

Children and Young People Making Every Contact Count Training Course (CYP MECC): Children and Young People Youth Voice Report

Date: November 2023

Background

It is vital that the views and opinions of young people across Warwickshire are continually considered to help inform the development of a new CYP MECC course, scheduled for rollout and delivery in February 2024. Capturing and conveying local youth voice will ensure that the new course is tailored to what young people want, is appropriate and fit for purpose, and accounts for young people's beliefs, values, and experiences. This report includes an engagement review of what young people have said to partners and extrapolates key themes and similarities, concluding with follow on recommendations and next steps for the CYP MECC taking in account this engagement review and engagement with young people.

Voices of Tomorrow: Warwickshire's Annual Youth Conference

Child Friendly Warwickshire and Warwickshire County Council's Voice, Influence & Change team teamed up to deliver the second annual Youth Conference: Voices of Tomorrow. The conference was held on Friday 3rd November between 10am-4pm at Warwick



University. The event, organised by young people, for young people, offered a friendly and safe environment where those aged between 11 and 17 could come together with local organisations to be heard and help shape the future of Warwickshire.

Issues were highlighted by young people as areas most important to them which were then presented as workshops:

- Climate change awareness
- Safety (in Warwickshire)
- Mental health & wellbeing
- Careers/opportunities (including further education)
- Cost of living
- Activities and green open spaces
- Spaces for girls
- Identity (LGBTQ+)

At the event, young people had the chance to attend 2 workshops out of the 8 mentioned above. Attendees got to meet and chat with various organisations from Warwickshire who provide different services to young people. Some of the 25 organisations in attendance

included Coventry and Warwickshire MIND, Warwickshire Youth Council, Warwickshire Police, You Can Flourish, Warwickshire Skills Hub, P3, Warwickshire Pride, Kooth, and Safeline.

There were also lots of fun activities such as a digital graffiti wall, henna, face painting, an artist, a magician, an arts and crafts area, and a raffle draw (with loads of great prizes).

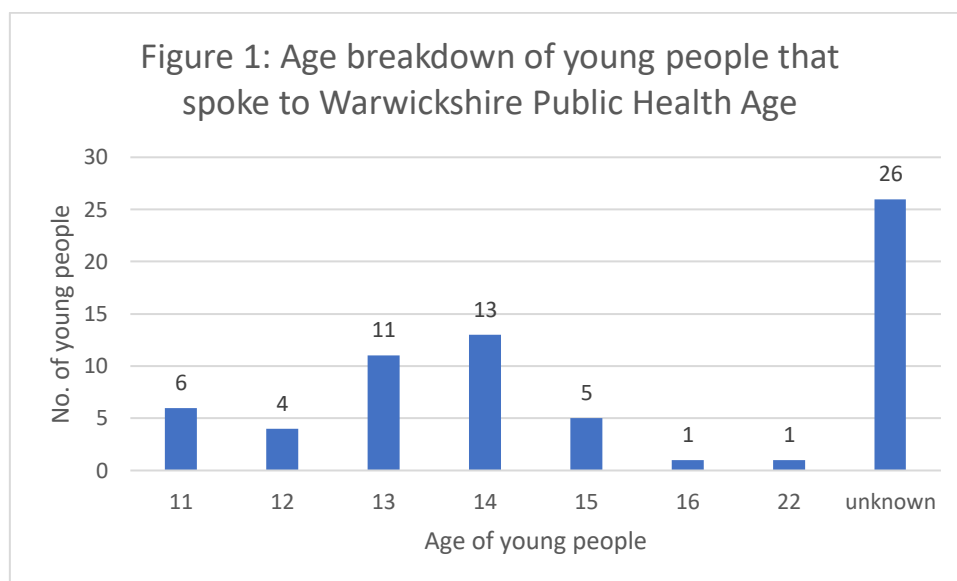
Young people supporting the planning of this conference invited Warwickshire County Council Public Health to attend and host a stall during this event.

