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Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would like to thank the schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who participated in this project. Without the input and interest of the students and the support of teachers and staff, the findings and publishing of this report wouldn't be possible.

Introduction

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough* is an independent champion for health and care. Our job is to make sure that those who run local health and care services understand and act on what really matters to people.

This project is part of a programme of work with young people to help local health and care commissioners understand what will help young people keep emotionally well and cope with difficulties in life. It was funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group. They are working together to develop a model of care called i-THRIVE. This is an integrated, person centred approach to providing mental health services for children, young people and families.

As part of Being Happy, Being Me, we visited four local secondary schools to encourage young people to:

- talk about their opinions and experiences of mental health and the services available.
- give information about services and resources available in their area.
- think about how they use and understand language related to mental health.

It follows on from our Thriving report, published last year, where young people told us they wanted mental health support that is meaningful and relevant to them. This included

- more information about mental health
- more education about mental health
- to fight stigma about mental health
- to share their own experiences of mental health

To encourage young people to talk more about their experiences, we designed the Your Mental Wellbeing survey. The survey asks young people about their experiences as well as how they access mental health services. The findings of the survey can be found in this report and will be used to directly inform the redesign of children and young people's mental health services and the implementation of the new I-THRIVE model.

Whilst we were running the Being Happy, Being Me project, we also ran a separate project called Minding Us. Minding Us had the same overall aims and we asked the same questions; however, we targeted young people who may be more vulnerable to mental ill-health.

As part of Minding Us, we visited ten young people's groups in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including young carers, young homeless people and young lesbian and gay people. Although some of the findings of the two reports may overlap, the Minding Us report will focus on the needs of young people who may be facing challenges in life, so commissioners can better plan services to meet their needs. We will be publishing Minding Us in Summer 2017.

*This project was run jointly between Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough, who merged on 1st April 2017.

Summary of what we've learned

Mental health language 1

Many young people found words to do with mental health, like thriving and resilience, difficult to understand.

Mental health education 2

More education is needed to fight stigma around mental health. Many young people found it difficult to define what mental health is.

Mental health services 3

Young people generally did not know about mental health services, unless they had used CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Young people said they needed better access to services.

General practitioners and healthcare staff 4

Some young people felt that there are a lack of self-referral options, other than going through the GP. For some, this was too formal and scary.

Parents and teachers 5

More mental health information for parents and teachers may help with a better understanding of youth mental health.

For full details, see page 11.



About the project

The project took place in 2016/17 during which Healthwatch worked with four schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

- The Voyager Academy, Peterborough
- Ormiston Bushfield Academy, Peterborough
- Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
- St. Peter's School, Huntingdon

Healthwatch staff spoke to **534 young people** between the ages of 11 to 20 years. In each school, we were asked to provide the sessions in different ways as each had a specific schedule and a way they felt we could best engage their students. As a result, we developed several ways of delivering sessions to students that included assemblies, lunch time sessions to give information and personal social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Some of the things we talked about included:

Stigma and language

In each session, Healthwatch staff talked about mental health and discussed the stigma associated with it. We showed each group Mind your Language, a video made by young people from Suffolk that gives information and an overview of mental health and the issues around it. We discussed language around mental health, including being respectful about words used in relation to people who may have mental health issues.

A sheet was given out to students called the gapped-out exercise from Young Minds where they had to try to fill the word gaps giving an overview of mental health. Young people were also asked to fill in our survey at the end of each session.

Information

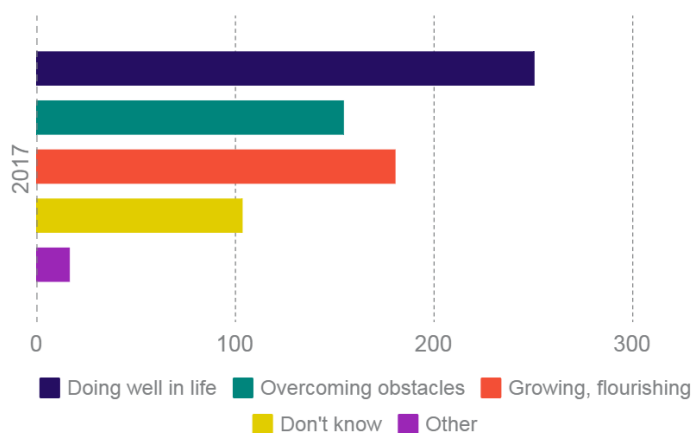
Then we gave out our service sheets with local mental health services available including new service such as NHS 111, option 2, local drop-in clinics, KOOOTH online counselling service, Shelf-Help in some libraries, Keep Your Head website etc. Many of the young people seemed to appreciate the new service information and seemed particularly interested in the drop-in clinics.

