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# Introduction and Background

## Four years of college engagement

Healthwatch West Sussex has attended Chichester College Group Freshers Fairs for the last 4 years.

Chichester College Group have seven colleges, Anglia Examinations, First Steps Childcare Group, Chichester English School and 2,600 staff spread across West Sussex and Brighton & Hove. This makes them the largest college group in Sussex, providing high quality learning opportunities for over 25,000 students every year.

Year on year Healthwatch has built on the learning gained from each event, to help us to plan and deliver more engaging, interactive and informative displays, talking to more young people and capturing more voices.

In our first year we attended just two of the college campuses in West Sussex, Chichester and Crawley.

Following the expansion and merger of the group, we were invited to attend seven of their eight campus sites – Chichester, Crawley, Haywards Heath, Brinsbury, Northbrook Broadwater, Northbrook Durrington and Worthing.

With our resources and capacity in 2023, we were able to attend five events between 4 and 8 September, where we spoke to approximately 300 young people across week.

We have a strong relationship with the Student Services Teams across the College Group and have supported them with evaluations and future planning for the annual freshers fair programme.

# What did we do & how did we do it?

## Collaboration and Co-Design

For our 2023 engagement, planning began in July, when the college group confirmed dates for the September fairs and our Lead Youth Volunteer was tasked with drawing up initial plans and ideas to share with the team.

In collaboration with the staff team and other volunteers, we started by looking at and reflecting on the learning from previous years.

We identified what worked well and what needed to be done differently, taking into account the resources and anticipated capacity within the team.

A number of ideas were debated, and we asked for feedback from our Youth Network members and young people who had worked with us in recent months.

Although a little risqué, a casino theme was agreed as the basis for our engagement activities as we knew this would draw young people to our table and would look interesting and engaging.

