

Goal C: Better Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing Strategy Thurrock

2016-2020



GOAL C: Better Emotional Health and Wellbeing

1. Give parents the support they need
2. Improve children's emotional health and wellbeing
3. Reduce social isolation and loneliness
4. Improve the identification and treatment of depression, particularly in high risk groups

Aim

We aimed to engage with Thurrock residents around the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 for Thurrock and to gather their views on each of the strategy goals. For Goal C we will gather the views of Thurrock residents around emotional health and wellbeing services. We will gather the views of both young people and adults.

Methods

To engage with Thurrock residents on Goal C we carried out a survey to gather views on the four priorities as set out in Goal C (shown above). We engaged with two groups in the community: adults and young people aged 10 years plus. We used different methods for asking questions around goal C that were relevant to their age bracket.

1. We developed a survey online for adults which we shared using social media and our email networks. We also took out a paper version of the survey to various outreach opportunities e.g. the community hubs and support groups.
2. To engage with young people we developed a paper survey that we took to Fresher's Fair and a couple of clubs for Thurrock's younger population.
3. We also engaged with people informally in a group context to get people's views, whereby discussion was facilitated around Goal C.

Due to the sensitive nature of the data we were collecting we did not ask for identifiable data, however we asked for gender, date of birth and postcode.

Data was uploaded and analysed using Microsoft Excel. Overall the number of completed surveys included:

- 126 young people aged 10-18 years
- 61 adults aged 19-82 years

The online survey was open 10th September to 10th November.

Table 1: Engagement for Goal C

Date	Area	Group or Event	Description
15/09/2016	Grays	Palmers College Freshers Fair	Freshers Fair
29/09/2016	Grays	South Essex College Freshers Fair	Freshers Fair
07/10/2016	Tilbury	Tilbury Hub	Healthwatch Thurrock drop in
11/10/2016	South Ockendon	Community Hub	Healthwatch Thurrock drop in
17/10/2016	Thurrock	Young Carers Group	A support group for young carers age 10-18. Healthwatch attended to speak with young people.
04/11/2016	Tilbury	Tilbury Children's Centre	Healthwatch Thurrock drop in
04/11/2016	Tilbury	Tilbury Hub	Healthwatch Thurrock drop in
07/11/2016	Purfleet	Shining Stars	A support group for children with Downs Syndrome, Healthwatch attended to speak with parents/carers.
07/11/2016	Grays	Stroke club	A support group for people in Thurrock who have suffered a stroke. Healthwatch attended to speak with the group.
08/11/2016	South Ockendon	Community Hub	Healthwatch Thurrock drop in

The survey questions

We asked adults:

1. Are you currently a parent of a child under 16 years old? (if no skip to Q3)

Yes or No

- a) Do you feel there is adequate support for parents in Thurrock?

Yes No Unsure

- b) Do you attend any support or parent led groups in Thurrock?

Yes or No

- c) Have you used the services provided by the Children's Centre before?

Yes or No

2. Thinking of the above questions (a-c), is there anything that would help you answer yes to more of the questions?

3. Are you aware of the Local Area Coordinators in Thurrock?

Yes or No

4. Where would you go for support around mental health?

5. Have you ever used an emotional health and wellbeing service in Thurrock?

Yes or No

6. If yes, were you happy with this treatment?

Yes No Unsure

7. What are your views on the service and treatment you received around your mental health?

We asked young people:

1. Have you experienced any of the following in the last 3 weeks? (tick all that apply)

Bullying	Drinking alcohol
Cyber Bullying	Peer pressure within school
Anxiety	Family pressure
Depression	School/Exam pressure
Eating problems	Lack of interest in things
Sleep problems	Peer pressure outside school
Stress	
Using or trying drugs	

2. If you feel anxious, depressed or worried in the last 3 weeks did you: (tick all that apply)

Do nothing

Speak to a teacher

Do sport/exercise

Speak to a professional

Speak to a friend

Call a help line

Go online and look for advice

Other

Block it out (e.g. by using drugs or alcohol)

Speak to a relative

3. Do you partake in activities outside of School/College? e.g. sports clubs, activity clubs etc

Yes or No

4. Do you ever go to the Libraries, Youth Clubs or Community Hubs in Thurrock?

Yes or No

5. Are there enough affordable things for young people to do outside of school/college?

Yes or No

6. Are you a Carer for a Parent or a Relative?

Yes or No

7. Is there anything you would like to see provided by Mental Health Services in Thurrock?

Yes or No Please state what

8. Is there help available at school if you are feeling anxious/depressed or worried?

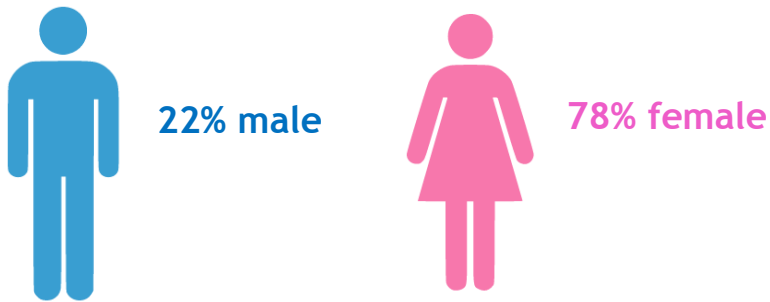
Yes or No Please state what

9. Where would you go if you needed support for mental health?

Adult Findings

Demographic data for adult responders

Of the 61 adults who completed surveys, 77% were female and 23% males. The average age of responder was 46 years with the age range from 19-82 years. Everyone we spoke to stated they live within a Thurrock postcode.

