



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
MENTAL HEALTH AND
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING SURVEY**

JULY 2020

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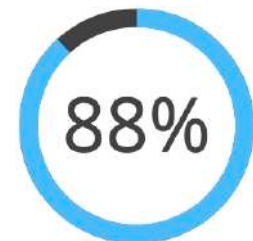
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What we did

Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Young Somerset launched this survey for children and young people aged 8-18 years old to gather their feedback on Mental Health in Somerset. The survey ran from 06 July to 09 August 2020. 307 people completed the survey. 11.4% of the responses came from Parent/Guardians and Professionals who work with Children and Young People in Somerset.

The survey was promoted via email and social media. It was also shared with local charities and organisations who work with children and young people.

The survey consisted of 10 questions, mostly multiple choice. The aim of the survey is to help us understand what children and young people in Somerset feel is working well, not so well and what could be improved. The feedback given will help us to design and commission services that meet the needs of children and young people in Somerset.



88.6% responses were from young people aged 8-18 years

Key Findings



People liked services that helped, listened, supported and were friendly towards them.



People did not like that some services had long waiting lists and were hard to access.



People would like to see easier access, increased availability, more suitable services and better communication about the services on offer.



Friends, family, hobbies, listening to music and a good sleeping pattern are very important in helping to maintain or improve mental health.




Loneliness, difficult relationships with friends and family, school/college and poor sleep pattern makes it harder to maintain good mental health.



Of the total participants 60% felt okay, only 28.5% felt happy and 8.5% felt angry. Other identified emotions were 12 feeling anxious, 4 feeling lonely and 4 feeling mixed emotions.



12% of respondents said they hadn't accessed services but said that they would like to.

A photograph of three people in a meeting. A man on the right is pointing at a document with a pencil. Two women on the left are looking at the document. The woman in the center is smiling. They are in a room with a window in the background.

The check and challenge for commissioners

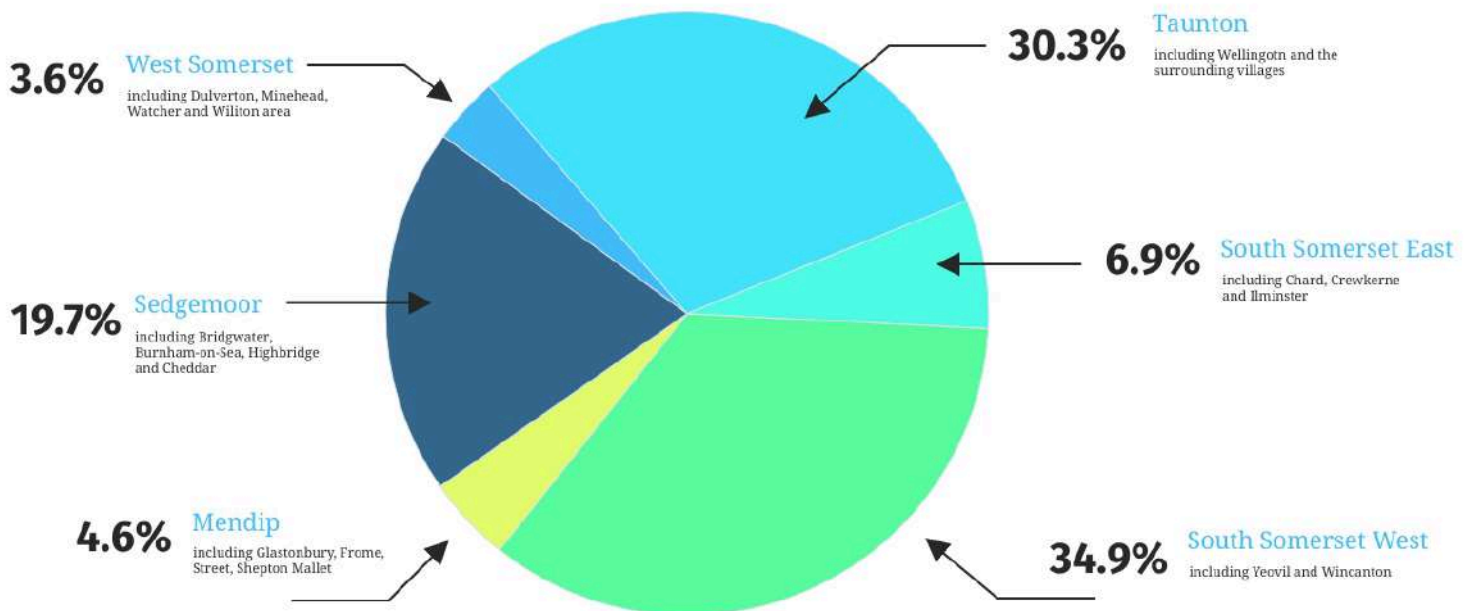
Based on the findings of the report, commissioners of children and young people mental health services in Somerset should always check if the service will:

