

Report on the findings from the Healthwatch Young People's Survey on Health Services

June 2016

1. WHAT IS HEALTHWATCH?

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) established Local Healthwatch as the new consumer champion for health and social care services for adults and children in England. Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland's aim is to be a strong, independent, trusted and effective voice and a champion for local people, influencing health and social care delivery and supporting people to access health and social care services. It will strive to ensure the best possible quality and choice in health, social care and wellbeing services for the benefit of all living and working in Redcar and Cleveland.

2. AIM

At the beginning of 2016, Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland designed a young person's pilot survey to be distributed at a Health Fair event at Prior Pursglove College in Guisborough. The aim of this survey was to highlight and raise awareness of health and social care services which are available and how to access them. The sample of responses received gave indications that there were certain services that students were finding difficult to access. Following these findings, the Healthwatch Board agreed to carry out a wider survey to find out if this was representative of young people throughout Redcar & Cleveland. Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland identified this as an ideal opportunity to involve its young Healthwatch Champions who had been recruited during its engagement work with Redcar and Cleveland College. The role of the Healthwatch Champions is to gather the views and experiences of young people and potentially influence how services are delivered. The Healthwatch Champions were tasked with this project as part of their work placement, a requirement of their Health and Social Care qualification at the College.

The feedback which Healthwatch received from this survey highlights what is important to young people with regards to their health, their general awareness of what services are available and if they are able to access them. The results of the survey will be shared with NHS South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group, Redcar and Cleveland Local Authority, NHS England and Healthwatch England to help influence how they plan and promote services to young people.

3. METHODOLOGY

The feedback received from the pilot survey at Prior Pursglove College highlighted the need to change some of the questions and the Healthwatch Champions were given the task of making some modifications. One of the changes made to the pilot survey was to include an age category for 13 - 15 years olds as young people are able to access some services independently from this age and this would allow for a wider reach for the survey. The survey was launched on 26th February 2016 and ran for a period of 4 weeks and a total of 9 questions were asked in the survey.

The survey web-link was posted on Redcar and Cleveland College’s website and Facebook page. The Healthwatch Champions visited classes within the College to encourage fellow students to complete the survey and also distributed the survey amongst their own networks. In order to reach young people outside of the College, the survey web-link was also distributed through the following routes:-

- Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland’s Facebook and Twitter page
- Prior Pursglove College
- The Junction
- Doorways Project
- Healthy Schools
- Kidz Konnekt
- South Bank and Grangetown Health Forum

After the launch, the Healthwatch Champions requested that they were given paper copies of the survey as they were finding it difficult to get young people to complete it on-line and also held a stall within Redcar and Cleveland College to promote the survey.

Paper copies were also distributed through the youth club network via 25K Centre allowing young people aged 13-15 a greater opportunity to participate.

4. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

A total of 378 surveys were completed. It was originally envisaged that the majority of the surveys would be completed on-line or through social media. However, it was found that the distribution of hard copies through face to face engagement proved to be more successful (see fig.1).

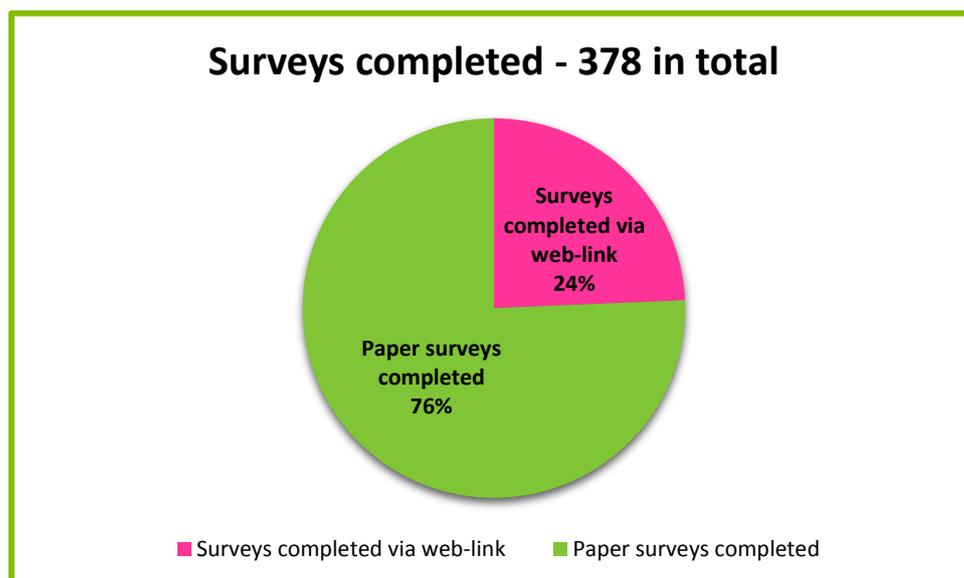


Fig. 1 – Comparison between the number of hard copies of the survey completed and those completed via the web-link.