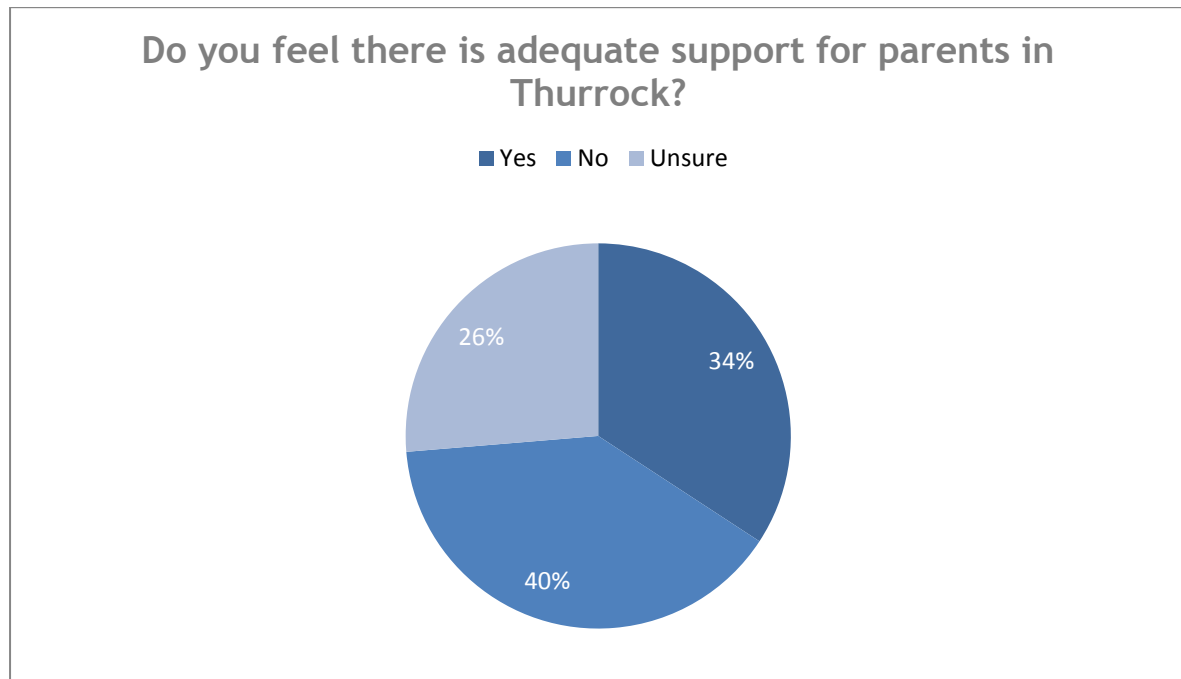


C1: Give parents the support they need

1. A) Are you currently a parent of a child under 16 years old? (if no skip to Q3)

- 66% of the people we spoke to were current parents of a child under 16 years old.

B)



The results were close: the majority stated no (40%), 34% said yes and 26% were unsure.

C)

Do you attend any support or parent led groups in Thurrock?

- The majority said no at **76%**.

There are a number of groups in Thurrock such as the Parent Advisory Team Thurrock (PATT) which can provide support for parents in a variety of ways.

D)

Have you used the services provided by the Children's Centre before?

- **50%** said yes and **50%** said no.

There are currently 9 children centres running in Thurrock.

E)

Thinking of the above questions (A-D), is there anything that would help you answer yes to more of the questions?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I think there is plenty of support for parents and children under 5 years. Once they start school there isn’t as much help available.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “If there were more playgroups for new parents as everything seems to be closed.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Referral streams should be made easier. Getting the word out there as to what support parents can access.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “If there were Children Centres nearer to where I live as they are only in Tilbury.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I believe my daughter who has downs syndrome received the support she needs but I feel some of the teams need a deeper understanding of Downs Syndrome children and their needs.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I was told my son who has special educational needs couldn’t attend children centre activities - hard to find any groups locally. There seems to be little support here.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “There used to be hydrotherapy available for a short term for children with disabilities however once this is over there isn’t much else. I go to a Sunday swimming session at Impulse Leisure Centre with my child which is for disabilities. Would be good if there were more available activities like this.”

C1 Recommendations

- Increase the awareness of support for parents with children who have disabilities and make it easier for parents to access this support.
- Provide disability support groups and ensure sessions at the Thurrock Children Centres are suitable and accessible to children with a disability.

C3: Reduce social isolation and loneliness

2)

Are you aware of the Local Area Coordinators in Thurrock?

- 51% saying yes and 49% saying no.

The Local Area Coordinators in Thurrock are able to reach out to people and re-connect them with their community in a number of ways such as attending a local group with them for the first time.

Other comments and views gathered around C3 (reducing social isolation and loneliness in Thurrock) including the community hubs:

- | |
|--|
| • “More publicity of community hubs and events. Better times for events that do take place. Events and hubs being held in central/clearly accessible areas.” |
| • “Information on what’s happening in the area, better advertisement of this.” |
| • “I’m elderly now. But I am interested in joining Waterstones book club at Lakeside. It is just the getting there.” |
| • “Being able to find out about activities and groups. I work so don’t have much time.” |
| • “I am new to area. Accessing the groups etc. Working out of the Borough so it’s hard to find out what is going on locally sometimes.” |
| • “Being more aware of community groups and the community hubs in Thurrock and ways to become more involved.” |
| • “If information about community groups was put on notice boards - in the flats, in doctors surgeries etc.” |
| • “More awareness of what’s going on and volunteering opportunities. If I had more time I would volunteer.” |
| • “I would use the community hubs and I have planned to but not got round to it yet.” |