1. Help and support young people improve their mental health
2. Put the young person's voice at the heart of it so they are listened to
3. Be friendly
4. Reduce waiting times and waiting lists
5. Be easy to access
6. Be suitable and appropriate
7. Be well communicated

We recommend using this list to check and challenge when designing and commissioning of services in partnership with children and young people.

Questions and Findings

Question 1 - Please tell us where you live (if your town or village isn't listed, please choose the closest place)



The data shows that South Somerset West, which includes Yeovil and Wincanton, had the highest number of participant responses to the survey at 34.9%. Taunton, including Wellington and the surrounding villages, had a participant response rate of 30.3%.

At the lower end of the participant responses is West Somerset including the areas of Dulverton, Minehead, Watchet and Willton, which had a response rate of 3.6%. Mendip, including Glastonbury, Frome, Street and Shepton Mallet had a response rate of 4.6%. Future focus needs to be placed on engaging with these areas.

Question 2 - Please tell us who you are

The data shows that the majority of participants who responded to the survey were aged between 16-18 with a response rate of 43.5%. Participants aged between 12-15 years also had a high response rate of 39.5%.

Participation was lower from professionals who work with Children and Young People in Somerset at 5.2% and also participants aged 8-11 years.

The data reflects that the survey and using electronic means to send the survey appeals to the 12-18 demographic, but further thought needs to be given on how to appeal to the younger demographic of 8-11 year olds, parents/guardians and professionals.



60%



of participants
said they felt
Okay at the
present time

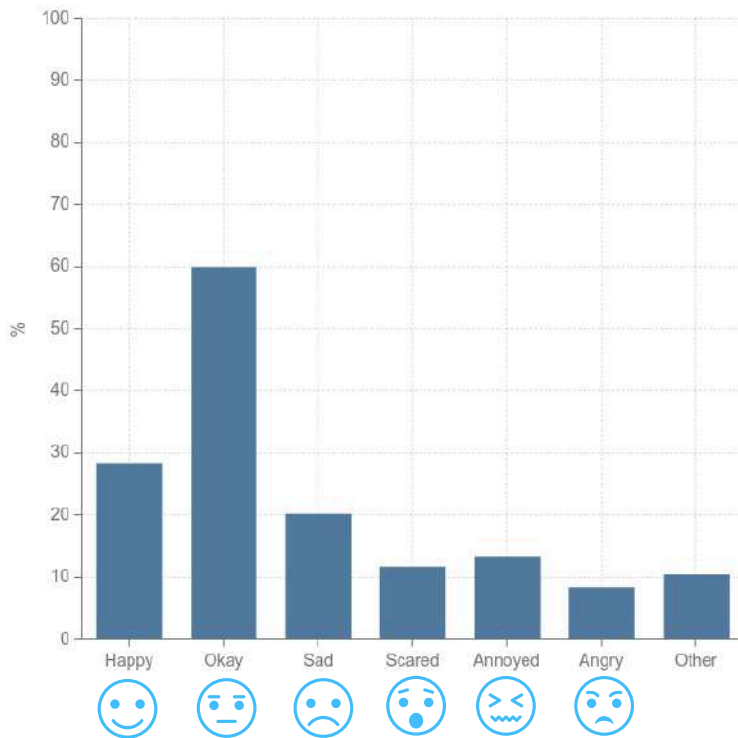
Question 3 - How are you feeling at the moment? If you are answering on behalf of a young person, let us know how they are feeling. Please tick as many as you want to.

The data shows that 60% of the participants felt okay and only 28.5% felt happy at the present time. There were 20.3% of participants who felt sad.