The Annual Youth Conference 2023 full report, including recommendations can be access here - [WCCC-1980322935-2628 \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/WCCC-1980322935-2628)

What young people said to Warwickshire Public Health (WCC PH)

WCC PH attended the Youth Conference: Voices of Tomorrow to seek the views and opinions of young people on an individual basis to help inform the development of the new CYP MECC course. Informal opportunities were created for young people to come and speak with WCC PH and provide feedback to 4 questions. WCC PH received 67 responses in total to the questions.

Figure 1 is an age breakdown of the young people that spoke to WCC PH at this event. Young people were given the option to provide their age if they were happy to. If the 'unknown age' category is disregarded, the mode age providing the responses to the questions was 14-year-olds, followed by 13-year-olds.



Below are the questions and responses from young people at this event.

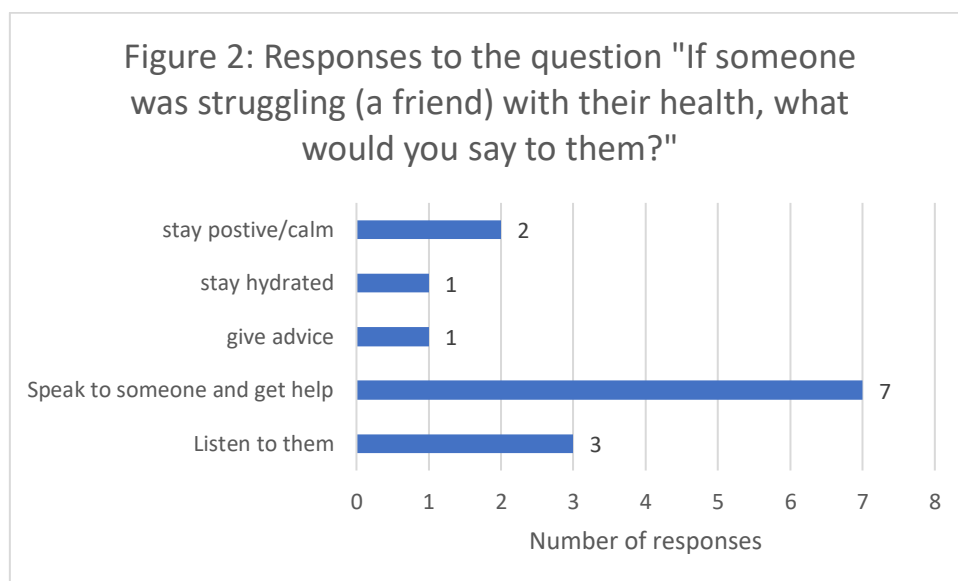
Q1. If someone was struggling (a friend) with their health, what would you say to them?

Responses from young people can be found below to this question:

- I would like to talk to them, make sure they're okay and tell them that I'm here for them, age 13
- I would tell them that I am here if they want to talk and I would listen to them and give them advice (if they want it), age 13

- To speak to someone and make sure you have something to calm you down and go to clubs.
- Making sure your friends feel comfortable to talk to you.
- Speak to someone.
- Talk to someone and get help, age 15.
- I would encourage them to speak to a trusted adult or give them advice based on my own experiences, age 14.
- Ask how they are, tell them everything is okay, tell them to talk to their parents, carer or councillor), age 12.
- I would talk to them and make sure they know I'm here for them and help them, age 12
- Im here for you, age 11
- Im here for you, age 14
- Stay positive and exercise, stay hydrated, age 14

Summary: What young people told WCC PH is represented below in Figure 2. Young people are aware and have the skills to console a friend requiring support. Speaking to someone and getting help was the highest reported response to this question from young people, followed by listening to their friend and staying positive and calm.



