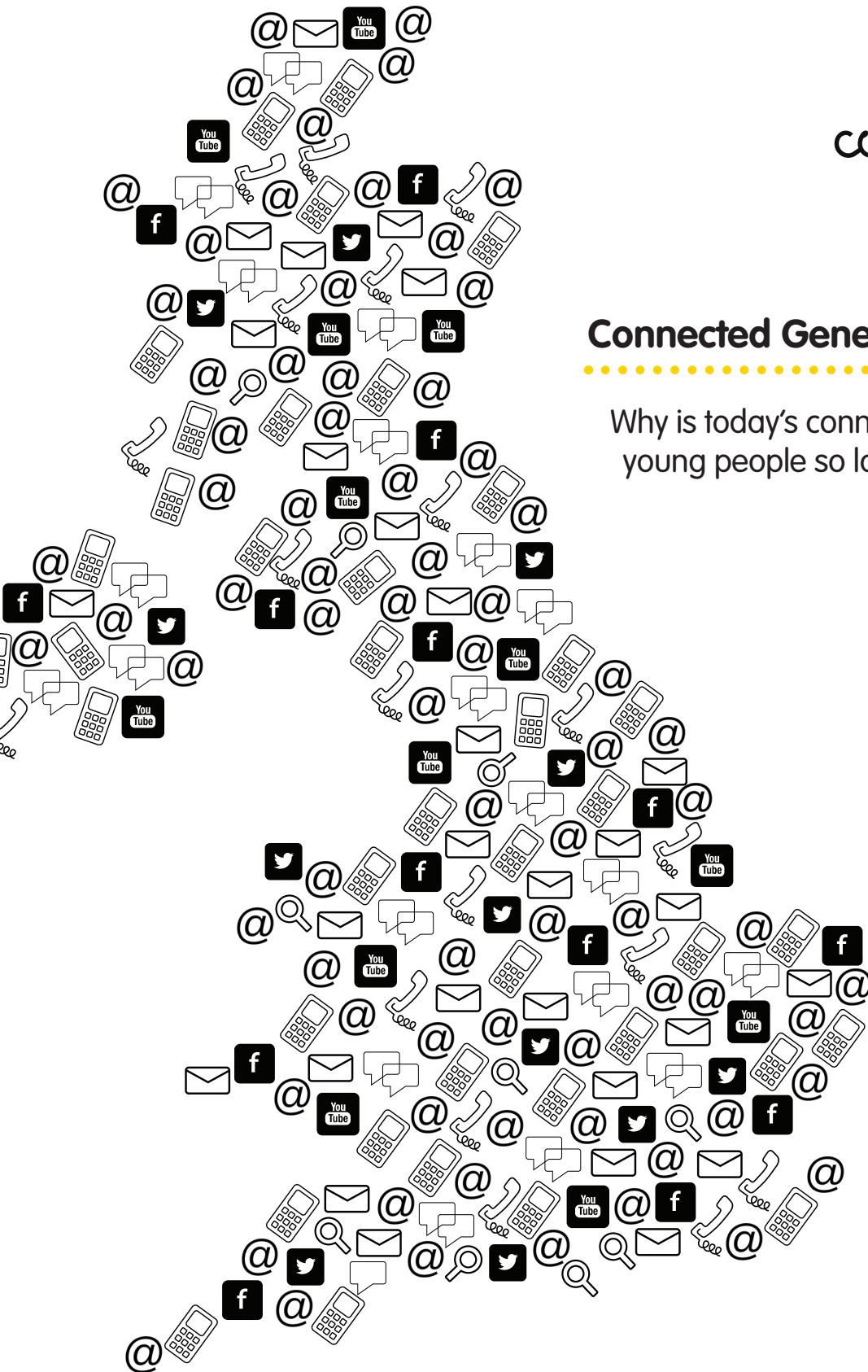


free confidential help for
young people under 25



Connected Generation Report 2015

Why is today's connected generation of
young people so lonely and isolated?



About Get Connected

Get Connected plays a critical role for children and young people in crisis.

Get Connected is the UK's only free, multi-issue, confidential helpline service specifically for children and young people under 25, who need help with any issue but don't know where to turn.

