



Mental Health Takeover Day 2017

Final Report

Improving access to mental health services for young adults
aged 16 to 25

Summary

Mental Health Takeover was designed on behalf of the Department of Health and the Young People's Health Partnership by a group of young people supported by Youth Access. Amidst concern that young adults are getting left behind by current attempts to improve children and young people's mental health services, 23 young people came together on 24th April 2017 with senior NHS decision-makers for a youth-led day of discussion, activities and debate to inform Government policy-making.

The agenda for the day covered young people's agreed priorities:

- Government spending on mental health services for young adults
- Problems young adults face in accessing mental health services for the first time
- What services for young adults should look and feel like
- Transitions from CAMHS to adult mental health services
- Issues for particularly vulnerable groups of young people

Young people's 3 key messages from the day were:

1. Young adults need sustainable, community-based mental health services
2. All services should be available to young people up to age 25
3. Services for young adults should be funded out of both child and adult mental health budgets

The day's discussions and conclusions will directly inform Government policy-making relating to young people's mental health.

Background and methodology

Following a successful Mental Health Takeover event in November 2015, the Young People's Health Partnership (YPHP) was commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) to organise a second event, focussing on the key issue of improving access to mental health services for young adults.

Youth Access, one of the partners in YPHP, was assigned the management of the event, which followed a set of clear principles developed by YPHP for NHS takeover activities.

The work began in Summer 2016 with desk research and focus groups with young people to scope the key issues impacting on young adults' access to mental health services. This enabled young people from across England to become involved in framing the focus of the work.

Youth Access then recruited 6 young people to form a Young People's Takeover Planning Group tasked with developing the agenda for a national event. The group met remotely 8 times over a 5 month period using Zoom, a video conferencing tool, with meetings facilitated by an engagement worker at Youth Access. The group determined the content of the event, designed many of the activities, invited specific organisations and individuals to lead some of the sessions, and took over Youth Access' Twitter feed for the day.

DH worked with Youth Access on the logistical arrangements for the event.

"I became involved with the Mental Health Takeover planning group because I believe that young people should be involved in shaping the things that affect them. Youth voice is incredibly powerful, and directly working with the Department of Health at Mental Health Takeover lets us have our voices heard by the policy makers. Participation should be at the heart of improving services. Not only is it an empowering experience, but building services with young people should increase engagement and therefore improve health outcomes – something that benefits everyone! I fundamentally believe that young people can come together to create positive change and to influence the way things are done."

Grace, aged 24, from Bristol

Attendees at the event

23 young people descended on Whitehall for a packed day at DH's main Westminster building, Richmond House. All the young people were aged between 16 and 25. Many had lived experience of mental health issues, there was a strong representation of BAME and LGBTQI young people and participants came from across the country – Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, Weymouth, Southampton, Rochdale, Leeds, London and Kent.

Young people were joined at the event by senior decision-makers from

- DH's Mental Health Team and CYP Mental Health Green Paper team
- NHS England's Children and Young People's Mental Health team
- Public Health England's Children, Young People and Families team
- Health Education England's Mental Health Workforce Strategy team
- NHS Improvement's CYP Transitions team
- Department of Education's Mental Health and Bullying Team

The event was facilitated on behalf of Youth Access by Nim Ralph, who is a community activist, facilitator and equality and diversity specialist.



Rochdale Borough YA @RochdaleYA Apr 24

At #MHtakeover today! Great discussions & always great to meet passionate ppl who want to create positive change in MH services and stigma

Introductions

Participants were welcomed to the event by Emily Antcliffe, Deputy Director Mental Health Policy at DH.

Young people were anxious to know that their voices would be taken seriously and that the day would result in change. Emily signalled DH's commitment to listening to and acting upon young people's views from the event.



Youth Access @YouthAccess

Questions in the room on how next stages after #MHtakeover will be taken seriously. Vital for YP to see action after today's event

Session 1: Youth Loneliness

Peer Ambassadors from 42nd Street gave a presentation about the fantastic work of this Manchester-based charity, which supports young people experiencing mental health difficulties through individual therapeutic support, projects, leadership and a creative programme.

