CAMHS Academy

A report by the Community Engagement and Experience Team

Solent NHS Trust

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Executive Summary

The Community Engagement and Experience team were asked to engage with local communities, specifically those that involve young people, as well as organisations that support them to gather insights and feedback for young people on CAMHS and the future workforce of CAMHS. Using the Solent's strength's based approach to community engagement and inclusion we spoke to **113** young people, adults in supportive roles to young people, and adults who access mental health community services. We spoke to people across Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire.

As over 70% of the people who we engaged with were under the age of 25, throughout this report all who fed-back are referred to as *young people* unless specifically specified.

Young people were asked to reflect on the following three key questions. A brief summary of the feedback collected from each question is included below.

> **1. Who and what is needed in our workforce to make you feel safe enough to openly talk about your mental health?**

Young people need a *non-judgmental workforce* along with *a non-judgemental space* to feel comfortable enough to discuss their mental health. Additionally, building *trust and rapport* with their CAMHS worker along with a *person-centred approach* implemented within sessions is key for young people to open up.

More so, CAMHS workforce should ensure questions within assessments and overall conversation have an overall *positive undertone* and staff are able to exercise their *emotional intelligence* when conversing with young people to know when it's okay to push conversations and when to pause and move on until a later point.

Young people discussed the need for a *non-clinical environment* along with an environment that ensures their *psychological safety*.   This is done by *removing barriers between staff and young people*, allowing them *as much choice* within their sessions as possible, and setting *clear boundaries and expectations* from the start.

> **2. How much do you think the CAMHs workforce understand what it's like to be a young person today? What do they need to consider?**

Most young people shared their belief that their CAMHS workforce *do not understand what it's like to be a young person* in this day and age. A significant reason for this lack of understanding is the *negative influence social media* has on them, which they have grown up with.

Based on feedback from young people, CAMHS workforce should consider their use of *social media to engage*, consider *specialist training on key issues* young people are affected by, seek to employ a *younger workforce* and individuals *with lived mental health experience*. Additionally, CAMHS workforce need to inform themselves of young people's *cultural and spiritual needs* along with ensuring the workforce is more *representative of the diverse communities* they serve.

Young people recognise there is continuous need to *raise mental health awareness*, specifically in schools and colleges. They also believe CAMHS has a vital role to play in this and should be more *engaged with schools and wider events*.

Additionally, CAMHS need to continue having a ***person-centred approach*** to how they ***communicate with young people*** as they have a preference for a wide range of methods. Lastly, young people fed back the need for CAMHS to ***review their discharge process*** as many young people are not getting the support they need and are being discharged fairly quickly.

> **3. Where do the CAMHs workforce need to deliver their service that would make it accessible to you?**

Young people expressed the need for services to be ***easily accessible for them to get to***. Ideas such as delivering sessions in ***schools and colleges***, ***town and city centres, community centres, parks***, and ***places of worship*** were shared. A key area to note, the location of where services are delivered needs to be person-specific for the young person to get the best outcome.

Supplementary Questions

Throughout our conversations with young people, a set of supplemental questions were asked and included with the feedback collected from the key questions. This is due to the interconnectedness of the questions and responses from young people.

The supplementary questions include the following:

- Does our workforce represent your community?
- Is our workforce informed about your cultural and spiritual needs?
- How do we improve our environment/building/office to make it feel safe?
- Where else do you get mental health support?
- Who should we employ to meet your needs?
- What platforms do you use to communicate your mental health needs?

Additionally, feedback regarding the CAMHS Academy website was collected from young people and included in the main body of the report.