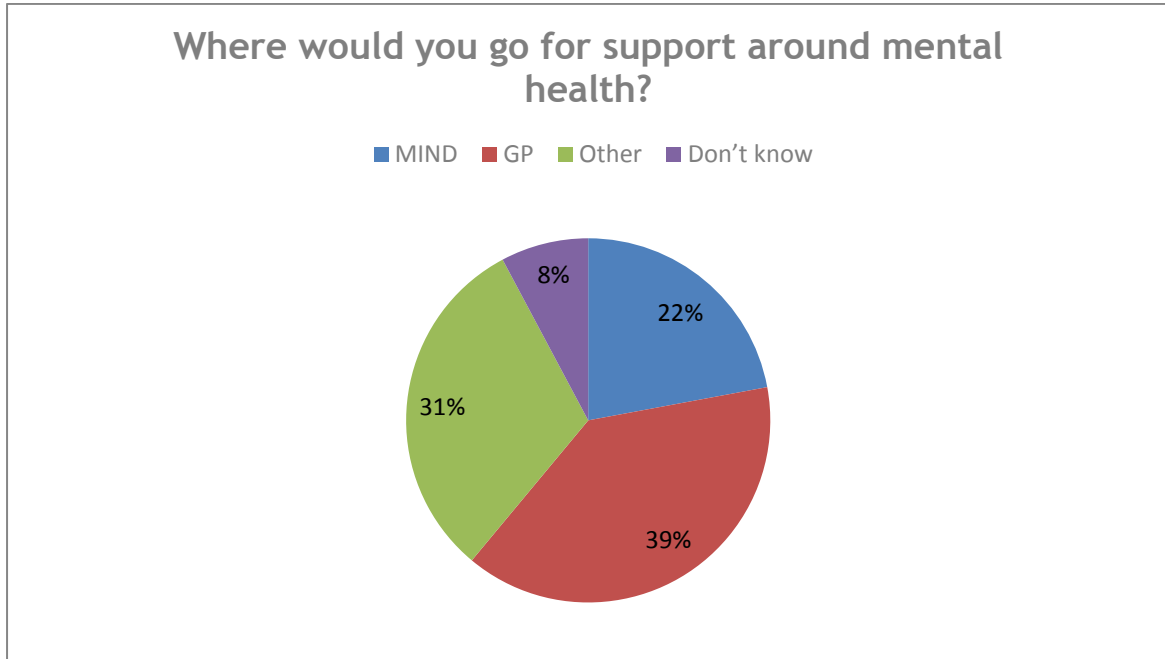
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I work and the community hubs are not open in the evening, therefore I have not visited my local hub.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I work 40 hours a week but do my best to be an active member of the community through social media and always help out neighbours.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Now both my children are in full time education, I could help volunteer.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I would like to try to get more involved in my neighbourhood groups in my community.”

C3 Recommendations (as cross referenced with B3 findings and recommendations)

- Publication/notification of local community activities. Many people in the community are not aware of everything that is going on.
- Continue to strengthen social relationships and opportunities for community connection for individuals and families, especially those in greatest need e.g. the most vulnerable and isolated. For example through use of the local area coordinators.
- Work on how to strengthen relationships between communities and health and social care agencies.

C4: Improve the identification and treatment of depression, particularly in high risk groups

3)



Where would you go for support around mental health?

The majority said GP (39%), other responses included:

- Community Mental Health Team
- Local library
- Community Hub
- I am an England Athletics Mental Health Ambassador
- Adult Community Health Teams (SEPT)
- SEPT due to the previous experience I have had
- Local Area Coordinators
- Inclusion Thurrock
- Hospital
- Children Centre
- Health Visitor
- Samaritans
- Cariads
- Older People Mental Health Team

- Healthwatch Thurrock

4)

Have you ever used an emotional health and wellbeing service in Thurrock?

Yes or No

16 said yes (26%) and 45 said no (74%).

5)

If yes, were you happy with this treatment?

Yes No Unsure

6 said yes (38%), 3 said no (19%) and 7 were unsure (44%).

6)

What are your views on the service and treatment you received around your mental health?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was referred to them by social services. My mentor was Heidi at Open Door she was brilliant. I recommended Heidi to my mum for my brother.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was awful. We had Family Therapy because of my eldest daughter's behaviour, especially towards her younger sister. After four sessions of enabling my elder daughter to vilify and verbally abuse my younger daughter and the therapists telling me to be quiet every time I objected, the two "professionals" announced rather smugly that it's common for step sisters to clash. They were full siblings. Your "professionals" hadn't even bothered to read the referral and subsequently put my already abused child through utter hell. Disgraceful!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am trying to get word out in Thurrock that we have a running club and running is an amazing way of overcoming anxiety and depression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was supposed to go see someone by now about my emotional wellbeing but never heard back from them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling in GP service (Pre Therapy For You) was great. Low intensity CBT good. High intensity CBT did more harm than good - partly down to CBT (limited to one type of therapy rather than person centred), partly due to therapist. Too long to wait for the first appointment. Set number of (maximum) sessions is restrictive.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be more health centres open. For people with mental health issues, somewhere they can meet and talk out their problems and maybe get advice on any issues troubling them, whether mental health, financial or medical advice. After the closure of our local hospital in Ockendon that dealt with people with mental health issues, it seems the council and government have turned their backs on these people. They have rights and needs just as much as anyone else, but nobody has spoken to them or advised them on what's available in the local area. These sorts of issues need to be addressed and hopefully remedied sooner rather than later.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be truthful at the time (of having treatment for mental health) I was not too forthcoming with how actually I felt. This was my fault; it is hard to tell with mental health.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was in a place I didn't want to be on during my early path of recovery from stroke I attend Mind at Bridge Road, Grays. I didn't think it could be helped; I wasn't to forth coming with the truth of how I actually felt. But in hindsight I think it helped me.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAPT inclusions were friendly helpful people who were willing to help.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health illness is a problem that people often feel they cannot share and they find it hard to talk about. I would love for a breakthrough to be in place to help others get help they need or to encourage family members to get help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of information and resource around mental health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make more info available about them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had a service I waited for but never got an appointment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of empathy and proper support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phoned for counselling, spoke to someone who didn't know what they were on about, (call centres), they offered a group session but that was not what I was looking for.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think more should be done to help people become more confident in approaching professionals about mental health. To break down barriers of stigma or mental health. There should be more services for mums and families with Post Natal Depression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My treatment was mostly satisfactory but I could tell the service was understaffed and overworked.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the past I have paid privately for support regarding Mental Health