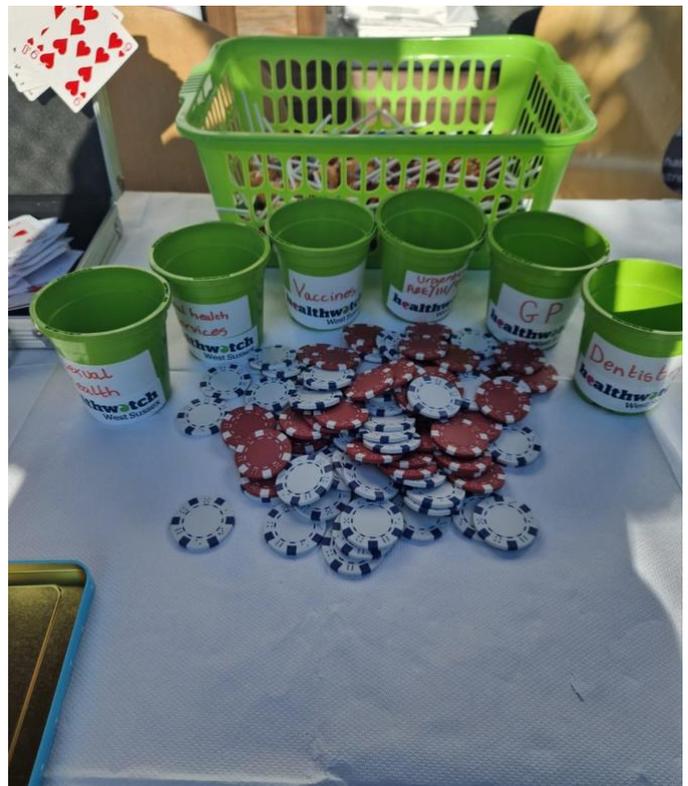
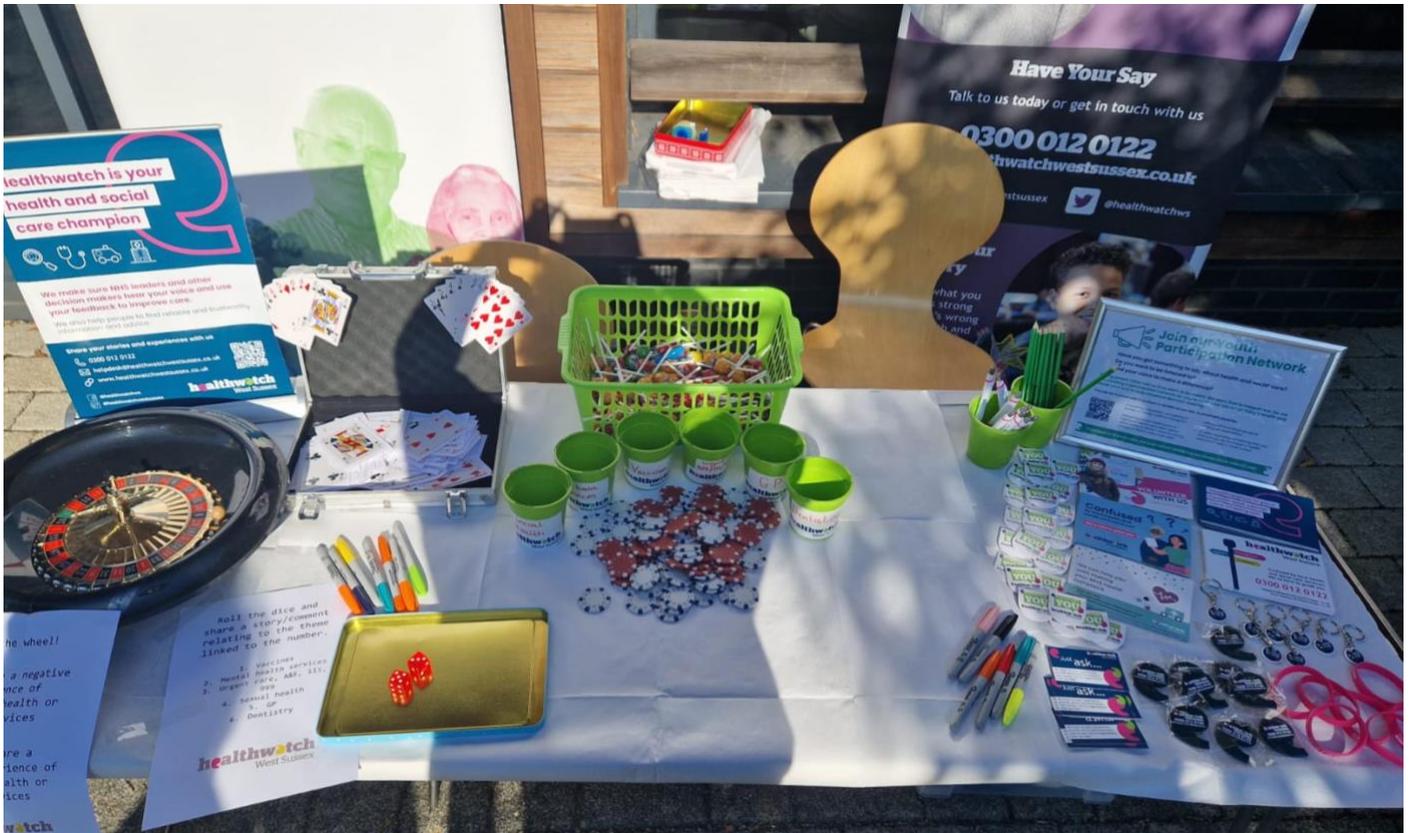
We have found the 'graffiti' table to be very popular in recent years, so we wanted to keep this element of interactive engagement and complimented it with a dice activity, a playing cards activity, a poker chips activity, and a roulette wheel activity as described below.

We chose our 6 key themes and topics based on previous key themes, considering more recent system challenges, insight we have heard from the public and in consultation with our Youth Network and young people we have had contact with.