At absolutely no cost to the young person (free for them to call and text from any device or network), Get Connected offers a single gateway to help.

Young people can speak directly to our trained Helpline Volunteers by **phone, email, webchat and SMS**. They can also access support online with WebHelp 24/7 and our free help App with geo-location technology.

About the Connected Generation Report 2015

Young people under 25 are the most connected generation in UK history. With access to multiple communication channels, they are exposed to more information than ever before - but despite this the survey shows they feel lonely, unsupported by their schools and traditional networks and worried about the information they find online. The report evidences that children and young people need much more support to tackle their issues and need confidential pathways to help so they can share their worries and concerns.

An alarming 54% of 13-24 year olds feel there is not adequate support for young people in the UK

45% of young people agree they don't know where to go for help when tackling personal problems

57% of girls and young women are reluctant to look for help because they're worried about being judged about the issues they face. But there is an overwhelming desire to have someone to discuss their issues with - over 93% want to talk.

The 2015 Connected Generation Report is a major survey, canvassing the opinions of **5,000 young people aged 13-24 across the UK**. These findings provide an unsettling insight into the distressing and multiple issues facing young people in the UK today and the dire lack of support available.

The report explores the ways young people would like to communicate about their issues, the barriers to seeking help and the type of support they would prefer.

The findings are unanimous and condemning; the UK's young people are in desperate need. While demand for care is rising, in many parts of the country funding is being frozen or even completely cut.

"I felt listened to, was able to talk in my own time, and just felt like someone out there cared. Thank you."



Female Get Connected service user, 19,
called about self-harming

Our Best Friend, actor Daniel Radcliffe explains why he is proud to support Get Connected as we release our Connected Generation Report 2015

It's a great privilege to be able to support Get Connected as their Best Friend. Get Connected provides the UK's only free, confidential helpline service specifically for children and young people under 25, who need help but don't know where to turn. Over two fifths of children and young people have experienced depression and anxiety - that's over 4 million 10-25 year olds.



Get Connected's best friend, actor Daniel Radcliffe

Growing up, I was very fortunate to have my parents and good people around me for support. This was invaluable when facing the challenges of public scrutiny from an early age, but the sad fact is that many young people don't have anyone they can turn to for help if they need it, or they don't feel comfortable reaching out for help. There is still a social stigma to talking about some issues, especially amongst young men, and many young people are really worried that they'll be bullied or laughed at if their friends find out. So they keep it inside. It's vital that we encourage children and young people to reach out for support and know it's ok to talk about issues they may feel embarrassed or scared about sharing.

Alarmingly, of the 5,000 children and young people surveyed for the Get Connected report, two thirds feel isolated and lonely due to problems they have faced; shockingly one in five have experienced suicidal thoughts; 45% have been bullied. That's a huge number of children and young people who are finding life very tough, and are at risk if they cannot find or access appropriate support.

Many desperate young people are turning to the internet for help with personal problems, the need for young people to self-source help has been exacerbated by the closures and cuts to youth services. From the report we now know that the internet can do the opposite of help - this is especially true for young women, with over 50% telling us that they are more worried about their issues after looking online. Get Connected has access to over 8,000 trusted help services, and their website and helpline can ensure that young people access the best support for them, whatever the situation.



This research clearly shows us that there has never been a more pressing need for the service Get Connected provides.

Daniel continues...

There are many barriers for young people seeking help, talking about the issues they are facing is not easy and there's a very real fear of being judged. I think it's incredibly important for young men and women to know that they can reach out for support without fear of any stigma - Get Connected is a safe space to explore whatever you're going through, with the chance to find further, specialist help as well.

Over half of children and young people who took part in this study said that they would feel more comfortable asking for help from a free, confidential and non-judgemental helpline - and this is what Get Connected offer to anyone under 25 across the UK: a safe place to turn.

I've been a supporter of Get Connected for over four years and I've seen first-hand how many thousands of young people they've been able to help, but there are many more out there struggling, alone and in need of support. The number of young people who contacted Get Connected in 2014 saw an unprecedented increase of 53% from the previous year.