conditions (depression).

Group Visits

We attended Stroke Group (a Thurrock support group for people with stroke) on 07/11/2016 to discuss with the group the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy. We facilitated discussion around Goal C, what people's views were on the strategy and what their experiences were whilst having a long term condition (LTC) and potentially experiencing mental ill health. Themes of discussion were as follows:

- *Working out personal independent payment (PIP) and other benefits that are continually cut, or requires appealing puts enormous pressure on people. These financial worries can cause anxiety and/or depression.*
- *Not assuming people are depressed because of a LTC and physical issues. But to have the option of an assessment or simply be asked by the relevant health professionals.*
- *People don't always realise they are suffering from depression and may need to be prompted to get help.*
- *Why is nobody picking up depression at the start of any long term illness, when hospitals, doctors, nurses and often adult social care are involved?*
- *Having a LTC can lead to reduced income, loss of money and not being able to work can have a great impact on someone's life, and then can lead to depression.*
- *To overcome feeling low with a LTC it helps to join clubs, get out, mix with people, and recover by going to a gym but most of these things cost.*
- *Men who have LTCs are less likely to discuss depression.*

“Long term illnesses often cause isolation, this can bring on depression, and sadly there isn't always someone on hand to notice.” (Stroke Club Member)

C4 Recommendations

- Counselling services should be able to recognise and understand the links between LTCs and mental health. It was suggested (by Stroke Group) that often counsellors do not understand that having a LTC can be the main cause of depression. Living with a LTC greatly impacts on a person's quality of life and can lead to mental health conditions.

Younger Person Findings

Demographic data for young people responders

126 individuals aged 10-18 years filled out our survey. 68% were female and 29% males, the rest (3%) did not disclose. The average age of responder was **16** years with the age range from **10-18 years**. All completed surveys showed that the individual lived within a Thurrock postcode.