When asked to provide any different emotions participants were currently feeling, 12 felt anxious, 4 emotionless, 2 lonely, 4 reported mixed emotions, 3 felt bored and 2 felt stressed.

From the data collected, it appears that under 1/3 of participants felt happy and it might be that those participants who do not feel happy, need further support and access to services in their locality.

How are you feeling at the moment?

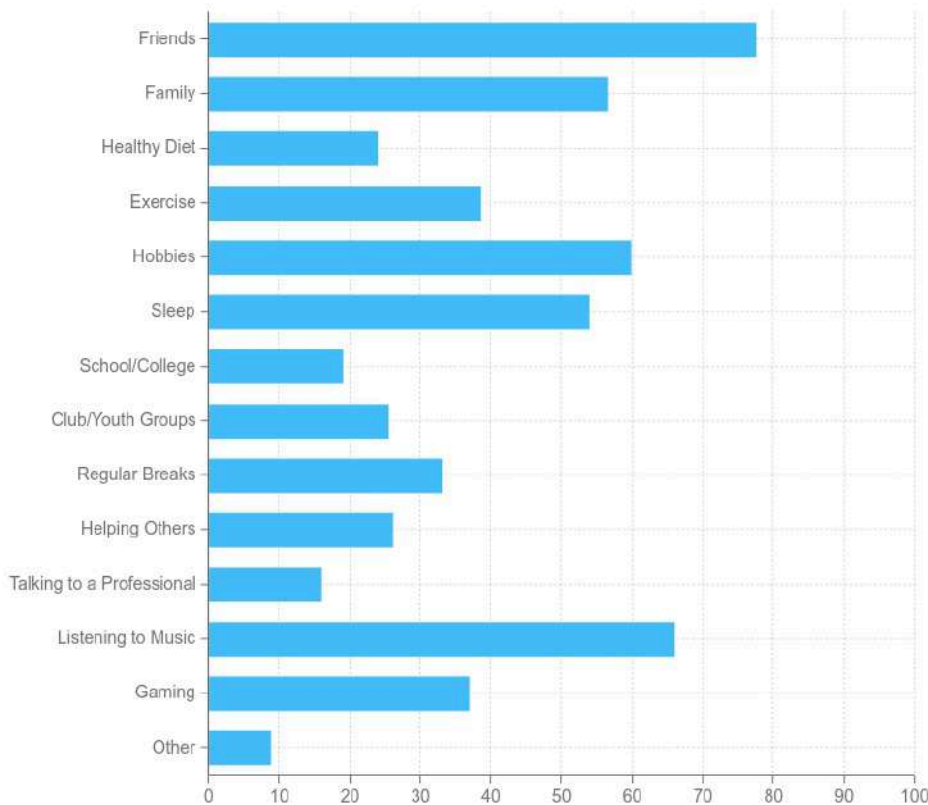


Other emotions that were mentioned were:

- anxious x 12
- emotionless x 4
- lonely x 2
- mixed emotions x 4
- bored x 3
- stressed x 2
- Irritable
- depressed
- trapped
- frustrated
- paranoid
- restless
- confused
- heart broken
- excited
- left out



What helps you maintain or improve your mental health?