- Does this website invite you to explore careers/jobs in CAMHS?
- If you were exploring jobs in CAMHS, what would you want to find out?
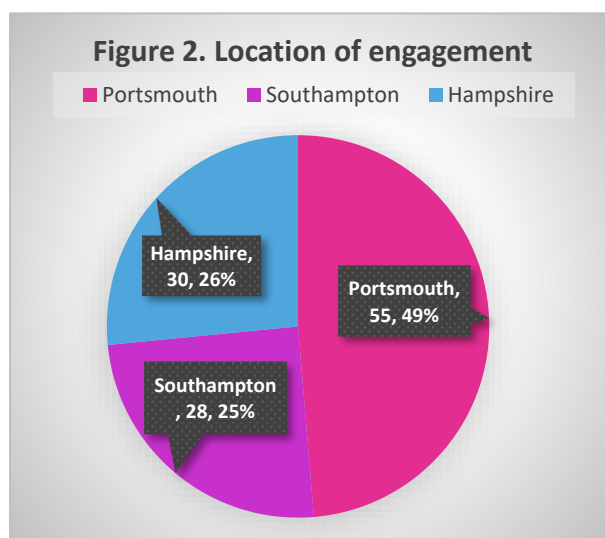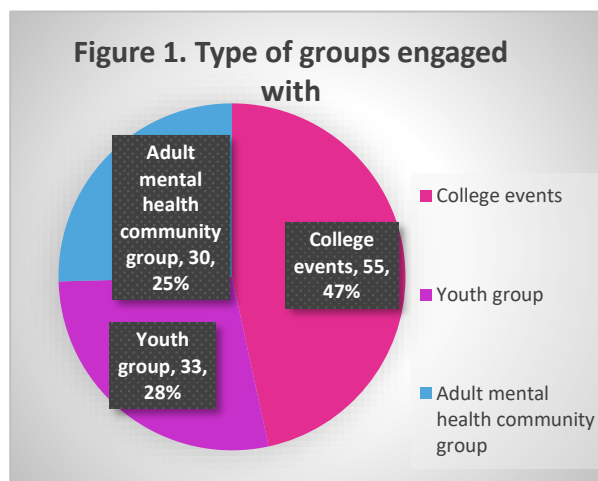
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Young People Profile

One hundred and thirteen (113) individuals were spoken with for this project. The majority of conversations (109) were held in-person in community settings, with just two young people emailing their responses to the questions prepared. Conversations took place with young people, adults in supportive roles of young people, and adults over the age of 25 with lived mental health experience.

Throughout this report, all who engaged and fed-back are referred to as *young people*, regardless of age.

A minimum of 70% of the individuals we engaged with were under the age of 25 years old. The majority of these young people were spoken to at college events and youth groups they normally attend. Due to the high volume of individuals spoken to in various community events, exact ages were not established due to the nature of these events. Age-based estimations were based on appearance and location of community conversations (e.g., college events, youth groups; see figure 1).

Figure 1. Type of groups engaged with

- College events, 55, 47%
- Youth group, 33, 28%
- Adult mental health community group, 30, 25%

Figure 2. Location of engagement

- Portsmouth, 55, 49%
- Southampton, 28, 25%
- Hampshire, 30, 26%

We engaged with young people across Portsmouth, Southampton, and Hampshire (i.e. Gosport and Havant; see figure 2). There were no notable differences or variances in the feedback received across the region. Many of the same challenges expressed by young people (e.g., bullying, gangs, etc) were expressed across the region.

Approximately, 77 (68%) of the individuals engaged with were males. A minimum of 12 (10%) of the young people we engaged with were from Black and Asian backgrounds. This number is only of the young people we were able to record. It is potentially higher.

We heard from various young people across our communities The following community groups and colleges took part in this engagement.

| Youth Options | Energise Me | Portsmouth College | Urban Cooking | Link Up Youth Hub | Andy's Man Club |
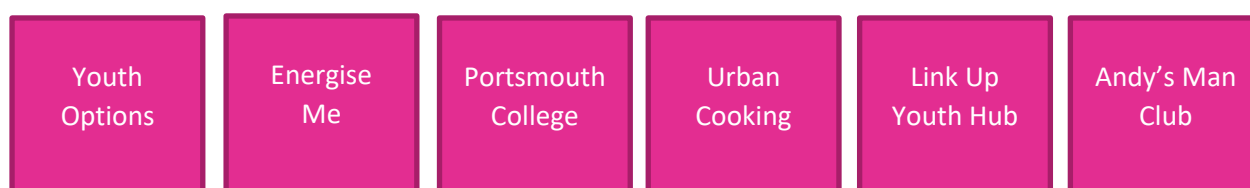
How the CAMHS workforce can make young people feel safe to discuss their mental health

Young people shared with us their views on what they need from their CAMHS workforce to feel safe enough to open up about their mental health to subsequently benefit from the support they receive from CAMHS. This section looks at what CAMHS workforce can try to implement within their service culture and personality characteristics they should look for in their staff.

