



**A report on Healthwatch Northamptonshire's  
Young People's Health and Wellbeing Conference  
18 February 2015**

## About The Conference

The young people's conference was planned and designed to be a positive and fun day to enable young people between the ages of 12 and 18 to engage with other young people and professionals, open the debate about health and wellbeing issues important to them and think about how young people want to work with Healthwatch Northamptonshire (HWN).

HWN and the Steering Group partners (appendix 1) had several aspirations for the day. They were:

- to be a fun and engaging day to inspire young people to get involved and to sign up for Young Healthwatch
- to launch the results of the Young Leader's wellbeing survey
- to consult young people on health and wellbeing issues
- to enable decision makers to hear young people's views
- to launch the idea of a 'Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire' and to consult on a new name for it
- to encourage youth engagement between partner organisations

## Planning and Promoting the Conference

HWN wanted to get the views of young people and other organisations from the very beginning to ensure that it was an event young people would attend and enjoy.

The Steering Group met three times between September 2014 and January 2015 to both challenge and support HWN in the preparation of the event.

A final post-conference meeting in March was held to evaluate what went well, what could be done differently and the next steps going forward.

The event was advertised widely through local health and social care partners, BBC Radio Northampton, Inspiration FM, black, minority and ethnic groups, local voluntary and community organisations and others. Too many to list here! Flyers and information about the event were also sent to all head teachers and chairs of governors of all secondary schools in Northamptonshire.

Organisations providing young people's services and information had tables in the 'Market Place' where the young people could look around and pick up information and 'goodies' on arrival. These were:

- Autism Outreach
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Children's Rights Services
- Delos
- East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)
- Information Advice and Support Service (IASS) for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Northamptonshire
- Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Kettering General Hospital
- Northamptonshire Association of Youth Councils (NAYC)
- Northamptonshire's Local Offer
- Northamptonshire Young Healthy Minds Partnership
- Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation NHS Trust (NHFT)
- School Nurses
- Service Six
- Solve It
- Talk Out Loud
- Young Leaders
- Local Safeguarding Children's Board

## Big Lottery Funding

HWN was also successful in their bid to secure £10,000 from The Big Lottery fund to support this event. This helped make the event more successful and will drive the future Young Healthwatch engagement programme.

## The Conference

The day itself was chaired and facilitated by Alistair Bassett, deputy leader of the Young Leaders Northamptonshire County Council and all the presentations were delivered by local youth groups.



The groups and presentations were:

- **Young Leaders, Connexions/Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)** who gave a presentation on the results of their young people's wellbeing survey - key findings were that 43% of the young people in the survey selected stress as something that most negatively affected them

[http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/2\\_young\\_leaders\\_survey\\_1.pdf](http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/2_young_leaders_survey_1.pdf)

- **Shooting Stars, Children's Rights Service NCC** video gave an insight into the work they do and their aspirations. Their British Sign language (BSL) Katy Perry sing along video was also used in the mid morning break as a backdrop



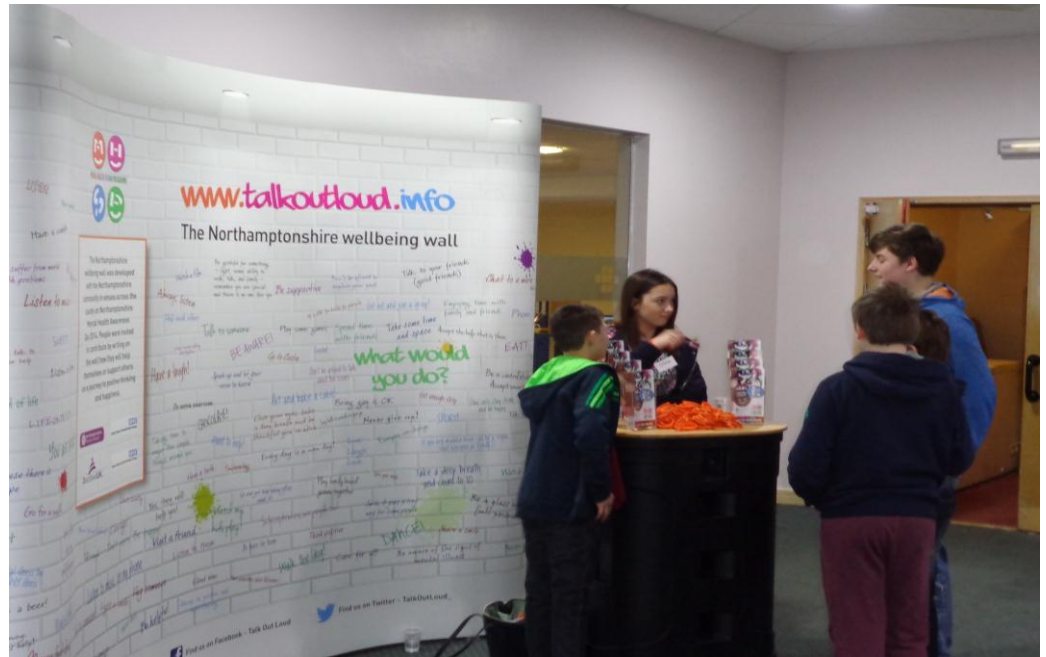
- **Northampton Youth Forum, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)** presented on their work on mental health and happiness and instigated some group discussion