42nd Street's services work so well for young adults in the transition to adulthood because of their age range (11-25); the offer of flexible, social support in a youth-centred environment; and providing opportunities for young people to be heard.

The Peer Ambassadors are undertaking The Youth Loneliness Project, a peer-led research project talking to 100 black young males – who are more likely to experience mental health problems – to find out their experiences, stories and opinions on youth loneliness.

Findings will be presented through a performance to engage the community and record young people's voices; and will inform a campaign to tackle youth loneliness.

"We want young people to have access to services like 42nd Street everywhere across the UK"

Kurtis, 42nd Street



YPHealth Partnership @YPHealth

Youth loneliness is an epidemic especially in big cities. See work [@42ndStreetmcr](#) to find out what you think [@YouthAccess](#)

Session 2: What makes a good mental health service for 16-25 year olds?

This session was led by young people from The Mentality Project, a social action project at Bristol Off The Record campaigning for change.

Participants were split into small groups to try to agree the three most important qualities of a mental health service for young adults (out of 16 qualities provided).

Whilst each group made slightly different choices, the top qualities selected were: **'Feel comfortable'**, **'Free'**, **'Confidential'**, **'Non-discriminatory'**, **'Self-referral'**, **'Short waiting lists'** and **'Choice'**.

Also high up on young people's priorities were **'Across transition age'**, **'Young-person centred care'** and **'Skilled workers'**.

It was agreed that all of these qualities (and more) were needed to make a service truly accessible and that they are all linked with one another.



Youth Access @YouthAccess

.@otrbristol now take centre-stage and tell us about their latest campaign to help more young people know about their rights. #MHTakeover



Session 3: Problems in accessing mental health services

Young people from 42nd Street led this immersive workshop, which cleverly highlighted through role play how the way people are treated right from the start of their contact with a service makes a huge difference to how they feel about accessing that service.

In the activities and debate that followed, some important issues emerged:

- Young people need time to understand what services are on offer from an agency and to make informed decisions.
- There's a postcode lottery, with many areas of the country having very limited services for young people and little early intervention.
- Where services do exist, young people often face barriers in accessing them, e.g. you don't meet the rules for getting a service or have to wait too long. If you don't get what you need quickly, your will to seek help dissipates.
- Services stop being available to you when you reach a certain age and you have to go through the whole process of finding and trying to access a new (adult) service – and often there simply isn't one!

Session 4: Transitions

This solution-focussed workshop was led by Kirsty and Curtis from the Young People's Takeover Planning Group.

Critical issues during the transition from child to adult mental health services were agreed to include lack of contact / communication breakdown and the child/adult age boundaries of services. Young people need to be empowered to cope with and be prepared for transition.

Ideal transitions were felt to require: a joined-up approach between children and young people's mental health services and adult mental health services; a consistent national approach with efficient use of resources; follow-up after CAMHS; young people to be given better information about what happens in transition; and a youth-led transition plan.

Young people said they wanted:

- a service that goes through to age 25 (no transition needed)
- adult mental health services funding for young adult services delivered by the voluntary sector
- drop-in, open access services "year-round"

Session 5: Issues for particularly vulnerable groups of young people

This interactive workshop was led by the Proud Trust, which helps young people empower themselves to make a positive change for themselves and their communities.

This workshop aimed to identify what issues young adults who may be considered vulnerable or oppressed face when accessing and using mental health services, and work towards possible solutions.

- Barriers: staff attitudes and behaviours, for example being aggressive if a young person is non-communicative. It was agreed that there was poor tailoring of services for BAME groups.
- Issues - autism (suicide is leading cause of death for Autistic people in UK); discussion on whether diagnostic focus in early CAMHS appointments encourages using one or two labels as opposed to wider picture of young person; also spoke about limited options in many areas beyond standard face to face (e.g. phone, text, online services).
- Young people need support whilst waiting for services; access/waiting times was raised as a big issue.



YPHealth Partnership @YPHealth

Chatting with YP about barriers to mh services for marginalised and oppressed groups of yp @YouthAccess



Session 6: Government spending on mental health

This workshop was led by Karen Whitelaw from Youth Access, together with Grace and Jack from the Young People's Takeover Planning Group. Participants were put in the shoes of a local commissioner faced with the tricky challenge of having to decide how to allocate a limited pot of money towards a range of desirable mental health services for young people. The majority of funding available was from the CAMHS budget, with a smaller amount available from the adult mental health budget.