Activity	Method / purpose						
Graffiti Table	We wrote a key message on the tablecloth – ‘Are you gambling with your health and wellbeing?’ – and invited students to scribble their thoughts / messages / experiences of health and care services.						
Dice Activity	<p>We asked students to roll a dice and then share an experience / view / comment on a health / wellbeing topic relating to the number they rolled:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 – Mental Health</td> <td>2 – Sexual Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 – GP Services</td> <td>4 – Urgent or Emergency Services (999/111/A&amp;E/UTC/MIU)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 – Social Care</td> <td>6 – Vaccinations</td> </tr> </table>	1 – Mental Health	2 – Sexual Health	3 – GP Services	4 – Urgent or Emergency Services (999/111/A&E/UTC/MIU)	5 – Social Care	6 – Vaccinations
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5 – Social Care	6 – Vaccinations						
Poker Chips Vote	<p>We asked each student to take 3 poker chips. We had 6 pots labelled with 6 topics / themes and asked students to vote on which topic they felt was the most important to them. They could place all their poker chips in one pot or spread them across 2 or 3, depending on the strength of their view.</p> <p>The six topics were the same as those for the dice activity *</p>						
Cards – feedback	We had playing cards with blank sides for students to note comments, feedback or personal accounts that they didn't want to write publicly in the tablecloth.						
Roulette Wheel	<p>We invited students to spin the wheel and throw in the roulette ball ... if it landed on red, we asked them to share a negative experience or view of health or care services and if it landed on black, we asked them to share a positive view or experience. To help to prompt them, we added themes as follows:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 – 6 = Mental Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 – 12 =Sexual Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 – 18 =GP Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19 – 24 =Urgent / Emergency Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 – 30 =Social Care</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31 – 36 =Vaccinations</td> </tr> </table>	1 – 6 = Mental Health	7 – 12 =Sexual Health	13 – 18 =GP Services	19 – 24 =Urgent / Emergency Services	25 – 30 =Social Care	31 – 36 =Vaccinations
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Over the 5 sessions we attended, we spoke to around 300 students with an average of 60 interactions per day.

We found that our casino display and activities generated a hugely positive response with a lot of interest which drew people to our table and was a great conversation starter!



# What did we hear?

## Key themes and common issues

In previous years we have been able to find out from young people what they feel are the most pertinent health, care and wellbeing issues for them.

The following have always come up as high priorities for young people in West Sussex [in no particular order]:

- Mental Health
- Sexual Health
- Urgent Care (emergency and urgent services)
- Primary Care (GP services)

This year we heard much the same – which indicates that things haven't changed or improved for young people in the 4 years that we have been collecting this data.

The top 4 themes were [in ranked order]:

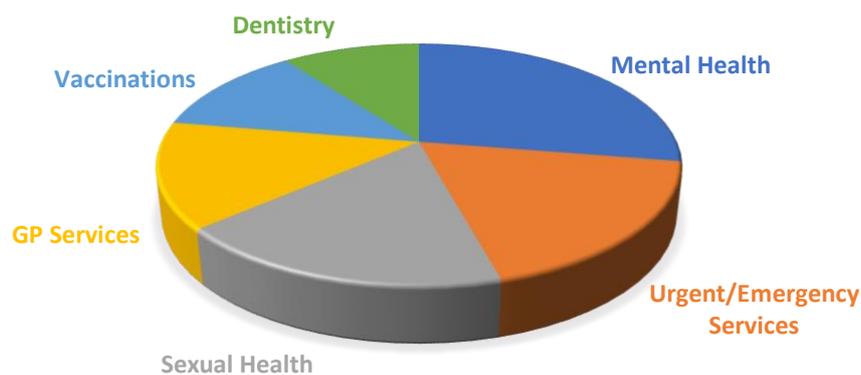
1. Mental Health (Most important)
2. Urgent/Emergency Care
3. Sexual Health
4. GP Services

2023	Crawley	H. Heath	NB B'water	NB D'ton	Worthing	TOTALS	Average total
Dentistry	12	16	18	15	14	<b>75</b>	19
GP Services	17	21	26	24	16	<b>104</b>	26
Mental Health	28	51	30	68	26	<b>203</b>	51
Sexual Health	24	28	26	33	20	<b>131</b>	33
Urgent/Emergency Services	18	16	30	45	25	<b>134</b>	34
Vaccinations	13	26	16	18	16	<b>89</b>	22

We also heard high numbers of stories relating to dentistry and vaccinations.

Dentistry has been a theme over the last 2 or 3 years and Vaccinations is new for 2023.

## KEY THEMES 2023



## Emerging themes and new issues

Some new and emerging themes this year include:

### Vaccinations

Across the 5 sessions, around **100** young people talked to us about their hesitance, anxiety, and mistrust of vaccines.

We heard a lot of 'myths' and 'rumours' about vaccines in that they were 'ineffective' or caused long term health issues and negative reactions in large numbers of people.

Much of this was anecdotal and young people had no evidence or data to back up these views, just hearsay and debate via peers / social media.

This prompted a lot of interesting and intense discussion at all the sites we attended,

We spoke to young people about the other products, chemicals, and consumables they put on or into their bodies.

