



PEN PICTURE:

Talktime Scotland: The first free counselling service for physically disabled young people

TalkTime Scotland is the first free counselling service for young people with a physical impairment or long-term health condition aged 12-25 living in Scotland. It was set up in 2015 by Josh Hepple who has cerebral palsy and his mother Seonaid Cooke to celebrate Josh's graduation. Josh is a wheelchair user and needs 24-hour support and his family never thought that he would be able to leave home to work or study so it was an amazing day for them when he received his 2:1 in Law from Stirling University.

Together Josh and Seonaid wanted to mark this achievement by setting up a service that could encourage other young disabled people to fulfil their potential and decided that a tailor-made counselling service would be of great benefit in relieving anxiety and building confidence and resilience. For the last 3 years TalkTime has worked with over 30 young people with a wide range of impairments from its base in Edinburgh offering face-to-face professional counselling.

Here is some feedback from recent clients:

"I'm so happy to have found TalkTime."

"My counsellor helped me through a really dark time and I feel with her support I have reached a level of clarity for myself again."

"Thank you so much for just existing. It gives me hope."

In September 2017 the MSP Miles Briggs tabled a motion in the Scottish Parliament promoting the work of TalkTime which was supported by over 30 other MSPs. Launching in January 2018, Seonaid and Josh are now delighted to be able to offer the same professional service across the whole of Scotland either by telephone or video link. The service is totally free and run by qualified experienced counsellors. Clients can access the service by ringing or texting **07774 210 104** or emailing **talktimescotland@gmail.com** Anyone living within easy reach of Edinburgh can also access the face-to-face service which continues from the charity base in the Leith area of the city.

More about TalkTime online: www.talktimescotland.co.uk