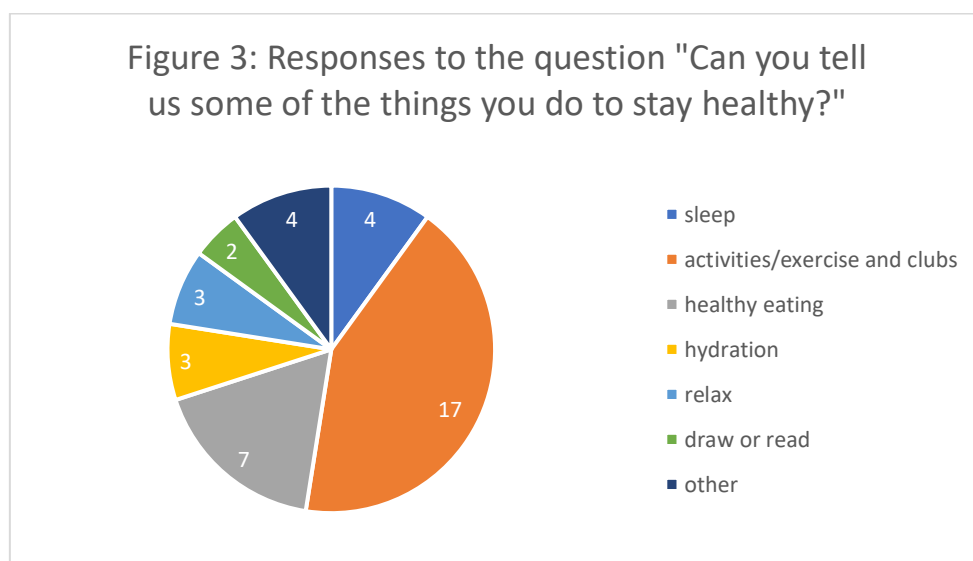
Q2. Can you tell us some of the things you do to stay healthy?

Responses from young people can be found below to this question.

- Go on a 15-minute walk.
- Play sports, workout, mindful eating, educated on food and nutrition.
- I took to beginning with Couch to 5k
- Exercise and clubs
- Exercise and get sleep, going outside and a good diet, year 7
- Spending time doing activities I enjoy.

- Working out 3 times a week, go to the gym sometimes, sleep 8hrs, take breaks in between breaks.
- Regular sleep schedule, getting out of the house everyday, sticking to a routine
- Sleep, age 22
- To stay healthy, do exercise and eat healthy, age 13
- Taking some time to relax and not stress too much, age 12
- Stay physically active and get all your nutrients, age 15
- I go swimming once a week, I do PE in school. I take time off homework to do relaxing things like reading and drawing, age 14
- I do a lot of sports and outdoor activities to chill. I also cycle and run aswell, age 13
- I do lots of exercise such as hockey and football, I also cycle, age 15
- Some of the things I do to stay healthy is swimming, sports and relaxing such as drawing. I also eat healthily, age 13
- I do regular exercise outside of school. I do boarding with friends. I also meet up with friends and stay happy, age 16
- Exercise and some medication. Drink some water. Always remember to eat, age 13
- It's good to stay mentally healthy as well as physically healthy. So when I come home and see my dog I make an effort to spend a few minutes with him, age 13
- Do some exercise and drink lots of water, age 14
- I do PE in school and have balanced diet which help me stay physically healthy and I do activities I like to stay mentally healthy, age 13
- I turn all electronics off and think tomorrow is a new day, age 14

Summary: What young people told WCC PH has been themed into the most popular responses and represented below in Figure 3. The pie chart highlights a wide range of responses from young people, identifying and expressing what is important to stay healthy. Partaking in activities, clubs and exercise was the highest reported response, followed by healthy eating and sleep. Other responses included relaxing and staying hydrated.

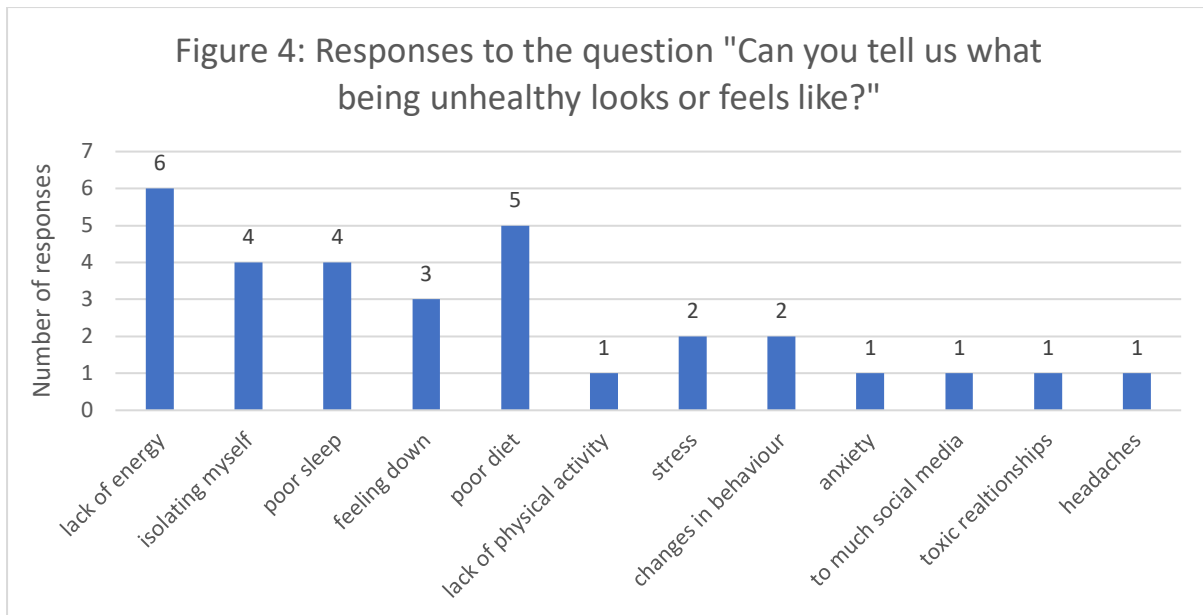


Q3. Can you tell us what being unhealthy looks or feels like?

Responses from young people can be found below to this question.

- Lack of energy and motivation, no routine, stress and outbursts and changes in behaviours.
- Struggling to get up in the morning and like you don't fit in anywhere or that no knows yourself
- Isolating yourself from friends and family. Not eating enough, becoming tired and weaker.
- Exhausted, struggling to work and emotional outbursts
- Tired, lack of energy, unbalanced diet
- Lack of sleep
- Constantly stressing, feeling numb and isolating yourself, 14
- Being unsocial and not leaving the house, 14
- Always unhappy, never engaging and keep yourself to yourself
- No sleep, not having a healthy diet, not exercising enough and too much social media, age 11
- Panicky feelings, no energy, being severely under or overweight, not moving or being able to move, age 12
- Unhealthy means feeling down and rubbish, age 11
- Being unhealthy is when you don't feel good or well and when you know your body is unhygienic, age 13
- I'd say that sometimes being unhealthy can cause you to hate yourself because you stay inside all day, binge eat in your room and you feel really responsible, but you don't receive help, so you feel worthless and incapable of getting out such a slump, age 11 years
- General unhappiness, fatigue, poor sleep, aching headaches, age 14
- Poor sleep, toxic relationships and addictions, age 15
- Bad diet, weak immune system

Summary: What young people told WCC PH is represented below in Figure 4. Young people have identified what makes them feel unhealthy which is unique to everyone and the affect it can have on their own health and wellbeing. Lack of energy and poor diet were the highest reported responses, followed by isolating themselves, poor sleep and feeling down. Other responses to this question received even responses.