For example:

- make up and beauty products
- fast food and convenience snacks
- alcohol and drugs

We asked them if they were aware of the full ingredients of any of these products and if they check them or google them or even give any thought to what might be in them, before they use or consume them.

This seemed to be a good way to highlight the risks v's benefits discussion and gave the young people we spoke to, an opportunity to stop and think.

Some of the young people we spoke to, told us that their decisions and views were influenced by their parents, grandparents and other family members.

We were told by at least 8 young people that their whole family were against any vaccinations and had therefore declined or refused vaccines of any kind in recent months/

Of these 8 families, 7 of the young people had received their childhood vaccines and cited the change in view as being influenced by the pandemic / post pandemic media.

## Friends and Family Experiences

For the first time, we heard from a number of young people that they were concerned, upset, or frustrated by the care or treatment experienced by friends or family.

The empathy and care demonstrated by young people in respect of other people's experiences was new this year and we were impressed at how articulately and passionately young people spoke about how negative experiences impacted them and their wider family.

'We had to wait for 6 hours for an ambulance when my Mum was sick and laying on the floor. It was very scary and seemed like such a long time. We felt forgotten'.

'My little brother had great care on Bluefin Ward at Worthing Hospital. The staff there were lovely and looked after all my family really well'.



"I called 999 because my Grandad was throwing up blood. The Ambulance took ages to come (several hours) and I thought it would be a priority. Grandad was in a bad way and was very upset"



## Insight & Experiences Collected

### Mental Health

- CAMHS lost my file then misdiagnosed me and refused all further communication.
- Men's mental health is not looked into enough.
- MIND is better than CAMHS!
- CAMHS and mental health support do not have enough staff.
- I've been on a CAMHS waiting list for 3 years.
- CAMHS diagnosis as a young child and lots of support then, but there are no relevant services for me now.
- CAMHS waiting list for 3+ years.

- CAMHS is crappy – I waited ages for support after I overdosed and have had no follow up after being in hospital.
- I had therapy during high school, now I'm at college there is no follow up or continuation of support.
- Mental health services need to be spoken about more and details of support and self-care needs to be taught in schools.

## Urgent Care

- 6hrs wait in A&E wasn't great!
- 10 hours wait in A&E.
- I was in A&E for 12 hours – mostly waiting and the last few hours being seen.
- After an allergic reaction I went to A&E. The reception team were so focussed on taking my details I collapsed/fainted which got me seen quicker!
- I called 999 because my Grandad was throwing up blood. The Ambulance took ages to come (several hours) and I thought it would be a priority. Grandad was in a bad way and was very upset.
- We had to wait for 6 hours for an ambulance when my Mum was sick and laying on the floor. It was very scary and seemed like such a long time. We felt forgotten.
- My Nan was on the floor for 4 hours waiting for an ambulance.
- I was seen quickly at Worthing Hospital A&E.
- I was involved in a car crash and the ambulance came really quickly and were great. A&E was shit! They didn't x-ray me and I ended up being sent home with a broken wrist, broken arm and broken collar bone – they had diagnosed my ankle injury and gave me crutches and an appointment at the fracture clinic – where they finally found all the other broken bones I had, a few days later!
- I cut my hands while riding my bike. Went to A&E who helped me really quickly.
- I broke my collar bone and waited hours in A&E, I then needed surgery on it and had to stay a couple of nights. They treated me well, but the waiting was awful (Worthing Hospital).

## GP's / Primary Care

- It is impossible to get a GP appointment.
- My Mum had to buy me an inhaler online when I couldn't get another one on prescription because I lost it.
- My local pharmacy helped me through a tough spell which ultimately led me to applying for here [college]
- The doctor's surgery never answer their phones – you can't get through.

- I was seen quickly by my GP – just 24 hours after calling – and they were very respectful of my privacy during the examination.
- My GP left and my family and I were allocated another one – but nobody told us!
- If I could change one thing in the NHS, I would make sure everyone had a named GP.
- GP appointments are hard to get – phone lines are always busy – receptionists are rude – no-one ever calls you back.

## Dentistry

- My dentist is great because I get very anxious – but I can't get an appointment, so I haven't been since before the lockdowns.
- I haven't had a dentist check-up since before Covid – I can't find an NHS dentist.
- I've been waiting to get braces for more than 2 years.
- My dentist is great with my autistic brother – very patient.

## Other

- I was taken off the young carers list without me knowing! [my brother is disabled]
- My little brother had great care on Bluefin Ward at Worthing Hospital. The staff there were lovely and looked after my family really well.
- Covid stats are a lie! We don't know which data to trust or believe.
- The sexual health clinic gave me treatment for chlamydia and kept it all private
- The NHS has really helped me out.
- My nurse was old, and I didn't feel comfortable with her
- I come from Germany and the healthcare is much more progressive there – it is very confusing here with so many different places to go for different things!
- I haven't had a Covid vaccine because I really don't like needles. If it was a pill or a nose spray [like flu] then I would be happy to have it
- I went to South Africa for an operation because the wait was too long in England [I have family in SA]
- I had blood tests and an ultrasound scan. They told me I would get a review appointment in 2 to 3 weeks, and I wasn't contacted for 3 months – and only because I chased with my doctor.
- I had a problem with my leg and was sent to physio. They saw me quickly and it was a good service. I felt better after treatment. (Worthing Hospital)

# Actions and Opportunities to Follow Up

## Networking and Partnerships

Attending the events hosted by Chichester College Group enabled us to network and develop relationships with existing and new partners.

We have been able to collaborate with the NHS Sexual Health Teams on public engagement and involvement activities following the introductions and conversations we have had at fresher fairs over the years.

This year we built on our relationships with representatives and colleagues from the following organisations –

- AudioActive Worthing
- Chichester College Group Student Union(s)
- Chichester Theatres
- The Hawth Theatre
- Mid Sussex Voluntary Action
- The Terrence Higgins Trust
- University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
- UHST West Sussex Sexual Health Team
- Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester
- West Sussex Libraries Team
- West Sussex Fire and Rescue
- West Sussex Waste Prevention Team

## Learning

The Chichester College Group ask us to evaluate and reflect on the events we attend and feedback to them regarding the hospitality, communication, environment, facilities etc

As part of this evaluation, we identified areas of learning for both the hosts and for ourselves.

In addition, a team de-brief was undertaken the week after the events, to consider what worked well and what we might do differently next year.

The following points were raised, explored and have been noted for future planning

- Having access to power is essential and enables us to display our website / social media
- Having interactive and engaging activities are a huge benefit to attracting and encouraging participation – the casino theme was a big hit!
- The graffiti table could be used across all engagement activities, with all ages and demographics
- A minimum of 2 team members are required to deliver the events successfully
- Freebies are good to have, but not essential if you have an engaging activity
- Keyrings were not very popular but pens / pencils were popular with students
- Having a QR code linked to social media or a survey / poll is a good idea
- Our location and placement at events does make a difference – arriving early enabled us to negotiate where we were located and we found that we were able to engage with more people if we were not adjacent to similar stands / services or where there were noisy/busy activities taking place
- Setting up our display with chairs next to the table, rather than behind, really improves communication and interaction with people
- Wandering around the event, rather than waiting passively at our display, also encourages engagement and interaction
- Planning and preparation are key – we packed 3 event kits which were shared between staff members so that each member of the team had identical kit / resources and could replicate the same display and activities at each event
- A de-brief with all team members soon after the events is helpful to capture the learning

## Actions to follow up

Action	When
Insight entered on HW insight database	October 2023
Insight shared with system where relevant	October '23 – January '24
Report shared with Chichester College Group	Early 2024
Report shared with NHS Sussex CYP Teams	Early 2024
Learning from engagement events to be shared with Healthwatch engagement team to influence future engagement plans	Early 2024
Meet with Chichester College Group Student Reps / Student Union to explore future engagement and involvement opportunities	Spring 2024
Follow up opportunities for partnership working with teams and organisations networked with during events	Spring 2024
Start planning for 2024 Freshers Fairs – building on learning from 2022/2023	Spring / Summer 2024

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Chichester College Group for their invitation to attend these events, for their hospitality and for our ongoing relationship with them.

We would like to particularly mention Mickey Day and Andrew Burgess for their support.

We would like to recognise the student union and support teams at all the college sites and, of course, the year 12 students who attend the events in their first week as a college student.

We are always impressed with the maturity and positive attitude of students who speak to us and trust us to share their stories with.

Our team for the 2023 events were:

- Hannah Rickwood – Lead Youth Volunteer and Planning Lead for Freshers Fairs 2023
- Jo Tuck – Staff Team
- Zoey Harries – Staff Team



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