Young people's ages



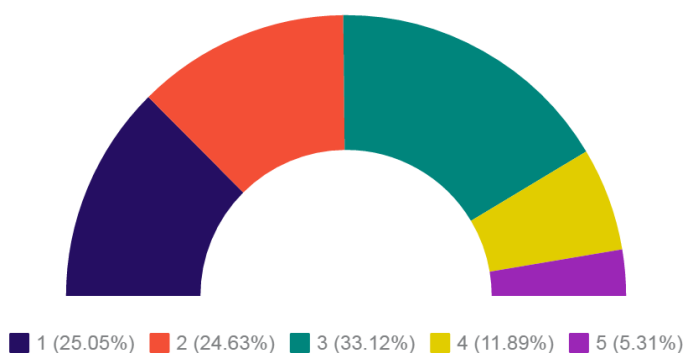
Language about mental health

• What does thriving mean to you?



Nearly half of the young people we spoke to, 251 out of 534, told us thriving means 'Doing well in life'. One in three, 181, said it means 'Growing, flourishing'. One in five, 104, didn't know what thriving meant. When choosing 'other', some young people added their own interpretation: 'Achieving/progressing' or 'reaching assessed goals'. This was a multiple choice question and young people could circle more than one option. There were 691 responses.

• On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you know about resilience?



Just over half of the young people we spoke to had little or no understanding of resilience, selecting option 1 and 2 on the scale (234). A third, 156 out of 534, told us they have a medium understanding of what resilience means. Only a small percentage of young people were confident to say they know what resilience is.

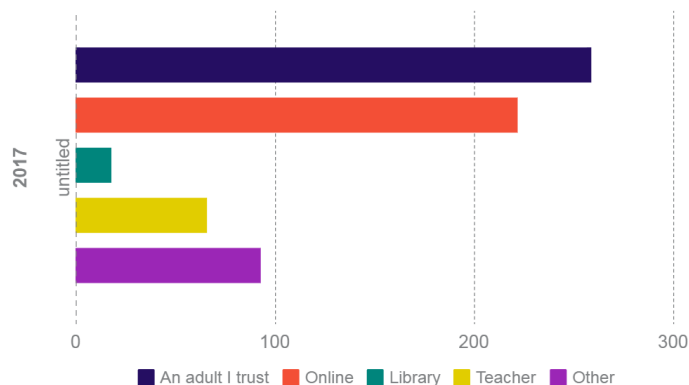
• What do mental health and resilience mean to you?

This was an open question and students could expand on what they thought these words meant. Below are some of their comments:

- *It means all about the person, how they behave, how other people affect our behaviour and life.*
- *It means feeling good emotionally and physically.*
- *It is important to have support when you're feeling down. If anyone has a mental health problem, with support they can overcome it.*
- *Mental health is the ability to understand and know my actions and to be in control of my emotions and how they affect those around me.*
- *Mental to me means how well someone is inside their own head.*
- *Mental health to me means how stable you are.*
- *Adapting well in the face of tragedy. I think it means bouncing back from difficult experiences.*
- *Mental health is emotional wellbeing, so is depression. I don't know what resilience is.*

Accessing information

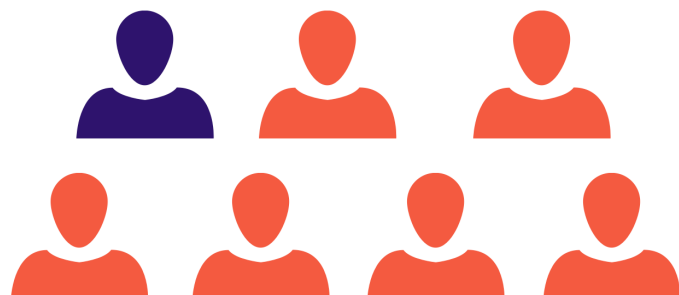
- Where would you go if you wanted information about mental health?



Nearly half of young people, 259 out of 534 said they would prefer to see an adult they know and trust. Two in five, 222, said they would also like to get information online. Going to the library or speaking to a teacher were less popular options. When choosing the option 'other', some said: 'parents', 'doctor', 'social worker', 'family', 'friends', 'therapist'. This was a multiple choice question and young people could circle more than one option. There were 658 responses.

