

Keeping Well

A snapshot of young people's physical and emotional wellbeing. September 2022



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About Us

Healthwatch Derbyshire is an independent voice for the people of Derbyshire. We are here to listen to the experiences of Derbyshire residents and give them a stronger say in influencing how local health and social care services are provided.

Our mission

Healthwatch Derbyshire (HWD) is a strong, independent, and effective champion for people that use health and social care services. We will continue to influence health and care services and seek to improve joined-up care for the people of Derbyshire.

Our vision

We want to see consumers of health and social care services being put centre stage so that service providers and commissioners listen to what they have to say and use their voices to shape, inform and influence service delivery and design.

Summary

Young people's opinions about staying healthy greatly affect future health and care services.

In September 2022 Healthwatch Derbyshire we engaged with young people at two further education colleges (Broomfield Hall Campus of Derby College and Chesterfield College). This was part of their fresher's fayres in September.

Face-to-face engagements with young people have been limited in recent times. It was vital to use this opportunity to find out what young people do to help them thrive and keep physically and emotionally well.

We also wanted to see if they needed any further help or support to enable them to do this.



Over 200 young people shared their views on their physical and emotional wellbeing.

The key issues they raised were:

- Desire for information about help and support to stay well. There is a lack of knowledge about trusted sources of accurate and up-to-date information that young people can easily access and understand.
- The need for greater availability and access to exercise opportunities.
- Cost of accessing activities and gyms.

Overall young people have a good knowledge and awareness of the importance to stay physically and emotionally well

- Exercising regularly, eating healthily, and drinking enough water to stay hydrated were the most important things they said they did to stay physically well.
- Relaxing (with a hobby; reading, music, nature, helping others, learning new things), eating healthily and regular exercise were the most important things they said they did to stay emotionally and mentally well.

The results show a link between physical and mental wellbeing. The young people who said they are physically well have better emotional and mental

wellbeing. This is backed up by our results which showed that young people who said their physical health is bad or very bad have poorer emotional and mental wellbeing.

Method



This was an engagement snapshot at a point in time with a collective of young people to enable us to hear their views.

The decision to do a brief survey was made due to the short time Healthwatch staff and volunteers would have with young people at the events. It was also an opportunity to raise awareness of Healthwatch. The sites were Broomfield Hall Campus of Derby College and Chesterfield College.

A short six-question survey was used to find out what young people thought was important to them to stay well physically, emotionally, and mentally. It also asked young people what help they needed, if any, to improve their physical and emotional health.



A QR code was used to encourage people to take part with the additional incentives of Healthwatch pens, pencils, stress balls and notepads on offer.

