

# Young Inspectors' REPORT 2019-20

## Young Inspectors' Report on support services for the emotional and mental health of young people aged 14 to 19

### 1. Who are the Young Inspectors?

Every year, a team of Young Inspectors undertake research into the views of other service users and professionals about the services provided by partner agencies responsible for safeguarding children.

The Young Inspectors are young people aged 16 to 22. They are selected by interview process and are involved in designing and conducting each inspection. The strength of the Young Inspectors is that they can apply their own experiences and knowledge of the service to the inspection.

### 2. What was the aim of the report by Young Inspectors?

The aim of the Young Inspection was to:

- Find out young people's perspective on emotional wellbeing and mental health, their interpretation of wellbeing, what they are most worried about and what type of support they find most helpful
- Obtain feedback from parents and foster carers about their experience of supporting their child, who they ask for help, what type of help has made a difference
- Hear from social workers about which emotional difficulties they see most in the children they work with, what support they get from organisations and what other support they may need.

### 3. Why is the Young Inspection focusing on support for the emotional and mental health of young people?

The focus of the inspection stemmed from:

- The government green paper Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision (2017), which recommends new duties for schools on supporting the mental health of children and young people
- The Children's Commissioner for England's observation that there is a need to draw on children's feedback about their experience of receiving support with their mental health needs "Where studies sought to capture the experiences and views of children with mental health

needs, they often drew on the perspectives of parents and service providers, rather than children themselves"

- An increase in the numbers of young people with emotional difficulties known to Camden's social work service, particularly amongst unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

### 4. How did the Young Inspectors collect the information?

The process of gathering information included the following:

- **Obtaining feedback** from young people, parents and social workers using questionnaires
- **Interviewing professionals** including: the Associate Director of Camden CAMHS<sup>1</sup>, Managers from Fitzrovia Youth in Action, Manager of the Hive, a CAMHS clinical psychologist for looked after children/refugees, independent reviewing officers and looked after children team managers
- **Holding focus groups with young people** who have experienced emotional difficulties, with unaccompanied asylum seekers and with parents from the Parent Advisory Board.
- Desktop research covering:
  - Children's Commissioner for England - Early access to mental health support (2019), Children's Voices – A review of evidence on the subjective wellbeing of children with mental health needs in England (2017)
  - Department for Education and Department of Health - Transforming Children and Young People's Mental health provision (2017)
  - The Children's Society - The Good Childhood Report: Summary (2018)
  - Research in Practice - Promoting Mental Health for Children across Children's Services (2007)
  - Positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people (2019).

1 \* Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Open Minded)

# Key findings Feedback from focus groups:

1. Focus group with young people who are Camden unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)
2. Focus group with young people who live with families (Non-UASC).

## What does wellbeing and mental health mean to you?

### MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



### What is the best help for young people with emotional difficulties?

#### Responses from young people living with families

- Youth activities
- Speaking to a teacher or friend
- Speaking to a mentor
- Using an app to track your mental health
- Exercise, eating well and sleep
- Information to understand mental health in different languages
- Help from anonymous services
- Mental health workshops in schools
- Consistent support
- Feeling loved
- Help to feel good and achieving.



#### Responses from unaccompanied asylum seeking children

- Secure stay in UK
- Specialist advice
- Positive activities: football, swimming
- Help to gain more confidence
- Feeling valued
- Counselling
- Help to develop a hobby
- Help from social workers
- Speaking to someone
- Having friends.

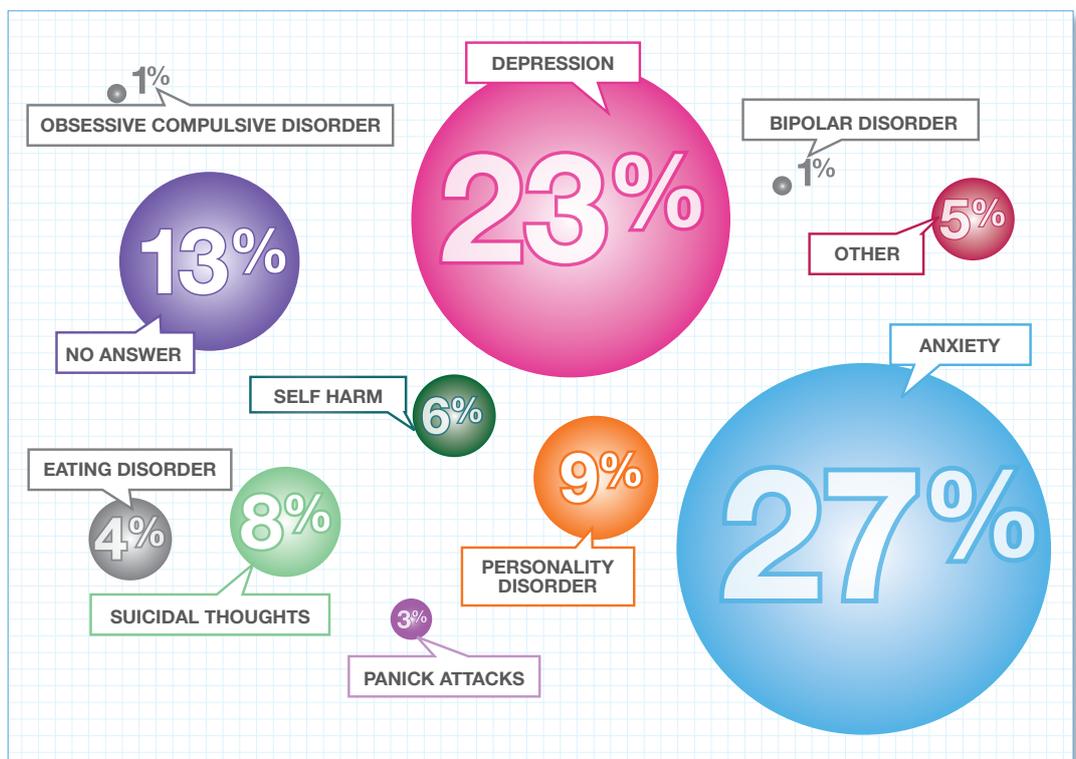


having friends

# Responses from the questionnaire

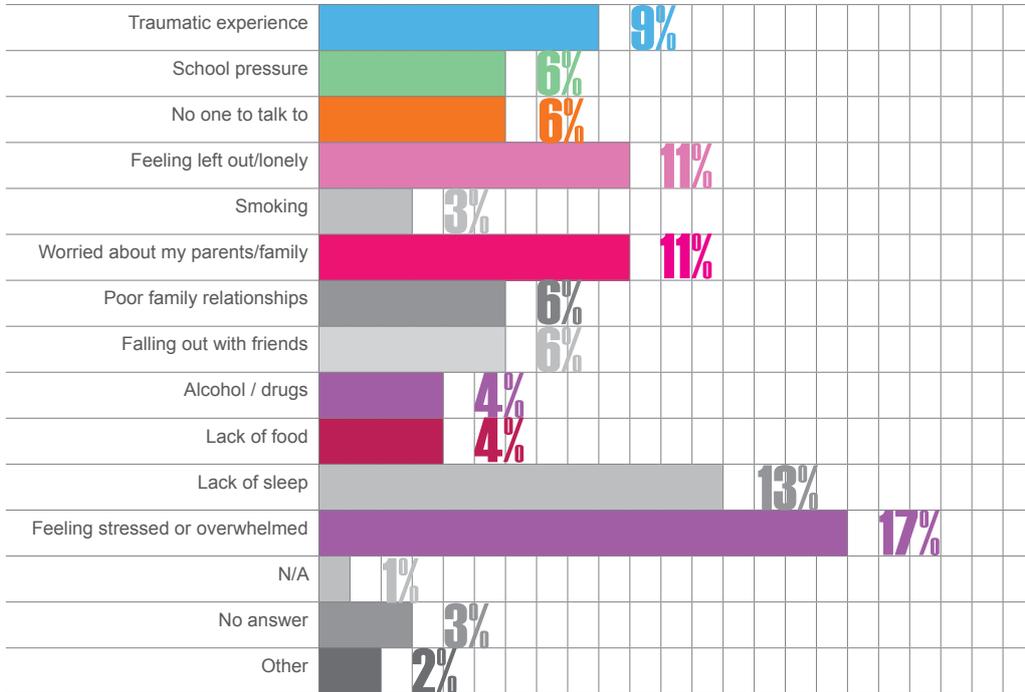
In the past, have you ever experienced any of the following?

