



SOUTH AYRSHIRE YOUTH FORUM

**Say It Out LOUD - A Survey
researching Young People's
Mental Health in South Ayrshire.**

**Final Report
December 2016**



SOUTH AYRSHIRE YOUTH FORUM

Say It Out Loud - Initial Findings December 2016

The Scottish Youth Parliament Research (2016) 'Our Generation's Epidemic' highlighted young people's awareness and experiences of mental health information, support, and services across Scotland. In response to this report as well as their own first-hand experience and knowledge within their own lives, with peers, schools and youth activity the South Ayrshire Youth Forum developed and distributed a local survey, Say It Out Loud, for young people concerning mental health.

Within the survey Mental Health was defined as;

- *'...a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community'*

Youth Forum members worked with the NHS Health Improvement Team and Community Learning and Development staff to agree the survey questions and its distribution. The Youth Forum also agreed with Educational Psychology services for an additional question to be added. The survey was completed in hard copy across youth work services, Fresher's Event, Young People events, schools and Ayrshire College. Staff and volunteers highlighted the commitment and time young people spent fully completing the survey.

Age	%
11-14 years	40.1%
15-17 years	47.1%
18-20 years	7.2%
21-23 years	3.5%
24-26 years	2.0%

In total of 1197 surveys were fully completed by young people aged 11-25 years from across South Ayrshire. The highest percentages of young people completing the survey were aged 15-17 years and the lowest were aged 24-26 years. Efforts were made to engage older young people through Youth Employment Hubs and Youth Work services.

More females than males completed the survey.

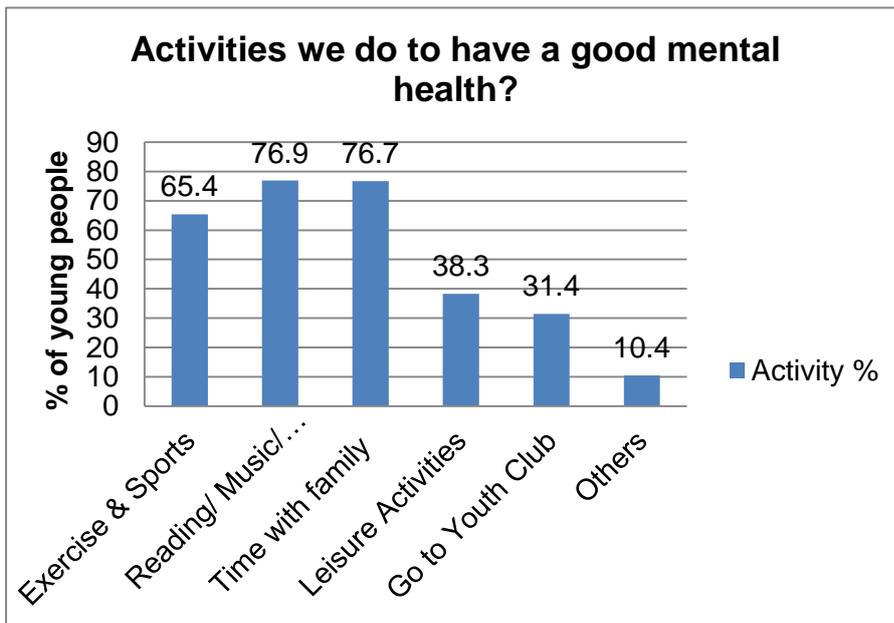
Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Other
38.6%	55.7%	4.7%	1.0%

The findings from the survey were launched at the South Ayrshire Youth Conference in November 2016. The findings from each question have been included below. As part of the Youth Conference young people worked in groups to discuss and analyse the findings. Young people agreed actions they felt should be taken in response to the findings. Actions from each group were shared at the Youth Conference and have been collated and included in this document.

Only fully completed surveys were included in the analyses. The data is shown as a percentage of young people who completed the survey unless otherwise specified. In some cases percentages add up to more than 100% as young people chose to give more than one answer.

UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH:

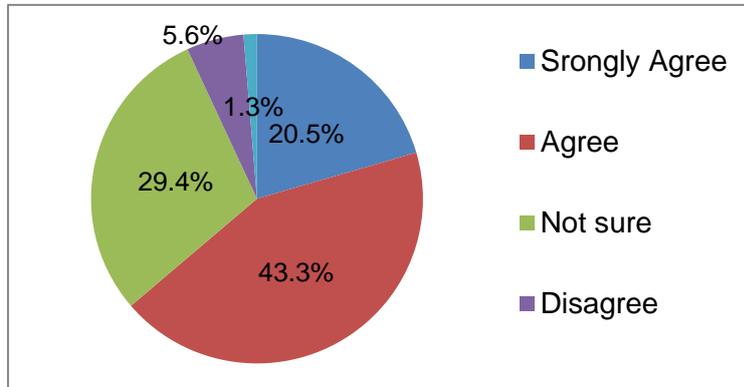
Mental Health is clearly important to young people in South Ayrshire, illustrated not only in their commitment to fully complete the questionnaire but also as 91% of young people were aware that everyone has mental health whether it is good or bad. 47% felt mental health changes throughout their life and 65% said it changes depending on the situation, with 5% saying it stays the same throughout their life.



