

# What Young People have to say about Mental Health -the survey

March 2019

## Disclaimer

*This report is based on conversations or responses freely given by members of the public. Where possible quotations are used to illustrate individual or collectively important experiences.*

*Engagement officers collect responses verbatim and we also present these in our final report as an appendix. This is important in showing the accuracy of our analysis, and so that further work can be done by anyone wishing to do so.*

*A full explanation of the guiding principles and framework for how we do engagement and analysis can be found online on our website [www.healthwatchwiganandleigh.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwiganandleigh.co.uk).*

*Please note that this report relates to findings observed and contributed by members of the public in relation to the specific project as set out in the methodology section of the report.*

*Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an analysis of what was contributed by members of the public, service users, patients and staff within the project context as described.*

## Introduction

This report looks at young people's mental health in the Wigan and Leigh area.

The findings contribute to part of Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh's priorities for 2017-2018.

Analysis focuses on key themes and areas that emerged from the responses gathered. Quotes have been chosen to give an idea of the general kind of comments received, a full list is available and will be published separately to this report.

## Key findings

- Many young people reported feeling down, as well as engaging with mental health services, or some kind of mental health support in some capacity.
- There was a strong desire for talking and support, which supports the idea of preventative need.
- Schools, GPs, local mental health services around hospital, private counsellors were all important points of access for mental health support.
- The source of concern for young people often related to school.
- We also looked more specifically at the potential for technology and also self-help groups to assist with mental health support.
- Finally there are some examples of young people's hopes and aims for the future.

## Methodology

We engaged with young people in three ways; a set of focus groups with young people, an online survey, and a 'tick' sheet questionnaire.

This report focuses on the information found in the *online surveys*. A separate report will be published to look at the focus groups, and 'tick sheet' questionnaire.

### How was the engagement carried out?

We ran a workshop at Wigan Youth Council, Leigh Youth Voice, classroom sessions with Year 12 and 13 Health and Care students at St Marys 6<sup>th</sup> form college, Tyldesley and Wigan and Leigh College, Leigh campus and we held engagement events at Winstanley College, Wigan and Leigh College Parsons Walk campus, Pagefield campus and Leigh campus.

We handed the tick sheet out to all the young people at all sessions and spent some time in communal areas at the colleges collecting the tick sheet information.

The survey was promoted alongside the engagement activities.

# Methodology - Who we spoke to

There were **63** people in this survey study.  
We collected **312** comments.

Age	Responses
Under 18	40
18-24	12
25-34	1
35-44	1
45-54	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>