Please tick all that apply.

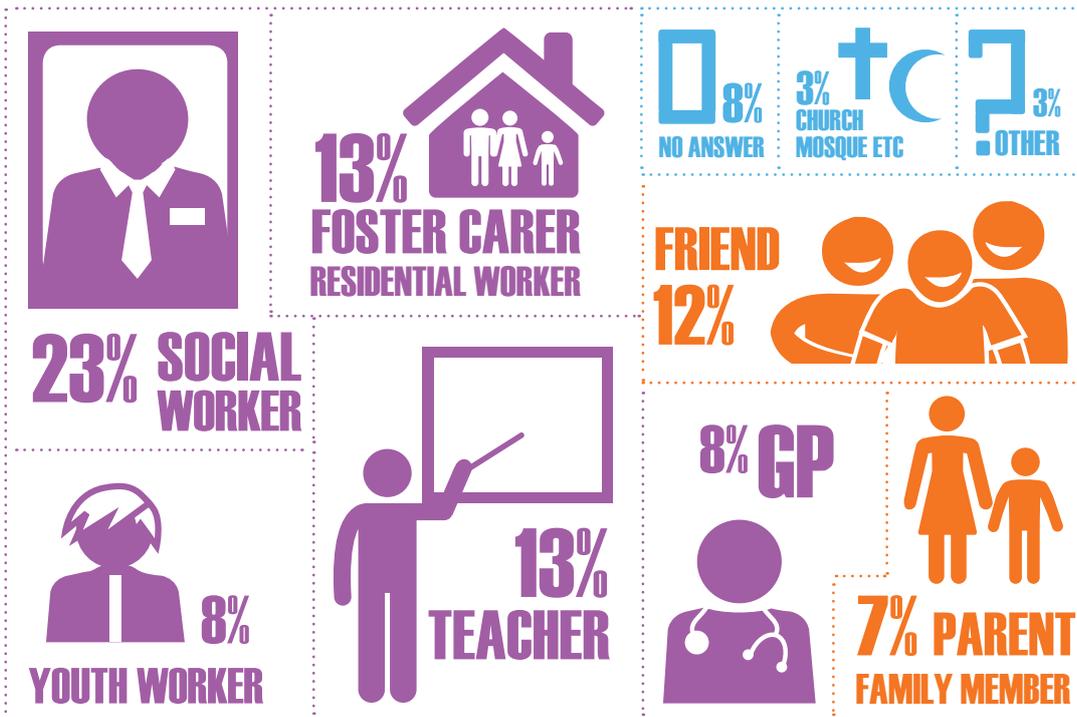


# Responses from young people

If you have experienced any of the above or other emotional difficulties, what do you think has caused it or made it worse?