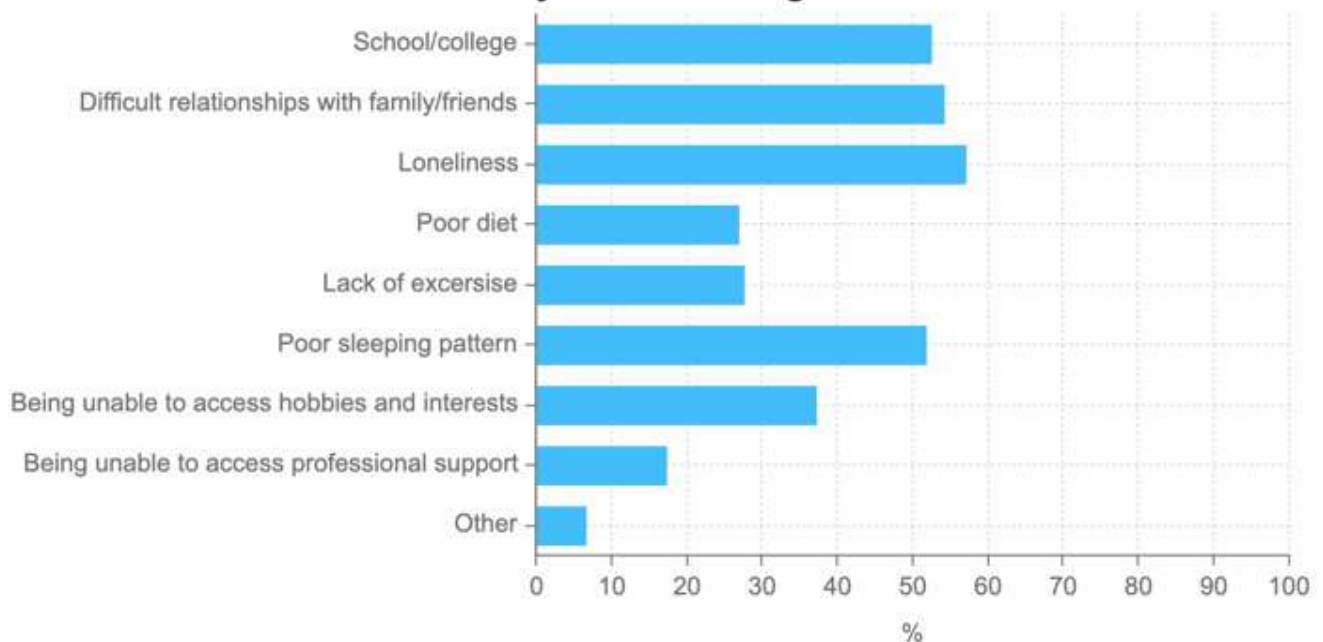
Question 4 – What helps you maintain or improve your mental health?

The data shows that 77.5% participants maintain or improve their mental health by socialising with friends and 56.5% by socialising with family. 66% of participants found that listening to music helps and 59.8% find that being involved in hobbies assists them.

Only 16% of participants find that talking to professionals helps maintain and improve their mental health, and 19% found that attending school/college helped.

Question 5 - What makes it hard for you to maintain good mental health?

What makes it hard for you to maintain good mental health?



The data collected indicates that a large proportion of participants find that loneliness, difficult relationships with friends and family and school and college make it hard for them to maintain their mental health. Of the participants, only 17.3% found being unable to access services and professional support impacted on their mental health. This data is useful for professional support and services as it reflects the importance of focusing on personal relationships with young people when they attend the services, as these personal relationships appear to be what helps them maintain and improve their mental health.

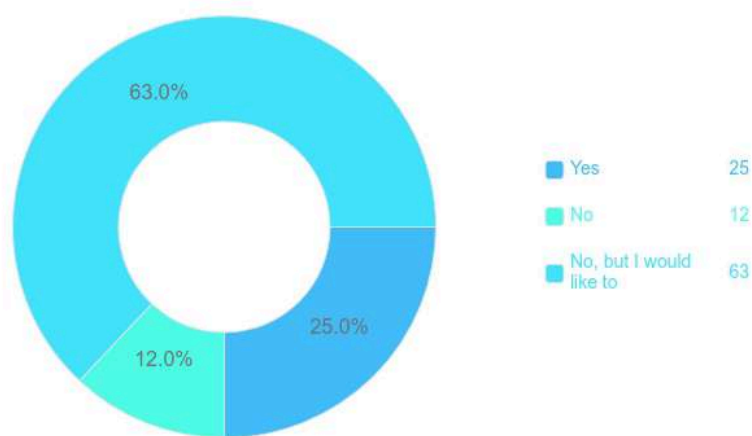
Other included:

- My crippling loneliness.
- Medical issues, when things go wrong in my life and I can't control them. Tablets that increase my appetite so I gain weight and become even more self-conscious.
- Worrying about the future. Not doing as well as I want to. Getting annoyed.
- School. Not going to school cause of Covid-19.
- Being unable to see lots of people. Not being able to see my friends and family. Trouble making and keeping friends. Being separated and not allowed to see anyone, parents divorcing.
- Too much remote communication forced on us by government restrictions in last few months.
- Not being able to play rugby. Unable to go on holiday. Gaming.
- Not being aware of the professional support available.
- I get stressed over my siblings, work I have to do at school and thinking if I'm falling behind, stressed family always on me.

