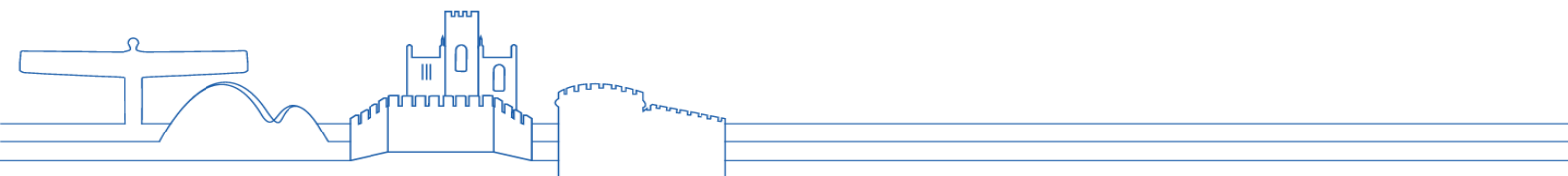




**North East and
North Cumbria**

Children and Young People's experiences of mental health services in Gateshead

November 2022





This report was produced by Involve North East on behalf of North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. We are an independent organisation who specialises in involvement and engagement. We work with integrity, ensuring people's voices influence the design of services they receive.

We have vast experience and expertise in gathering the views and opinions of patients, carers and the general public in relation to health services. For example:

- service evaluations
- changes to care pathways
- locating new services

We employ quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques including:

- Questionnaires – paper-based and online
- Participatory appraisals
- Drop-in events
- Face-to-face and telephone interviews
- Focus groups
- Informal group discussions

For more information about the services we can provide please contact Andrew White on 0191 226 3450 or email andrew@involve.org.uk. Visit our website at: www.involve.org.uk

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Introduction

- Gateshead's Mental Health services are coming together in December to explore what is working well, what is not working so well and where they think improvements could be made.
- To help inform this discussion the Children, Young People & Families Team (Gateshead) were tasked with gathering feedback from children, young people or their parents/carers around:
 - Talking about their feelings and what good mental health means to them
 - Finding their own support to help them feel better
 - Experiences of speaking to a health professional about their feelings
 - Experiences of accessing mental health services
- Due to the tight timescales of this project, data collection was via an online survey during October and November 2022 which was publicised widely across statutory and voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead. Thirty-six children, young people or their parents/carers shared their views (see Appendix 1 for profile of respondents).
- Involve North East was asked to summarize the survey data and the following is a brief report of the findings.

Key findings

Good mental health

- For children and young people good mental health means being happy, being able to cope with day-to-day life and having a positive mindset in particular.

Talking about my feelings

- Most children and young people report speaking to family, friends or health professionals but more than two-fifths struggle to talk about their feelings. They find it hard to explain themselves, worry they will be misunderstood.
- In order to help them talk about their feelings they would like to talk to the same person each time to build a trusting relationship, share their feelings in a space they feel comfortable in and feel listened to and understood.

Support from health professionals

- Three-fifths of the children and young people taking part in this survey have talked to a health professional about their feelings although the majority reported difficulties getting the appointment. During the appointment most felt able to talk to the practitioner who offered support and signposted them to a range of other support services. Despite this, two-fifths of children and young people felt that this support did not help them.

Support from mental health services

- Twenty children and young people have accessed support provided by mental health services.
- Waiting times for appointments varied with two-fifths waiting one month or less and one third waiting five months or more.
- Over half of children and young people thought the service they received was okay, but more than one third were not happy with the support, reporting that they did not feel listened to, did not find it helpful, felt misunderstood and rushed.

Finding my own support

- Nearly three-quarters of children and young people have tried to find their own support to help them feel better, looking on websites and speaking to friends and family in particular. For nearly three-fifths however, the information they were looking for was difficult to find.

Children and young people’s views

What does good mental health mean to you?

- Children and young people were initially asked what good mental means to them.



What does good mental health mean to you?



No. of respondents – 32

- For over half of children and young people, good mental means feeling happy (56.3%). For some it is about being able to cope with daily life (40.6%) or having a positive mindset (25.0%).

“Being happy and healthy, being able to cope with day-to-day life.”

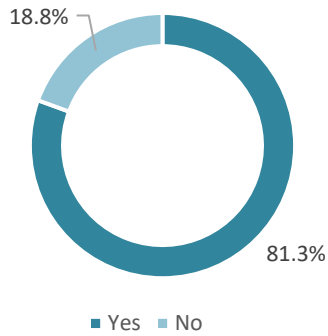
“Feeling okay with my own thoughts and how I feel about myself so I can get on with my life.”