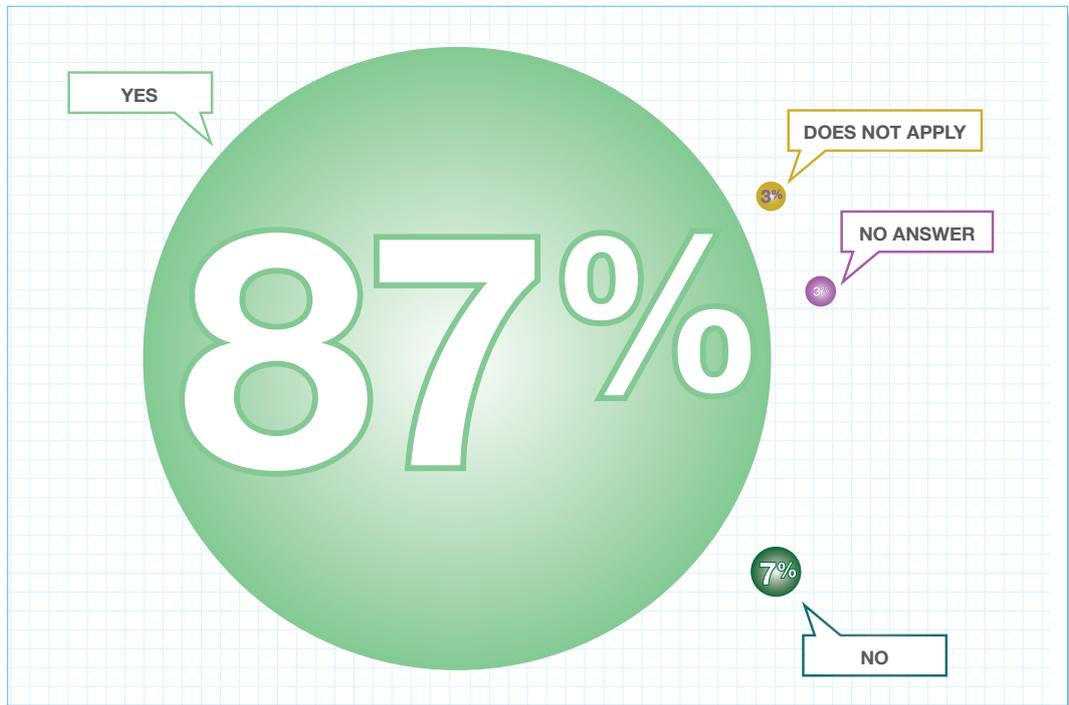


## Who did you ask for help?



# Responses from young people

## Did the help you received make a difference?



## If you had help, what difference did it make?

I have a more positive outlook on life and feel my mental health is improving

Made me open up more and I feel better

Made me more happy

Made me feel proud of myself

Feeling less stressed

I haven't self-harmed since I started family therapy

Helped me to forget about my worries

I have learnt how to control my panic attacks

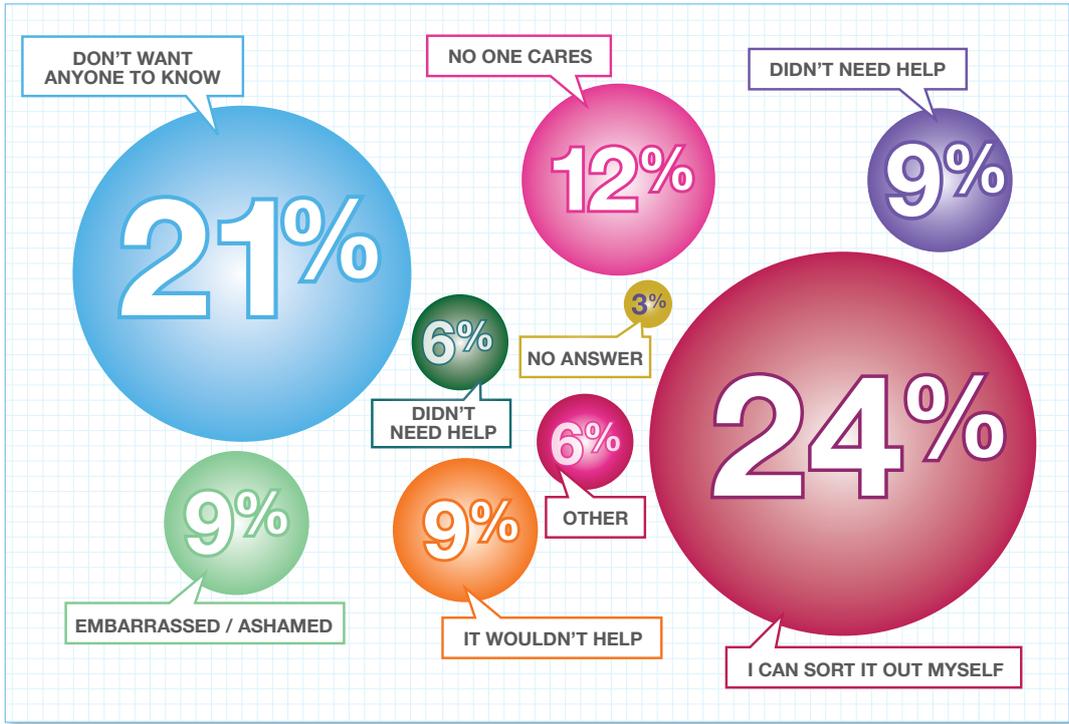
I gained confidence in how to deal with my problem

It helped me to see life in a new light and gave purpose to my life

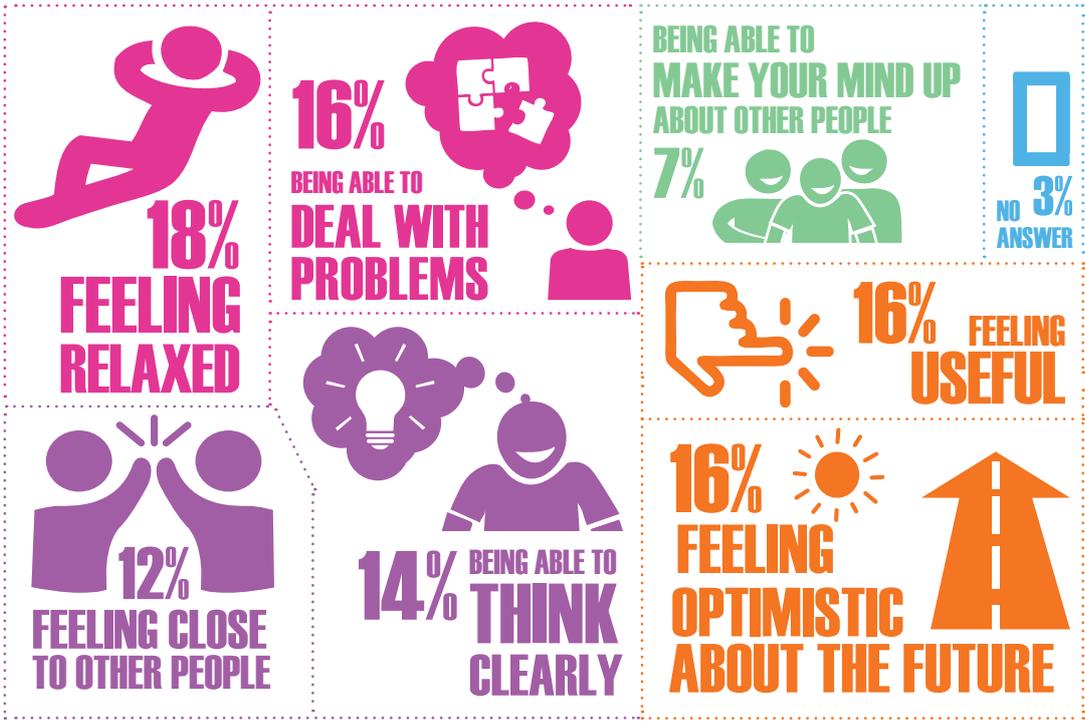
Helped me with my issues and to make plans for the future

I know how to deal with stress

If you didn't ask for help, why not?

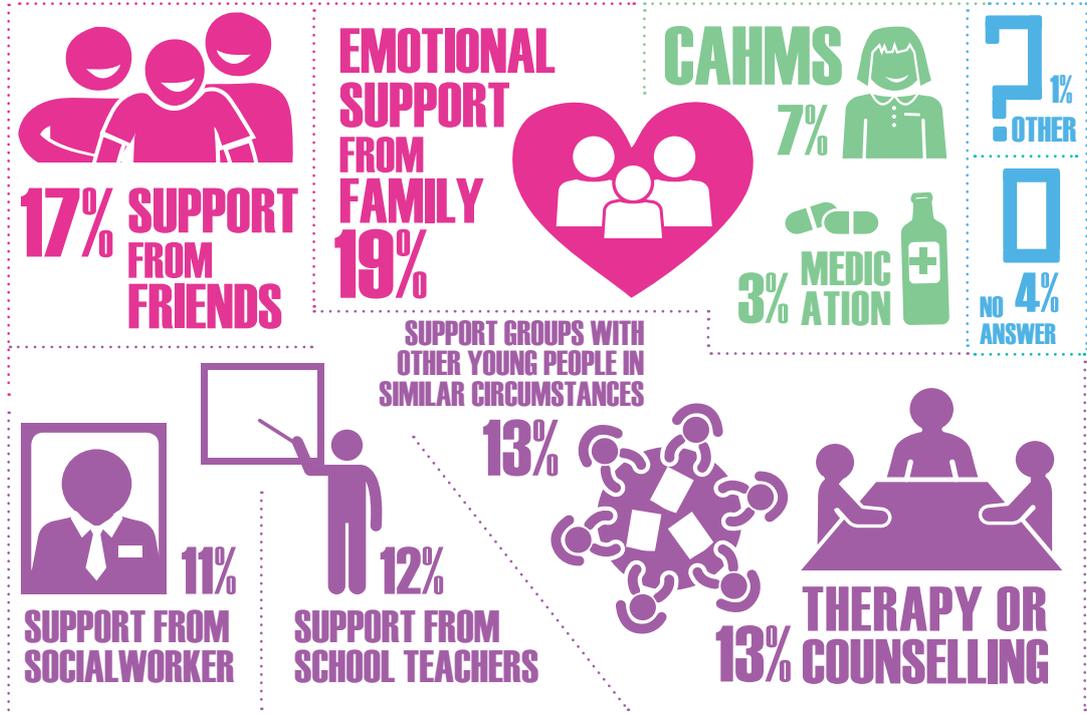


Which of the following are the most important things to you about feeling well? (Mental Health Wellbeing Scale)



# Responses from young people

What do you think would be the best help for young people experiencing emotional difficulties?



Words can not express....

## What do you think services in Camden could do to improve the support for young people experiencing emotional difficulties?

### Support

- Provide continued support from the same person
- Social workers to have more time to talk to young people.



### Information

- Provide better information for young people about the available support, including using digital media platforms
- Have mental health events targeted at certain age groups so you can speak to them on specific issues.