The key findings of the survey are as follows:-

Who answered the survey?

Responses were received from all age categories with the most being from 16-18 year olds (see fig. 2 for age breakdown.) Fig. 3 shows that the majority of those who filled in the survey were female. This highlights the need to target a greater number of male participants in future work to ensure a fairer distribution of data.

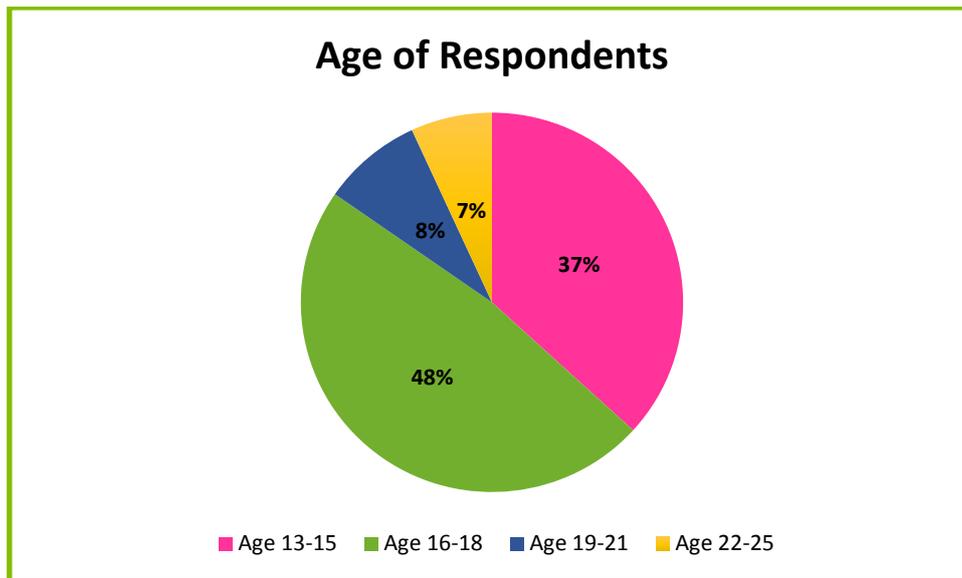


Fig. 2 – Age of respondents who completed the young person’s survey.

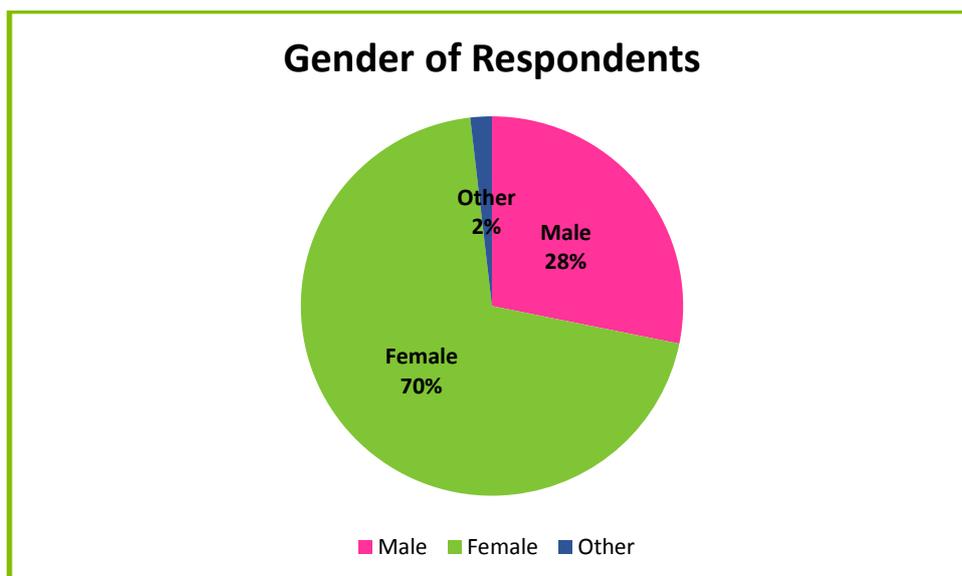


Fig. 3 – Gender of participants completing the young person’s survey.

Who do young people look to for help and support?

