



**A report on a survey of Young People's Wellbeing in
Northamptonshire
February 2015**



VOLUNTARY
IMPACT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
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About Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Healthwatch Northamptonshire (HWN) is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care. We are part of a national network of local Healthwatch organisations. Our central role is to be a voice for local people to influence better health and wellbeing and improve the quality of services to meet people's needs.

About Young Leaders

The Young Leaders are an elected leadership group of 8 young people (1 from each borough/district of the County) to enhance the engagement and empowerment of young people enabling them to represent their friends, peers and others in the political structures at County, District and Borough level. The young leaders group is sponsored by Northamptonshire County Council.

About the survey

The survey was designed by the Young Leaders with advice from Healthwatch Northamptonshire. It was designed as a survey by young people, for young people to find out how young people feel about their wellbeing (Appendix 1).

Summary

From September 2014 to January 2015, Healthwatch Northamptonshire and the Young Leaders carried out a survey on the wellbeing of young persons aged 11-25 across the county. This report shows the findings.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire has made 4 recommendations based on the findings:

1. Healthwatch Northamptonshire, working with Young Leaders, should conduct a similar survey in future years.
2. Health and social care partners need to share evidence on the causes of stress for young people.
3. Healthwatch Northamptonshire and Young Leaders should share the findings of this survey widely.
4. Healthwatch Northamptonshire should work with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to radically improve the quality of child and adolescent mental health services

Our report brings together the key data that was collected from the 527 surveys that were completed.

The survey gives evidence on how young people feel most of the time, what most negatively affects them, where they would go for help if they needed it and which wellbeing services they are aware of.

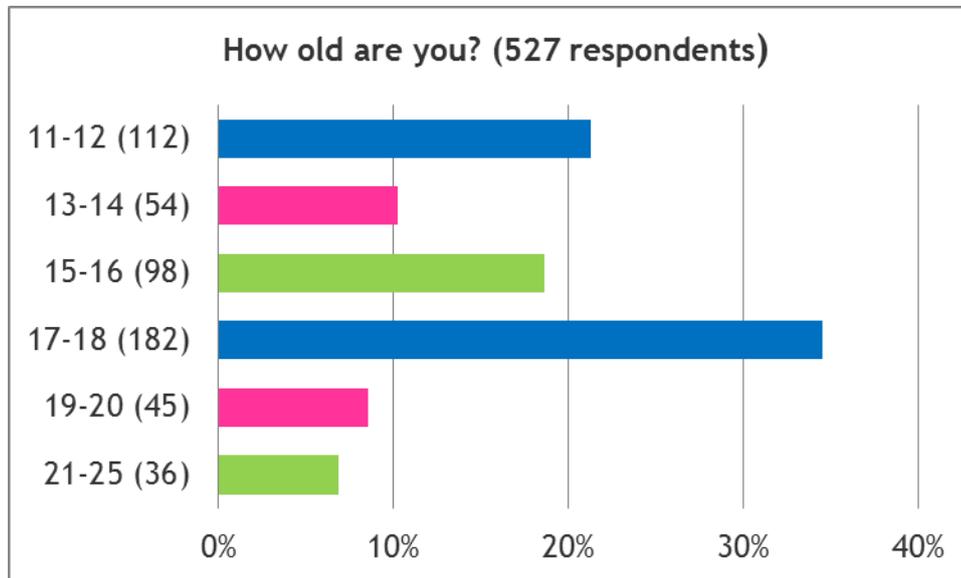
Amongst the key findings were:

- of the total number of answers to describe how they felt most of the time, 64% selected a positive feeling and 36% selected a negative feeling
- 43% of the young people in the survey selected stress as something that most negatively affected them. This is nearly twice as many as the next highest option
- 35% answered 'No' to the question 'do you know where to go if you needed help?'
- 70% of young people said they would rather speak to someone they trust if they needed help