### Different approaches

- Have different activities for young people, support groups and talking with peers about mental health
- Have mental health events targeted at certain age group (16 to 18) so you can speak to them on specific issues.

### Training for staff

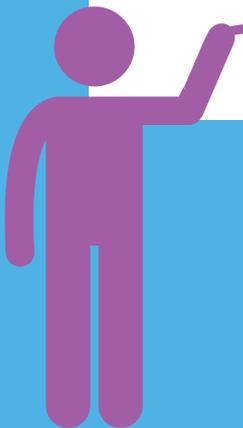
- More training for teachers.

### Working together

- Remove stigma about mental health difficulties and encourage young people to talk about their mental wellbeing.

### Support in schools

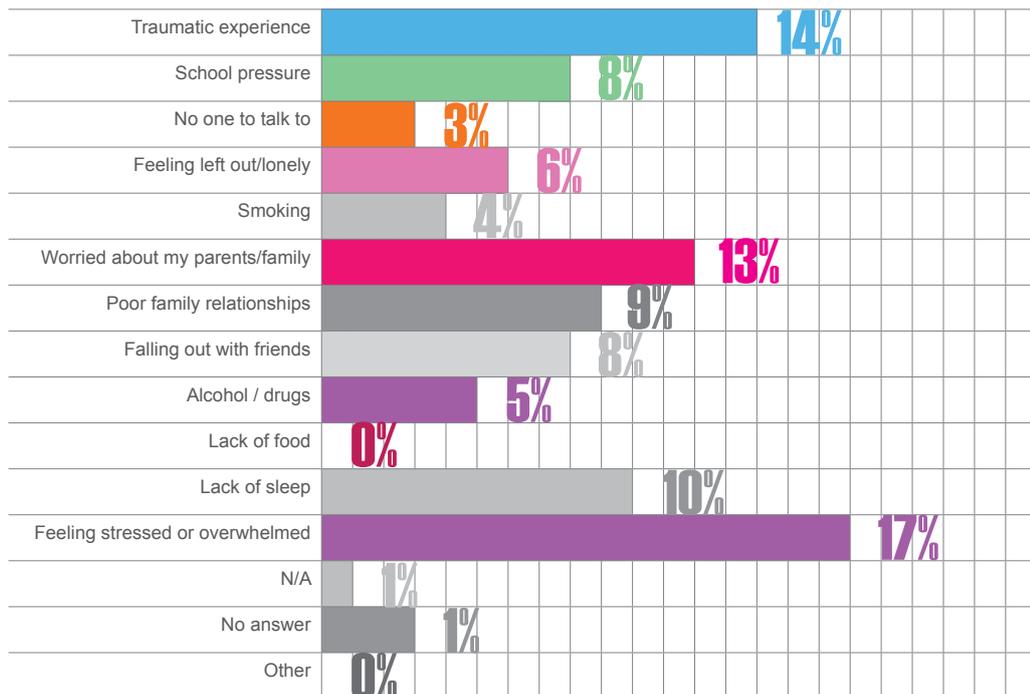
- Have more people at schools for students to talk to.



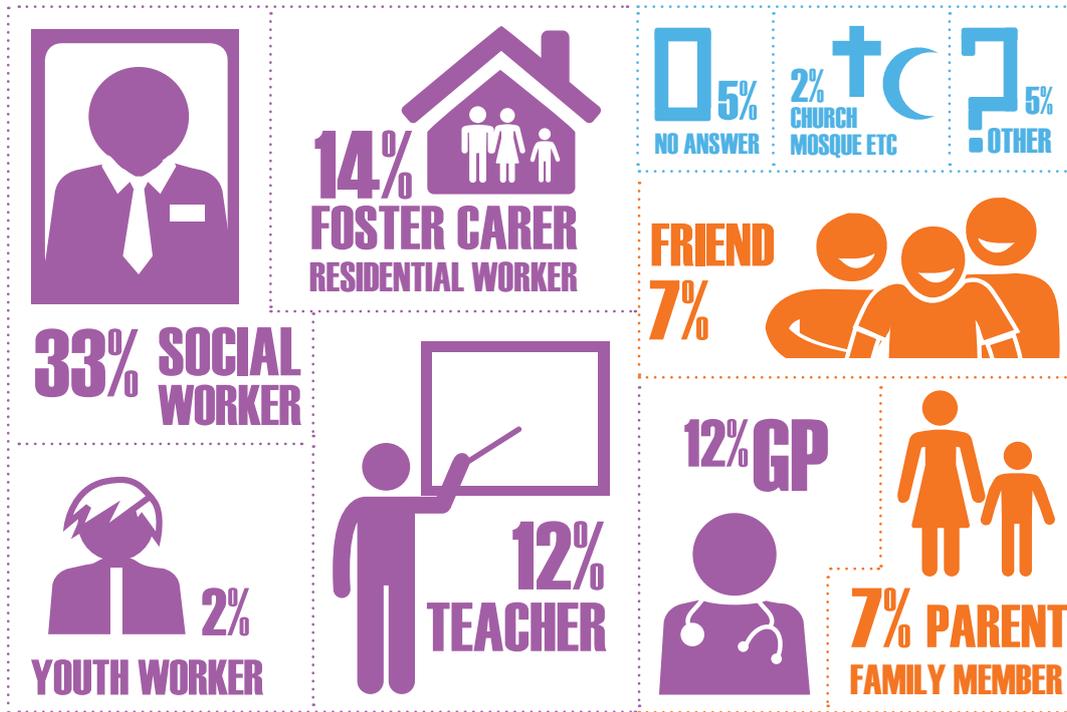
# Responses from parents and carers

We received the following feedback from parents and carers who took part in focus group discussions and from their responses to questionnaires:

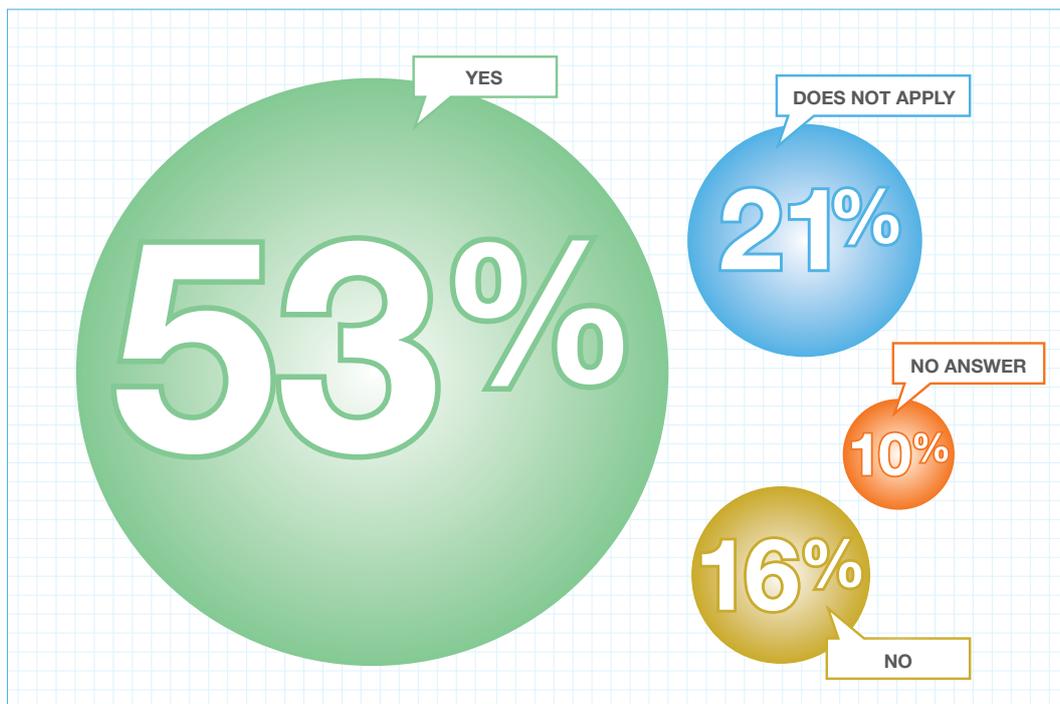
**If your child has experienced emotional difficulties, what do you think has caused it or made it worse?**



If you did ask for help, who did you talk to?



