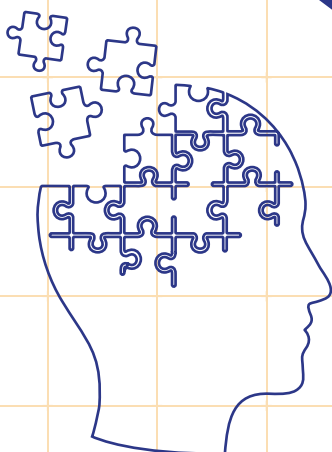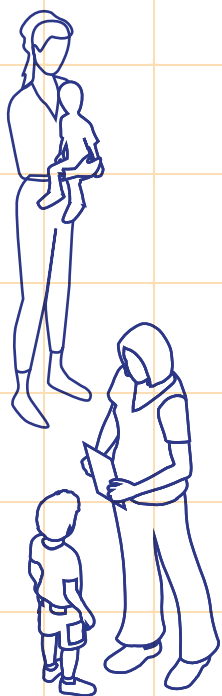# WHAT WOULD A MENTALLY HEALTHY AREA LOOK LIKE?

Youth-led recommendations on mental health and emotional wellbeing

MH2K.ORG.UK

MH2K

The recommendations presented here are the work of 127 diverse young people who co-led the MH:2K project. They are based on engagement events run by these young people with over 3,400 of their peers.

Together the recommendations paint a compelling picture of what a mentally healthy area would look like from young people's perspectives. They are a vital contribution to the work of decision-makers and researchers, both nationally and locally.

MH:2K is run by participation charity Involve and social enterprise Leaders Unlocked. It was developed with funding from the Wellcome Trust and participating local areas.

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ABOUT MH:2K

MH:2K is a powerful new model for engaging young people in conversations about mental health and emotional wellbeing in their local area.

Developed with funding from the Wellcome Trust and participating local areas, it empowers 14–25 year olds to:

- Identify the mental health issues that they see as most important;

- Engage their peers in discussing and exploring these topics;

- Work with key local decision-makers and researchers to make recommendations for change.

Five diverse areas of England have hosted MH:2K to-date: **Birmingham, Central Lancashire, North Tyneside, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and Oldham**. The local recommendations for these areas have had significant impact, influencing work including Local Transformation Plans, cross-organisational strategies and work in schools.

Here we bring together our local work for the first time. **MH:2K's national recommendations highlight the key themes emerging from local areas** for national attention and action.

THE NATIONAL PARTNERS

MH:2K is delivered by a partnership of charity Involve and social enterprise Leaders Unlocked.

Involve is the UK's leading public participation charity, on a mission to put people at the heart of decision-making. It supports people and decision-makers to work together to solve our biggest challenges.

Leaders Unlocked exists to allow young people to have a stronger voice on the issues that affect them. It drives greater accountability and fairness by helping organisations to adopt new ways of working with the young communities they serve.

HOW MH:2K WORKS

MH:2K uses a seven-step model designed to benefit decision-makers, researchers and its young participants. The model has three key features:

- **End-to-end youth leadership**: MH:2K's youth-led approach means it is grounded in the reality of young people's lives. Young people decide its focus, co-lead its events, and determine its findings and recommendations.

- **Peer-to-peer engagement**: By empowering young people to reach out to their peers, MH:2K creates a safe and engaging space for participants.

- **Close collaboration with key decision-makers and researchers**: By involving key stakeholders in the project from its start, MH:2K builds trust and enthusiasm. It helps stakeholders reach a shared understanding of the challenges they face and a shared commitment to action.

The MH:2K model is transferable; it could work in any UK local area. Here we outline how it works and some of its key achievements to-date.

1

RECRUITMENT

We recruit a core team of young people as Citizen Researchers.

Local areas involved to-date

Birmingham

Central Lancashire

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

North Tyneside

Oldham

Total number of Citizen Researchers

127

Demographics of Citizen Researchers

36% BAME

16% LGBTQ+

12% with a physical or learning disability

78% with lived experience of mental ill-health

2

DESIGN DAYS

The Citizen Researchers use key information and their own experiences to agree five priority topics for their area. They receive training in facilitation and public speaking.

