Youth Select Committee 2015: Inquiry into Mental Health

Call for evidence

On Friday 14 November the UK Youth Parliament voted overwhelmingly for 'mental health' as its priority UK-wide campaign. The British Youth Council membership called on a future Government to address youth mental health issues by voting this as a priority campaign in its General Election manifesto, and determined that this should be the subject for inquiry by the 2015 Youth Select Committee.

The Youth Select Committee (YSC) is a British Youth Council initiative, supported by the House of Commons, which takes evidence in public and has its proceedings televised and recorded in Hansard. The eleven committee members are aged 13-18 and include Members of UK Youth Parliament, Youth Councillors, a Young Mayor, reserved seats and representatives from each of the devolved nations.

The Committee would welcome submissions from young people affected by mental health issues, related charities, local authorities, schools, campaigners, other enquires, Government and Opposition Parties, staff in the NHS and any other interested parties on what changes could be made to improve mental health services.

Points on which comments are invited

The Committee requests comments on the following points:

Awareness

- What more could be done to prevent stigma and discrimination towards young people with mental health issues, particularly when they prevent young people from seeking support?
- Do young people feel informed about the services available to them? If not, what more could be done to raise awareness?
- Could more use be made of social media or mobile applications? If so, how?
- What is the impact of websites which promote self-harm and other online material? Should something be done about these sites? If so, what?

Education

- Is education on mental health in schools sufficient? What could be done to improve it? Should it be a compulsory part of the National Curriculum? If so, at what age should it be introduced? Could more be made of education around peer support?
- What is the impact of mental health issues on young people’s education?
Do teachers, parents/carers and others working with young people receive sufficient training and support? If not, what more could be offered?

How accessible is published literature and online information about mental health? Could it be made more "youth friendly"?

Services

What is the current state of services and treatments available (e.g. through CAMHS)?

Is the current funding for mental health services being targeted at the right areas?

Are changes needed to the provision of mental health services? Are they accessible and appropriate for young people? If not, what could be done to improve them?

Could more be done to promote the sharing of best practice between services? Is the process for transition between children and adult services effective? If not, what could be done differently?

What experiences have young people had in using mental health services?

How does mental health provision compare with the services available for physical health?

The Committee call for evidence closes on 22 May 2015 and the YSC will hold oral evidence sessions in the House of Commons in June and July 2015.

Form of written evidence:

How to respond

Responses should be submitted by no later than 12 noon on 22 May.

Responses should ideally be sent by e-mail to bycyouthelect@parliament.uk. The body of the e-mail should include a name and contact details. It should be clear who the submission is from, particularly whether it is on behalf of an organisation or in the name of an individual.

If you do not have access to e-mail, you may send a paper copy of your response to the Clerk of the Youth Select Committee, Internal Audit, Care of the Office of the Chief Executive, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

It assists the Committee if those submitting written evidence adhere to the following guidelines:

- Written submissions should be in Word or Rich Text Format wherever possible;

- Submissions should as short as is consistent with conveying the relevant information. As a rough guide, it is usually helpful if they can be confined to 1,500 words (about 4 pages) or less;

- Paragraphs should be numbered for ease of reference.

- A summary of the main points at the start of the submission is helpful.
• Material already published elsewhere should not form the basis of a submission but may be referred to in the response, preferably with a hyperlink.

• The Committee will not investigate any individual cases of complaint.

Evidence that is submitted will be published on the British Youth Council website. If you do not wish your name to be published then please indicate this when you submit your evidence. You will still need to provide your name and contact details as the Committee will not accept anonymous evidence but that information will not be shared online.

Inquiry-related questions:

Please contact the inquiry team on bycyouthelect@parliament.uk