“Feeling happy, optimistic, not feeling anxious or worried.”

“Not feeling stressed or overwhelmed every day for no reason - feeling positive rather than negative overall.”

Talking about feelings

Do you speak with someone about your feelings?



No. of respondents – 36

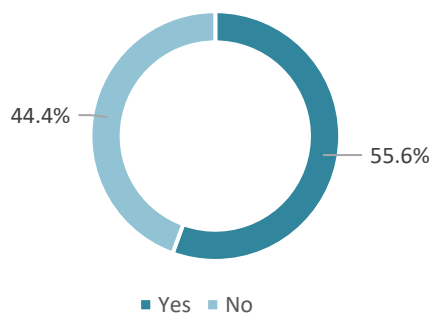
- The majority of children and young people speak to people about how they are feeling and in particular talk with parents (56.3%), friends (50.0%) and health professionals (28.1%).

Who do you talk to about your feelings?	Percentage of respondents (%)
Parent	56.3
Friend	50.0
Health professional	28.1
GP	15.6
Teacher	12.5
Colleagues	3.1
Family support worker	3.1
Leaving Care Personal Adviser	3.1
Psychotherapist (private)	3.1
Youth Worker	3.1

Respondents could give more than one answer

No of respondents – 32

Do you find it okay talking about your feelings?



No. of respondents – 36

- Over half (55.6%) of children and young people find it okay talking about their feelings.
 - Those who do not cited difficulties in explaining themselves (42.9%) or worried that they will be misunderstood (21.4%) in particular.

What do you find difficult talking about your feelings?



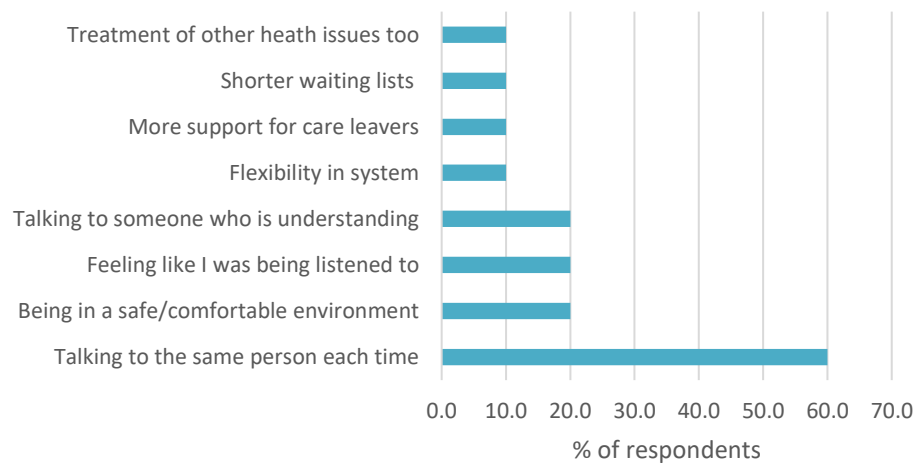
Respondents could give more than one answer
No of respondents – 14

“It is hard to open up especially with the fear of your struggles being disregarded or not taken seriously. It is also hard to be honest about things when you feel like you're the only one experiencing it.”

“Find it hard to find the words to describe how I feel, or I feel stupid or that people will not understand - or it is my fault.”

“Expressing emotions because it makes me feel weak as a male.”

What would help you talk about your feelings?



Respondents could give more than one answer
No of respondents - 10

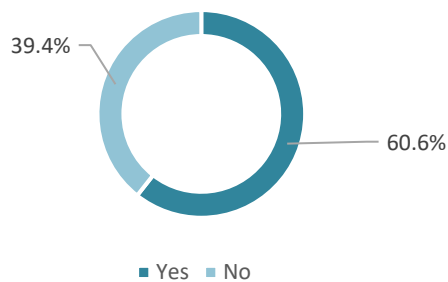
- Having consistent support so that they are able to speak to the same person each time and build a trusted relationship would help them talk about their feelings (60.0%).

“Same person, seeing someone at home or somewhere that is not a hospital would help. Someone friendly who listens and understands.”

“Easier access to mental health services. Being allocated a worker who I can build a relationship with. Not having to wait months for an appointment. Not closing me to the service if I miss an appointment. A large number of care leavers experience mental health difficulties...we should have allocated workers based within the Leaving Care Team so we can access a Community Psychiatric Nurses who knows our history and background, or a Counsellor who can do some work with us, a therapist who can offer therapy - at the times that we need it!”