Did the help you received make a difference?



## Responses from parents and carers

If you had help, what difference did it make?

It makes it easier  
if you know you  
are not alone and  
have support

Understanding my  
own emotions and  
those of my child

My child does not blame himself anymore

He understands  
himself better

He is more calm

Has better understanding of the situation

It has helped to boost  
his confidence

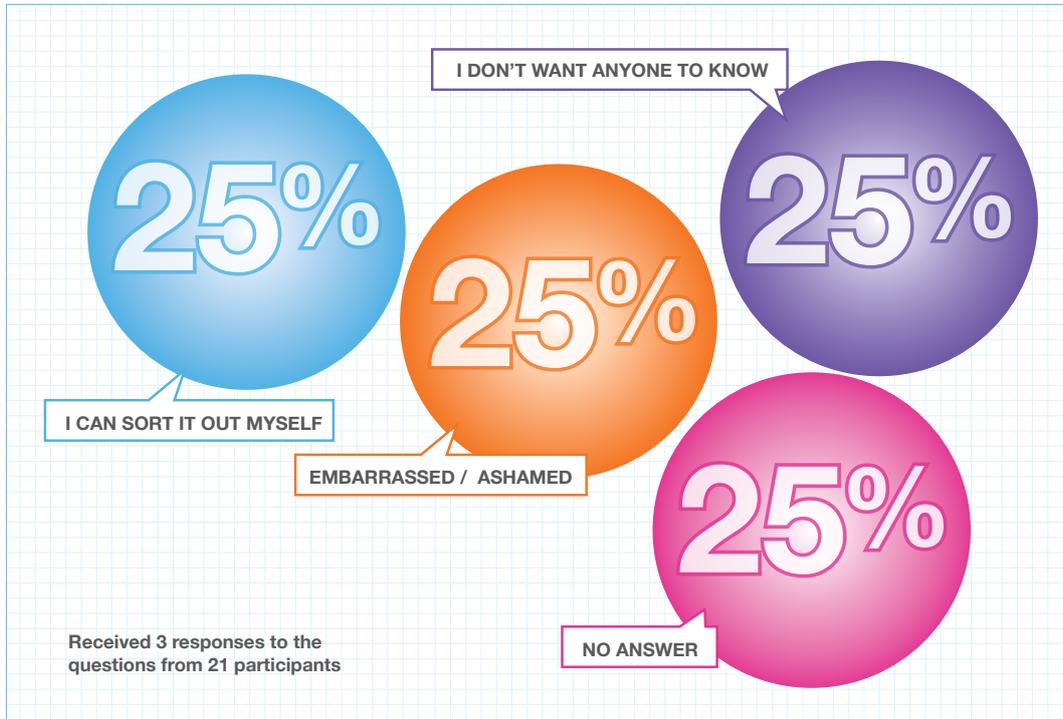
My child's  
school work has  
improved

He is more settled  
and does not miss  
school

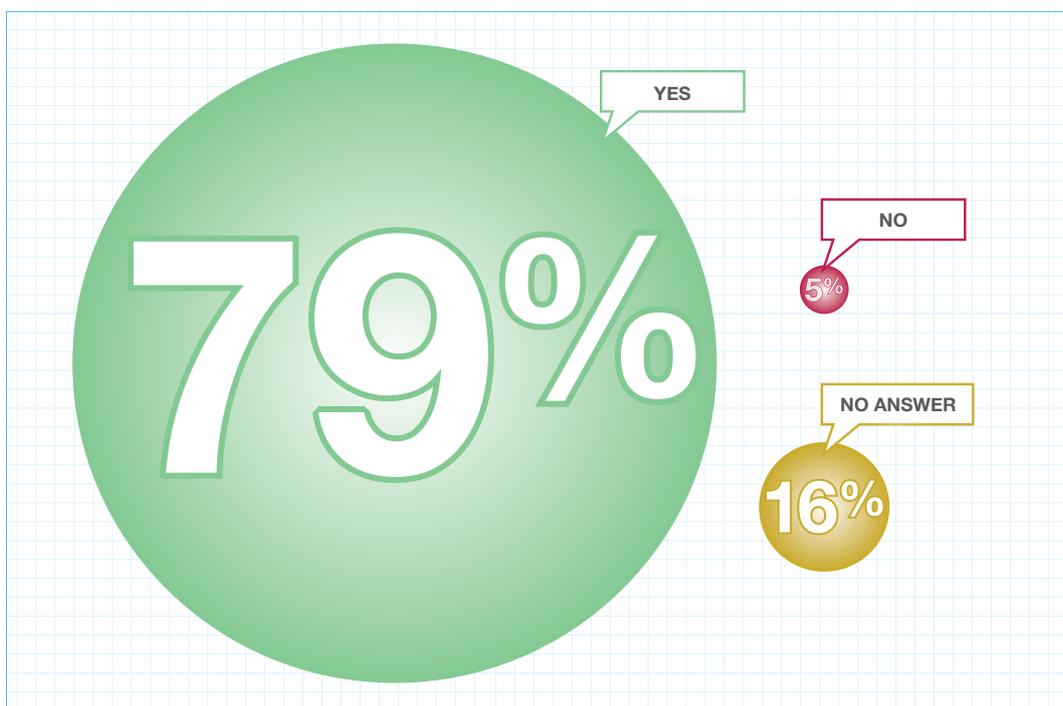
He is now willing to engage in counselling



If you didn't ask for help, why not?