1. No judgement

From every group we spoke to, the most referenced aspect needed for young people to feel safe enough to discuss and disclose their mental health concerns is to speak with individuals who are '*non-judgemental*' and can create a '*non-judgemental space*'.

> 'Someone to open up to be supportive, to be non-judgemental, and to feel safe to talk to.'
>
> Energise Me

2. Trust and rapport

From the feedback gathered from young people and those who have accessed CAMHS services in the past, the initial welcome from staff plays a critical role. The initial welcome can *make or break* the ability for the young person to develop and build rapport and trust with the CAMHS worker which will impact how well they are able to benefit from their intervention. This feedback also comes from community groups who work with individuals struggling with their mental health and are successful in creating safe spaces for people to discuss their mental health and wellbeing.

> '[Staff need to be] friendly and welcoming.'

> 'You [need to be] made to feel at ease [when you first go in].'
>
> Andy's Man Club

> 'The initial welcome is important; [you should be] introduced, made to feel welcome, offered a hot drink.
>
> Andy's Man Club

> 'Young people need someone who will chat their language and understand what they are saying.'
>
> Youth Options

Young people were united in their feedback on the importance of developing trust with the CAMHS workforce involved in their care. From this feedback, young people expressed their ability to open up also widely '*depends on the doctor [or health professional].*'

> 'No bravado just because they are the professional. '
>
> Andy's Man Club

> 'Need to be able to develop that trust with the professional to feel like you can open up.'
>
> Portsmouth College

> 'Personality clashes are a problem if a YP doesn't get on with an NHS member of staff.
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

Young people also highlighted the need for continuity in their care which directly impacts their experience and ability to feel safe to openly discuss their mental health.

'Staff turnover is a problem as it's a different person every time.'

Portsmouth College

'There needs to be the same person giving support.'

Energise Me

'It's about consistency, same people, same time.'

Youth Options

3. Person-centred care

Young people divulged the vital role effective communication has in their experience of care with CAMHS. Effective communication was raised as having '**good communication from the team**.' This included being aware of what their treatment plan involves and being kept up to date with any changes.

'Not to be left for months not knowing what's going on [referencing treatment plan].'

Link Up Youth Hub

'Clear next steps if discharged or moving to a different part of the service.'

Link Up Youth Hub

Young people shared with us the characteristics and traits in their CAMHS workforce they would find most beneficial to better engage with. They all include critical aspects to providing person-centred care.

| Good listener | Interested in you as a person | They prioritise you and your needs | They ask you what you want | Compassionate /empathetic |

'Want the CAMHS workers to be someone who is confident, friendly, nice, and respects what you want to say and someone that you find easy to talk to. Someone that is not a pessimist.'

Energise Me

Conversely, we also spoke with young people who shared with us the negative experiences they have had with CAMHS in the past when they have felt their care was not person-centred. Some of these young people were discharged from CAMHS and feel they did not benefit from the support provided and subsequently, this has left negative residual feelings about the service CAMHS may provide.

'No one understood what was going on with me at school; 3 teachers quit because of me. And CAMHS just discharged me.'

Andy's Man Club member in his early 20s

'They discharged me from CAMHS because I didn't want to take medication.' 'They thought I was too difficult so they got rid of me.'

Urban Cooking group member

'CAMHS is Sh** - because they are unhelpful. Someone could be sent to hospital for attempted suicide and they will turn around tell you your fine and don't do that next time BLAH, BLAH,BLAH..'

4. Positive questioning throughout sessions

> 'Workers should be able to sense what topics could be talked about and when to stop.'
>
> Energise Me

> '[CAMHS workers] They need to be able to read the temperature of the room.'
>
> Youth Options

We also heard of the need for CAMHS workforce to use and implement *'positive questioning'* and *'good questioning'* when speaking with young people. Young people shared the importance of keeping the mood of the sessions positive where possible and for staff to use *'emotional intelligence'* to enable young people to get the most out of their sessions.

How the environment can make young people feel safe to discuss their mental health

This section outlines the physical and psychological environment that would make young people feel most safe to open up about their mental health within CAMHS.

1. Physical Environment

From conversations with young people, they all concurred on the need for the physical environment to feel warm, welcoming and most importantly, *non-clinical*. The suggested different ways to make spaces look non-clinical and informal. This includes having calming colours on the wall, low lighting, and items you may find in a home such as comfortable sofas, plants and many windows allowing natural light.

> 'Make the space comfortable with teddies, fidget toys, sofas; Have plant and photos.'

> 'The room lighting needs to be low and calm.'

> 'Colours matter- you can't have bright colours like orange or red. You need calming colours.'

> 'A cosier approach to designing the environment instead of the usual sterile hospital look will go a long way to make users feel safe and comfortable'

A young person from the group No Limits provided us with a visual representation of what he perceives as clinical vs non-clinical.

Clinical

Non-clinical

2. Psychological environment

Young people equally expressed the importance of a psychologically safe environment to enable them to share and open up about their mental health. Young people shared this does not just take place during their assessment but rather from the very beginning of their journey with CAMHS.

3. Removing barriers between staff and young people

We heard about the importance of removing barriers between the CAMHS workforce and service users to ensure young people feel more comfortable and able to open up more freely. The following feedback was received from the Link Up Youth Hub.

'No badges!'	'Relaxed looking staff are better; not wearing a suit.'	'A conversation first to break the ice before you get into the problem/session. Get to know me first with general chat.'

4. Providing choice

A critical aspect to creating a psychologically safe space for young people is to ensure they have as much choice as possible with all aspects of their sessions, and this includes the space. We heard from various young people on their differing preferences for smaller and larger rooms which showcases the need for person-specific approaches to ensure they feel comfortable. Students from Portsmouth college shared with us their feedback on this.

'Consistency and familiarity in the room are important.'	'I would prefer somewhere small [room size]'	'Where I'm not in a confined space'

5. Clear expectations and boundaries

Young people also expressed the need to be informed of the process and what they should expect from their overall intervention and/or sessions with CAMHS. Additionally, they would want to know what to expect from each session at the start to ease any anxiety they may be feeling.

'Rules and boundaries [are needed] to feel safe; [similar to college] College feels safe.' Portsmouth College	'Good to understand the process of what will happen to not be surprised or anxious on what to expect.' Portsmouth College

6. Reassurance, Comfort and Confidentiality

From all the groups we engaged with, young people expressed their need to feel and know their feelings and experiences matter and are validated.

'Can improve things by considering the things young people have been through in the past. Consider their thoughts/feelings.' Energise Me	''[Knowing] not alone; there are others like me; Don't want to appear weak.' Portsmouth College	Can feel like I don't matter.' Portsmouth College	'Don't want to be a burden.' Portsmouth College

> 'Physical touch can be important and may make someone feel safe but consent needs to be given.'
>
> Portsmouth College

We also heard of the impact physical touch can have on someone, such as holding their hand, when they are in distress or discussing a difficult experience when appropriate and if there is consent.

In almost all the groups we spoke to, we heard of the importance of CAMHS sessions to be '*one to one*'. Equally, we heard of the desire for conversations to be kept '*confidential' and 'anonymous'*. We received feedback on ways CAMHS could implement more anonymity within their services to reach more young people.

