



Wandsworth's Mental Health Youth Climate REPORT

How do young people's views, thoughts and feelings help improve Wandsworth's Mental Health services? This report aims to find out.

Executive Summary

Staff are inspired to go to work, young people receive great outcomes but often, they don't know what they are.

Wandsworth's Clinical Commissioning Group asked us, Participation People, to help them look at 3 things:

1. What is working
2. What isn't working
3. Where the gaps are



Mental health is defined as “A state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

When it comes to involving young people in shaping Wandsworth's mental health services.



Emotional wellbeing is defined as “A positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment.”

We ran 64 interviews with young people, parents and professionals and asked them a bunch of questions to find the answers.

Finally, we created this, a Youth Climate Report with everyone's answers thrown in.

We found out about a ton of stuff including:

- Professionals are motivated to come to work. They know they make a difference to young people's lives. This, is the main driver for them to achieve.
- Young people know that there is help out there. They also know that they can ask for help, but sometimes finding the right person to ask can be tricky.
- Parents and young people aren't aware of their rights and what happens when they feedback about the services they received.

Our findings will inform:

1. Wandsworth's Local Transformation Plan.
2. Strategic decisions for every Mental Health service offered to young people.
3. Budget decisions.
4. Commissioning processes including, contract monitoring and designing contract specifications.
5. The Transition service that is set up to help children and young people move into adult mental health services when they are old enough.
6. Staff recruitment and appraisal processes.

The big bosses <- people in charge, will read this report, talk to their teams about it and finally, agree a set of actions they will take to make things better.

...AND young people, parents and professionals we interviewed will read this, see what we learnt and be double checking to see if we have missed anything.

This report will then be updated and shared with those who took part and those who use mental health services. It will be their guide to help them "check in" that things are getting better for children and young people in Wandsworth. We need your help to do that too! Read onto find out what we discovered...

What is a Youth Climate Report?

An assessment and audit tool of an organisation's ability to utilise #YouthVoice to improve business outcomes.

A Youth Climate Report is a snapshot of how well an organisation is listening to and acting on the views of young people.

It provides insight into:

1. What is working
2. What isn't working
3. Where the gaps are

A Youth Climate Report isn't:

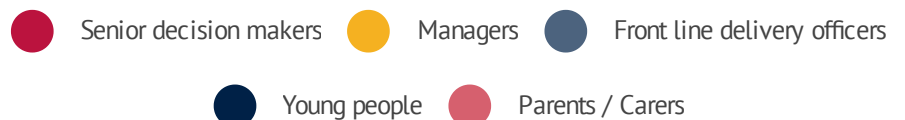
- A long report.
- A list of magical actions that will fix everything.
- Full of jargon, abbreviations or complicated language.

But it is:

- Short, snappy and colourful.
- An overview of how an organisation is doing.
- Something for everyone involved with the organisation to read and think about.

To complete it, we:

- Spoke to our commissioner, Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Listened to what they wanted to know about.
- Offered our advice and support on how best to get that done.



Graphical representation of who we spoke to to complete the Youth Climate Report.

We created a series of questions for adults to answer and questions for young people to answer. These questions focussed on 3 key areas:

1. The **organisational culture** of mental health services.
2. The **structures** put in place to listen to young people's views, thoughts and feelings.
3. The **feedback loops** i.e. how mental health services listen to what young people say, take action (or don't) and then report what they have done to young people.

We ran 29 phone interviews with adults who work with and for mental health services in Wandsworth. We ran 35 short phone interviews with young people and parents who have accessed these services.

Add in: a short SMS survey for those that didn't want to speak over the phone; reviewing forms and paperwork young people complete; analysing the data; and writing this report.

Easy peasy!

Wandsworth mental health services, the background

Our vision is to give every child the best start in life and help them develop into healthy and resilient adults.

Mental wellbeing and good mental health is when you feel generally good and are able to cope with your daily life.

If things start to go wrong or young people are finding it hard to cope, their GP should be the first place for them to seek help.

A GP can refer young people to another service, such as a ACCESS to child and mental health services, drug and alcohol support, or something else.

If young people don't feel comfortable talking to their GP there are other places they can find help. They can also self refer to ACCESS to child and mental health services when they are 15.