Talking to a health professional

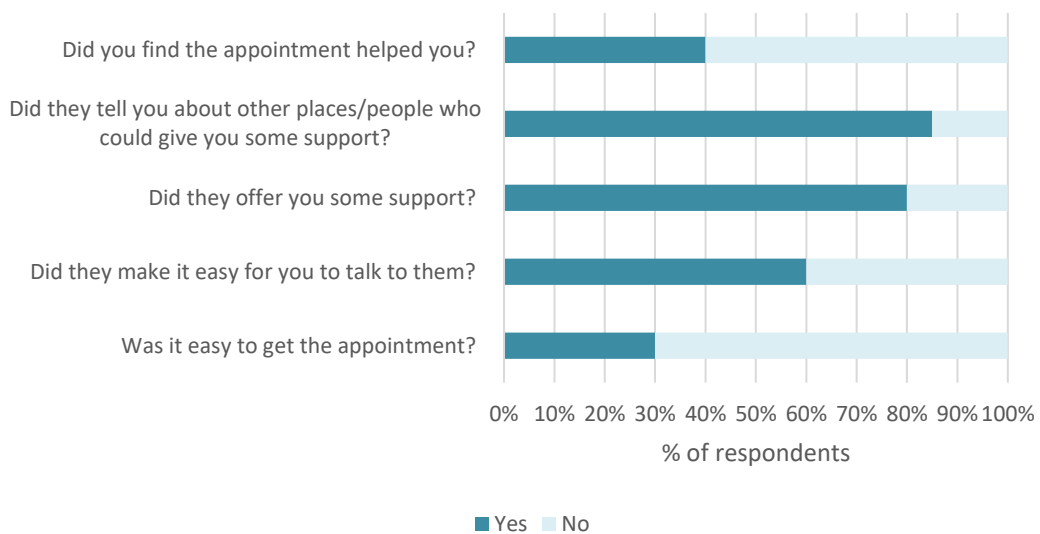
Have you talked to a health professional about how you feel?



No. of respondents – 33

- Three-fifths (60.6%) of children and young people have talked to a health professional about how they feel. They gave feedback on their experience:

Professional help received



No. of respondents – 20

- Children and young people reported that it was difficult to get an appointment (70.0%). During the appointment the majority felt able to talk to the practitioner (60.0%) who offered support (80.0%) and signposted them to other support (85.0%) but for over half, they felt that this still did not help them (40.0%).
 - Children and young people were signposted to the following services:

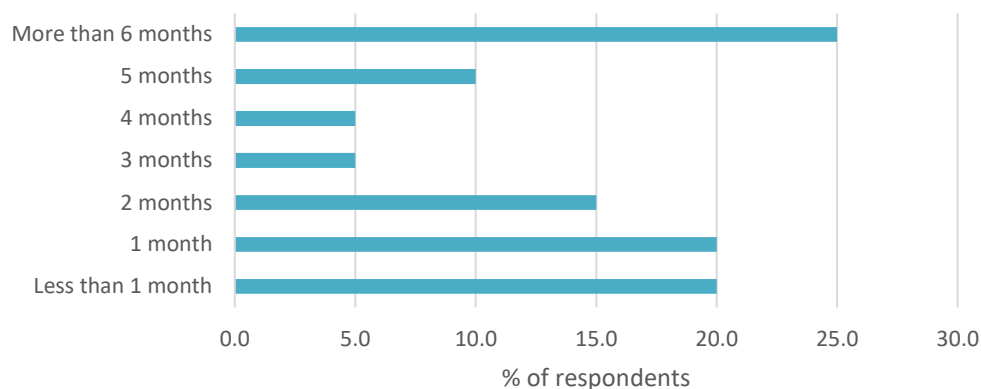
Services signposted to	Percentage of respondents (%)
Talking Therapies	35.3
Children Young People's Service	23.5
General practitioner	23.5
Local charities	17.6
Child Adolescent Mental Health Service	11.8
Gateshead Community Mental Health Team	11.8
North East Counselling Service	11.8
School	11.8
Central At-Risk Mental State Service Gateshead	5.9
Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team	5.9
Early Help Service (Gateshead Council)	5.9
Early Intervention in Psychosis Team	5.9
Edberts House	5.9
Emergency Duty Team	5.9
Kooth	5.9
Looked After Children Nurse	5.9
Platform (Gateshead Young People's Substance Misuse)	5.9
Private counselling	5.9
Support through employer	5.9

Respondents could give more than one answer
No of respondents - 17

Support from mental health services

- Twenty children and young people reported accessing support from mental health services.
 - Some waited less than one month for an appointment (20.0%) whilst others waited more than six months (25.0%).

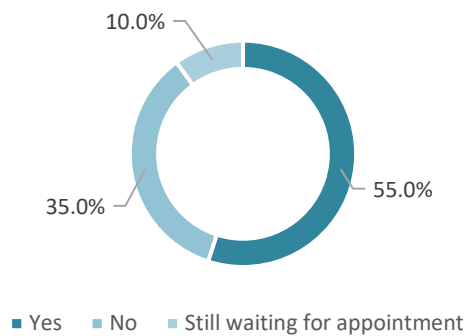
If you needed support by mental health services, how long did it take you to get an appointment?



No of respondents - 20

- Over half (55.0%) of children and young people felt that the support they received was okay whilst 35.0% felt that it was not.

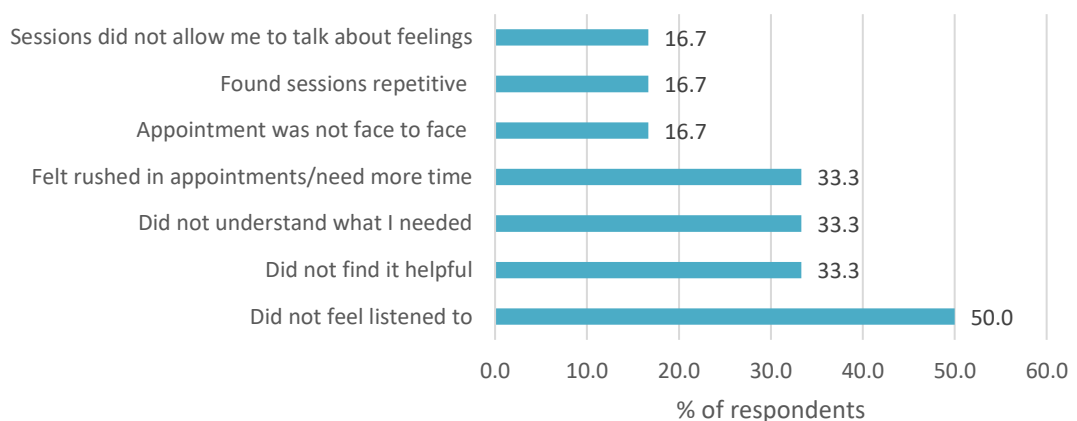
If you have seen someone from a mental health service, was it okay?



No of respondents - 20

- Those who did not think the support was okay cited the following reasons:

Issues with mental health support received



No of respondents – 6

- o Half did not feel like they were listened to, whilst others felt misunderstood or rushed.

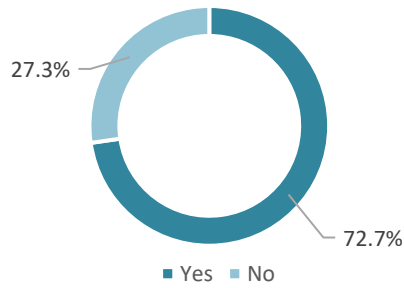
“Would prefer face-to-face contact not on the phone Need time to trust them not just be passed on or given advice. They need to listen.”

“Not feeling listened to...Suicide attempts didn't feel like they were taken seriously. I was made to do work booklets even though I said I really struggled with the reading as someone with dyslexia and couldn't engage with the work...they focussed so much on getting the work book done that I never got a chance to actually talk about how I was feeling when I needed to...she'd rush me to finish talking...I felt like I was just a box to tick.”

“Talking therapies were not helpful, in fact you weren't allowed to talk about your feelings or what was on your mind as the whole session was based around a structured template of activities. No point in calling it talking therapies if you're told to draw diagrams.”

Finding your own support

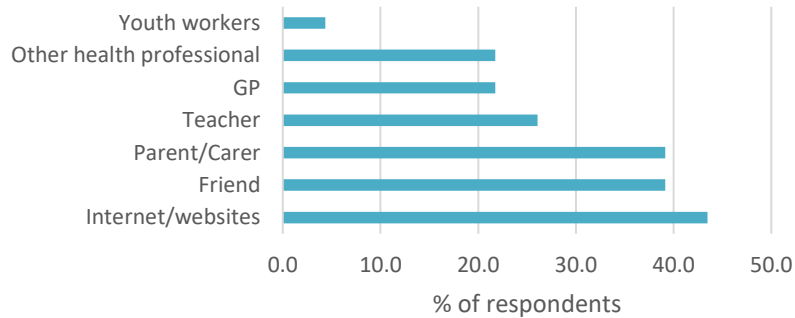
Have you ever tried to find your own support to help you to feel better?



