

# South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group

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Linda Sergeant  
Community Engagement Lead  
Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland  
Redcar Leisure & Community Heart  
Ridley Street  
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Sent by email

Dear Linda

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

Thank you for sharing with us the Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland report focusing on young people's views of health services. It was interesting to note the role of the Healthwatch Champions in this work, and through their pilot work and final survey approach, it was helpful to see how some young people prefer to engage.

The survey certainly gives us additional intelligence we can triangulate with other sources, and some initial work we are doing with colleges and care leavers. The relatively high number of young people aged 19-21 that would seek help and support from a parent or carer is certainly something we will take to our care leavers project team, recognising that for many care leavers they do not have access to a parent or carer after the age of 18.

With regards to the recommendations, whilst we have noted all and recognise that health issues run throughout, we will respond to those directly related to the role and functions of the commissioning group:



**Recommendation 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.***

It is noted that as young people get older, and perhaps access GP services independently they identify more opportunity for improvement than younger people who may access services with a parent or carer. We note the recommendation regarding practices conducting work with their young patient population; however, we would like to give this some additional consideration, to see what information may already be available and independently obtained such as national surveys which we may be able to breakdown by age. There may also be other opportunities to do this at scale, rather than each of our practices undertaking this individually and differently.

**Recommendation 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.***

Access to services is always a priority for the public and commissioners. As with most services, the GP can refer into child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), but on Teesside there is also an open referral system allowing schools, social workers, and parents to request an assessment. We will make plans with partners to improve young people's awareness of services and how to access them, including in the school setting.

You may also be interested to know that we are working with library partners in the local authorities and taking part in the 'Reading Well Books on Prescription' scheme for young people that focuses on mental health and emotional wellbeing. We have promoted this in the local press linking in with the national press coverage of Zayn Malik, former One Direction singer who has openly suffered with anxiety, in the hope of reaching a wider group of young people. We will continue to raise awareness of the scheme, including the eight collections we are piloting in GP practices to enable patients to request the books, and for clinicians to 'prescribe' them to patients who many benefit.

**Recommendation 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.***

We welcome this recommendation and we are in the process of strengthening our involvement of, and engagement with, young people. Where providers have already established groups and networks, we ask them to share intelligence with us to inform commissioning. We commissioned Kidz Konnekt in 2014/15 to consult with children and young people on our behalf to inform our Mental Health Strategy and plan to consult further as the transformation of specialist CAMHS services gains pace.

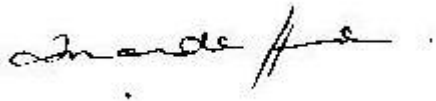
We learned a lot from our urgent care engagement which will inform how we work in the future. As part of that work we commissioned Groundwork to engage with young people on our behalf, as well as undertaking some direct engagement work ourselves at Teesside University. The issues raised are similar to those outlined in your report; namely that GP access is a concern to young people and they are not always clear where to go for support to manage their health. In addition, we received valuable feedback on the communication methods we use to reach young people and how we can improve. Our urgent care work will also ensure we promote self-care and alternatives to A&E such as pharmacies which was touched upon in recommendation 5, and we will explore how best to communicate these messages to young people.

We are also developing links with local colleges, starting in Middlesbrough but will be seeking to replicate in Redcar and Cleveland. Our Director of Programmes and Primary Care Development is now a member of the Middlesbrough College

Safeguarding and Welfare Committee which will help inform this work and build important relationships.

Once again, thank you again for sharing this report with us. The report will be of interest to our newly appointed Clinical Lead for Maternal and Child Health, Chris Briddon, along with all of our clinical workstreams so I will ensure they each receive a copy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Hume', with a small dot below the 'e'.

Mrs Amanda Hume  
**Chief Officer**  
**NHS South Tees CCG**