Priorities chosen by Citizen Researchers

Ethnic minorities

Family, parents, friends and carers

Healthy relationships

LGBTQ+ young people

Schools and education

Self-harm

Services and professionals

Social media and self-esteem

Stigma and awareness

Young men

3

ROADSHOW

The Citizen Researchers co-design and co-deliver workshops to engage other young people on the priority topics.

Types of organisations hosting Roadshow events

Council groups

Schools, colleges and universities

Service user groups

Voluntary and community groups

Youth centres

Total number of Roadshow events

173

Total number of young people engaged in Roadshows

3,447

4

RESULTS DAY

The Citizen Researchers analyse the Roadshow data. They work with local decision-makers and researchers to decide the project's findings and recommendations.
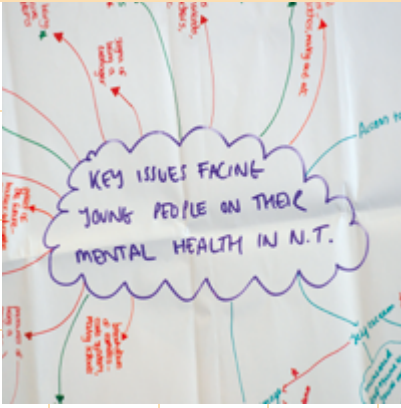
Total number of findings

128

Total number of recommendations

146

5

BIG SHOWCASE

The Citizen Researchers present their findings and recommendations to key stakeholders.

Total number of decision-makers and researchers attending attending Big Showcases

295

92.8% of attendees said the findings and recommendations were 'very useful'

98.5% of attendees said they would do something new or differently as a result of the findings and recommendations

6

LOCAL ADVISORY PANEL

A panel of local decision-makers, researchers and other stakeholders informs the project's work throughout its lifetime.

Total number of Local Advisory Panel members

56

Local Advisory Panel Members

Academic Health Science Networks

CAMHS

Civil society groups

Clinical Commissioning Groups

Clinical Research Networks

Councils

Education partnerships

Schools

Young people

7

IMPACT

MH:2K has a significant impact on participating young people, decision-makers and researchers.

Work influenced by MH:2K

Frameworks and strategies

Local Transformation Plans

Materials

Participation work

Practices in schools

Training and guidance

Impact on Citizen Researchers

86% of Citizen Researchers report greater optimism for the future

82% report increased feelings of wellbeing

86% report that their confidence has grown

Mentally healthy
SCHOOLS, COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

The Citizen Researchers based their recommendations on the views of young people at a wide range of schools, colleges and universities. They include existing practice that works and areas where change is needed. The recommendations are presented in no particular order.

1

Provide compulsory education on mental health from a young age

Young people want compulsory mental health education to be taught in PSHE or citizenship classes.

These classes should cover **topics about mental health** itself, such as spotting the signs of problems, getting help, and coping mechanisms. They should also cover **related topics**. These include:

- Self-esteem;
- Drug use and addictions;
- Healthy relationships, including physical and verbal self-defense;
- Expectations of masculinity;
- Social media.

Education on healthy relationships should start in primary school, with greater information from Year 7 onwards. It should **help young people understand how to make their relationships healthy**, not just what healthy and unhealthy relationships are.

Schools should choose **teachers for these classes who are comfortable discussing the topics**. These teachers should receive appropriate training.

2

Use resources co-designed by LGBTQ+ young people

Young people want their LGBTQ+ peers to be involved in designing session plans and resources for schools.

Sex education should be taught in a way that addresses and includes everyone across the spectrum of sexual identities. **LGBTQ+ identities, rights and history** should be reflected at relevant points across the curriculum.

If education does not include relevant and realistic knowledge for both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ people, then some students will feel alienated and confused.

3

Raise awareness of mental health services and resources available both inside and outside of the institution

Young people want schools, colleges and universities to distribute information about mental health services and resources to all students. This information should be clear and simple. It should be **provided discreetly** (e.g. through email bulletins and posters on the back of toilet doors) **and publicly** (e.g. in assemblies and on noticeboards). Awareness raising within primary schools should include resources for children to take home to their parents.