I've pledged my support, and I really hope you can help too, vital funds are needed to cope with this surge in demand from children and young people who feel they have nowhere else to turn. You can become a Friend of Get Connected - visit www.getconnected.org.uk/donate to give as much as you feel able. You can also donate with a text - send GCUK25 £5 or GCUK25 £10 to 70070.

To find out how to become a Get Connected volunteer and give 3 hours a week to support children and young people, no matter where you live in the UK, visit www.getconnected.org.uk/volunteer.

Thank you.

Daniel Radcliffe

**"I always felt ashamed and embarrassed to speak about what happened to me. Get Connected changed that."
Get Connected service user**



Male Get Connected service user, 17,
emailed about abuse



The nation's young people are in crisis; highlights from the Connected Generation Report

.....

67%

of young people **feel lonely and isolated** due to problems they have now or have faced previously

54%

feel there is **not adequate support** for young people in the UK

5%

only 5% of young people **feel adequately supported** by their school, college or teacher

48%

of young people found they were **more worried after looking online** for advice/practical information

57%

of young people would feel more comfortable asking for help from a free, confidential and non-judgemental helpline like Get Connected





The issues facing young people today are wide-reaching and prevalent; of the 30 issues we asked young people about (including gang violence, sexual violence, banned drugs and racism) 93% of them had been experienced

.....

93%

young people are **keen to discuss their issues**, only 7% stated they would be unlikely to discuss their problems with anyone

57%

of girls and 43% of boys feel reluctant to look for help because they're **worried about being judged about the issues they face**

45%

of young people agreed that they **didn't know where to go for help** tackling personal problems

1 in 5

young people have had **suicidal thoughts**; 23% of girls and 13% of boys



The need is evident but seeking help isn't easy

For many young people, knowing who to approach for help can be incredibly daunting, particularly during times of difficulty and distress.

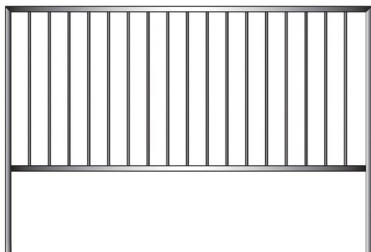
As the Connected Generation Report has clearly evidenced - young people are in desperate need of support; 67% of young people feel lonely and isolated due to problems they have faced now or in the past.

Only 5% feel adequately supported by their school, college or teacher

Sadly, despite being the most connected generation in history:

- almost half of those asked (45%) admitted they didn't know where to go for help tackling personal problems
- more children and young people (54%) feel there is not adequate support for young people in the UK
- more than 1 in 3 don't know what help is available to them.

But young people are keen to discuss their issues; only 7% said they would not wish to discuss their problems.



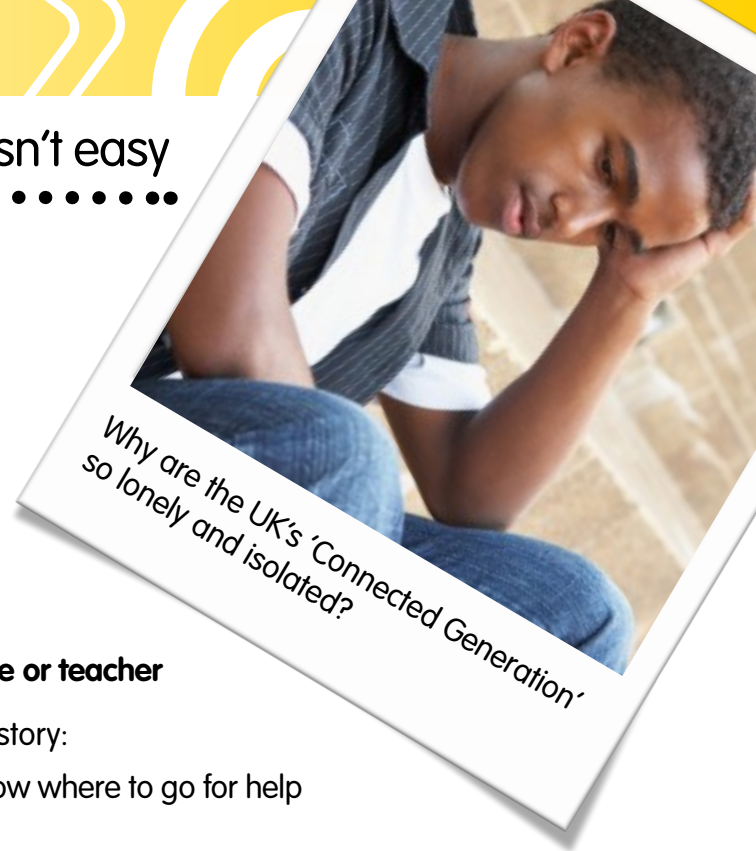
The majority of young people want to discuss their issues but there are many barriers; others feel that they do not have anyone that they can turn to for support, or may have had a negative experience of seeking help in the past. Many are simply afraid of being judged; **57% of girls and 43% of boys feel reluctant to look for help because they are worried about being judged about the issues they face.**