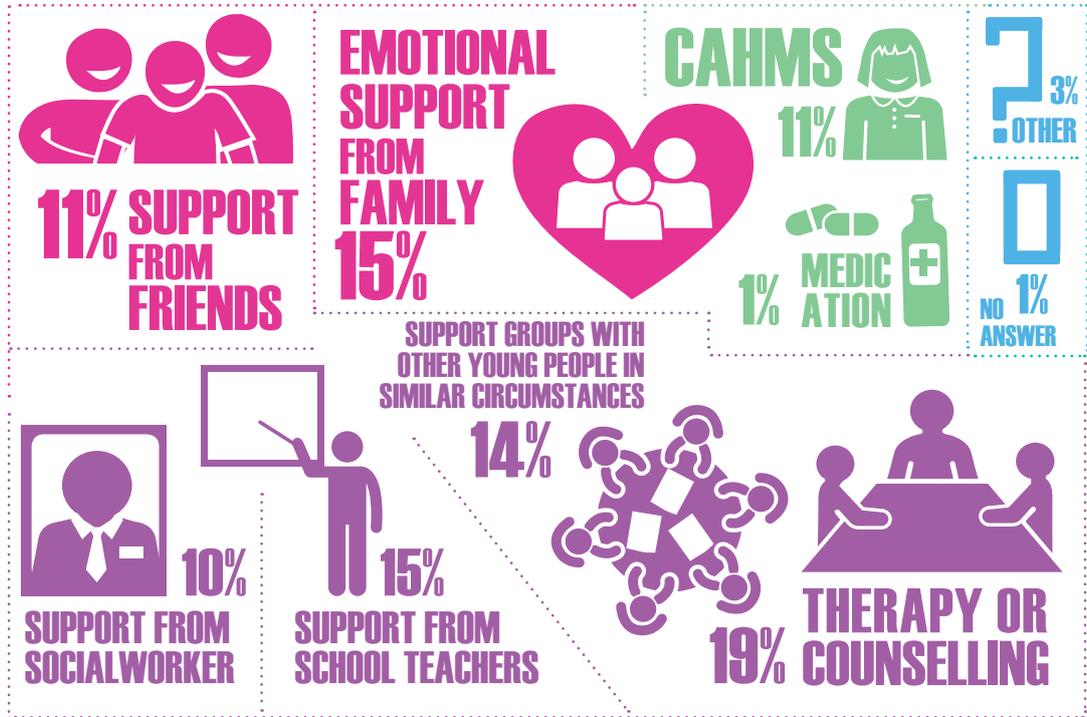


Do you consider yourself well-informed about services available to support your child with mental health and emotional wellbeing?



# Responses from parents and carers

What do you think would be the best help for young people experiencing emotional difficulties?



# What do you think services in Camden could do to improve the support for young people experiencing emotional difficulties?

## Support for parents and carers

- More pathways to support parents: support groups, online support
- Places for parents to go to for information, swap ideas
- Support families.



## Training and information for parents and carers

- Sympathetic training for parents on how to improve relationship with teenagers and be partners on the journey to recovery
- More training for teachers on challenges faced by children with emotional difficulties, dyslexia or ADHD
- More training for foster carers about self-harm.

## A range of different approaches

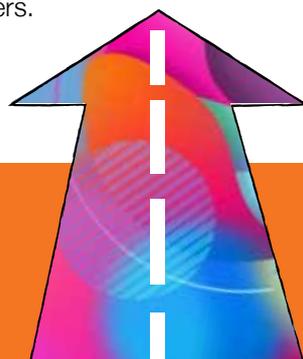
- Not to rely on medication for children with mental health difficulties
- Support in schools
- More support for children in schools
- Independent provider in schools to discuss mental health and wellbeing with parents.

## Specific information

- More information for parents highlighting potential symptoms and step by step guide on how to respond
- Information on who to go to for help if your child refuses to get help
- Help to understand and recognise the triggers.

## Work together

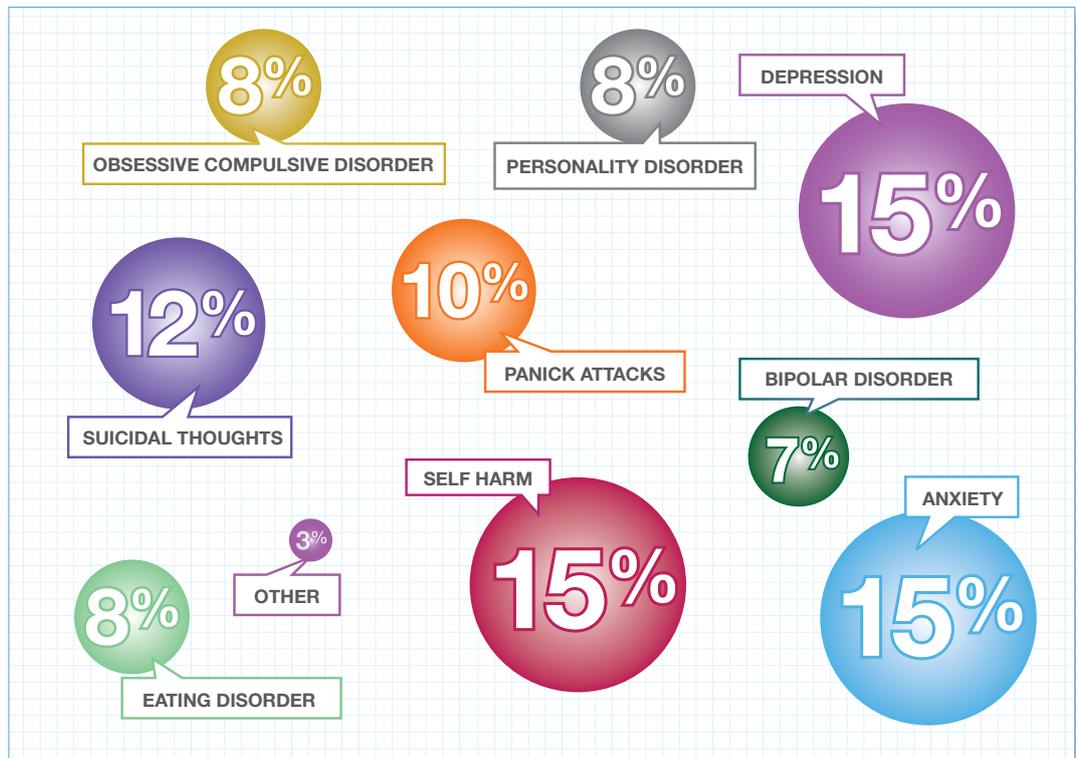
- Work collaboratively with families
- Investment to change service
- Consider different approaches and not only referrals to CAMHS
- Keeping good communication between agencies involved with the family
- Build resilience from early age
- Continued and quality relationship with a significant adult.



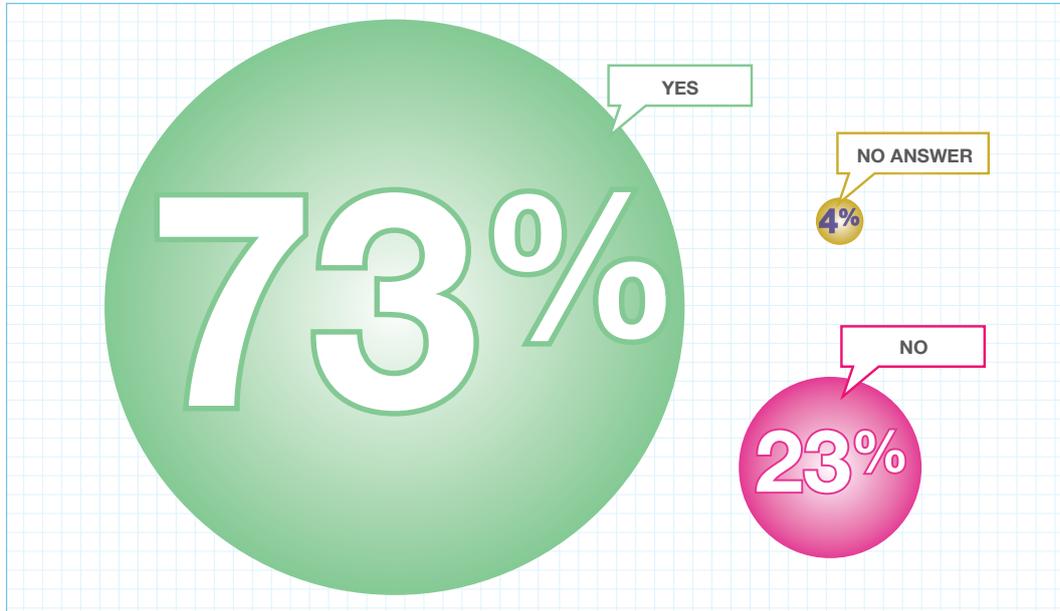
# Responses from professionals

We received the following feedback from staff who were interviewed by the team and from their responses to the questionnaire.