Young people also want schools to hold an annual '**Mental Health Awareness Day**'.

4

Provide activities that support mental wellbeing and resilience

Young people want schools, colleges and universities to run **extra curricular activities such as yoga, mindfulness, and group sessions**. The group sessions should provide a space where young people can discuss key issues, including self-care, coping mechanisms and how to manage stress. Some of these activities should be youth-led.

Within the school day, young people want schools to have **designated areas for relaxation and stress-relief**. Young people suggested common rooms for each year group, or peaceful places with calming music and sensory stimulation. These would also provide a place where young people could cool off if they were angry. Young people want at least **half an hour a week within the timetable to be dedicated to de-stressing**. This should be through recreational and wellbeing activities such mindfulness, yoga, and self-care.

5

Help remove and mitigate pressures around revision, exams and the future

Young people face significant pressures around exams and choices about their future. Young people want schools to **help them understand how to revise**. This includes what they should focus on and different ways of revising. They want schools to run **revision clubs and sessions**. These should include breakfast clubs to help make sure students eat something and can talk to teachers about what's worrying them before the school day starts. In some cases schools should provide young people with individually-tailored, person-specific revision plans. **Revision materials** should be provided both online and offline to suit different learning preferences. They should be easily accessible and there should be enough to go round.

Young people want there to be **more visits to universities, colleges and apprenticeships** to help them make decisions about their future. These visits would provide them with more information about the different options available.

6

Use peer-to-peer support to help improve mental wellbeing

Young people want schools to train older students aged 16+ to run peer mentoring and support groups. **Group sessions** should be about awareness raising or activities designed to promote wellbeing. **Mentoring sessions** should support young people facing particular challenges, for example those who are being bullied or falling behind. Many young people find it more personal and relatable to talk to someone of a similar age, at least at first.

7

Ensure support within the institution is accessible, discreet and professional

Young people want schools to employ specialist and proactive staff. These staff should be **linked to local mental health services**. School counsellors should be **accessible to all students** during school hours, via booked appointments, drop-ins, and online.

Young people want to be able to **access support in a way that protects their privacy**. It should be possible to book appointments with school counsellors via an online booking system, and to specify a location for the first meeting. Students at schools, colleges and universities should have 1-2-1s with tutors, giving them someone to talk to outside of home. These conversations and the counselling sessions should be private and confidential.

9

Give young people a voice

Young people want to have a voice within school. Schools should recognise that young people's opinions are important and listen to them. This could be through **school councils** if their members include a wide range of young people, or through mini **MH:2K-style processes**.

Schools should work with bullies and the bullied to co-create their approach to tackling bullying. They should listen to young people's views about whether anti-bullying efforts are working.

10

Are better funded

Young people are concerned that schools will not be able to meet their recommendations without greater funding. They want to see national action on this issue.

8

Take account of mental wellbeing in school rules

Young people want schools to embed mental wellbeing within their rules. It should be **allowed for young people to have a bad day** or a bad moment. Young people are humans not robots, and want to feel better understood. Schools should also **consider underlying issues before giving punishments**. Where a problem is caused by, for example a young person's caring responsibilities, punishment may not be an appropriate or helpful response.

Young people want schools to **take bullying more seriously, including homophobic and transphobic behaviour**. Simply having a zero tolerance policy written down does not solve the problem. Schools need to take action. Schools should also **provide more support to bullies**, considering what might be underlying their behavior, not just what they've done wrong.

Mentally healthy
PROFESSIONALS

The Citizen Researchers' recommendations are for mental health service staff, GPs, teachers, youth workers and other professionals working with young people. They include existing practice that works and areas where change is needed. The recommendations are presented in no particular order.

1

Receive mental health training

Young people want mental health training to be compulsory for professionals working with young people, particularly teachers and school staff. The training should cover topics including:

- How to spot the signs of mental health problems and approach young people about them;

- How to create an environment where young people feel more comfortable coming forward;

- How to respond to a young person who comes forward;

- Available resources and services;

- How to support young people with mental health problems, including those who self-harm;

- How to deal with challenging behaviour;

- How to create a positive culture towards progression, rather than panic and pressure.

Involving young people in providing this training would be useful to both sides.