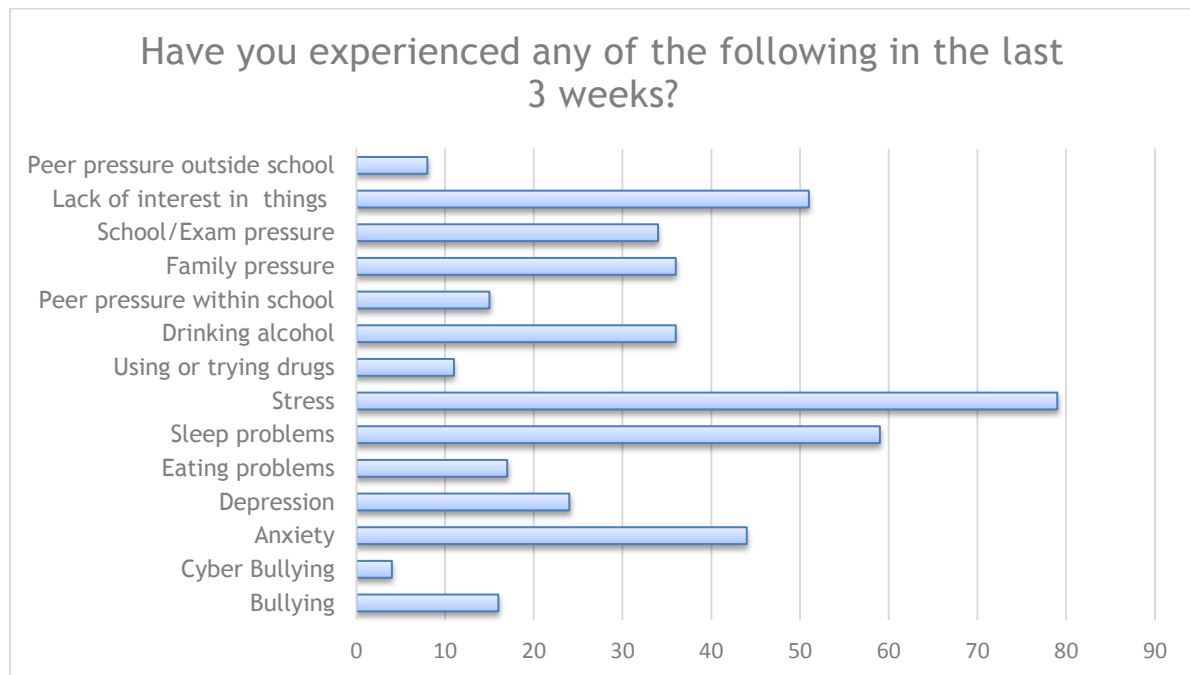
29% male



68% female

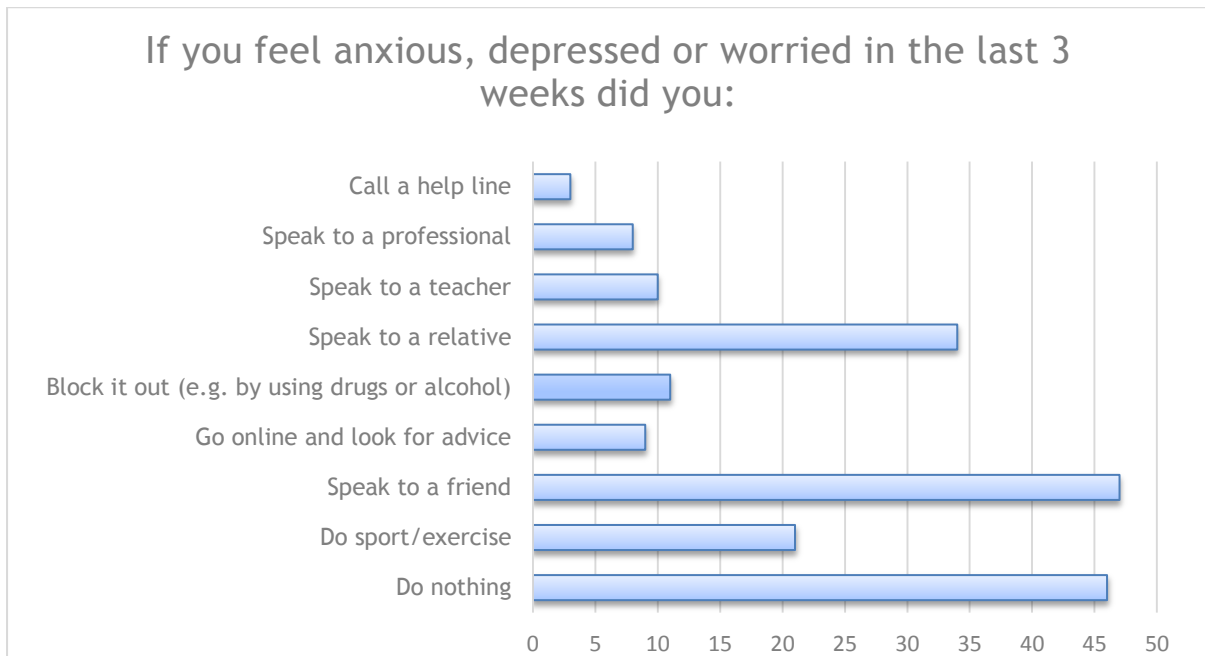
C2: Improve children's emotional health and wellbeing

Q1



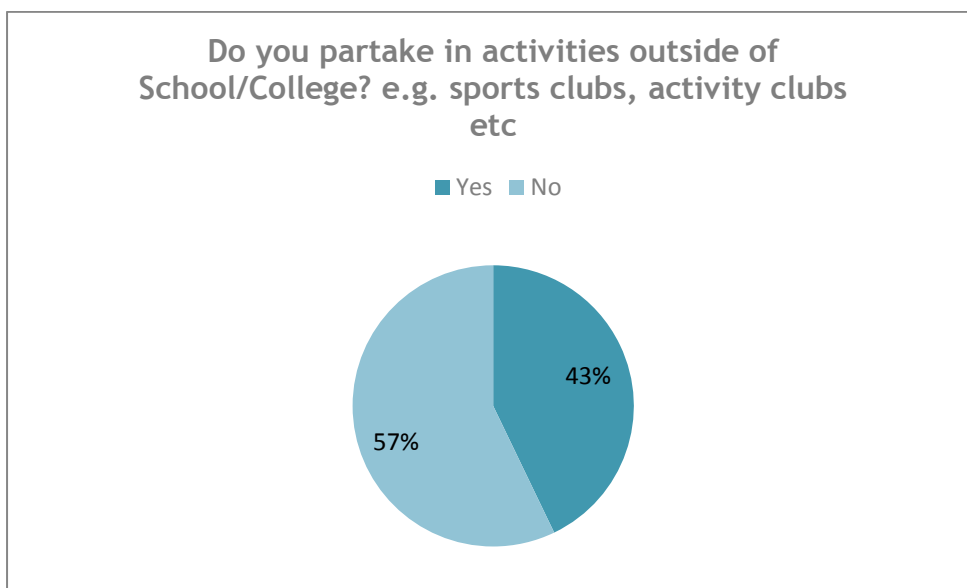
As the graph shows the most common mental health issue identified by the young people in this survey was **stress**. This was closely followed **sleep problems, lack of interest in things** and then **anxiety**.