Mental health service experience

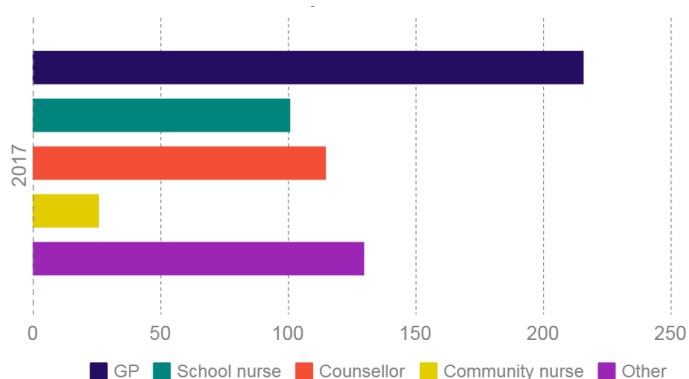
- Have you used mental health services before?



One in seven of the young people who answered this, 73 out of 503, told us they had previously used mental health services. They told us:

- 'It was ok it wasn't great. I didn't feel like a human'
- 'I went to counselling and thought it to be too impersonal'
- 'It was ok but some of it was confusing'
- 'It helped me a lot'
- 'Used CAMH to speak about my anger issues and stuff, it was nice to speak to someone who doesn't know me personally and won't judge and offers advice'

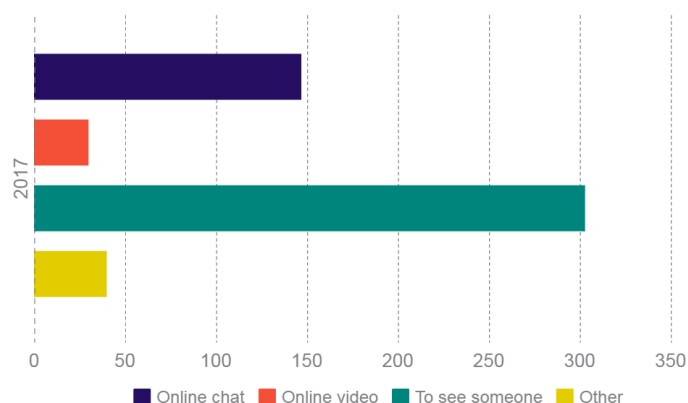
- Where would you go if you had a mental health problem?



Two in five young people (216 out of 534) said they would prefer to see their GP. Seeing a counsellor was the next popular option with a one in five, 115, choosing this. Of the 130 who said 'other', some said: 'someone I trust well', 'online', 'mum, grandmother', 'family', 'hospital or doctors', 'deal with it myself'.

This was a multiple choice question and young people could circle more than one option. There were 558 responses.

- If you wanted to get counselling to talk through your problems, would you prefer it to be?



Three in five, 303 out of 514, told us they would prefer to see someone face to face when receiving counselling. Just under one in three, 147 out of 514, wanted counselling via online chat. Seeing someone they trusted was important and this would have to be done in a safe quiet space. When choosing the option 'other' some young people said: 'mother', 'closest friend', 'internet', 'parents'.

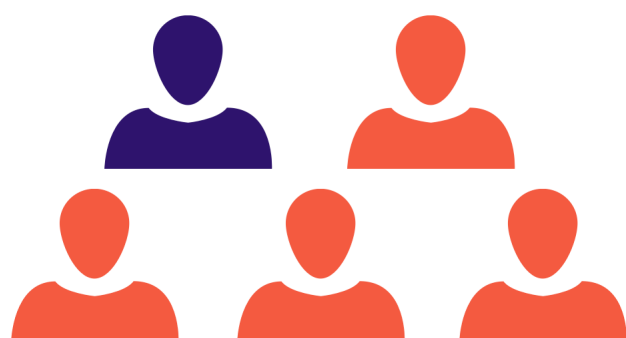
This was a multiple-choice question and young people could circle more than one option. Not everyone answered all of the questions.

- If you were to use (or have used) a mental health service, what would make your experience a positive one?

This was an open question and students were allowed to expand on their experiences and preferences.

- *Being confidential. Feeling safe and welcome. Patient staff.*
- *Not feeling awkward and having someone understand you.*
- *More of a friendly service. Getting to know the counsellor so it is less nerve racking when you go in to see them.*
- *Being able to get help and support. Never giving up.*
- *Just having someone to talk to.*
- *People not constantly asking questions repeatedly.*
- *Somebody with a sense of humour to get my mind off things.*
- *People not being patronising and treating you like an idiot.*
- *Being able to trust the person I am talking to and receive good advice.*
- *Not to have to wait for months to receive the help I need to.*
- *To keep it between the person and me. No parents involved.*

- Have you heard of NHS 111 option 2 for mental health?



One in five of the young people who answered this question, 102 out of 504, had heard about the NHS 111 option two, mental health crisis service before.

This service was launched in September 2016, so was very new when we spoke to many of the young people.

