NATIONAL CONSULTATION
YOUR HEALTH, YOUR CARE, YOUR SAY
ON-LINE SURVEY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

KEY MESSAGES

The vast majority of the respondents reported 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good' health.

Young people were not confident in their knowledge of the health and social care services available to them.

The majority of young people did not use health or social care services very often.

About half the young people thought that health and social care services were 'quite good'.

New services relating to exercise and physical activity, diet and nutrition, and mental health services would be most welcomed, while those relating to smoking would have the lowest take-up.

Parents and friends stood out as persons young people would most like to seek support from.

Young people said they would prefer to get new information on health and social care services face-to-face, followed by via a website or through leaflets or other written information.

Home emerged as the overwhelmingly most popular place for young people to talk to someone face-to-face.

Over half the young people said they usually made their own health care decisions, and most of the rest said they made them in conjunction with others.

Young people called for more welcoming, friendly and child-friendly services.

They also wanted quicker access to consultation and treatment, and greater assurance of confidentiality.

Some young people said they wanted better mental health services. Drop-in clinics seemed generally appreciated.
The survey

An online questionnaire asking young people for their views on their health and the health and social care services available to them was widely distributed via local organisations and NCB contacts and networks. Paper versions of the questionnaire were also sent out. The survey was open for one month between 3 October and 3 November 2005. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at the end of the report.

The sample

The questionnaire was completed by a total of 521 young people. Many, however, did not answer all questions. There was also an impression from the verbatim comments that some young people may have completed the questionnaire more than once.

Age

The majority of respondents were aged between 13 and 16 years. Their distribution by age was:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 12 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 and 14</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>15 and 16</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 and 18</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Gender

Almost three quarters of the respondents (277: 73%) were female and only one in four (101: 27%) was male.

Ethnicity

The sample was predominantly white. The distribution by self-reported ethnicity was:
White British 332 (88%)
White Irish or any other white background 16 (4%)
Asian (including mixed) 21 (6%)
Mixed (one as white and Black Caribbean, one as white and Black African, and 4 as ‘other’) 6 (2%)
Chinese 3 (1%)

Geographical location:

366 respondents supplied their home postcodes. It has not, however, been possible to analyse these to determine the geographical spread of the sample.

Young people and their health

The vast majority of the respondents reported ‘excellent’ (70: 18%), ‘very good’ (130: 34%) or ‘good’ (125: 33%) health. On the other hand, 34 (9%) said it was ‘not good enough’ and 25 (7%) said it was poor.

Overall, 75 (20%) said they definitely had a health problem and 69 (18%) said that possibly they did. Fewer than half this number said they definitely (35: 9%) or possibly (31: 8%) had a disability or impairment.

Knowledge about services

Young people were not confident in their knowledge of the health and social care services available to them. In part this is because they were not heavy service users.

There was a link between knowledge of services and young people’s health. Those who said their health was ‘excellent’ were most likely to say that they knew as much as they wanted to, while those who said it was ‘not good enough’ or ‘poor’ wanted to know more.

Health services

Asked whether they know as much as they would like to about health services for young people, 20 (5%) of respondents said ‘yes, definitely’, 139 (37%) said ‘yes, I think so’, 206 (55%) said ‘no, not really’ and 13 (3%) did not know. Neither age nor gender made much difference to these patterns.

Perhaps not surprisingly, those who felt their health was ‘not good enough’ or ‘poor’, or those who reported a health problem or a disability/impairment, were most likely to say they did not know as much about health services for young people as they would like to. Nonetheless, a small number of respondents
who reported definite disabilities or impairments did say they definitely knew as much about services as they wanted to

**Social care services**

Fewer young people seemed knowledgeable about social care services than about health services. It is worth noting, however, that several commented that they were not clear exactly what social care services are. Overall, 29 (6%) felt they knew as much as they wanted to about these services, and a further 138 (28%) thought that they did. On the other hand, 286 (58%) said they did not really know as much as they would like to, and 42 (8%) did not know. Responses were again affected by young people’s self-reported health but not by their age or gender.

**Use of services**

The majority of young people did not use health or social care services very often.

**Health services**

Overall, 42 (8%) of respondents said they used health services ‘very often’, 129 (26%) said they used them ‘quite often’, 290 (58%) said they used them ‘not very often’, and 38 (8%) said ‘never’. Female respondents were the most likely to say they used health services very often and least likely to say they never used them. There were no clear associations between service use and age.

