

Your Mind, Your Say:

Young people's views of mental health services in Dorset

Summary

Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) launched 'Your Mind, Your Say' in February 2020 to capture the views of young people, and their families, who use mental health services. To inform the development of mental health services for children and young people, they supported events, visited groups and ran an online survey #YourMindYourSay in February and March 2020. The purpose of this view-seeking exercise was to involve local people and communities in shaping future mental health services across Dorset.

To complement Dorset CCG findings, we visited youth groups and local organisations to gather feedback and seek the views of young people who don't always have a strong voice. This was an opportunity for young people to make a real difference to the way mental health services for young people are set up and delivered. Our engagement focused on young people who are excluded from school, young offenders, care leavers, young asylum seekers and young people who are experiencing homelessness. We carried out face-to-face engagement activities with young people at various organisations and youth groups across Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset. We spoke to a total of 23 young people, aged 14-20 years.

Headlines

Key issues that the participants raised:

- Long waiting times to access mental health services
- Being unable to see the same support worker
- Being unable to access services when young people are desperate for them
- Sessions being held in a clinical environment that make young people feel uncomfortable
- Not feeling listened to

- Being unable to access an interpreter
- Not being able to access more sessions
- Support workers are not reading client notes before the start of a session, so you have to repeat yourself

Key recommendations:

- The most common concern that people raised with us was the amount of time that young people have to wait in order to be able to access services. People would like to see much shorter waiting times. Perhaps some 'get to know you' telephone sessions might be beneficial prior to the young people starting the one-to-one sessions. This may help to alleviate the amount of time that young people have to wait.
- We spoke to several young people who said that the setting in which they have their sessions is too clinical and makes them feel uncomfortable. The young people said that they would prefer it if the sessions were held in an environment where they are comfortable and feel safe in.
- A lot of the young people who we spoke to said that the support workers that they see are constantly changing, and there is a lack of continuity between staff, which then slows down the care that they receive. Young people would like to see the same support worker, who they are familiar with.
- Young people were frustrated that they are only given a limited number of sessions. They felt that it takes time to feel comfortable talking to a support worker, and by the time they do feel comfortable they only have one or two sessions left. The young people would like to have an offer to extend the amount of sessions.

Link

Our full report will be published later in the year on the Healthwatch Dorset website:

<https://healthwatchdorset.co.uk/>



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