



What do the Student Union Team at National Star College think of health and care services aimed at young people?

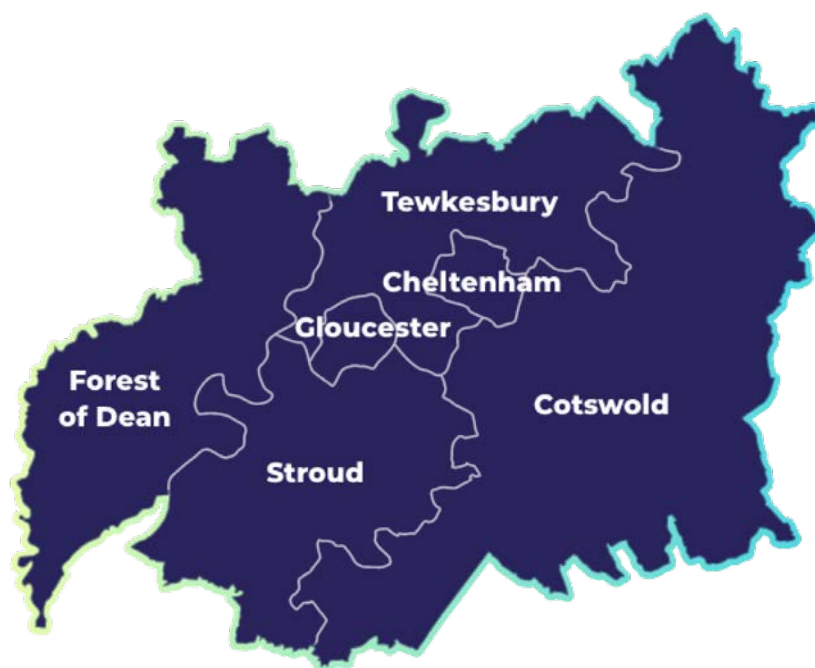
About us

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion.

We're here to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you. We are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with us is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice to help you to get the care and support you need.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care. This report is an example of how your views are shared.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country. We cover the geographical area of Gloucestershire County Council, which includes the districts and boroughs of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud, and Tewkesbury.



© Healthwatch Gloucestershire

The material must be acknowledged as Healthwatch Gloucestershire copyright and the document title specified. Where third party material has been identified, permission from the respective copyright holder must be sought.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

You can download this publication from healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

Contents	Page
Introduction	4
What we did	4
Key messages	6
Recommendations	8
Thank you	8
Appendix: Survey questions	9



Introduction

Healthwatch Gloucestershire believes that health and social care providers can best improve services by listening to people's experiences.

We know there are few opportunities for young people to discuss the care they receive and the impact this has on them, so we wanted to give them a platform to discuss how they feel about the local health and care services they use. We launched our Young Listeners project in March 2021. This was designed and led by a group of young volunteers, who engaged with other young people in the county and recorded their views and experiences.

What we did

At the start of the Young Listeners project, our Youth Engagement Officer reached out to the National Star College. She wanted to give them an opportunity to volunteer or share their opinion on health and care services.

The National Star College was created to support people with disabilities. It encourages their students to realise their potential as equal and active citizens in control of their lives.

The Student Union showed an instant interest in the Young Listener project. After being in contact with the college, a meeting was set where the project was put forward to the Student Union team consisting of 10 members. They planned how to create a survey around their experience with health and care services, and then go through it with each other to collect feedback. We had also hoped to take the survey around the college but with COVID-19 still being a huge factor, it was ultimately decided that it would be too much of a risk to the students.

Planning the project

We started by asking the Student Union how they would like to engage and be engaged with. Most said they would prefer engagement to be face-to-face activities or games, and one person made an important point that online isn't always accessible and inclusive of everyone's needs.

I don't mind Teams, but it can be difficult when using an AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication); mine is quite quiet.

Another person also spoke openly about how they preferred in person meetings, but the lockdowns made this impossible and gave people no choice but to have online meetings.

I like to be spoken to face-to-face. I am getting used to online meetings now but prefer seeing people.

Creating a logo

Next, we discussed a team logo. They decided that they wanted to incorporate their student union logo and include a picture that represented communicating and listening. This was the outcome (see right).

Designing the survey

Two of the union members sat down with our Youth Engagement Officer to discuss what they wanted to find out and how this would look in a survey. It was decided that the point was to have an overview of how happy young people are with the services available, if they know what those services are, and what impact COVID has had on accessing them. 15 questions were designed to capture this feedback (see Appendix).





