



NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

OUR MINDS
OUR FUTURE



Our Minds Our Future Online Event

Summary Report
for Participants

September 2021



✓ Make sure the service is affordable for young people.



✓ Don't make young people wait any longer than necessary to receive a service.



✓ Don't discriminate against young people, no matter who they are, where they come from or what their background is.



✓ Help young people to feel safe and welcome.



✓ Give young people clear information about the service so that they know what is going to happen.



✓ Listen to young people and respect their story without judging them or where they are from.



✓ Keep information confidential and tell young people when it needs to be shared with others.



✓ Focus on young people's needs and the issues they face.



✓ Offer young people hope that they can make positive changes in your life.



✓ Include young people in decisions about how our service works and how we educate children & young people on mental health.



Our Minds Our Future Project

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) delivers the **Our Minds Our Future** (OMOF) project in Northern Ireland and works in partnership with Youth Access, Scottish Youth Parliament, SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), ProMo Cymru and Hafal to put the voices of young people at the centre of mental health service design and delivery all across the UK. The five-year project is funded thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Youth-Led Event

NCB hosted an online youth-led event, which took place via zoom from 16:30 – 18:00 on Thursday 30 September 2021.

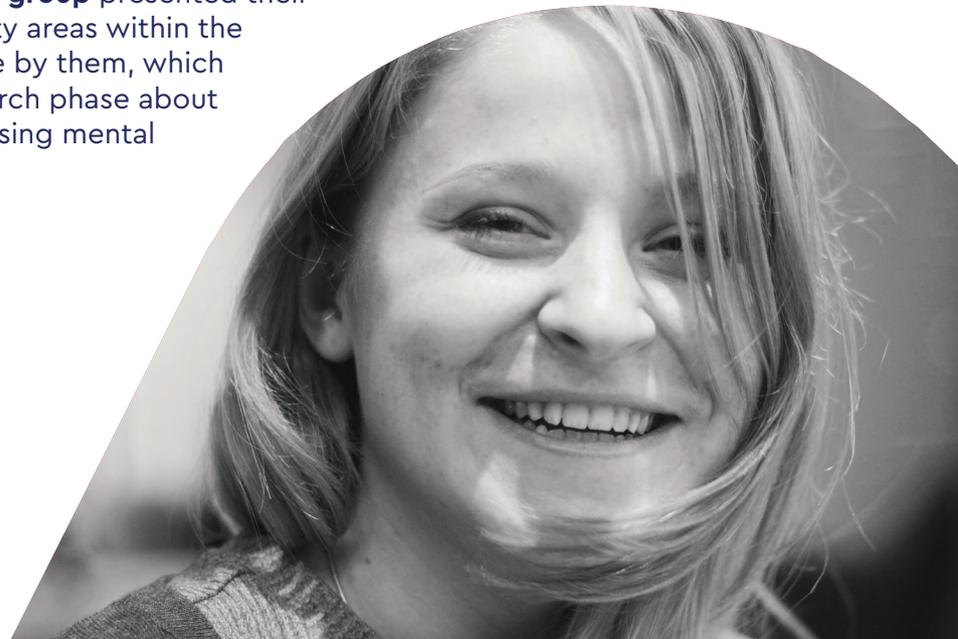
The event provided opportunities for safe and solution-focused conversations, with young people and those involved in designing and delivering mental health services in Northern Ireland and aimed to:

- ✓ identify common causes of mental ill health using the **Youth-Led Charter for Mental Health Services** in Northern Ireland;
- ✓ agree priorities for action;
- ✓ discuss how we can co-produce solutions.

The event was co-designed and co-facilitated by young people with lived experience of mental ill health and those interested in improving mental health services for young people in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner, Koulla Yiasouma, provided opening remarks, discussing the importance of young people's involvement in improving mental health services and the new mental health strategy. She commended the young people who had been involved in the development of the first mental health charter for young people and for their OMOF event.

Young people from the OMOF Advisory group presented their project, and outlined the five key priority areas within the charter and showed a **short video** made by them, which summarised the findings from the research phase about 'what mattered most to us' when accessing mental health services.





