



**Healthwatch Halton**  
**Young People's Mental Health Report**  
*Finding Help and Support*  
March 2021

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Statistical data rounding errors: Figures in this report have been rounded, and discrepancies may occur between sums of component items and totals. All percentages have been calculated using unrounded figures. Percentages are normally rounded to up to one decimal place.

## Introduction

Healthwatch Halton act as the voice of the public in the delivery of health and social care services.

We collect feedback from the public about their experiences of using health and social care services and share that information with service providers and commissioners to look for ways in which services can be improved.

One of the ways that we collect feedback is by carrying out focused projects that look at a particular service or condition.

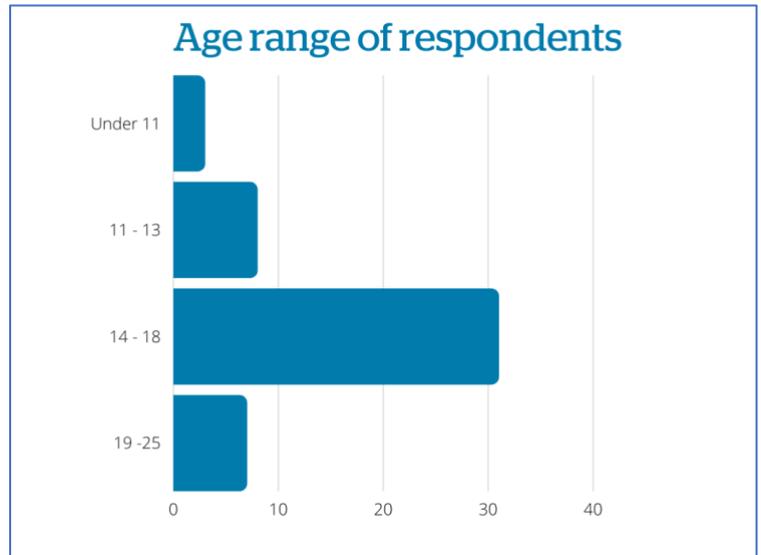
On this occasion we chose to look at the initial support available for children and young people around mental health and well-being and how young people would go about getting help if they needed it.

## What we did

Healthwatch Halton designed a short online survey to gather the views and experiences of young people on where they would go to access support for their mental health.

The initial plan for the project was to carry out a number of face to face sessions with local young people's groups to gather their thoughts and views. Due to the introduction of the lockdowns and the pausing of all face to face engagement by Healthwatch Halton the decision was taken to just run the online survey. This was promoted widely by Healthwatch Halton through social media and the voluntary sector networks in Halton.

## Who took part?

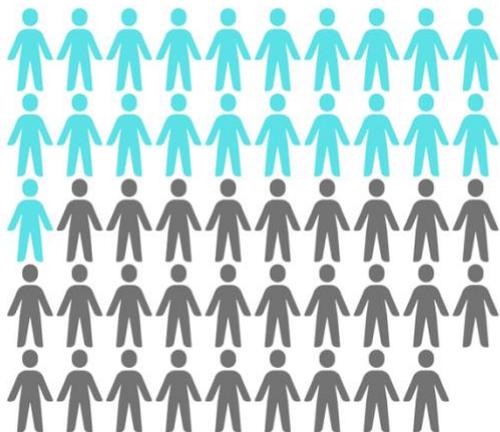


49 young people took part in the survey.

- 31 (63%), were in the 14 - 18 age group.
- 11 (22%) were under 14 years old,
- 7 (15%) were in the 19-25 age group.
- 22 respondents described their gender as Female, 19 as Male, 2 stated their gender as Non-binary/neutral, with 4 preferring not to say and 2 not giving a response.

## Results and Finding

### Have you ever accessed support for mental health?

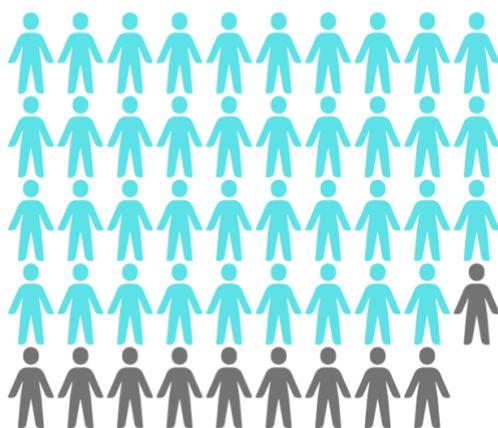


**Yes**  
**21**

**No**  
**28**

28 respondents said they had never accessed support for their mental health while 21 respondents, (43%), told us they had accessed support at some point.