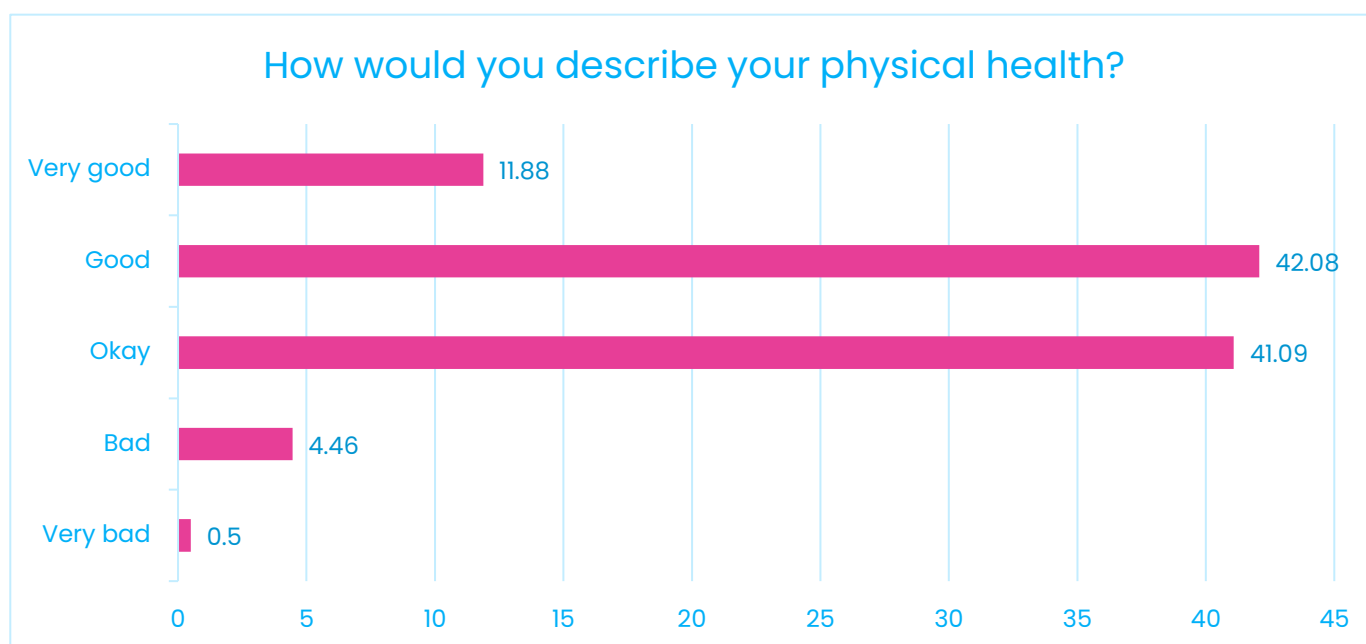
We would like to thank the young people who shared their views, and Derby College and Chesterfield College for inviting Healthwatch Derbyshire to attend the fresher's sessions.

Findings

Keeping Well – Physical Health



Overall, the results are positive with 54% of respondents saying they had very good or good physical health. 41% reported having okay physical health. This still leaves 5% of people who think they have bad or very bad physical health.



When asked what the most important thing was that young people did to stay physically well, the top three responses, in order (from the options given) were:

1. Eating healthily
2. Regular exercise
3. Drinking enough water to stay hydrated.

These were followed, and chosen in much smaller numbers, by:

4. Not Smoking
5. Avoiding drugs and alcohol
6. Getting enough sleep
7. Practicing safe sex.

When looking at the responses for young people who said they had very good or good physical health the top three areas remained the same, but with drinking enough water in second place and regular exercise in third. Eating healthily was in the top position by a clear margin.

For people who had responded okay, bad, or very bad, eating healthily was clearly the most important with regular exercise second and drinking enough water in third place.

No one who described their physical health as bad or very bad said that regular exercise was important to them to stay physically well.

Physical health and link to emotional and mental health

Of the 24 people who identified themselves as having very good physical health:

- Only one person said they had very bad emotional and mental health
- Twelve (12) said their emotional and mental health was very good
- Six (6) said their emotional and mental health was good
- Five (5) said their emotional and mental health was okay.

Of the 85 people who identified themselves as having good physical health:

- Nineteen (19) said their emotional and mental health was bad
- One person stated it was very bad.

The remaining 65 stated their emotional and mental health was:

- Very good (7)
- Good (30)
- Okay (28).

Of 83 people who said they had okay physical health:

- 19 said they had bad or very bad emotional and mental health.

The remaining 64 stated their emotional and mental health was:

- Very good (1)
- Good (11)
- Okay (52).

Of the ten people who said they had very bad or bad physical health six said they had bad or very bad mental health and just two said their emotional and mental health was good or very good.

The results show a link between physical and mental wellbeing. Those who are physically well have higher satisfaction with their emotional and mental wellbeing. Those who said their physical health is bad or very bad, had higher levels of dissatisfaction with their emotional and mental health.

Where people identified having good or very good physical health, there were many responses saying what they would do if they felt they needed help to stay well.

This included:

- Stating they needed to do more exercise, including going to the gym and walking more
- Eating better or more regularly
- Stopping smoking.

People were quite specific in their answers with only 10% not responding.

