



Young Person's Engagement Report



Contents

Content Warning – this report discusses suicidal feelings and self harm.

**Introduction and aim
of the project**

What we did

Our findings

**What young people
had to say**

**Our plans moving
forward and what
young people want**

Introduction and aim of the project

Healthwatch Walsall carry out projects to gather experiences, views and information to help shape health and social care services in Walsall. We have engaged with young people aged 14 – 24 from a wide range of backgrounds.

We wanted to find out what is important to young people when accessing Health and Social Care services, what they feel is missing and give young people an opportunity to have their voices heard.

What we did

Healthwatch Walsall have teamed up with young people from all around Walsall to engage with their peers, colleagues, friends and family. We have a small team called Youth Healthwatch who have been listening to what young people are saying, and

together, we decided to carry out a small project to ask questions and get to know what young people really think.



We did a poll on our social media platforms asking young people if they think Health and Social Care services need improvements. 100% of respondents voted 'yes'

We came together as a team and created a short survey, the questions were designed by the young people themselves as was the poster to advertise the survey.

We carried out the survey asking young people what matters most to them when accessing Health and Social Care services. We had an online version which we promoted through our social media platforms, and to be digitally inclusive to those who cannot access online services, we distributed paper copies by communicating with organisations that we work with, local businesses and liaised with a local pharmacy who asked their service users to complete them, our young listeners also engaged with people they know using the paper form.

100%
of people voted
health and social care in Walsall
could be improved!

We want Walsall young
people to get the best
health and social care
access possible!

So if you are 14 - 24 , take
part in a short survey. Tell
us how you feel about the
services in Walsall. Use the
link.
<https://tinyurl.com/2p98zku4> Or use the QR code

youth healthwatch
Walsall

If you want to join our
youth healthwatch team
then call 07732 683449
today!

Our findings

From our research we found that although there are many services available, young people are unaware of them and find there are barriers to accessing some services, including primary care and, particularly, mental health. Our team of young listeners spoke to individuals who shared their experiences around the barriers they faced accessing mental health services. To discuss these experiences further we decided to hold a small focus group where young people could come to talk about their health and well-being and what it means to them. We held the event on 10th October to celebrate World Mental Health Day. On the day we had the support of 5 young listeners who had not only accessed mental health services but also brought forward the experiences of their peers who had also accessed services.

The young people really enjoyed sharing their experiences and worked well together, supporting each other with useful advice and encouragement. And to end the day...we had pizza!



**Come and join
Healthwatch Walsall for
World Mental Health Day**

Food and refreshments will be provided.

Come and talk to us about Mental Health and what that means to you.

We want to listen to your thoughts on what services have worked for you and those that you think need improvements.

10th October 12 - 2 pm

Blakenall Village Centre, 79, Thames Road, Walsall WS3 1LZ
To express your interest, please contact
loretta.higgins@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk or call/text
07732 683449

The following page shows some of the experiences our young people shared with us, we would like to take this opportunity to advise you on some services you can access should you feel like you want talk to someone or feel you need support.

<https://www.kooth.com/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/>

Urgent mental health support



<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>

Ways to help yourself cope in a crisis



<https://anxiety.ecrm-registration.nhs.uk/>



Sign up for anxiety easing emails

<https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/>

What young people had to say

TRIGGER WARNING - some of the stories below discuss suicide and self harm.

One individual told us they have struggled with mental health from around 7 years old, some services have helped more than others and they found comfort in other places rather than mental health services, like a teacher that was at their senior school, who understood that they just needed to 'off load' or 'vent' at the end of the day. This teacher helped to support them. Having a good relationship with the professional that's helping you makes all the difference.

Another group member said they have accessed lots of different services from CAMHS to adult mental health and has also worked within mental health services. They are currently having CBT and it is working, they feel really happy, but their therapist has said their PTSD is too complex for the 12 weeks they have together. They have been told they need to do some work on their own.

One of the young people shared their friend's experience - their friend said they were really depressed and took an overdose in 2020, they were referred to CAMHS and afterwards, felt like they had improved, however in 2022 they experienced feeling low again and started to have anxiety. The friend said the advice they were given this time wasn't helpful to them. They received a letter from CAMHS advising them to take a bath, go for a walk or count to ten to help them, but they felt they needed more support than that.

Another individual from our group said - "people can bottle up their feelings, I think a service may put their attention on self harmers because they seem more of a danger to themselves, however there are others who are low and close to suicide but the professionals don't know. A person can seem bubbly, happy and be socialising but you do not know what is going on inside."