Table 1 below shows that young people aged 13 - 21 are more likely to turn to parents, carers and friends should they need help and support for their health and wellbeing. However, as young people get older (22-25 years old) and more mature they become more independent and tend to seek advice from their GP. The results show that from an early age, young people who are in mainstream education are not turning to or receiving support from services that are being delivered in the school e.g. school nurse/counsellor. Community centres were also found to be poorly utilised by young people.

Age	Parent/ Carer	Other family	Friends	School Teacher /Tutor	School nurse/ counsellor/ pastoral support	Community centre or young people's service	Doctors	A website, an online forum or telephone helpline	Walk-in Clinic
13 - 15	78%	31%	39%	16%	10%	5%	31%	12%	5%
16 - 18	69%	23%	56%	18%	7%	5%	39%	9%	15%
19 - 21	71%	31%	62%	12%	6%	0%	37%	12%	9%
22 - 25	46%	19%	38%	7%	11%	11%	53%	30%	30%

Table 1 – The breakdown in responses when young people were asked ‘If you needed advice or support for your health, wellbeing, lifestyle choices or emotional support, who would you go to for help?’

*As respondents selected more than one answer for this question, the percentages are reflective of this.

What are the most important aspects of health for young people?

Table 2 shows the feedback received when young people were asked to rate how important different aspects of health were to them. The most important aspects of health for young people are physical health, sexual health and emotions, stress and feelings. The aspects of health which were deemed ‘not important’ to many young people were drugs, alcohol and smoking. However, the reasons for this are unknown. Some may rate these aspects of health as ‘not important’ as they may not have any experience of them, whereas others may feel that even though they do have experience of them, they do not feel it impacts on their health.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Important	Quite Important	Very Important	N/A
Emotions, stress, feelings	6%	11%	28%	19%	34%	2%
Physical Health	5%	9%	28%	22%	36%	0%
Sexual Health	11%	8%	24%	14%	35%	8%
Drugs	46%	5%	10%	8%	15%	16%
Alcohol	32%	19%	15%	10%	14%	10%
Smoking	43%	9%	11%	8%	14%	15%
Diet, weight, healthy eating	10%	12%	25%	19%	32%	2%

Table 2 – Results of survey feedback when young people were asked to indicate how important each of these aspects of health were to them.

Which services were rated the highest by young people?

Primary care services were given the highest ratings of ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ by all ages categories (13-25 years old) including; dentists, pharmacies and opticians. Hospital appointments were also given good and excellent ratings by 16 - 25 years olds. However, 34% of 13 - 15 year olds said that this service was ‘poor’ or ‘could be improved’.

For the services which were rated as ‘poor’ or ‘could be improved’, the responses received varied for each of the age categories. One service in particular which was given this rating by 13 -15 years olds was the school nurse. GP’s were given the highest rating of ‘poor’ or ‘could be improved’ by those aged 16 - 25. In addition to this mental health services were also a cause for concern for 22 - 25 year olds.

Feedback received highlighted that some services were given neither a high nor low rating, e.g. drugs, alcohol and smoking. These services had the highest response of ‘not sure’ when asked to rate these services which may indicate that young people have little or no experience of them.

Age category	Good/Excellent	Poor/Could be improved
13-15	Dentist (75%) Optician (73%) Pharmacy (67%) GP (67%)	Hospital Appointments (34%) School Nurse (28%) A&E (27%) Walk-In Centre (25%)
16-18	Dentist (75%) Pharmacy (75%) Optician (74%) Hospital Appointments (59%)	GP (42%) A&E (32%) Hospital Appointments (29%) Walk-In Centre (27%)
19-21	Pharmacy (83%) Dentist (81%) Optician (75%) Hospital Appointments (65%)	GP (47%) A&E (41%) Social Worker (36%) Walk-In Centre (28%)
22-25	Opticians (77%) Pharmacy (71%) Dentist (61%) Hospital Appointments (52%)	GP (54%) Mental Health (50%) A&E (50%) Physiotherapy (35%)

Table 3 – The health and social care services which were given the highest ratings by young people who completed the survey.

Young people were asked for comments about how a service did not meet their needs. A few examples are listed below:

‘Walk in centre could be improved by handling confidential information.’

‘Pharmacy did not have my prescription after a month of waiting and multiple trips to enquire about it.’

‘Physiotherapy funding has been cut so I can no longer receive it.’

‘CAMHS did not ring back, it’s been 6 months, they were impersonal and were not helpful.’

‘CAMHS - after I had been issued medication, I wasn’t checked up enough, also I stopped taking out the prescriptions, I was not contacted, why?’