2

Communicate well with young people

Young people want professionals to speak to them with **respect and listen** to what they are saying regardless of their age. Professionals should **avoid jargon and language that is too formal**. Their communication should be age appropriate: young adults can feel that communication is pitched at children and is patronising.

Young people also want professionals to **show compassion**; to show that they care and understand how young people are feeling.

Professionals should receive **training in how to communicate** with young people. Young people should be involved in training delivery to help make it more powerful.

3

Are LGBTQ+ literate

Young people want **better training** for doctors, other NHS staff, counsellors and therapists on how to deal with LGBTQ+ issues. LGBTQ+ young people should be involved in running the training. There should also be a **greater number of gender clinics**.

Teachers should be trained to **recognise homophobia and transphobia and deal with it**. They should take it as seriously as any other kind of bullying.

4

Are informed about digital technologies

Young people want schools to be better informed about digital technologies. Schools should have a **dedicated member of staff** to tackle social media related issues. Young people also suggest holding **group sessions for teachers in school**. Here teachers could discuss cyber-bullying and how to support students and their families.

5

Receive support with their own wellbeing

Young people want education leaders and others to recognise the **importance of teachers' wellbeing**. Leaders should look at whether teachers are coping with the pressures of their work. If teachers are stressed, they should be given the opportunity to speak up and get help.

6

Are more diverse

Young people want a greater choice of mental health service professionals. This means a greater diversity of staff at least in terms of **age, gender and culture**. This would make young people more likely to open up and feel comfortable. Young people want to be asked what gender of professional they would like to see. It is important that services and the support they provide are culturally competent.

Mentally healthy

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

1

The Citizen Researchers based their recommendations on the experiences of young service users in five diverse areas of England. They include existing practice that works and areas where change is needed. The recommendations are presented in no particular order.

Are easy to access

Young people want a **range of ways to seek help** that reflect their different needs and preferences. These should include:

- 24/7 helpline support;

- Drop-in sessions that don't clash with school or college hours;

- Online help, such as forums, messaging and websites;

- Home visits, especially for young people with mental or physical conditions that make it hard to leave home.

The Citizen Researchers also suggested an app linked to local mental health services. The app would give young people access to ongoing support and advice. It is important to young people that **some of the ways to seek help are anonymous**. This would allow them to seek help without feeling judged, uncomfortable or fearing public exposure. This is particularly important for young men.

All young people who need help should be able to access services. Services should **address barriers caused by language, or physical and learning disabilities**. They should take into account **financial barriers**, such as being unable to afford transport fares to an appointment. Services should be **located in places that young people can get to unaccompanied**.
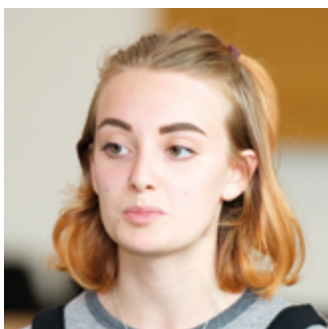
3

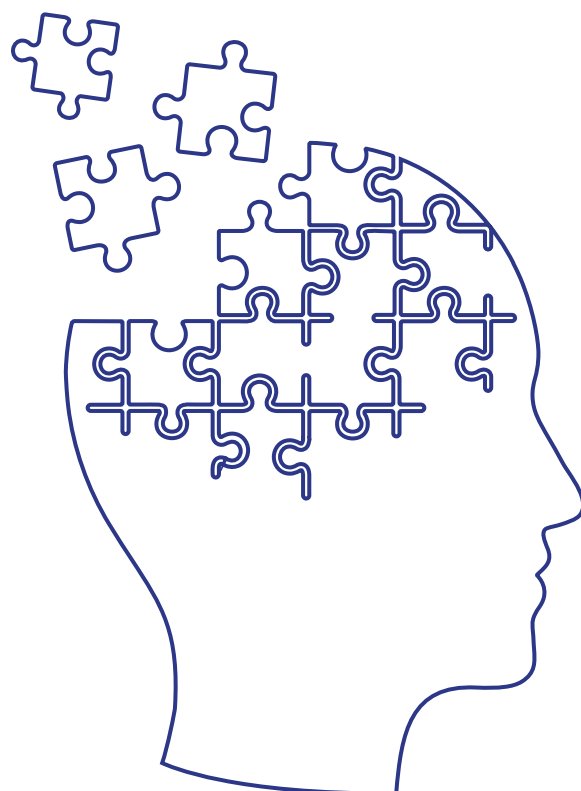### Provide good transitions between youth and adult services

