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Young Minds Matter

Mental health and wellbeing report



This document was written by the **Welsh Youth Parliament's Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee**. It is an easy read version of 'Young Minds Matter - Welsh Youth Parliament, Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee'.

December 2022

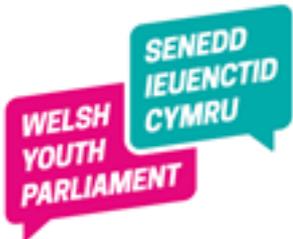
How to use this document



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Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 28**.



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Introduction



The **Welsh Youth Parliament** is a way to talk about problems that affect the lives of children and young people in Wales.



We are the members of the **Welsh Youth Parliament's Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee**. We formed in June 2022.



Mental health is how someone is feeling in their mind.



Wellbeing means being happy, healthy and comfortable with life and what you do.



We are a group of 22 young people aged between 11 and 18 years old.



Over the last few months, we have been hearing about mental health and **wellbeing** from young people from all over Wales.



This has helped us understand their experiences. And how they would like things to change.



This work follows on from our 2020 report called **Let's Talk About Mental Health**.



Many of the ideas from that report are still important. We want to see how young people's lives are now since 2020.



Thank you to the **Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing** for telling us about the Government's work in this area.

Thank you to all the young people who helped us:



- Lots came to our events.
- Some talked to us about **mental health**.
- More than 3.5 thousand filled in our **Mental Health** survey in August 2022.



We know there is a lot of work to do to help young people's **wellbeing**.



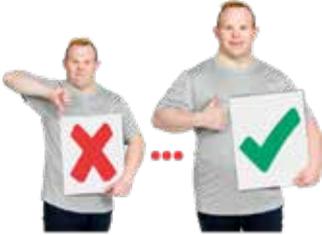
Poor **mental health** and **wellbeing** is a big problem for a lot of young people in Wales.



The Welsh Government has spent more money to make it better. But we know that the help is not good enough.



This report is about the results of our survey and young people's views about **mental health** and **wellbeing**.



It is also about what we want to see changed to make things better.

The results of our survey covered **4** areas:



1. Your emotions and **mental health**.



2. Awareness and understanding.



3. Getting help at your school or college.



4. Getting extra help.

1. Your emotions and mental health



There are the same amount of **mental health** problems in young people as there was in 2020.



Most young people said they struggle with their **mental health**.



More than 1 out of 4 young people said that they struggle every day.



Most young people told us they have **mental health** problems or know a friend or family member who does.

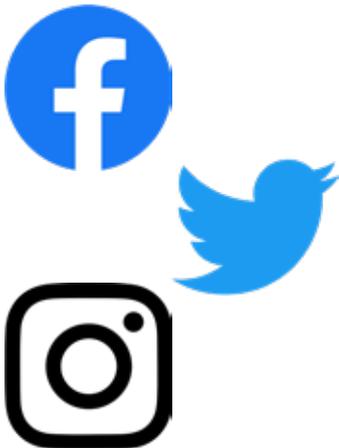
The **3** biggest reasons that young people struggle with their **mental health** were the same as in 2020:



- School or college – the work and exams.



- Friends and family – not getting along.



- **Social media** – using it and people saying bad things to them on it.

Social media is ways of sharing information on your phone or computer. For example, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Young people are also affected by larger events, like the **cost of living crisis** and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The **cost of living crisis** means lots of basic things like food cost more money than they used to. And people find it harder to afford them.

Lots of young people from **diverse** backgrounds talked about the extra problems they have and bullying.



Diverse means we are not all the same. For example people in Wales:

- come from different backgrounds and cultures
- have different abilities
- believe different things
- have different sexual identities
- make different choices about how they live their lives
- are different ages.

What we learnt



Young people are having problems with their mental **wellbeing** as much as they were in 2020.



This is mainly because the help for young people is not good enough.





Inequality means that some young people have extra problems.

Inequality means not treating people fairly and people not having the same chances in life because of things like their gender, where they are from or because of their age.



This puts more strain on their mental **wellbeing**.

What we think needs to happen next



1. We should focus more on mental health. There should be more help around exams to help young people cope with the stress.



2. Teach young people in schools and colleges about different **cultures**, views, and beliefs. Show them that they should treat all people with respect and kindness.

Culture means the ideas, beliefs and traditions shared by a group of people. It includes things like art, language and history.

2. Awareness and understanding



Few young people knew the early signs of **mental health** problems.



Over 1 out of 4 young people said they did not know what to do to help their **wellbeing** if they were having problems.



More than half knew where to get help, but most would not ask.



People said they are scared or embarrassed to ask for help.



Most people said they would talk to family and friends for help. Only a few said teachers.



Young people said that more teachers and youth workers are talking about **mental health**.



Some people said that they wanted 1 website to go to with all the helpful information in 1 place.

What we learnt



Spotting early signs of **mental health** problems is important.



Young people are more aware of their **mental health**.



People talk about **mental health** more and see it as more important, which is good.



We have heard that it can be hard to know where and how to get help.



Our 2020 report asked for 1 website to go to for information and help. This has not happened.

The 1 website should:



- Offer help to those with **mental health** problems.



- Teach **wellbeing** and mindfulness. Mindfulness is about helping people feel calm.



- Show how to help someone you know who you think might need help.



- Link to other resources and helplines.



Shame around talking about emotions is a big problem.



It means that fewer young people ask for help.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

We like the Welsh Government's **whole school approach**.



This means everyone working to include **mental health** and **wellbeing** in all parts of learning.



This is a good way to raise awareness and lower the feeling of shame.



Some young people said that schools and colleges should make safe spaces for them to talk about their feelings.



They should find more ways for learners to help each other.



