

## **How can we improve emotional health and wellbeing support for young people aged 16-25?**

### **Workshop engagement report June 2018**

In June 2018, we held a morning workshop and evening drop-in event to give people an opportunity to share their views on how we can improve mental health and wellbeing support for young people aged 16-25.

We invited people who use services, those who care for them, those who deliver the services and the wider public to attend these events, and 16 people attended:

- Five young people
- Eleven professionals/providers of mental health services

### **Summary**

Attendees were given an overview of the community mental health services review, including a summary of what people have told us so far about what works well or needs to change, and clarification on which specific services are being looked at by the review.

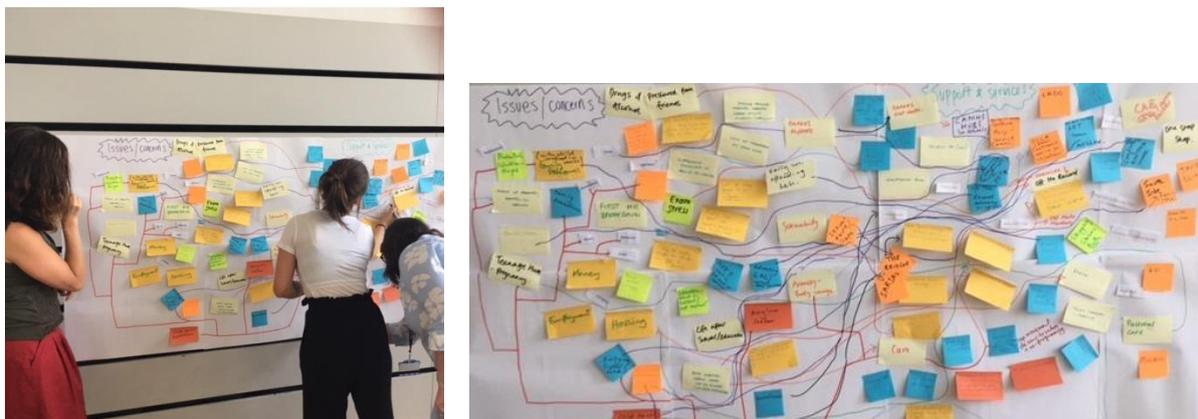
A sub-group focusing specifically on emotional health and wellbeing support for young people aged 16-25 were then asked to consider a number of questions:

- What are the current issues for young people aged 16-25 and what services and support are available?
- What are the issues with current support for young people?
- What is already in place?
- What more could be done?
- If you were in charge of an emotional health and wellbeing service for 16-25 year olds, what support would you offer and how?

### **What people told us**

#### **What are the current issues and what support is available?**

We asked people attending the workshop/drop-in to tell us what they think young people may have concerns about and need support with, and what services they are aware of that can help.



Young people and professionals listed a range of issues and concerns that young people need support with, including: bullying, self-harm, not being able to talk to anyone, exam stress, university fees, life skills, substance abuse, sexuality, housing and the stigma surrounding mental health.



They also identified a large range of services and support that are available in B&NES, but noted that a lot of people are not aware of these or what they offer.

### **What are the issues with current support for young people, what is already in place and what more could be done?**

We asked attendees to look at the issues and suggested solutions people shared with us last year (during phase 1 of engagement). This feedback is divided into key themes that have emerged from discussions with people who use services, those who care for them, the wider public and those who provide services.

Here are the key themes, issues and suggested solutions:

### 1. Long waiting times

#### What are the issues with current support?

- “Long waiting makes people feel worse because you feel you aren’t worth an appointment, [as you’re] ‘not depressed enough to be seen by services’.”
- “Why there are such long waiting lists for children at their point of need? E.g. 8-10 months when they’re self-harming.”
- “Gender Identity Clinic waiting times are at least six months.”

#### What could help?

Promote Kooth  
(online counselling  
service)

Promote support in  
schools (e.g.  
counselling)

Support people while  
they are waiting e.g.  
group work or  
creating a specific  
supportive role.

Peer mentor support  
e.g. Southside Family  
Project young  
advocates are trained  
in coaching

Use micro providers  
e.g. Somerset social  
care and adult mental  
health use external,  
quality assured  
providers.

Make information  
available online about  
all services that are  
available for young  
people aged 16-25.



## 2. Lack of options/long-term counselling support

### What are the issues with current support?

- “Limited number of sessions does not allow people enough ongoing support...Need to have more options, so don't have to ‘stop getting support’.”
- “No being offered the right kind of support (in adult services) – group therapy or short-term 1:1 counselling sessions are not appropriate, so put young person off accessing any support.”
- “Won't prioritise you if you've already had some support but still need more.”
- “There is a lack of awareness about where young people can access support. This information is not widely known and is shared on too ad hoc a basis.”
- “Ending university is difficult when they have been providing good support (e.g. flexibility, no waiting times).”

