



**What young people think of
health and care services**

Contents

Background	3
What we did	3
What young people told us	4
General practice	4
Mental health	5
Dentists	6
Hospitals	6
Other services.....	7
Identifying support in their community	9
Next steps	10

This report was published June 2021 © Healthwatch Wiltshire

The text of this document (this excludes, where present, the Royal Arms and all departmental or agency logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Healthwatch Wiltshire copyright and the document title specified. Where third party material has been identified, permission from the respective copyright holder must be sought. Written consent was given for all photos used in this report. Any enquires related to this publication should be sent to us at info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

Background

Healthwatch Wiltshire is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Wiltshire. We listen to local people's experiences of healthcare services and use them to influence change and improvement in those services. As we don't often hear from young people, we wanted to give them the opportunity to have their voices heard.

What we did

Between September 2019 and March 2020, we went out and about talking to young people aged 16-25 about the work we do and gathered their feedback about local health and care services.

We were invited to the following schools, colleges, youth clubs and training programmes:

- Avon Valley College, Durrington
- Chippenham PHAB Club
- Salisbury 6th Form College
- The Princes Trust – Salisbury and Trowbridge
- Wiltshire College – Trowbridge, Salisbury and Chippenham Campuses

The aim of our visits was to explain the work that Healthwatch does, the importance of feedback in health and care settings and find out from young people how much they knew about the services available to them. We also wanted to find out what services they thought should be available to support their physical and mental health.

What young people told us

We asked young people to think of the last time that they used a health or care service and to think about:

- What was good about the experience?
- What was OK and what could have been improved?
- What really didn't work?

A total of 197 young people took part and gave us feedback on a range of services:

- General practice (GPs)
- Sexual health
- Mental health
- Opticians
- Dentists
- Ambulance services
- Hospitals
- Accident and Emergency
- Pharmacies
- Social services

91% of the feedback was focused on four areas; general practice, mental health, dentists and hospitals. This is what young people had to say about these services:

General practice

For most young people it was the attitude of staff and professionals that made it a good experience for them.

Always friendly nurses and doctors there to help you and they explain the best option for you.

I felt comfortable and confident to talk with the doctor about something personal; something that I wouldn't feel comfortable talking about to others.

[The] doctor I saw provided a positive and safe environment for me. He listened to my issues and asked questions to further the knowledge of the problem.

The doctor was extremely supportive and helpful.

Accessing GP appointments and long waiting times in GP surgeries were highlighted as the main issues that could be improved:

A three-week wait to get an appointment.

I couldn't get a face-to-face appointment for my regular GP, so I have had to get a telephone appointment first and wait to get a face-to-face appointment. So, I had to make 3 appointments when one would have sufficed.

Every doctor's appointment I have had in the last year has been running late.

I was waiting for ages. They could have communicated this to us.

Mental health

Having a supportive GP and friendly staff made the experience of accessing services, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) a positive one for many young people.

GP was very friendly and was able to help as much as possible.

Supportive GP, understanding.

Doctor was very friendly and gave me clear information.

I think it's good that they help kids of all ages and the staff are nice [CAMHS].

Referrals, waiting times, and not being listened to by mental health professionals were identified as the main areas for improvement.

They are very patronising and treat you as though you are 8 not 18! [CAMHS]... They only asked me questions and didn't actually let me explain what I was experiencing... The service doesn't help you it makes you feel small and pathetic.

I was suffering from anxiety and depression and had a 3-6 month waiting list. In that time I got worse and stopped eating. Only then did they help – took three weeks for an initial appointment.

I am yet to receive treatment for PTSD and have had to wait a long time to see someone.

It took a long time to get me sessions and they rejected mostly all of my requests. It is important for them to listen to my feedback to help change the way that CAMHS works because for someone like me I'm still struggling. I felt like I got no help.

Dentists

Friendly staff and good communication made going to the dentist a good experience for most young people:

The [dental] surgeon made sure I was comfortable with what was happening and kept seeing if I was OK with what was going on.

Very friendly staff! Told me clearly about what they were doing. Good communication. They made me feel very welcome and comfortable.

Dentist very good with patient. From not liking to be touched can now touch his face but not able to check his mouth yet – but getting there. Very kind and very patient.

Making an initial, or follow-up, appointment as well as waiting times caused by appointments over-running, were the main things young people told us could be improved:

Getting a quicker appointment for a filling I was told was bad (understand that they are busy).

I had to wait half an hour. People could tell us if it's going to be a long wait and why.

The dentist was running a bit behind. Other than the wait it was a very good experience.

Hospitals

We received positive feedback about hospital experiences, particularly the level of care provided by staff and health professionals:

Every member of staff that I came across was lovely, they all kept me at ease, any information that I was given was explained in a way I understood and no medical terminology was used.

The staff were super helpful and really kind and nice.

The process was fast and the staff were very friendly and helpful.

Very informative. Understanding doctors and nurses. Questions I had were answered.