Young people want **smoother, quicker, and more reliable transitions** between youth and adult services. Young people can find transition stressful, particularly if they feel nervous or uncomfortable trusting new people and places. Services should provide a **buddying system** which links young people in transition with young people who have already transitioned. They should use **regular meetings and fun activities** to help young people settle into the new service. **Waiting times during transition should be cut** to help stop young people 'falling through the net'.

4

Share data and pass on information

Young people want services to be better at sharing patients' data. They don't want to keep reliving experiences in order to explain their situation to new people. This is true when they see different professionals within the same service and when they transition between services.

Young people also suggested that services should share data to create a pool of information about a family. This includes services beyond those focused on mental health.

2

Ensure continuity of care

Young people want **an end to the system of offering limited weeks of treatment**. Instead they want a continuous assessment of need. This would reduce the pressure and stress on young people to 'feel better' within a defined period.

Young people also want a **more trusting and sustained relationship with a particular professional**. Changes in practitioner can be disruptive and make young people feel like they have to start again with each change. Young people want stability.

5

Support young people on (shorter) waiting lists

Young people want shorter waiting lists and better support for young people while they are waiting. Services should send young people **regular updates** about the progress of their referrals. There should be **an app** that young people on waiting lists can use to access support.

6

Use spaces where young people feel comfortable

Young people want treatment and consultation to happen in spaces where they feel comfortable. These include safe yet familiar settings such as **community and youth centres**. Young people are less comfortable in clinical or hospitalised spaces.

7

Offer treatment options

Young people want more control over their treatment. Many young people want to be offered **talking therapies before being given medication**. Young people also want services to offer them **alternatives if they are unhappy** with their treatment or assigned professional.

8

Listen to young people and take action

Young people want services to have **better feedback and complaint procedures**. Services should provide feedback opportunities appropriate for all ages. Feedback should be collected regularly. Complaints procedures should be clear, accessible and taken seriously. Young people should not be afraid to complain. Services should listen to, and act on, what young people want from them.

9

Have flexible staffing models

Young people want mental health services to use more flexible staffing models. This should help them to provide **better coverage when areas are facing high demand**. They suggest bringing in staff members from across mental health teams to help areas that are struggling.

10

Benefit from more and better funding

Young people would like to see improved funding for youth mental health services. This might be about increased levels of funding, or about distributing funding between youth and adult mental health services differently.

Mentally healthy
COMMUNITIES

The Citizen Researchers' recommendations on communities cover issues on which councils, schools, the NHS and civil society organisations should work together. They feature existing practice that works and areas where change is needed. The recommendations are presented in no particular order.

1

Ensure young people know where to get help

Young people want information about available services and resources, both locally and nationally. This includes awareness that they can ask for help at their school, GP surgery and online.

This **information should be everywhere and easily accessible** to everyone. Local areas should **involve young people in developing promotional materials and advising on where they are displayed**. Good places to post information include the back of toilet doors, existing online platforms used by young people and bus stops.

Voluntary sector groups, schools and religious and community centres should actively promote available services and resources. **Services should run roadshow events and pop up hubs** about their offer in educational and other young person settings.

2

Create better resources around self-help and conditions

Young people want **more specific and understandable materials** about topics such as diagnoses, advice and coping mechanisms. Information on self-harm is important to counter the inaccurate way it is often portrayed online. Self-help materials would benefit many young people, including those who do not have the confidence to seek help.

These resources should be available in print and online. **Young people should be involved in producing them**, or reviewing them where materials already exist. Current materials can lack colour, bullet points, positive quotes and survivors' stories. Young people should also advise on how best to make their peers aware of the resources available.

3

Offer a good number and range of offline activities for young people

Young people want **good and affordable offline activity provision** in their local area. They have a wide range of ideas for what this could include – from art, painting, dance, singing and cooking, to youth clubs, football, boxing, chess and table tennis. It is important that there is **a range of different activities** available to cater for different interests. Gym memberships should be cheaper.

In addition to the above, offline activities could be provided in age appropriate and tailored environments for young people with mental health issues. These groups could be exclusive to young people with mental health problems or also open to others.

4

Run programmes and campaigns targeted at young men

Young people want greater support for young men. Local areas should:

- Work with young men who feel comfortable talking about mental health. They should **support these young people to talk to younger boys** about the issue. This should happen in schools and in community settings.

- Ask community groups to run **specialist education programmes that address masculinity and mental health**. Relevant groups include football, sports, drama and air cadet clubs. Such programmes are likely to be more successful than work in a classroom setting. Young men often feel more comfortable in these spaces and conversations can be kept casual.

- Use **accessible means like street stalls** to address ideas of masculinity from an early age. Activities should also raise awareness of topics like identity and equality.

5

Ask the voluntary sector to help provide greater support

Young people want councils and services to use their voluntary sector links more effectively. They should **consider commissioning the voluntary sector** to provide:

- Specialist services, drop-in sessions and family workshops;

- Groups (safe spaces) for young people to talk to someone and discuss their problems;

- Cyber-bullying support groups, consisting of peers or mentors who have been through cyber-bullying themselves.

Community groups working with young people should run **awareness raising activities around social media**. Such groups include youth clubs, youth groups at religious institutions, the scouts and the girl guides. Young people often particularly trust professionals who work with them in these settings.

6

Provide discreet access to services

Young people want discreet access to services. Organisations should work together to make that possible. For example, young people suggested dropboxes in religious buildings and schools. Other options include a free text number that young people can contact to get a call back. These would allow young people to provide their details anonymously, then to receive confidential support through a real person.

7

Deliver community events on mental health and emotional wellbeing

Young people want local areas to run a variety of community events on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Between them these should promote community responsibility, raise awareness of mental health issues, increase access to services and tackle knowledge gaps in particular communities.

Specifically young people want **more local workshops for young people** so that they have regular access to mental health resources. They also recommend **family-based community events**. These would have the dual purpose of encouraging family bonding, and increasing awareness of mental health issues.

8

Provide targeted support for different cultural and religious groups

Young people want targeted mental health support and information for different cultures and religions (through mosques, churches etc). They want local areas to tackle the idea that mental ill-health results from not being close enough to God. They also want local areas to help address cultural pressures around lifestyles that can leave young people feeling 'stuck' between two worlds and two generations.

9

Run campaigns co-designed with young people
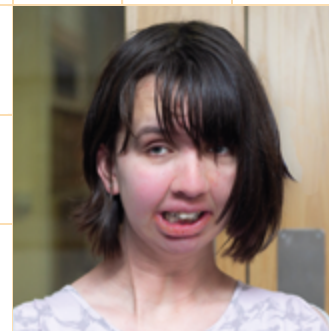
Young people want local areas to:

- **Train 'Community Ambassadors'** to have conversations about mental health in religious and cultural spaces. These should include social centres in religious buildings. This would help to bridge gaps in knowledge and awareness through the community;

- Provide **better mental health education for religious leaders**. Religious leaders are one key set of people who give advice, so this advice needs to be well-informed and practical;

- Arrange for **mental health professionals to visit religious buildings** and give talks. These visits and talks should be designed with the community.

Local areas should make use of existing initiatives that work. For example, one Citizen Researcher highlighted a mental health conference organised by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies.

Young people want to work with local areas to co-design and deliver **campaigns on mental health and related issues**. These include campaigns that:

- Challenge the stigma around mental ill-health;

- Take on prejudices around disabilities and learning difficulties;

- Raise awareness of safe spaces, services and resources;

- Promote positive role models, focusing on what the person has done not what they look like;

- Encourage people to question photo-shopped images, and share positive achievements rather than selfies;

- Highlight the effects of unhealthy relationships on mental health.

