

Engaging Young People

Full report

March 2019



**Tunbridge Wells
& District**

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Background

Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells and District were awarded funding by Kent County Council's **Suicide Prevention Innovation Fund** to carry out research into how our charity can best reach and engage young people including those young people with suicidal thoughts caused by debt.

Citizens Advice's core purpose is to give **everyone** the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward whatever their problem. Our aim is to reach as many people who need our help as possible and this means understanding that different people require different kinds of information and support. Our research aimed to find out what this might mean in practice for young people in our area.

Research Objectives

This report is structured around the five objectives below. We carried out an in-depth review of existing research as well as carrying out our own survey and talking to other organisations and charities in Tunbridge Wells. Our objectives were:

1. To better understand young people and the problems they face including the link between debt and mental health
2. To investigate the barriers which prevent young people from accessing advice
3. To evaluate the ways we could reach a younger audience (including the use of digital communication channels)
4. To forge valuable long term links with organisations and charities who support young people.
5. To make evidence based proposals for next steps

1. Understanding young people and the link between mental health and debt

Why young people experience problems

We have used the term 'young people' to include those aged between 14 and 25. The period of adolescence (from the onset of puberty until independent adulthood) covers a unique period of change during which young people can be particularly vulnerable to experiencing the kinds of social welfare problems that give rise to a need for advice.

There are several reasons for this:

- **Young people think differently from older adults**

Research now shows that the brain continues to develop all the way through adolescence and into the 20s. Cognitive development can be responsible for impulsive behaviour and the area of the brain which deals with reasoning and problem solving does not fully mature until at least age 25¹. During this period behaviour will be more strongly influenced by peers as more weight is given to social exclusion when making decisions, over health or legal risks² meaning young people may think and react in very different ways from older adults in the same situation.

- **The transition from adolescence to adulthood can be complex**

The transition to adulthood has become more protracted and complex in recent years. Young people in England must now stay in education or training (full or part time) until the age of 18 but the path to employment can be less straightforward. The cost of housing has risen as has the amount of low paid and insecure work³ and it takes longer for young people to achieve full social and financial independence.

¹ Romer et al, 2017

² Blakemore & Mills, 2014

³ Institute for Fiscal Studies, Poverty and Low Pay in the UK, 6 March 2018

- **Key life events**

Changes in life circumstances (such as leaving education, getting or losing a job and leaving or moving home) occur frequently during this period and can act as triggers causing social welfare problems. The most common problems experienced by young people are those related to rented housing, homelessness, employment, debt and benefits⁴.

- **Rising levels of debt**

Research shows that young people are more likely to struggle with bills and repayments than the rest of the population: The Financial Lives Survey from 2017 showed more than half (55%) of 18-24 year olds were in debt and they were more likely to be over-indebted:⁵ 17% of 18-24 year olds compared to 15% of all UK adults⁶. A report by Citizens Advice published in 2016 found that 20-29 year olds were **twice** as likely as 30-39 year olds to have debts worth more than six months of their income.⁷ As well as the financial burden, unmanageable debt is closely related to wider problems in people's lives including their mental health. Those with unmanageable debt are 24% more likely to have poor mental health⁸ and they are three times more likely than the rest of the population to have considered suicide.⁹

- **Mental health**

The most recent official statistics from NHS England¹⁰ show that 1 in 8 young people aged under 19 had a mental health disorder in 2017. An NHS survey of young people found that 87% knew that they had an important role to play in looking after their own mental health but only 49% were confident that they

⁴ Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P. *Young People & Legal Problems: Findings from the Legal Problem Resolution Survey 2014-2015*, February 2018

⁵ Definition of over-indebted from Institute of Fiscal Studies: have missed domestic bills or credit payments in 3 or more of the last 6 months

⁶ Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Lives Survey 2017

⁷ A Debt Effect - How is unmanageable debt related to other problems in people's lives, Citizens Advice, Joe Lane, July 2016

⁸ A Debt Effect - How is unmanageable debt related to other problems in people's lives, Citizens Advice, Joe Lane, July 2016

⁹ Money & Mental Health Policy Institute, A Silent Killer - Breaking the link between financial difficulty and suicide, December 2018

¹⁰ Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, NHS England, 2017

could find services in their area where they could go for help with their mental health.¹¹

Why advice and early intervention matters

Research by Youth Access has shown that young people aged under 25 are considerably less likely than the general population to access legal advice when they experience social welfare problems¹². As well as being a key predictor of mental health problems in young people¹³ the experience of problems can also lead to a loss of confidence, loss of income, physical illness and unemployment¹⁴.

Advice and early intervention can have a huge positive impact on outcomes for young people by preventing the escalation of problems and saving resources and funds in the long term. A study of clients of youth advice services found that 64% of those who received advice reported an improvement in their stress levels¹⁵.

There is a stigma associated with financial difficulty and suicidal thoughts which means that many of those at risk may not feel able to disclose their problems.¹⁶ This means that a preventative approach will be more effective than a reactive approach. **In order to reach those young people with suicidal thoughts we must look to engage with all young people to raise awareness of the help that is available to them.**

The local context

In 2017 the population of Tunbridge Wells was 118,100¹⁷ of which 7,000 were 15-19 and 4,800 were 20-24 meaning that approximately 10% of the population is aged 24 or under. At Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells and District in 2018 only 6% of our clients

¹¹ NHS England, Young Minds - Transforming participation across young people's mental health, Feb 2018

¹² Kenrick, J. Young People's Access to Advice - the evidence, October 2009

¹³ Youth Access, The Social Determinants of Young People's Mental Health, June 2015

¹⁴ Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P. *Young People & Legal Problems: Findings from the Legal Problem Resolution Survey 2014-2015*, February 2018

¹⁵ Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P. *Young People & Legal Problems: Findings from the Legal Problem Resolution Survey 2014-2015*, February 2018

¹⁶ Money & Mental Health Policy Institute, A Silent Killer - Breaking the link between financial difficulty and suicide, December 2018

¹⁷ Mid Year Population Estimates, Age and gender 2017, Kent.gov.uk

were aged under 25 which means that young people were under-represented as a client group.

Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells & District
RESULTS FROM OUR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

We designed a short online survey to find out more about young people's experience of seeking advice.

The blue boxes contain headline results under the relevant topic, please refer to the full survey results for all the findings and matrix charts.

2.The barriers to seeking advice

Young people are less likely than the general population to access advice due to practical and emotional barriers which are complex and can be interrelated.

Practical barriers

- **Low levels of awareness of rights and services**

Young people are less aware than the general population about what their rights are and what services are available to them¹⁸ and this represents a significant barrier to seeking advice.

¹⁸ Kenrick, J. Young People's Access to Advice - the evidence, October 2009

LEVELS OF AWARENESS

We asked young people how well they knew various advice organisations and charities. **Childline** came out top overall: 16.9% of young people had been on their website or contacted them and 97.8% were aware of them and knew what they did. **Samaritans** also had a good level of awareness with 76.4% knowing what they did.

NSPCC (57.3%), **Shelter** (46.6%) and **Mind** (54.5%) had average levels of awareness.

Levels of awareness of **Citizens Advice** were lower: 41.8% of young people in our survey had heard of us and knew what we did whilst 22% had heard of us but were unsure what we did. **36.3% had never heard of Citizens Advice.**

- **Preference for informal channels**

When they do seek advice young people are less likely to do so via a formal channel. The Legal Problem Resolution survey¹⁹ showed that young people were more likely than older adults to seek advice from family or friends²⁰ and less likely to consult an independent adviser²¹. In another survey, when asked where they would go if they couldn't solve a problem on their own, only 14% of those aged 18-24 suggested Citizens Advice (compared to 43% of older adults)²². Our own research followed this trend with 95.5% of the young people we surveyed stating they would be either very likely or likely to ask family or friends for help compared to only 22% who would be very likely or likely to consult an advice organisation.

¹⁹ Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P. *Young People & Legal Problems: Findings from the Legal Problem Resolution Survey 2014-2015*, February 2018

²⁰ 58% of 18-24 year olds would consult family or friends compared to 41% of older adults

²¹ 11% of 18-24 year olds would consult an independent adviser compared to 21% of older adults

²² Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P. *Young People & Legal Problems: Findings from the Legal Problem Resolution Survey 2014-2015*, February 2018

WHERE TO GO WITH A PROBLEM

95.5% of young people we asked would be very likely (60.7%) or likely (34.8%) to talk to a **family member or friend**. This was in comparison to very low numbers who would consult an advice organisation: only 5.5% said they would be very likely to and 16.5% said likely.

Overall **78.6%** (split 39.3% very likely and 39.3% likely) said they would **look online** for advice. Worryingly a significant minority of **23.1%** said they would be likely or very likely to **do nothing**.

- **Less developed life skills**

Young people have less life experience which may explain why they are less likely to seek advice for their problems²³. Some young people will fail to seek any help at all - either because they don't know where to turn or because they don't think that advice will help them. Our survey found 56.8% of young people would not know who to speak to and 47.7% did not think that advice would help them.

- **Modes of access**

Opening hours, a complicated appointment system, a callback system and a room full of intimidating adults are all practical barriers which might put off young people from seeking advice. When opening times are restricted to school or working hours, the location is difficult to get to or the appointment system is complicated young people may give up before they manage to access advice. 50% of the young people we asked said that not being able to speak to someone at a convenient time would put them off seeking advice.

²³ Kenrick, 2002

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Email came out top with **66.7%** of young people selecting this as their preferred method of contact. This was followed by phone with 52.8% and text message with 54%.

In line with other research, young people are not completely rejecting face to face appointments in favour of online options - around **27%** of young people opted for **face to face** compared to 30% for webchat and 27% for direct message via social media.

- **Limitations of online advice**

Young people have grown up with the internet and The Financial Lives Survey²⁴ confirmed that 90% of those aged 18-24 used the internet at least once a day whilst 71% rate their online skills as excellent. Despite this, the same survey found that only 36% would be happy to get their financial advice online. There is evidence which suggests that young people are actually less likely than older age groups to use the internet for the purpose of seeking information to help resolve a problem: 18-24 year olds reported high levels of internet usage for social networking and entertainment but not for seeking information and advice²⁵. This was supported by our own survey, only 39.3% of the young people we surveyed would be 'very likely' to look online if they had a problem compared to the 60.7% who would be 'very likely' to talk to their family or friends.

There is a huge volume of material on the internet to help young people but the availability of information about their rights online may not have any bearing on the capacity of young people to tackle their problems independently and this may be especially true of vulnerable young people²⁶.

²⁴ Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Lives Survey 2017

²⁵ Denvir, C. Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P. 2011, Surfing the Web: Recreation or Resource

²⁶ Access to Justice, Challenging the Myth of the 'tech savvy' generation

Emotional barriers

BARRIERS

75% of young people surveyed stated that being **embarrassed** or ashamed about asking for help would be very important (20.5%) or important (54.5%) to them. **Fear or anxiety** came next with 71.1% saying this would be either very important or important.

- **Embarrassment or anxiety**

Dealing with the practical barriers can alleviate the emotional barriers. Offering different options for getting in touch that don't require face to face contact could ease embarrassment or anxiety. We asked young people how they would prefer to get in touch with us and email came top with 66.7% of young people selecting this as their preferred method of contact, well above other methods of digital communication such as instant message and webchat.

- **Trust**

Young people prefer to ask for advice through informal channels and 95.5% of our respondents would refer to a family member or friend - someone that they trust. Young people need to trust a service before they feel comfortable asking for advice. This could be achieved by transferring the trust from another service they already access e.g. by locating a drop in session at a familiar venue or facilitating referrals from youth professionals they already work with.

3. Ways to reach a younger audience

A service designed for young people

The first step to reaching a younger audience is to design a service that they will want to use and mitigate as many of the potential barriers as possible. In 2017, the charity Youth Access worked with 200 young people across the country to develop their

'Altogether Better Charter' to describe what a young person-friendly service looks like²⁷.

The main points were as follows:

- Young people should be treated with respect by skilled workers who took their problems seriously
- The service should be aimed at young people
- The setting should be welcoming, age appropriate and easy to access
- More than one service in the same place would be preferable
- Advice should be friendly, free and flexible

The problems experienced by young people are often interrelated which means a holistic approach is effective and Citizens Advice are well placed to deliver this as we are able to offer advice on a full range of problems. There are improvements that could be made which are outlined in Section 5.

Use of technology

Using technology could alleviate some of the barriers by making our service more flexible and easier to access. The young people that we surveyed welcomed the use of alternative ways to get in touch when it came to accessing advice.

"I would prefer webchat to email as I know I can expect a more immediate response. It depends on the problem though and I would be happy to wait to see someone face to face if I needed the support." Respondent, aged 24

Manchester Citizens Advice trialled the use of the instant messaging service, WhatsApp, to offer specialist debt advice.²⁸ They did report a decrease in the average age of their clients from 43 to 33 but many were existing Citizens Advice clients rather than a whole new younger audience. Only 29.9% of the young people we surveyed selected WhatsApp as their preferred method of contact and the practical issues associated with implementation (including GDPR issues) mean the benefits may not outweigh the costs.