### Do you know where to get help from?



**Yes**  
**39**

**No**  
**10**

39 respondents, (80%), said that they knew where they could help from for their mental well-being if they needed it.

10 respondents, (20%), said that they did not know where to get help from.

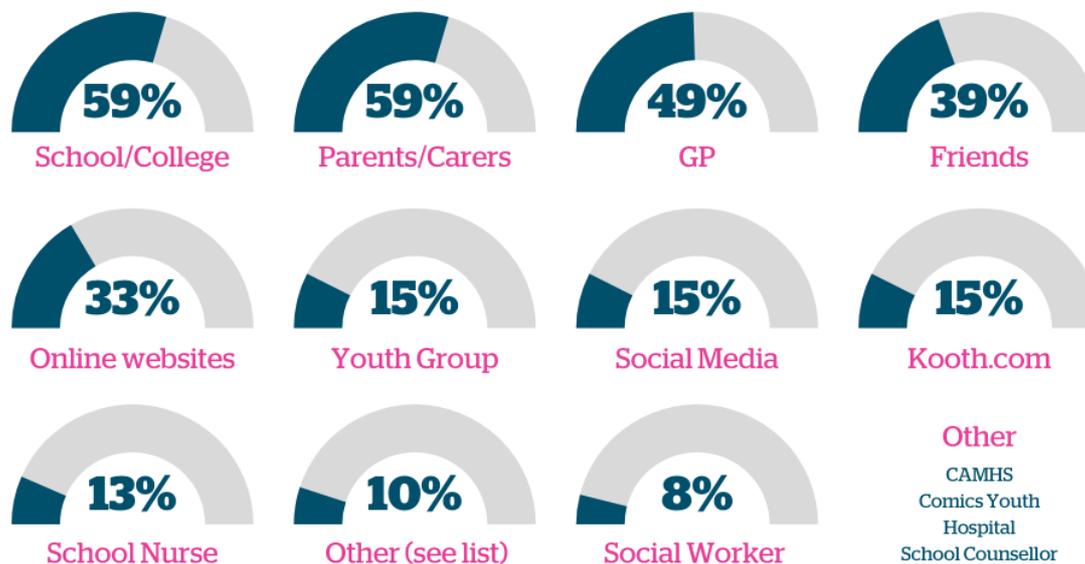
One young person told us, *'I mostly know, but sometimes there's a lot of information, which means you might not know where to start.'*

Another young person said they knew where to go to get help, *'Only because I went out of my way to find out'*.

A further one replied that they knew where to go, but said, *'I don't like the place, so I don't tend to go there.'*

## Choices

### Where can you get help from?



We asked the 39 young people who had answered 'Yes' to Question 3 to choose all the places they could go to for help and support.

The most popular answers were:

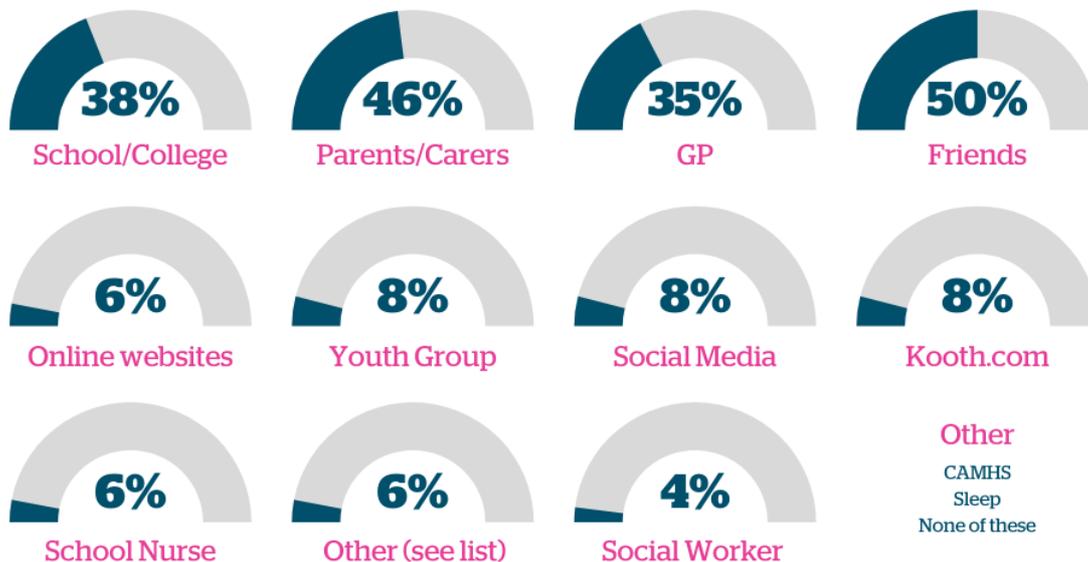
- 24 (59%) people listed parents/carers and school/college teachers as a source of help.
- 19 (49%) highlighted their GP
- 15 (39%) chose friends as somewhere they may go for help.
- 13 (33%) said they may look online as an option.