‘Long waiting times in hospitals even if an appointment has been made.’

‘Should be quicker with people who really need the help.’

'CAMHS is not good at all, they need to stop asking stupid questions.'

'My physiotherapist mixed up files and gave me wrong treatment.'

'Coatham Surgery can be really rude and do not check your prescriptions.'

'Waiting times for most is very long. This can cause further stress on individuals if it is something serious or important.'

'The times of appointments being moved further back, I can't walk into the dentist without an 'adult'.'

'It is difficult to get an appointment to see the GP, a telephone appointment is needed first, losing customer care. Dentist has a very long waiting list to get an appointment. Physiotherapy sent a sheet out for exercise, I was supposed to receive a follow up call, never received one.'

'They act like I am a child.'

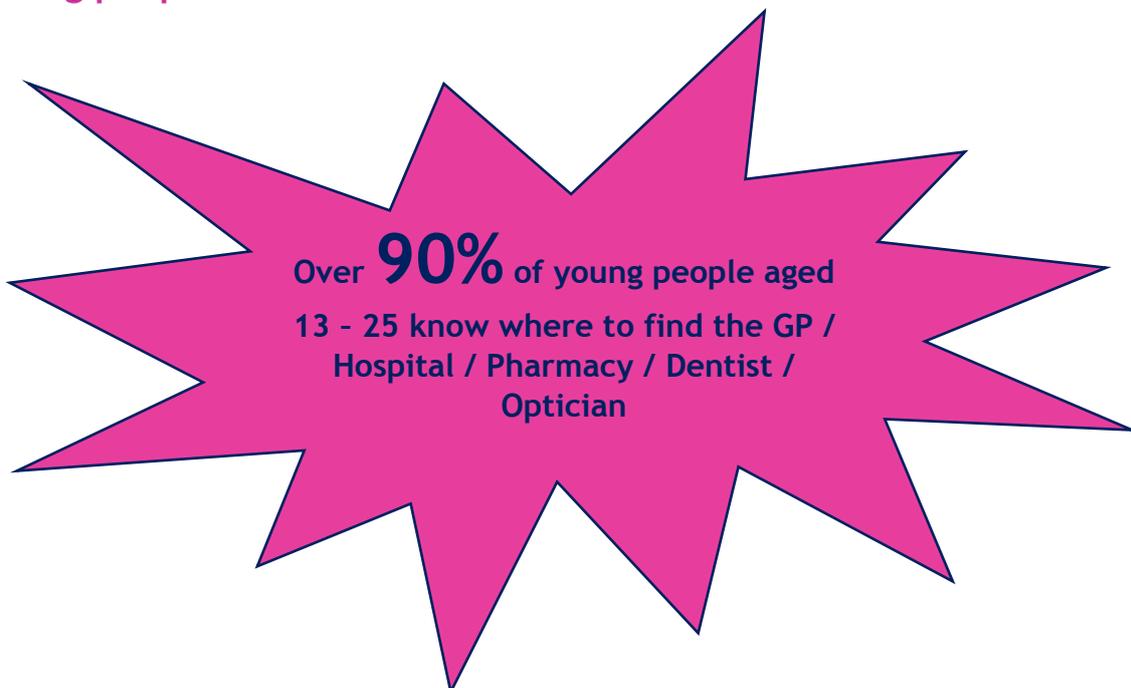
'Doctors could be more organised and offer more useful advice.'

'Doctors throw tablets at depression for the most part rather than referring to mental health services.'

'Appointments need to be longer.'