Young people identified a range of activities they take part in which can contribute to them having good mental health.

ACCESSING SUPPORT AND INFORMATION:

When asked “If I or someone I know had a mental health problem that I wanted to talk about, I would know where to go for help”.

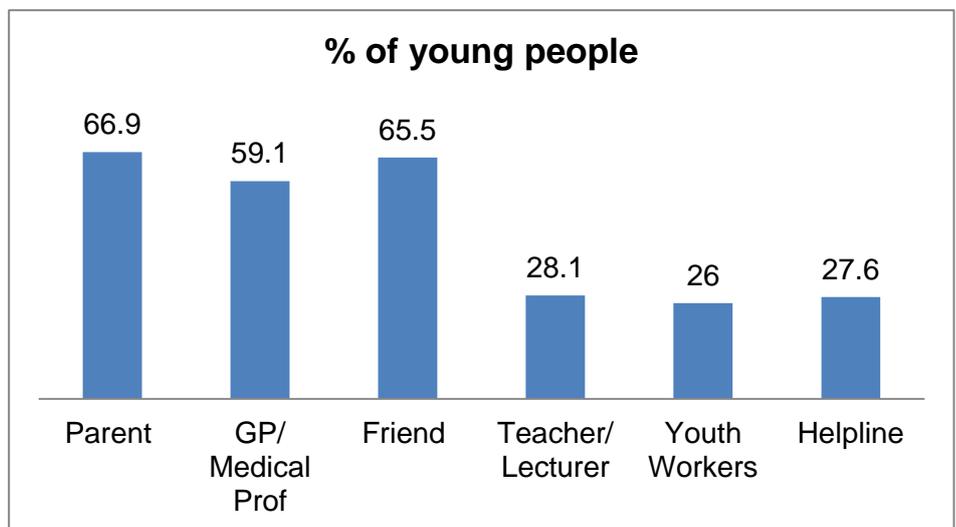


63.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to go for help. Almost 30% were not sure.

It is important to acknowledge that there were also comments from young people including “my mental health is no one else’s business and I wouldn’t talk about it”.

When young people were asked who they would go and speak with about their own mental health;

High numbers of young people said they would speak with a parent, GP or friend with a lower percentage stating they would speak with a teacher, youth worker or use a help line.