\*n/a = 7

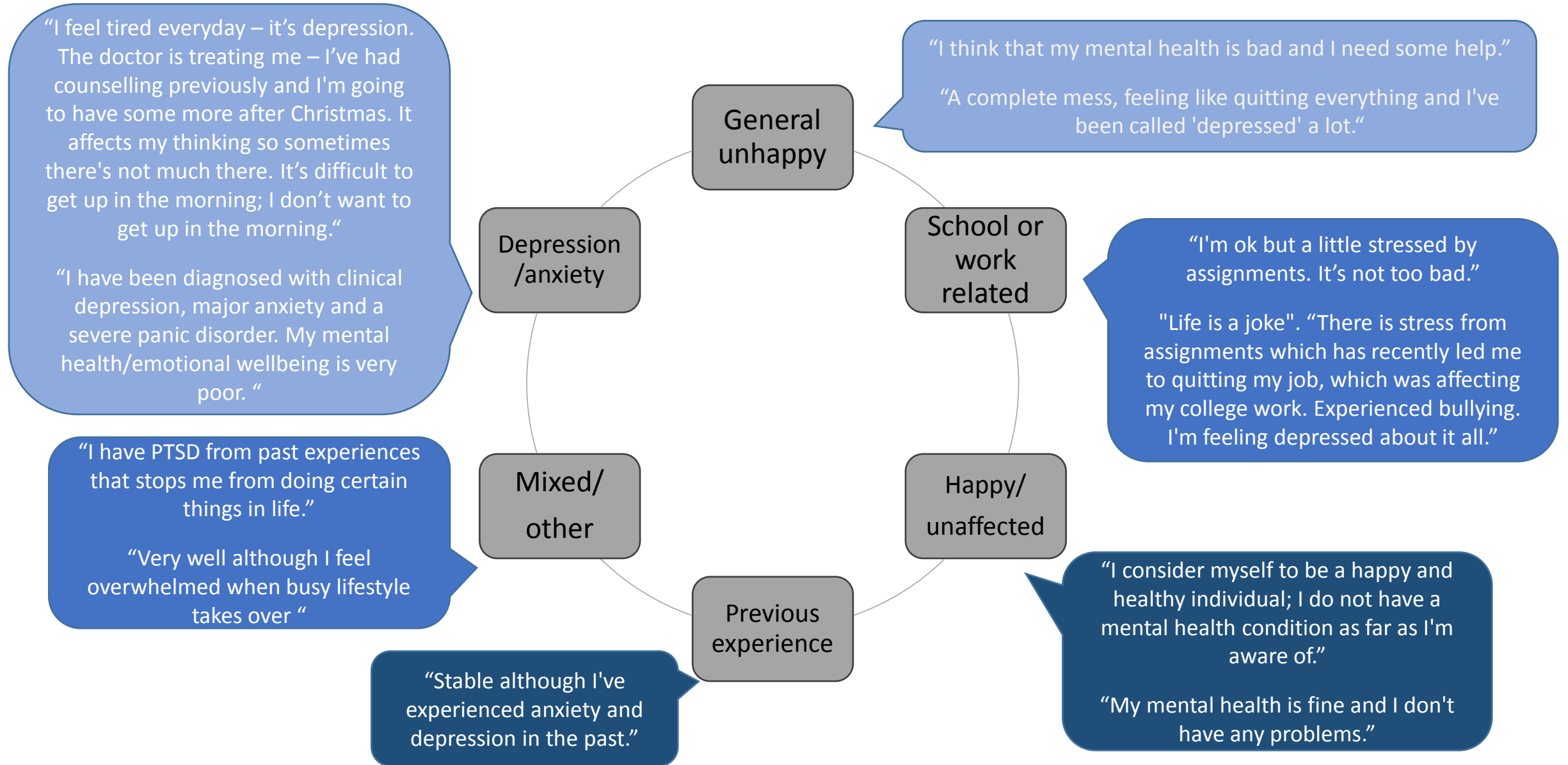
Area	Responses
Wigan North	5
Wigan Central	18
South Wigan and Ashton North (SWAN)	0
LIGA South	6
Leigh	14
(TABA)	11
LIGA North	2
Other	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>

\*n/a = 5

## The questions

1. How would you describe your mental health or emotional wellbeing?
2. If any, which services are you in touch with now, or have been, over the past two years? What support are/did you receive during this time?
3. What is it, from those services or support that is working or not working for you?
4. Can you think of 3 things, in an ideal world, that would help individuals experiencing poor mental health or emotional wellbeing?
5. How could technology help improve what is available for you/anyone with a mental health or emotional well-being issue?
6. What is your view or experience of 'self-help' groups and peer-support? In what ways has this been/not been helpful?
7. What are your future goals? What do you hope to achieve?
8. What needs to be put in place to help you achieve those goals?

# Exploring young people's own description of their mental health:



# Young people's reflections on experience with various mental health services:

## Mental health services

"The first time I had help from CAMHS when I was in year 9. It didn't work; I didn't feel it helped. The second time it was when I was in year 11 and it did help. The practitioner spoke about her situation which helped me feel at ease and helped me see other options."  
(CAMHS)

"There are too many hurdles to go through before you get help; you end up at crisis point." (CAHMS/GP)

"The waiting list is way too long; the waiting lists need to be quicker." (CAHMS)

## Primary Care Services

"I need more input about coping mechanisms. I get support from mum but can't tell dad. 'On-line' help would be difficult as I live at home. I feel like I need a longer time with someone to talk to." (Counselling – GP)

"Just the GP. They're easy to talk to and they're making arrangements for me to see a counsellor. I felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders; I don't know where the appointment will be yet. I've been told I'll only have to wait a couple of days." (Counselling – GP)

## School-based help

"It helps – it's someone to talk to; I see them every week and it helps with my college work." (School counsellor)

"Supporting me and getting me to talk even if I don't want to." (Counsellor/school)

## Voluntary sector

"I've been in a mental health hospital and it wasn't good. They put you with other patients who are very unwell. You trust no-one whilst you are in. Staff don't listen. ~ Whilst I was on the ward as an inpatient I saw someone from MHIST (Mental Health Independent Support Trust). They were really good to talk to." (Hospital – voluntary sector)

## Private Services

"I mean 'nothing' really as it's really hard to open up to those you don't know." (private counsellor)



## The following areas are young people's top suggestions for improving mental health:

### Service related

"If attending a service being able to take a friend; I find it easier talking to friends than family and if you're already anxious having a trusted friend with you would help."

"Private sessions that are relaxed instead of tense."

"Quicker access to services as there are long waiting lists."

### Young people specific

"A place to go for people of my age group."

"Not a 'Youth Zone' – it's shocking."

"Places to go to feel they belong."

### School support

"Understanding by teachers."

"Lecturers / tutors to be more aware if it looks like / or they know someone is struggling and make provision for time out / distraction / support."

"Better counsellors in schools/college and universities."

### General support

"See someone every fortnight or more if needed."

"Someone independent who you can trust and be able to talk to."

"Someone to listen and not just be like 'oh be more positive'."

### Other

"De-stigmatising mental illness."

"Spiritual wellbeing should be top of the list."

"Access to outside or a walking or drawing group - these need lots of time."

# Comments on areas related to technology and mental health:

## Apps

“Apps should be created so that people could get cheered up or they could write what they think and get different places they could be referred to.”

“Apps to help and them being free - not by (paid for) subscriptions. Most social medias are being the issue like 'Snap chat'. “

## Video

“Perhaps being able to have a 'video chat' for someone who is unable to leave the home.”

## Text (mobile SMS)

“Could text a person you trust such as CAMHS worker if you feel you need help.”

“By text or mobile.”

## Phone

“Phoning people up to talk to them.”



## Other

“It gives people someone to talk to and someone who can help. Most social media like 'Snap chat' can cause issues.”

“It could help contact people if you are struggling with problems.”

## Online

“More encouragement on social media to speak out and break stigma.”

“Free online confidential advice and counselling (Anonymously).”

## Comments on self-help groups:

### Positive

“Self- help' groups seem like a good way for people to express how they feel and get the help of people.”

“They do help to share similar experiences; tips and advice.”

“I think they're great because they are much less formal and they give people more hope and care.”

“I've been to a group therapy session which was helpful.”



### Concerned

“Young people wouldn't go. We prefer 1:1 if it was confidential and discreet. There's nothing worse than someone going into a classroom and calling a student out as everyone else knows they'll be going out for their counselling session.”

“Its not worked for people I know as they don't understand the things they are going through.”

“Ineffective and slightly condescending. Often times I feel worse after a 'self-help' session.”

“I probably wouldn't use a self-help group; your friends do that for you.”

## Important areas related to young people's future and how they hope to work on this:

### Education

Completing exams, getting a degree, using their education, apprenticeships.

### Work

Working with children, in the forces, healthcare system, as scientists, lawyers, politician, design, teacher, painter/decorator, being fulfilled.

### Other

Being happy/content, moving city, gaining confidence, travelling, some not yet sure.

### Education:

"It's a painting and decorating course...and...diploma. I need to keep up my contact with My Place and my counselling."

"Good schools and the right motivation to get it done."

### Personal goals:

"To set realistic goals and objectives. To inform people who are affecting mental health."

"My confidence . More opportunities for entry rather than have to join an irrelevant job within the industry to 'work your way up'."

### Skills:

"- Hard work - Self motivation - Experience - Dedication"

### Support:

"To promote opportunities to speak to someone if the stress gets too much. Top tips, advice and support."

"Support around my studies whilst I'm in college and feeling low."

# Conclusions

This study has looked at the views of young people, using a survey to capture their experiences.

Responses gathered here give some insight into how young people are thinking about their mental health, and valuable comments on their interaction with various mental health related services. As seems clear from what young people say, they want support and also for access to professional support to be easy for them.

On the application of technology to mental health there are useful suggestions on both the dangers of social media in fuelling mental health difficulties, but also ideas for making best use of technology to improve communication and access to support.

Self help groups were addressed in comments here with both positive aspects looked at, as well as some challenges that could be used to improve services. One reflection from the comments is that a range of options should be open to those seeking support, so better to fit with individuals needs.

Respondents also showed the diverse hopes and plans for the future they had, which should remind readers of what young people are working towards and the importance of making appropriate support available.

*Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh would like to thank all those that took part in this research or facilitated it to take place.*