

How Young People Friendly are our Health Services? Nottinghamshire Mystery Shopper Project 2014-15



Objectives:

- Use the national 'You're Welcome' quality standards when assessing services as 'young people friendly'
- Mystery shoppers to provide feedback to commissioners on a range of services, to establish if health services for children and young people are accessible, appropriate, confidential and non-judgemental
- Providers use the mystery shopper findings and recommendations to identify good practice or areas for further development.

For more information

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Aim

The Mystery Shopper exercise aimed to evaluate services with a view to sharing best practice, making health services and interventions young people friendly, improving access to these services and consequently encouraging improved health and wellbeing amongst young people (YP).

Methodology:

- 20 participants, aged 14-19 were recruited. They were representative of race, gender, disability, faith, sexuality and age.
- The training was undertaken in a weekend residential setting.
- Visits took place across a selection of GP practices, Pharmacists offering Emergency Hormonal Contraception, Contraception and Sexual Health services in community and acute settings; and a selection of C-Card sites including those in youth centres, pharmacists and health centres.
- Young people completed questionnaires and filmed their feedback to share with commissioners and services.
- Young people did not request any treatment or use valuable clinic time.

What did the Mystery Shoppers Evaluate?

Access	Accessibility of the service, disabled access, engaging marginalised young people, opening hours, public transport links, self-referral and making appointments
Service publicity	Publicity content
Confidentiality and consent	Written policy and posters displayed
Environment	Young people friendly, safe and suitable environment
Staff	Communication and skills
Joined up working	Additional services and referrals and information provided by the service

Key Findings:

- YP are still very concerned about confidentiality and this can prevent them from accessing services or asking for help.
- YP evaluated services well when staff were friendly and took their time to listen to them. Even a smile can make YP feel more comfortable.
- YP are disappointed by the lack of information available in settings about a range of health concerns e.g. eating disorders, which in turn makes it hard to be signposted to appropriate services and access advice and guidance.
- Generally websites were not YP friendly, were often out of date and did not include information re location, access by public transport and what services are offered. Young people want maps and photographs of the building to help them locate services.
- YP suggested the need for 1 website for all YP health needs and services to enable them and professionals to find information easily.

Recommendations:

1. There should be regular active engagement of YP to ensure that services are accessible and YP friendly.
2. Services should display clear YP friendly confidentiality statements and all YP need to be explicitly told about confidentiality
3. All professionals (including reception staff) should be equipped with the skills and abilities to communicate effectively with young people, offer a non-judgmental service, safeguard young people and understand the requirements of being a YP friendly service.
4. Information about a range of health topics and services should be available in all health settings e.g. pharmacists.
5. Services should be promoted to YP and have up to date websites with detailed information about services offered, their location and how to get there.
6. Mystery Shopper programmes should be repeated annually or bi-annually.
7. Commissioners must ensure that YP friendly services are a key element of performance work, in particular services targeting all age groups.

Conclusion:

The Mystery Shopper project identified a number of areas for further development across a range of health services and services offering health interventions. However there were also a number of excellent examples where services take time to listen and engage young people in assessing and supporting their needs.