It's a vicious cycle. There should be a support system in place but there isn't."

This campaign will be looking at all elements of mental health care and wellbeing support. Most importantly, it will take a lead from young people, living with epilepsy and managing their mental health, to understand exactly what is missing in the health services they currently rely on. The charity will also work with young people to develop a co-created Mental Health and Wellbeing guide, using the best information available, to help young people with epilepsy find the right mental health support for their individual needs.

**Mark Devlin, Chief Executive of Young Epilepsy, explained:** "On top of the physical challenges of living with their epilepsy, children and young people face extra struggles such as dealing with the side-effects of medication, anxiety about having a seizure, concerns about school or missing out on normal growing-up activities.

They often tell us that the mental health difficulties can have more of an impact on their everyday lives than the condition itself at times and this is not always understood by the professionals they encounter. We feel it is time to put mental health and wellbeing at the centre of the support provided for children and young people with epilepsy."

**-ENDS-**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

### **About Young Epilepsy:**

Young Epilepsy is the children and young people's epilepsy charity.

We exist to create a society where children and young people with epilepsy are enabled to thrive and fulfil their potential. A society in which their voices are respected, and their ambitions realised.

Young Epilepsy host a helpline Monday to Friday 9am till 3pm, offering advice and guidance to both young people and their families. Telephone 01342 831342, text 07860023789 or email [helpline@youngepilepsy.org.uk](mailto:helpline@youngepilepsy.org.uk)

[www.youngepilepsy.org.uk](http://www.youngepilepsy.org.uk)

### **About epilepsy:**

112,000 children and young people in the UK are living with epilepsy. Epilepsy is one of the most common long-term conditions that affects children.

Epilepsy is a neurological condition that disrupts the normal electrical activity our brains use to communicate with the rest of the body. This disruption causes seizures.

There are over 40 different types of seizure and every young person's epilepsy is unique to them. In order to be diagnosed with epilepsy, a young person must have had at least two seizures.

In most cases, epilepsy is well managed, and seizures are controlled, but it is a very serious condition and can be life-threatening.

### **Contact:**

**For media enquiries at Young Epilepsy, please contact:**

Danielle Ross, Communications Officer

Email: [dross@youngepilepsy.org.uk](mailto:dross@youngepilepsy.org.uk)

The children and young people's epilepsy charity



Tel: 07825 188861