Other responses included:

Youth Groups, Social Media and Kooth.com with 15% listing these as possible options for help.

All respondents were then asked to choose up to three preferred places to get help for their mental wellbeing.

### Which are your 3 preferred options for help and support?



Friends were seen as the preferred support option by 50% of the young people who responded to the survey.

One young person spoke about their peer group, ‘*knowing what you’re going through*’, while another said, ‘*Getting support from friends is a preferred method because they know you and your struggles, meaning you don’t have to disclose information to professionals which might be uncomfortable or upsetting.*’

Friends were seen by many respondents as a source of ‘*advice and help in a way I feel is non-judgemental*’.

Parents/Carers were highlighted by 46% of young people as one of their three preferred options for help and support.

One person, echoing many of the other comments, told us they would speak to their parents/carers, ‘*because they know you more, this helps on a more personal way*’. Another told us, ‘*I would feel calm talking to them. They know me well.*’

Not all young people were as comfortable in seeking help or support from their families, with one telling us, *'I don't want to worry my mum'*, while another said, *'I prefer speaking to people who don't already know me as I feel I can be more open, and they can give you more professional advice.'*

Just over 1 in 3 respondents said they would seek help and support from their GP. With one respondent telling us, *'GPs because they know about the medical aspects regarding to mental health'*, while another young person said they would go to the GP, *'Because you see a doctor if you're not well.'*

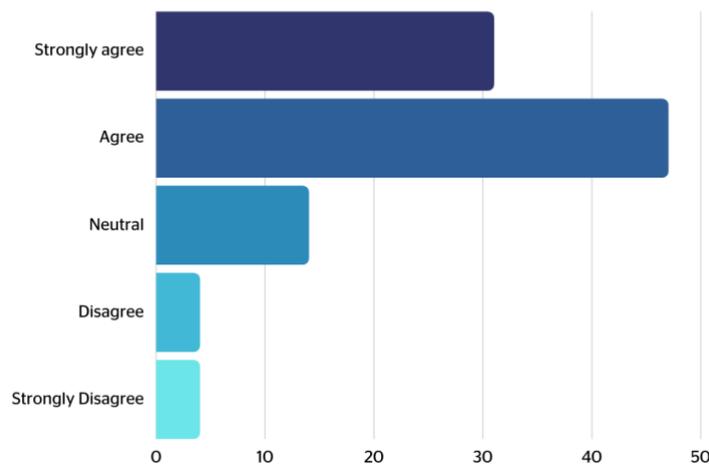
A small number of respondents, 8%, said online support was their preference. This was seen as an alternative way of getting help and support without having to involve family members, with one respondent saying, *'Online would mean you wouldn't have to speak to someone face to face which makes it easier.'*

Another said they would use online support, *'So that I don't have to be a burden on my parent or family or friends.'*

Online support was highlighted as a good early intervention by one young person who told us, *'There's a lot more resources online now to help you manage your emotions, Instagram accounts, online wellbeing resources, online guidance - which means you can get help earlier and quicker without needing to then access more 'serious' support such as through your GP. It's better to be able to drip feed support and resources to yourself and prevent it becoming a more serious issue later on.'*

One respondent felt the amount of online support could be overwhelming and confusing, *'but there sometimes a lot of information, which means you might not know where to start'*.