Participants wanted to invest in more services than they had funding for! Given their desire for community-based services going up to age 25, including voluntary sector services like 42nd Street or Off The Record, the key problem was the inadequate sum available from the adult budget. The CAMHS budget couldn't stretch to meet the needs of young adults if it was also to fund work in schools, reduce waiting lists for children etc. Young people felt it shouldn't be so difficult to get money out of the adult budget.

The discussion highlighted problems with statutory mental health services (e.g. their 'tick box' approach) and services based in schools (young people can't self-refer; leaving classroom mid-lesson is challenging; confidentiality may not be respected; they can't help young adults who aren't in school). It was felt that voluntary sector services don't have these problems, you can just walk through the door and access the service on your terms, without controls. However, teaching mental health through the curriculum would be very beneficial – and should be integrated into the main curriculum subjects all the way through from primary school age to build resilience early on.

"Schools are terrifying enough. A mental health service within a school is not a good idea. I would never have accessed counselling in the school."

Young person in Government spending workshop



Youth Access @YouthAccess

Where does spending need to be allocated? Some tough decisions to be made in this workshop #MHTakeover



YPHealth Partnership @YPHealth

It shouldn't depend on your age whether you get funding or not to support your MH @YouthAccess

Session 7: What do we want to change? How do we do it?

This session focussed on how to achieve young people's overall priorities for change. Young people led three separate groups, each focussed on one of their agreed priorities.

Group 1: All services should be available for up to 25 year olds

Current situation:

- Some services go up to 25, but these are mainly non-statutory
- Within statutory sector, some services won't see 16-18 year olds, though a couple of new 0-25 services are emerging
- Services and commissioning are inconsistent

Ideal situation:

- Gradual transition, with preparation for transition
- More services bridging the gap
- Sustainable community services – not necessarily an 11-25s service, important to be experience-appropriate and needs-appropriate, not just age-appropriate
- More early intervention and prevention
- More creative services to break down thresholds and remove barriers – more walk-ins and drop-ins for up to 25s
- Young people understand their rights and are empowered to stand up for them
- System is transparent and held to account; with an accessible transformation plan; and CCGs are more consistent around how they spend and protect money for CYP mental health.
- Young people lead services with professionals. Young people have really good access to influence commissioners. Commission with young people.

Barriers:

- Local commissioning – fragmented funding, commissioning patterns
- “Ideas just stay in the transformation plans”

What can be done?

- Better aftercare, follow-up and support for self-care
- Different ways of funding – personalised commissioning?
- Speak to young people, find out and remove the barriers
- Stop making decisions about young people without young people
- Empower and educate young people
- More early intervention – “What's early about waiting for longer?”
- Less jargon / buzzwords



Group 2: Services for young adults should be funded by both child and adult mental health services

What needs to happen:

- Services for young adults tend to be funded out of children's services budgets, not adult services. **FUNDING SHOULD COME FROM BOTH.**
- Integrate child and adult services funding into one joined-up pot, with same system and information sharing so that system is more efficient
- Young people need to be more involved

Barriers:

- The whole structure! Different systems in adult and child services

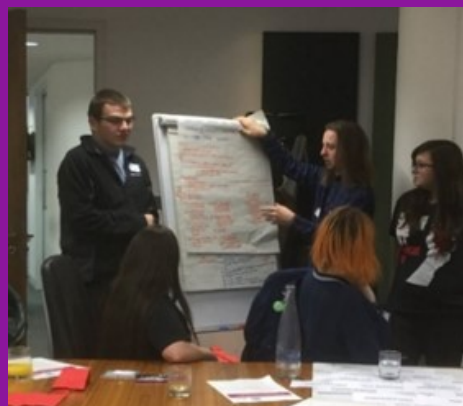
Action needed:

- Get people on board with one system approach – commissioners, local councillors, MPs, Government, parents/carers, practitioners, service users/young people, potential service users
- Convince adult services to share money
- Staff training to work under new/same format. Consult service users and staff to design new format.
- Prove this one system is more efficient (including money efficient)
- Flexible structure to meet individual needs
- Share experiences of young people's transitions with decision makers
- Ring-fence funding!
- Funding allocated appropriately to different types of intervention

