

# Health Inequalities—Case Study

Youth Recovery & Wellbeing College, Dec 2023

## Identifying the issue

- . The Youth Wellbeing & Recovery College is a unique person-centred service which puts those aged 11–18 at the heart of its provision, development and delivery.
- . There were several drivers behind the development of the Youth Recovery & Wellbeing College, including:
  - . Young people identified a need for an empowering offer of self care and self management so that they are able to better manage their wellbeing and journeys (prevention).
  - . The impact of the pandemic and escalating family stressors from the cost-of-living crisis has led to many young people experiencing increased levels of worry and anxiousness as well as social anxiety, feelings of isolation and helplessness. This has also led to some young people struggling to grow healthy relationships and develop effective social skills.
  - . Young people reported that they felt there was a disconnect with traditional educational and mental health services.
  - . Many young peoples services had been developed based on models for the adult population and did not meet their needs.
  - . A need was identified for preventative and creative support (reducing need for future use of services), reducing risk of declining wellbeing whilst on waiting lists (waiting well) and maintaining wellbeing (joined up discharge pathways).

## Making the Change

This provision was developed in the post-pandemic environment that many young people were faced with in terms of health and wellbeing within the area. Members of the Humber Youth Action Group (HYAG) who have their own lived experiences, collectively voiced their concerns about the increase in mental health challenges faced by their peers and community. Young people wanted a non-clinical approach that felt accessible and that they had ownership of with a sense of community. The primary focus of the Youth Recovery & Wellbeing College was agreed to be an opportunity for young people to meet new people and engagement through positive activity, addressing wellbeing and health in creative ways. The HYAG designed the website, interviewed the Youth Practitioner and co-produced the sessions available. Furthermore, they have been continually been involved as the provision grows further.

Despite the provision initially being delivered on a trial basis, it is now a permanent fixture sitting within children's services. The offer is very flexible; young people wanted a strong digital offer, as well as welcoming face to face interactions. Both of these have been built into the provision, meaning that a variety of needs are catered for.

There is a strong digital offer which was developed with the HYAG. The digital offer operates as a platform for instant access to the provisions offers such as the creative sessions available, online bitesize learning course, podcasts (lived experience) and resources as well as accessibility support features (session location pin drop, tags to pre-empt attendance worries). All of this is built into the digital offer via the website design which was carefully created with young people.

The thread of coproduction runs through the service, meaning it is fluid and responds and reacts to the needs of young people, who feel a part of its ongoing development. Peer support and relationship building is a key part of the Recovery & Wellbeing College, giving young people the opportunity to develop positive relationships based on shared experiences and understanding in relaxed and non-judgemental environments.

Young people also have access to volunteering and skills development opportunities such as training modules available. A lot of emphasis has been place on 'what is on in your local community' and encouraging young people to get involved so they feel integrated. The team have also supported attendance at LGBTQIA community events.

The service champions a joined up approach to support, through linking in with other services so that young people can build trusting relationships and not need to retell their story unnecessarily.

The Youth Practitioner has also been working with identified YP in schools and colleges as well as home educated, who are outside mainstream provision, via community outreach work. They have also worked jointly with the Child Looked After team and various CAMHS teams. They have supported discharge pathways by in-reach into Inspire and supports transition through into community.



## Impact

The Youth Practitioner service sees a large volume of young people. On average the provision is having contact with 120 young people each month (since September 23—see below):

<p><i>Bishop Burton College—deliver two sessions per month</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group provides support for around 12-16 young people</li> <li>• The group are aged between 16 and 18 years old</li> </ul>	<p><i>Willberforce College—deliver two sessions per month</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group provides support for around 12-16 young people</li> <li>• The group are aged between 16 and 18 years old</li> </ul>	<p><i>Kelvin Hall—deliver sessions on weekly basis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group provides support for 7 young people</li> <li>• The group are aged between 13 and 14 years old</li> </ul>	<p><i>Wyke 6<sup>th</sup> College—deliver session once a month</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-to-ones with 4 young people</li> <li>• They are aged between 16-18 years old</li> </ul>	<p><i>Inspire NHS—deliver sessions on weekly basis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group provides support for around 1-4 young people</li> <li>• The group are aged between 11-18</li> </ul>	<p><i>Home-Ed Group, Kingston Youth Centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group provides support for around 2-7 young people</li> <li>• The group are aged between 13 and 15 years old</li> </ul>
---	--	--	---	---	---

- The provision Youth Recovery & Wellbeing College provides instant access for young people, where often young people are facing lengthy waiting lists for mainstream services.
- Anecdotally, it is recognised that access to support through the Youth Practitioner and Youth Recovery & Wellbeing College has reduced demand upon mainstream services through its early intervention and preventative approach.

## Learning

- The **value of coproduction**—involving Young People has meant that **the service has been truly coproduced**. This means that it is **able to reach a wider pool of young people** through its **careful consideration of accessibility and activities**. This approach has been embedded within the provision and so **it is able to continually respond and adapt** to the changing needs of young people.
- Young people need specially designed services that work for them, **not adult services adapted for children**.
- **Collaboration with community partners** has been important to reach those young people who may not ordinarily access services and support.
- **A pilot of the provision was helpful** to gain better understand of the needs of young people and evidence how well the provision could meet these needs. This has **led to securing central funding** to continue delivery.

## Feedback

*"It's so fun. I have made new friends and found things to do help with my energy."*

*"I feel listened to and part of something. Thank you."*

*"Taking ownership of what we do with Mez is the best."*

*"My daughter absolutely loved the sessions. I'm really happy she has found something she enjoys. She has confidence issues and that often gets in the way of her doing anything away from me... so yay!" - Parent*

*"Mez has provided our young people with opportunities to express themselves in alternative ways that feel less scary for them such as through lyrics or poetry. Sessions have been extremely flexible to meet the needs of the young people on our ward and Mez has quickly built relationships with young people who are often slow to trust others. Inspire strives to provide young people with links to services in the community upon discharge and the in-reach sessions from the youth recovery college have been key to this, letting our young people know there is a place for them to continue to build on their skills with staff who are already familiar to them." - Advanced Occupational Therapist - Inspire CAMHS Inpatient Service*

## Next Steps

- In the future, there are plans to progress a business case to further develop the Youth Recovery & Wellbeing College into a sustainable model.
- To continue to develop the service responsibly based upon feedback from young people and carers.
- Despite efforts of community outreach, it has been recognised that the majority of young people accessing the provision are White British. There are ambitions to further explore this and understand any barriers to access for those from minority groups so the provision can be adapted further to meet needs.