



# North East and North Cumbria Child Health & Wellbeing Network

*Getting engagement right to design and deliver better outcomes for our children and young people (up to 25 years)*

## **Executive Summary of Children and Young People's Survey and Focus Groups**

**May 2019**



## Foreword

We are proud to be part of a small but growing piece of work in the North East and North Cumbria that plans to make a real difference to children's services. Our evolving hypothesis from early discussions with children, young people and professionals is:

*"In the North East and North Cumbria we believe all children and young people should be given the opportunity to flourish and reach their potential, and be advantaged by organisations working together"*

It gives us great pleasure to see the responses to our second Child Health and Wellbeing Survey and feedback on our emerging priorities wheel from the children and young people of our region. As with the first survey results from the professionals' responses, this work has been given deserved attention with full analysis and a set of helpful documents to share with all sectors in our system:

- An executive summary for the high-level cascade of key findings of the CYP feedback and a comparison of this feedback with the professionals' findings;
- A detailed report, highlighting themes identified through the analysis of both the survey and the feedback, and summarising if these themes were represented in the priorities wheel or where gaps may need to be addressed, as well as comparing CYP findings to that of the professionals.

These will be published alongside our previous documents from the professionals' feedback:

- An executive summary for the high-level cascade of key findings;
- A summary of the good practice examples shared within the survey;
- A detailed report, developing themes identified through the analysis; and
- The appendices to reference the helpful feedback and suggestions – these will be used throughout our evolving work when task to finish groups commence vital work based around our agreed priorities.

We were overwhelmed that over 600 children, young people and families took the time to share their perspectives including a small proportion of individuals with additional needs. Whilst our work was intended to reach all children and young people, the pragmatic approach and timelines has restricted feedback from some groups, but we are committed to comprehensive engagement and co-production as the Network develops – this is only the first step of many in a journey we will continue to grow and learn from.

The findings from this exercise have further influenced the priority areas or themes that the Network will develop its work from, and we believe that the combined feedback of over 1000 individuals has influenced the Network to address the areas of importance to the North East and North Cumbria.

This work has found that the children and young people had highlighted similar priorities to the professionals but with some differences, such as the importance of substance misuse, which fits with the 'Supporting the Vulnerable' and 'Mental Health' themes identified. There was also a higher weighting to



the importance of equitable access to services and the general feedback highlighted the importance of feeling safe. This and wider feedback have influenced the next draft of the Network’s priorities into a revised priorities wheel (version 2 - June 2019 shown below).

## Child Health & Wellbeing Priorities



### CROSS CUTTING THEMES



### ENABLERS



The data provided is helpfully categorised by geographies, making it useful for local improvement work and analysis. We hope that whatever sector or background you are from that you find benefit from the sharing of these reports and you are pleased to see that your contributions are actively influencing our work to enable children, young people and families to flourish within the North East and North Cumbria.

For the latest on our work and for future developments please access our website via <https://nhsjoinourjourney.org.uk/what-we-are-doing/priorities/optimising-health-services/>

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## Executive summary

This year, the Child Health and Wellbeing Network dedicated its second regional event to **The Voice of the Child**, and as preparation for this it gathered feedback from children, young people and their families and local organisations and professionals that work with children. This was done in two ways:

1. Asking groups of children, young people and their families to comment on the Child Health and Wellbeing Network priorities wheel (updated following feedback from the professionals survey earlier in the year) and to describe what made them happy.
2. Conducting a survey of children and young people through social media about priorities for children and young people and any other issues they wanted to raise.

This report summarises the independent evaluation of feedback from these focus groups and the children and young people’s online survey. Detailed reports have been produced for both the focus group feedback and the survey results and integrated into a final report. This short report brings together the themes from each to summarise the rich data collected from the large numbers of children and young people involved in either the focus groups or the survey by:

- Highlighting the main themes from the children and young people’s feedback, comments on the priorities and what made them happy;
- Comparing what the children and young people felt were priorities to those highlighted in the survey of professionals working with them; and
- Checking how the priorities highlighted align with the Child Health and Wellbeing Network’s priorities wheel (Chart 1 and expanded upon in Appendix 1).