Support is available for all sorts of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, self harm, eating disorders, exam stress and for young people just having a really bad day.

As well as treatment services, Wandsworth wants to prevent young people having poor mental health. So there are services that help with that too!

For the purpose of this project, we looked at services that deal with both treatment and prevention.



Wandsworth has to write a plan of how they will support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. This is called a **Transformation Plan**.

This comes from a statutory duty (legal obligation) to respond to the Department of Health's Future In Mind policy.

Lots of people, reports and data feed into making the Transformation Plan, including: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Public Health, young people, parents and carers... and now, this project too!

The Future in Mind policy highlights requirements to create a system that supports the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. These are:

- Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention
- Improving access to effective support
- Care for the most vulnerable
- Accountability and transparency
- Developing the workforce

We made sure we interviewed people from all of these strands in this project too!

Staff are motivated to make a difference and help children, young people and their families thrive.

We asked everyone a number of questions about what it was like working **for** and **with** a mental health service.

We asked slightly different questions to different people. The general gist of what we asked was:

1. What gets you out of bed to come to work in the morning?
2. What is your vision for young people's mental health?
3. What stops you and your teams from performing well?

What's working?

Every professional we spoke to said that the biggest motivator to come to work was to make a difference.

Every person we spoke to was able to give examples of how a young person or parent had influenced their decision making.

Every professional wanted to prevent children and young people from mental ill health.



What's not working?

80% of professionals stated that a lack of flexibility in how they are allowed to work with children and young people was a barrier to performing well.

Young people's involvement in service shaping was often thought about and acted upon at the start of a new service (Access to Mental Health and Transition services). However, this wasn't thought about for existing services or "business as usual" services.

Ease of partnership working between the commissioners (people with the money) and providers (people who deliver the service) was often mentioned as a barrier to performing well.

What are the gaps?

Lots of gaps were identified in how the culture of mental health services could be improved to involve young people. The top 5 were:

1. Involving young people in shaping the vision for mental health services.
2. Involving young people in staff appraisals.
3. Involving young people in scrutinising services.
4. Supporting services to think about how young people's feedback informs their annual reports or contract monitoring.
5. Keeping up to date with current trends and habits of young people.

Structure

Lots of structures exist to listen to what young people are saying but they often don't feed into each other to improve learning.

We asked everyone a number of questions about what it was like working for and with a mental health service.

We asked slightly different questions to different people. The general gist of what we asked was:

1. How do young people influence front line delivery of services?
2. Do friends and family know the signs of a child/ young person struggling with mental ill health?
3. How do you collect what young people are saying about your service?

What's working?

Most professionals said that they were aware of young people taking part in staff recruitment panels.

Most people said that they were aware of Youth Forums that were set up to help mental health services improve.

Most people said they had been asked about the service they had received.



What's not working?

Young people/ parents / carers said that they hadn't received any written information on:

- Young people knowing their rights.
- Their notes.
- Distance travelled - how their treatment has benefitted them from point of entry to exit.
- How their complaint/ compliment had changed something.

60% of young people said they didn't understand what professionals were saying or that they were patronised.

Professionals said that sometimes it was difficult to get young people to fill in surveys/ questionnaires.

What are the gaps?

Lots of gaps were identified in how the structure and structures of mental health services could be improved to involve young people. The top 4 were:

1. Have a youth proofed service improvement plan.
2. Create a clear, simple and easy structure for young people to hold professionals to account.
3. Share with young people what their rights are when it comes to mental health services Wandsworth provides.
4. Every professional to be clear on how they listen to and act on the views of young people to improve their work.

Feedback

Professionals could evidence how they had listened to young people and children. But... young people and children were not clear on how their voice had influenced service change.

We asked everyone a number of questions about what it was like working for and with a mental health service.

We asked slightly different questions to different people. The general gist of what we asked was:

1. What have you seen change since you started working for/ with services.
2. How well is change or reasons for decisions communicated?
3. What is the learning from reports, complaints and compliments?

What's working?

It's very clear that individuals are making a **HUGE difference** to some young people's lives.

For young people that are **proactive**, it is easy to access help.

The service offered to Young Offenders is very **flexible** to meet the needs of young people.



What's not working?