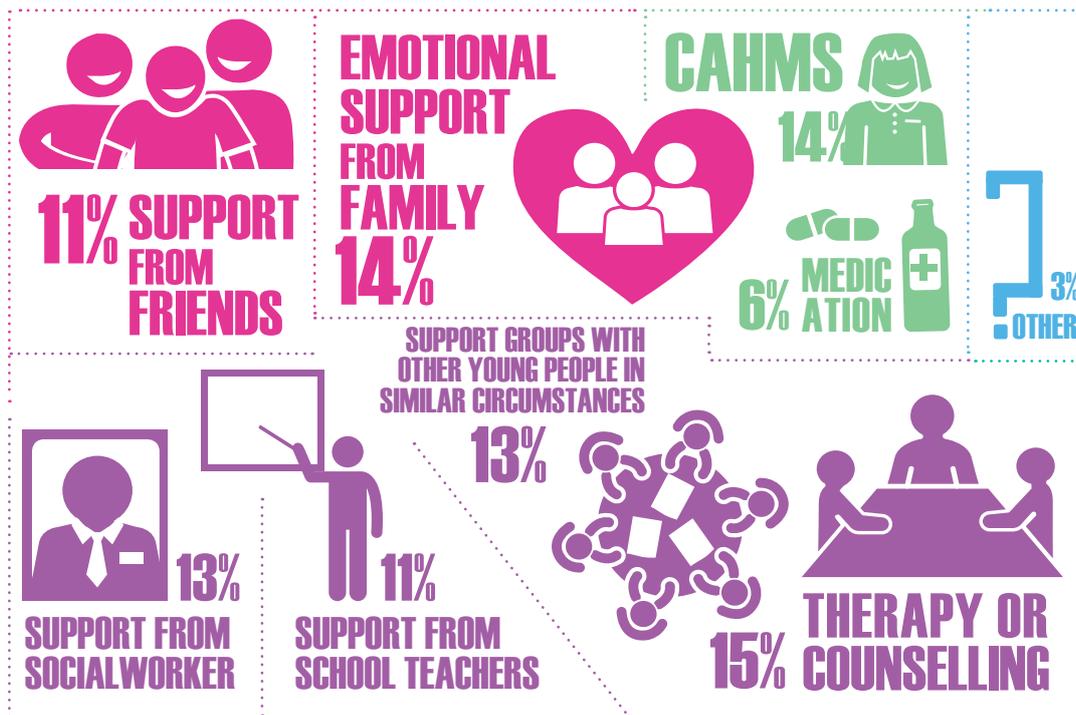
Which of the following difficulties have young people you work with, experienced?



Do you consider yourself well-informed about services available to support children and young people's mental health and emotional difficulties?



What do you think would be the best help for young people experiencing emotional difficulties?



## Responses from professionals

What other support would you like to get from organisations that provide help with children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing?

Better understanding of different diagnoses and how best to support young people

More sharing of resources

More joint thinking and joint working with other organisations

Training and workshops

Workshops for the community

Regular updates to manage and support young people in crisis with mental health

More mentors and mental health advocates

Other organisations to have a good understanding of children in care

Flexible appointments

Not to discharge young people after missing appointments

Consistent person to support young people

Reduce isolation for young people with disabilities

Challenge use of medication for emotional wellbeing for young people with disabilities

In your experience, what are the reasons for young people deciding not to continue with support?

**Barrier 1**

**Not being able to see the benefits**

- Thinking that they can deal with it themselves
- Not seeing there is a problem.

**Barrier 2**

**Worry about what others think**

- Being judged.

**Barrier 3**

**Family influence**

- Being discouraged by the family
- Not being supported by the family.

**Barrier 4**

**Stigma attached to mental health**

- Feeling embarrassed.

**Barrier 5**

**Pressure to share the story**

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Too much information was shared.

**Barrier 6**

**Making yourself vulnerable**

- Re-living the trauma.

**Barrier 7**

**Access to support services**

- Long waiting list
- Change of staff
- No flexible appointment time.

**Barrier 8**

**Past experience of services**

- Sharing their story with a multitude of professionals
- Not trusting professionals and services.



## Responses from professionals

# What do you think services in Camden could do to improve the support for young people experiencing emotional problems?

### Support

- Work with young people even if they display poor engagement
- Ensure young people can have a good relationship with a consistent support worker who they value and trust.

### Access to services

- Ensure young people know how to access support
- Extend CAMHS until 25 - young people need support at the transition stage between children's and adult services
- Provide better access via schools, health and social care and shorter waiting times
- Provide flexible appointment times
- Ensure unaccompanied asylum seeking children have access to specific services and receive specialised support.

### Training

- Have staff with specific skills to support young people with mental health difficulties
- Provide training on how to recognise early signs of emotional difficulties
- Involve young people in delivering the training.

### Support in schools

- Increase availability of peer mentoring at school.



### Information

- Use social media platforms and events for young people.

### Working together

- Campaign to normalise therapy/ counselling for young people – remove stigma of mental health
- Ensure shared values between agencies
- Ensure specific services to support mental health of unaccompanied minors
- Work collaboratively with families.

### Availability of different approaches

- Provide options with flexible hours and flexible location
- Consider drop-in sessions
- Provide more creative approaches.

