From conversations to change

healthwatch Hertfordshire

Young people on health and social care

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Children and young people are often discussed but rarely consulted. At Healthwatch, we constantly seek to amplify community voices, and we recognise how important it is to understand what matters to children and young people. We have gathered a series of case studies to share with local providers and commissioners. Through this work, we will highlight the importance of listening to young people's insights and experiences for them to benefit from a health and social care system that reflects their needs and values their voices.

We also met with local young people aged 12-19 and asked them to rank which health and social care topics they deem **most important**. Below are the categories voted for, sized according to votes received. We then asked young people to share **priorities** (page 2) and **challenges** (page 3).

SEND

Mental health

Drug use/effects

Long-term conditions

A&E

Primary care

Neurodiversity

Young carers

This work was done in partnership with the ICB Youth Council and the University of Hertfordshire's Young People's Advisory Group.

Dieting, body image and eating disorders

Managing acute illness (short-term conditions)

Long-term and lifelong conditions and their impact on everyday mental well-being

How to support peers

Self-confidence and managing anxiety

The mental and physical repercussions of bullying

Our priorities

Information about medication – how to use it safely

Sexual health services and information

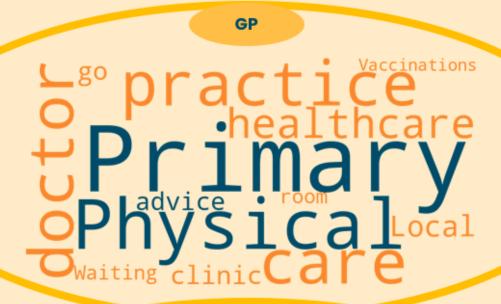Social media and its impact on mental health

Smoking, vaping and using snus

Weed smoking and other drug use and their effects

Staying safe at home, at school and out-and-about

Genetic disorders

Loss of outdoor play and connection with nature

Over-working (GCSEs and A Levels)

Growing up too fast

anxiety

Vaping addiction

Social media and mental health

Staying safe online

The mental and physical repercussions of bullying

Our challenges

The 'manosphere' – misogyny and related issues

Access to healthcare

Social media and its impact on mental health

Bullying

Casual stereotyping

Body image and appearance insecurities

Healthy lifestyle and eating

Discrimination and prejudice

Anxiety about the state of the world

Generalised mental health difficulties

"... Too many to choose!..."

Finally, we asked young people what their **first thoughts** were when we said the words **GP** and **dentist** to them...

GP

go practice Vaccinations
doctor healthcare
Primary
advice room
Physical Local
Waiting clinic care

Dentist

Bright expecting free Teeth
time know month Pain scrapers
chair usage lights
mouthwash equipment
Dental appointment

Successfully supporting young people begins with listening to them. The upcoming case studies will cover a variety of themes concerning the experiences of young people living in Hertfordshire. The insights from these case studies will demonstrate to **local decision makers** the importance of centring young people's voices in matters that affect them and will help providers to make services betters suited to our young people.

Youth voices matter. They need to be in the room, not just on the agenda.