> 'If I can talk about problems anonymously without having to give out my details.'
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

> 'It would be a good idea to have ways in the NHS that people can text anonymously and just ask for support and advice. Then CAMHS workers can be on duty to check messages and engage with the young person.'
>
> Youth Options

7. Activities during sessions

Additionally, we heard from staff who support young people in community settings and use varied activities to get the most out of their sessions with young people and build rapport and trust. They shared the importance of encouraging young people outside of their boundaries by completing activities together and conversing while doing so to '*break the routine.'*

> For example when we are talking to YP about resistance, we'll use the practical example of them trying to build a fire […]The YP will try and try and sometimes they'll be there for ages […] Some will get frustrated and want to give up but we'll keep encouraging them. Eventually when they get it the pride on their faces and the relief that they didn't give up is so evident. Then we use this lesson throughout the remainder of the sessions reminding them that when they were frustrated and thinking about giving up they didn't and look what happened.
>
> Youth Options

Where CAMHS workforce should consider delivering services

1. Location of services

Young people feel strongly CAMHS services need to overall be delivered where it is most accessible and close to them.

> 'Accessibility. Whether you have certain disabilities, have problems with transport or even want to opt for online support, the service should be available in as many physical and digital locations to be as accessible as possible.
>
> Energise Me

'**Schools and colleges'** were significantly referenced by young people as these are places, they know and generally feel comfortable in. Additionally, they mentioned places like their '**town or city centre'** as key places which are accessible to them. Additional suggestions provided were:

YP's homes	Commons/ parks	Online	Community centres	Places of worship

It is equally important to recognise, some young people expressed a preference for more private settings and specifically stated not their school. This relates to creating a psychologically safe environment by providing them with choice.

How well CAMHS workforce understand what it's like being a young person today and what they need to consider.

Overall, young people shared their belief that CAMHS workforce, **do not understand what it's like to be a young person today**. They shared some of the key challenges they are experiencing that are directly impacting their mental health. These challenges include **bullying, gangs, self-esteem issues, and the rise of social media**.

> 'They need to understand what it is like and be in our shoes so that they can understand better.'
>
> 'CAMHS workforce do not understand the youth. Older people do not understand what it's like to be young.'
>
> Energise Me

> 'I think being a teen is quite stressful, you have a lot more responsibility [...]. It might be a bit depressing because there are a lot of influences and a lot of lifestyle of bad habits, gangs, social media, etc.'
>
> Energise Me

1. The negative impact of social media

A key issue raised by a significant portion of the young people we spoke to, is the negative impact social media can have on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Many felt, CAMHS workforce do not have a strong understanding of the pressures and challenges they face on social media platforms. This belief was often linked to CAMHS, and overall, the NHS's lack of presence and engagement on social media. The quotes below are from a young person from the community group Energise Me.

> 'The constant bombardment of 'social media-worthy' pictures and videos from dozens or hundreds of friends and strangers might harm a person's mental well-being.'

> 'Cyber-bullying. Bullies have never had so much power or reach as they do now. In the past, it might have stopped as soon as you reach your home.'

> 'The overwhelming negativity that you can be exposed to online. I recently did a workshop on TikTok with a group of LGBTQ young people, and every single user has been harassed and sent death threats and other horrible things just because of who they are.'

Young people shared key areas they believe CAMHS workforce need to prioritise to ensure they gain a better understanding of the issues and experiences of young people today to better support them.

2. CAMHS usage of social media

> 'Day in the life of a CAMHS worker [on social media]-add it to your reels.'
>
> Portsmouth College student

Young people and those working with young people in supportive roles suggested a vital medium the NHS, and CAMHS, are not actively using to engage with young people is social media. Social media was named as a key reason why young people do not feel connected to CAMHS workforce as we heard *'the mentality of [young people] is fast moving [due to social media].'* Young people mentioned multiple times, how *social media is important* and how the NHS needs to **'keep up.'** Whilst young people recognised the potential negative impact social media can have on their mental health (and some stated they do not use it for this reason), overwhelmingly, young people said they were avid social media users. They also expressed the need for staff to have more specialised training on using social media platforms to better engage, inform and promote their services and offerings.

3. Training and awareness on key issues

To provide a better service, improve outcomes and develop a greater awareness of what it is like to be a young person today, young people expressed the need for the CAMHS workforce to have training and understanding of the key issues impacting them. The following key issues were identified:

Unconscious biases	Classism	Bullying (including cyber bullying)	Peer pressure	Gangs	Body-image issues

Unconscious bias was raised by the individuals we engaged with, specifically, *accent* and *gender bias*. We heard from individuals how these biases can impact the level and quality of support they receive, and the importance of CAMHS workers to be aware of their own biases when working with young people.