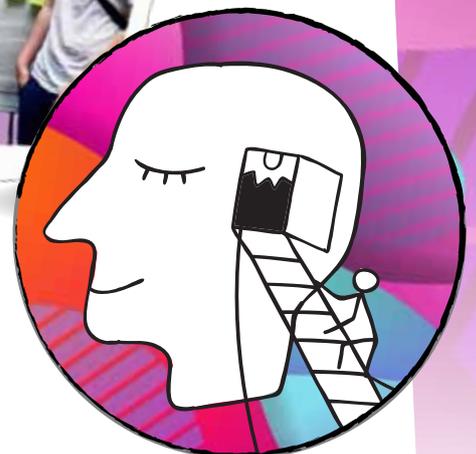
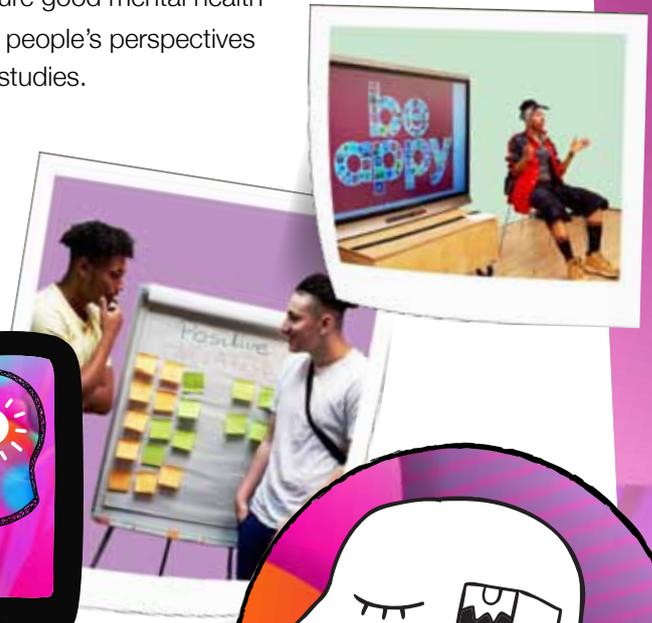
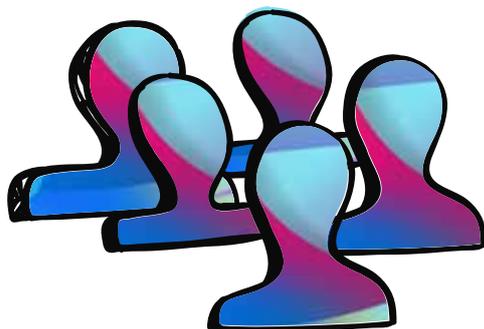
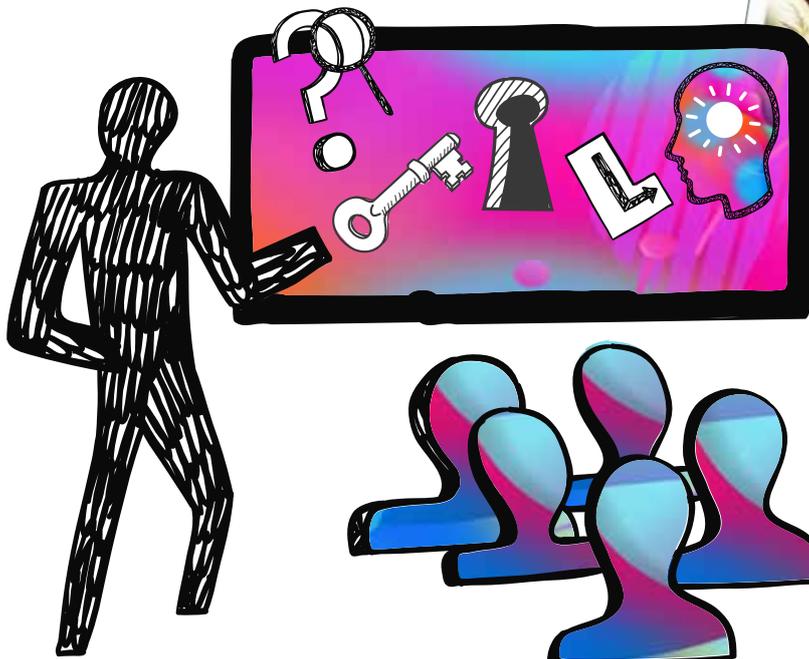
### Voice of young people

- Involve young people in designing services
- Involve young people in delivering training to staff and to peers.

# Would you find the training in mental health of young people useful?

## If yes, what should the training cover?

- Recognising early signs and symptoms of poor emotional wellbeing and mental health in children and young people across the age range
- How to access emergency and ongoing specialist mental health support- what services are available and the referral pathways
- How neglect, abuse and trauma affects young people's mental health
- The impact of drugs and alcohol on mental health
- How to provide effective support to children and young people including mental health 'first aid' and ongoing support
- How to support young people who self-harm, are suicidal or have eating disorders
- How to support parents, carers and families and enable them to provide effective support to their child
- How to support young people to access mental health services
- How to prepare young people for medication and therapy, what to expect, how long the treatment will take, etc
- Diagnosis and what impact it has on young people
- How to better focus on prevention to ensure good mental health
- Young people's perspectives /case studies.



# Individual evaluation of the inspection by Young Inspectors

## Sean

Young Inspectors team co-leader

The most enjoyable part of the project was meeting new people. As a team leader, I found it challenging to have a right balance between expressing authority and at the same time remaining friendly and approachable. The project gave me an insight into the world of professional work, their knowledge and vast experience.

## Hanifa

Young Inspectors team co-leader

I found it pleasantly challenging to have such a mix of characters and experience on the project. It was interesting to see when everyone challenged themselves. The focus group with a room full of people who don't speak English was a new experience and gave an opportunity to develop new communication skills with the aid of interpreters. I found certain topics very hard to deal with due to my own experience.

## Gjesika

Young Inspector

The most enjoyable part of the project was interviewing professionals like psychologists, who gave information about mental health and how much they work to help young people that have difficulties.

Having discussions with other young people in focus groups helped us to decide what recommendations we should make.

I have learnt it is important to be patient in a group and listen to everybody's opinions. I have learnt how much help there is for young people and how much support you can get if you just ask for it.

The project has changed my opinion of what I want to study at university. I really wish I could help everybody with mental health problems and be able to make a difference in someone's life.

# Individual evaluation of the inspection by Young Inspectors

Individual evaluation of the inspection  
by Young Inspectors

## Redwan

Young Inspector

Being part of the team has helped me to get better at understanding and speaking English. I enjoyed meeting other young people. The project helped me to feel better about myself and my problems. I have learnt how to look for information on the computer. I now have a better understanding of services in Camden and how they work together.



## Jessica

Young Inspector

What I found most enjoyable was interviewing senior managers. I met different people and I learnt a lot about mental health from different perspectives. One of the most challenging things for me was coming up with the right questions to interview professionals. We all had different ideas and we had to learn how to include everybody's ideas. I have gained experience in teamwork, planning focus groups and running focus group discussions. This project has helped me to think about what I want to do in the future. What I found most valuable about this project was making new friends with the people I have worked with.



## Jamie - Lee

Young Inspector

I liked meeting and getting to know everyone and learning new things. The project made me aware that I need to improve my motivation and get used to being able to come on time. I have gained communication and teamwork skills as I am not used to working with other people. Also it made me manage my time better and be more organised and independent. Other young people in the team gave me good advice about options to consider for the future. It has made me feel I should be more open to try new opportunities, to be more independent and take more responsibility.



# Key themes and Recommendations

Key themes identified from the consultation responses and from the research are:

1. Importance of removing stigma of mental health so young people are able to seek help and talk about their difficulties.
2. Universal services like schools, colleges and youth clubs have a key role in providing support and early intervention to young people around mental health.
3. Importance of the role of community awareness in recognising early signs of emotional and mental health difficulties.
4. Importance of sustained support from the same professional, to enable young people to develop trust and be able to benefit from the support.
5. Importance of continuing the specialist support for emotional difficulties and trauma experienced by unaccompanied asylum seeking children currently provided by CAMHS and social care.

Key recommendations for the development of a specialist adolescent-centred approach arising from this inspection, include the following:

- 1 Support young people to be involved in making decisions about the help they receive by providing information on the range of services available.
- 2 Monitor the continuity and stability of staff providing support to ensure that stable and enduring relationships are developed so that young people are able to build secure and trusting relationships.
- 3 Work towards developing ways of reducing the waiting time for CAMHS support.
- 4 Raise awareness amongst professionals about cultural differences in the way mental health is perceived.
- 5 Support families to maintain a good relationship with their child to enable children to share emotional difficulties and be supported by their family.
- 6 Consolidate the existing a range of approaches that help young people with mental health difficulties such as: peer support, individual counselling, group support, group activities and strengths based approaches.
- 7 Continue to develop and provide a greater emphasis on mental health in schools, giving children the language to express their mental health needs and provide a safe space to talk.
- 8 Ensure staff are able to recognise the early signs of emotional difficulty.



If you would like to be a **Young Inspector** or would like to know more about the project, please email [elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk](mailto:elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk) or contact us via [www.backchatonline.org.uk](http://www.backchatonline.org.uk)