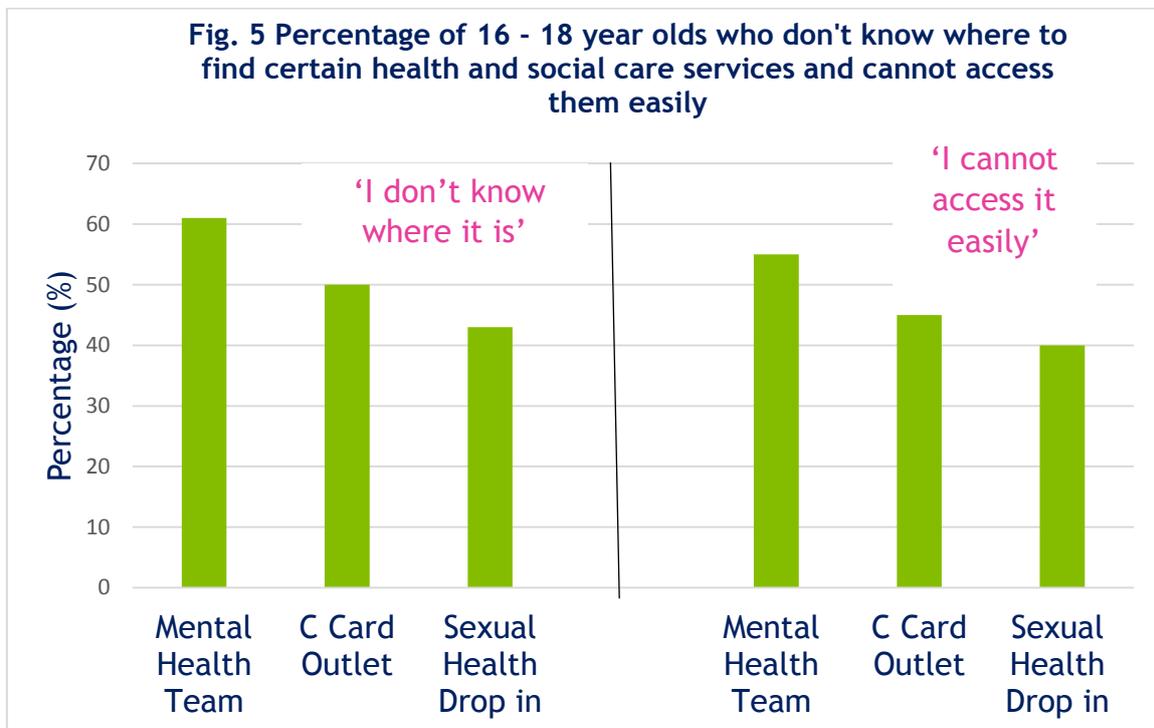
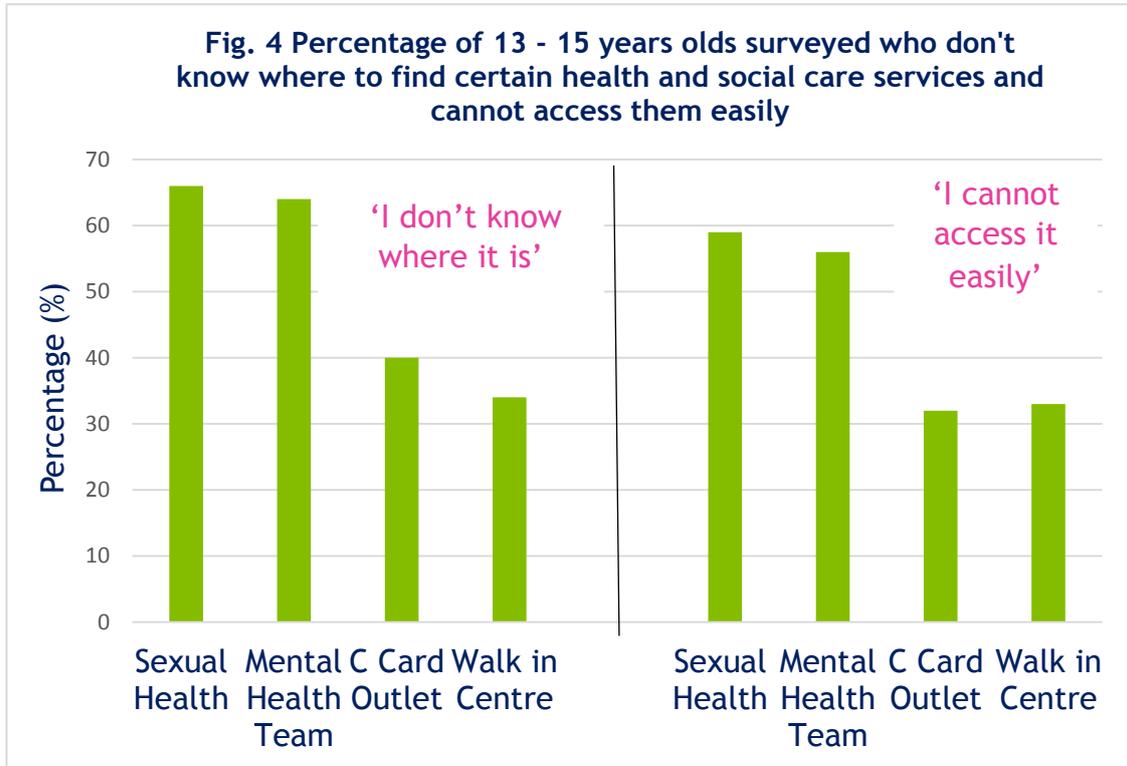
'Doctor / GP - Getting appointments can be incredibly tricky in some areas.'