As might be expected, there was an association between how respondents described their health and their use of services. Half of those with poor health said they used services ‘very often’ as compared with hardly any who reported ‘excellent’ health. Nonetheless it is noteworthy that one in five of those with ‘poor’ health said they used services ‘not very often’ or ‘never’. Half of all those with ‘not good enough’ health said they used services ‘not very often’ and a few said ‘never’. There was also a greater use of services if a health problem or a disability/impairment was reported.

**Social care services**

Only 14 (3%) of young people said they used social care services ‘very often’ while a further 44 (9%) said they used them ‘quite often’. By contrast, 144 (29%) reported using them ‘not very often’ and 288 (59%) never.
Views of services

The survey included the questions ‘What do you think of health services you have used?’ and ‘What do you think of the social care services you have used?’ More young people provided views on the former than the latter as 37 (7%) said they had no personal experience of health services while 287 (58%) said the same of social care services.

Health services

Overall, 70 (14%) of respondents said they thought health services were ‘very good’, 243 (49%) said they were ‘quite good’, 54 (11%) said they were ‘not very good’ and 93 (19%) said they were ‘variable’. As already mentioned, 37 (7%) of respondents claimed no personal experience of such services.

Neither gender nor age made any striking difference to what young people thought of these services. Those with ‘excellent’ health appeared to have the highest opinion of them, and those with ‘not good enough’ or ‘poor’ health were most likely to say they were ‘not very good’ or ‘variable’. Young people with definite or possible health problems had less favourable attitudes towards services than those who did not, and those with a definite disability or impairment, followed by those with a possible one, were particularly likely to say that they thought services were ‘not very good’. Both these disability groups were more likely than others to say they felt services were ‘variable’ – probably because of their greater experience of them.

Social care services

Of those who gave a view on social care services, 24 (12%) said they were ‘very good’, 106 (52%) that they were ‘quite good’, 29 (14%) that they were ‘not very good’ and 46 (22%) that they were ‘variable’.

Information, advice and support

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to use various information, advice and support services if they were readily available. These were in relation to: smoking cessation; exercise and physical activity; diet and nutrition; safer drinking; safer sex; feeling upset or unhappy; housing; and money. The proportions indicating that they might use such services are shown below. The findings suggest that services relating to exercise and physical activity, diet and nutrition, and mental health services would be most welcomed, while those relating to smoking would have the lowest take-up.
Respondents saying they would be ‘very likely’ or ‘fairly likely’ to use services in selected areas if they were readily available (N= 465-471)

Getting help for health/support problems

Young people were asked who they would like to talk to if they had a health/support problem, and provided with 13 possibilities to place in rank order (a parent, another family member, a friend, a family doctor, another doctor, a nurse at the doctor’s surgery, a school nurse, another nurse, a specialist health worker, a teacher, a social worker, a learning mentor or Connexions advisor, and a peer mentor). As can be seen, parents and friends stood out as persons young people would most like to seek support from.

Respondents’ first choices about whom they would like to talk to if they had a health/support problem (N=429)
Preferences for where to talk to somebody face-to-face about a health/support problem

Young people were then asked about the setting in which they would prefer to talk to someone face-to-face about a health or support problem. Home emerged as the overwhelmingly most popular place for young people in this respect.

Respondents’ first choices about where they would choose to talk to somebody face-to-face if they had a health/support problem (N=415)

Getting new information about services

Young people were next asked how they would like to get new information about health or social care services, and were asked in each instance to rank their first four choices from six possibilities (face-to-face, website, leaflet or written information, telephone helpline, via their mobile phone, from a CD-ROM). In both cases, face-to-face was much the most popular choice, followed by via a website or through leaflets or other written information (the order of these last two choices was reversed for health and social care services).
Respondents’ first choices about how they would like to get new information about health or health services (N=388)

Respondents’ first choices about how they would like to get new information about social care services (N=374)

Making decisions about using services

Young people were asked to comment on how choices are made about the services they use. Do they make their own decisions, do they make these in
conjunction with their parents or carers, and/or doctors and other health/social care professionals, or are decisions usually made on their behalf by these adults?

Over half (204: 53%) said they usually made their own decisions, and most of the rest (151: 39%) said they made them in conjunction with others. Only 32 (8%) said that decisions were usually made on their behalf. These patterns almost completely reflected the way they would prefer decisions on this matter to be made.

**Young people’s views and experiences of services**

At three points in the questionnaire, respondents were provided with the opportunity to comment on their views and experiences of services. They were asked

- to add comments about any health or social care services they had used
- to make a suggestion about how health and social care services for young people could be improved
- to tell their own story about their experiences – either good or bad – of health or social care services.

In all, 120 young people responded to the first invitation to comment, 230 made suggestions in relation to the second request, and 92 provided information on their experiences for the third. A small proportion of these comments were not serious responses to the questions posed.