Attendees were split into five separate breakout rooms for a **workshop focusing on one of the key priorities identified by the Charter:**

- Education,
- Safe & Welcoming Space,
- Waiting Times,
- No Discrimination/Judgement
- Affordability.

These workshops were facilitated by young people, with support from an NCB staff member and used Jamboard, an interactive collaboration tool, to present information and record conversations in real time.

In each workshop, members were presented with a case study to illustrate the issue to be discussed.

Each of the workshops focussed on setting priorities to improve services. They discussed:

- ✓ What does a good service look like?
- ✓ What will need to change for the service to be a good service?
- ✓ What the impact would be for young people if their service improved

Lastly, each group discussed and gave their ideas on **'How can we co-produce solutions?'** Using these questions as prompts for discussion:

- ✓ Identify who needs to help; who has a role to play?
- ✓ How best can young people support professionals to make these changes?
- ✓ How will we know if change is happening? (how can this be measured?)

Finally, attendees then joined the **plenary session**, where they heard a brief summary of feedback from each workshop. (These can be seen in the jamboard links below).

Closing remarks and reflections were given by **Professor Siobhan O'Neill, Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland** who thanked all the young people involved for their work on the Charter and the event, and made a commitment to ensure that the Charter's priorities are embedded throughout services as we progress the implementation of the new Mental Health Strategy.

The event closed with a **Mindfulness activity**, led by young people from Elephant In The Room youth group, using a body scan activity taken from the mental health advocacy toolkit Heads Up!



Education to improve our own mental health

Our stories

From an early age, children and young people need to be given the tools and skills they need to identify when their mental health is suffering, and strategies to help themselves. Luke* is one young person whose mental health went undiagnosed for years.

"At 13/14 I didn't have the words - I used to say I had severe headaches so my GP diagnosed me with that, it but was more down to my mental health."

He hadn't been given the skills or education to know that the problem was stemming from his mental health, which could in turn impact his physical wellbeing. Now, he believes that more can be done to encourage educational discussions about mental health.

"It needs to be promoted more widely with young people - they only access services when in dire straits. Young people don't think they can access it before the situation becomes worse."

Educating young people about mental health is the first step in ensuring they can access early intervention before the situation gets more severe.

*not his real name

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Stories collected during the research phase of the Mental Health Charter in 2020.

Priorities for Action		
What do I need the service to look like?	What changes need to happen for this to be no longer an issue?	How can services improve this for young people?
<p>Something that you can go into at not feel judged</p> <p>• In the future, mental health services should be more accessible and less stigmatised. It should be a place where young people can go to get help without feeling embarrassed or judged.</p> <p>• The service should be more welcoming and have a friendly atmosphere. It should be a place where young people can feel safe and supported.</p> <p>• The service should be more accessible and have a friendly atmosphere. It should be a place where young people can feel safe and supported.</p>	<p>High street safe mode - less</p> <p>• High street safe mode is a service that provides a safe space for young people to access mental health services. It is a service that is available in high street locations and is designed to be accessible and welcoming.</p> <p>• High street safe mode is a service that provides a safe space for young people to access mental health services. It is a service that is available in high street locations and is designed to be accessible and welcoming.</p>	<p>Clinical atmosphere</p> <p>• Clinical atmosphere is a service that provides a safe space for young people to access mental health services. It is a service that is available in high street locations and is designed to be accessible and welcoming.</p> <p>• Clinical atmosphere is a service that provides a safe space for young people to access mental health services. It is a service that is available in high street locations and is designed to be accessible and welcoming.</p>
<p>Waiting times can also contribute to people not attending</p> <p>• Waiting times can be a barrier to accessing mental health services. It is important to ensure that waiting times are kept to a minimum and that young people are able to access services as soon as possible.</p> <p>• Waiting times can be a barrier to accessing mental health services. It is important to ensure that waiting times are kept to a minimum and that young people are able to access services as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Make sure your services are accessible to all genders</p> <p>• Make sure your services are accessible to all genders. This means ensuring that services are available to young people of all genders and that the services are designed to be inclusive and welcoming.</p> <p>• Make sure your services are accessible to all genders. This means ensuring that services are available to young people of all genders and that the services are designed to be inclusive and welcoming.</p>	<p>Treating people humanely</p> <p>• Treating people humanely is a service that provides a safe space for young people to access mental health services. It is a service that is available in high street locations and is designed to be accessible and welcoming.</p> <p>• Treating people humanely is a service that provides a safe space for young people to access mental health services. It is a service that is available in high street locations and is designed to be accessible and welcoming.</p>