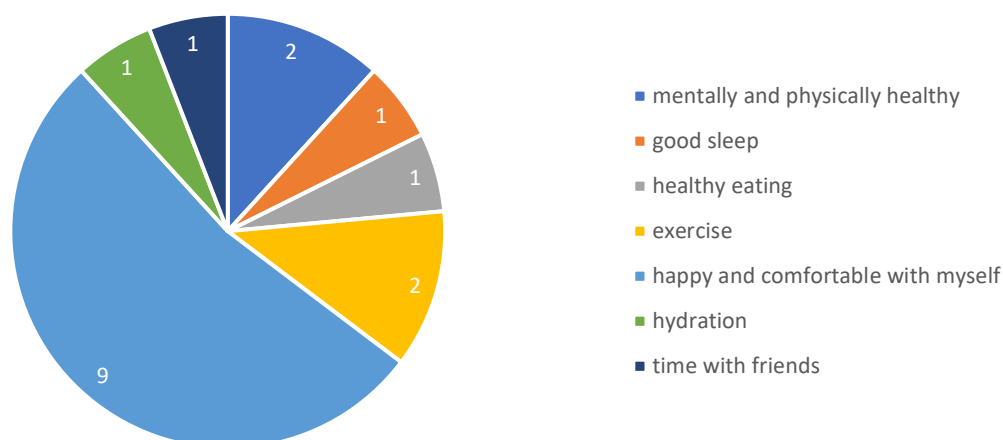
Q4. Can you tell us what being healthy looks or feels like?

Responses from young people can be found below to this question.

- Being mentally and physically well, age 13
- Getting enough sleep and eating and drinking enough
- I think it is looking after yourself and feeling happy with yourself, age 11
- Doing regular exercise spending time with friends, age 14
- No sweets, happy and average weight, age 13
- Daily exercise is good for everyone to be healthy, 14
- Healthy means feeling perfect, age 11
- Being comfortable in yourself and your body
- Being able to do moderate intensity tasks, able to join in active games and activities
- Being healthy means knowing your body is perfectly fine the way it is, age 14
- Being able to live life comfortably without being afraid of having to stop doing what you love
- Feeling happy and content. Talking to people and able to open up about things
- Feeling confident in your body
- For me, being healthy is being happy and comfortable.
- Being healthy relies on you having a good mental and physical health started by yourself, age 14

Summary: What young people told WCC PH is represented below in Figure 5. Half of the young people answering this question said feeling happy and comfortable is what being healthy looks and feels like to them. Other responses to this question included good sleep, hydration, healthy eating, time with friends and being mentally and physically healthy.

Figure 5: Responses to the question "Can you tell us what being healthy looks or feels like?"



High level summary of what young people told WCC PH at the Annual Youth Conference

- The mode age of young people that spoke to WCC PH was 14, followed by 13-year-olds.
- When asked if someone was struggling (a friend) with their health, young people have the skills to console their friend and support their friend in speaking to someone and getting help.
- Young people provided a diverse range of responses when asked the things they do to stay healthy. Partaking in activities, clubs and exercise was the highest reported response.
- Lack of energy and poor diet were the highest reported responses from young people when asked what being unhealthy looks and feels like to them.
- A large proportion of young people said feeling happy and comfortable is what being healthy looks and feels like to them when asked this question.

Children and Young Voice Event – May 2023

On Tuesday 9th May 2023 in Old Shire Hall, Warwick, the Youth Voice event brought together young people from 4 Warwickshire County Council youth forums - Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Forum, Youth Council, and IMPACT (Forum for young people with SEND)

These Forums were given an opportunity to meet with Elected Members and Officers of Warwickshire County Council in a safe space to talk about the 4 themes young people had identified:

- More things to do in Warwickshire
- Health and wellbeing

- Safety in Warwickshire
- Young people's experiences in schools

Feedback and recommendations from the event

In response to a County wide Child Friendly Warwickshire survey to the question 'How can we help to make Warwickshire more child friendly?' Mental health and wellbeing made up 8% of the responses from young people in the county. Children and young people said that they would like to see an improvement of their experience in schools. Young people reported wanting to be heard and have an influence within the development of their schools, so that young people's needs are understood, and there are appropriate responses from trusted adults, who have the right training to support them in their role. Young people are happy to be part of developing solutions for themselves, but they were also very clear that it is the adults that need to act early to understand and respond to need, so that situations do not escalate and leave young people reliant on each other. The need for trust was a feature of the conversation and trust is the evidence of safety.