[http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/5\\_nyf\\_mental\\_health\\_and\\_happiness\\_1.pdf](http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/5_nyf_mental_health_and_happiness_1.pdf)



- Talk Out Loud group presented and gave a video on their anti-stigma programme #stampoutstigma

[http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/6\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Stigma\\_Programme-DRAFT.pdf](http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/6_Mental_Health_Stigma_Programme-DRAFT.pdf)



A video from Healthwatch Peterborough 'Is mental health all about hearing voices?' was also shown.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbC9z3-6Gcw>

(Agenda appendix 2)

There was also a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter to enable young people with hearing impairments to fully participate. This was really well received.

There were 70 young people and 71 adults attending so it was also an ideal opportunity with so many organisations present to capture their views too and guests marked their comments with an 'A' to identify and separate their comments from those of the young people.

Each table had a facilitator and young people's views from the day were captured on postcards, leaf shaped 'Post It' notes, which they posted on a tree (loaned from **University of Northampton (UN)**), flip chart paper for questions to the decision makers and the paper tablecloths.

The day was also filmed by Laurence Maybury of UN. Laurence also captured young people's views on a variety of topics in the afternoon in The Diary Room. These will be made into a short video for the web, including YouTube and will be circulated to local health and social care decision makers.



## What Young People Said

To enable everyone on the tables to get to know each other, there was an initial icebreaker task and then young people were asked to discuss and put on post cards what was important to them about health and wellbeing.

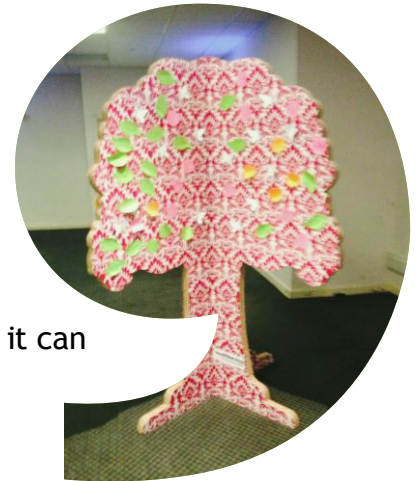
The exercise threw up a diverse range of comments which were then grouped for a later session to be voted on e.g.:

- my friend is being abused at home
- I've attempted to run away 4 times
- police counsellor (sexual crimes) left as soon as case was finished (when I was most in need)
- the NHS needs more money to improve their timing
- accessible information
- discriminated and treated as unequal
- services aren't advertised enough
- too long for help
- 16-18 year olds get lost in the systems (cannot access services)
- not everyone gets noticed in the community when people could be in need of help and advice

The next task was to ask young people what they wanted more information about on 'Post It' notes and stick them on the tree.

This raised a variety of topics e.g.:

- I want parents to be able to understand the problems in mental health and how to treat their adolescents
- to be able to understand the treatments/medications a bit more
- to make information more child friendly as it can seem confusing and can result in children worrying when they do not need to



