

Engaging Year 8 PSHE
students:
a pilot project

6

Local health
and care
shaped by you

Contents	Page
Overview	3
What we did	3
What students said	3
1. Transitions	3
2. Mental health and wellbeing	4
3. Physical health	5
Evaluation of the sessions	6
Making improvements to the pilot	6
Next steps	7
Thank you	7
Appendix: PSHE session plans	8

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Overview

We were approached by Devizes School and asked to support them in designing PSHE sessions for Year 8 students for one term. The delivery of these sessions would support the school with their Healthy Schools accreditation process.

What we did

We developed a session plan which would be delivered by Healthwatch Wiltshire representatives and PSHE teachers covering topics including:

- Who is Healthwatch Wiltshire
- A community mapping activity
- Sharing experiences of services
- Looking at case study examples
- A survey about health and wellbeing support
- Identifying causes of stress and coping mechanisms

The first of the three sessions was delivered by a Healthwatch Wiltshire representative, the remaining were delivered by the PSHE teacher.

Six Year 8 classes took part in the sessions from February until April.



What students said

As part of the sessions, we developed a survey for the students to complete. The survey asked questions around the transition from primary to secondary school and their experiences of support for mental and physical health. 139 students responded to the survey.

1 Transitions

When asked about the transition from primary school to secondary school, 65% of students said that they felt excited and the same number nervous, illustrating that some students felt both excited and nervous during the transition. 40% said that they felt stressed. Many young people said that less homework at the start and more support such as induction days and maps of the school would have been helpful during the transition phase.

2 Mental health and wellbeing

82% of students said that the school taught them about mental health and wellbeing. Just over half of these said that they felt that school taught them what they would want to know about mental health.

Of those that felt they weren't taught about mental health (18%), just over half said that they would like to be, and the top topics that they'd like to know more about included understanding and managing stress, depression and self-harm.

"Great as it helped me with my illness."

"When I was younger they used easier language to understand."

"They listen and gave me an offer to see them again and whether you wanted help and to sort them out."

"School was amazing, however my counsellor was very nice but I didn't feel as though she helped me as much as I thought she would." (referring to support from CAMHS)

Most young people said that they would like to be taught about mental health and wellbeing in PSHE lessons and assemblies.

72% of students said that they knew where to access support for mental health and wellbeing and 10% of these students said that they had accessed support from CAMHS. There were mixed experiences of the support received from CAMHS.

Of those that received support from CAMHS almost all said that they felt they were treated with respect, listened to and that they received enough support.

When stressed and feeling under pressure, the students felt that family members such as parents, siblings and grandparents and their friends were the most helpful.



Photo by Tim Gander

3 Physical health

“She treated me nicely and made it so I felt better but didn’t force me to do something I didn’t want to do.”

“OK, however the nurses aren’t there all the time and it isn’t very private due to the small room.”

The majority of students said that they knew where to go if they had a health concern at school, and 64% of students said that they had visited the school nurse. There were mixed views on their experiences of the school nurse but most students said that they felt respected, listened to and that they received enough support.

79% of students said that some teachers were helpful if they needed support, and 75% said that teachers would signpost them on to other services that may be able to help.

Most students felt that there was enough information about support available for them at school, and the preferred way to receive this was online, posters and verbally in assemblies.



The students spent one session identifying what was good, not so good and what could be improved about services that they had visited. They focussed on several services including doctors surgeries, dentists, orthodontists, opticians and hospitals. There was a similar theme through all of these in that they were positive about the quality of the treatment received, but said that they often had a long waiting time and that the waiting rooms weren’t very young people friendly. Some suggestions they made included being kept informed if there was a long wait time, increased appointment availability and general improvements to waiting areas. Some other comments included:

“They didn’t do a lot just sent me home.”

“It’s a nice experience at the Dentist, you get stickers and there are lots of toys in the waiting room.”

“It’s irritating having to go to the orthodontist in Bath. I go all the way there for 5 minutes and it means I have to miss lots of school.”

“I go to the optician and the appointment is quick but then I have to wait to get the results. Then it’s a different person that helps me choose my glasses.”

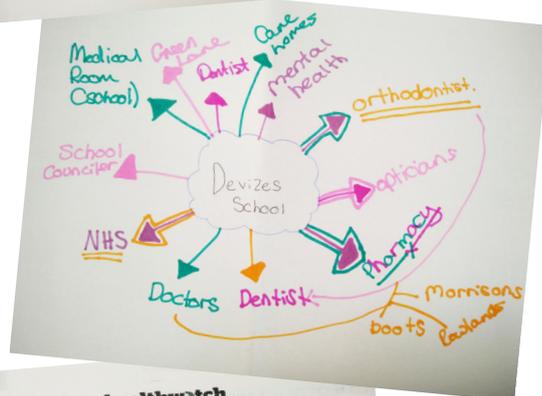
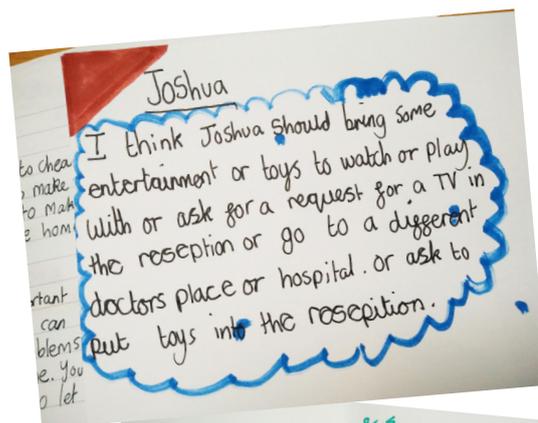
Evaluation of the sessions

We spoke with four students who had taken part and the PSHE lead for the school to get their feedback on the sessions. The students said that they had enjoyed the group work and discussions that the sessions had brought.

They all said that they had enjoyed the community mapping activity and felt that they had learnt about services that were available for them, for example, none of these four students knew about the school counsellor within school or about the NHS Treatment Centre in Devizes. This seemed to be a valuable exercise in raising awareness of services available locally.

The students said that the survey was a good length and that they liked the inclusion of videos which helped to break it up.

They said that the case studies had provoked discussion within their groups, but it was noted that the teachers didn't have much knowledge about services that could support those young people.



Making improvements to the pilot

The sessions were well received by students, and the teachers felt the sessions plans were deliverable, but a few suggestions were made for the future:

1. It was noted that it would have been useful to have a factsheet of all health and care services locally that the teachers could use to prompt the students during activities, particularly the community mapping exercise.
2. The case study activity could be adapted to include a matching exercise, where the students match the case study with support options. This would give students more ideas of services that could be available to them, and be less onerous on the teacher to explain different services. It would also be useful for the teacher to have a factsheet explaining the services that would be available to support those in the case studies, so that they could expand on discussion and prompt if necessary.
3. Teachers also suggested improvements to the way the worksheets were designed and laid out, making it easier for them and the students.

Next steps

Healthwatch Wiltshire will produce a *You Said, We Did* report which illustrates the impact of the pilot project.

The data and intelligence gathered from the students who took part is being used by the school to make improvements.

Healthwatch Wiltshire will offer these session plans to other secondary schools in Wiltshire.

Thank you

Healthwatch Wiltshire would like to thank Devizes school, PSHE teachers and Year 8 students who took part in these sessions. Thanks also to our dedicated volunteers who delivered some of these sessions, giving up 3 hours of their time.



It should also be acknowledged that the findings of this pilot project mirror those of the Young Listeners project in other schools across Wiltshire.

Appendix: PSHE session plans

SESSION 1: ACTIVITY ONE

5 minutes

Who is Healthwatch Wiltshire?

Healthwatch Wiltshire is the county's independent health and care champion. It exists to ensure that people are at the heart of care.

Dedicated teams of staff and volunteers listen to what people like about local health services, and what could be improved. These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations, so together a real difference can be made.

Healthwatch Wiltshire can also help people find the information they need about health and care services in their area.

We also have a young person's group called YouthWatch. This is a way that children and young people can get involved and make sure that their voices are heard too.

Animation explaining who we are and what we do - <https://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/>

SESSION 1: ACTIVITY TWO

15 minutes

Why talk to us and why should we listen?

This activity is designed to introduce the concept of Healthwatch and recognise the benefits of feedback.

What services do you use?

Ask the group to consider what services they already use or have experience of and note them down. For younger children this is likely to be limited to Doctors, dentist and possibly hospitals and opticians. For older groups this may also include services such as care homes and specialist services.

Why do you use these services?

Ask the group why they use these services and to consider why they are important. It may be useful to have a conversation about the variety of reasons that people access services and older groups might explore the fact that health care is free in this country - why is that important? How are health services paid for? Should people pay through their taxes? Is there a need for private health care? Ask the group to write their thoughts on the sheet below.

Why should we listen?

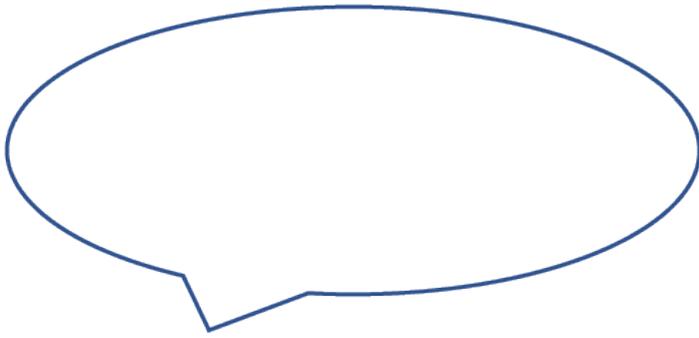
Explain that Healthwatch has been set up to listen to people's feedback about health and social care services. Ask the group to consider why this is important. What are the benefits of telling an organisation such as Healthwatch about your experiences?

Explain that Healthwatch have the ability to share the thoughts and feedback of your group with the 'decision makers' within health and social care services so the work that you are doing can genuinely make a difference.

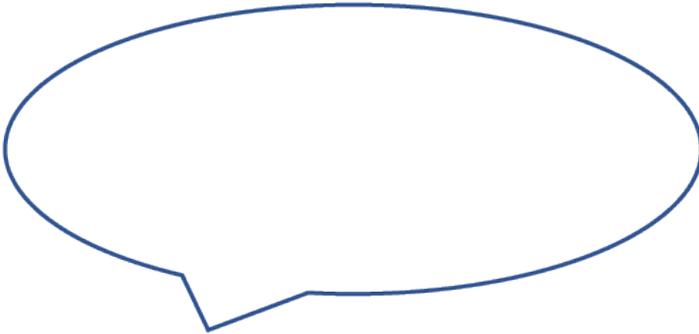
Why talk to us and why should we listen?

Healthwatch Wiltshire would like to get your feedback about local health and social care services but why do you think we would like to do this? Use this sheet to consider what services you already use, why you use them and the reasons why we might like to hear your thoughts, experiences and feedback.

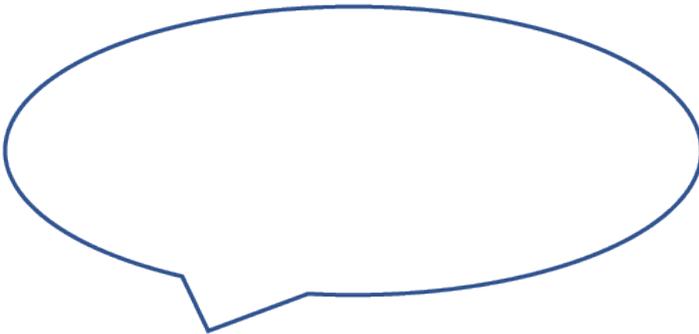
What services do you already use or have experience of?



Why do you use these services?