> 'Comms for issues that usually affect females, remember to include males in the images you portray. That way when CAMHS workers are engaging with young males they won't be entering the conversation with unconscious bias. Be insightful as it can be so easy to miss the obvious clues. Look beyond.'
>
> Andy's Man Club

4. Lived mental health experience

The significance of lived mental health experience within the CAMHS workforce is not lost on the young people we engaged with. A few young people noted how they would feel more comfortable disclosing their mental health concerns if they could have some reciprocity from CAMHS workforce.

> 'Maybe employ people who have lived experience of poor mental health and have overcome the challenge themselves.'

> 'Professionals should be able to talk a bit about their lived experience to get others to feel comfortable and to open up.'

' [CAMHS workers] could relate in certain situations stating, 'I know where you've been, I've been there and come through and so can you […].' It will help the YP appreciate that the CAMHS worker really does understand what they are going through.'

Andy's Man Club

5. Younger workforce

Feedback was also received on the need to have a *'younger workforce'* who can better relate and understand the key issues and experiences that are impacting young people today. Young people expressed they would be more likely to share with someone of a *'similar age and background.'*

6. Cultural and spiritual backgrounds and needs

Overwhelmingly, young people expressed the need for CAMHS workforce to be informed of their cultural and spiritual beliefs. They recognised that these aspects are important to them and play a significant role in their lives. The majority of the young people from the Energise Me group, who are from diverse cultural backgrounds, shared that they do not believe CAMHS workforce are informed of their cultural and spiritual needs.

| ' They are not informed about our cultural spiritual social needs but they should be.' | ' Yes, I would want CAMHS workforce to be informed about my cultural/spiritual/social needs as it's good for wellbeing.' | 'I don't think people's spiritual and cultural beliefs are [considered]. They do include Christianity. |

They also shared that not being from a particular cultural or spiritual background is reason enough for CAMHS workforce to be informed and have awareness of the different religions and cultures present within the communities they work with.

'Probably as in this day and age it is very easy to educate yourself on different religions/cultures.'

'No excuses and it shouldn't go un-noticed as it is a big part of people.'

'Its Ok not to know about the YP's cultural or spiritual aspect of their lives but have some curiosity and ask questions sensitively to find out more. If you get it wrong apologise and say you're eager and willing to learn.'

Youth Options

7. Diverse representation of communities

Whilst there was discord between young people on whether our current CAMHS workforce is representative and reflective of our diverse communities, overwhelmingly, they believe *they should be representative of the communities they serve.* It was noted, this should be across all levels and bandings to be truly representative.

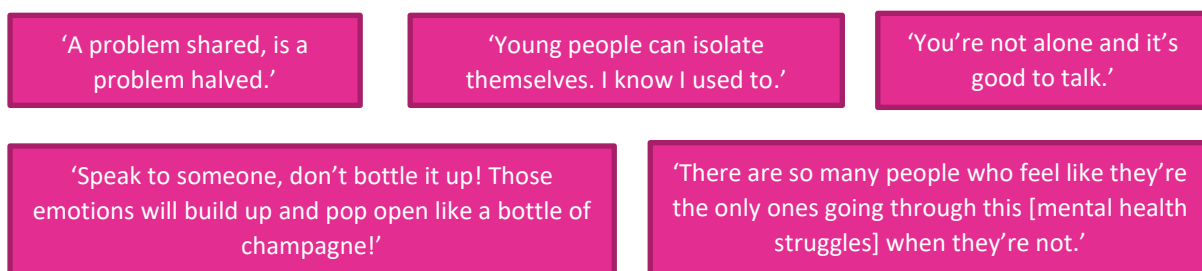|			
CAMHS workforce DO NOT represent our community Energise Me	'Military adverts they use to recruit. I think about the colour and people featured on the ad. Do you see yourself in that role? Youth Options	I'd want a CAMHS worker to be of a similar culture to me and to meet me at home where I feel comfortable. Energise Me	The NHS is fairly representative of the population regarding demographics and BAME representation. Although it still has work to do at the managerial level. Energise Me

8. Engagement with young people to raise mental health awareness

'Need more schools to talk about CAMHS and mental health to get the word out.'