### I am confident I know where to get help if I need it



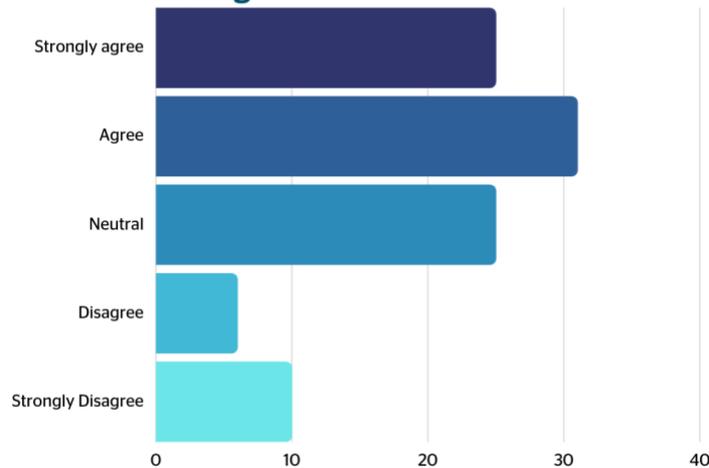
The majority of young people, 38 (78%), told us they were confident they knew where to get help if they needed it.

There were another 7, (14%), who gave a neutral answer.

4 young people, (8%), were unsure where to get help if they needed it.

A key part of the THRIVE model for mental well-being support is that low level support is accessible through schools/colleges, therefore young people were asked if they felt supported to look after their mental health at their school or college.

### I feel supported at school/college to look after my mental wellbeing



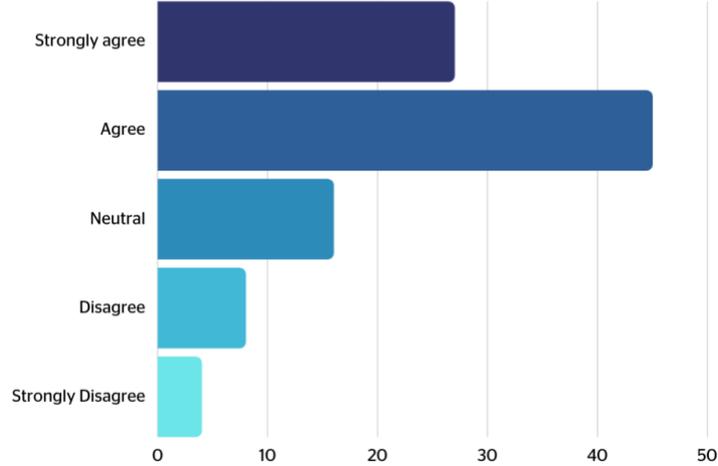
27 (56%) respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they feel supported at school to look after their mental well-being.

13 (27%) respondents gave a neutral answer.

8 (16%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were supported with one young person stating, *'I know friends and people in school who have waited a long time*

*to get counselling. They only got it because their mums properly chased it up.'*

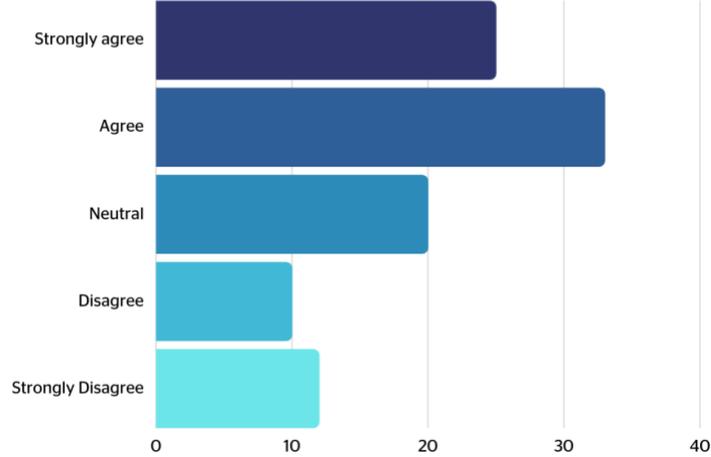
**I have enough information to be able to look after my mental wellbeing**



35 (72%), respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they had enough information to look after their mental wellbeing.

