

Survey launched during Mental Health Awareness Week

Young people, parents and professionals are being asked for their views on how we can improve mental health and wellbeing in Wiltshire. The online surveys for Mental Health Awareness Week will help shape how services are provided in the future. They are one of a number of initiatives the council and partners are involved in to help improve services to support young people's mental health.

Other initiatives include:

- Kooth – an online counselling for pupils at all secondary schools. In April this was extended for young people aged from 11 to 25.
- Youth mental health first aid – an internationally recognised programme designed to promote awareness of psychological and emotional well-being and mental health for eight to 18 year olds.
- On Your Mind website – which signposts young people to local and national sources of support and provides positive health messages.

Laura Mayes, Wiltshire Council cabinet member for children's services, said: "We all have to look after our mental health but it is particularly important to ensure our young people have support.

"Exams, growing up and the myriad of pressures on young people can make life very difficult. We want to work alongside our young people to ensure they have the right support when they need it."

In April 2018, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust launched a new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire.

James Fortune, Head of Service, said: "We are really delighted to be implementing a modern child and adolescent mental health service and want to ensure that children and young people remain at the heart of everything we do.

"Their experiences and opinions, as well as the views of parents, carers and professionals, ensure we can continue to drive forward service transformation and improvements. That's why surveys like this are so important.

"In Wiltshire we receive over 2,000 referrals a year and offer a range of support, interventions and treatments."

Catherine, a young person based in Wiltshire, said: "Seeking support for mental health difficulties is a very important thing to do. It's by no means easy, but with support from others things can and really do get better. Having just one person who you can talk to, reach out to, offload to and brainstorm with makes facing difficulties so much easier to manage.

"Having someone there as a shoulder to cry on, but also there to share laughter with can help with making sense of your thoughts, give a new perspective on issues and help with moving forward."

Lucy Baker, Acting Commissioning Director (Maternity, Children and Mental health), Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group said: "Wiltshire CCG is working together across BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) to transform how we deliver mental health support to better meet the needs of our local population including children and young people. There is a shared enthusiasm to enhance lives and wellbeing with a shared commitment that no-one should be left in need. We really want to hear what people think of our services and how we can make things better."

The surveys are available at: Young people
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/speakupcyp>

Parents and carers <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/speakupcarers>

Professionals <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/speakupprofs>

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