The campaigns should be **online and offline**. They should work through **recognised partners and platforms**. These include clothing and make-up brands, celebrities, youtubers, sports clubs (including football, boxing, gyms), and the arts (including music, film and graffiti). They should include **good representation**, for example of people with different sexualities and ethnic backgrounds. They should be **realistic**.

Local areas should use **youth peer-to-peer engagement** to increase campaigns' impact. They should ask young people with relevant direct experience to talk or write about mental health for other young people. Campaigns should include awareness days, either on mental health in general, or on specific issues such as self-harm.

10

Harness the potential of social media

Young people want local areas to make better use social media. They should use it to promote accurate information about mental ill-health and raise awareness of key issues. For example, areas could use **snapchat discovery stories, instagram and content such as questions, games, articles and facts**. They could approach popular vloggers and ask them to help promote mental health awareness. They could ask charismatic young people to make videos about mental health.

Mentally healthy
FAMILIES

The Citizen Researchers' recommendations on families cover issues on which councils, schools, the NHS and civil society organisations should work together. They feature existing practice that works and areas where change is needed. The recommendations are presented in no particular order.

1

Understand and have practical knowledge around mental health

Young people want their parents, guardians and carers to be able to support them. Their **knowledge of mental health and emotional wellbeing** should include:

- How to help stop mental health problems occurring in the first place;
- How to spot the early signs of issues and how to help;
- How to make the whole family more at ease with talking about the topic.

Local areas should **ask parents, guardians and carers how to make it easy and accessible** for them to learn about these issues. They could do this through an MH:2K style process. Young people then want local areas to provide the recommended support.

Young people's ideas for what this support might look like include:

- Compulsory talks throughout the school years;
- Peer learning – parents, guardians and carers who have a child with mental health problems could talk to other parents about it;
- A resource pack;
- Face-to-face support.

2

Recognise a wider range of grades and careers as positive achievements

Young people want schools to help build parents', guardians' and carers' understanding of grades and career pathways. They also want them to understand how much pressure is appropriate on these topics, and what is too much. **Schools could use meetings, parents' evenings, or day-in-the-life swaps** where parents, guardians and carers sit in on lessons.

3

Support young people with social media issues

Young people want **evening workshops for parents**, guardians and carers to increase their understanding of social media. The workshops should cover:

- Risks on social media;

- How to help and support young people with social media use;

- How to balance young people's independence with keeping them safe;

- The impact that social media, and what happens on it, can have on young people's mental health.

4

Accept and support LGBTQ+ young people

Young people want **support groups for families of LGBTQ+ young people**. Some parents, guardians, carers and families are homophobic or don't know how to react when their children come out. They also often need help with how to support LGBTQ+ young people with the issues they can face.

5

Understand the challenges facing young men and how to support them

Young people want **mandatory evening events for parents, guardians and carers of young men**. Professionals from local mental health services and young people themselves should co-run the events. They should signpost parents, guardians and carers to follow up resources. These might include useful websites, social media groups and helplines.

6

Receive better support when their children are using mental health services

Young people want services to provide better materials and support to the families of young people receiving treatment. Services should give families **advice that is practical** (not too biological). They should not be patronising. They should also provide families with **follow-up support** after young people are discharged.
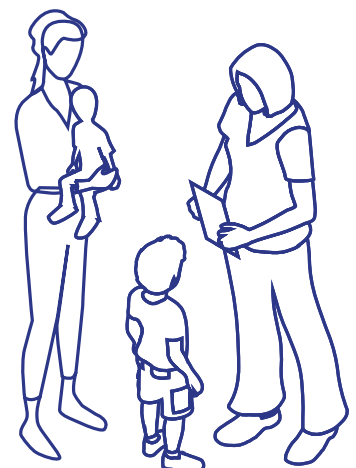
7

Benefit from more and better services for families and their children

Young people want more support targeted at the whole family unit. There should be a **free mediation service for extended families** to enable young people to make themselves heard. Local areas should also provide **more family therapy**.

Young people want **additional support for young people who face challenges at home**. This includes understanding the support needed by young carers and others with additional home responsibilities. Young people may also require additional support due to changes in their living situation (e.g. housing issues, employment issues, changing households), bereavement or serious family illness.

8

Have time off

Young people would like their parents, guardians and carers to be entitled to one paid day off work a month to bond with their children.