6 (12%) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had enough information while the remaining 8 (16%) gave a neutral response.

**I'm confident I will receive a caring response that meets my needs if I ask for help**

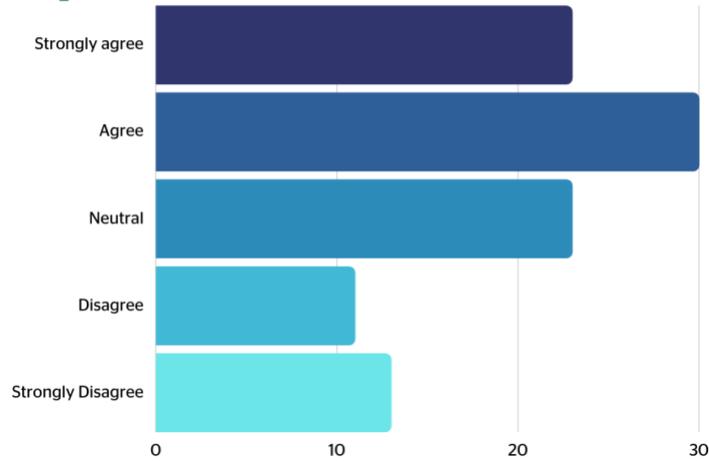


28 (58%) respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they would receive a caring response that met their needs if they asked for help.

10 (20%) gave neutral answers.

11 (22%) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**I'm confident I will receive support and treatment at the point I need it**



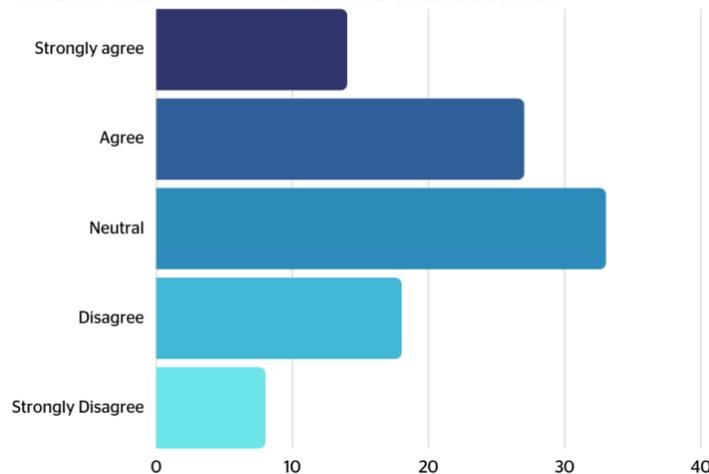
25 (53%) respondents said that they were confident that they will receive support and treatment at the point that they need it.

11 (23.5%) gave a neutral response.

11 (23.5%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would receive support and treatment at the point that they need it.

One young person stated, *'It will take months to get support and treatment at the point I need it.'* Another told us, *'There are so many delays to mental health support it's heart-breaking. I have lost a friend to suicide who was waiting far too long to access support.'*

**I'm confident I will be given a choice of where and when I will be seen and who will see me...**



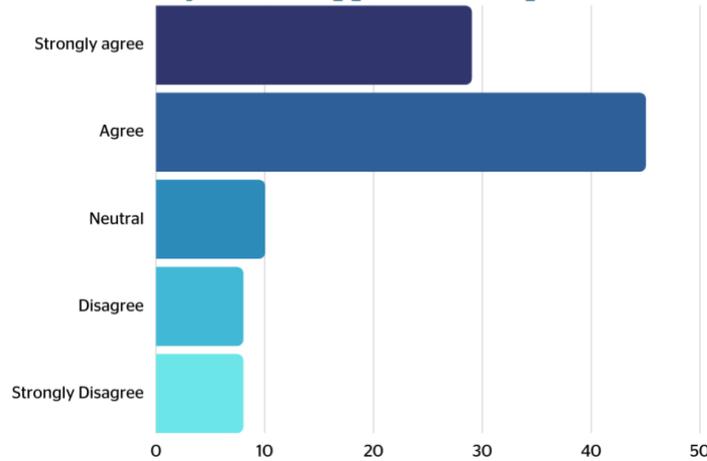
20 (41%) respondents were confident they would be given a choice of where and when they would be seen including who would see them and what care they would receive.

