

Your Health

HIGHLIGHTING THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

Time to end the destructive stigma surrounding mental health issues

WRITTEN BY

ADAM
ASHWIN LEE



I am 16 years old and I have been through a lot of things due to my mental health issues. I have bipolar disorder, Asperger's syndrome, anxiety, and could possibly have post-traumatic stress disorder.

When I was nine years old I was already going to CAMHS - child and adolescent mental health services. I was around 10 years old when I was admitted into an open unit in Sheffield.

I was discharged two weeks later - if I remember correctly, it was because I was too much to manage and probably too young to be sent into a secure setting.

Do you think they could have done more?

Maybe if they tried to manage it for a bit longer, maybe I wouldn't have had another seven admissions into the same open unit and twice into a secure unit.

I feel even if I was there for a year or maybe a little more in that open unit, could it have prevented further pain because of such damaging admissions?

The reason why I may have PTSD is because of the constant physical restraint procedures used. I was 13 when I was admitted into a secure unit setting. I was in Manchester. It was harder for my family to visit me as well because of the distance.

I can't say it was all bad in those kind of settings. I did meet some people there who I still keep in contact with and we are very good friends.

I looked up the CQC reports on the secure unit, written not so recently. They did match my thoughts and my concerns. It was dirty in the extra care area and seclusion unit. There was absolutely no privacy while showering or using the toilet in the ECA/SU and that felt very horrible to be in.

I was reading my old reports and different services' notes, and one that caught



Young children can be seen by CAMHS - child and adolescent mental health services.



We deserve proper care that the system is failing to provide many young people

my eye was a police report.

The report was not about any criminal activity - it was just a response report they have to fill out when called out to an incident.

I am not quoting exactly what it said, but some of it I can't remember happening.

The police officer was concerned about my safety. Some people think people who have mental health problems are either naughty, or like wild animals who should be locked up like in a zoo. Just writing that makes me think.

I can say sometimes, some people with mental health problems can seem like wild animals and the places they can be sent are locked door/secure units. That's what made me think, a zoo is for

animals that are kept securely and safe, and that's what secure units should be like, minus the animals because we are humans.

We deserve proper care that the system is failing to provide to many young people.

I was on a waiting list for PTSD therapy for quite a few years.

Luckily, someone in the community services put me higher up in the list for the therapy and I will be starting it very soon.

I am in a specialist school now and from time to time some students are physically restrained.

When I pass by and witness this taking place, my jaw kind of drops and I just stare. Before I know it, I am see-

ing my past experiences and feeling very trapped.

Then it disappears and I go back to seeing everything clearly, but not calmly and in a big rage that usually lasts for five to 10 minutes.

If I was on that waiting list from the start, maybe I would have not been this badly affected by it.

I feel the mental health system has failed me but I'm not going to lie, there was some good.

If there was anything I could say to someone reading who is suicidal or can feel themselves going downhill mentally, noticing they are taking dangerous risks towards themselves or others, at that moment in time, do go and get help.

At the time it is usually

the best thing. If things get on top of you after being in a mental health unit, push for whatever aftercare you need.

My aim is to be a voice for the mental health community, either if you're in hospital or not. I want to be able to support people through my writing.

It's important we end the stigma, bullying and hurtful comments.

Adam's mum, Anuradha, who is proud of his journey, supported him writing this article to highlight mental health issues.

GET INVOLVED

+ SHEFFIELD TELEGRAPH IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO ITS HEALTH PAGE
+ EMAIL TELEGRAPH@JPRESS.CO.UK