

Our recommendations for change

In response to young people's concerns around emotional wellbeing and related services, we have recommended service commissioners and providers make a number of important and thorough changes:

1. Address stigma - ensure that people know that they will be treated confidentially and that they can ask for help
2. Promote services currently available so that people know who to ask for help and how to get help
3. Make future services young person centred. Locate services in the community, accessible outside of school hours with a non-threatening, non-medical environment
4. Change the mode of delivery to be more young person centred
5. Review CAMHS thresholds and waiting lists
6. Focus care and promotion on people whose sexuality, gender or ethnicity make them least likely to access care
7. Create a positive school environment in relation to emotional wellbeing by raising awareness and opening discussion around mental health within schools
8. Acknowledge academic pressures and limit mental distress caused by them

Improving Emotional Wellbeing for Young People 2016



Contact us



www.healthwatchrichmond.co.uk



@HW_Richmond



Tel: 020 8099 5335

Healthwatch Richmond
Regal House
70 London Road
Twickenham TW1 3QS



healthwatch
Kingston Upon
Thames



healthwatch
Richmond upon
Thames

healthwatch
Richmond upon
Thames



Our research

Young people in Richmond and Kingston have made strong comments about their emotional wellbeing, and the services available to help them.

Healthwatch Richmond, Healthwatch Kingston, and the two borough's youth councils, have created a report to present these views. It is based on responses from 1,580 students aged 11-18. We've made important recommendations to commissioners and providers so that they tackle any problems with the services.

The full report is available at healthwatchrichmond.co.uk and by calling 020 8099 5335. Its findings are summarised in this brochure.

Young people's emotional wellbeing

There is some very positive news to share. Local young people, after accessing services that are beneficial, report positive feelings on a par with those who've never needed to seek help.

Young people cited notable benefits from counselling and online support, as well as from conversations with family and friends.

But emotional wellbeing services did not work for a large number of others and for these people their emotional wellbeing was as bad as if they had not received help when needed.

A number of factors led to young people feeling they needed help. As they went from early to late teens, they reported lower wellbeing levels, and 26% of people who identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other found support wasn't working. Exam stress and cyber bullying also played heavily on wellbeing.

Accessing support

A number of people felt support worked, and two thirds of them benefited from speaking to a friend or relative. Just under a third expected to access counselling, which they said offered a safe environment, and 34% liked to refer to online videos and forums.

Of those who felt the support they'd received hadn't helped, over a quarter said there was nothing that could help them. They also expressed significant concerns about the quality of support. Many said they were not able to connect with their professional, and others warned of long waits and tough criteria to be seen.

Out of the group who needed support but hadn't accessed it, nearly half reported continued negative wellbeing. Some 44% of them felt they could not ask for help, often due to worries about stigma or that their issue might not be taken seriously.

I did not really progress into anything, just mulled over the same situation



Good wellbeing was reported by 44% of those who accessed helpful support

Where schools fit in

Pupils at 51 schools across the borough were surveyed for the report. A number of them felt helped by their school, and they cited kind teachers and a good school environment. Others warned of some teachers being difficult to approach, or unsympathetic.

It is important for schools to promote mental health issues and services. Pupils praised schools where they were encouraged to express their emotions.

But serious concerns were also voiced around stigma, and many young people said they find it hard to talk about their mental health, stopping them from doing so. They were also worried about confidentiality.

Some schools were praised for openly acknowledging the effects of heavy workloads and exam stress, but others were criticised for not doing enough.

My school is very strict about bullying so it just doesn't happen

We need to show that any problem is worth talking about

How young people think that services can be improved

Young people shared with us a number of improvements they'd like to see. Ensuring accessibility, anonymity and confidentiality is essential in improving mental health services, they said.

It is important to provide help out of schools, many said, in order to protect their privacy. They also suggested that the services should run most of the time, be friendly and run in an informal atmosphere.

Young people highlighted the need for compassionate individuals to deliver the services, including those who are young and have gone through similar problems. In addition, online counselling services or chat rooms could help them discuss their feelings.

Finally, many suggested that there needs to be plenty of publicity around services, and around how to tackle common issues such as stress, depression, and self-harm.