Press release

# Mental health support in schools could have prevented a stabbing

By Richard Curtis

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For immediate release

Southampton, Hampshire – The death of 16 year old Christina Edkins could have been avoided by more mental health support in schools. The report commissioned by Birmingham Cross City Clinical Commissioning Group states that although the attack was random and unprovoked:

"it is the conclusion of the panel that as Christina's death was directly related to P's mental illness, it could have been prevented if his mental health needs had been identified and met."

The report, released today, highlights that Phillip Simelane had difficulties at school, was bullied and involved in gang violence. His mother reportedly asked their GP for help for his mental health and the report highlights the intervention that could have been initiated by school.

Mental health support services available for schools have suffered over the last few years due to the cuts in local authority budgets. Schools can struggle to find the professional support required to help promote young people’s mental health. They are increasingly turning to companies, like The Root Of It, set up by child behaviour expert Richard Curtis in 2013 to help schools identify the root causes of a child’s difficulties and address them. Richard says “too many servcies have been cut, meaning for schools, even if specialists are available from their local authorities they have to meet thresholds and wait months for support. If we want to avoid murders like this happening again, then we need to ensure that schools are able to provide early mental health interventions.”

Behaviour consultant Elizabeth Freeman says “early mental health interventions in schools help to address emotional distress, increase a young person’s emotional resilience, which in turn increases their success in school and can strengthen their family.”

The Root Of It provide special needs professionals to schools and run a national phone line to help staff in schools meet children’s social, emotional and mental health needs, plus give advice on inclusion and special needs. Details can be found on www.rootofit.com.

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**About The Root Of It**

The Root Of It was founded in April 2013 to help children with complex needs and disabilities succeed. Richard Curtis has brought together a team of professionals to provide a wrap-round service for schools that includes Clinical Psychology, behaviour advice, Social Work, family support work, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Play Therapy, Counselling and support for low attenders. Richard says “Poor behaviour is a symptom of an underlying difficulty, just like good behaviour is a symptom that a child's needs are being met. The Root Of It work as a team to address the underlying difficulties.” The Root Of It provide support to schools, families, early years settings and organisations. For more information, please visit <http://www.rootofit.com>.

**Contact for articles, comment and interviews**

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