"Young people have access to more information than ever before, but as the Connected Generation Report has revealed, that doesn't necessarily provide them with the quality of information or type of support they need to tackle and overcome their issues. We also know that social media networks are at the core of young people's connected worlds, but this has come at a cost. I believe one on one human contact is crucial to support our children and young people, they need emotional support, someone to listen to them and help them navigate their issues and find the specialist help they need. Get Connected provides a trusted and safe harbour for young people who want to talk about their issues in a confidential and non-judgemental space".

Jessica Taplin, CEO, Get Connected

Young people need more access to help services and better awareness of the services that are available.

More than half of children and young people would feel more comfortable asking for help from a free, confidential and non-judgemental helpline like Get Connected, with this option becoming even more popular in older groups; 60% of 21-24 year olds saying they would feel more comfortable.



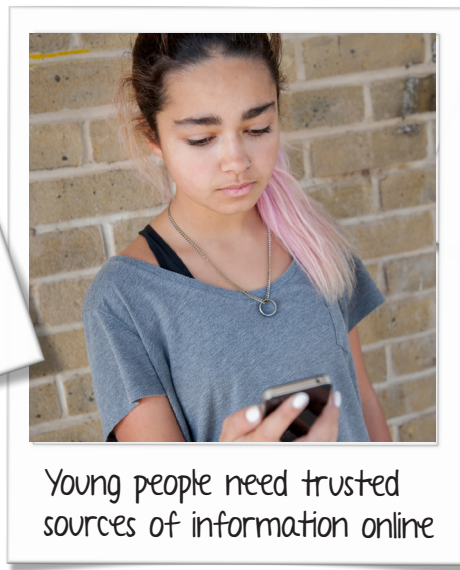


@risk?

The internet, help or hindrance?



The internet can endorse and heighten harmful behaviour in young people



Young people need trusted sources of information online



Get Connected provides trusted online resources

Young people today have never known a world without the internet and mass communication. They are now exposed to more information than ever before but, as the Connected Generation Report has revealed, that doesn't necessarily provide them with them with the quality of information and support they need to get through their issues.

Confirming the popularity of the internet amongst young people in crisis, the report shows that two thirds of over 18's would go online for advice and practical solutions. We've seen this impact first hand with a huge increase in visitors to our site and a rise in webchats. Sadly, this survey tells us that the internet can be more damaging than helpful; over half of girls find they are more worried about their issues after looking online for help and over a third have found material that is negative or even glamorises harmful behaviour, such as self-harm or eating disorders. Most worrying is that only 17% of young people would check information they found online with another source.

Young people need trusted sources, like Get Connected, to help them make an informed choice, whatever the problem may be.

"Connected technology is a fundamental part of children and young people's lives across the UK, the internet is an amazing source of information and as this survey shows it provides the preferred support network to many young people. But it's crucial that young people are accessing information safely and from reliable sources, that they know they have somewhere to go to check that the information they've seen is reliable, and can have a confidential conversation about what's bothering them. We've supported Get Connected for over 15 years as they provide a multi-channel support service that young people can access safely, where they talk through any issue that's on their mind and find out about and be connected safely to the specialist support that's available". **Andrew Harrison, Deputy CEO, Dixons Carphone Group**

Get Connected has access to over 8,000 trusted help services and will support over 350,000 children and young people in the next year. Over 34,000 of these will be seeking 1-2-1 support through our phone and webchat services.