Why is it important for Healthwatch to listen to your feedback?



SESSION 1: ACTIVITY THREE

20 minutes

What does a 'healthy community' look like?

This 'draw and write' activity is a good starting point for discussion around health and social care services. It can be carried out with a small group or a whole class.

Start by asking the group to draw your school in the middle of a large page and add services that pupils feel are important. The idea is that this pulls together a wide range of different services/places that support physical health (health centres, hospitals, dentists) and well-being (park, swimming pool).

This can be done as an idealistic activity in terms of the services that everyone would like to see but also acts as a good discussion point for the services that are actually available in your area too. Any services that you don't have locally could form a starting point for discussion as to why these services aren't available and why it might be beneficial to have them closer.

Older groups may move into discussions around more complex issues that are part of a 'healthy community' such as social, environmental and economic factors.

Alongside health and social care provision such as hospitals, doctors dentists etc. You could also consider wider issues including:

- Lifestyle choices -diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking, drugs
- Culture -creativity, equal opportunities
- Living & working conditions - Housing, transport
- Community - public spaces, safety, pride
- Education - schools, classes, literature

SESSION 2: ACTIVITY ONE

25 minutes

Health and Wellbeing Survey

Why are we asking you to fill in this questionnaire?

The best way to find out how children are doing and what support they might need in their local area is to ask them themselves. That's why we'd like you to help us find out more about what young people really think about emotional wellbeing, mental health and the way your school engages with these topics. We're inviting children and young people aged to fill in a short online questionnaire during school time.

What questions will we ask?

The questions we will ask you have been developed by our team. We ask questions like 'Does your school teach your about mental health and wellbeing?'

What will happen to the questionnaire once you've completed it?

We will link your answers to existing data held by your local authority, which is Wiltshire County Council. Linking this data will help us to find out if services are meeting the needs of children and families. All the information and data will be kept safe and confidential and will remain anonymous. This means that no one will know your responses, not even your teachers or parents.

How long will it take?

The survey should take no more than 25 minutes. But don't worry, you won't be answering questions for that length of time. We have designed it to be interactive, so you will be shown several videos. We hope that it'll also teach you a thing or two about mental health and wellbeing. After watching each video, please move on to the next set of questions.

Other things you need to know...

If at any point this questionnaire causes you distress or emotional discomfort, please feel free to stop and tell your teacher. Alternatively, you can call Healthwatch Wiltshire for a private and anonymous conversation on 01225 434218.

SESSION 2: ACTIVITY ONE

20 minutes

Case Studies

Below are four fictional case studies about young people and their experiences of various health and social care services. Share these case studies with the young people taking part and ask them to carefully read through each one.

It may be useful to have an open discussion about each case study before asking each group or individual to complete the worksheet. Each worksheet is designed to promote discussion around how each young person feels and how to make each situation better.

Things to consider:

- How does this young person feel and why?
- Do they have access to enough information and advice?
- Are they safe?
- Are they being treated well by professionals?
- Are there improvements that could be made to the environment around them?

1. Doctors Surgery



Joshua's mum has to go and see her doctor every month.

Joshua has to go with her every time.

Sometimes they have to wait for over an hour and he gets very bored.

Joshua Age 7

2. Young Carer



Emma is a young carer, this means that she looks after her mum at home.

When she gets home from school she has to cook dinner for her mum and her younger brother, then she has to do some cleaning before she can do any homework.

She gets very tired and finds it difficult to concentrate in school.

Sometimes she feels like she needs some help but she doesn't know who to talk to.

Emma Age 13

3. Care Home



Lucy's Grandma lives in a care home because she can no longer live on her own.

Lucy visits her grandma every week with her mum and dad.

Lucy enjoys seeing her grandma but sometimes she gets bored because there isn't much to do.

Lucy sometimes worries that her Grandma might be bored too.

Lucy Age 6

4. Hospital



Harry has broken his leg and needs to have a small operation in hospital.

He has never had to stay in hospital before and he is very scared.

He will have to stay in the hospital over night and he is worried about being on his own.