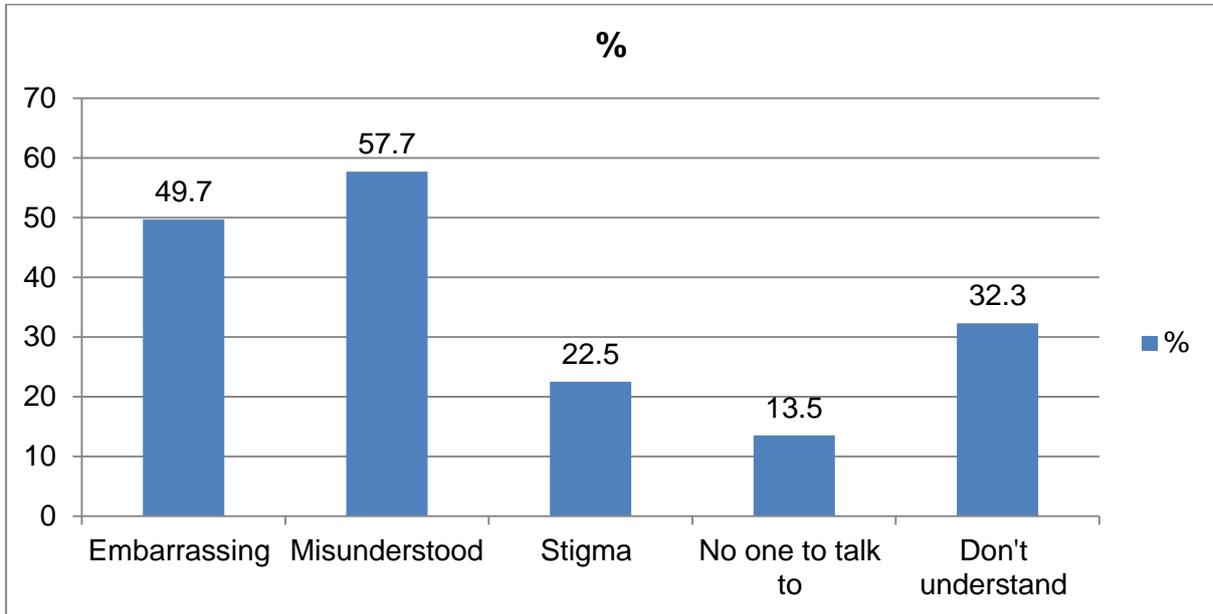


Young people were also asked who they would speak to about a friend’s mental health. Higher percentages said they would speak with a parent, friend or GP (56%, 50% and 40%) with lower percentages (34%, 30% and 30% agreeing they would talk with a teacher, youth worker or use a helpline.

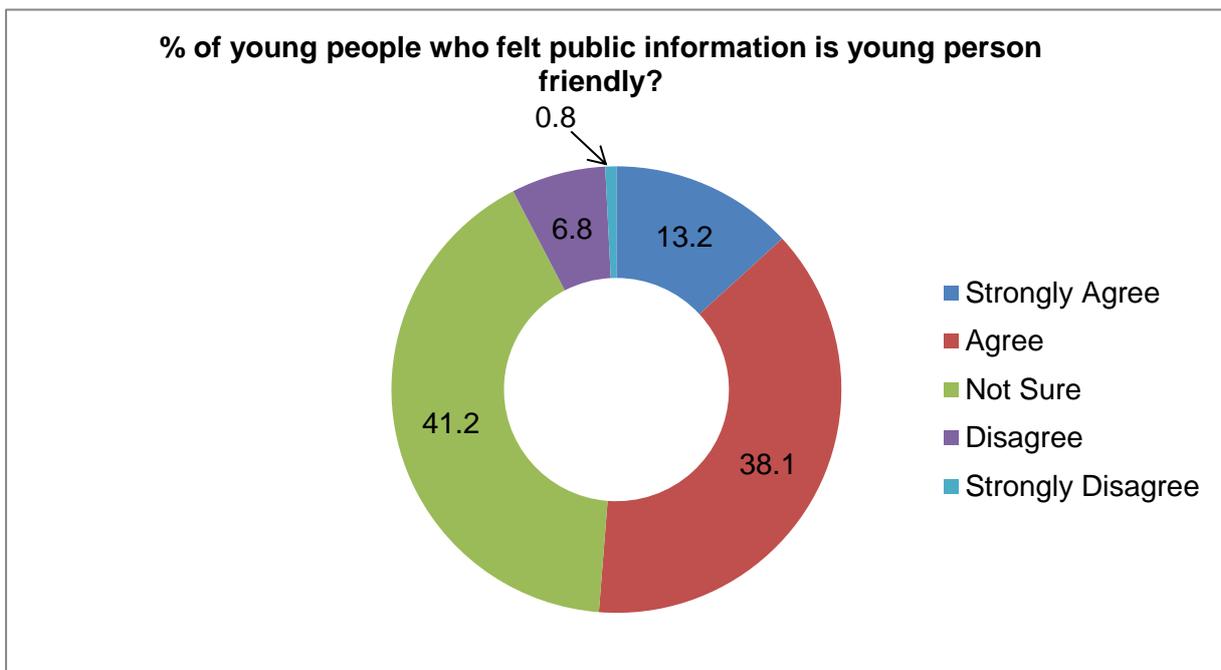
The comments shared on the survey and feedback at the youth conference highlighted that young people felt there were key issues around confidentiality when discussing mental health with teachers. Also young people said that they wanted to go to any teacher and not just a named teacher or school nurse if they want a discussion or have a problem.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SUPPORT:

When asked “In your opinion what would stop you from speaking to someone about your own or someone else’s mental health?”, half of young people 50% felt embarrassed and 58% felt they would be misunderstood. 32% felt that others didn’t understand with 14% or 149 young people sharing they had no one to talk to.

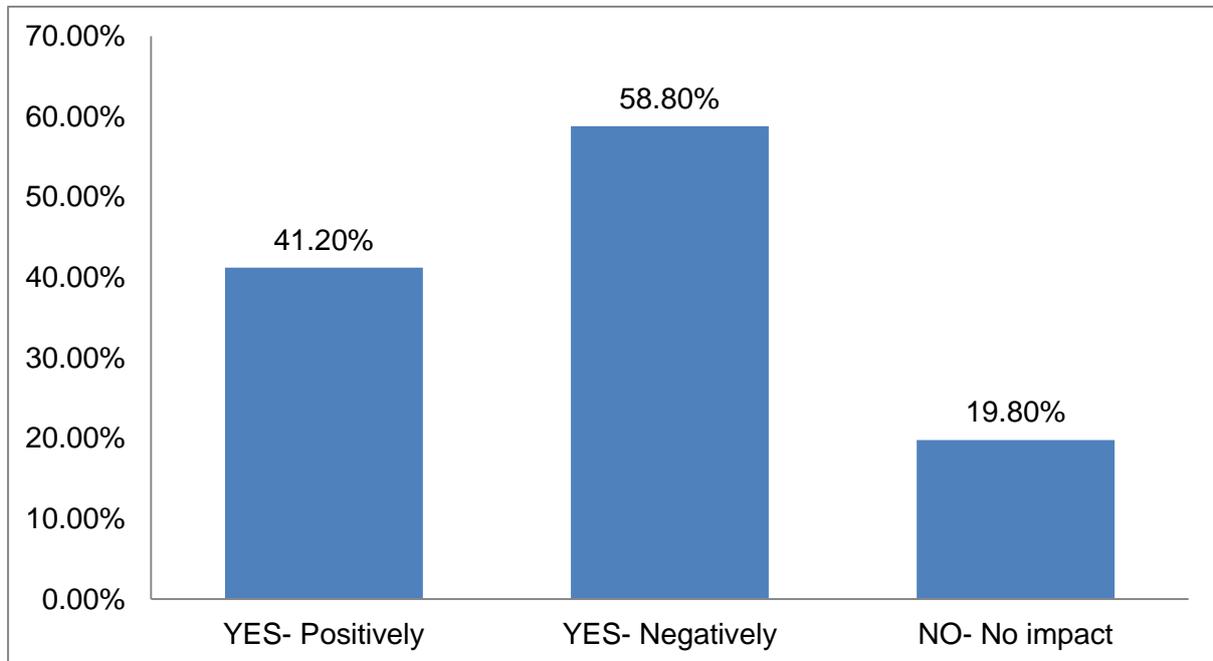


Young People were asked if they thought public information (eg websites, leaflets, medical advice, etc) about mental health was young person friendly. 51% strongly agreed or agreed and 41% said they were not sure. Young People considered why such a high number were ‘not sure’ and felt this may have been because they have had limited experience of youth focused information or mental health information over all.



25.8% said they were aware of self-help guidance, information and services available in their area identifying national services such as Childline. 73.8% young people said they were not aware of self-help services and this figure may be even higher as many identified CAMHS as a self-help service which would not be considered as such by service providers.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA:



We are aware of the influence social media has on young people. When asked whether they felt social media has a positive or negative effect on mental health 41% felt social media impacts positively and 59% felt it impacts negatively. A number of young people recorded both yes positive and no negative, with comments including;

“I selected both because you can control what you want to see. I follow motivational people and those that can uplift me and block the ones I feel impact on me negatively.”

Additional comments highlighted the negative effect social media can have;

“A lot of social media like Instagram and Tumblr glorify and try to encourage mental health issues like self harm and depression as if it is a good thing. “

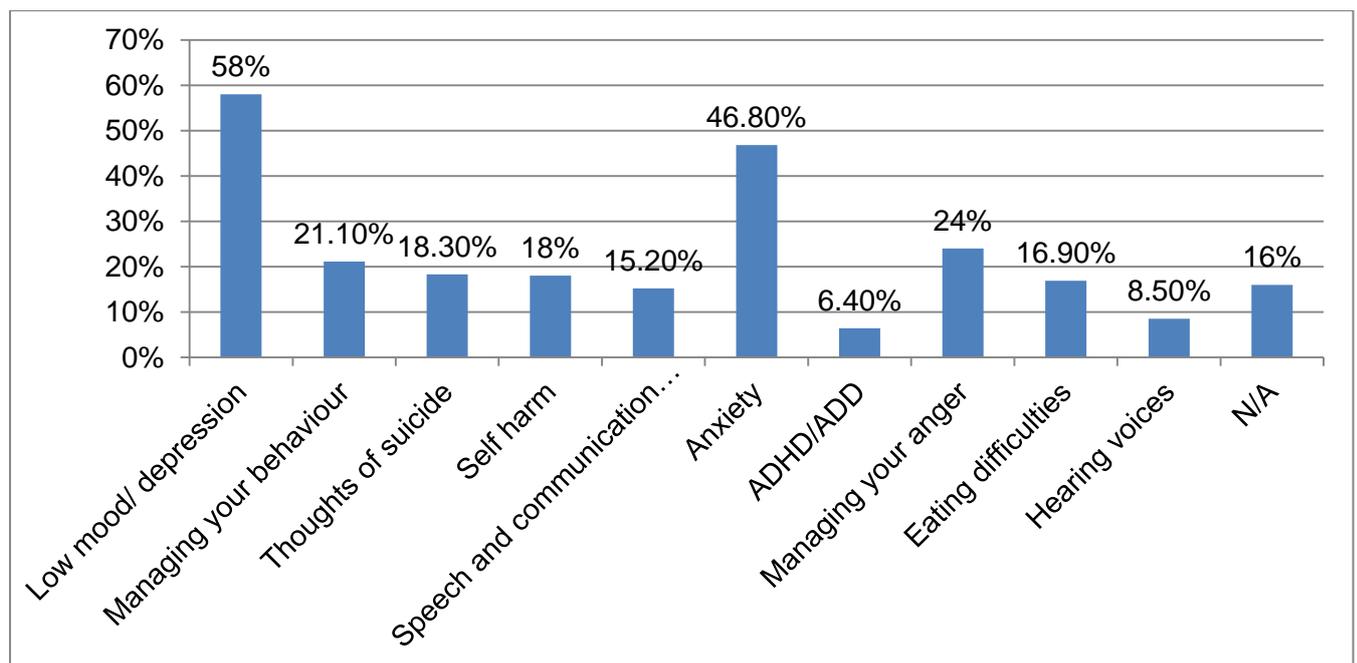
“Facebook and Instagram seeing people that are perfect and have a perfect lifestyle can make us feel bad”.

When asked “Are you aware that there are Apps that specialise in improving mental health?”, of the 262 who said they were aware of Apps/ sites for young people 78 young people gave details including calming sounds apps, Mindfulness and PACIFA. One comment included “I know there are Apps and sites but don’t know the names or how to find them”

Are you aware that there are APPS that specialise in improving mental health?		
Answer	% of all asked	Number of Young People responding
Yes	22.5%	262
No	77.5%	901

ISSUES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE

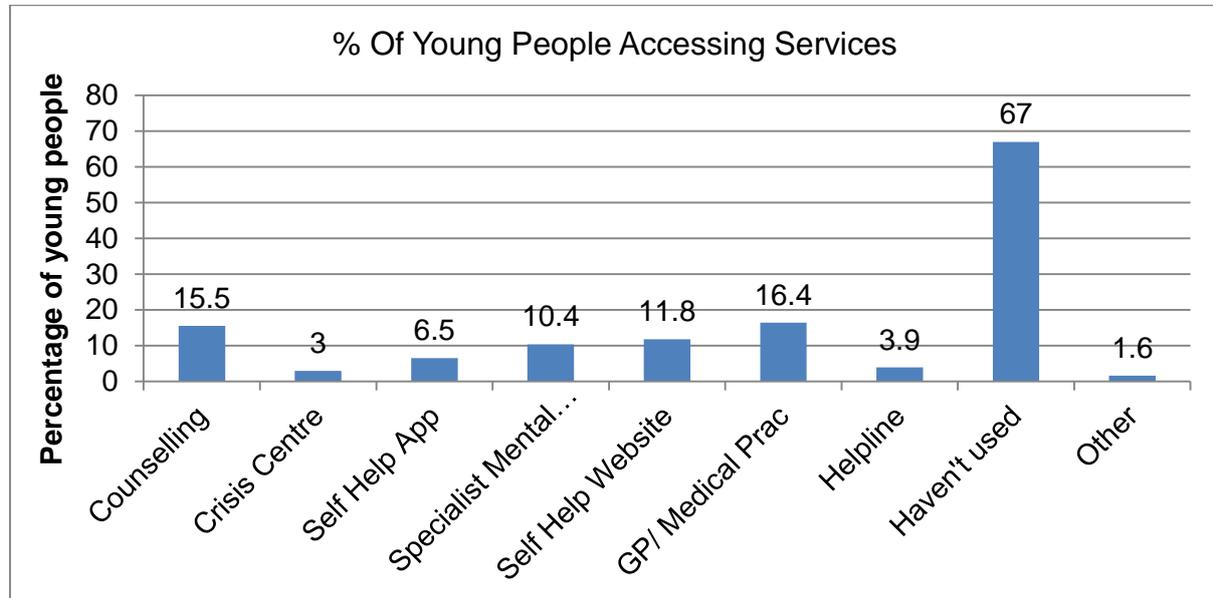
Young People were asked if they felt they had experienced difficulties listed below.



Over half of young people who completed the survey indicated they had experienced low mood or depression. It is important to note that some young people did feedback they felt they had experienced low mood and not depression. Just under half felt that they had experienced anxiety. It is interesting to note that approximately 20% of young people had difficulty managing their behaviour, managing their anger, had thoughts of suicide and self-harm. In order to target support around these areas it maybe worthwhile identifying the numbers of males and females that gave these responses.

ENGAGING WITH AND EXPERIENCES OF SERVICES

When asked if they have accessed services, 67% or 782 young people said they hadn't accessed services. As part of the youth conference there was discussion amongst young people who felt that this was not because 67% of young people didn't need services, but for reasons identified above they haven't accessed services. The service accessed by the highest number of young people or 16.4% was a GP or medical practitioner.



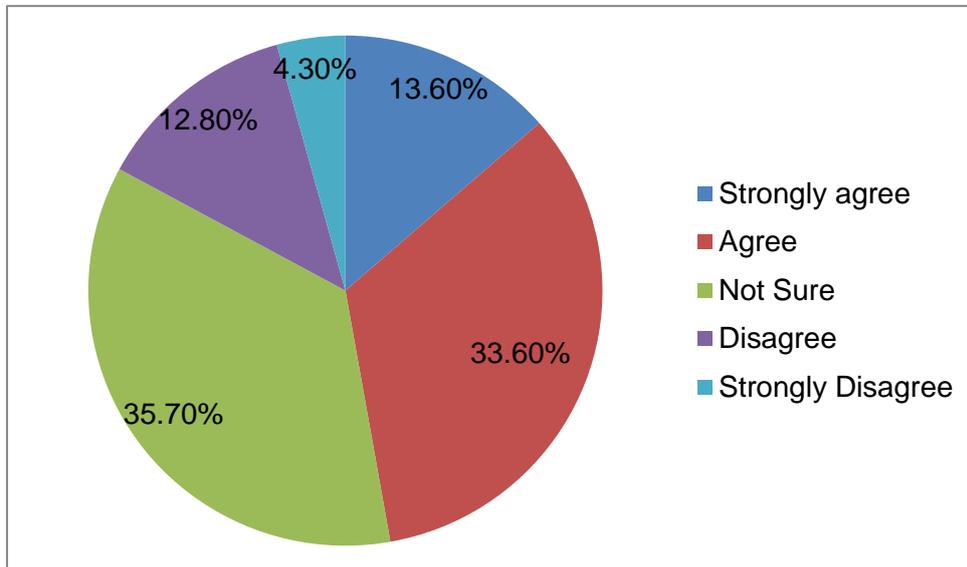
And we are reminded of the importance of peer support with comments included; *"I could never bring myself to seek help from professional when I was young and really struggling. What helps me is confiding in a best friend.. Young People need to find someone to trust first, that the first step and that can open so many doors to seeking information and professional help"*

Young People were also asked how they rate services as indicated in the table below. Between 50% and 60% of young people think services are good or great. However, between 25% and 35% think they are ok. That is a total of 372 young people in South Ayrshire who thought services were ok. And 136 who thought services were bad or poor. Comments for not accessing services included delays in referrals.

	Of those who have used the service and said it was GOOD or GREAT.	OK
GP / Medical Practitioner	69.3%	22.1%
Counselling	61.2%	27.8%
Crisis Centre	55.8%	36.3%
Self Help Website	55.4%	35.7%
Self Help App	60.9%	26.5%
Helpline	69.4%	22.4%
Specialist Mental Health Service	64.2%	23.3%

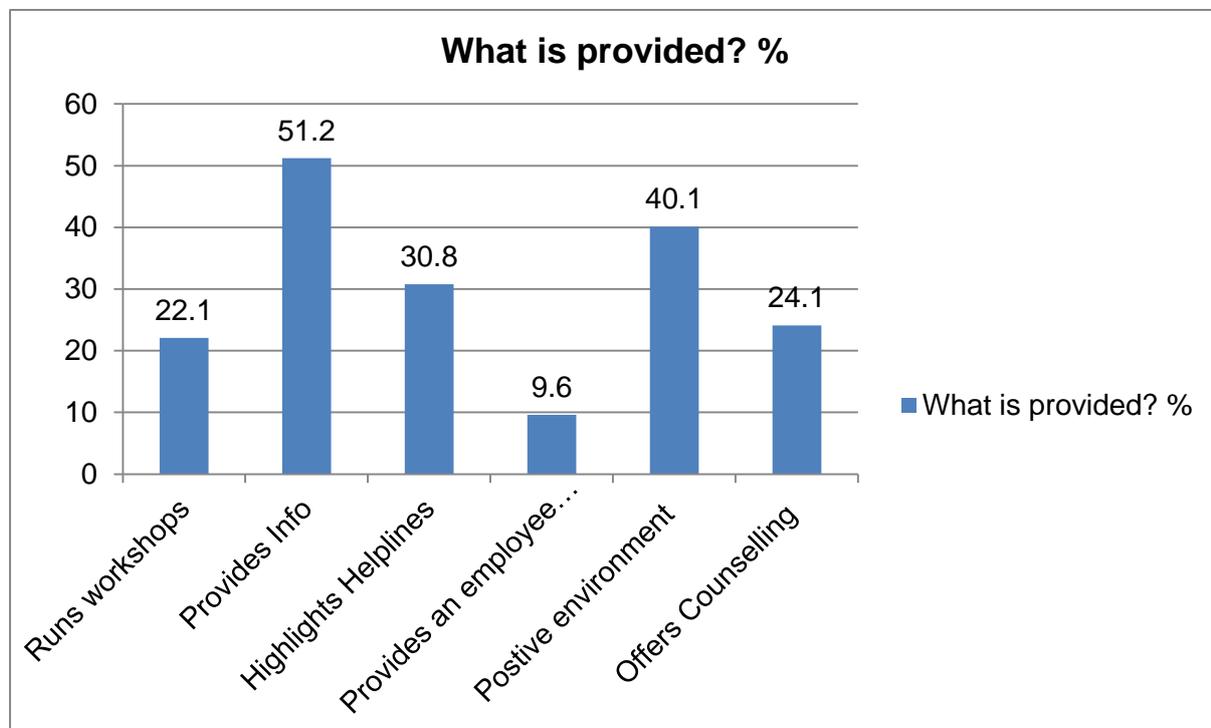
HEALTHY PLACE – HEALTHY PEOPLE

When researching the questions to include in the survey young people discussed the importance of their environment. Therefore we asked; “My school/college/university/workplace provides a supportive environment to talk about mental health” and provision available was also discussed.



Just less than half, 47%, of young people felt their school or college provided a supportive environment to talk about mental health. A quarter of young people disagreeing and 36% not sure.

When asked what is provided in schools just over 50% of young people did state that information was provided and 40% stating a positive environment was provided. With just under a quarter aware that schools and colleges offer counselling and run workshops.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEEDBACK – YOUTH CONFERENCE ACTIONS

A key message shared by one young person;

"My mental Health is everyone's responsibility"

As part of the South Ayrshire Youth Conference young people were supported to analyse the findings from the survey. Their feedback and actions were recorded and have been collated here. Please note comments have been recorded as shared by young people.

ACCESSING SERVICES:

Young People said:

- Pop up stalls – roadshow
- CAMHS: Go to youth group and school more
- More publicity in youth clubs and schools around mental health and the services available
- More approachable services – make topic less taboo
- Advertise – through social media
- School noticeboards – Young Scot, TV's
- Leaflets out of date
- know there are places [online] to go but don't know them
- First thing announcements – get all schools to do it
- How to access support is still an issue
- Easy to access
- Post a note to the school nurse
- Make school nurse a visible presence
- Supply more help – advertising more services
- Parents: info on what services are available
- More informal info between school and home – named person
- Assemblies – regular more info
- More access to info on-line (privacy) i.e. online workshops
- Not enough awareness at school
- Not been told where to go
- Too scared
- All teachers should have knowledge
- PSE lessons discussing – more approachable
- Training to young people

Youth Conference Proposed Actions -

Work with young people to;

- ✓ Review publicity available. Agree 'approved' publicity to be available in all places where young people are with links online.
- ✓ Look at how to access support and services (including self-help) for parents, teachers, youth workers and young people. Do these work? How can they be improved?
- ✓ Schools and Colleges to work with school representatives (this does not have to be the school council) to make sure mental health is part of everyday school life.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SUPPORT ONLINE

Young People said:

- ICT lessons – app/game creating that promote mental health
- Website built especially for online live chat - anonymous
- Promote positive apps/sites
- Facebook pages, websites, YouTube channels, Names – Get known
- Raise awareness around reputable apps available
- Advertise Raise awareness specifically on social media – through adverts
- All over social media – promote apps
- Advertise apps more on app store
- Create gaming apps more on app store
- ICT schools – create games/apps at school
- Improve access to online support
- Google search – how to word it?
- Depression helpline
- Helpline
- Social media helps us work as social distraction for ADHD
- Negative videos
- Group chats – bullying! Posts can hurt
- Blogs on Tumblr – positive
- Bands glorify mental health
- Songs have depressing messages
- Self-help group
- PSE/Workshops
- School - Drop ins/ Group sessions
- 1 to 1 counselling – more access and availability
- Not school screens
- Bring more people into schools – bring in service providers
- Later primary ages (Primary 6 and 7)

Youth Conference Proposed Actions -

- ✓ Consult and plan with young people to develop an online chat service for South Ayrshire Young People.
- ✓ Share 'approved'/ 'recommended Self Help Apps' widely across schools, youth work settings and all other services for young people.
- ✓ Youth groups to create guide on how to access services online.

TALKING TOGETHER

Young People said:

- Teachers make assumptions, you have to see them each day and say it in front of the wrong people
- Training for teachers on mental health that they can deliver to senior pupils.
- Not sure how to explain the issue.
- Compulsory training so that teachers can be more approachable
- NHS giving training
- More awareness training in mental health for (guidance) teachers
- More training for teachers in relation to counselling or listening to young people – conversation is key
- Better understanding of young people and their mental health.
- Teachers need to train on teenage mental health to know how to deal with conversations appropriately
- More teacher training in mental health

Youth Conference Proposed Actions -

- ✓ Deliver training for those working with young people. Training should focus on managing the issue, retaining relationships whilst safeguarding young people.

Young People said:

- Peer education drop ins to support – more comfortable talking to someone your own age rather than an adult
- Friends are more approachable
- Pupils to promote (peer to peer education)
- CLD + Teachers to support young people delivering lessons
- Peer to Peer Support - More approachable than teachers

Youth Conference Proposed Actions -

- ✓ Increase Peer Support and Peer Education Models.

HEALTHY PLACES: HEALTHY PEOPLE

Young People said:

- Local personalities – mental health ambassadors
- More people who have experienced mental health
- Create a safe space - So it doesn't control you
- People think mental health is attention seeking
- Mental health used as an excuse to justify bad actions
- Confidentiality
- Confidentiality is a big problem in school
- Worried about anonymity.
- Fear of exposure.
- More communities/ spirit
- Talk about it more in class would help
- Youth café for people who don't attend school
- Make it more of a casual subject
- Ability to communicate
- Promote more face-to-face conversation
- Provide a listening ear more face-to-face conversation
- Listen more
- Use the right vocabulary
- Talk about it more
- Kind of vocabulary needed is hard = a guide to the kind of words needed would help
- Feel like it's just a part of teenage life
- Celebs support/ write songs about it/ talk about personal experience
- Confidentiality is an issue when speaking to teachers and school nurses and doctors (under 16). Don't break trust or pass info on to external persons for support (not parents)
- Colour (makes it young people friendly), pictures, bold title, positive message
- Hobby's – support mental health
- Good quality centres – funded

- ✓ Say it's okay to watch out for your pals
- ✓ Being nice to each other
- ✓ Work with young people to make a positive environment checklist for schools, colleges and other settings for young people.
- ✓ Work together with young people to agree guidelines to ensure a balance between keeping young people safe and confidentiality is maintained.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

1197 Young People aged 11-25 from across South Ayrshire completed a survey developed by South Ayrshire Youth Forum, CLD and health partners. The survey findings highlighted young people's commitment to wanting to tackle the issues around mental health and mental health services and support. In general young people felt pathways to mental health services are not youth focused. Approximately 60% of young people would talk with a friend, parent or GP if they felt they had a mental health problem. However fear of being misunderstood or embarrassed was highlighted as a barrier for over 50% of young people.

At the South Ayrshire Youth Conference 2016 the findings of the survey were discussed and actions recommend by young people have been highlighted above. One young person commented "*My mental health is everyone's responsibility*". Young people want to see mental health support embedded within their everyday life enabling them to enjoy and relax in positive and safe environments. Young people want to speak to the person they have the best relationship with and not a specific staff member or health professional; this could be a peer and may be online as well as face to face.

Young people acknowledge change requires commitment and action from service providers, families, communities and from young people themselves. The Youth Forum will review and prioritise the actions put forward by young people and discuss the above. Youth Forum members and interested groups of young people will link with the South Ayrshire's Mental Health Steering Group and agree and review an action plan of work based on the priorities and actions from the survey.

Thank you to all the young people who took time to complete the survey, often sharing sensitive information about a complex issue. Thank you to Youth Forum members and other partners who developed the survey and distributed it far and wide and thank you to those of you who spent your time inputting the data. Suggestions have been made for surveys to be completed every 2-3 years which would be one way to assess the impact of the joint work which takes place as a result of this survey. For now, these findings provide useful information and actions to take forward. There are opportunities to further analyse the findings based on gender, age group and, to some extent, locality. Please do not hesitate to contact South Ayrshire Youth Forum or Community Learning and Development to share examples of good practice and to gain an update on progress so far.

Thank you

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