**Chart 1: Child Health and Wellbeing Network Priorities Wheel (version 1 - May 2019)**





## Highlights

### Summary of results (survey and non-survey feedback)

- The top four most frequently mentioned themes from both the focus groups and the survey are:
  - **Mental health and wellbeing**
  - **Being physically healthy**
  - **Having enough money to make healthy choices/reducing poverty**
  - **Ensuring that young people are prepared for adulthood.**
- Other priorities were also noted by both the focus groups and survey respondents: **feeling and being safe, education, housing and environment, social support and networks, specific groups.**
- The results show similarities between the results from the adult's survey and the CYP (both focus groups and survey) with **mental health** highlighted as the top priority by both, and **poverty and health and well-being** also noted as important priorities by both.
- The top four overarching themes identified by CYP - **mental health, physical activity and nutrition, poverty and transitional bridges** - closely align with the Network priorities wheel.
- The priorities identified from the CYP have been fed into the next draft of the Network's priorities wheel.
- The focus groups and survey has positively increased the Network's profile, contacts and membership.
- The messages and learning contained in the two detailed standalone reports will be used in the future work of the Network and made freely available via its website, for those within the system.

### Survey

- 466 children and young people between the ages of 13 and 25 contributed to an online survey.
- The survey could be easily completed by those able to access and complete the survey, although some services did offer support to facilitate completion.
- The greatest number of CYP completing the survey are aged between 14–15 years old, with relatively few aged between 20–25 years.
- The majority of CYP are in school, consistent with the proportion of 14–16 year olds who completed the questionnaire (69%).
- The largest number of CYP indicated they live in the North ICP area (39%) followed by the South ICP area.
- There is a clear steer from the findings of the top priorities: **mental health, tackling drug and substance misuse in children and young people, poverty – children living in low income families, children with additional needs (learning and physical disabilities), equal access to physical and mental health services, and having enough doctors, nurses, health visitors, social workers and teachers.**
- These priorities and issues are reflected in the report analysis by sector and ICP areas, with the additional inclusion of 'care for children and young people who are seriously ill and will not live a long life (palliative care)' and 'having your voice heard: ensuring children and young people have the chance to give their opinion on health and social matters'.



- Additional issues and priorities highlighted by the CYP completing the survey covered **feeling and being safe, preparing for adulthood, education, and physical and social health.**

## Focus groups

- Over 150<sup>1</sup> children, young people and families contributed feedback on what it is to be happy and healthy and what they thought of the first draft of the Child Health and Wellbeing Network priorities wheel.
- The groups covered a range of ages, disabilities, gender, settings and location. They included pregnant women and parents of children with autism.
- Feedback could be completed by those of any age or ability but depended on both the request and responses being facilitated locally though a professional lead e.g. teacher, service lead, youth worker.
- The most frequently mentioned themes were: **mental health and wellbeing, being physically health, having enough money to make healthy choices / reducing poverty, ensuring young people are prepared for adulthood**
- Other themes mentioned by more than one group were **better and more affordable (public) transport, understanding respect in relationships/ relationships in general, and better access to support.**

## Findings

Earlier this year, the CYP Network surveyed 557 professionals from all sectors, whose job is to support and work with children and young people. Since this data was first analysed in February 2019, the Network reviewed its core priority areas alongside the emerging national priorities and national framework examples. From that work, it developed a priorities wheel to share with children, young people and their families for their feedback, through focus groups and an online survey, to influence the next iteration of the priorities. It also asked those participating in the focus groups what made them happy.

Over 600 responses were received covering the four integrated care partnerships (ICPs) across the North East and North Cumbria. The greatest number of responses were obtained through the online survey (466 responses), particularly from those aged 14–15 years and the lowest for those aged 20–25 years old. More than 150 children and young people from across the North East took part in the focus groups, which also included the results from a large project undertaken in Cumbria, involving more than 3000 children and young people.<sup>2</sup>

The feedback came from widely varying individuals and groups, from pregnant women to parents of children with autism, and children from all ages. There was a commonality in what they said were the key priorities for children and young people. For the purposes of this executive summary the following tables and charts summarise the results under the key areas:

- a) Top themes/ priorities for children and young people (up to age 25 years of age)

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<sup>1</sup> Based in known numbers involved. One of the projects that contributed feedback included involved 3000 CYP. The numbers involved in other focus groups are unknown.

<sup>2</sup> The Barbados S17 project, was a very large survey of over 3,000 children aimed at asking what it was like to be a child living in Cumbria. It has been included here as the aims of the survey were specifically linked to the CYP Network's priorities, which means there is good alignment with its own aims and this piece of work.



- b) Top priorities for CYP highlighted through the online survey
- c) Top themes identified through the focus groups
- d) What makes CYP happy
- e) Comparison of top themes / priorities of CYP with those highlighted by professionals working with CYP
- f) Comparison of top themes / priorities with the Network priorities wheel.