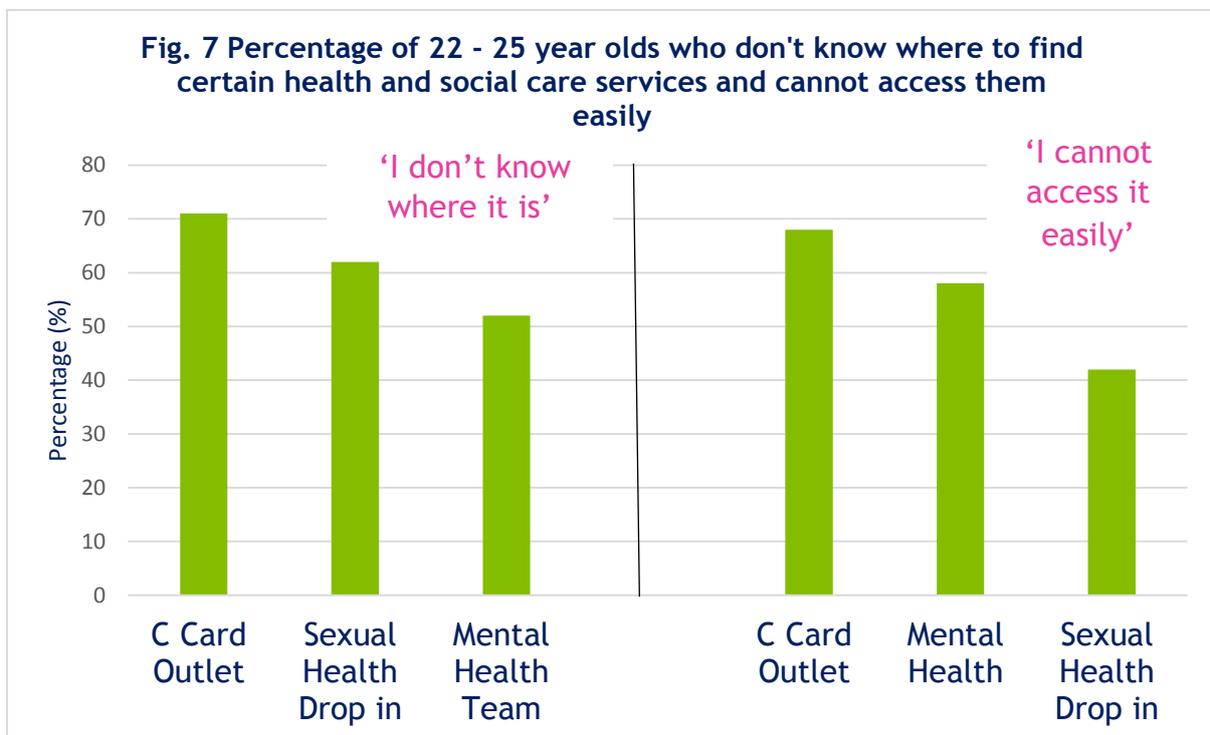
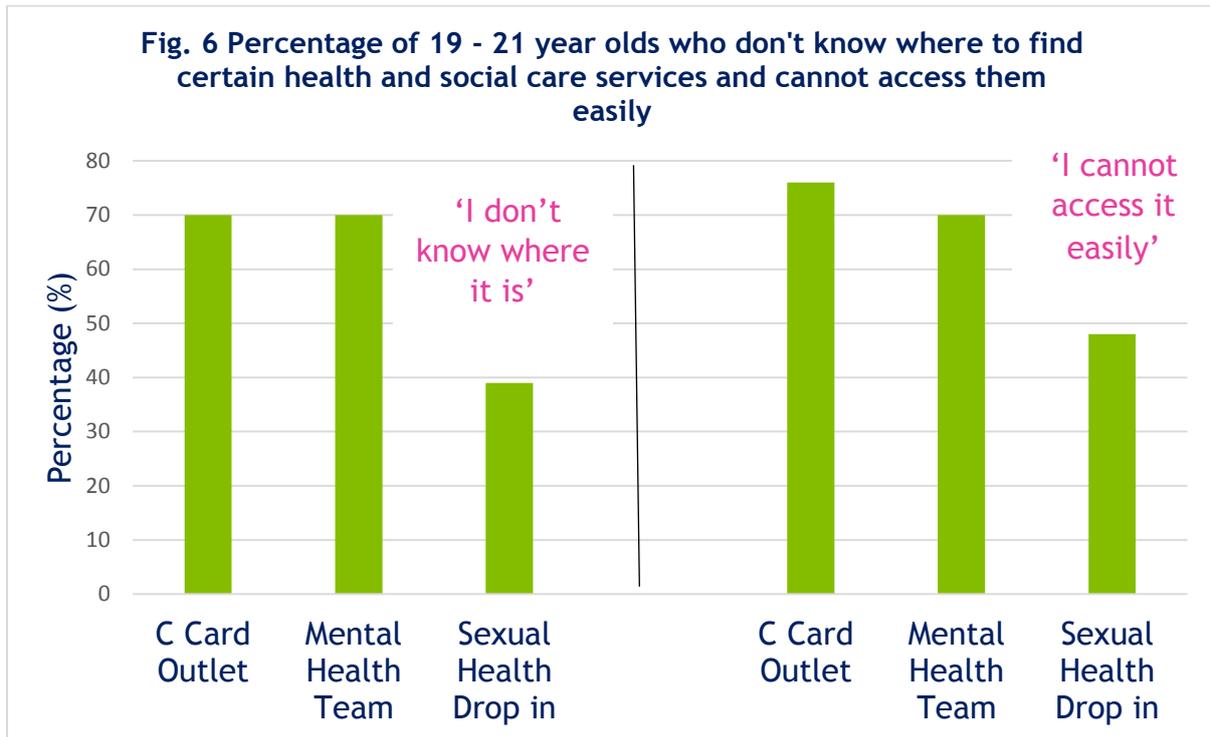
Young people's awareness of local services and how to access them