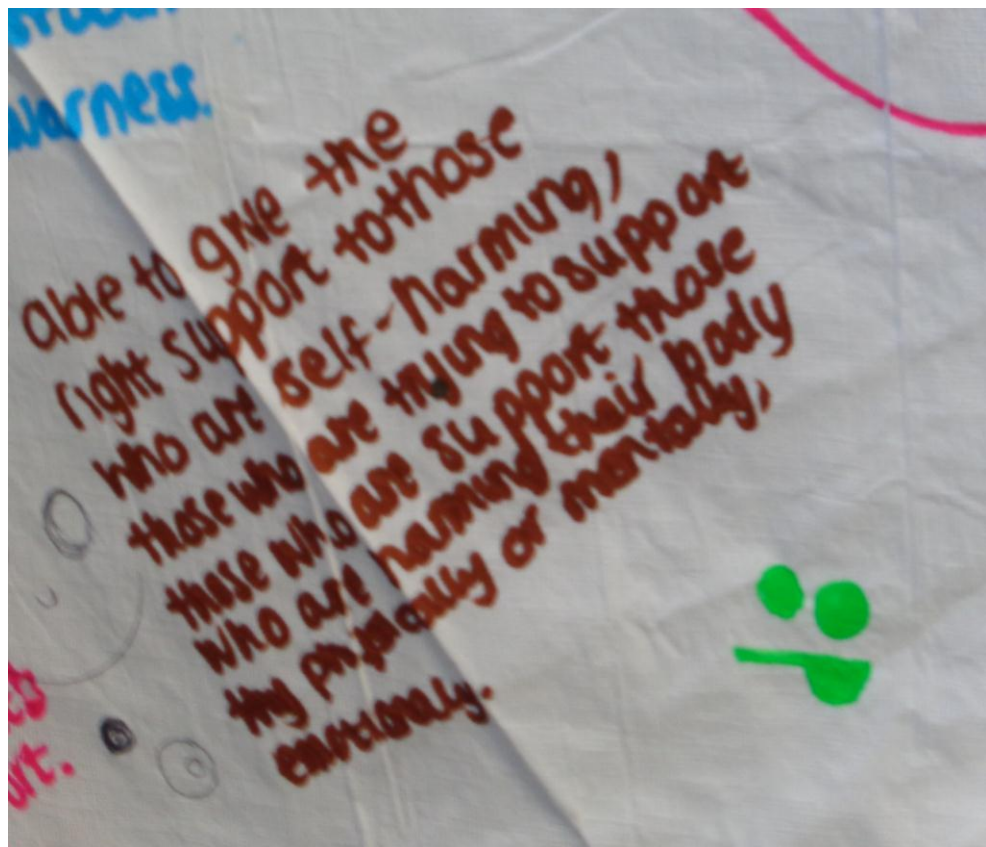
The next task was to write on the tablecloths about how they would like to be involved with a Young Healthwatch and possibly come up with a new name for it.

The tablecloths became works of art, not only with ideas about a Young Healthwatch but also with other questions, comments and drawings. The jury is still out on a new name though!



Some of the ideas included:

- using the network of existing groups
- meetings in the local area
- organising a meeting for November as exams to revise for
- involving people with disabilities
- mainly young people but adults if needed
- contacting all youth groups within Northamptonshire so everyone could be involved with Young Healthwatch
- contacting young people through education
- designing an app
- need to link in with other child and young people (CYP) groups
- a pictogram produced by one group was to make more use of technology e.g. Twitter ▶ Facebook ▶ Instagram ▶ WhatsApp Group ▶ ProjectMIND ▶ Talk Out Loud ▶ Young Minds ▶ Shadow Board ▶ sharing campaigns ▶ #letscollob





## Question Time Panel

The question time panel consisted of:

- **Councillor Joan Kirkbride**, Chair Northamptonshire County Council
- **Angela Hillery**, Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)
- **David Loyd-Hearn**, Children and Young People Commissioning Manager Emotional Health and Wellbeing, NHS Nene & Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- **Councillor Heather Smith**, Deputy Leader Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
- **Alex Hopkins**, Director of Children, Families and Education, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)