There was no mention of people not knowing where to go to get help. They knew what to do. This potentially shows how the importance of people knowing what they need to do to stay well impacts how they feel about their physical health. There were few comments saying they were unsure what to do.

Where people identified as having okay physical health there were more comments stating they were uncertain about what they needed to be doing to stay well.

Some respondents said they were unsure and uncertain of what they should be doing. This included mentions of:

- Needing motivation
- Finding things to do
- Finding people to do things with.

There was also a greater proportion who had chosen not to respond to this question.

Improving young people's physical health

When asked what would improve your physical health, the top three suggestions were:

- Exercise
- Healthy eating
- Both (Exercise & Healthy eating).

Overwhelmingly people who responded to this question (155) stated they knew what to do to improve their physical health. Young people with the knowledge to improve physical health should be encouraged to form healthy habits in the hope that this would set them up to leading healthy lives into adulthood.

Eighty-nine (89) young people said exercise would improve their physical health. This was followed by Healthy Eating (16) and Both (Exercise and Healthy eating) (13).

Twelve (12) young people said sleep would improve their health and 11 said increased social activity. Eight young people stated stopping smoking, with three young people suggesting drinking more water.

Young people were given the opportunity to share what help they needed to improve their physical health. Their responses show that they view exercise as an important factor in staying physically healthy.

Suggestions given by young people for help and support needed to improve their physical health were:

Increased awareness and promotion of different types of exercise; people said they want to find something they enjoy as they know they will continue with this.



**Do something I enjoy.
Find a sport that works for me.
Have fun exercises instead.**



Better access to groups to meet people and take part in different types of physical activity and exercise. Several people mentioned walking groups as people walk on their own and would like to walk with other people.



Walking groups with people of my own age as I do not know of any. I go walking on my own, but it would be good to go with others.



Opportunities to increase confidence to meet people make new friends and try out new things.



(exercise) I lack the confidence to do so regularly.



Easier access to healthy foods; skills and knowledge of how to prepare healthy foods.



**Advice on workout routines and meals to try.
Healthier options in the canteen would be great.
Less available junk food.**



Help with motivation to be healthy and develop routines



Need something to motivate me to do something.



Costs need to be considered, ensuring there is no negative effect on those living with social inequality.



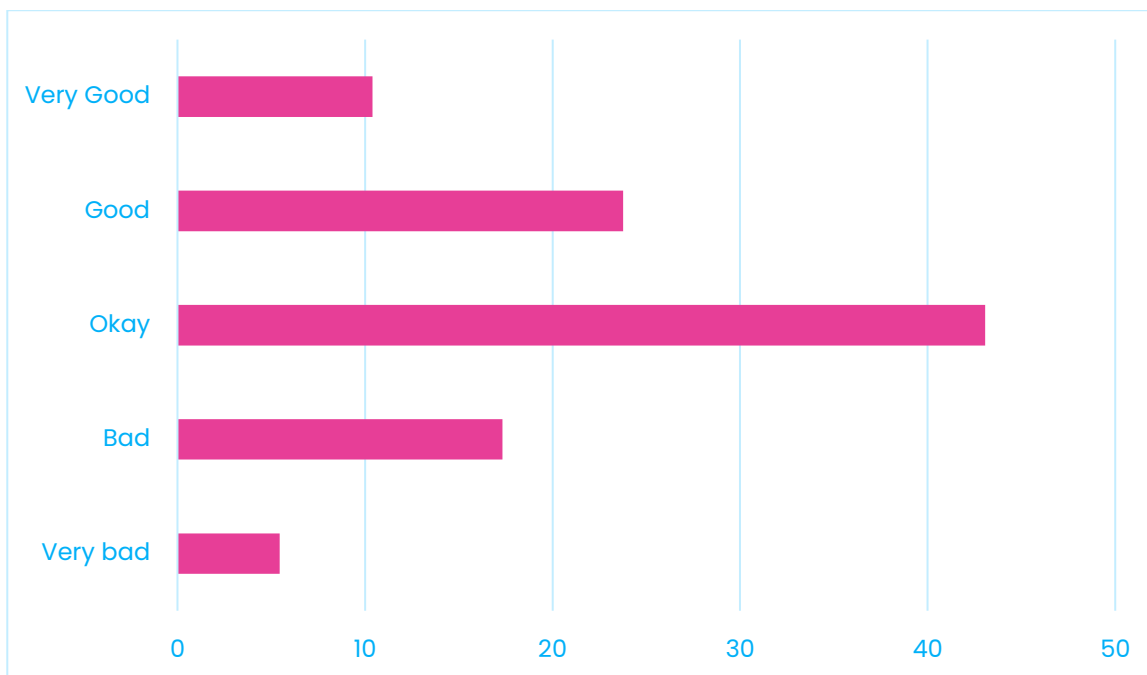
Gyms are cheaper and have membership discounts.