Young people were not clear on how to access their case files / notes. They often felt patronised by professionals.

Young people felt that professionals were instructive rather than empowering/ coaching. Young people often felt alone with their mental ill health.

When they had the wrong professionals around them, this was more detrimental than having no professionals around them.

Decisions were often made about them, without consulting them. This left young people feeling disempowered about their own treatment plans.

What are the gaps?

Lots of gaps were identified in how the structure and structures of mental health services could be improved to involve young people. The top 4 were:

1. Create a list of what young people are entitled to with each service (including how their data is used).
2. Promote, use and evidence the complaints, compliments and suggestions process more widely. Share this!
3. Have young people train professionals on how to engage with them.
4. When decisions are made about service changes, think about how this will affect young people, by asking them first.

Policy and paperwork review

Consistency, accessibility and language can be improved

across all services

We asked professionals and young people what the paperwork was like for the service they worked for or with.

We asked them to send us examples and templates, so we could have a look.

We also asked organisations to send us their:

- Complaints and feedback policy
- Annual report
- Contract monitoring data.
- Letters they send young people.
- Questionnaires and surveys they ask young people to complete etc.

What's working?

Every young person and **parent** we spoke to said they were asked for their feedback regularly.

Every professional we spoke to could tell us what feedback mechanisms existed to capture both staff and young people's feedback.

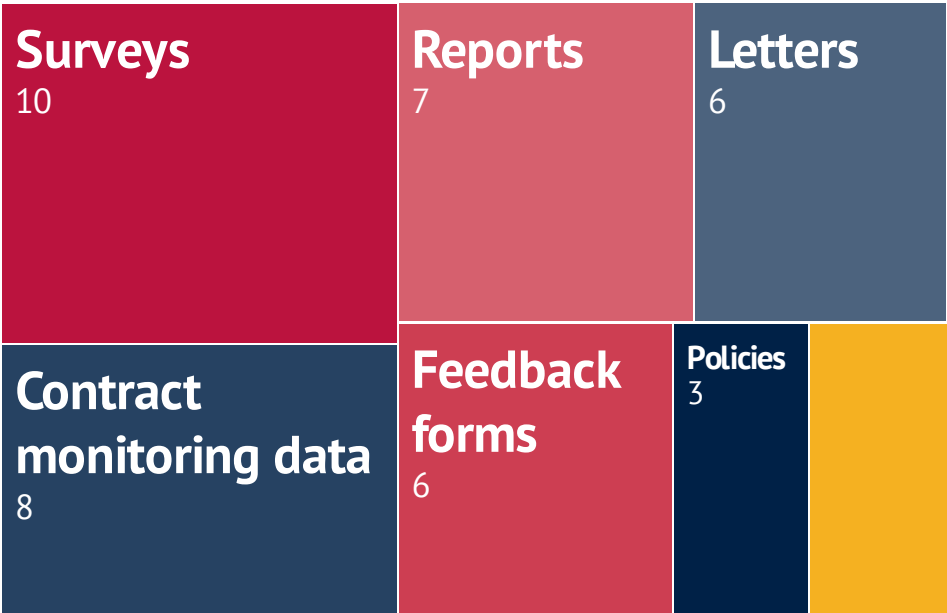


Table showing types of paperwork reviewed to inform this project

What's not working?

Overall, there is a lack of consistency when it comes to paperwork. Some organisations are great at communicating with young people and parents in a youth friendly and accessible manner.

We found multiple examples of where professionals have to speak through what the paperwork means. This shouldn't be necessary if Wandsworth can get the paperwork is right.

Organisations are data rich. By that, we mean they capture lots of stats and facts. What they use it for is often unclear. Young people don't know what has happened as a result of feeding back comments - both positive and negative.

What are the gaps?

Lots of gaps were identified in how the paperwork and policies of mental health services could be improved to involve young people. The top 3 were:

1. Make the language used consistent across services. Including: policies, letters sent to young people to questionnaires, reports and surveys.
2. Ask providers (those who deliver services) to report back to young people what has changed as a result of their comment/ complaint as standard. Build this into contract specifications.
3. Ask young people to regularly "youth proof" your letters, websites and marketing material.