Focus on mental health

The Connected Generation Report confirms the mental health crisis amongst the UK's young people.

Depression and anxiety affects two fifths of young people and one in five have had suicidal thoughts.

There are over 12 million 10-24 year olds in the UK. They face a relentlessly challenging environment. Unemployment figures are all over the media; according to the Youth Unemployment Figures from the House of Commons Library, Economic Policy and Statistics 2014, over 1 million young people are unemployed and surely they are suffering the side effects.

As a young person, knowing the difficulty in gaining employment will add huge pressure when it comes to exam and study stress. **70% of 18-20 year olds surveyed by the Connected Generation Report are feeling the pressure.**

An indication of how bad things are can be seen with two titles the UK has just acquired:

'The self-harm capital of Europe'

According to Young Minds, roughly 1 child in 15 is self harming. Children are cutting and burning themselves as their way of coping with a raft of issues, from bullying to depression and stress.

The most common type of issue about which young people contacted Get Connected in 2013-14: mental health, suicide and self-harm.

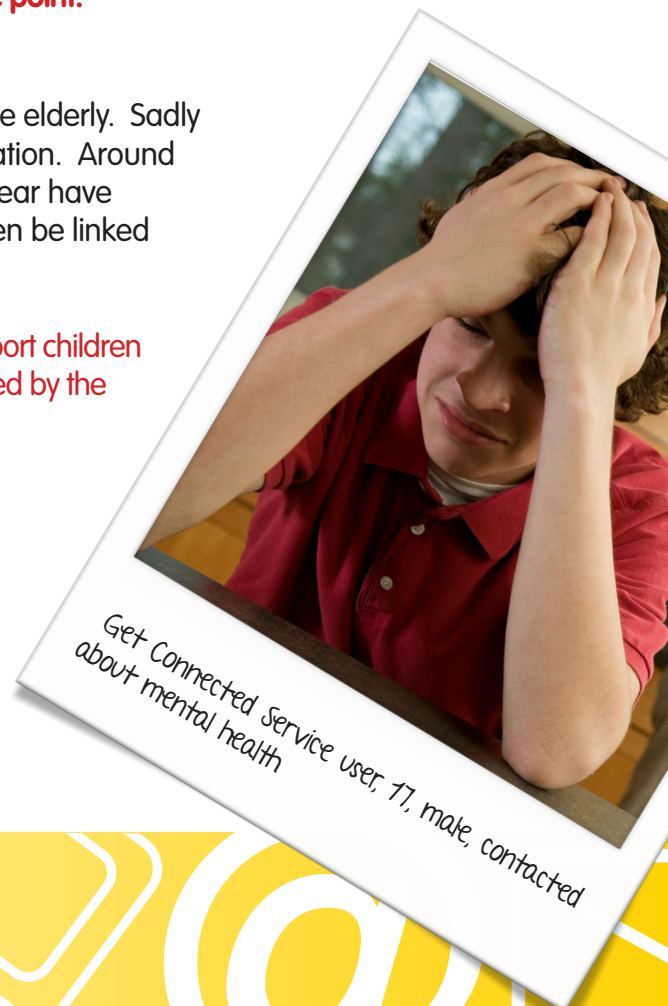
45% of young people we surveyed have faced bullying at some point.

The loneliness capital of Europe:

Loneliness is widely reported as being an issue which affects the elderly. Sadly under 25s are all too familiar with the problems caused by isolation. Around a quarter of the young people Get Connected speaks to each year have issues relating to emotional and mental distress, which can often be linked back to loneliness, isolation and a lack of support.

In 2015/16, Get Connected will be developing new services to support children and young people to maintain their psychological wellbeing, funded by the Department for Education.

"I felt like I was talking to a friend, and a real human being who wouldn't judge me and only wanted to help me out. Never did I feel like they didn't care or I was just another kid. I felt important to them and I knew that I could tell them anything and they would only use that to find the best help for me. Thank you."