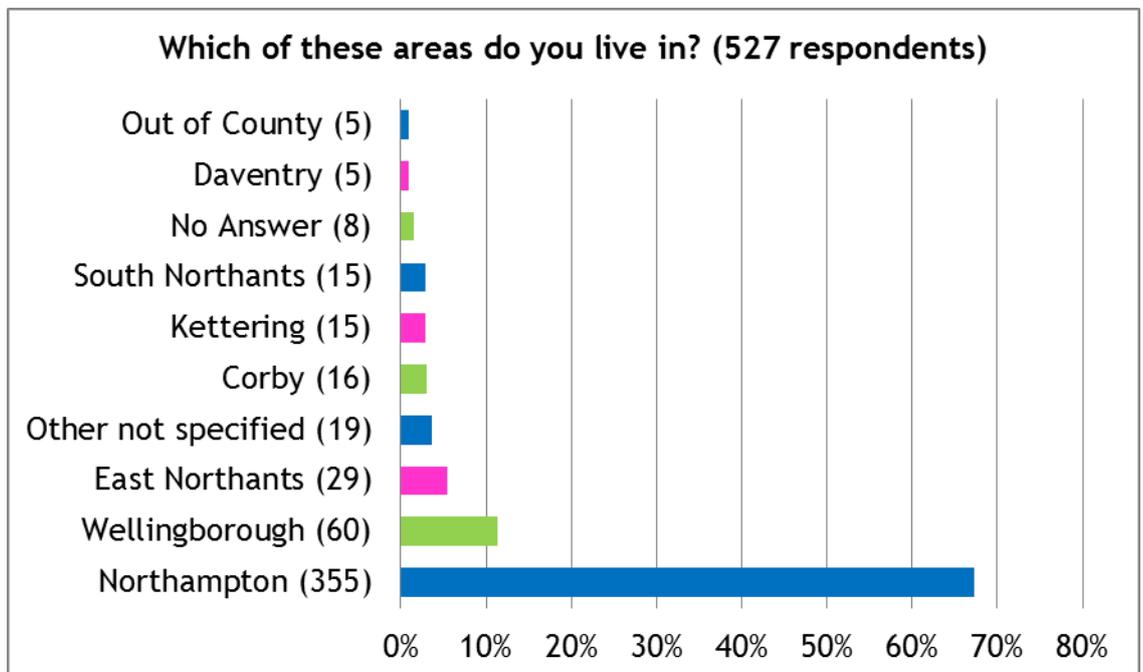
Our aim in the report is to share, in an accurate and fair way, the information we have received.

Findings

1. How old are you? (Please circle ONE)

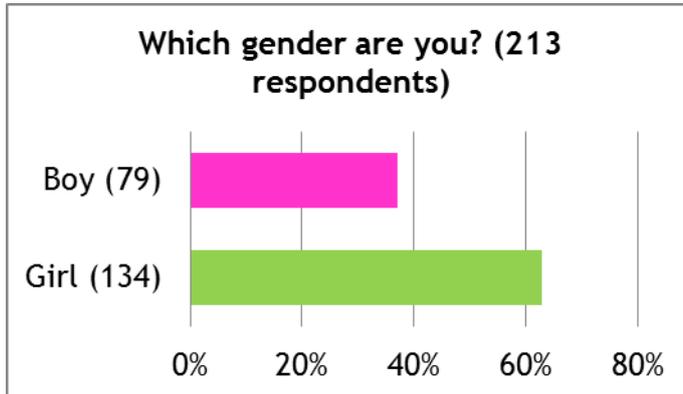


2. Which of these areas do you live in? (Please circle ONE)



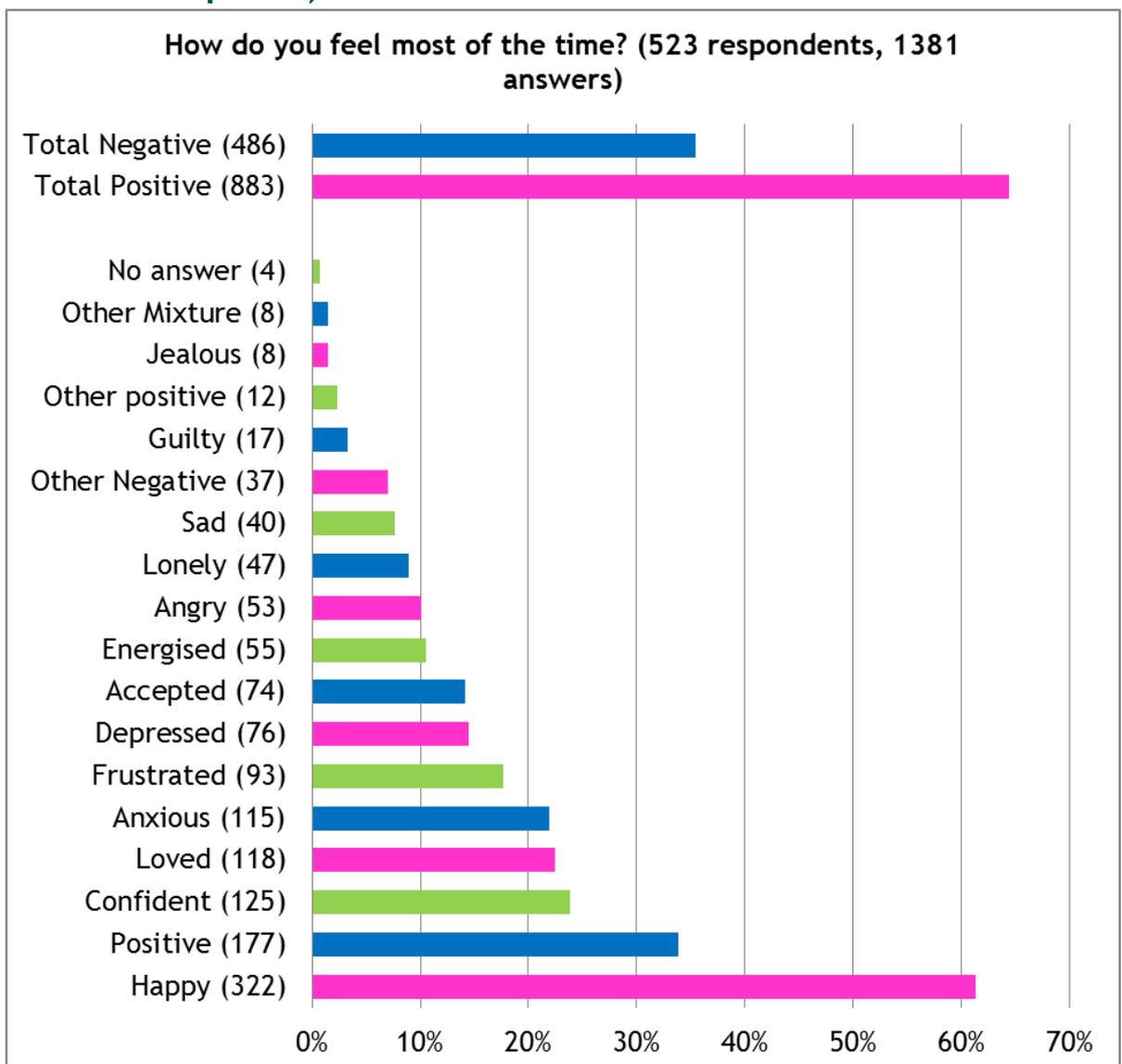
Healthwatch Northamptonshire aimed to get cross county representation, however nearly 70% of the respondents were based in Northampton.

3. Which gender are you? (Please circle ONE)



60% of the respondents did not answer the question, 40% provided their gender

4. How do you feel most of the time? (Please circle up to 3)



Other responses for “how do you feel most of the time” included:

A mixture... alright... annoyed... blank... bored... bullied... confused... content...down... drained... excited... existential... free...high... hyper... shy ...insecure... it varies... listless... lonely... lost... meaningless... motivated... neutral... normal... numb... paranoid... relaxed... romantic... self-conscious... serene ... stressed... tired...unsure...difficult to communicate these feelings.

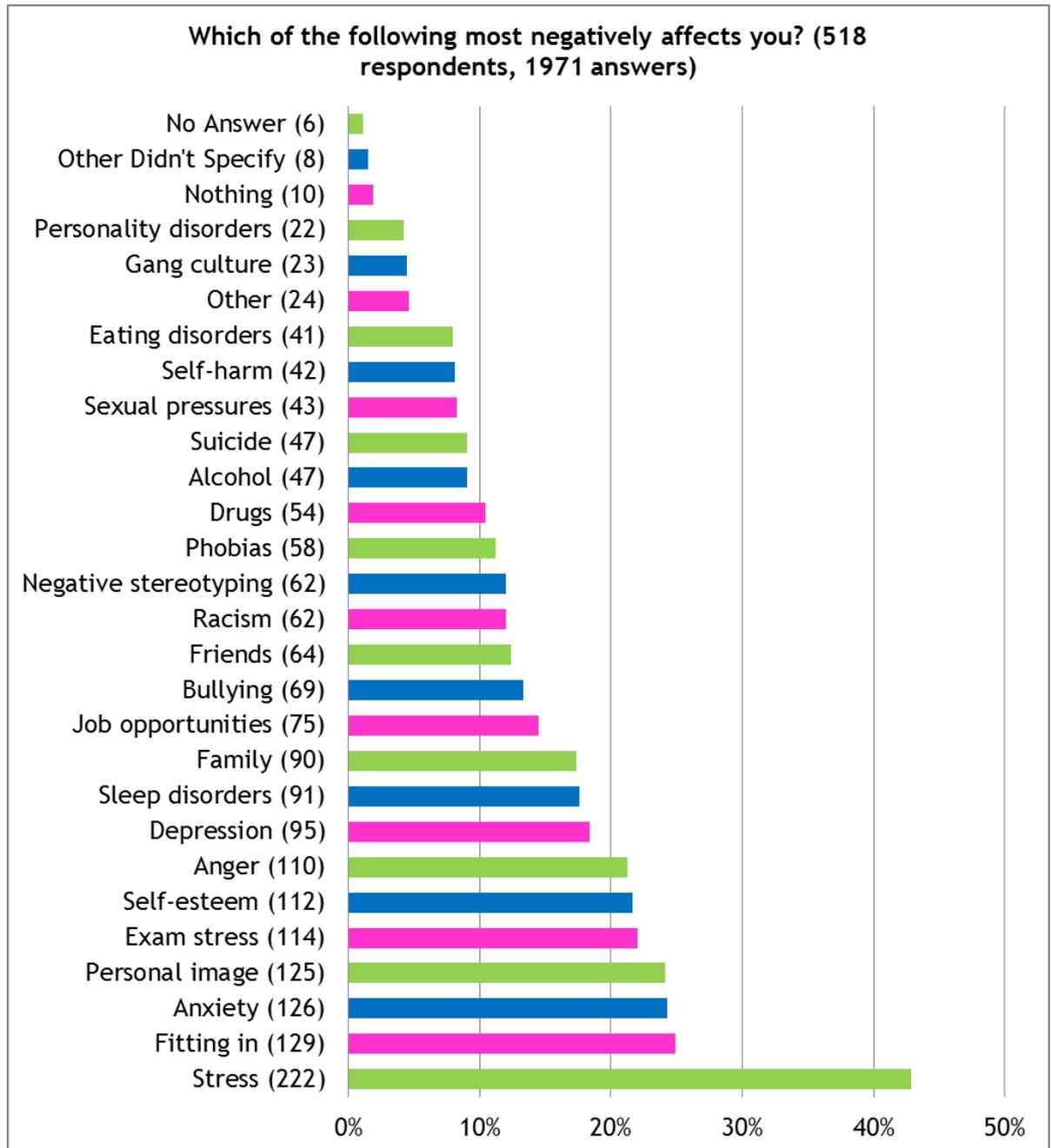
Of the total number of answers, 64% (883) can be classed as positive feelings (happy, accepted, loved, confident, positive or energised) and 36% (486) as negative feelings (anxious, angry, sad, lonely, depressed, guilty, jealous or frustrated).

There were some differences between different age groups:

Age Range	Overall total	11-12 year olds (112)	13-14 year olds (54)	15-16 year olds (97)	17-18 year olds (182)	19-20 year olds (45)	21-25 year olds (33)
Overall Positive	64% (883)	84% (214)	56% (80)	60% (153)	64% (313)	57% (75)	55% (51)
Overall Negative	36% (486)	16% (40)	44% (64)	40% (104)	36% (178)	43% (56)	45% (41)



5. Which of the following most negatively affect you? (Please circle up to 6)



Other responses for “which of the following most negatively affect you” included:

big headed people... college... disabled sibling...lack of social opportunities for young deaf people... discrimination... failing... homophobia/sexual orientation... other people’s problems weighing on my mind... overdevelopment... political beliefs...relationships...substance abuse by relatives...worries about future



The most concerning issues -
Suicide, Self Harm and Eating
Disorders - were selected by
9%, 8% and 8%

68 participants
selected both Stress in
q.5 and Anxious in q.4.

Stress was by far the
most common option
selected (43%) that
negatively affect
young people.



Of the 213 young people who told us their gender:

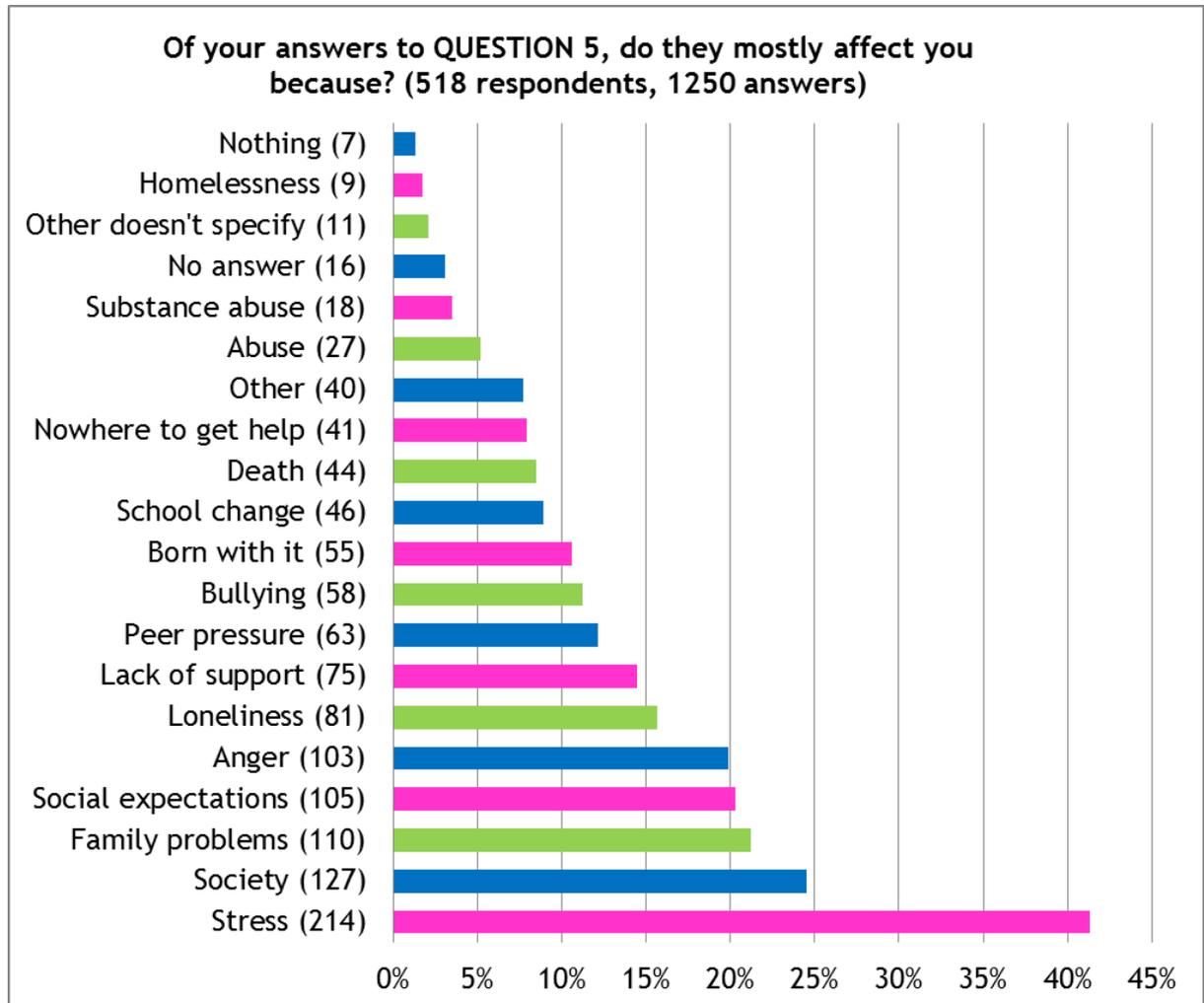
Girls are more likely to be negatively affected by:

- stress (50% compared to 31% for boys)
- personal image (32% compared to 14% for boys)
- anxiety (28% compared 18% for boys)
- self-esteem (27% compared to 9% for boys)
- self-harm (13% compared to 0% for boys)

Boys are more likely to be negatively affected by:

- job opportunities (17% compared to 10% for girls)
- friends (14% compared to 9% for girls)
- personalities disorders (8% compared to 2% for girls)
- gang culture (6% compared to 2% for girls)

6. Of your answers to QUESTION 5, do they mostly affect you because? (Please circle as many as appropriate)



Other responses for “which of the following most negatively affect you” included:

anxiety... Asperger’s syndrome... college/school... confidence... habitual self-fulfilling behaviour... confused... fitting in... friends who do drugs... gender... health... amount of homework... I can’t trace cause and effect-it’s chicken and egg... it’s just in my mind... Job... just do...lack of opportunities...mental health... money... moving house... not enough space... personal expectations... procrastination... show-offs... sometimes I’m sad...too much pressure and not enough support... trust issues... unfairly relied upon

Notable findings:

- 11% answered that the things that negatively affect them are because they are ‘born with it’. Which is low when compared with social categories such as ‘family problems’ 21%, ‘social expectations’ 20%, and ‘peer pressure’ 12%, ‘society’ 24%.

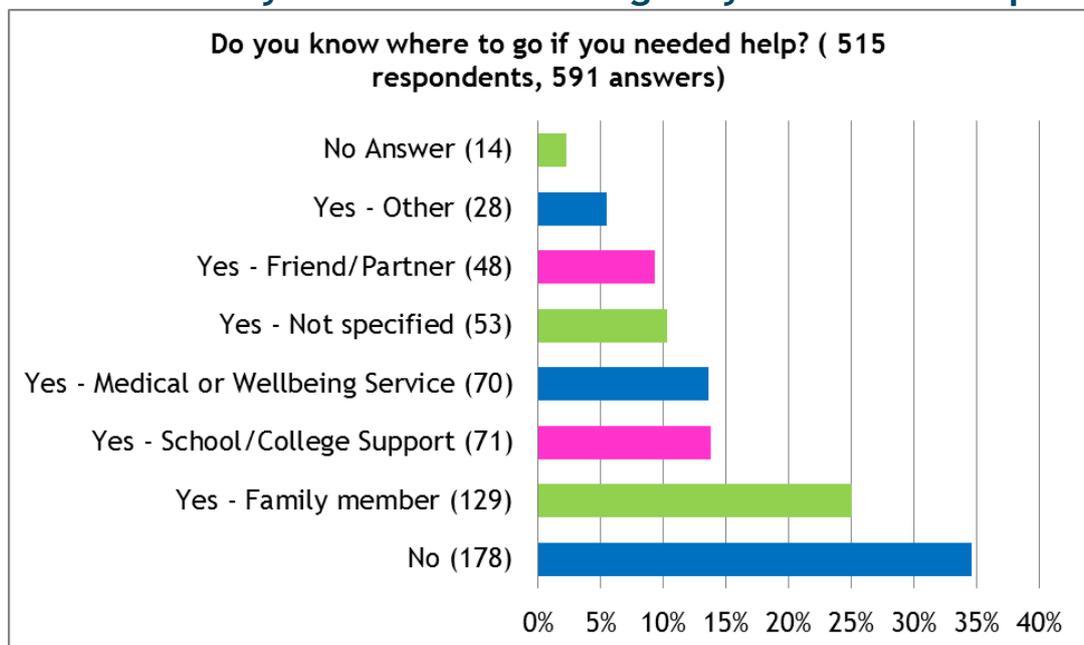
52 participants selected both Personal Image in q.5 and Social Expectations in q.6.

31 participants selected both Depression in q.5 and Loneliness in q.6.

20 participants selected both Job Opportunities in q.5 and Lack of Support in q.6.

11 participants selected both Suicide in q.5 and Abuse in q.6.

7. Do you know where to go if you needed help?

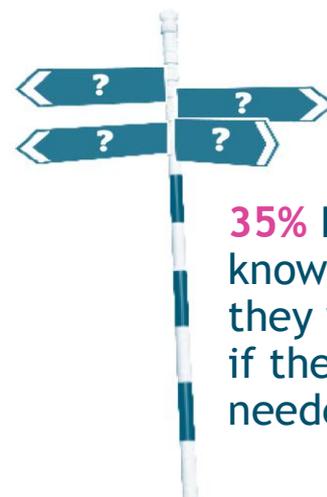


Because this option had a section to write an answer, there was a variety of responses. Among the most common ‘other’ responses were police and online services.

Important comments by respondents:

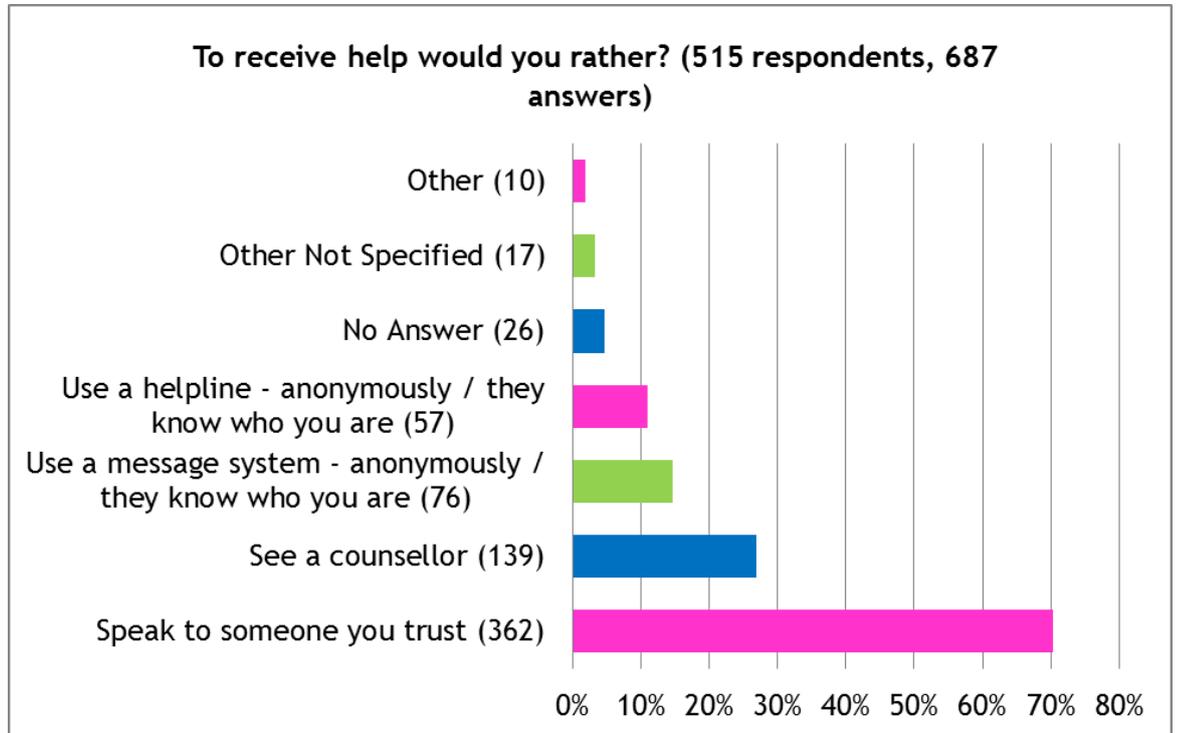
“Help is limited/not widely available”

“There is not enough help that actually works”

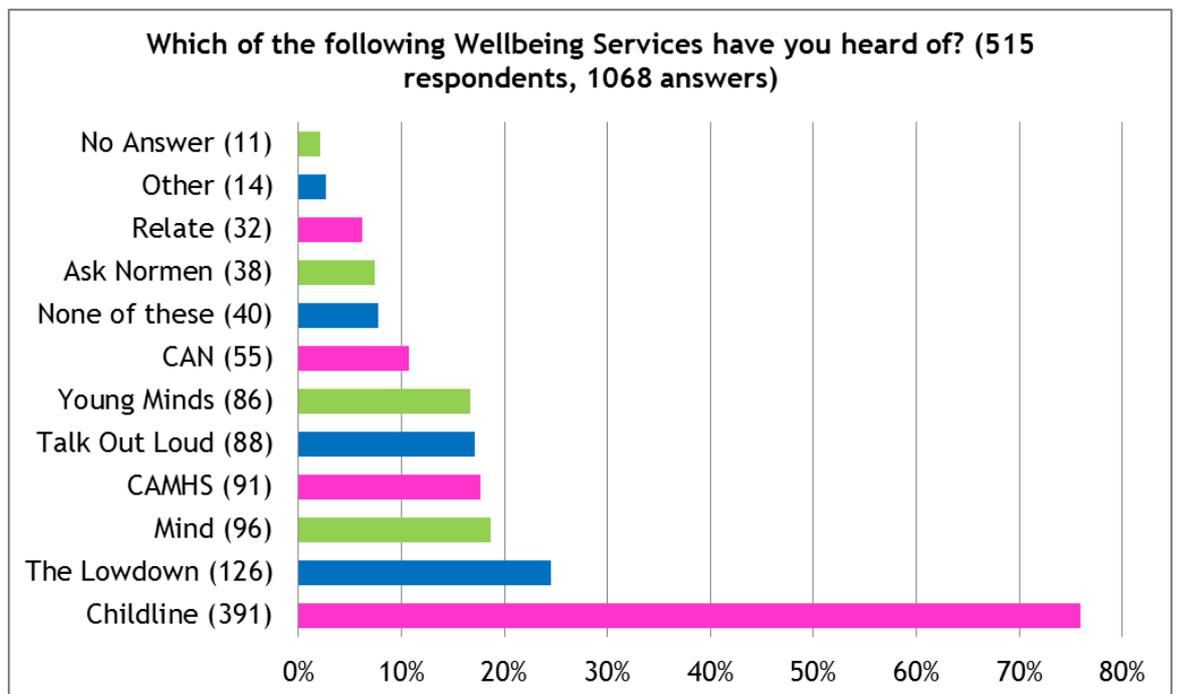


35% Do not know where they would go if they needed help

8. To receive help would you rather (Please circle up to TWO)



9. Which of the following Wellbeing Services have you heard of? (Please circle as many as appropriate)



Of those who answered 'other', participants mentioned organisations such as: Cancer Research UK..... Serenity....Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre...Thinkuknow... Human Utopia...Time2talk...Talk to Frank...Deafconnect

Childline is the most well known wellbeing service (76%). Despite the names of other wellbeing services on the survey, there was much less awareness of these services among young people who responded. The Lowdown (25%) is the next most well-known. The Lowdown provides a free and confidential drop in service in Northampton, where young people can get help and support. Relate was the least well known (6%).

Despite there being no question asking for judgments of wellbeing services, 3 separate survey participants wrote very negative and high critical comments to describe Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). No other comments on any other wellbeing service were given.

Conclusion

A recent government publication¹ on early intervention shows the importance of the data this survey has produced. "Evidence shows that poor social and emotional wellbeing predicts a range of negative outcomes in adolescence and adulthood. For example, negative parenting and poor quality family or school relationships place children at risk of poor mental health. Early intervention in childhood can help reduce physical and mental health problems and prevent social dysfunction being passed from one generation to the next".

It was significant that 36% of young people responding to Question 4 selected a negative emotion particularly among older age ranges. This seems a concerning amount to feel "most of the time". The responses that had both personal image and social expectations; or depression and loneliness; or job opportunities and lack of support; or suicide and abuse selected were particularly significant. The results of this survey are useful for local health and social care decision makers in planning, delivering and promoting local services for young people.

1. "Early intervention: the next steps". Department for Work and Pensions and Cabinet Office
First published: 1 January 2011 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-intervention-the-next-steps--2>

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the report Healthwatch Northamptonshire makes the following recommendations:

1. Healthwatch Northamptonshire, working with Young Leaders, should conduct a similar survey in future years aiming for more respondents and a greater range of respondents representing different parts of the county and age groups.
2. Since stress was clearly the most common response to Question 5, health and social care partners need to share evidence on the causes of stress for young people; identify whether there are gaps in our understanding and agree how this evidence can be gathered.
3. Healthwatch Northamptonshire and Young Leaders should share the findings of this survey widely, including with health and social care decision makers at the Young People's conference on 18 February; Public Health to inform the needs assessment for children and young people and the Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board. We will request a County wide action plan, in consultation with young people. The action plan needs to include raising awareness of local services.
4. Healthwatch Northamptonshire should continue to work with the lead children's and young people's community health service provider - Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to radically improve the quality of child and adolescent mental health services and to ensure that children, young people and families views, experiences and voices drive the improvement process.

Thank you and acknowledgements

We would like to thank:

- Northamptonshire Young Leaders for designing the survey and helping to distribute the survey
- Northamptonshire County Council and Connexions for enabling Healthwatch Northamptonshire to work with the Northamptonshire Young Leaders
- the 527 young people who took time to complete the survey and got involved in Healthwatch Northamptonshire's Make Your Voice Count 2 campaign

Appendix 1:

This survey was written by the Northamptonshire Young Leaders, who were elected by young people all across Northamptonshire. The aim is to get **your** views, confidentially and honestly. To do this, we need to know what is important to **you**, and what **you're** struggling with. If you want to get further information or follow this survey up: contact **your** Young Leader or email us at: loreilly@connexions-northamptonshire.org.uk

<p>1. How old are you? (Please circle ONE) a) 11-12 b) 13-14 c) 15-16 d) 17-18 e) 19-20 f) 21-25</p>	<p>2. Which of these areas do you live in? (Please circle ONE) a) Northampton b) Wellingborough c) Kettering d) Corby e) East Northants f) South Northants g) Daventry h) Other (Please WRITE):</p>	<p>3. Which gender are you? (Please circle ONE) a) Male b) Female</p>
<p>4. How do you feel most of the time? (Please circle up to THREE) a) Happy b) Anxious c) Accepted d) Loved e) Confident f) Positive g) Angry h) Sad i) Lonely j) Energised k) Depressed l) Guilty m) Frustrated n) Jealous Other (Please WRITE):</p>		
<p>5. Which of the following most negatively affect you? (Please circle up to SIX) a) Job opportunities b) Anxiety c) Sexual pressures d) Fitting in e) Racism f) Alcohol g) Negative stereotyping h) Depression i) Gang culture j) Self-harm k) Anger l) Drugs m) Personality disorders n) Exam stress o) Self-esteem p) Phobias q) Stress r) Family s) Eating disorders t) Friends u) Sleep disorders x) Suicide v) Personal image w) Bullying Other (Please WRITE):</p>		
<p>6. Of your answers to QUESTION 5, do they mostly affect you because: (Please circle as many as appropriate?) a) Family problems b) Substance abuse c) Loneliness d) Stress e) Social expectations f) School change g) Peer pressure h) Death i) Bullying j) Homelessness k) Born with it l) Anger m) Abuse n) Lack of support o) Nowhere to get help p) Society Other (Please WRITE):</p>		
<p>7. Do you know where to go if you needed help? Yes No Where would you go? (Please WRITE):</p> <p>8. To receive help would you rather: (Please circle up to TWO) a) Use a helpline - anonymously / they know who you are b) See a counsellor someone you trust c) Use a message system - anonymously / they know who you are d) Speak to</p> <p>9. Which of the following Wellbeing Services have you heard of? (Please circle as many as appropriate) a) The Lowdown b) CAN c) Childline d) Relate e) Ask Normen f) Young Minds g) CAMHS h) Mind i) Talk Out Loud Other (Please WRITE):</p>		



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