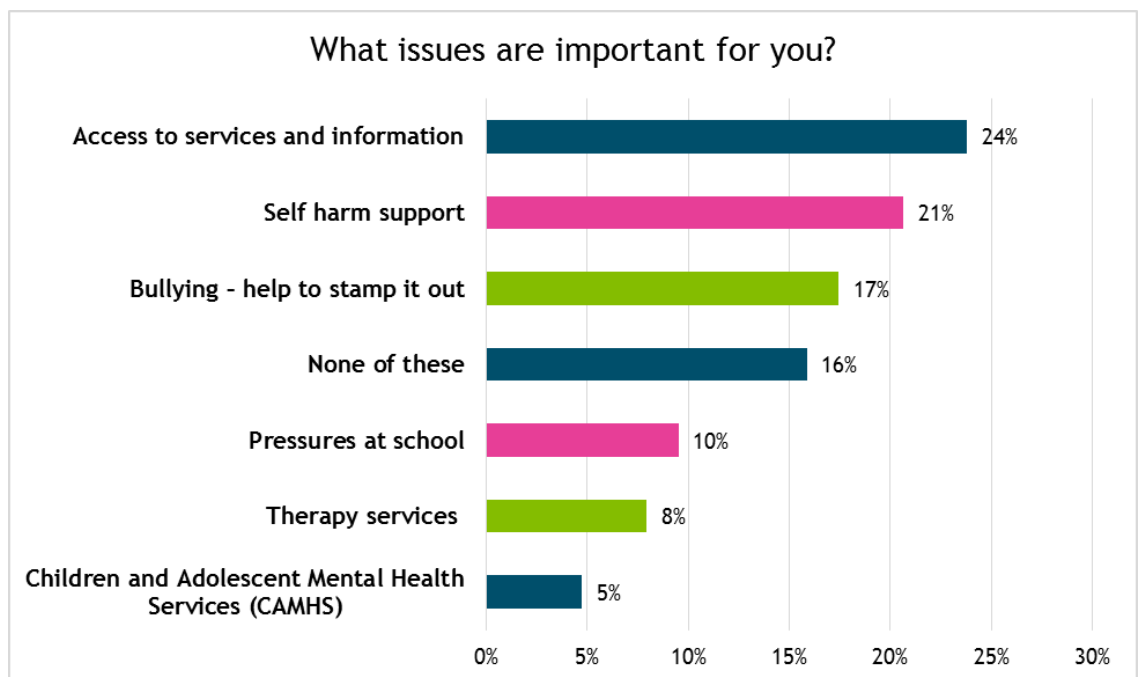


The questions asked by the young people can be found at appendix 3

I think having the panel was really good to make sure something happens after this rather than just talking

## Voting

From the post cards, the issues raised were grouped and young people voted on what they now thought was a priority after listening to all the presentations:



The biggest theme coming from the post cards was that young people wanted more information about where they could go to for help and in a format they could understand:

**“I found the waiting rooms in general were not very child friendly, you couldn’t understand posters”**

**“Not getting the right information from social workers”**

**“Social workers/personal assistant (PA) not giving information on what other support services there are ....”**

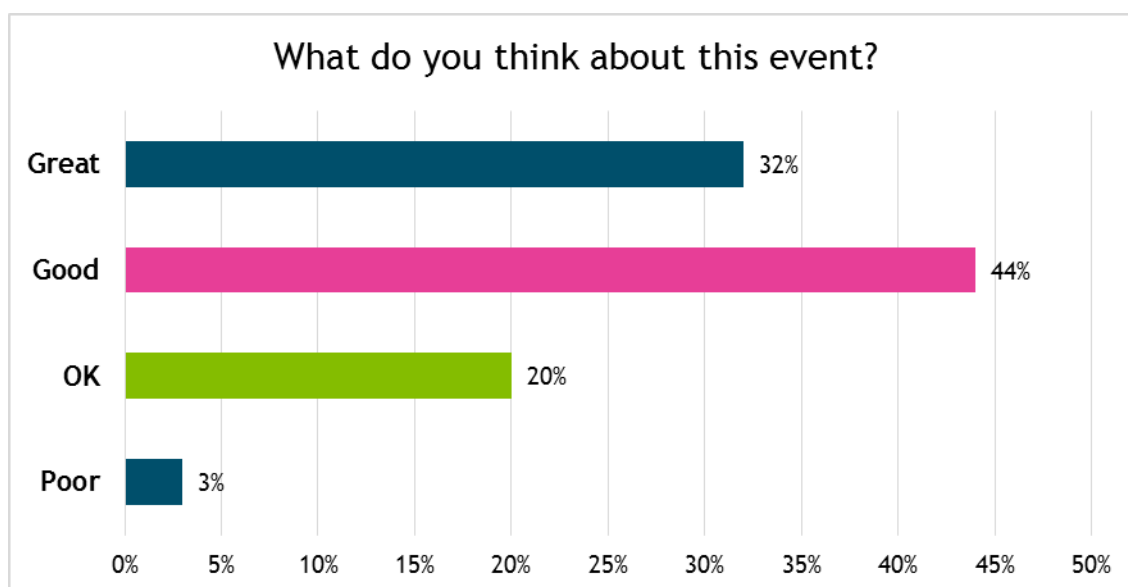
**“Access to information as where help can be obtained for emotional problems”**

**“Help for children with parents who have mental health conditions (depression/post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)/bipolar etc.)”**

**“Services aren’t advertised enough”**

## Feedback on the Conference

As well as completing written feedback forms with additional comments young people also had the opportunity to give direct feedback on the event by using voting buttons on loan from Northamptonshire County Council:



76% voted that they felt the event was great or good.