No of respondents – 33

- Nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of children and young people have tried to find their own support to help them feel better. They have looked for support in the following places:

Who have you talked to or looked for support?

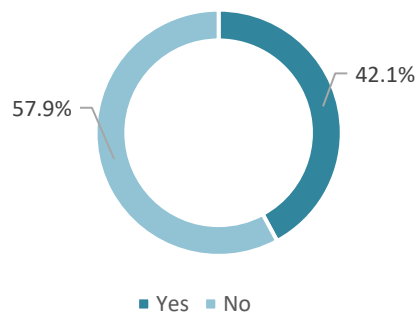


No of respondents – 23

Respondents could give more than one answer

- Only one young person named the website they used – Kooth.
- More than half (57.9%) reported that it was not easy to find the information they were looking for.

Was it easy to find the information you were looking for?



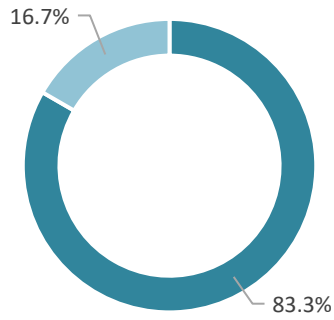
No of respondents – 19

Appendices

Appendix 1: Profile of respondents

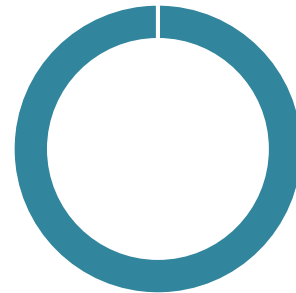
Please note not all respondents shared their personal details

Gender



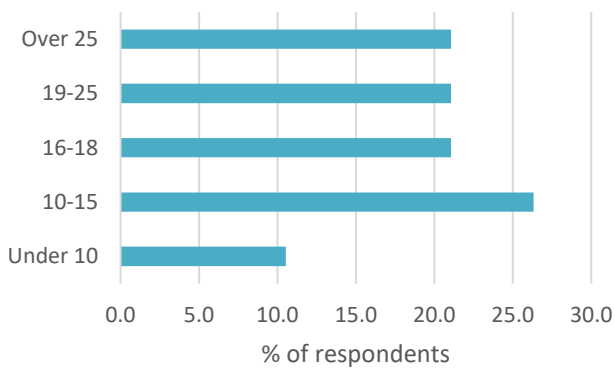
■ Female ■ Male

Ethnic background

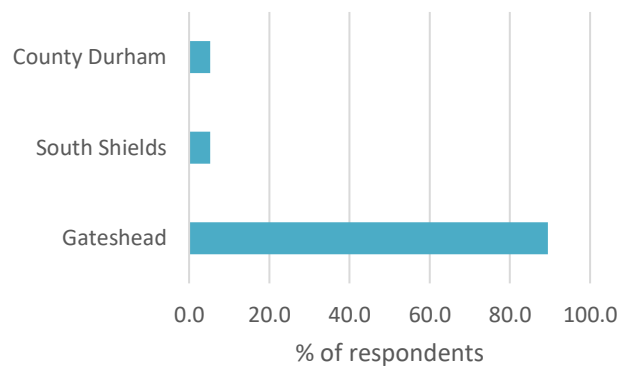


■ White British

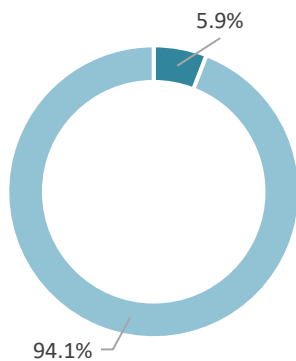
Age



Location

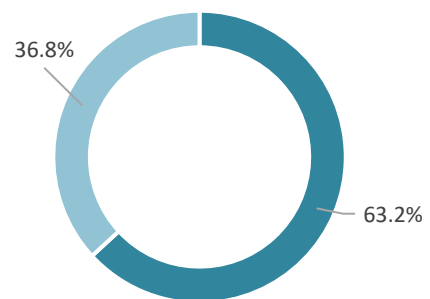


Disability



■ Yes ■ No

Religion



■ No Religion ■ Christianity

School attended