Attendees

A total of 31 young people pre-registered for the event, with **21 young people** aged between 16–24 in attendance on the day. These young people were remunerated with a voucher for their participation.

A total of 52 adults pre-registered for the event; with **31 adults from 25 organisations** in attendance, from across a wide range of statutory and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. A list of organisations who attended can be seen on the back page of this report.

A snapshot of conversations

A summary of conversations from each breakout room were recorded on Jamboard and can be seen here:

Education: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1VCrSr-mraM0I_nWwoKhoDK8Ea8aoKjQULlCHNyDgUkM/edit?usp=sharing

Affordability: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1xVeTAN7IRYd3VqDbdtMEaXKJUUpuc258ZLX0mmy5MqSQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Safe and Welcoming Space: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1Pg1eh4Dxh7437VCob4o4mliQSnnciC4LUt-cms5hIHk/edit?usp=sharing>

Waiting Times: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1nLGiowz6L6sRplnDtBFyXjygbgR0MN2FrIhrBwjQLrg/edit?usp=sharing>

No Discrimination, No Justice: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1P4OOh5XgrvuOqWZRvK-Q8SVvNwFVLiLIAu7Blahonvw/edit?usp=sharing>





Next Steps

We acknowledged that a limitation to our event was time. Due to the current coronavirus restrictions the event was delivered virtually and to prevent Zoom fatigue we decided 1.5 hours was as much as we could expect young people and adults to participate for.

Our next steps for this project are to follow up with the discussions we have started at our first event. Together with the young people and adults from our Advisory Groups we will **design and deliver a larger scale conference**; for young people and professionals across the system to come together to share results from previous activities/events; to share learning, and to develop further solutions and spread good practice.

Stay involved!

We encourage any young person aged 13–25 years interested in improving mental health services to join our **Young People's Advisory Group**, all they need to do is **contact us** for more information about how to get involved.

In addition, NCB will be hosting **communities of practice**; a space for professionals interested in improving mental health for young people, to come together to discuss issues, share information and best practice, including training workshops to further develop their skills and learning. You can register your interest via our **website** or by contacting Gill Hassard via **email**.

We want to thank you again for your interest and support to the OMOF project and encourage you to stay in touch with us. We look forward to talking to you again soon!

Gill Hassard
NCB Senior Participation Officer
E: [ghassard@ncb.org.uk](mailto:g Hassard@ncb.org.uk)

How you can show your support to the OMOF Mental Health Charter:

- ✓ You can **download the Charter**
- ✓ You can sign up to the Charter by using the online form below or by emailing us on ni@ourmindsourfuture.uk (please send us your logo)
- ✓ You can visit us on Twitter at: https://twitter.com/ncb_ni_tweets and share the Charter by clicking [here](#).
- ✓ In addition, you can tag us using our Twitter handle [@ncb_ni_tweets](#).





Organisations who attended our event included:

- Action Mental Health
- AWARE NI
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast youth forum
- Bytes
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Children's Law Centre
- Crisis Cafe CIC
- Cruse Bereavement Care
- CYPSP – Health and Social Care Board
- Department of Education
- Department of Justice
- Education Authority
- Familyworks Counselling Service
- Health & Social Care Board
- Mae Murray Foundation
- Mental Health Champion NI
- Mindwise
- National Counselling Society (NI Committee)
- NI Assembly
- NI Commissioner for Children and Young People
- NIABF
- ProMo-Cymru
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Secondary Students' Union of Northern Ireland (SSUNI)
- The National Lottery Community Fund