Results show that young people have a good knowledge of services that they use regularly and know how to find and access them easily.

Findings did show however, that there were services that young people had little awareness of and found difficult to access. The following figures show a breakdown by age group of the results.





Results for the most part show that those services young people have little awareness of are also those they find difficult to access, indicating that knowing where a service is located is key to being able to access it.

Although there were a few variations amongst the age groups, overwhelmingly the services that young people had little knowledge of and could not easily access were:

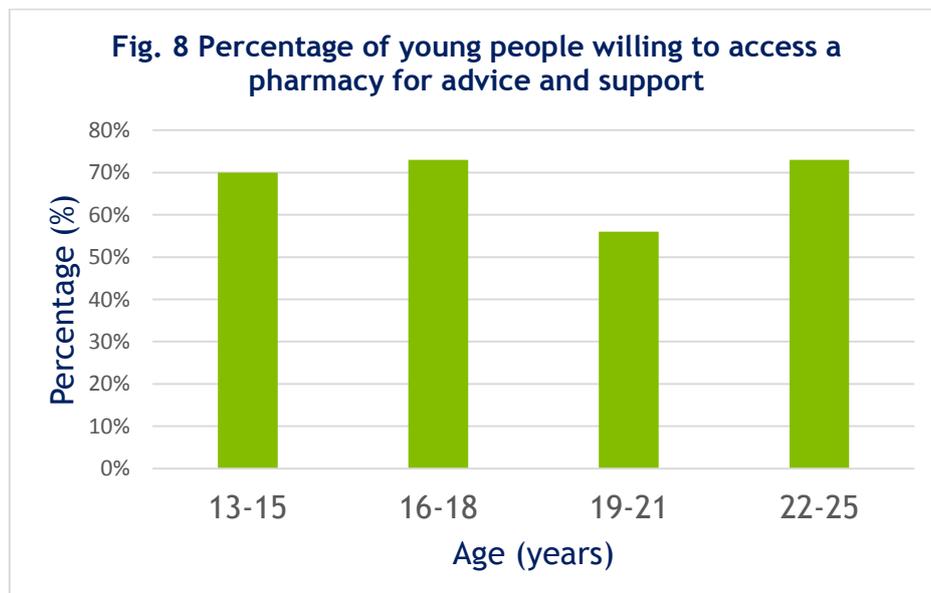
Sexual Health Services

Mental Health Services

Collectively 60% of all young people surveyed did not know where to find mental health services within Redcar and Cleveland. For sexual health services, this figure was 50%. Healthwatch find these results alarming as although not all young people may need to access these services at present, it is concerning that they do not know where they are should they need to access them in the future and therefore makes them less likely to do so.

Use of pharmacy for advice and support?

Young people were asked if they were unable to get an appointment at their GP, would they be willing to go to a pharmacy for advice or support.



Overall young people seem to be aware of the services that a pharmacy can offer and would visit them for support if they were unable to access other services.