Comments from young people

At the end of the survey, students had the option of adding comments they felt were not included. These are some of the things students told us:

People should feel safe when they ask or /and get help. Support is most important thing to them.

Mental health to me needs to be recognised more in young people and dealt with as some can be scared to come forward or embarrassed / ashamed about talking to someone.

Could doctors get more training in the mental health service so they know what to do?

Feedback from Teachers and staff

Teachers told us that when children go to their GP for a mental health problem like an eating disorder or self-harming, doctors do not seem to refer them for further care. Instead, they ask the children to go back to school to be seen by the school nurse or by the SENCO staff for referral. For example, one child was hearing voices and the parents were told to go back to school for referral.

Generally, there seems to be a big gap in services for children waiting for CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and for the children who not meet the criteria for CAMHS referral. There is difficulty for post-16 students who often do not fit into young people's services but also don't fit into adult services so they end up in limbo.

Staff told us that there isn't enough counselling support in the schools. Normally they would have a counsellor coming in once or twice a week but this would not meet the demand, especially in big academies who have around 1,600 students.

Teachers would like more training around mental health and support for staff. This is normally a problem due to lack of financial resources. The staff are very aware that mental health issues are rising as they have had to deal with some serious issues which have presented themselves in school time.

One teacher said:

'All the students who took part of the project have benefited from doing so, I do believe there needs to be more education around mental health and I know that both your visits / projects and the media coverage it is getting at the moment will help that but it is not just a short term thing nor should it be treated as 'flash in pan' but needs to be looked at as a long term programme/intervention.'

Youth Connect

Youth Connect is an e-newsletter that goes out to young people from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough every month. Youth Connect gives information and shares ways young people can get involved with their health and social care services. Giving feedback to their local services, opportunities to volunteer, or learning all about new services available, are some of the ways young people can get involved in their local area.

Since starting this project, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been encouraging young people to get involved and subscribe to Youth Connect. The number of young people subscribing has increased substantially, and there are now more than **220 young people** signed up.

Giving information

Giving information about local help and support services is an important part of what we have done with each of the schools' visits. We wanted to keep young people and teachers up to date with new services and the resources available to them. We compiled information sheets for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas. The sheets contain information about mental health services and organisations who can provide help and support. The services included in the information sheets are:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

- Peterborough and Fenland Mind (now Mind CPSL)
- Richmond Fellowship
- Lifeline
- SUN Network
- Insight Talking Therapies
- Cambridgeshire Consultancy in counselling
- YMCA
- Whittlesey Young People's counselling
- Drinksense
- #POW
- Family Action
- Kooth
- Total Voice Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- Keep Your Head
- Centre 33
- Red2Green
- Lifeline
- Riverside
- Pinpoint
- K9 Cafe
- Cogwheel Counselling
- Illuminate Charity - Confidence for Change
- Shelf Help
- First Response Service
- Carers Trust
- Young Minds
- Childline
- Young Minds
- Papyrus

What we've learned - - - - -

Mental health language

Language about mental health needs to be simpler. Many young people found the words thriving, resilience and mental health difficult to understand. There is still a lot of stigma associated with words like mental, for example. Moving away from this kind of language can help young people access services and get help sooner.

Mental health education

More education is needed to help fight the stigma around mental health. Young people found it difficult to understand what mental health is and comments like 'my friend has mental health' were common. When talking about it, many said they did not understand it. 'What is mental health?' was a common question.

Mental health services

Young people generally did not know about mental health services unless they had used CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). They wanted better access to services in their area. Accessing services with an adult they know and trust was important to them. Privacy and confidentiality were also mentioned, having a quiet, safe place to go to if needed as well as having understanding staff would make it easier for them to use services.

Few young people knew about new mental health services in their area. Not many young people heard of services like NHS111 option 2 or KOOH. However, some schools have distributed information about these services and they are getting more recognition. No one seemed to have heard of the Keep Your Head website.

General Practitioners and healthcare staff

Young people said they would like to go to GPs (General Practitioners) but found it difficult as sometimes they would be referred back to the school. More drop-in clinics to discuss mental health issues informally, would also be helpful. Drop-in clinics were seen as an easy flexible way to access the help they needed.

Many young people said that receiving help in a confidential and private setting is important to them. Staff need to be non-patronising, trustworthy, welcoming and friendly in order for young people to feel safe when needing help.

Parents and Teachers

Some young people do not feel that parents and teachers are equipped to help with mental health problems. Some didn't want parents to be involved in their care, but this wasn't the case for everyone. More mental health information and training for parents and teachers may help with a better understanding of youth mental health and how to support them.

We will be checking to see how this learning is used in the re-design of children and young people's mental health services.

Please let us know if you would like this report in another format, e.g. large print.

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