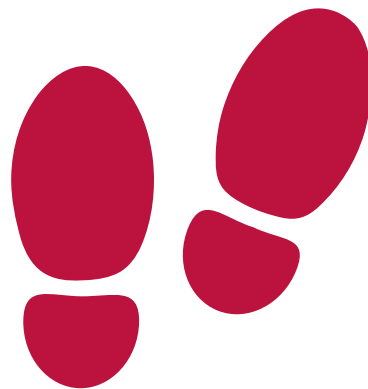
● Service star rating

Outline reason for star rating

We have given Wandsworth Mental Health services a 3.5 star rating for these reasons:

1. There are examples of FANTASTIC practice, which in our view, national best practice examples.
2. Staff are motivated to go to work. Parents, in particular, look forward to their support sessions.
3. Consistency of language, professional support youth friendliness across services needs to be addressed.
4. There is limited evidence of how young people hold services to account.
5. Some decision makers aren't up to speed with trends, habits and models of #youthvoice.
6. Commissioners (those who pay for the service) and Providers (those who deliver the service) are use different ICT systems. These can actively inhibit ease of reporting and increases paperwork time. Which means less time to work directly with young people..
7. Parents consistently praised the high quality of work from professionals from the Under 5's service. This should be learnt from and replicated across other providers. Our short analysis shows that the magic ingredients to this service are the hiring of fantastic staff, great leadership and management and, putting the needs of parents and their children first.
8. We couldn't find evidence of how young people proactively shape services. Our analysis shows that every service gathers this data, but how they use it is unclear.
9. Young people do not know their rights or the full offer when it comes to mental health services.
10. Marketing of services and the "Mental Health Offer" need to be better and youth proofed.
11. Helping young people communicate what treatment they have received, what they have learnt and the new tools they have got to cope could be improved.
12. Bringing providers, young people and parents together, regularly, to create a shared vision for mental health services would be a fantastic way forward. This will help everyone know what Wandsworth are trying to achieve and how everyone can play their part to get there.

Recommendations



... and next steps

1 Sharing is caring

Where best practice is identified in a service, share it!
Where a mistake has been made, share the learning from it!

This could be as simple as a case study, 3 bullet points on an email, short vlog or regular forums with providers.

Work together to look at how young people's feedback can meaningfully shape service delivery.



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We know that what we deliver is ok. We would love opportunities to get better and learn as a service. We often feel quite isolated, just doing our own thing. It's hard to track what young people have said and what we have done sometimes. There is always so much other stuff to do.

Female, professional

2 Involve us

Young people have a very honest view of services they receive. We recommend that professionals are trained to listen to this. Offer calendar of opportunities throughout the year of varying length and ways to engage.

We strongly suggest that young people and parents are involved in staff appraisals, staff selection, induction and training, consistently and that this is written into contract specifications.

A photograph of a young man and woman lying on their backs on the metal bed of a truck. They have their feet propped up against the truck's cab. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a blue jacket. They are both looking up towards the sky. The background is slightly blurred, showing some trees and a building.

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I get so angry when I say the same thing or get asked the same question over and over again. It's like no one has listened to me... no wonder I'm so screwed up.

Male, 16

3 Youth proof everything

Bring young people, parents and professionals around the table for a day. Create a set of rules of how young people want to be communicated with. Turn this into a Youth Proof Charter. Get everyone to sign up to it and run spot checks!

Finally, ask them to help you re-design and youth proof:

- Template letters and emails
- Forms, questionnaires and surveys
- Websites and marketing material
- Public reports
- Complaints, compliments and feedback policies



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I don't understand why adults continue to think they know best when it comes to communicating with us. Surely, we should be teaching them? Now I've completed my treatment, I want to help, so that others don't have to put up with complicated letters and leaflets that don't make sense and make you even more anxious.

Male, 17

Next steps

Outline how this inspection moves forward here.

Recommendation	Commissioner	Senior Manager	Front line staff	Young people
Name of recommendation 1 here	X		X	X
Name of recommendation 2 here		X	X	
Name of recommendation 3 here		X	X	X

Table showing who will be responsible for which recommendation

Provide feedback on what decision makers have said.

Which recommendation is possible to implement. By when?

Which recommendation isn't possible to implement. Why not?

General feedback on next steps / decision maker input.

For more info

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