Key messages

The impact of COVID-19 on young people

We asked: *In your opinion do you think health and care services have changed since COVID-19?*

50% (5) of the answers we received said 'yes'. One person felt as though the change was positive, and this was because they can be accessed online. Others highlighted how COVID had made the process different as we are now conscious of needing to social distance, meaning there is less option for face-to-face appointments. They explained how for some people, online is better as it is quick and less stressful, and having the option to see a health care provider in person or over the phone is a good way to make it inclusive for everyone's needs.

Services have changed for the better.

Accessibility has gotten harder.

Young people's mental health services

Talking about mental health

A topic the Student Union felt should be talked about is the importance of mental health services for young people. The Student Union asked each other: *Do you think there is enough support for young people's mental health?*

We acquired eight answers; 63% (5) said 'yes', 12% (1) said 'no' and the remaining 25% (2) said 'sometimes'. One person went onto explain how, due to the promotion of mental health services being needed by young people, it has increased the awareness and increased the number of services available.

it is better than a few years ago due to more being aware of it.

Young people's mental health has gone through the roof.

Impact of COVID-19

It was mentioned how young people's mental health had been affected due to lockdown, and that services needed to be in place to support them with the impact that COVID has had, and continues to have, on their health. Another person said how more should be in place as a preventive service to help reduce the impact mental health has on a young person. They believe this could have a positive impact on the person's future and the services they may go on to need.

If services improved there would be more people for them to talk to and it could reduce suicide numbers.

Mental health and services need to help before they get into a crisis, they need more preventative services.

Accessibility and inclusivity

The Student Union members highlighted areas in which services could be more inclusive of disabilities. One individual mentioned the frustration they felt whenever they went to a medical appointment, they wouldn't be addressed, and it would be their carer or the person they were with who would be spoken to. This is frustrating as it is their own health they were talking about, and they wanted to be respected.

They would talk more at my mum instead of me.

Personal requirements being considered during appointments

Another person explained how their requirements in a medical appointment hadn't been met. Being unsure whether healthcare professionals are aware and conscious of their patients' needs creates low confidence in the service. It was also noted that having an option of an online or in person appointment is a great way to let people choose the route that is appropriate for them.

Some people don't show up in the interpreters services, they need to improve to better the experience.

I think they have changed for the better because they are online now.





Recommendations

- **Services to be more inclusive and accessible.** People with access needs should feel confident that when they approach a service, their requirements will be met. This should be a requirement every service should meet for the ease and accessibility of their services users.
- **More mental health support.** Although there are services available, the pandemic has had a huge impact on young people's mental health. Services should be conscious of this and have better availability and resources for their users.
- **More options when it comes to services available to young people.** This could be having more online options, such as wellness group sessions, as they are accessible and available for most people and flexible to fit around people's day.
- **Listen to young people.** When it comes to designing services for young people, include them. The project made it clear that young people are open to sharing their feedback and this could have a positive impact on how effective the services are.

Thank you

We would like to thank the National Star College and the Student Union for taking the time to support young people having a voice when it comes to the services aimed at them.

Appendix: Survey questions

- Can you list examples of health and care services?
- Do you know what services you're entitled to?
- Do you find it easy to access the services?
- Do you feel confident talking to a someone when it comes to seeking care?
- What has your experience been like with health and care services?
- On a scale of 1-5 (1 being very bad and 5 being great), how happy are you with the care you have received so far?
- Who would be the person you would first confide in over your health?
- In your opinion do you think the services have changed since COVID?
- Do you think young people have good options when it comes to health and care services?
- What services do you think are needed for young people?
- Do you think there is anything services could do to improve young people's experience?
- What would improve your experience?
- Do you think there is enough support for young people's mental health?
- Are there other topics, for example GP access, that you think should be focused on?
- Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding services aimed at young people?

healthwatch

Gloucestershire

☎ 0800 652 5193

✉ Info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

🌐 healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

Healthwatch Gloucestershire
13c Wheatstone Court
Waterwells Business Park
Quedgeley, Gloucester
GL2 2AQ

If you need this report in an alternative format,
please contact us.

Find us on social media:

📘 [HealthwatchGloucestershire](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchGloucestershire)

🐦 [@HealthwatchGlos](https://twitter.com/HealthwatchGlos)

📷 [healthwatch_gloucestershire](https://www.instagram.com/healthwatch_gloucestershire)

🌐 [healthwatch-gloucestershire](https://www.linkedin.com/company/healthwatch-gloucestershire)

© Healthwatch Gloucestershire 2022

The Healthwatch Gloucestershire service is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch Brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement