

PE1627/JJ

Young Scot submission of 16 May 2018

Please find attached our response to your request for an update on the Young Scot/SAMH “Youth Commission on Mental Health”, which launched at the end of April. I hope the information in the attached briefing is helpful and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.



Youth Commission on Mental Health Services

Young Scot are currently working in partnership with SAMH and Scottish Government to develop a 15-month Youth Commission on Mental Health Services in response to the Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 and the ambition for people to ask once, get help fast, expect recovery and fully enjoy their rights, free from discrimination and stigma. To achieve the best mental health outcomes possible, a key action in the strategy is to take a whole system approach to reviewing child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and deliver services for young people with a key focus on prevention and early intervention.

Over the next 15 months, the Commission will gather evidence, encourage debate and conversation and develop a set of solutions and recommendations from young people to the Scottish Government and other service providers on how child and adolescent mental health services can be developed and improved for young people in Scotland both now and in the future.

STATUS

We have recently recruited 22 young people aged 13-22 from all over Scotland and from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The Commission represents a diverse range of young people including care experienced, LGBT+ young people, those from BAME communities and those with extensive experience of using mental health services and others with little or no experience of using services.



CO-DESIGN: EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOP IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The overall timeframe for the Youth Commission is 15 months, 12 months of which will see the Youth Commission undertaking a wide range of activity with both their peers and key stakeholders from across the country, including research, expert witness events, evidence gathering sessions, attending relevant events and conferences to increase knowledge and gather insights, developing and testing ideas and solutions, creating recommendations and contributing to the Mental Health Biannual Forum in December 2018. The Youth Commission will follow the Young Scot co-design methodology which enables young people and experts or stakeholders to explore insights and experiences and develop ideas together. The table below provides an outline of each of the five stages of the co-design process and the activity/outputs that will be undertaken during each stage.

CO-DESIGN STAGE	RATIONALE	ACTIVITY
Explore	Define by uncovering the issues through gathering insights and experiences from experts, stakeholders and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Understanding perspectives/awareness » Understanding “the system” » Building capacity » Desk research » Commissioning new research, where gaps are identified from desk research, involving online and offline engagement » Expert Witness Events – special events to hear and gather evidence from experts » Local events, to promote and stimulate debate and gather views
Create	Generate ideas and co-produce solutions with/by young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increasing awareness with young people » Challenging “the system” through wider ideas and recommendations » Defining / prototyping ideas and solutions » Strategic relationships – building further
Reflect	Consider the future impact and sustainability of the ideas / solutions produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strategic relationships – sharing preliminary findings with peers & experts » Testing models for ideas and solutions » Survey for feedback from peers
Recommend	Produce influential ideas / solutions with young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reporting and Presenting – consolidating insights, finalising recommendations/ideas and presenting these to Scottish Government and key stakeholders/decision-makers. » Presentation of work at the Mental Health Biannual Forum

Young Scot’s tried and tested co-design approach, to support the young people to develop informed insights, ideas, recommendations and solutions for policy and practice in relation to child and adolescent mental health services. This model will provide opportunities for the Youth Commissioners to engage with key stakeholders, experts and young people from across Scotland and potentially further afield.

We see this as a 15-month-long study with appropriate milestones into mental health services for young people – fully led by young people, resulting in both recommendations and solutions. In addition, based on Young Scot and SAMH experience, it is recommended an Advisory Group of stakeholders be established to provide guidance, a sounding board and possible mentoring to the Youth Commissioners.

'I am excited to have an opportunity to make real change to improve the quality of care for young people struggling with their mental health' (Commissioner, 17)

'I'm excited to meet people just as passionate as I am and to be part of a positive change to current services' (Commissioner, 15)

'Young people are often made to feel like their feelings are invalid just because they are young, this negatively impacts on individuals' mental health and needs to change.' (Commissioner, 19)

All young people involved will have the opportunity to receive formal accreditation for their involvement, primarily through the Youth Achievement Awards and the Saltire Awards for volunteering.

The independence of the Commission is vital to ensure credibility therefore Young Scot and SAMH would simply facilitate and support the group. Training in research, facilitation, media and presentation skills for the group will also be co-ordinated by Young Scot and SAMH, paying particular attention to the specific capacity building approaches required for those with lived experience of mental health problems.

LAUNCH

We officially launched the Commission on Thursday 26th of April in the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. The Minister for Mental Health, Maureen Watt, met with our Commissioners and discussed their hopes and ambitions for the year ahead on the Commission.



SHARING LEARNING

Sharing the learning with other young people and relevant organisations / individuals across Scotland will be a key strand of activity. We will therefore develop a simple digital platform to allow progress and learning to be shared as the programme develops.

In addition, the following parallel activities will also require to be engaged and where possible, aspects of coordination and synchronisation should be considered:

- » Audit Scotland review of Children and Young People's Mental Health
- » Scottish Government / SAMH / ISD audit of rejected CAMHS referrals in Scotland
- » Education Scotland review of PSE
- » Scottish Youth Parliament –Work in relation to 'Our Generation's Epidemic' report, and consultation with young people on Anticipatory Care Plans and transitions from children's mental health services into adult mental health services
- » Youth Forum Renfrewshire

As part of the overall Youth Commission process, we will ensure that relevant on-going work being undertaken by other organisations is considered and where appropriate, used to inform the Youth Commission's investigation and evidence gathering. In addition, we will seek opportunities to involve the Permanent Secretary in the work of the Youth Commission given her interest in children and young people's mental health as a key theme of the Year of Young People 2018.

REPORTING

During the Recommend phase of the Co-design process, the Youth Commissioners will compile a final report for the Minister and the Scottish Government. In December 2018, there will be an opportunity for the Youth Commission to present their work and test out their findings so far at the Mental Health Biannual Forum before producing their final report and set of recommendations. We would also hold an event in March 2019 at the end of the process for the Youth Commissioners to formally report to the Minister and Scottish Government.

OUTCOMES

Evaluation of both the process and impact will be embedded throughout the programme, including working with the Youth Commissioners and Evaluation Support Scotland to develop a theory of change. We will be seeking to monitor and evaluate the key outcomes for the project, namely:

- » The Scottish Government and service providers better understand young people's experiences of mental health and service delivery in response to mental health needs
- » Young people have opportunities to propose and influence changes that would improve mental health service delivery and outcomes for young people

The programme should also evaluate the personal outcomes for young people involved in the Youth Commission, including:

- » Increased confidence, a sense of empowerment and raised aspirations
- » Development of new skills, experiences, qualifications and accreditation
- » Greater awareness and understanding of decision-making processes
- » Increased employability

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information please contact:

Louise Macdonald OBE | CEO | Young Scot | Louisem@young.scot | @Louisemac