Urban Cooking group member

Young people discussed the need for more engagement and outreach from their CAMHS workforce to ensure they are able to better connect with their communities and identify key issues young people are experiencing. A few young people shared their belief that staff should be trained on how to engage with young people outside a session. The need to continue to break the *stigma and taboo around mental health and raise awareness* was identified as a priority by many of the young people and those who support them. From the feedback collected, awareness needs to be raised in *schools,* and as *part of the curriculum*, with *CAMHS going into schools* and having these discussions on a wider scale. Additionally, more *media discussions* to *normalise and raise awareness of mental health* are needed.

We received feedback from many of Andy's Man Club, a men's mental health group, on what they wish they could say to their self and what they wish young people heard today from those around them to normalise talking and seeking support for mental health.

'A problem shared, is a problem halved.'	'Young people can isolate themselves. I know I used to.'	'You're not alone and it's good to talk.'

'Speak to someone, don't bottle it up! Those emotions will build up and pop open like a bottle of champagne!'	'There are so many people who feel like they're the only ones going through this [mental health struggles] when they're not.'

9. Communication with young people

Young people expressed their varied preferences for communicating with CAMHS workforce. These methods included *text, email, telephone, face to face, online*; even through *their parents*. Due to the high variability in methods, the best way is to ensure it is person-centred.

Feedback on ways to engage and communicate with young people from individuals who work at Youth Options in supportive roles is to communicate 'via word of mouth.'

> 'When we chat to YP we give them out cards. Text is usually good too and if we put out adverts having a QR code works really well.'
>
> Youth Options

10. Easily discharged from CAMHS

A key topic of conversation in many of the groups we spoke to was how ***easily and quickly*** young people can be discharged from CAMHS. This reflection came from young people who are still within the age range to access CAMHS and those who are in their early 20s now who were discharged from CAMHS in the past and did not benefit from the service.

> 'Not chased by service to come to appt; discharged very quickly; it's too easy to walk away.'
>
> Portsmouth College

Young people felt there needs to be a greater understanding from their CAMHS workforce on the challenges they experience which can lead to reduced communication on their part or needing more time to warm up in their sessions, especially when they are struggling with mental health.

Young people and those who support them identified a real need to improve the discharge aspect of CAMHS to better support young people. This would include providing **'transitional support'** if required.

> 'Dealing with behaviour issues (i.e. DNA for appointments or bad behaviour during appointments). They need to have levels of support built in to counter this. Maybe if a Young Person can't cope with the clinical appointment there is a level which is more focused at just talking. Different levels of support needed or to be referred somewhere else to support.
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

Other avenues young people seek mental health support

In regard to where and how young people get their mental health needs met, outside of CAMHS, they shared varied responses. Feedback ranged from young people who are not actively engaging in any formal and/or informal support and stated they do ***'nothing'*** and **'keep it [they hold it within themselves].'** Others mentioned talking to friends, engaging in sport and accessing local services.

> 'You can't cope on your own, you need friends to share with.'
>
> Portsmouth College

> 'I've changed so much since I started coming to this group [Urban Cooking]; I wouldn't talk to at all with anyone [before].'
>
> Urban Cooking group member

> ''I choose to communicate my mental health needs to others [friends/support network] as they are able to relate to us.'

Some young people shared their experiences with medication, however, those we spoke to did not have positive experiences.

> 'Medication- but the breaks in my meds due to new referrals don't help.'
>
> Portsmouth College

> 'I take medication but this causes drowsiness, so it isn't working for me.'
>
> Portsmouth College

A few young people shared more counterproductive coping mechanisms such as the following:

| Being loud | Smoking | Drinking- makes you feel okay to talk about mental health | Vaping- it relaxes me |

Feedback on CAMHS Academy website and recruitment process

Feedback gathered on the appearance of the website was overall positive. A key area to keep in mind, highlighted by young people is to ensure there are *'plenty of accessibility features'* and to promote more inclusion of T levels.