More outside gyms. There are none, or they get vandalised.



Keeping Well – emotional and mental health

Overall, the results show 34% of respondents saying they had very good or good emotional and mental health and 43% having okay emotional and mental health.



The remaining 23% of people consider themselves to have bad or very bad emotional and mental health.

It is of concern that young people are stating poor levels of emotional and mental health. However, it is to be valued that they feel able to share this with Healthwatch. This is also reflected by the many respondents who say it is important to talk to others when they are not feeling emotionally or mentally well.

When asked what the most important thing was that young people did to stay emotionally and mentally well, the top three responses, in order (from the options given) were:

1. Relaxing – with a hobby; reading, music, nature, helping others, learning new things
2. Eating healthily
3. Regular exercise.

This was followed, and chosen in smaller numbers, by:

4. Connecting socially – with friends or family
5. Talking to someone when I need help
6. Avoiding smoking drugs and alcohol
7. Getting enough sleep.

When looking at the responses for people who said they had very good or good emotional mental health the top three areas remained as above. Eating healthily was clearly at the top followed by regular exercise in second and relaxing in third place.

For people who responded okay, or good emotional mental health relaxing was the most important followed by regular exercise and healthy eating in third place.

For people who responded bad or very bad emotional mental health relaxing was the most important followed by healthy eating and regular exercise in third place.

Improving young people’s emotional and mental health

When asked what would improve your emotional and mental health the top suggestions were:

- Talk to someone, when I need help (with family, friends, or a trusted person)
- Relax – with a hobby, reading, music, nature, helping others, learning new things
- Connect socially
- Access therapy or treatment when I need to
- Get enough sleep

- Exercise.

166 people answered this question.

Talking to someone was the most popular suggestion with 45 young people saying this would help to improve their emotional and mental health. This was followed by relaxing (20) and socialising (20).

Nineteen (19) people said that accessing therapy, treatment or professional support would improve their emotional and mental health. 11% of the people who completed this question said they currently needed help for their emotional and mental health.

Sixteen (16) people said that getting enough sleep would benefit them. Twelve (12) people said exercise would help them.

Nine (9) people also said they did not know what to do to improve their mental health.

It is positive that many young people can identify what they need to do to improve or maintain their emotional and mental health. However, the results highlight a need for easier access to help and support for young people alongside raising awareness of resources and support that is available.

Young people who said they had good or very good emotional and mental health gave a broad range of responses to this question including:

- Talking to family, friends, or professionals about their concerns
- Connecting with others
- Socialising
- Getting more sleep
- Doing more exercise
- Eating healthily
- Not using their computer so much
- Going outside in nature
- Being with animals
- Relaxing
- Staying positive.

People who said they had good or very good emotional and mental health also said they knew what to do to stay well. This could show a link between having knowledge of what is needed to stay well. This could mean young people are empowered to improve

their emotional and mental health. They have the tools and knowledge to maintain good emotional and mental health.

Where people identified as having okay emotional and mental health there were more comments about:

- Needing to socialise more (with family and friends)
- Needing to have people to socialise with
- Having the confidence to speak up about how they are feeling.