40 feedback forms from young people and organisations also included contact details of those who want to be directly involved with the future Young Healthwatch programme.

Feedback from young people included comments that the conference focused mainly on mental health. There was feedback that other issues such as learning disabilities and physical health should also be included in the future.

It was noted that some youth groups were absent e.g. Northamptonshire Young Carers, although they had planned to have a stall and were invited to join the steering group circumstances prevented them from participating.

Young people would also have liked more group activities during the morning and fewer presentations to enable more interaction.

## Our learning

The things we would do differently if we organised another event would be to:

- include a wider range of health and wellbeing issues on the agenda
- make sure that there are more interactive sessions
- encourage more/different youth groups to participate



**This event was great because it let me voice my opinion. I was able to express my thoughts and worries about healthcare services**

## Next steps

HWN is now going to organise 2 early evening meetings in May (Kettering and Northampton) with the young people who expressed an interest in being involved with Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire on their feedback forms.

These meetings will be to plan the Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire work programme for the first 6 months taking on board all the comments from the young people and guests and the issues identified at the conference.

## Summary

The event was a great success from the viewpoint of Healthwatch Northamptonshire, partner organisations and the majority of young people who attended.

Going forward we will:

- set up a Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire to embed engagement with young people in the work of HWN
- work with the Young HWN and use the evidence received from young people at the conference to plan a work programme for Young HWN
- report young people's comments and questions to commissioners and providers to inform their decision making

The Shooting Stars network also identified that there seemed to be a real lack of accessible and useful information for young people in easy read formats looking at mental health issues.

They then contacted Mind England and MENCAP England after the event for information and it appears that there isn't any available for this group which is user friendly and looks at the key elements of mental health, what it means and how to stay safe and happy.

The Shooting Stars have now included these themes in their 2014/2015 action plan and the group has spent some time developing a simple Mental Health Guide in an easy read format. This work will be made available to young people from the Shooting Stars network in April 2015.

A heart warming story coming directly from the event was that 2 young people who were bullied because of their learning difficulties were able to discuss some coping techniques and how they could make friends.

At the end of the event they proudly displayed their graffiti art and the fact that they had also made 5 new friends, swapping contact details!

## Appendix 1

# Thank you and acknowledgements

### The Steering Group

- **Abbie Weaver** Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)/Macmillan
- **Alice Morgan and the Northampton Youth Forum** Northampton Borough Council
- **Alistair Bassett** Deputy Leader, Young Leaders, Connexions/NCC
- **Ashley Poulton** Shooting Stars, Children's Rights Service (CRS) NCC
- **Claudia Slabon** Service Six
- **David Loyd-Hearn** Nene and Corby CCG
- **Jenna Bartley** Kettering Borough Council
- **Kate Holt** Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- **Katharine Parker** Talk Out Loud
- **Kimberley Critchell** Young Person CRS/NCC
- **Liam O'Reilly** Connexions/NCC
- **Nathan Street** Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- **Sam Ward** Children's Rights NCC
- **Shaun Sannerude** East Northants District Council
- **Steven Edwards** Kettering Borough Council
- **Zoe Robinson** Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs

**Definitely think this should be an annual event to help combine efforts and support each individual groups**

Appendix 2

Youth Healthwatch Conference  
Kettering Conference Centre NN15 6PB  
Wednesday 18 February 2015  
9.00am-3.00pm

Market Place on arrival

9.30

- welcome and introductions
- what is Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- aim of the day

9.40

- Young Leaders - Health and Wellbeing survey

9.55

- icebreaker - a truth and a lie
- what is important to you about health and wellbeing? (postcards)
- what would you like more information about? (post it notes)

10.20

- Shooting Stars

10.30

- Northampton Youth Forum - Mental Health and Happiness
- Mental Health Stigma Programme

11.00

- post cards in post box
- break

11.15

- focus groups - how would you like to be involved with a Youth Healthwatch?
- Youth Healthwatch - new name (post cards)

11.35

- Healthwatch Peterborough - 'Is mental health all about hearing voices?'