- Better communication between all services
- Young people's participation – in service design; with clear line to influence CCG

We need a campaign led by young people:

- What we want: integrated services
- Why? Early intervention is key. It saves money. Current system is failing us! Responsibility is on the system. System overhaul is needed.
- Message: Keep short (10 mins speaking), hashtag (#Fairfunding #NoMoreSegregation #FallingThroughTheGap)
- Methods:
- Link message to wider social media campaign
- Engage Young people in VCS organisations who have access to CCG
- Post, Facebook, email CCG (link message to wider social media campaign), Twitter
- Train young people in how to speak up and what to say so you're listened to
- Lobby staff to help represent YP's views
- "CCGs have a duty to engage" – contact engagement lead



Group 3: Young adults need sustainable, community-based mental health services

- Need to involve school, GPs, business, CCGs, CAMHS, AMHS
- Make sure money is spent correctly, and get feedback
- Need to move away from NHS vibe/judgements, have services in local community with good transport access
- Services need to look like a 'youth' service; where anyone can access (open door); with drop-ins and group work; well-advertised; youth-friendly spaces – free, accessible; it's ok to be here; with one-to-one counselling, youth work support, activities and socialising; separate from home and school
- Young people need a choice and be able to move between services
- Mental health professionals should be available
- Needs to come from the top
- Contracts for services need to last for years, not year-to-year
- Need youth-led fundraising and voice
- Services should trade resources



Youth Access @YouthAccess

Feedback time on how we need to make improvements around priority areas in #mentalhealth. #MHtakeover

Session 8: Department of Health consultation session

Staff from the Department of Health's Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper team then consulted young people on some important questions:

1. How do you think stigma and discrimination of mental health problems can be changed/improved?

- More open talking re mental health generally – but just talking about it won't solve the mental health crisis
- It's effective hearing from people we aspire to and can relate to, not always celebrities, also people who have had successful support. Diverse voices needed and more creative and subtle campaigns.

2. What do you see as the harmful effects of social media? How do you think the Internet and social media can be used to support young people?

- Harmful: spending too much time on it; how you use it; using it to escape reality can take over real life; websites that promote destructive behaviour.
- Positives: social media can work for people feeling isolated; can help you find information on mental health and services; free online services, e.g. Kooth, Childline, local counselling services; use it to self-manage your own care.

3. How do you see the role of parents/carers/families/friends in mental health support for CYP? How can they best be supported/included?

- Young people need to feel able to talk to parents
- Confidentiality – giving YP power to share when they want
- Peer support can be effective – but can't be used alone
- Need to identify best-placed 1st point of contact where multiple agencies are involved, so young person not bounced around. Young person needs a choice and access to advocacy.
- Peer support and education for parents re LGBT issues needed.

4. What action would you consider most helpful to support those who are particularly vulnerable or oppressed?

- Autism – improve professionals' (incl. GPs') awareness, training and communication skills
- There's never enough time to explain a complex problem to a GP – introduce a '10 minute rule'
- Young people can feel quite isolated. Help needs to come to the young person. Need more digital delivery as an option, it can make it easier for some young people to 'speak', but still requires confidence to 'get there'.

5. What do you think would work most effectively in terms of 1) prevention of mental ill health and 2) before specialist CAMHS support is required?

- Schools should: teach us life skills; be more aware of non-CAMHS support available; address need to care for our mind as we care for our body. Mental health needs to be on the curriculum. Need specially-trained counsellors in schools – we don't always want to talk to teachers.
- Parents should be educated to spot signs and do preventative stuff
- Still need to break down stigma
- Parity of esteem – and don't deal with physical and mental health separately
- Need access to youth services where young people can have somewhere to go. And workers from VCS should go into schools to promote mental health.

6. How do you think the voluntary sector can best play a role in provision of mental health services?

- Need more youth provision – places to go, things to do, support network – funding cuts need to stop and we need the services back.
- Need more community provision – with trained youth workers on site and combined wellbeing and mental health services
- Need a collective voice for young people to actively challenge poor services and fight for decent funding
- Need centres for young people and young adults – not just children's centres, which are too focussed on younger children



Youth Access @YouthAccess

Some big questions for #MHtakeover and how we can provide some solutions here.

End of event feedback from Department of Health

Emily Antcliffe addressed participants at the end, assuring them that her Department would take all the information from the day and use it to inform their policy-making. She thanked all the young people for coming and gave a special thanks to those who had planned the day so expertly.

Immediate post-event feedback from young people:

“Love that it was genuinely led by YP”

“Great networking, great experience, LOVE working as one big group!”

“Facilitator was awesome”

“Got to have an impact on young people’s mental health services?”

“YPs listened to”

“Fantastic”



Grace Jeremy @_graceadele Apr 25

Reflecting on the wonderful #MHtakeover day. So good to see #CYP focussing on positive change in #mentalhealth services we can do this 🙌

Really enjoyed Mental Health Takeover Day at The Department of Health yesterday. Shattered from facilitating 3 workshops/ debates, but so proud of everyone who came together.

It was really refreshing to have a day that wasn't focussed on ranting and complaining about inadequate services (which is of course understandable, but often stops us from actually doing anything about it!) but instead seeing so many young people come up with solution focussed and creative approaches to improving things.

#MHTakeover #MentalHealth



Jack Welch @MrJW18 Apr 24

Hear some of my immediate reflections about #MHtakeover today... @YouthAccess @YPHealth



YPAS Liverpool @YPASLiverpool Apr 25

Empowering stuff! Very proud of all the young people who took part yesterday!



The Proud Trust @TheProudTrust Apr 25

Great day in Westminster at the Mental Health Takeover Day with @YouthAccess @RochdaleYA @YPASLiverpool @42ndStreetmcr @offtherecord

Youth Access and YPHP reflected that the day benefitted from young people being afforded such a high degree of control over the agenda. This is rare when Government is involved in organising events with young people. Much credit must go to DH!

Emily Antcliffe has written on behalf of the DH to all the young people who took part saying:

“Thank you all for organising and inputting into Takeover Day. My colleagues and I felt the day was very successful and enjoyed observing the presentations and sessions you planned and delivered.

I would especially like to thank the Planning Committee for their hard work leading up to the day, and the facilitator of the day – they were all brilliant.

We were really pleased the day could go ahead despite the constraints of the pre-election period. We believe it is important to engage with and listen to the thoughts you have on the services you receive as we develop our thinking in this area.”

Next steps

We are encouraged by the Government’s determination to improve mental health services for young people and by the Prime Minister’s personal commitments in this area. We believe one of the greatest areas of weakness in the system is the lack of appropriate services for young adults. We are grateful to DH for giving young people the opportunity to ensure forthcoming Government policy on children and young people’s mental health is informed by the voices of the experts – young people with lived experience.

However, as young people commented throughout the planning for the day and the event itself, there is no point “just talking with no results”, “we need to ensure that there is consensus from ministers to make changes”. Therefore, Youth Access and YPHP will be working with young people and the DH over the coming months to ensure the messages from Mental Health Takeover become embedded in future policy.

Resources

[Young, adult – and ignored: Getting a fair deal for 16-24 year olds from mental health services](#) – A policy briefing by Youth Access for The Young People’s Health Partnership highlighting the difficulties experienced by young adults aged 16 to 24 in accessing the mental health support they need and setting out recommended solutions.

[Takeover Day Toolkit and Resources](#) – produced by The Young People’s Health Partnership for anyone wishing to organise NHS-related Takeover activities

About the Young Planning Group

Mental Health Takeover Day was designed and delivered by a dedicated team of young adults aged between 16 - 25 who are experts by experience.

Teniola Dowie

Curtis Greenwood

Taibah Hussain

Grace Jeremy

Jack Welch

Kirsty Wilson

About The Young People's Health Partnership

The Young People's Health Partnership represents the interests of young people and young adults aged 10-25. We focus specifically on young people facing health inequalities. We are a partnership of six organisations with VCSE networks across England from the youth and young people's health sectors. <http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/yphp>

About Youth Access

Youth Access is the advice and counselling network. We promote the Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services (YIACS) model as part of local services for young people everywhere. www.youthaccess.org.uk