A wide range of views emerged, some predominantly positive, some mainly negative, and others mixed. The overall impression was of both good and bad experiences.

Positively, for instance, young people said:

* I think that the work of the NHS is excellent - there may be widely documented flaws to the system but every many, many more people are experiencing first hand the dedication of doctor, nurse, dentists and many more besides.

* A & E at (town) were fast and (provided an) effective response to a sprained wrist and I was generally impressed by the overall politeness and positive attitudes.

More negatively, however, others commented:

* Health care could be ALOT better! I feel that health services are very very poor and that it could be a whole lot better!
Many, nonetheless, had mixed views:

I have been pleased with certain parts but because I am younger I felt that I was not believed and more likely to be talked down to. My medical complaints were overlooked in some cases or dismissed. I have however had problems where prompt action was taken and I felt understood.

There were a number of themes that recurred throughout the comments. Some of the key messages that came through were:

- It can be slow to get appointments, access services, and gain a diagnosis and treatment. Many young people called for services to be ‘quicker’.
- Many young people were concerned about the confidentiality of services they used, particularly sexual health services or those that they did not want their parents to know they had consulted. It is important that it is completely transparent to young people what information will and will not be passed on.
- There was a widespread feeling among young people that they did not know what services were available and how they could be accessed. Many called for much better advertisement of local provision, as well as a focal point from which they could find out about, and make contact with, services.
- A number of young people wanted better mental health services for those of their age. There was also a feeling among some that doctors should spend more time checking the general well-being of young people attending appointments. However, as one respondent pointed out, doctors should ensure that they do not attribute all health problems to depression, self-harm or other mental health difficulties that young people may have experienced.
- Many young people called for health service professionals to ensure that they take them seriously, treat them with respect, listen and talk to them properly, and act on their wishes.
- There was a strong call for clinics and other health care settings to be more welcoming to encourage young people to attend when they first have a problem or concern rather than wait until it may have become more serious.
- Young people wanted ‘friendly’ and ‘child friendly’ services which, among other things, included more younger doctors, nurses and other professional staff.
- Drop-in clinics were welcomed – both at school and in other settings such as youth centres.

More specifically, young people also had some useful suggestions to make. Some of these, in their own words, were:
There should be gynaecologist appointments that are compulsory for all girls once a year from the age of 16 as there is in Europe as this would cause a great decline in the number of long term STD’s and would allow young women to voice their fears in a private one-on-one appointment.

I would like all my health appointments to be together - I see a paediatrician, speech therapist, and psychologist all at different times. It means taking too much time off school and I like school.

I would use health facilities like children’s gyms if they were there to use!

I think that social care services should be taught about more often because I have no idea what they are.

There could be a dedicated team for young adults/people aged 15-25 who deal with this age group who have difficulties and want to be treated like adults but still need a bit of extra guidance. Also need to make them a bit more urgent.
What is Your Health, Your Care, Your Say?

The Government is carrying out a national consultation to find out what people think about health and social care services and their experiences of them. The consultation is called Your Health, Your Care, Your Say! and more information about it can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/NewsHome/YourHealthYourCareYourSay/fs/en

What does this questionnaire aim to do?

This questionnaire has been specially designed for young people to make sure that the government listens to you too. Please take this opportunity to give your views on any services you have used and how you feel health and social care services might be improved. Tell your friends about the questionnaire as well so that they can also have their say.

Most questions require only a tick in the appropriate box, but some give you the opportunity to say a bit more. It would be very helpful if you could add your more detailed comments wherever possible. There is no need to put your name on the questionnaire. We may report your comments but these will be in an anonymous form and nobody will know who you are.

What will happen to your views?

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The government has pledged to listen to what young people and adults have to say and to take their views into account in shaping future health services. We will produce a short report to let you know what we have told them, and this will be published in November.
**What do we mean by the term ‘health’**

The word ‘health’ in this questionnaire refers to how healthy a person is, both physically (their body), as well as emotionally and mentally (how they think and feel). For example, being healthy can include feeling well and feeling good about yourself as well as taking regular physical activity such as playing, walking, cycling and running. Different things may affect how easy it is for a young person to stay healthy such as where they live and how easy it is to get to play and leisure services.

**What do we mean by ‘health services’?**

The word ‘health services’ refers to services that provide information, advice, support and/or treatment to help young people keep happy, healthy and safe.

**What do we mean by the ‘social care services’?**

The term ‘social care’ is used to describe the services that help young people to get the most from their life and their community. Examples of these services might include supporting a young person who lives on their own to manage their money or helping a disabled young person to find work.