Get Connected Service user, 17, male, contacted about mental health

What our volunteers say

Laura's story:



I've learned so much as a Helpline Volunteer with Get Connected - the training is really helpful and gives you confidence in dealing with difficult situations. I also met one of my very best friends on the helpline.

My experience with Get Connected was also instrumental to me getting a new job as a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner!

The support you receive on the helpline is brilliant - you're part of a team even though you are supporting young people one-to-one. It can be difficult to motivate yourself to begin volunteering, especially if you work full-time, but the Get Connected team are behind you every step of the way.



Sophie's story:

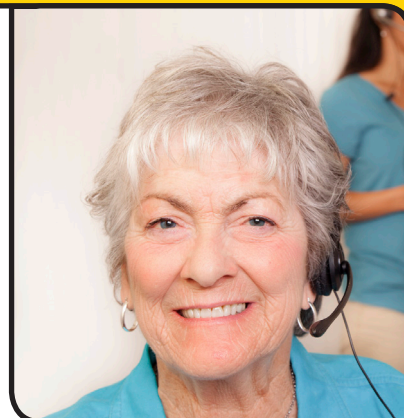


There are some difficult contacts that will always stay with me, but the feeling that I've made even the slightest difference to the young person on the other end of the line is so incredibly valuable.

The training you receive at Get Connected is so comprehensive, and the shift reviews you receive on induction are really useful, a great confidence boost when you're taking contacts.

There's a real personal touch at Get Connected, and you're always offered the chance to talk through a challenging contact with a Shift Leader or Supervisor. It helps for us to talk too!

I'd really recommend volunteering at Get Connected - it's changed my whole outlook on life.



Service User Case Studies

Francesca's story:



I contacted Get Connected when my sister was going through a massive bout of depression. I didn't feel like I could talk to anyone within the family, there was too much going on and I felt guilty, but it does affect you.

I found Get Connected on the internet when I was looking for anonymous help. I saw quotes from other people they had helped and that made me feel comfortable enough to get in touch.

Get Connected has helped me feel better and more able to talk about what's going on. They put me in touch with the Samaritans, but also talked through the help my doctor may be able to give me and other options open to me as well. I'd recommend Get Connected to other young people - I find it a lot easier to talk about my feelings now.



Toni's story:



I contacted Get Connected when I was being bullied – I was getting a lot of hate and I was finding it hard to handle. I was self-harming too, to try and cope. I'd been able to talk to a couple of my closest friends, but I felt that Get Connected could help me find more options for support.

I liked the fact that the service was free, and I felt like Get Connected listened to me, which was really nice. I also felt like I got the right kind of help. I still have the web chat transcript and I look at it from time to time – it really helped me and I'm still in touch with some of the organisations I was put in touch with. The volunteer I spoke to was really helpful and understanding.

I still get a lot of hate, but I feel more able to talk to people now. It was the best thing, contacting Get Connected. I can now do normal things - I was able to perform in a band! I was able to overcome my anxieties and cope with things better.

One of my friends also used the Get Connected website and it helped them too. I'm glad I contacted Get Connected and I'd like to say thank you. I'd definitely recommend this service.





Get Connected provides a trusted and safe harbour for children and young people who want to talk about their issues in a confidential and non-judgemental space. We offer a breadth of communication channels, including phone, email, webchat, SMS and WebHelp 24/7 so that young people can get in touch in a way that suits them – **ensuring that no cry for help goes unanswered.**

To find out more about our work, contact:

Katie Greenhead, PA to CEO

Phone 020 7009 2500

Email admin@getconnected.org.uk

www.getconnected.org.uk

Our free helpline for under 25s is available via:

Phone 0808 808 4994

Email help@getconnected.org.uk

Text 80849

Webchat via www.getconnected.org.uk

WebHelp 24/7 via www.getconnected.org.uk



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Research Methodology

The Connected Generation Report 2014 was commissioned by Get Connected and conducted by Research Now, polling a nationally representative sample of 5,000 UK respondents aged between 13-24, in October 2014.