16 (33%) gave neutral answers, while 13 (26%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Feedback on this question highlighted some concerns

with one young person telling us, *'I also feel as if not all information is stated to me - generally regarding the steps to providing help, like the stages.'*

**I'm confident that if I want my family or carers to be involved they will be supported to help me**



36 (74%) respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were confident that their family or carers would be given the information and support that they need to help them, if they chose to have them involved. 8 (16%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with another 5 (10%) people giving a neutral answer.

Some of the young people who disagreed stated they didn't necessarily want family or carers involved, with one saying, *'I would be more reluctant to be more honest about my mental health if my mother was in the room'*, while a second said, *'I don't like the involvement of other people when it comes to myself; I prefer to have only myself be involved or I feel everything may be blown out of proportion and I won't end up any better.'*

## Conclusions

The number of young people that took part in this survey was relatively small and as such the results should be taken as a snapshot of the views and experiences of these individuals, rather than as generalised findings about the different types of help and support available for young people looking for help with their mental well-being.

Feedback does suggest that the majority of young people are in general aware of the options they have to get support. The results also show that young people knew where to go to get support to look after their mental well-being, and that for many, being able to go to trusted adults such as their parents, or professionals within education settings is important to them. Although some of the feedback received suggests that while a lot of young people want parental involvement there were a number who don't.

The numbers who said they would get help from school shows they are seen as really important to young people. This also causes us concern as many young people have been away from school for so long during the past year while at the same time many will have been away from their friends, the other go-to support option. These both highlight the potential need for a lot more youth services and mental health support locally.

Most young people had high expectations of how services would interact with them and how they would be involved in their support and treatment.

However, some of the feedback received suggests that young people's expectations aren't always met and there can be some barriers they face in being able to access services.

We see a need for young people to have a range of options for person-centred help and support when they need it. It shouldn't be a '*one-size fits all*' approach.

## Recommendations

- 1.** With a large number of young people choosing 'Friends' or 'School' as their preferred places for help and support we'd like to see consideration given to building on the mental health awareness campaigns already being carried out in schools:
  - a. We recommend that mental health support information should be given as part of a welcome pack for the yearly induction process in schools.
  - b. We'd like to see regular mental health awareness sessions being held in schools / colleges to make young people aware of how they could best support a friend if needed.
  
- 2.** The number of young people who took part in our survey was small and cannot be seen as being representative of the wider population of young people across Halton. We recommended further engagement with young people is undertaken to develop a better understanding of their knowledge of the support available and their experiences of using those services. In particular, we'd like to see partnership working with local schools and colleges to ensure this engagement reaches a greater number of young people.
  
- 3.** We recommend further work be carried out on what the barriers to accessing professional services are for some young people.
  
- 4.** We recommend an audit be carried out on the local mental health information available online to ensure it is up-to-date and correct.
  
- 5.** Halton CCG to meet with the service providers to discuss the findings in our report and report to Healthwatch Halton with their specific recommendations.

## Report update – May 2022

Since publication of this report in 2021 we have worked with commissioners to ensure the recommendations were fully considered, responded to, and acted on.

The following formal update was received from NHS Halton's CCG's Deputy Chief Nurse/ Children Clinical Lead on 22 May 2022.

	
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	Tel: 01925 303030
<p>21<sup>st</sup> May 2022</p>	
<p>Dave Wilson Healthwatch Halton Suite 5, Foundry House Widnes Business Park Waterside Lane Widnes WA8 8GT</p>	
<p>Dear Dave,</p>	
<p><b>Subject: Healthwatch Halton Thrive Report: 'Finding Help and Support'</b></p>	
<p>Firstly, thank you to both you and your team for the engagement work undertaken during the course of 2021 in relation to the Thrive agenda and the subsequent recommendations made within the Healthwatch Halton Thrive Report: 'Finding Help and Support'.</p>	
<p>As you are aware the recommendations from the Healthwatch report were discussed within a dedicated session of the Halton CYB Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Partnership Board with identified actions incorporated into the 2021/22 Children and Young People's action plan.</p>	
<p>Following a development session at the April 2022 Board meeting the action plan is currently being updated to reflect both the Transition paper presented by Halton Borough Council (HBC) in February 2022 and the Child of the North Report published in 2021.</p>	
<p>I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on the work to date in regard to the recommendations you identified, a number of which will remain on the 2022-24 action plan as detailed below.</p>	
<p>With a large number of young people choosing 'Friends' or 'School' as their preferred places for help and support we'd like to see consideration given to building on the mental health awareness campaigns already being carried out in schools.</p>	
<p>a) We recommend that mental health support information should be given as part of a welcome pack for the yearly induction process in schools.</p>	
<p>The Halton Mental Health Support Team (MHST) offer was launched across 14 schools in January 2022. The rollout across the remaining 31 schools identified as part of project is scheduled for the Autumn Term 2022. A bi-monthly operational group has been established to support this process with a quarterly performance monitoring process in place. The MHST Programme Manager is a member of the CYP EHWB and provides a bi-monthly update to the Board on progress. MHST has remained on the CYP EHWB Action Plan for 2022-24.</p>	

