

GP Champions for Youth Health – Summary Report

Feedback from our GP Champions on why they wanted to get involved in the project:

"Improving any type of public service is not an easy task. But when it comes to health services, the difficulty increases by countless folds. As a founding member of the GP Champions, I hoped that as a young person I could help improve GP services in a way that would be beneficial to young people, and without a doubt the current members have taken that initiative further. They produced this report that highlights key points regarding the relationship between young people and their consciousness of healthy wellbeing, and GP services. Let us hope that policy makers take the voice of the young people of our city into consideration to improve services that fall under their control."

Hayyan Asif, a GP Champion

"As I am interested in going into medicine as a career, and I joined the GP Champions, having heard about it through the Youth Council. I wanted to gain more knowledge regarding the inner workings of local health systems, side by side with working to improve them, especially for younger people"

Hannah Ward-Pennington, a GP Champion

"I got involved in GP Champions for Health because of the work I did for the Brighton and Hove Youth Council in being the representative on the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was this opportunity which led to the offer to help Young People in the city even further by becoming part of this campaign group. I joined GP Champions for Health in the summer of 2012. It has been a great experience and has led me to meeting many interesting people. I am hopefully that the work we do will positively affect the health of Young People across the City"

Thomas Soud, a GP Champion

Some key developments from the project:

- GP Champions developed a survey – 246 responses came back. The learning will be shared amongst GPs, commissioners and other health groups (see information below). A mouse mat and booklet will be provided to surgeries locally.
- They wrote a YP's insert for Portslade Health Centre to go into their practice information booklet to be given to new patients – this is a YP-friendly information sheet helping YP get more out of their appointment, and also signposts to Doc Ready, and Find,Get,Give website (known locally as 'Where To Go For...?')
- They met with the Practice Manager and asked questions around access for young people; this created discussion and action points such as feeding back on the surgery's website and helping them with their Facebook Page.
- Portslade Health Centre introduced text reminders to patients, and hope this will have an impact on young people's DNA rate.
- Portslade Health Centre had amended their website to include a YP page, and their practice leaflet to include signposting to YAC and other young people's services (eg Right Here)
- The GP Champions will be presenting their findings to Portslade Health Centre, CCG in Brighton and Hove, the Portslade Health Centre and the Council's Healthy Weight Management Programme Board.

The survey's key findings were:

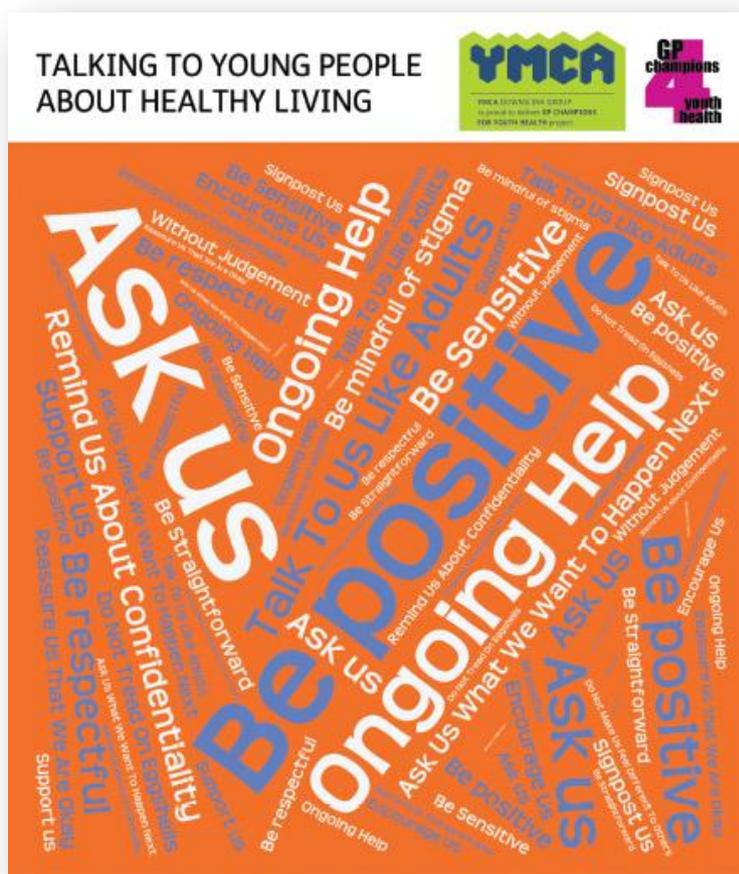
- 85% of young people said that a healthy lifestyle was important or very important to them.
- 75% of young people said that they exercise at least a few times a week or more
- 70% of young people enjoyed exercise as it kept them fit and healthy
- 78% of young people would be comfortable speaking to a GP about healthy living
- However, only 27% said that they would go to their GP for advice
- 42% of young people think about their weight all the time or on a daily basis; 55% said that they were happy with their weight
- Overall, young people feel that they are equipped and confident to live a healthy lifestyle, giving 8 out of 10 for confidence levels

- The top 3 places where young people would look for advice on healthy living were:
 1. Family
 2. Friends
 3. Internet
- When asked how they would change their weight young people overwhelming stated they would eat healthier and increase exercise

Overall, these results suggest that the majority of young people hold a healthy lifestyle to be important and feel confident that they have the ability to live one. However, in spite of this a large number are not happy with their weight. This appears to tie in with the divide of to what extent healthy living concerns young people's thoughts, with half thinking about health living regularly. Our results suggest that young people are aware the best way to live a healthy lifestyle is to exercise more and eat better; taking advice primarily from friends and family but also including their own research through the internet.

Why wouldn't young people go to their GP? From our focus group reasons are that they would be embarrassed, they might receive complex information around their BMI, they don't want to be judged or nagged and also a lot of young people don't realise that they can go to their GP.

From the survey results, the GP Champions have created a mouse mat for GPs locally, using young people's views on how they would like to be talked to:



Alongside this they have created a booklet with top tips on how to talk to young people about healthy living.

We are linking in with Right Here, a YMCA DownsLink Group-led project; we are sending out boxes of resources to 47 surgeries across Brighton and Hove. The mouse mats and booklets will be included in this, along with Right Here resources on mental health.