1. **How can we help you stay healthy?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, definitely</th>
<th>Yes, I think so</th>
<th>No, not really</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you know as much as you would like to about health services for young people?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Do you know as much as you would like to about social care services for young people?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>How often do you use health services of any kind?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>How often do you use social care services of any kind?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What do you think of health services you have used?</strong></td>
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What do you think of social care services you have used?

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<th></th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Quite good</th>
<th>Not very good</th>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Don’t have any personal experience</th>
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Please add any comments about the services you have used

Would you be likely to use any of the services listed below if they were readily available?

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<th></th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Fairly Likely</th>
<th>Not very likely</th>
<th>Not at all likely</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a Information, advice and support to stop smoking</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b Information, advice and support on exercise and physical activity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c Information, advice and support on diet and nutrition</td>
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<td>d Information, advice and support on safer drinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>e Information, advice and support on tackling drug use</td>
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<tr>
<td>f Information, advice and support on safer sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>g Information, advice and support when you’re feeling upset or unhappy</td>
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<tr>
<td>h Information, advice and support on housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Information, advice and support about money</td>
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2. If you needed help, how would you like to get it?

Who would you like to talk to if you had a health/support problem? (Please rank top 4 choices).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>My parents</th>
<th>Another family member</th>
<th>A friend</th>
<th>My family doctor</th>
<th>Another doctor</th>
<th>A nurse at the doctor’s surgery</th>
<th>A school nurse</th>
<th>Another nurse</th>
<th>A specialist health worker</th>
<th>A teacher</th>
<th>A social worker</th>
<th>A learning mentor or Connexions advisor</th>
<th>A peer mentor</th>
<th>Someone else</th>
<th>Please say who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Where would you choose to talk to somebody face-to-face about a health/support problem? (Please rank top 4 choices).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>Somewhere close to school</th>
<th>At the doctor’s surgery</th>
<th>At a drop-in centre</th>
<th>At home</th>
<th>At hospital</th>
<th>At a youth or community centre</th>
<th>Somewhere else (Please state where)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

How would you like to get new information about health or health services? (Please rank top 4 choices).

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Somebody face-to-face</th>
<th>A leaflet or other written information</th>
<th>A website</th>
<th>A telephone helpline</th>
<th>My mobile phone</th>
<th>A CD-Rom</th>
<th>Something else (please say how)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How would you like to get new information about social care services? (Please rank top 4 choices).

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Somebody face-to-face</th>
<th>A leaflet or other written information</th>
<th>A website</th>
<th>A telephone helpline</th>
<th>My mobile phone</th>
<th>A CD-Rom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Making decisions

Which of the following best describes how you usually decide about using services?

- I usually make my own decisions
- I usually make decisions with my parents or carers and/or doctors and other healthcare professionals
- My parents or carers and/or doctors and health/social care professionals usually make decisions for me

Which of the following best describes how you would prefer to make decisions about using health services?

- I want to make my own decisions
- I want to make decisions with my parents and/or doctors and other professionals
- I want my parents and/or doctors and professionals to make decisions for me

3. Making services better

Please make one suggestion about how health and or social care services for young people could be improved

About you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How old are you?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you male or female?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

16
In general, how would you describe your health?

Excellent □ Very Good □ Good □ Not very good □ Poor □

Do you have a health problem?

Yes, definitely □ Yes, possibly □ No □

If yes, what is it?

Do you have a disability or impairment?

Yes, definitely □ Yes, possibly □ No □

If yes, what is it?

Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?
(Please tick one box only)

White British □ Mixed - White & Black African □ Any other Asian background □

White Irish □ Indian □ Caribbean □

Any other white background □ Pakistani □ African □

Mixed - White & Black Caribbean □ Bangladeshi □ Any other black background □

Any other mixed background □ Chinese □ Any other (please state) □

What is the first part of the postcode of your main home address? (e.g. M12)
And finally…

We are trying to collect some stories of young people’s experiences – both good and bad – of health/social care services. If you have a story you would like to tell us please write it here. We may publish your story but, if we do, your name and personal details will not be given and nobody will know who you are and where you are from.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR HELP

This is a word version of the on-line survey. Please send your handwritten completed questionnaire to:

Gareth Probert  
‘Your Health, Your Care, Your Say’ Programme Team  
Department of Health  
7E28 Quarry House  
Leeds LS2 7UE

Or

Transfer the answers in your written questionnaire onto the on-line questionnaire at

http://is-nri.com/take/?i=100616&h=dBRW3LDDf9vjSEdorYYuZA

or


DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONNAIRES IS 20TH OCTOBER 2005