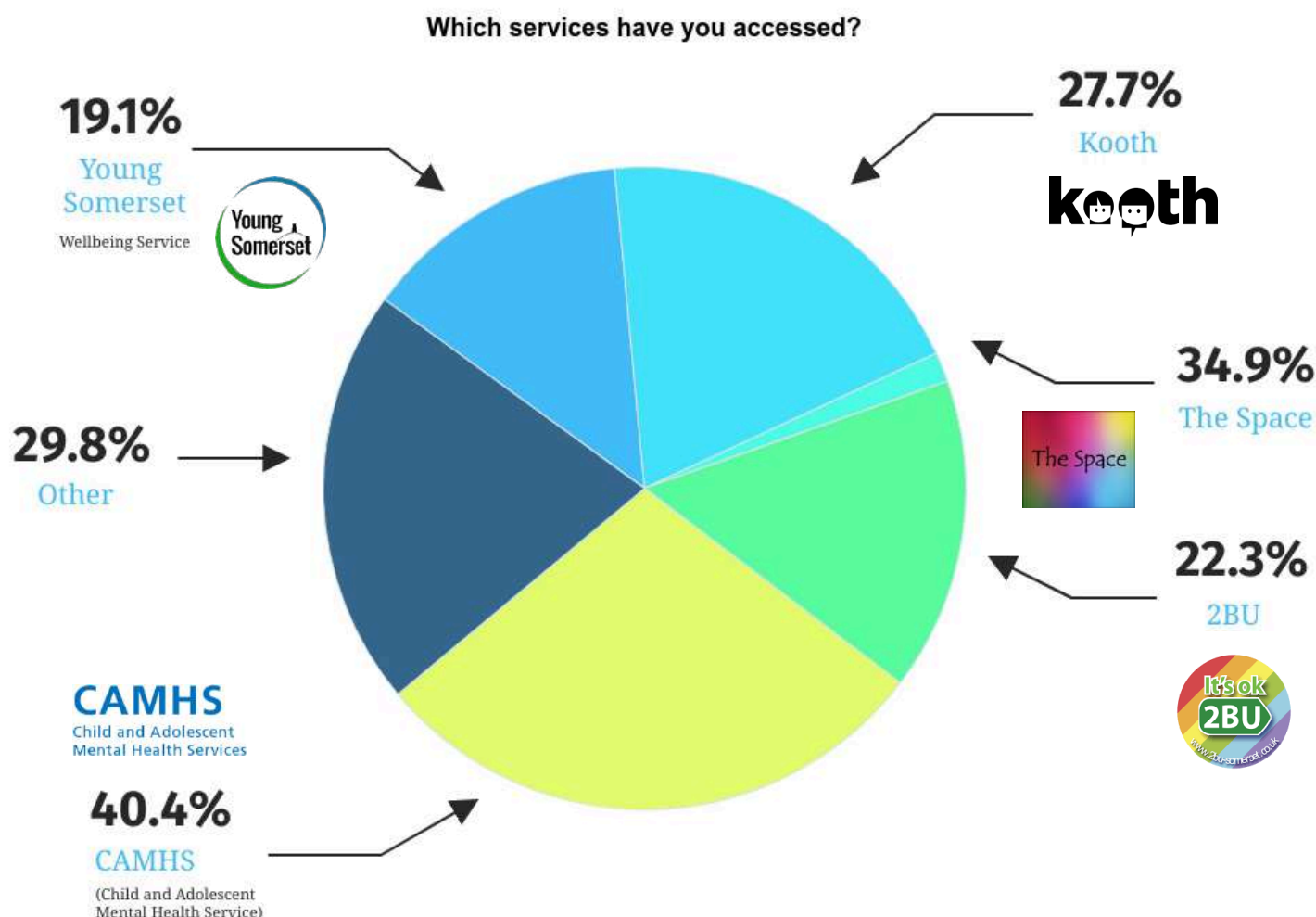
Question 6 – Have you accessed any mental health and emotional wellbeing services?

Despite only 28.5% of participants feeling happy at present, only 25% of participants currently access and use the services available to them to assist with their mental health. 12% of participants have indicated that they would like to use professional services and focus should be placed on ensuring the services available to young people are advertised and readily available for them to access.