**a) Top themes and priorities for children and young people (up to age 25 years old)**

The top four most frequently mentioned themes from both the focus groups and the survey were:

1. **Mental health and wellbeing**, including tackling drug and substance misuse among children and young people, more investment in CAMHS and teenage suicide prevention.
2. **Being physically healthy**, including physical activity and good food as well as having stress-free environments and places to meet.
3. **Having enough money to make healthy choices/reducing poverty**, for example, funding for health care, transport and ending austerity.
4. **Ensuring that young people are prepared for adulthood**. The examples given included: life-skills, preparation for work and applying for jobs; knowing the law; having confidence to be able to make appointments; understanding finances and having support for financial decisions; and preparation for living alone.

The children and young people<sup>3</sup> from both the focus groups and the survey respondents also noted other priorities, which can be categorised into the following themes:

<b>Other priorities identified by CYP (both focus groups and online survey)</b>		
<b>Physical and mental health and wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding STIs and adult/reproductive health issues, including menstruation and teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• Drug and alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Issues around weight gain/loss</li> <li>• Other aspects of mental health – other than depression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health, illness and social care issues, for example specific illnesses and conditions such as cancer, Alzheimer’s Disease and genetic illnesses and helping children understand their illnesses. This also included issues around vaccinations.</li> </ul>
<b>Feeling and being safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal safety and community safety, especially in deprived areas. For example, knife crime, gun crime and reducing anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Equality and diversity, for example issues around discrimination, homophobia, LGBT, transgender support and awareness, and support for people with learning disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting young people and children from abuse, for example preventing physical and sexual abuse, children in abusive homes, child exploitation and grooming and abuse from families or bullies at school.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health support in schools, such as therapists, learning about mental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good education</li> </ul>

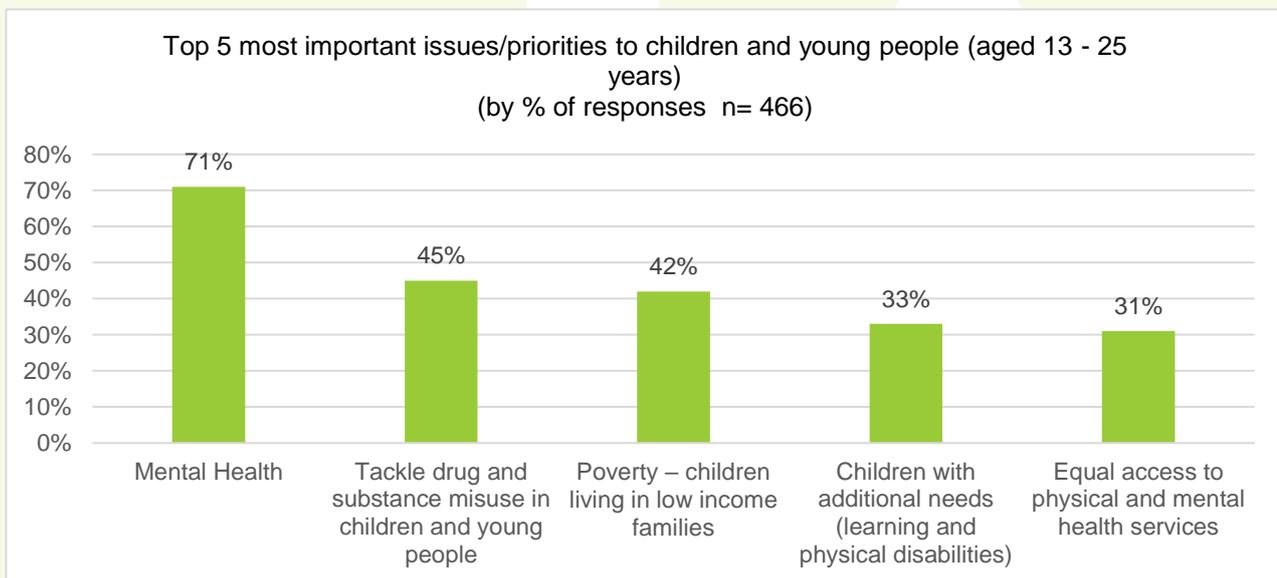
<sup>3</sup> Excluding the adults for the purpose of this part of the report