Young people felt that waiting times for appointments could be improved:

I was waiting one hour and 30 minutes after appointment time was supposed to be. It wasn't busy.

Waiting to be seen – the communication could have been better. I had to wait hours for the results.

It was a burn that needed looking at so we all didn't mind waiting but after waiting four hours someone who came in after us only waited an hour and got seen before us.

Had to wait over 40 minutes for the appointment. Client with severe learning disability got very agitated and restless. If they had told us that they were going to be late we would have gone for a walk.

Other services

While there was a lot of positive feedback regarding the staff and health professionals in GP surgeries, dentists and hospitals, feedback for those in specialised services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Improving Access to Psychological Services (IAPT) and social services was more mixed:

My friend's friend went to her GP saying she felt depressed and suicidal. GP referred her to CAMHS. CAMHS said that they felt she didn't need help and that she was attention seeking.

They [CAMHS] were unorganised and cancelled appointments and didn't find me a replacement therapist. The first time I used them they didn't listen to me and didn't take me seriously.

Social services helped me to become safer, however, in terms of communication they didn't listen very well to me. They only listened when the problem that needed to be resolved got worse.

Nothing was good about the experience [social services]. What really didn't work? They didn't treat my family with respect and didn't listen.

Feedback about pharmacies included communication between GPs and pharmacies and problems with repeat prescriptions:

I went for a repeat prescription but have been requesting a dosette box for the last four months due to mental health reasons. I am still waiting due to the pharmacy saying I have to speak to my GP and my GP saying I have to speak to the pharmacy.

Did not communicate that my prescription wasn't processed. It is a one-month order that is delivered to the staff at my Supported Accommodation. It was left until the day I ran out and went nearly 24 hours without anti-psychotics which is very dangerous both mentally and physically.

Provision of information and non-judgemental attitudes of staff made the experience of sexual health services a good one for young people:

They were very friendly and very understanding without any judgement.

They provided me with various options of birth control and listened to my needs including symptoms and opportunities to change and adapt treatments.

Positive feedback about opticians included receiving clear advice and information and good service from staff:

The eye test was good, the service was good, lovely staff and they answered questions in good detail.

They gave me good advice.

For the young people who had used Accident and Emergency services, it was the care shown by staff that made the experience good. Communication and waiting times were areas that could be improved:

The staff were very helpful and friendly which helped to put me at ease... Better communication [could be improved] because when I got to A&E the person we spoke to on the phone did not know what was happening. Communication could have been better – it would have made it easier.

The staff were super helpful and really kind and nice. What really didn't work? The time waited to be seen by a doctor/nurse.

The feedback received about ambulance services was all positive:

They got here really quick and they were all really calm. The paramedic was at the college in 5 minutes. They were amazing!

They got here really fast and acted as quickly as possible. Arrived as soon as we called them and they knew exactly what to do. They were amazing!

Identifying support in their community

Working in groups, we asked young people to identify the services available to them in their local area and in the rest of the county. All identified essential services such as GPs, dentists, and hospitals.

Those at college and school were aware of the support services available to them in their educational setting such as wellbeing advisors and tutors. Other services identified were CAMHS, IAPT and Revival. Participants in the Prince's Trust programme were also aware of support services such as Alabaré, Samaritans and the Mental Health team at Fountain Way hospital, Salisbury.

We then asked them to think about services they felt should be available to support their physical and mental health needs in the community and these were some of their suggestions:

A trained professional that can support – not just giving me a leaflet or referring me but to walk the journey with you – a wellbeing mentor; someone to help push you out of your comfort zone and to talk to.

Talks about mental health and crisis intervention in schools and colleges.

An intensive intervention worker with those at risk of being NEET [Not in Education, Employment or Training]. Work with young people to keep them in education.

Free activities, eg youth clubs and exercise classes.

Pre-16 mental health first aid.

I was given the contact info for people who could help. However, due to a lack of drive and mental energy I did not contact the services. As getting stuck in loops and fear of change is common for people with mental health issues, I think doctors should be more connected with these services and help you in contacting them.

Next steps

We will share what young people have said with the commissioners and providers (the people who plan, pay for and run services) of services so that their feedback can help to shape and improve services in the future.

Healthwatch Wiltshire will continue to gather feedback from children and young people to make sure that their voices continue to be heard in Wiltshire.

We set up Young Healthwatch Wiltshire for our young volunteers, aged 16-25, who want to make a difference to their community. Find out more at healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/young-healthwatch-wiltshire

Thank you

Thank you to all the young people who have shared their experiences with us so far and to their teachers, tutors and programme leaders for making it possible.



Freepost RTZK-ZZZG-CCBX
Healthwatch Wiltshire
The Independent Living Centre
St. George's Road
Semington
Trowbridge
BA14 6JQ

www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

01225 434218

info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk



[facebook.com/HealthwatchWiltshire/](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchWiltshire/)



[@HWWilts](https://twitter.com/HWWilts)



[healthwatchwiltshire](https://www.instagram.com/healthwatchwiltshire)