Have you accessed any mental health and emotional wellbeing services?



Question 7 - Which services have you accessed?



The main service which appears to be accessed is CAMHS which 40.4% of participants have used. 27.7% of participants have accessed Kooth and 22.3% have accessed 2BU.

Of the 94 participants, other services they had accessed are services such as Rain.org, private CBT, Somerset Talking Therapies, physiologist, counsellor, young victims, Mind, Shout, College, psychotherapist, school, hospital.

Questions 8,9 &10

The data shows that of the total participants, 228 comments were received in respect of questions 8, 9 and 10.

Please note that the ages of respondents to questions 8, 9 and 10 were aged as follows:

- Parent/Guardian: 6
- Professional: 5
- 16-18yrs old: 39
- 12-15yrs old: 33
- 8-11yrs old: 3



Question 10 - How would you like us to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people in Somerset?

76 pieces of feedback were analysed. The data shows that services accessed could be improved by:

- Easier access and availability
- Reduced waiting times to attend these services and a shorter referral process
- Increased appointment/session times
- More localised services and more specific services focused to particular needs
- More support available for those who do not wish to attend services
- An online booking system for appointments
- Use of social media to improve outreach and advertising
- Review the way sessions/appointments are conducted and offer long term support after the sessions/appointments have concluded

There were a number of other comments raised from participants and these include:

- Having to attend private therapy due to the waiting lists of services and the expense this generates
- Primary Care (e.g. GPs) having more training on how to deal with participants struggling with their mental health
- Upskill young people to help other young people as they may find it easier to talk and relate to other young people



The answers to this question allowed it to be broken down into the following categories: Accessibility, Communication, Services, Medication, Onward Referrals, Schools and Other.

SERVICES

- 36 comments were received.
- Specific services needed for trauma, autism, boys, meditation, mindfulness, support groups, crisis team,
- Plenty of services, need more services, do what they say they will do, therapies for under 18, open 24/7, early intervention, programmes, more activities, more than 6 sessions, long term support – 2 – 3 year plan.
- Feelings – reduce stigma, felt unworthy, have greater understanding, actually care, less talking, more advice, actually help.
- Advertise.
- Younger therapists.

ACCESSIBILITY

- 20 comments were received.
- Predominantly asking for easier access.
- Length of waiting lists, more localised services, under 18 therapies, book appointments online.

COMMUNICATION

- 15 comments were received.
- Regular and irregular check-ups, be able to talk without parents, be more open minded, use social media to improve outreach and advertising, listen, give advice, take seriously.

SCHOOLS

- 6 comments received
- Suggestion: have whole class talks, more support needed, small support groups, services to talk to school.
- Have: support group, access to professional support, stronger presence.

ONWARD REFERRALS

- 5 comments
- GPs – too slow, School – not discrete, Criteria – not met as autistic.
- Young Carers referred to Young Somerset – still waiting 12 months later.

- Better communication between CAMHS and Adult mental health.
- Refer on if service cannot offer treatment.

MEDICATION

- 2 comments
- Lower the age for meds, GP refused to prescribe.

OTHER •••

- Private therapy – expensive, had to resort to.
- GPs – need training in mental health.
- More activities help with bullying.
- Support site, upskill young people to help other young people.
- 5 x I don't know how services could be improved.

Next Steps

This survey has provided useful insight to review current services that we commission and to ensure that children and young people's feedback is taken into consideration when commissioning new services.

We appreciate there were limitations to the survey and we will therefore:

- Ensure that South Somerset East, Mendip and West Somerset are represented in continued engagement
- Further engage with young people aged 8 – 11 years and parents/guardians.
- Better understand different views based on gender and other demographic characteristics
- Ask further questions to;
 - understand why only 16% of children and young people like talking to professionals about their mental health difficulties
 - understand what children and young people think about how their school or college engages with mental health
 - work with children and young people to better understand how to raise awareness of services for them and their families

We will also take the following actions:

- We will set up an engagement website to continue engaging with children and young people about services and their needs
- We will work with the services mentioned and use the feedback provided in this report to discuss and implement service improvements
- We will look at ways to improve our communication routes to GPs, schools and colleges
- We will link with drug and alcohol services for children and young people and share these findings

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YOUR VIEWS MATTER