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health awareness and having a space to take time out to talk.</li> <li>Educating young people to enjoy life – “it’s not all about work”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition from primary to secondary school</li> <li>Homework support</li> <li>Issues around bullying</li> <li>Reducing stress around GCSEs</li> <li>Sunday school</li> </ul>
<b>Housing and Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to services, space and support, for example accessible parks, transport and health services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern for the wider environment, for example global warming, plastic and environmental sustainability for the children’s futures</li> </ul>
<b>Social support and networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to reduce stress caused by social media</li> <li>Adults who listen</li> <li>Hobbies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connectivity</li> <li>Sports facilities</li> <li>Pets/contact with animals</li> </ul>
<b>Specific groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early support/intervention</li> <li>Homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for young carers</li> <li>Single parent support</li> </ul>

**b) Top priorities for CYP highlighted through the online survey**

Survey respondents selected the following most important priorities (from a list of 23 options):



Comparison of the top five priorities chosen by the CYP and by the professional survey indicates strong agreement about the top priorities important to both cohorts and a few differences. Both the professionals and children and young people emphasise **mental health** as the top priority and **poverty, children with additional needs, and equitable access to physical and mental health services** as significant issues. CYP in the survey highlighted **tackling drug and substance misuse** as a key issue which did not feature in the professionals top five priorities.

The following were also rated as priorities:



- Having enough doctors, nurses, health visitors, social workers and teachers (workforce)
- Care for children and young people who are seriously ill and will not live a long life (palliative care)
- Having your voice heard: ensuring children and young people have the chance to give their opinion on health and social matters
- Environmental risks for health and wellbeing (e.g. tobacco smoke exposure and polluted environment)
- Tackling childhood obesity.

### c) Top themes identified through the focus groups

The top four most frequently mentioned themes, from the analysis of the focus groups, were:

- **Mental health and wellbeing.** This was mentioned as the key priority by every one of the groups (12).
- **Being physically healthy,** including physical activity and good food.
- **Having enough money** to make healthy choices/reducing poverty.
- **Ensuring that young people are prepared for adulthood.** The examples given included: life-skills, preparation for work and applying for jobs; knowing the law; having confidence to be able to make appointments; understanding finances and having support for financial decisions; and preparation for living alone.

Other themes mentioned by more than once group were:

- Better and affordable (public) transport
- Understanding respect in relationships/relationships in general
- Better access to support.

### d) What makes children and young people happy

Feedback from the question 'what makes you happy' is reflected and incorporated in the themes identified by the focus groups (see above). Good (fresh) food, being healthy, exercise, sufficient money to meet needs, and family were key themes arising from this feedback:

'Smiley, laughing and being fit and able to exercise'

'To like life'

'Not being in poverty or feel less able to pay for things such as clothing and treats on a weekend, like going out with friends'

'Eating the right foods, not having loads of sugar all the time, being around family'

'Eating correctly and sleeping the correct amount of time would make you happy and healthy'

'Having a good diet; no problems emotionally; doing OK at school'

Playing football instead of being lazy and going out with friends'

'Having a house, home where you feel safe'

'Having a job so I can buy the things we need would make me happy and healthy'

'To have enough money for the things we need like food'



### e) Comparison of top themes / priorities of CYP with those highlighted by professionals working with CYP

The table below compares the top priorities for CYP, by professionals working with CYP and by the results from the focus groups and online survey:

Professional Survey (Feb 19)	CYP feedback: both focus groups and survey
<b>Top 5 priorities for children and young people (n = 497)</b>	<b>The top four most frequently mentioned themes (n= 600 approx.)</b>
Mental health	Mental health and wellbeing
Poverty – children living in low income families	Being physically healthy
Children with additional needs (learning and physical disabilities)	Having enough money to make healthy choices/reducing poverty
Health promotion and prevention of illness	Ensuring that young people are prepared for adulthood
Equitable access to services including mental health services	

Both professionals and the children and young people note **mental health** as the top priority and the importance of **poverty** and **health and wellbeing** as key issues and priorities.

Overall the children and young people’s groups did not single out children with additional needs as one of their priorities (even though some of the groups included children with additional needs).

Although wellbeing and resilience was noted as one of the top priorities for 1 in 5 respondents in the professionals’ survey, this was more of a theme for the children and young people, who described resilience in terms of how this would help them for adulthood and other transitional phases in their lives.

### f) Comparison of top themes/priorities with the Network priorities wheel.

The top overarching themes identified by the children and young people align closely with the Network’s priorities wheel as shown below:

CYP themes	Alignment with Network’s priorities	
<b>Mental health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	That a child’s mental health and wellbeing is considered as important as their physical wellbeing and that opportunities to support and skill them to promote resilience are maximised.
<b>Being physically healthy</b>	<b>Physical activity and nutrition</b>	Promoting physical activity health nutrition for all our CYP and families. Reducing harmful risk-taking behaviours that contribute to the increasing levels of poor health and wellbeing outcomes such as childhood obesity and dental health issues.
	<b>Health and wellbeing in all settings</b>	Maximising every opportunity to work as a system to improve health and happiness for our children whether at home, school, at a community club, in a care setting and beyond. Ensuring the right professionals contribute at every opportunity to positively impact outcomes. Think child before organisational boundaries.



<b>Having enough money to make healthy choices/reducing poverty</b>	<b>Poverty</b>	To enable those living in low income families. Reduce disadvantage of living in poverty and advocate on behalf of CYP and families in relation to this.
<b>Ensuring that young people are prepared for adulthood</b>	<b>Transitional bridges</b>	Supporting children across transitions to an independent adulthood. Enabling positive transition points for CYP across organisational, departmental and life experiences – e.g. nursery to school, junior to senior, child services to adult services, child to an adult or parent.

## Summary

To summarise, the aims of the focus groups and CYP online survey were to:

- Highlight the main themes from the children and young people’s feedback, comments on the priorities and also what made them happy;
- Compare what the children and young people felt were priorities to those highlighted in the survey of professionals working with them; and
- Check how the priorities highlighted aligned with the Network’s priorities wheel.

The results highlight the priorities of most importance for the 600-plus children, young people and families who provided feedback via the online survey or focus groups, and what they considered important for their happiness and wellbeing. When this feedback is compared to the Network’s priorities wheel and feedback from the professionals’ online survey, there is a high degree of agreement as well as additional issues and priorities to be considered, for example, around drugs and substance misuse, capacity to deliver care and services, feeling and being safe, education and preparing for adulthood.

Undertaking the survey and participating in the focus groups has naturally grown the network of children and young people interested in in child health and wellbeing and engaging in the work of the Network.

The methodologies employed in obtaining the views of children and young people highlighted the challenge of ensuring the right balance in diversity and representation of those CYP participating.



# Appendix 1. Child Health and Wellbeing Network priorities wheel

Version 1



Version 2

## Child Health & Wellbeing Priorities



### CROSS CUTTING THEMES



### ENABLERS





**Mental Health:** That a child's mental health and wellbeing is considered as important as their physical wellbeing and that opportunities to support and skill them to promote resilience are maximised.

**Poverty:** To enable those living in low income families. Reduce disadvantage of living in poverty and advocate on behalf of CYP and families in relation to this.

**Additional Needs:** Focus on children with additional needs whether physical, mental health or social needs. Ensuring organisational barriers are reduced and do not create disadvantage. Closely connecting to the vulnerable workstream.

**Preconception, pregnancy and early parenthood:** To provide a holistic approach to all antenatal, perinatal (around 20th week of pregnancy to around 28th day of life), and postnatal services to enable seamless access for all families. Every baby to receive sensitive, appropriate and responsive care from their main caregivers in the first years of life: The 1001 Critical Days.

**Early Years intervention, family support and school readiness:** Enabling children to be school ready especially those with additional needs, promoting the support of and recognising the role and influence of the family to achieve this. Acknowledging the importance of early years intervention.

**Physical activity and nutrition:** Promoting physical activity and healthy nutrition for all our CYP and families. Reducing harmful risk-taking behaviours that contribute to the increasing levels of poor health and wellbeing outcomes, such as childhood obesity and dental health issues.

**Health and wellbeing in all settings:** Maximising every opportunity to work as a system to improve health and happiness for our children whether at home, school, at a community club, in a care setting and beyond. Ensuring the right professionals contribute at every opportunity to positively impact outcomes. Think child before organisational boundaries.

**Transitional bridges:** Supporting children across transitions to an independent adulthood. Enabling positive transition points for CYP across organisational, departmental and life experiences – e.g. nursery to school, junior to senior, child services to adult services, child to an adult or parent.

**Protecting vulnerable children young people and their families:** Developing integrated services wrapped around the individual need of the vulnerable child, young person and their family.

**Childhood illness (incorporating specialised services):** Ensuring that CYP and families get the best possible support when they are unwell and in the best setting.

Link to and support established informal networks: epilepsy, respiratory, gastroenterology, allergy, endocrine, surgery.

Link to and support developing ODNs: PICU/Transport/Surgery – CYP Cancer.

Support ICP networks for acute care.

Report prepared by [Quintessent Ltd](#)