**Stakeholder Network Event 13 August 2015**

**Young People’s Health**

The Young People’s Health Event which took place at Myplace in Mansfield aimed to;

* Share the excellent work being done to promote Young People’s Health in Nottinghamshire.
* Give young people the chance to say what they would like from health services.
* Provide guidance on how health services can ensure they are ‘young person friendly’.
* Present the draft Young People’s Health Strategy and request feedback.

Around 85 people, including 20 young people, attended the event which was hosted by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board and Andy Fox, Specialty Registrar in Public Health. The audience included representatives from the local authority, county and district councillors, Healthwatch Nottinghamshire, NHS representatives and a range of voluntary and private sector organisations.

The audience heard the following presentations:

* **Representatives from the Young People’s Board** discussed their involvement in the Mystery Shopper exercise. A video of the exercise was shared with attendees and the young people also shared some of their personal experiences of attending health services.
* **Andy Fox, Speciality Registrar in Public Health** spoke about the Nottinghamshire context as well as the feedback from the recent young people’s health survey. Following this he explained the motivations behind the young people’s health strategy and how this has the potential to improve access to and suitability of services.
* **Damian Wood, Consultant Paediatrician** explained challenges for adolescent health at a national level, what is being done and how we can support this.

All of the presentations, including the Mystery Shopper video, are available on the County Council’s [website](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/yourhealth/developing-health-services/health-and-wellbeing-board/stakeholdernetwork/?9870777_entryid282=533004).

The presentations were followed by table discussions where participants were asked to reflect on the following questions:

* What do you consider to be the most important issue for Young People’s Health?
* What can be done to improve the experience of Young People when accessing health services?
* How can young people be more involved in service re-design/evaluation? How can the views/opinions of young people be captured?
* The number of NHS, local government and voluntary sector organisations mean that the health ‘estate’ is very complex. How can we simplify this and help young people to navigate this successfully?
* How can we best use online technology to help young people be healthy in Nottinghamshire? How useful do you feel this would be?
* Do you feel that there is anything we have missed?

**Key points raised during the group discussions included:**

* Health services should ensure that reception areas are appropriately designed to be friendly, welcoming and that young people are treated like adults and made to feel comfortable. There should be a confidential space for young people to discuss their concerns along with greater clarity on confidentiality policies. Comprehensive signposting information should be available from reception staff and supported by a range of posters/leaflets in all waiting areas. Services should also be easily accessible, particularly during the school holidays and outside of the school day, with clear directions provided online. In support of these suggestions, young people suggested they could be involved in the design of reception areas to ensure they are suitable.
* All staff working in health services should undertake training on how to effectively communicate with young people. All contact should be age-appropriate and non-judgemental and services should be easily accessible. It is equally as important that staff feel confident and competent when interacting with young people.
* Where possible, health services should adopt new practices using technology to engage with young people. Specific suggestions included an SMS service, live chats, the provision of WiFi in waiting areas and the use of social media to promote and signpost to services.
* Young people also require a central information source, specific to Nottinghamshire. There is a preference for this to be online for ease of access. It should provide information on a range of concerns that young people may have as well as signpost to a range of services that young people are able to access.
* All services should have a visible statement of confidentiality to explain how information provided by young people will be stored and shared. This should be referred to by health professionals in order to ensure that young people understand and accept the process.
* Most noticeably, feedback from the event highlighted the need for greater attention to be given to young people’s emotional and mental wellbeing. Feedback in this area was wide-ranging and included the role that could be played by schools and required changes to the curriculum, access to universal services, raising awareness of mental health, destroying the stigma attached to it and providing a space in which young people can discuss their concerns. Young people suggested they need more information on how to cope with challenges in life as well as how to manage pressure. More specific concerns included misconceptions and a lack of understanding around self-harm, eating disorders and the current difficulties in accessing services. In addition to this, the impact on young people living with an adult with mental health issues should be considered in more detail.
* It was suggested multiple times that the support of young people is required when designing and evaluating services. They should also be involved and consulted with regarding key decisions. One suggestion is that a Young People’s Health Group be set up for this reason. This could be a sub-group of the existing Young People’s Board.
* In addition to the above, it was suggested that young people may be able to work with health professionals to ensure they are comfortable when meeting young people. If possible, there should also be a specified young person’s lead in each setting.
* Greater attention should be given to the health needs of looked after children. Health professionals should consider the language they use and should avoid asking about a young person’s ‘parent’. In addition, looked after young people should have the opportunity to share their concerns, some of which may be specific to that cohort.
* The Young People’s Health Strategy should have clear ownership and should be discussed with schools. It should be well promoted and buy-in from all services should be a priority.
* The needs of young people for whom English is their second language need to be considered in more detail. There is a concern that they are not able to access the services they may require.
* The difficulties facing young people with disabilities should also be considered in the design of health services. Advances in interactive services could be investigated as well as ensuring that all settings are suitably designed.
* The transition to adult services should be made smoother and less stressful for young people and their parents/carers. There is currently a lack of knowledge and understanding in this area.

**It was also suggested that future Stakeholder Network meetings tackle issues such as:**

* Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing. Specific suggestions within this subject include
  + Referral procedures
  + Self-harm
  + How services supporting emotional health can be coordinated
  + The impact of education – e.g. how can the curriculum support young people’s emotional health and wellbeing?
* Domestic Violence
* Children and Young People’s Inpatient Wards
* Looked after Children/Young People and Care Leaver’s Health Outcomes
* Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health
* Health and Wellbeing for families with children under the age of 5

**Next steps**

All feedback collated at the event will be used to inform he Young People’s Health Strategy. This will be presented to Nottinghamshire’s Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2015 along with a clear set of recommendations.

Relevant feedback will also be provided to services across Nottinghamshire to support them in their work with young people.