Q2



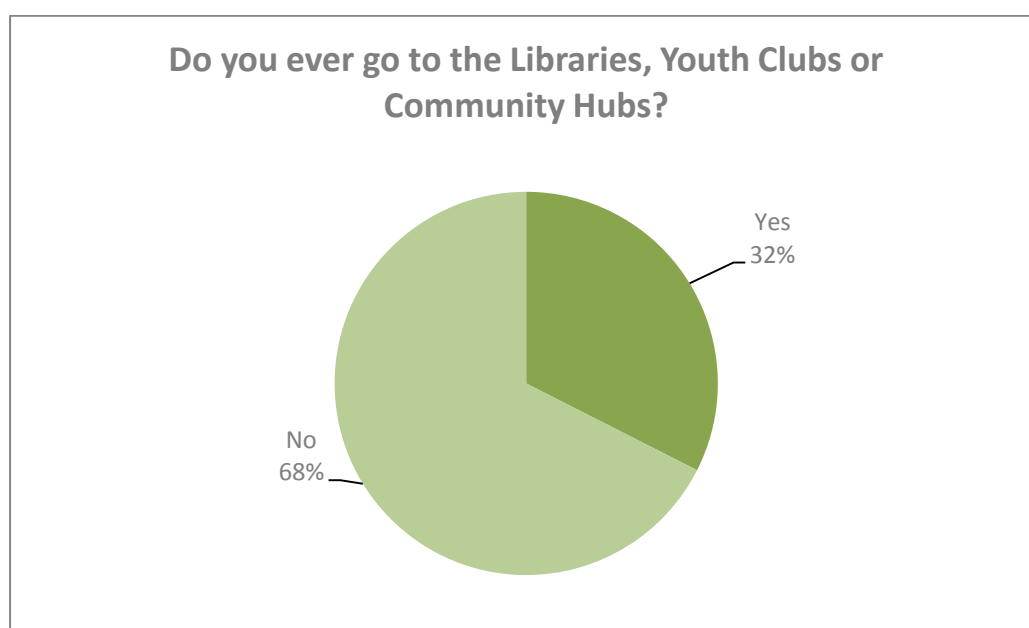
Those that responded that they did feel anxious, depressed or worried were most likely to **speak to a friend**. However, in second place only shortly behind was the option to **do nothing**.

Q3



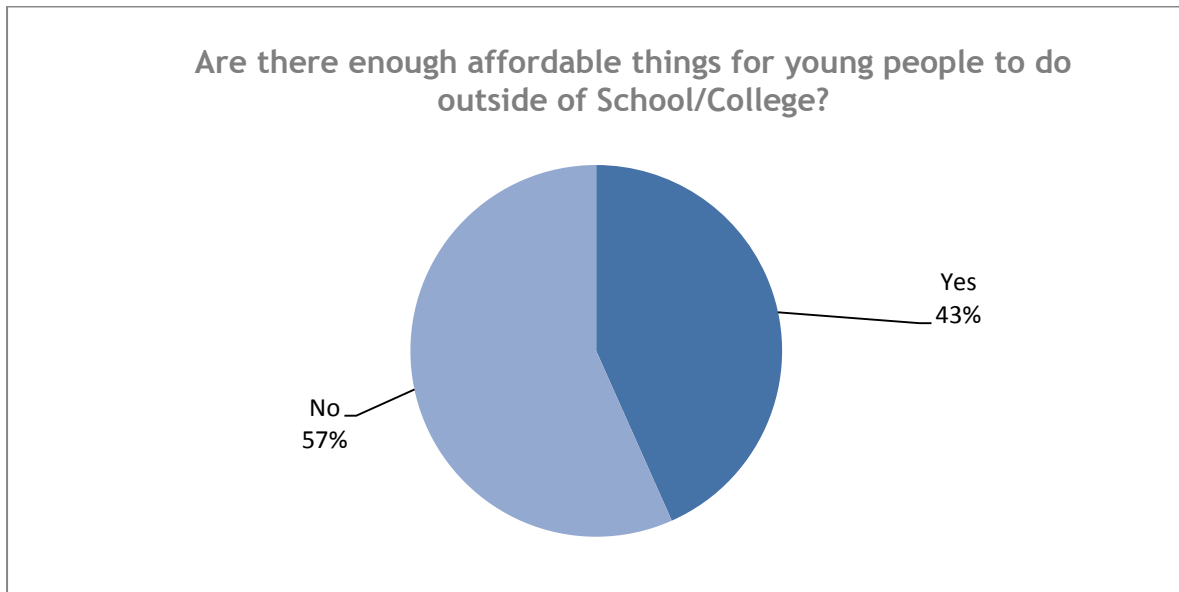
A total of **57%** of young people who took part in our survey do NOT partake in activities outside of their School or College. **43%** of young people said they did attend an activity outside of school and the most common responses fell into the categories: Support Groups and Sport Clubs, this will not be a true representation as we attended various groups such as one support group (Young Carers) in order to speak to the young people in this survey and therefore does not represent the population as whole. It is likely that the true figure for those that do not attend activities outside of school is lower.

Q4



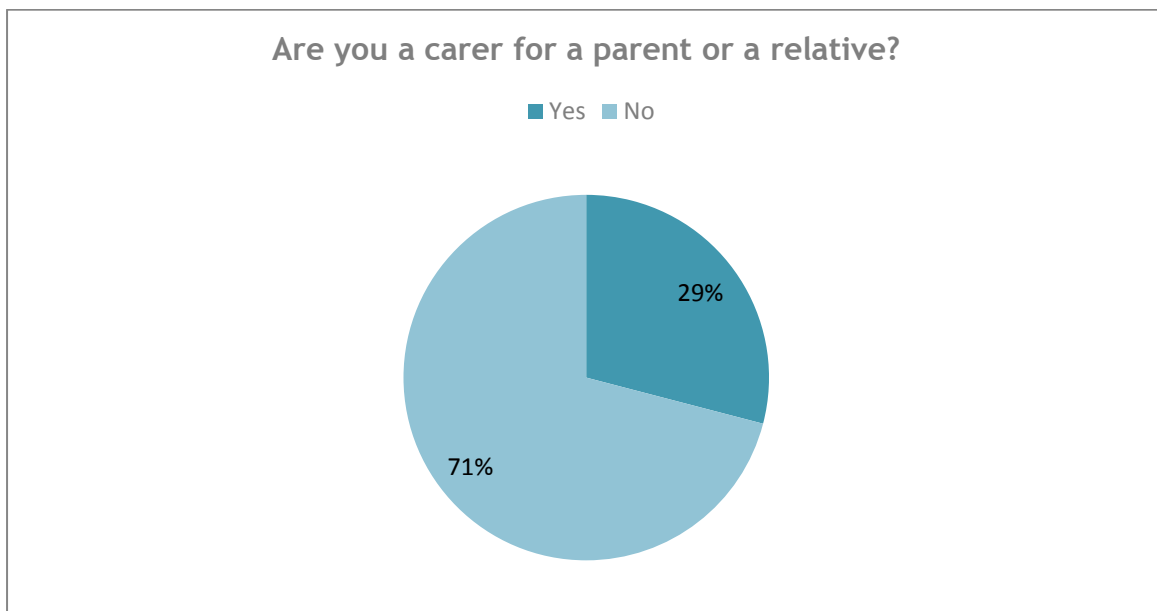
Only a **third** of young people use the free facilities they have locally in Thurrock such as libraries, youth clubs or community hubs. This may indicate that these resources are not providing much for young people within the age bracket of 10-18 years or are potentially not promoted well enough. Some hubs are open very limited hours due the reliance on volunteers. For example, Purfleet Hub is only open 10am-12pm on a Tuesday and a Thursday. Therefore not actually open at any time a young person could use regularly as this is within school hours.

Q5



Over **half** of young people in this survey do not think there are enough affordable things for young people to do. This can lead to inactivity, social isolation and may contribute towards anti-social behaviour in the Borough.

Q6



A young carer is anyone who is under 18 years who provides, or intends to provide, assistance or support to another family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill

or has a substance misuse problem¹. Less than a third of the people we spoke to were carers; this figure is likely to actually be lower as we did spoke to Thurrock Young Carers group which of course identified as higher number of carers. A more accurate figure from the 2011 census identified that there are 2.17% of young people (aged 0-24years) in Thurrock who are providing unpaid care¹. Young carers may need additional support around mental health, getting a good education and getting into employment.

Q7

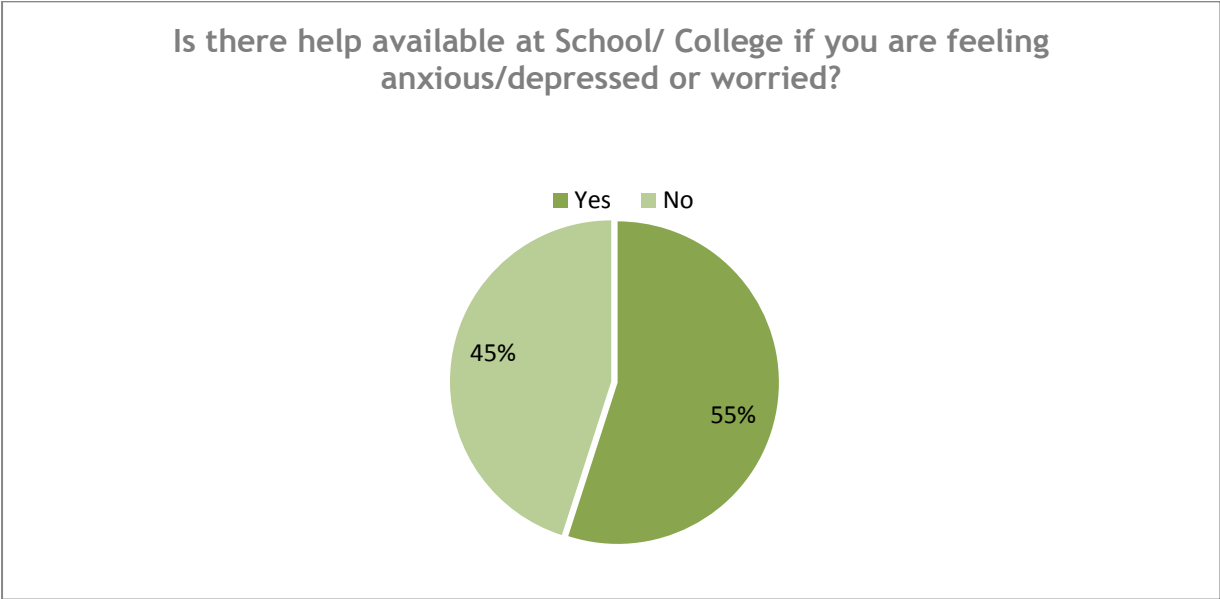
We asked is there anything you would like to see provided by Mental Health Services in Thurrock? Many people (**78%**) said no, not really or were unsure. **22%** said yes and the responses are below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More assistance and people to talk to about mental health.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support for those with mental health issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth groups, more things for young people what won't cost money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health professionals to listen to their patients.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Professionals should listen to their patients more.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More investment in Mental Health Services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier access to adult care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More help/support for young depressed people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help create less of a stigma around mental health and using the services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer opening times (e.g. at the doctors)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to young people more - be less dismissive etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling on problems we experience in school and outside of school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see better medication and treatment for mental health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More services available e.g. more confidential online services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see a centre that children/teens experiencing neglect can go to.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent using medication and just pill taking. People need more support than that.

¹ *Thurrock Public Health 2015: Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Children and Young People*, pp. 116.

- More youth groups - don't close them!
- Advice and assistance
- Campaign against the stigma of mental health illness.
- More support for the carers of the people with the health issue.
- Better provision of Youth Clubs in Thurrock e.g. Youth Zone with youth facilities (www.youthzone.com).

Q8



More than half the people we spoke to were with the understanding that there was available help at their school or college for this. However a high proportion were not with this understanding indicating that more needs to be done within schools and colleges to raise the profile of the help available for mental health.

Q9

Where would you go if you needed support for mental health?

We left this question open for the responder to fill out. Most common response was the GP.

Category	Tally
GP	28
Family support	22
School support	21
Healthcare services	11
Friend support	8
Unsure	3
A quiet place e.g. Bedroom	2
On-line support	2
Outside School/College Clubs	2

C2 Recommendations

- To ensure that activities such as youth clubs, groups and sports for young people are equitable across the Borough. Some areas now do not have a youth club e.g. Aveley. Also, these resources should link in well with each other in order to fulfil the wide range of young people's needs. E.g. academic support, getting into employment, mental health support, promoting healthy lifestyles and fun activities.
- Over half the young people we spoke to (57%) do not feel there are enough affordable activities for young people to do. LA should consider voucher schemes or encourage better promotion of student discounted opportunities such as reduced fees for train fares and bus fares.
- Some of the young people we spoke to (45%) did not know about the offer of help available within their school or college for mental health concerns. This suggests that more needs to be done within schools/colleges to raise the profile of the help available and to promote a culture of asking for help when needed rather than doing nothing. Make it easy for people to seek help, e.g. through use of social media or an app.

Summary

We had a great response to our Goal C engagement with **126 young people** and **61 adults** completing our surveys.

Of the adults in this survey, a majority (40% saying no/26% were unsure) felt there wasn't enough support for parents in Thurrock, when asked to elaborate the themes centred on services provided by children centres (e.g. the stay and play, speech and language sessions) and more support for parents of children with disabilities. Adults seemed to know and understand what support is available locally to them with regards to Local Area Coordinators and where to seek help for mental health issues. Very little responses were about the new community mental health services provided by Inclusion Thurrock. This is a self-referral service and more should be done to promote this service. At Healthwatch Thurrock we continue to work with our stakeholders and signpost people that come to us to this service when appropriate.

In a recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) by Thurrock Public Health², it was identified that recorded levels of depression in some areas of Thurrock (such as Purfleet) were lower than expected. This non-identification of depression in the Thurrock population could be due to a number of factors including:

1. Patients not presenting (typical of disadvantaged areas)
2. Under-doctoring/lack of appointments for patients who may not feel it is worth continuing to try to get an appointment due to their depression
3. Lack of training or awareness for health professionals to be able to identify symptoms and diagnose
4. Missed opportunities to diagnose - when patients may present with other long term conditions (LTCs)

When we spoke to the Stroke Club, it was made clear to us just how much a LTC can impact on somebody's life and therefore affect their mental and emotional state.

The young people we spoke to were able to share that stress, sleep problems, a lack of interest and anxiety were the most common mental health problems they had experienced in the last three weeks. The worrying thing was that many people said they would do nothing about it. Sometimes this is because people do not understand where to seek help,

² *Thurrock Public Health 2016: A Needs Assessment to inform the Regeneration of Purfleet and a new Integrated Healthy Living Centre*, pp. 92-93.

or how to seek help. Other reasons may be due to stigma, or just not feeling that their mental health status warrants the help if they weren't to feel it serious enough.

It is important that efforts are made to continue reducing the stigma around mental health and to make it easy for people to seek the help they need. Schools and colleges having the most contact with young people must ensure that they work to raise the profile of help for mental health.

The recommendations in this report are set out for the local authority (LA): Thurrock Council to consider and are based on the data we have collected within our surveys.

Recommendations

C1: Give parents the support they need

C1 Recommendations

- Increase the awareness of support for parents with children who have disabilities and make it easier for parents to access this support.
- Provide disability support groups and ensure sessions at the Thurrock Children Centres are suitable and accessible to children with a disability.

C2: Improve children's emotional health and wellbeing

C2 Recommendations

- To ensure that activities such as youth clubs, groups and sports for young people are equitable across the Borough. Some areas now do not have a youth club e.g. Aveley. Also, these resources should link in well with each other in order to fulfil the wide range of young people's needs. E.g. academic support, getting into employment, mental health support, promoting healthy lifestyles and fun activities.
- Over half the young people we spoke to (57%) do not feel there are enough affordable activities for young people to do. LA should consider voucher schemes or encourage better promotion of student discounted opportunities such as reduced fees for train fares and bus fares.
- Some of the young people we spoke to (45%) did not know about the offer of help available within their school or college for mental health concerns. This suggests

that more needs to be done within schools/colleges to raise the profile of the help available and to promote a culture of asking for help when needed rather than doing nothing. Make it easy for people to seek help, e.g. through use of social media or an app.

C3: Reduce social isolation and loneliness

C3 Recommendations (as cross referenced with B3 findings and recommendations)

- Publication/notification of local community activities. Many people in the community are not aware of everything that is going on.
- Continue to strengthen social relationships and opportunities for community connection for individuals and families, especially those in greatest need e.g. the most vulnerable and isolated. For example through use of the local area coordinators.
- Work on how to strengthen relationships between communities and health and social care agencies.

C4: Improve the identification and treatment of depression, particularly in high risk groups

C4 Recommendations

- Counselling services should be able to recognise and understand the links between LTCs and mental health. It was suggested (by Stroke Group) that often counsellors do not understand that having a LTC can be the main cause of depression. Living with a LTC greatly impacts on a person's quality of life and can lead to mental health conditions.