

Healthwatch Solihull's response to the mental health and wellbeing plan consultation

Healthwatch Solihull welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the mental health and wellbeing plan. Our key role is to make sure that patients, the public, service users, and carers are at the heart of service improvement in health and social care. In line with our role, we have focused our comments on patient and public involvement and the proposed changes.

The responses to the questions in the consultation survey, are based on the findings in our recently published report - "Young People and Self Harm: What support is available from self-harm services and how does it impact young people and their families?" support these choices.

What more can the NHS do to help children and young people to access mental health support early?

One of the biggest issues reported was the long waiting lists young people face when trying to access support, which can be several months long. People who are already at crisis point when they initially seek support find the issue of waiting lists particularly distressing. The lack of support available when young people move between different stages of their care pathways was mentioned as another area that needs to be addressed. It was suggested that more support needs to be provided while people are waiting. The impact of spending long times on waiting lists is making some people decide to seek private treatment decide to stop seeking support or not bother seeking support or help at all.

What needs to happen to ensure the best care and treatment is more widely available within the NHS for children and young people?

Our findings showed that young people do not feel like they are being taken seriously by staff when seeking support regarding the mental health and self-harm. There is a lack of support or follow-up by the schools when students have stated they are having issues with self-harming.

Please suggest priorities for future research, innovation and data improvements in relation to children and young people.

The responses to this consultation need to be assessed to see if they are representative of citizens in this borough, as well as the demographic of children or young people and those not currently choosing to access services. If the responses are not representative, then further engagement work needs to be held on this strategy. This could include targeted engagement for certain populations, and would require materials to be produced that are much easier to read and understand.

How can we support sectors to work together to improve the quality of life of children and young people living with mental health conditions?

More training - Our findings showed that young people do not feel like they are being taken seriously by staff when seeking support regarding the mental health and self-harm. There is a lack of support or follow-up by the schools when students have stated they are having issues with self-harming.

How can we improve the immediate help available to children and young people in crisis?

Improve waiting times and keep care consistent.

How can we improve the support available to children and young people after they experience a mental health crisis?

Improve waiting times in between sessions.

What do you think are the most important issues that a new, 10-year national mental health plan needs to address?

- Early intervention and service access
- Treatment quality and safety
- Crisis care and support

Yours Sincerely,



Oluwakemi Adebajo

Project Officer



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