> I like the design overall, it's good to have some colour on there. The site itself would not put me off (male and female input).
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

> It's great that the T levels are on the website as YP will be really interested in this and will be a great entry point for a lot of them – these should be more visible and easier to see on the website as opposed to mainstream roles if CAMHS want YP to get involved.
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

Young people also highlighted key areas of the recruitment process they would be interested in finding out more in-depth information from the website.

1. Job Description

A priority for job descriptions is to ensure they clearly identify areas that are essential (e.g. holding a driving license) as a young person may read the description until the end and realise they are ineligible to apply. Additionally, it is important to make it clear what the reference requirements are for the role as many young people do not have suitable references as they have not held a job yet.

> 'It's very disappointing and a waste of time when searching lots of jobs.'
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

2. Application

Many young people expressed a need for a quicker application and expressed being *'put off by the application itself.'*

> 'It would be easier for YP if they can just send their CV and a statement. It is also a lengthy process to go through all the contacts at the organisation and you don't hear for ages. Dual nationality/DBS etc feels like we have to jump through hoops to get in.'
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

3. Interview

The interview questions and the overall interview style were noted as vital aspects in the recruitment process by young people, with a need for a *'more laid back'* style. Additionally, providing feedback to applicants who were non-successful would be beneficial for their growth and development, and would increase their chances of applying for other roles in the future.

> 'If we have to do a presentation this is scary but I did feel a sense of relief and achievement once I had finished. '
>
> Link Up Youth Hub

Additionally, where possible providing support to young people when asked to present on a topic for their interview would increase the chances of getting the best out of them.

4. Pay and support

With the cost of living increasing, young people are cognisant of salaries, and this is considered when applying for jobs.

> 'If pay isn't great, no one is going to want to work there.'
>
> Urban Cooking

> 'Need good pay. Can't live on a band 3 salary while taking the mental burden home.'
>
> Portsmouth College

Additionally, young people fed back on the importance of knowing they will be supported if successful in their role within CAMHS**.** They expressed needing to know if they will be part of a *'supportive team with good leadership and good communication'*. They emphasised the growing need to have good work-life balance, especially within CAMHS, when you may be supporting children and young people with their mental health.

> 'How will you [CAMHS/NHS] support me?'
>
> Portsmouth College

> 'Need to know there is a good quality of employment. A good work life balance. We know it can be an emotionally draining job listening and supporting people's struggles, there needs to be good support for staff.'
>
> Portsmouth College

Additionally, young people raised the issue of needing their employer to have a **'good understanding'** of their **'care responsibilities and any disability adaptations needed.'**

5. Promote roles and vacancies more

Young people also expressed more desire to find out about roles, vacancies and opportunities within CAMHS. Feedback from young people and those who support them included CAMHS attending more '*events, visiting colleges and speaking to students'*.

> 'They should be at events like this one [Movember Mental Health events at Portsmouth College].
>
> Portsmouth College

> 'Young People don't know about the work in CAMHS. They know about other roles in the community, social workers, police, but they don't know what they could do in CAMHS.'
>
> Urban Cooking

6. Perceptions on working for CAMHS

Many of the young people we spoke to shared the barriers and negative perceptions of CAMHS they hold which potentially influence them in not seeking a role or career within CAMHS. These perceptions are regarding what a role in CAMHS would entail. Below are some of the perceptions identified:

'I think working with kids makes you emotionally attached which is draining. You don't just leave it at work, you take it home with you.'

Link Up Youth Hub

'There's too much paperwork.'

Portsmouth College

'Need to know in CAMHS, we can be innovative and not just focus on traditional therapy.'

Portsmouth College

'You will struggle to get young people to work in CAMHS as they have not had the support they needed from it. More likely to get older people as young people are still in need [with their mental health].'

Urban Cooking

'I had work experience with 0-8 year olds, this was a bad experience as it's really hard work. There were lots of SEN requirements.

Link Up Youth Hub

'I like to be creative [not possible in CAMHS].'

Urban Cooking