### What could help?

Better long-term support for schools, including training.	Online directory of all services for young people, which helps them to identify which are most appropriate.	More choice and flexibility e.g. instant chat/help online, with option of video, and face-to-face sessions.
Support should be phased out, with option of contacting professional if have an urgent need to.	Support from a mentor with lived experience to help young people make their own choices.	Develop protocols for sharing information between universities and relevant agencies.

## 3. Transitions (moving from child-adult services)

### What are the issues with current support?

- “CAMHS is really flexible, but adult services aren't. It's a shock that adult services don't adapt to suit young people.”

- “‘Transitions’ as a word is too scary and intimidating for young people. Needs to be made less of a big deal.”
- “Fear of having to explain everything again (to adult services). Information sharing between services is key.”
- “Too much focus on ‘children’s services’ and not enough on support for young adults.”
- “Young people may find it hard to proactively seek support.”

### What could help?

Learning from those (older young people) who have been through it.

More information for young people about their rights/services and how these may differ when you’re under/over 18.

Shared transition “standards” to be developed for all services /agencies that work with young people 16-25.

A specific service should be created for young people aged 16-25.

More flexible services for those aged 18+ - e.g. services coming to the young person (rather than expecting them to go to them)

Raise awareness that young people are all different and maturity/situation can differ hugely from one young person to the next. Support needs to be broad and tailored.

## 4. Referral access and support

### What are the issues with current support?

- “Self-referral via phone can be a big barrier for some.”
- “Young people with learning disabilities/additional needs might not be able to refer or access support online.”
- “Issue with consent and at what point you seek this from a young person’s parents (possible conflict with confidentiality).”

## What could help?

More text/online referral access (also better for confidentiality)

More promotion and awareness raising that young people can self-refer and reassure those who might have concerns about this.

More tools (e.g. questions online) to help young people decide what support/service might be best for them.

There needs to be more flexibility. Services should come to you e.g. meet you at work, community centre or a drop-in

Referrals could be done through schools, and counsellors come to school (with school acting as consentor/guardian).

Ask people's communication and contact preferences.

## 5. Confidentiality

### What are the issues with current support?

- “Conflict of school as a familiar place where people know you vs. lack of confidentiality (regular reporting back to parents without consent from young people).”
- “Being scared to tell the truth, in case they tell your parents.”
- “Parental involvement with young people who are aged 18+ and balancing support with confidentiality.”
- “When a young person is in care, it seems that people share even more information about you (with schools especially).”
- “Parents afraid that if they speak about difficulties with their children because of their own mental health, their children will be removed. So keeping social services for children separate from mental health services feels safer for parents.”

## What could help?

Educate young people on their confidentiality rights and be clearer when others have to be informed.

Teach staff how it feels to have confidentiality breached.

Confidentiality protocol and policies for post-18 community services (including universities).

Create safe havens for children that are confidential.

Take into consideration a child/young person's mental capacity e.g. learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Parents' consent may be needed.

Signposting and suggestions of alternative support for things that young people don't want to talk about.



## 6. Lack of expertise

### What are the issues with current support?

- “Teachers are not mental health professionals.”
- “GPs’ lack of knowledge and understanding (e.g. around gender identity, causing referral delays).”
- “Professionals asking questions that aren’t relevant and being too quick to simplify and make assumptions about what the issues are.”
- “There is a lack of LGBT+-specific services for young people in B&NES (Off the Record is the only one).”
- “There is no identified key person in Recovery Team with specialist skills for the adolescent pathway.”

### What could help?

Schools and academies to employ mental health professionals.

Should have more education on mental health as part of the school curriculum and regular visits from mental health specialists on specific topics.

More education and advice about mental health available for young people, so they can support each other and themselves.

Clear guidance re. accountability and duty of care for all professionals working with young people aged 14-25.

Training given to staff on how to talk to young people and create the right environment.

Teachers to let young people know they have had training about mental health. Would help young people share more about their emotional needs.

## Summary

Based on everything people have told us so far, we can conclude that:

- ✓ There is a lack of information on what support and services are available for young people aged 16-25. We need an online directory (that is kept up to date).
- ✓ Language, and the way we describe emotional health and wellbeing support that is available, is important.
- ✓ There needs to be more choice and flexibility of different services and how to access them – both online support and face-to-face counselling need to be available for young adults.
- ✓ There needs to be more continued support for young people moving from child to adult services and 'shared transition standards' developed for all services working with 16-25 year olds.
- ✓ Wellbeing and mental health service provision needs to be grouped according to specific age groups e.g. 16+ and then older age groups.
- ✓ Adult services need to be more flexible to meet the needs of young adults
- ✓ Peer mentoring is felt to be very effective for providing informal and ongoing support.
- ✓ More awareness raising (on specific issues, including LGBT+ and gender identity) needs to be done among professionals and young people.
- ✓ Stress and anxiety amongst young people at university is a national issue – we need to explain what support is available in B&NES.