



Young Essex Attitudes on  
Health and Social Care





Healthwatch Essex believes that young people's lived experience of health and social care matters, but traditionally young people in the county have not been engaged in the commissioning of services.

In our Young People's Voice Network sofa film we were told that young people did not feel listened to or taken seriously when it came to health and social care.



In response, we created the YEAH! project which gives a large and representative sample of young people, the chance to have their thoughts and experiences listened to.

We use their lived experience to give commissioners and decision makers an interesting, dynamic and thought-provoking insight.



We have worked in partnership with Essex Boys and Girls Clubs, Essex County Council and the National Citizen Service to access the lived experience of **over 2,000** young people in Essex.

Over the course of our 3-year project we engaged around specific priorities as identified by the young people, such as **general health and social care, mental health and public health.**







## IMPACT

In the first year of the YEAH! project we found that:

- **85%** of participants had not heard of walk-in centres. Use of A&E by this group being **five times higher** than walk-in centre use.
- **8 in 10** participants did not know how to access support for mental health issues, yet young people often have real experience of mental health issues.
- **7 in 10** participants had not heard of the 111 service, and the number of those who had experience of calling 999 was **three times** higher than those who had called 111.



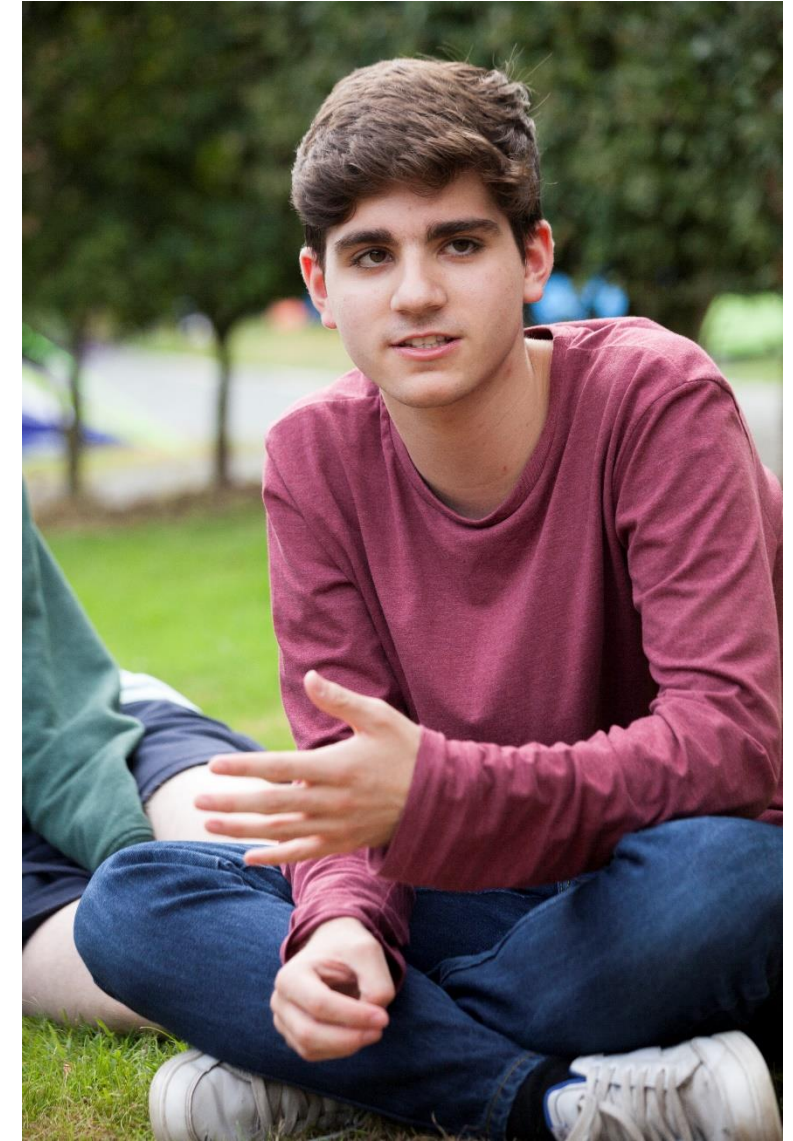
In response to these findings we arranged for 111 and mental health providers for Essex to join in our sessions to inform young people of the services available.

We also created the Essex YEAH! website as a signposting resource to promote among young people looking for health and social care information and services in Essex. [www.essexyeah.org.uk](http://www.essexyeah.org.uk)

## AWARENESS

### How we shared our findings:

- Regional CAMHS 'Delivering Future in Mind' event to CAMHS leaders
- Young people's Chatterbox podcast
- Press coverage from newspapers and radio shows, BBC Essex, Heart FM
- Presented at regional commissioning event
- Presenting at CCGs and CRGs
- Presenting at Essex County Council HOSC
- NCS shared to all NCS providers as best practice
- Presented at the Essexwide Children's Commissioning Forum
- Mentioned in Healthwatch England Chair's report



Using the lived experience from these young people, the **YEAH! reports** have influenced how health and social care is designed and developed for young people, both in Essex, and also nationally.

**Highlighting the value of effective engagement with young people, the YEAH! reports have:**

- Been presented to the Health Select Committee as evidence of best practice
- Been used by the Youth Select Committee as evidence in the enquiry into young people's mental health services
- Been shared by Essex Local Medical Committees to every GP in the county, to change how young people are
- Informed and been embedded in the young people's mental health transformation plan
- Influenced Essex County Council's Suicide and Self Harm Prevention strategies
- Created an Essex County Council HOSC task and finish group on young people's mental health
- Directly influenced the recommissioning of the EWMHS (previously CAMHS)
- Informed the work of NHS England's Young People's SCN
- Informed young people's obesity, diabetes and physical activity strategies
- Inspired commissioners and providers to reach out to young people
- Raised county wide awareness of YP's H&SC needs



## What professionals say

**“The YEAH! report is completely brilliant. It is so refreshing to see engagement with young people directly translate into a tool that can influence stakeholders and commissioners.”**

**“A really useful insight into young people’s experience and the difficulty they have with navigating the various hurdles in health services.”**

**“A great deal of insight, and I think very pertinent to young people ... we will encourage talking therapies services to advertise and target young people. Once again, a very helpful report!”**





## What YEAH! participants say

“It’s so very important for our voices to be heard, as we should have some level of say on the things affecting our health and social care.”

“It’s been good to say what we actually need, rather than people assuming what we need.”

“It was great to know Healthwatch Essex would make a difference by using my opinion.”



# Thank you for listening!

