



# Community Healthcare for Young People Focus Groups

December 2020





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## Summary

In the autumn of 2020 Healthwatch Northamptonshire was asked by Public Health Northamptonshire and NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to carry out some focus groups with young people to find out more about their views and experiences of community health and wellbeing services. The focus groups were designed to answer some of the questions raised by the results of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and Northamptonshire CCG August 2020 surveys for children, young people and their families<sup>1</sup>.

The August surveys had asked children aged 5-10, 11-19 and parents and carers (three separate surveys) to give feedback about community health and wellbeing services for young people and about their needs and what was important to them. The surveys focused on the following community health and wellbeing services commissioned by NCC and Northamptonshire CCG:

- Health Visiting
- Breastfeeding Service
- Family Nurse Partnership
- School Nursing
- Special School Nursing
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- CAMHS Crisis Team
- CAMHS for Looked After Children
- Looked After Children Service (for initial and review health assessments)
- Community Eating Disorders Service
- Continence
- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) / ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) Team
- Dietetics
- Children's Occupational Therapy
- Children's Speech and Language Therapy
- Residential Short Breaks
- Children's Community Nurses
- Community Paediatricians
- Children's Physiotherapy
- Children's Bereavement Service
- Child Development Centre
- Paediatric Audiology (South of the county)
- Substance misuse service
- Talk Out Loud Participation Group
- Strong Start
- Oral Health Improvement
- Youth Counselling

To find out more about what young people think, four questions tailored for young people were developed by Public Health Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire CCG and Healthwatch Northamptonshire based on the results of these surveys. Healthwatch Northamptonshire gathered the views of young people using these questions at three focus groups across the county in September 2020.

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[https://northamptonshire.citizenspace.com/consultation\\_finder/?keyword=Children+%26+Young+People%E2%80%99s+Community+Health+Services+Survey+for+Children](https://northamptonshire.citizenspace.com/consultation_finder/?keyword=Children+%26+Young+People%E2%80%99s+Community+Health+Services+Survey+for+Children)



Young people told us that being treated by friendly staff in clean environments was important to them and that the person treating them should show confidence and know what they are doing and respect their privacy.

Young people did not always feel involved in the care that they received, but when they, did it was a positive experience.

Overall young people did not want to receive healthcare services online. They were also not keen on receiving health messages digitally through targeted advertising although some did say they might click on a targeted advert link if they needed help at that time.

There were concerns around receiving care online, such as online safety, security, confidentiality and not knowing who could be trusted, as well as about the level of care they would receive. Most young people we spoke to still wanted to receive healthcare services face to face.

The young people we spoke to told us that they'd like to see more opportunities for outdoor exercise, such as skate parks, and there were some suggestions for improvements to current services, such as shorter waiting times.

Based on the findings of this report we would recommend that service providers and commissioners continue to work with young people locally to ensure that services meet the needs of the local population. We would also recommend that when future health and wellbeing services are set up they are not all based online and that there is an emphasis on face to face communication so that young people feel confident in the services they are receiving.

## Response from NHS Northamptonshire Clinical

## Commissioning Group and Public Health

## Northamptonshire

NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Public Health Northamptonshire are incredibly appreciative of the work that Esther and the team at Healthwatch Northamptonshire have undertaken to meet with local children and young people to explore their views on Northamptonshire's children and young people's community health and wellbeing services. This report will form part of wider engagement activity to help us understand where, as a system, services are right and where the gaps are that need a solution to improve and modernise services for the future. Thank you to all the young people and schools who took part and for sharing your views and experiences with us, we are grateful for your insight and will use the information collected to improve services and service access across Northamptonshire.



## Method

The NCC and CCG surveys took place during the summer of 2020 when Coronavirus was still in effect and before schools had returned to normal after being shut down nationally in March 2020.

We were asked to hold focus groups in September 2020, less than a month after schools had returned and when there were still strict social distancing measures in place.

We decided to approach schools we already had links with and, although many refused, one secondary school and two alternative secondary schools agreed to take part - Parker E-ACT Academy in Daventry, Progress Schools Northampton and Progress Schools Thrapston.

Progress Schools is an alternative Education provision for young people, they have 10 schools across the country. Progress Schools works with some of Northamptonshire's most vulnerable young people, many of whom have been excluded from mainstream schools, are at risk of gang crime and many have additional needs including ADHD and autism.

The focus groups were carried out with one member of Healthwatch Northamptonshire staff (rather than the usual two due to Coronavirus restrictions) and a class teacher. Strict social distancing guidelines were followed at all times as were compulsory and internal Covid-19 procedures.

The young people in the focus groups were aged between 11 and 16 and the focus groups took place in three schools in three different towns in Northamptonshire: Daventry, Northampton and Thrapston. A total of 36 young people took part in the focus groups.

We were tasked with asking four questions that were tailored for young people using the survey response data. The questions were designed by Northamptonshire CCG, Public Health Northamptonshire and Healthwatch Northamptonshire.

It was explained at the beginning of each focus group what community healthcare was and the types of health and wellbeing services that they use.



## What young people told us

We asked each group of young people four set questions. The responses were similar for all three groups so have been summarised together.

### Question 1 - What is important to you about health services?

The responses to this question could be sorted into three categories:

#### The facilities that were available for young people:

- Facilities for those that are disabled or have other needs (SEND)
- Play areas for all kids (including those disabled, etc.)
- More entertainment - toys in the waiting room are good for younger kids (5-8 year olds), TVs would be better for older kids
- More seating
- Food and drink availability
- Comfortable seating in waiting areas

#### The environment in which they were treated:

- That it is in a fresh space and a clean environment (it does not matter if the place looks new as long as it is clean)
- That they are able to get there
- That equipment is cleaned after it has been used

#### The qualities of the person treating them:

- A good listener and that can “understand them”
- A good communicator who is “clear with their words” and can talk in a way that young people can understand - that is “young person appropriate”
- Someone who gives them good advice - they “make sure you get the right information” and “they tell you what to look out for”
- They respect you and who you are
- They are kind/nice, understanding and good
- They are “qualified to treating me” and “knows what they are doing”
- They “keep you healthy”
- They are clean
- They are confidential
- That they help you when you need it





## Question 2 - If you have had care did you feel listened to and involved?

Some people had felt listened to and involved in their care by different services:

- “Yes, I did because they were keeping me busy by letting me draw and asked me some questions. I have to have at least one appointment a year.”
- “Yes, they definitely involved me when I got diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes a couple of weeks after my birthday this year at Northampton Hospital.”
- “School nurse was positive - I was as involved as can be when hurt.”
- “I felt listened to, they spoke to me as well as my parents. I knew what was going on.”

Others had not felt involved in their care by different services:

- “CAMHS - They just spoke to my mum and wouldn’t listen to me, so I walked out.”
- “Service Six - No she made me listen to her issues for an hour and a half.”
- “When I was 8 they talked to my parents not me. I was not listened to or involved.”
- “Physiotherapist - didn’t feel listened to.”

## Question 3 - How do you feel about digital media for future care you may need?

We split this question in to two sections - receiving healthcare messages and future care you may need.

### Receiving healthcare messages

There were some major concerns over trust and online safety with receiving healthcare messages through digital media:

- “Don’t know if they are real or fake - some are scams.”
- “It is only ok if you know it is proven.”
- “It might be dodgy on Instagram. I would go to a proper website like Gov.uk or NHS.”
- “It could be weird people. I never trust anything on the internet.”
- “If you click on an advert you don’t know where you will end up.”

Some people did say that they would click on the advert if they needed help ‘there and then’:

- “If it is something I need, I would click it.”
- “If desperately in need I would click - Childline, etc. - crisis information.”

Some people showed a dislike towards adverts altogether regardless of their content:

- “I swipe past adverts.”
- “No one likes ads on social media.”



## Future digital care

There were some concerns raised about receiving future care digitally, particularly around whether the professional would pick up on all the information and signs from the young person and whether they would receive all the help and information they needed:

- “Can’t do physical checks so can’t get the right information.”
- “They may miss physical signs.”
- “Not getting the info you need. Better if it is in person, you can hear and understand them.”
- “It probably won’t feel the same because you might need to see them in person because they are going to need more information.”
- “You might not get the right amount of help needed.”
- “Some services can’t be delivered online (like massages etc.).”
- “What’s the point?”

There were also some concerns about confidentiality and security:

- “Face to face, he or she may be telling someone. You don’t know what’s going on behind the screen.”
- “They could be recording it, stuff could be held against you.”
- “The online safety element.”
- “Are they who they say they are?”
- “Safer in person.”

There were considerations about those who may struggle with anxiety around appointments and the benefits of online appointments:

- “Less chance of getting coronavirus.”
- “It could be better or worse for people with anxiety.”
- “If you are insecure and don’t want to go outside it could be good.”
- “CAMHS are doing facetime calls for me, but I don’t want to do them. I don’t like to tell people how I feel.”
- “Anxiety around online sessions.”

## Question 4 - Where are the gaps in services for young people?

There were suggestions for new services as well as improvements for existing services.

### New service suggestions

Some young people talked about the need for a new youth service that would improve their physical and emotional wellbeing:

- “A place where children struggling at home can just walk in where there are social workers.”





- “More youth clubs to boost mental health.”
- “More youth activities.”
- “Sporty exercises like boxing or football - would help with anger management and mental health.”
- “More scooter and skate parks would help us keep mentally and physically well.”

### Suggested improvements to existing services

Some talked about improvements that could be made to existing services:

- Shorter waiting times (this was mentioned by every group)
- Sexual health services at GP (rather than having to go to the Lowdown or the hospital)
- Better communication between services
- Increasing awareness of the existing services
- Free Wi-Fi in healthcare services
- More local services (not always having to travel for them)

More GPs that are “better” (e.g. have more time to listen, are more understanding or have more ways of helping them)

## Acknowledgment and Thanks

Healthwatch Northamptonshire thanks all of the young people who took part in the focus groups and the supporting staff at:

- Parker E-ACT Academy, Daventry
- Progress Schools Northampton
- Progress Schools Thrapston



## About Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Healthwatch Northamptonshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care. We are part of a national network of local Healthwatch organisations. Our central role is to be a voice for local people to influence better health and wellbeing and improve the quality of services to meet people's needs. This involves us visiting local services and talking to people about their views and experiences. We share our reports with the NHS and social care, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (the inspector and regulator for health and social care), with recommendations for improvement, where required.

Our rights and responsibilities include:

- We have the power to monitor (known as “Enter and View”) health and social care services (with one or two exceptions). Our primary purpose is to find out what patients, service users, carers and the wider public think of health and social care.
- We report our findings of local views and experiences to health and social care decision makers and make the case for improved services where we find there is a need for improvement
- We strive to be a strong and powerful voice for local people, to influence how services are planned, organised and delivered.
- We aim to be an effective voice rooted in the community. To be that voice, we find out what local people think about health and social care. We research patient, user and carer opinions using lots of different ways of finding out views and experiences. We do this to give local people a voice. We provide information and advice about health and social care services.

Where we feel that the views and voices of Healthwatch Northamptonshire and the people who we strive to speak on behalf of are not being heard, we have the option to escalate our concerns and report our evidence to national organisations including Healthwatch England, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.

Find out more at [www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk)

**healthwatch**  
Northamptonshire





## About Connected Together

Connected Together Community Interest Company (CIC) is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch Northamptonshire.

The remit of the Connected Together CIC includes:

- Contract compliance
- Legal requirements
- Financial and risk management
- Sustainability and growth
- Agreeing strategy and operations
- Agreeing policies and procedures



Connected Together CIC is a social enterprise and a partnership between the University of Northampton and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire. It aims to be first for community engagement across the county of Northamptonshire and beyond.

By using our expertise and experience, we can help you in delivering community engagement programmes including workshops, research, surveys, training and more. Contact us to find out how we can help your community.

We welcome ideas and suggestions for projects that benefit Northamptonshire and its community.

Find out more at [www.connectedtogether.co.uk](http://www.connectedtogether.co.uk)





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