Everyone at the hospital has been really nice and friendly but sometimes he doesn't understand everything the doctor tells him.

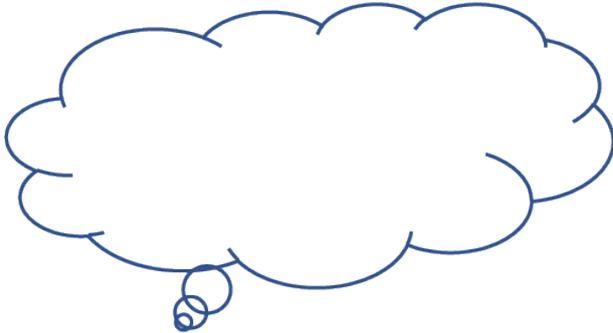
The doctors use complicated words but he is too scared to ask them what they mean.

Harry Age 12

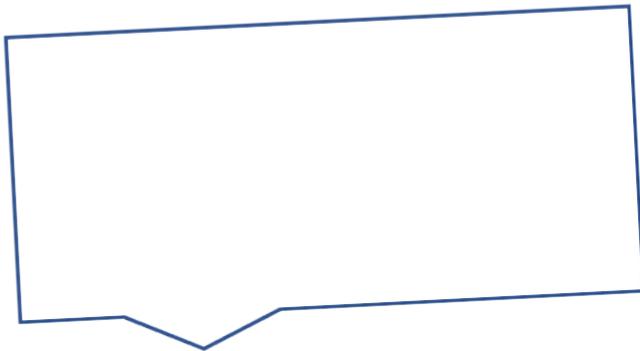
Case Studies

Read through your case study carefully and have a go at describing what the young person might be thinking. How are they feeling about their situation? Then consider what they might need to ask for to make the situation better. What could be improved? Are they safe? Are they being treated well? Do they have enough information?

What are they thinking?



What do they need to ask for and what could be done to make the situation better?



SESSION 3: ACTIVITY ONE

25 minutes

Thinking Hats

This simple 'Thinking Hat' activity will help us to understand the things that matter most to the young people in your school.

This task ultimately helps pupils to structure their thoughts and provides a way for pupils to sort through a problem.

They must assess: facts of the situation, disadvantages, advantages, feelings and alternative ideas, before finally making a decision.

The activity is flexible and can be carried out in a number of ways. It could be done in pairs or as a group activity. There could be a whole class discussion to stimulate thoughts and feedback or individuals could be given the worksheets to complete on their own.

It may be that you would like to talk about all services or just focus on one. The activity is designed to be simple and flexible, so it can give young people the best opportunities to feedback to Healthwatch. The service that receives the most feedback by Healthwatch Wiltshire is doctor's surgeries but we would like to stimulate discussion around a wide range of services that may be relevant to the young people in your school or setting.

Depending on the age of the young people taking part and the availability of services in your area you may want to consider focussing on:

- Hospitals (as a patient or visitor)
- Dentist
- Optician
- Care homes
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Thinking Hats

Healthwatch Wiltshire are working together to capture young people’s thoughts, views, and opinions of local health and social care.

Think of recent visit to a local health or social care service.

Which service are you commenting on?

Yellow Hat Thinking What were the good things about the service and your visit?	Black Hat Thinking What were the not so good things about the service and your visit?	Green Hat Thinking How could the staff and others working their make the experience better for yourself and others?

SESSION 3: ACTIVITY TWO

20 minutes

Personal first aid kit

Everyone can create their own emotional first aid kit.

Ask them to fold the page in half. On one side write down things that cause them stress/ make them upset or angry. On the other side ask them to write something that they do to help themselves when they feel stressed, upset or angry.

Note that some things they do for their physical health are also good for their mental health.

Encourage them to include things that they haven’t done for a while or may need to do in the future.

Encourage everyone to share one thing to the rest of the class.

Please share all information you gather/ feedback sheets with Healthwatch Wiltshire.

Why not get involved?



healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk



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