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Media Release

Sam Barakat works as a Mental Health First Aider and knows from experience seeking help isn't always easy.

Growing up with depression, she found accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) difficult, due to her school schedule and fear of her parents finding out.

The 21-year-old from Finchley, London, has teamed up with Fixers to create a film calling for CAMHS services to be made more accessible to young people, without the need for parental consent.

'I don't have a good relationship with my family, so my mental health is not something I'm comfortable talking about with them.' She explains. 'For CAMHS you need a referral from your GP, and I was worried about them finding out, and school policy meant that I couldn't leave lessons without their consent.'

'I ended up getting counselling from an online charity as oppose to going through CAMHS when I was 16, which helped by giving me someone to talk to. But face to face conversation would have been preferable.'

'I think for some people, getting parents involved would be a good thing, but it should be looked at on a case by case basis, as opposed to just a blanket rule, and at present, whatever issues you're experiencing, parents will find out one way or another.'

Sam is now a qualified [Mental Health First Aid](#) instructor, teaching adults who work with young people how to help those suffering with mental health issues.

She hopes to use her Fixers film to launch a campaign targeting mental health service providers, and create a petition to change CAMHS confidentiality policy.

Part of her campaign will involve working with schools to raise awareness of what CAMHS services are, for young people who have never been told about them.

'I would say that schools need to do more in providing this information' says Sam. 'I want to try and make schools talk about CAMHS and provide leaflets and handouts to students, so that they know where to go when they are struggling with their mental health.'

Sam has created a [website](#) for her campaign, where you can sign her petition.

Fixers works with young people aged 16-25 across the UK by providing them with professional resources to help them campaign on issues they feel strongly about.

The charity has helped more than 23,600 youngsters across the UK to have a voice in their community on issues such as cyber-bullying, self-harm, suicide or transphobia.

For more information or to make a donation to fund more Fixer projects, visit www.fixers.org.uk

Picture attached: Sam Barakat

For more images, interviews or information, please contact Matthew Mills on matthew@fixers.org.uk or phone 01962 810970.

Notes to editors

About Fixers:

- Since 2008 more than 23,600 young people have become Fixers and created over 2,400 projects. With a £7.2 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers extended from England into Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland as well in 2013.
- There are lots more stories about young people doing great things on the Fixers website, Twitter and Facebook pages:
www.fixers.org.uk
www.twitter.com/FixersUK
www.facebook.com/FixersUK