Another young person told us - "I accessed CAMHS, I went to the first appointment and was seen quite quickly and I knew straight away they weren't going to be able to help me. I went and got a private therapist, I would recommend a private therapist to anyone."

Feedback from young people about services.

"At therapy appointments the environments are too busy, too overwhelming with posters."

"There's a massive gap in resources for 18-30 year olds."

"Do not like therapy places to look like hospitals, it puts you off straight away. Just a normal room like this (the office we were in) would be fine."



"You feel under pressure to be 'fixed' in the 12 weeks you are given."

"I turned up to access a service, and it was a group setting, my anxiety was too bad for that, I didn't know it was a group, I wasn't told. I sat in a room and other people started walking in. I waited 6 months for the service."

"We need a texting social prescribing service, we don't like face to face."

(Social Prescriber/Link Worker - can refer to a range of local, non-clinical services).

"I was given an anxiety leaflet when I didn't have anxiety."

"Felt super uncomfortable and overwhelmed, it was a weird environment, like CAMHS talked to me like a child, they then spoke to my mom about me in front of me, I never felt like I could open up then."



What young people want

The young people told us what they think would be helpful to them when accessing services and getting help.

"Easy access to hobbies we can fill our time with. Sports, classes, online help. We know it is available but finding it can be hard."

"Easier access to services like signposting. Because we would not get to a really bad point."

"Social prescribing appointment when discharged."

"Are there free self help books? Can we be told about them? Can they be downloaded, if not can someone print them off?"

"Apps are good, we would like to be given more information on these."

Our plans moving forward

From the feedback we took at our World Mental Health Day focus group, the discussions and intelligence we have gathered and the responses from our survey, the young people agreed that communication played a role in the issues they have faced.

It seems there needs to be a better understanding of the services available to young people. Whilst there are many signposting services available in Walsall, young people are not aware of them.

Healthwatch Walsall and Youth Healthwatch have agreed a Communication Campaign would help to bridge the gap in accessing services, by finding out what is missing and seeing how young people really want to be communicated with.

As part of our original engagement survey, we asked, when accessing Health and/or Social Care ‘what service didn’t work for you and why?’ Young people told us they were unhappy with access to primary care services. Our young listeners spoke with their peers and found that most young people are unaware of what primary care services are available to them and how to access them.

To follow up on this, we have incorporated some questions into our Communication Campaign to explore this further.

Our Engagement plans

We will be sharing our survey in November and plan to engage with young people in Walsall through digital campaigns, community outreach, engagement and events. We are currently engaging with students who attend sixth form and are keen to support the campaign by doing research with students within their schools.

We will be sharing our engagement dates with the public via, social media, our website, newsletters, in schools, libraries, public places and with the help of organisations in Walsall.



Thank you

Healthwatch Walsall would like to say thank you to all the volunteers who supported us with this work and with our future plans. We could not do what we do without your support and dedication.

Healthwatch Walsall would also like to thank the organisations in Walsall who have supported us so far with the work we are doing. We look forward to the great things we plan to do together over 22/23.



Want to tell us what you think? Do you have a story you would like to share? Please contact us to find out how you can help shape Health and Social Care services for young people in Walsall.



Are you age 14-24? 

Have you accessed any Health and/or Social Care services?

Youth Healthwatch Walsall want to hear about your experience. 

Contact us on 07732 683449 or youthhealthwatch@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

youth healthwatch Walsall

Healthwatch are your independent organisation who champion the views of patients and social care users in Walsall. Tell us your views, needs and experiences to help Walsall get the best possible Health and Care.

   → YouthHealthwatch Walsall  → youthhwatch

Would you like to become a young listener?

Are you interested in Health and Social Care and would like work experience?

Are you aged 14 - 24 and would like to support your local champion Healthwatch Walsall in making positive changes to services?

Get in touch!



youth healthwatch Walsall

Are you a young person wanting to gain experience through volunteering?

Join our youth Healthwatch

At Youth Healthwatch Walsall we want to find out what young people think about health and social care services. We need young people to help us listen to others and feedback information. We use this information to make positive changes to services. **All are welcome!**



If you would like to get involved or join our team, contact us at youthhealthwatch@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk or call/text us on 07732 683449

 **VOLUNTEER**  **GET INVOLVED!**

 YouthHealthwatch Walsall  YouthHealthwatchWalsall

 @youthhealthwatch



**Engaging
Communities
Solutions**

healthwatch Walsall

79, Thames Road
Blakenall Village Centre
Walsall
WS3 1LZ

w: www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

t: 0800 4701660 / 07732 683 449

e: info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

e: loretta.higgins@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk