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Critically analyse how a local, national or international campaigning organisation has engaged with a topic of your choice over the last year. Your answer should refer to theory and legislation as part of the analysis.

This assignment will critically look at a national charitable organisation called YoungMinds (Street, 2004). YoungMinds are trying to develop an equitable society through political activism. This organisation is fighting for children and young people who suffer with mental health conditions. There will be a brief outline of the organisation and what their aims are and a discussion on their three latest campaigns, however for this assignment the focus will be on their 'Act Early' campaign (YoungMinds, 2020a). This assignment will focus on how this organisation has engaged with mental health issues through their campaign specifically over the past year. Currently in society this is portrayed as a hot topic that has covered much debate. This assignment will engage with societal issues which have impacted on poverty and social class. There will also be links to how this campaign and its organisation is portrayed through media and how media can at times be biased.

Young minds are a UK based charity who's aim is to get the very best support for all children and young people whose mental health is suffering and too help find the support that's right for them. According to Mansen & Thomas (2006), It can be challenging for schools and families to help care for young people with mental health problems, it is difficult to truly understand their diagnosis without the correct support. However, involving the young person in all aspects of their diagnosis, considering their wishes would be beneficial in gaining this understanding (Vostanis, 2008). Educating families and giving them strategies to help with their child's mental health condition could help massively, it promotes happiness (Sale, 2008). YoungMinds claim that in every class there are up to three children who are suffering (YoungMinds, 2020b; YoungMinds, 2020c). They also state that young people do not know where to find support when they are ready to get help for themselves (YoungMinds, 2020b). YoungMinds (2020b) state that, they are an honest and trustworthy charity and that every person who needs support is heard and supported.

There is a mental health crisis for young people today, who are in fact not getting the correct support, YoungMinds aim is to promote their vision and put a stop to this crisis (YoungMinds, 2020a). Young minds were praised alongside other charities for the changes made to the mental health act (Bracher, 2007). Before the change in this legislation the mental health act did not contain any information regarding young people's needs and so they would be treated in adult mental health units, they would be mis treated by adult patients and fall behind with their education (Bracher, 2007). As a direct result from YoungMinds hard work and determination, young people under eighteen, if admitted, would be treated in a suitable environment (Bracher, 2007) All professionals are accountable for a young person's well-being and mental health (McDougal, 2008). However even with the change in legislation, young people are still being admitted onto adult wards in a crisis (Helm & Doward, 2015). YoungMinds have stated over the years that early intervention is key, if these services are put into place there would be positive outcomes on the shortage of inpatient facilities (Helm & Doward, 2015). Within YoungMinds manifesto they have embraced the fact that there still needs to be changes made to the mental health act, they state that the act is outdated, and the rights and treatment of young people are still not protected at times (YoungMinds, 2019). In 2003 YoungMinds completed an in-depth qualitative study which concluded that even though there were signs of change and improvements, there were still gaps in healthcare for children and young people suffering with mental health problems (Street, 2004).

YoungMinds latest campaigns are 'act early', 'wise up' and 'our fighting for campaign' (YoungMinds, 2020a). Their campaign 'Act early' wants to call on the new formed government to get help early and to work together to look after young people and children's mental health (YoungMinds, 2020a) The 'wise up' campaign is calling for change in the classroom and education system. They state that the education system needs to be rebalanced to not only concentrate on a child's education but to also make the well-being of their students as important as the curriculum (YoungMinds, 2020c). 'Our fighting for' campaign is reaching out to help and give support to all young people who are suffering with mental health conditions (YoungMinds, 2020d). As you can see all three campaigns are all similar in what they aim to achieve but each have been broken down to tackle a specific issue that needs to change to have a positive impact on young people today.

One of the ways YoungMinds have attempted to create change is, in November 2019 their activists handed in a petition to parliament with seventy thousand signatures, in the hopes that

the next government would act early and support young people's mental health (YoungMinds, 2020a). YoungMinds is calling upon the government to address the factors that contribute towards a young person's mental health and to support not only the young people but their families to better understand and manage their health concerns (YoungMinds, 2020a). Walker (2020) claims that, over the past twenty-five years all the governments have promised to reduce child poverty. However, evidence suggests that they are failing in tackling these issues resulting in negative effects on communities. Some of the causes are the cuts in welfare benefits and the introduction of universal credit (Walker, 2020). In March 2020 YoungMinds activists are calling for the general public to help by contacting their local MP to attend their event at parliament, for their act early campaign (YoungMinds, 2020a).

A survey completed by YoungMinds shows that, a large amount of young people felt that they had to manage their own mental health because they were unable to find the support they needed and only a small amount actually felt confident in doing so (YoungMinds, 2020a). Young people tend to turn to their peers for mental health support (YoungMinds, 2020a; ITV News, 2019). Walker (2020) from the morning star claims that, children who suffer in silence feel inadequate, embarrassed and guilty. Mental health care is failing young people, the survey showed that, seventy-six per cent of general practitioners lacked confidence in referring young people to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for treatment, and only ten per cent felt confident in doing so (YoungMinds, 2020a). Interestingly what about the other fourteen percent?

ITV News and the independent have both written an article about the organisation YoungMinds and what they are aiming to achieve through their 'act early' campaign (ITV News, 2019; Independent, 2019). In these articles they have not given their opinion on the charity they have just re-interpreted what has been produced by the organisation itself. This is known as media bias. Stone (2011), developed a market model which show that, reporters at times are biased, mislead and misinterpret information to the consumers. The independent does state that the survey in 2019 was conducted by seven thousand young people under the age of twenty-five who previously searched for mental health support (Independent, 2019). The UK population is at its largest ever so a survey on a larger scale would be more beneficial, with evidence of the young people completing the survey being from the majority not minority, social class, household types, education and communities all being a factor in choosing who takes part, to make the study ethically and morally fair. However, this could

have been a factor on the current survey that was completed it just did not mention it. According to the social trend findings *cited in* (Walker, 2020), children who are from a lower social class suffer with more mental health problems than children from upper-class. So, it is vital to recognize the external factors like unemployment, poor housing, income and poverty when providing support for a young person's mental health (Walker, 2020; Collishaw, Furzer and sellers, 2019).

This assignment has looked at Mental health specifically effecting children through the organisation YoungMinds and their campaign 'Act Early'. Over the past year they have completed surveys and handed in a petition to the new government (YoungMinds, 2020a). In the next coming months, they are asking for public support to contact their MPs to join them in their fight for change (YoungMinds, 2020a). There has been a clear discussion on what the organisation aims to do and how they are going to implement their strategies. This hot topic has been widely conversed through media. This assignment has shown that there is not enough support readily available for children early on and because it is left too late, hospitals are unable to care for those children in suitable establishments for their age, which leads to those children being victimised (Helm & Doward, 2015; Bracher, 2007). It has also shown that many children feel they find their support from their peers and that they do not know where to start looking for professional support (YoungMinds, 2020a). Overall, it clearly shows that the government needs to make changes to legislation, increase funding and to put appropriate support in place to ensure each child is supported early on.

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