[Future Ready: Child Friendly Warwickshire Annual Youth Conference 2022](#)

Similar to 2023, the Child Friendly Warwickshire Annual Conference was held in April 2022. Young people chose the five topics for the day:

- Climate change
- Mental health
- Careers
- Respectful relationships
- Youth homelessness.

In total, there were 76 young people in attendance, ranging from ages 11 to 17.

Young people at the conference reported long waiting times for mental health services. The conference report recommended that there should be 'one place' that young people can visit to find out what support is available to them and is widely promoted.

Young people mentioned that they felt schools could be dismissive and tried to minimise mental health issues as 'exam stress' or 'low-level anxiety', but young people felt that that was not what they were experiencing. As a result, many did not view school staff/teachers as a safe place to talk through worries or concerns. Others who did use school support staff felt that teachers were stretched and not adequately trained in managing mental health issues, or even understanding them. The conference recommended better training to be provided to those in positions of responsibility to take young people seriously and signpost to appropriate quality support.

Young people feel that the information that they receive from school around sex is based around the biology of reproduction or the practical condom demonstration. The conference recommended that young people want more information on healthy relationships and spotting the signs of unhealthy relationships.

The full Child Friendly Warwickshire Annual Conference report held in April 2022 can be accessed here - <https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1980322935-2224>

[Barnardo's Coventry and Warwickshire Young People Report](#)

Barnardo's Coventry and Warwickshire Children's Rights Service were commissioned by Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) in March 2023 to engage and consult with children and young people across the geographical area regarding their views of their health, the support they receive, and the impact it has on their lives.

The project was focused on speaking to children and young people aged 0-18 (or 24 with a learning disability) who experience the following physical health conditions: asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy. The project provided an opportunity for children, young people, and their families where appropriate, to share their views about the health services they have received and how they could best be assisted to manage their conditions in the future. There was a particular focus on young people who have experienced A&E admissions and/or unplanned hospital admissions for these conditions, and those from ethnic heritage groups.

Report recommendations/further work

Emotional support, possibly within schools, was seen as an unmet need. Schools being more aware of these health conditions and the emotional impact was also noted by some respondents. One pointed out that it wasn't just the school nurse that needed to know. Given school nurses do not spend significant amounts of time on site, it seems important that information about a young person's diagnosis and how it impacts upon them would be an improvement for some young people. As with all consultation work, it always feels that this could go further. More work to proactively seek out young people who are not regularly engaging with health services to seek their views is likely to be valuable and would be difficult to attain within this methodology.

[Themes and Similarities](#)

It is evident that young people want to be heard and understood and the opportunity to influence local services. Young people would like to see accessible services that are fit for purpose and delivered by the right people, at the right time, and in the right place.

Partner reports highlight similar trends and responses when consulting with young people. Young people want a voice but also want to be part of the solution. Young people report across numerous partner reports that they would like appropriate support from trusted adults that would help them (and not just teachers). Young people would like to see support in one place where they can access information about their health and wellbeing. Young people are aware that support within schools is stretched and limited. Young people would like trusted adults to understand more about how they are feeling and the conditions they may have. Young people would like trusted adults to act early to avoid situations and issues

from escalating and for the trusted adults to have the right training to support them in doing this.

Additional CYP MECC Recommendations

1. Engage with young people and understand how trusted adults can help them further, what does this support look and feel like physically and practically?
2. Understand how health and wellbeing support can be improved in schools from young people.
3. Ensure the link between physical and mental health included in CYP MECC. Ensure that the language used by young people is embedded into the development of CYP MECC, including any young people front facing comms. With this, it would be helpful to understand from young people what social media channels they use to help support their own health and wellbeing.
4. Consider and implement where possible ongoing opportunities to align workstreams and consistent CYP messaging to professional and CYP across the system, colleagues, and partners.
5. Promote recommendations at the CYP MECC task and finish group, involving them to create and advocate engagement and consultation opportunities.