It is important to help family and friends know the signs that someone is having **mental health** problems.

What we think needs to happen next



1. Have 1 website for information and help.



2. Give training and information to the people that young people go to for help. This should include family and friends.



3. Schools and colleges should include **mental health** and **wellbeing** in all parts of learning.

3. Getting help at your school or college



Young people are not happy with the amount of help on offer in schools or colleges.



Less than half had tried to get help at their school or college.

They were worried that:



- There would be a long wait.



- They would not be treated well.



- What they said would not be kept private.



Less than half of young people said they would feel OK getting **counselling** at their school or college.

Counselling is a talking therapy. It is when people talk to a trained professional about their problems in a safe space.



Most of the young people who did get help said it was good.



Young people wanted teachers to have training to help them to get better at noticing signs. Signs like people becoming quieter or joining in less.



They said it would be difficult as the teachers are busy. And that it would be good to have extra support staff.



They said it was good when the school was welcoming and had safe spaces to talk.



Many young people told us that there should be help earlier on.



Some young people told us that they wanted **counselling** for all young people.



This would help lower the feeling of shame, because it would be normal for everyone.

What we learnt



There is less help in schools and colleges than young people need.



We want young people who need help to be able to get it quickly.



We want the help to be good and consistent.



Schools and colleges are a long way from giving this.



There should be help for young people who have not asked for help yet.



School **counsellors** for everyone could stop problems growing and lower the feelings of shame around asking for help.



Schools and colleges need to make places where young people feel able to talk.



Young people must have a good first contact when asking for help, or they might go back to struggling on their own.



The Welsh Government has given more money to have more **counselling** in schools. But this is not enough.



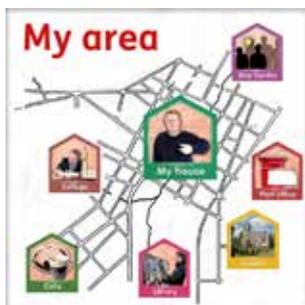
Teachers are very busy, so it is important that schools and colleges have extra support.



More needs to be done to help **diverse** groups of young people. We need to understand more about the problems they face.



There should be training for people who work with and help young people.



There needs to be more places where young people can get help. Like in schools and colleges, on the internet and in the places they live.



It needs to be the same across Wales. It should be easy and fast to get help.

What we think needs to happen next



1. More places in the community where young people can get information and talk about their **mental health**. This could be at local support hubs.



2. Training for people who work with and help young people. The training should be about the **mental health** problems faced by people from **diverse** backgrounds.



3. Schools and colleges to have the money and staff they need to give faster, better help to young people. To give **counselling** to all young people, including those who have not asked for help yet.



4. Schools and colleges to make more safe spaces for young people to talk with each other and **counsellors**. For them to make sure that help will be private so that other young people, teachers, and parents do not know.

4. Getting extra help



We asked young people what it was like getting help from **CAMHS - Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services**.



Nearly half of those who had got help from **CAMHS** told us that they had to wait **more than** 1 month for their first meeting.



1 month is the target set by the Welsh Government.



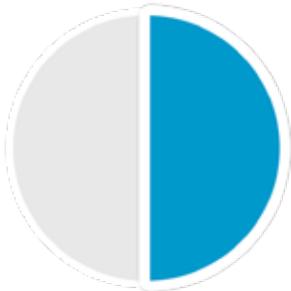
Some young people had to wait for up to **1 year**.



Waiting with no help made their **mental health** worse.



A lot of the young people, parents, guardians, and youth workers we spoke to said it was hard to get help from **CAMHS**.



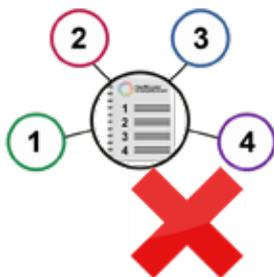
Nearly half of young people who had got help from **CAMHS** said it was bad.



Some people said they should have been able to get help from **CAMHS**. But they did not get it because the help is not there.



A lot of people said the waiting time should be shorter and there should be some help while you wait.



A lot of people told us that services are not well linked up. Between schools and **CAMHS**, and between **CAMHS** and **Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS)**.



People said that help stops when you reach 18, but they need the help to carry on.

What we learnt



If young people got help earlier, fewer young people would end up needing extra help from **CAMHS**.



More work is needed to lower waiting times for **CAMHS**. There should be more money and staff.



The problems were there in 2020 and are the same today. This is having a bad effect on young people.



The system now is no good. We worry that giving more money to the same service will not get the best results.

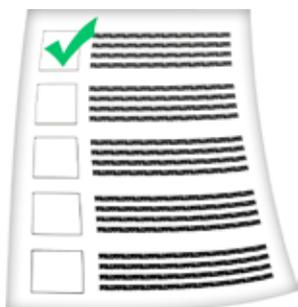


We want **CAMHS** to change and be better.

What we think needs to happen next



1. Better earlier help for young people to lower the need for **CAMHS**.



2. A review of **CAMHS** and changes to lower waiting times and make the help they give better.



3. Better links between the places young people go to for help. Such as schools and colleges, **CAMHS** and **Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS)**.

How to contact us



Thank you for reading our report. If you would like to find out more or tell us your views, you can contact us by:



Phone: 0300 200 6565

Email: hello@youthparliament.wales



Website: www.youthparliament.wales



Twitter: [@WelshYouthParl](https://twitter.com/WelshYouthParl)



Instagram: [@welshyouthparliament](https://www.instagram.com/welshyouthparliament)



YouTube: [@seneddieuencidcymru](https://www.youtube.com/seneddieuencidcymru)

Hard words

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Mental health

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Social Media

Ways of sharing information on your phone or computer. For example, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Wellbeing

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