Those who indicated that they would not be willing to use the pharmacy gave the following comments as to their reasons why:

'I would rather ensure I was seeing a specialist'

'Too personal to tell a pharmacist'

'Did not know you could'

'Depends how serious the problem is'

'I wouldn't feel comfortable'

Other comments received

Young people were asked if there was anything else they wished to comment about their health, wellbeing, lifestyle and emotional needs or experiences and ideas for improving services.

Comments received from age 13-15 year olds included:-

'Needs to be more for anger issues, for example management courses.'

'School nurse don't know who she is. Walk in Centre, what is it?'

'More support for my emotional needs.'

'Reminder for appointment eg. A week before and a day before.'

'I feel as if some of the services could listen more and offer more options in some cases.'

'Improve CAMHS.'

Comments received from 16-18 year olds included:

'More ways of making appointments at Hillside GP Skelton. Not just arrange for the same day but a few days in advance.'

'I would like to improve the pharmacy. I think the service they give should be more welcoming.'

'Allowing 16 - 18 year olds to be more independent with appointments, eg: I can go get "the pill" myself but the dentist isn't allowed to check my teeth. How does that make sense?'

'Need to see someone about weight.'

'Service availability should be improved and availability of appointments. Also sexual health is not particularly recognised.'

‘Waiting times for most (services) is very long. This can cause further stress on individuals if it is something serious or important.’

‘It is difficult to get an appointment to see the GP, a telephone appointment is needed first, losing customer care.’

‘Physiotherapy sent a sheet out for exercise, I was supposed to receive a follow up call, never received one.’

5. CONCLUSION

The results of Healthwatch’s survey provided a snapshot of the views and experiences of health services through the eyes of the young people who use them.

Many young people have a good awareness of the services they use and have had a good patient experience.

The following recommendations are proposed to commissioners and providers of services to ensure that services are fully meeting the needs of young people within Redcar and Cleveland.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland would like to propose the following recommendations:-

1. Results show that only 10% of young people aged 13-15 would seek help or advice from a school nurse and 28% of 13-15 year olds also expressed that this service could be improved. It is recommended that a greater awareness of the role of the school nurse is implemented within schools and feedback is sought from young people to ensure that the service is currently meeting their needs.
2. According to the survey, drugs, alcohol and smoking were not deemed as important aspects of health for young people. Although young people currently receive education within schools regarding the dangers of these substances, Healthwatch recommends that further work be carried out to determine young people’s perception of drugs, alcohol and smoking and the implications of their use to their health. Results of this work could then highlight more effective ways of implementing a young person’s drugs, alcohol and smoking strategy within schools and colleges.
3. Although 67% of young people aged 13-15 rated the GP as good/excellent all other age groups stated that it was either poor/could be improved. It is recommended that GP Practices carry out further work with young people to

determine why their experiences are poor. A continued poor experience of using the service may cause a barrier for some young people accessing the service in the future, impacting on their health and wellbeing.

4. One of the most significant findings of the report is with regard to young people's awareness of services and how to access them. Results showed that 60% of young people surveyed did not know how to find mental health services and 57% said they could not access them easily. It is recommended that awareness of these services is increased for all ages and, because of the different age groups involved, a range of methods should be utilised to target them.

As well as increasing awareness of mental health services Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland also recommend that there is greater education around mental health so that young people recognise it as an important aspect of their health and they are aware of the factors that can affect it.

To reduce potential barriers of accessing mental health services, young people should be given a greater understanding of what can be delivered in settings that they are familiar with. More information should be readily available within the school setting along with increased guidance, support and signposting.

5. Although 70% of young people surveyed said that they would be willing to use a pharmacy, Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland recommend that further work be carried out to raise awareness of the services that they offer and their role within the healthcare landscape. As well as giving advice to prevent unnecessary GP appointments and inappropriate use of A&E services, pharmacies can deliver services to young people that they currently have difficulty accessing. Our survey has highlighted that 50% of young people do not know how to find their nearest C-Card outlet or Sexual Health drop-in, and 46% do not know how to access them. Pharmacies are easy to access in the community and although many already deliver these services greater promotion is required as well as providing an environment that encourages young people to access them.
6. The results of the survey have shown that young people do care about the services they receive and are vital in shaping how they are delivered. The survey has highlighted that young people do have a lack of awareness of some services and some are possibly not being used to their full potential. To ensure that services commissioned currently and in the future meet the needs of young

people it is essential that commissioners and providers seek the views of young people. Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland recommend that these views are sought by carrying out robust consultation utilising many of the established young people's networks within Redcar and Cleveland.