11.45

- what questions do you want to ask the decision makers?

12.00

- question time with the decision makers

12.20

- have you changed your mind about what issues are important to you? (voting buttons)

12.30

- thank you
- feedback forms
- after lunch you can.....
- lunch

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Afternoon activities 1.00 - 3.00pm.:  
Big Brother- The Diary Room  
Graffiti Boards  
Crafts - glass painting and scratch art  
Circus Skills  
Bungee running  
Snowboarding





## Questions to the Decision Makers

There was a range of questions asked including:

- 1) **Where do you get your ideas from, how do you put them into action and how do you know if they will work?**

**David:** We look at data and the issues facing children and young people and the areas of greatest risk and need. We work with groups and also look at other work elsewhere and test out what is going to make a difference.

**Angela:** Something I want to take away from today is - are we doing enough? How do we reach people not in the room? We need you to give us more ideas and feedback.

**Alistair:** Launching Youth Healthwatch is a way to reach others not in the room

- 2) **What are the barriers in improving children's services?**

**Heather:** Very topical question as going through difficult times. There is a national shortage of social workers and for the children we look after it is vital we have a stable workforce. We are addressing this with our own academy. If we are seen as good employers we will get high quality staff.

- 3) **What do you feel you've done personally to improve the services for young people?**

**Alex:** Not just about us personally but everyone. What matters more is what the people who work directly with children do. They're the people that matter. Personally I have done nothing except focus on improving children's services for the past 2 years.

**Heather:** Listening to everyone.

**David:** I work with different groups about stigma with mental health.

**Angela:** I sit on the improvement board.

**Joan:** Children and young people are my most important priority

**4) How do you think your organisation can help with our campaign to stamp stigma?**

**Alex:** By coordinating different groups that are working together.

**David:** We can help with a parliamentary presence and provide evidence there. They are trying to grow talk out loud.

**Joan:** Make sure voice is heard in council - they have worked with Young Leaders

**Angela:** Through coordination. It is important to be ambitious about involving others and young people.

**5) What is your opinion of kids' bullying's motives?**

**David:** I've been bullied. It's a complex set of motives. A lot of bullying is on internet. Bullies are likely to have been bullied before elsewhere. It is a major cause for concern and should be able to be talked about more freely.

**Alex:** It is not just a matter for young people but adults too. You can focus too much on the bullies and the victim, but need to consider the bystanders who observe it but need to step in and help.

**6) Why do people get judged for mental health and learning disability?**

**David:** Fear of difference. Although 1 in 4 of people have mental health problems at any one time. Equality act is a important tool.

**Heather:** You can be an ambassador yourself, you can get help for others and raise awareness.

**Angela:** The aspect of fear again. It affects all ages. Positive mental health is important to promote.  
Needs everyone to make a difference in everyday life.

**Joan:** This conference is a great sign

7) If it were up to you, would you put more mental health information in schools?

**Alex:** Mental Health is not given priority enough nationally. Northamptonshire is no different. For some people, schools are the worse place for people to get help. It should be in a variety of places.

**Heather:** Some schools are good but not all are engaged. All should have a specialist staff member in mental health awareness.

**David:** Ask Normen website is important as is the Talk Out Loud anti stigma programme. Nurses in school are having an increased role.

8) We don't talk about mental health early enough at school. Why is it not before year 11?

**Angela:** Early prevention is the most important aspect. It is the only way to prevent escalation. It is our priority.

**Joan:** Schools are the ideal place to support. Needs a campaign around it.

**Alex:** Adults who make decisions don't like talking about mental health, that's why it's so late in schools.

**David:** We are starting to do more work with Key Stage 2 through Talk Out Loud and Targeted Mental Health in Schools Programme.

9) What action are you taking directly as a result of today?

**Joan:** Going to be in county council in March. Making sure the findings of the report are publicised.

**Angela:** Challenge yourself to listen to your voice **Alex:** You need to tell us what to do! We need better mechanisms to understand

**Heather:** Presentation has moved councillors. Need to look at early help to stop abuse.

**David:** Give support to work together. Mental health is ok in county, need to do more about physical health.



More time  
for  
questions  
please!



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