- b) We'd like to see regular mental health awareness sessions being held in schools / colleges to make young people aware of how they could best support a friend if needed.

All schools have access to the Healthy Schools Mental Health offer which includes workshops for staff-on-staff wellbeing as well as a variety of other support. This includes delivery of schools' staff wellbeing workshops; schools are encouraged to complete the Mental Health and Resilience in schools' self-assessment to support them to adopt a whole school approach and schools have continued to do this during the covid 19 pandemic. This process supports schools to consider policies and procedures as well as in addition to what staff can do to support themselves.

The Health Improvement Team meet with each school to look at Health Promotion / Involvement and to "sign up" for the wider Healthy Schools offer in place for specific planning and development, HBC colleagues deliver health checks for school staff.

The Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust 0-19 Team conduct a school review meeting with the Headteacher to look at underlying issues / priorities which supports specific planning and development.

- c) The number of young people who took part in our survey was small and cannot be seen as being representative of the wider population of young people across Halton.

We recommended further engagement with young people is undertaken to develop a better understanding of their knowledge of the support available and their experiences of using those services. In particular, we'd like to see partnership working with local schools and colleges to ensure this engagement reaches a greater number of young people. Explore how Healthwatch CYP health and social care engagement group can help support further engagement.

Further engagement to be raised for discussion at the Children's Commissioning Partnership Board about how best to do it. Discussion to be held with Youth Parliament on how they can support further engagement opportunities.

MHST conduct ongoing engagement as part of the in-house provision, this work is being cross referenced with engagement work conducted by HBC. Regular meetings have been established by the lead for both areas of work to ensure learning can be adopted.

- d) We recommend further work be carried out on what the barriers to accessing professional services are for some young people.

A Task and Finish (TAF) group has been established to review service transition from CYP to Adult services. The National Directive to extend CAMHS provision to 0-25 years by March 2023 will support this work and this TAF group will support the provider MerseyCare with the implementation work. For reassurance this action has been captured on the CYP EHWPB Action Plan 2022-24.

Initial discussion is underway with CAMHS and the Neurodevelopmental Nursing Team in relation to those young people presenting with Autism/ and or LD diagnosis to ensure they are considered when presenting with a mental health condition. The need and future requirements are being explored and an action has been captured on the CYP EHWPB Action Plan 2022-24.

e) We recommend an audit be carried out on the local mental health information available online to ensure it is up-to-date and correct.

The HBC Service Directory was launched in 2021, and additionally NHS Halton CCG developed a Directory of Services in the Autumn of 2021. The Directory of Services has been shared with the transition task and finish group to review as part of their work. This task and finish group action has been identified within the CYP EHWB action plan 2022-24.

f) Halton CCG to meet with the service providers to discuss the findings in our report and report to Healthwatch Halton with their specific recommendations.

As a result of the review of the report at the Board a broader provider representation is now in attendance on the CYP EHWB. This Board also has an action from the April 2022 meeting to re-review the membership to ensure it is fully representative, and suggestions are to be fed into the June 2022 Board meeting.

I would like to thank you and Healthwatch once again for completing this piece of work which has helped inform the work of the CYP EHWB Board.

Yours sincerely



Denise Roberts  
Deputy Chief Nurse/ Children Clinical Lead  
F2SU Guardian/ Caldicott Guardian  
NHS Halton CCG/ NHS Warrington CCG

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