There were also comments which stated 'relax more' but not specifying how. This is different from the people who have very good or good emotional and mental health. They were more likely to specify how they relax to improve their wellbeing in their responses.

Where people identified as having bad or very bad emotional and mental health, several people shared they were currently getting professional help. For example, from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Others stated they did not know what to do or whom to talk to. Although they knew they should talk to someone. 'More people to talk to. I don't know how to make this happen.'

People were given the opportunity to share what help they needed to improve their emotional and mental health. They could also share things that could be improved for all young people.

There were similar themes raised as those needed to help improve physical health. This again supports the link between physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

Suggestions given by young people regarding of help and support needed to improve their emotional and mental health and stay well were:

How to get more friends and socialise more. (This may be more significant now because of the impact of Covid 19. Young people had not been able to meet face-to-face. This could have had an effect on young people and their confidence.) Moving to a college could also have an impact. It is a new environment where there are new experiences and challenges.



**Start being more social.
Finding good people to chill out with.
More people to talk to. I don't know how to make
this happen.**



**To make myself keep talking to people which is hard as I have autism. I
would like to know what else to do.**

They want to know what to do when they need help and what they can do to help them stay well. This highlights the need for promotion of the help and support available. Young people should be encouraged to ask and talk about their emotional and mental health.



**I would like help but don't know how to get it.
I would like to be able to talk to someone about my
emotions. My mental health goes up and down.
Advice on things to do to calm me down.**



Wider awareness of different sorts of exercise. People want to find something they enjoy. This would benefit their emotional and mental health as well.



Knowledge of calming exercises or doing something I enjoy.



Easier access and knowledge of groups. This would bring opportunities to increase confidence to meet people, make new friends, and try new things.



I only link with family and friends. Maybe I should do more but not sure what to do or how to do it.



Help with motivation and developing routines to improve their emotional and mental health.



Start being more social, I need to just start doing it.



Recommendations

Findings to be read and considered as insight to help identify and address priorities for children and young people in Derbyshire.

To be used by suitably placed organisations, for implementation as appropriate, across the health and care system.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Continuous promotion of health and wellbeing support available for young people. A variety of communication methods should be used across a range of locations. This includes education establishments and health or care settings.
- The message of physical health leading to better emotional and mental health to be clearly promoted in Derbyshire. Help, support, and advice should be offered to young people on how to achieve this.
- Easy access and short waiting time for young people in need of mental health support.
- Targeted and more focussed work for people who have poorer physical health. They have a potentially greater risk of poor mental health
- Promotion of positive ways to improve physical health. Statutory and voluntary sectors to work together to provide diverse opportunities for being more active.
- Provision and promotion of opportunities (including volunteering) for young people to socially connect to increase their confidence and wellbeing. This was affected by Covid 19 socialising restrictions at an important time in their life.
- Better access to affordable opportunities to exercise:
 - There are several mentions of outside gyms in the survey responses. How can they be better used so that young people feel safe and confident using them?

- Promote and advertise walking groups at colleges or in the people's local area. Allowing them meet other young people and enjoy being active and outdoors in nature.
- Promotion of forming positive habits for a healthy lifestyle including:
 - Healthy eating
 - Staying hydrated
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Smoking/vaping cessation.

Particular consideration should be given as to how they are promoted to young people, with a range of methods and tools used to capture and engage with young people.

Thank you

Healthwatch Derbyshire would like to thank the young people for taking the time to complete the survey and share their honest answers.

Derby College (Broomfield Hall Campus) and Chesterfield College for letting us join their fresher events.

Healthwatch volunteers for assisting with the engagement sessions at the colleges along with devising and testing the survey.

Disclaimer

The comments outlined in this report should be taken in the context that they are not representative of all young people within Derbyshire but nevertheless offer useful insight.

It is important to note that the engagement was carried out within a specific time frame and therefore only provides a snapshot of people's views as shared with Healthwatch staff and volunteers.

They are the genuine thoughts, feelings, and issues people shared with Healthwatch Derbyshire. The data should be used in conjunction with, and to complement, other sources of data that are available.



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