Mentally healthy
SOCIAL MEDIA

To-date MH:2K has not looked in detail at what mentally healthy social media platforms would be like. Nonetheless its Citizen Researchers have made the following recommendations. Other recommendations relating to social media can be found under the schools, professionals, families and communities themes.

1

Have easier ways to report cyber-bullying

Young people can feel overly confident when bullying online. They are not face-to-face with the people they are hurting, and it can be hard to identify them. Young people can also feel pressure to participate in bullying to protect themselves. Reporting bullying currently takes too long. Young people want more effective measures, for example **a button specifically for the purpose of reporting bullying, abuse and harmful words**.

2
Make accounts automatically private

Young people want social media companies to **make accounts automatically private**. This would help ensure sure that young people understand that they are fully responsible for making accounts public. There should also be **more advanced privacy settings** on channels such as snap chat. For example, it should be possible to make sure certain people can only see certain posts.
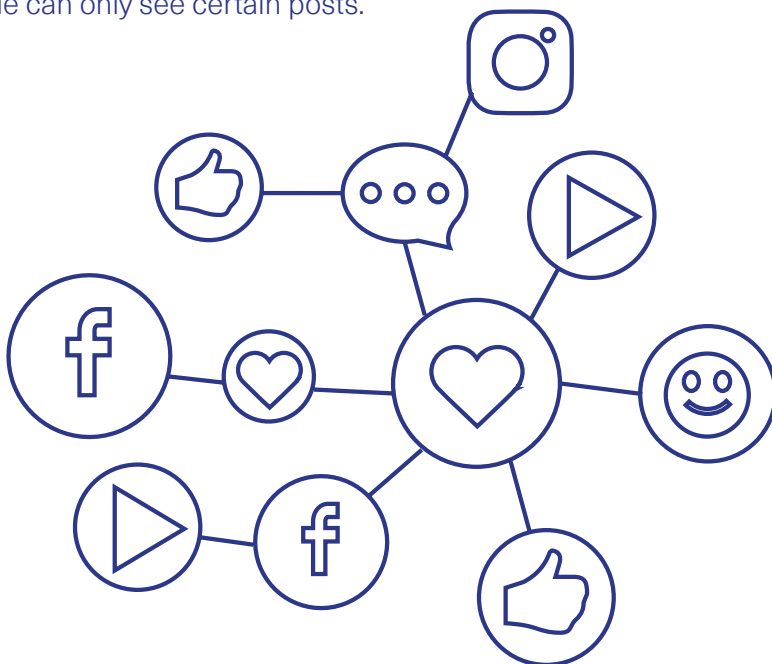
3
Include an option to hide followers, likes and comments

Young people face pressure to conform on social media. This includes pressure to get a certain amount of likes, look a certain way, and accept social norms. Young people can fear rejection and standing out. The Citizen Researchers suggested that this can leave young people lacking a personal identity, feeling pressured to change themselves, and being easily influenced to do something that they don't want to do. Having the option to hide followers, likes and comments would help to remove the need to conform.

4
Do more to protect younger children

Young people want social media companies to do more to protect younger children. There should be **stricter age restrictions** on social media. Some Citizen Researchers also advocated **creating a child-friendly version of social media** platforms. On these versions, blocking and reporting functions would be more obvious, and all mature and harmful content would be removed.

5
Feature a "social media mental health service"

Young people want to have **a more direct and anonymous way of communicating with professionals**. This could be through their social media accounts and pages. It would enable young people to seek help on the platform that is causing them the problem.

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FIND OUT MORE

If you would like more information about MH:2K to-date, its national recommendations or future plans please contact us using the details on the back cover.

You can also find more information about MH:2K on the Involve and Leaders Unlocked websites. This includes its local findings and recommendations, advisory panel memberships lists, and full evaluation reports.

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CONTACT US

Sarah Allan
Head of Engagement, Involve
sarah@involve.org.uk

www.involve.org.uk
🐦 @involveUK #MH2K

Rose Dowling
Director, Leaders Unlocked
rose@leaders-unlocked.org

www.leaders-unlocked.org
🐦 @LeadersUnlocked #MH2K

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