²⁷ Youth Access, Altogether Better Charter, 2017

²⁸ See Appendix 2 for a detailed review of this project

There are also issues of confidentiality involved in offering advice over social media which one respondent mentions below:

“I can imagine contacting via online messenger would be helpful for those who are anxious or embarrassed but equally I would worry about my data footprint and how that information is used via those channels (e.g. Facebook have access to all that is written on their instant messenger service)” Respondent, aged 25

The young people in our survey hadn't turned their backs completely on traditional methods of getting in touch and around half (52.8%) would still be happy to pick up the phone to make an appointment. Although embracing new methods of communication can only enhance our service we cannot assume that the use of technology alone will be enough to reach a younger audience.

What other advice organisations are doing

In our survey we asked young people how well they knew eight different organisations that offer advice and support (including Citizens Advice). We carried out a review of these organisations looking at how they engage young people in order to identify any lessons that could be learnt²⁹. The organisations which came out top in terms of awareness in our survey were Childline, Samaritans and NSPCC who all have a record of involvement in schools and colleges meaning they are familiar to children from a relatively young age.

²⁹ See Appendix 1 for a full review of charities we reviewed

HOW TO RAISE AWARENESS

Nearly all our respondents, 95.3% felt that **visiting schools or colleges** would be either very effective or effective. This was compared with only 35.6% who thought that print advertising would be effective.

80.3% thought that **online advertising** would be effective or very effective and adverts on Instagram came out top above Facebook or Twitter.

"With the exception of Facebook- just wanted to say that not many young people do use facebook or twitter." Respondent aged 15

Outreach and education

The young people that we surveyed overwhelmingly felt that going out to see young people would be more effective than advertising. As well as raising awareness of Citizens Advice and the services we offer, an outreach programme can offer the chance to educate young people. Financial capability is now included in the national curriculum for secondary schools but not all schools have the time or resources to deliver this effectively. Young people who receive financial education are more likely to have better money skills in later life³⁰ and early intervention before young people have chance to get into debt will be most effective.

At present Citizens Advice visit a small number of schools each year to talk to groups of sixth formers about the practical aspects of leaving home. During our research we talked to young people themselves as well as those who work with them, about what topics they felt would be helpful to cover, below are some of the areas that were suggested:

- Housing
 - Leaving home for the first time
 - Moving on from supported housing
 - Renting a house as a student

³⁰ National Youth Agency, Exploring the connection between social mobility and financial capability, January 2019

- To cover: where you can live, rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, tenancy agreements, council tax liability, what help is available, what to do if there is a problem, sharing a house, statutory rights, how to get enough money for a deposit, eviction process, lettings agents.
- Money
 - Managing your money for the first time
 - Managing your money as a student
 - To cover: how to budget, debt solutions, banking, student finance, consumer rights.
- Family
 - What to do when a relationship ends
 - Having a baby
 - To cover: what benefits are available, where can you live.
- Work
 - Getting a job for the first time
 - To cover: Contractual rights and statutory rights, minimum wage and what you are entitled to, what is discrimination, how to deal with a problem at work, benefits.
- Benefits
 - Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment and moving on from DLA, how to apply, how the appeals process works, entitlement for care leavers

This information is already on our website but not in a way that is targeted at young people. If we were to segment our target audience and design materials or 'fact sheets' around a particular topic these could form the basis for outreach sessions. By branding these in a way that appealed to a younger audience they could be shared through our social media accounts and downloadable from our website. See Appendix 3 for the results of early discussions with London design agency BrandMe who are experienced in targeting the young people we want to engage.

4. Forging links with local services

Collaborative working with other agencies will be important in reaching young people. We met with several local organisations to discuss our research and learn more about what they do for young people locally.

Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub

Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub work with young people under 25 but mainly in the 8-19 age bracket. The young people they work with are from vulnerable groups who may have been involved with offending behaviour or children's services, they may have additional needs or be NEETs (Not in Education Employment or Training). They have a 'Targeted Youth Offer' which provides a structured programme of courses aiming to support young people to make positive changes and raise aspirations.

They run a Skills for Life programme and a Work Readiness programme which ties into the advice we offer on first time renting and working. The Youth Hub do signpost to Citizens Advice if their young clients (or their parents) have a problem with benefits, housing or work. However, the young people they work with can require a high level of support and engagement and they felt it would be helpful to have an agreed referral process to CATWD.

West Kent YMCA

West Kent YMCA provides supported housing for 37 young people at Ryder House in Tunbridge Wells. They have dedicated Housing Support Workers who help residents address their individual issues, develop vital personal and life skills, look for training, work and volunteer opportunities and gain the confidence to live independently.

Ryder House is located in the centre of Tunbridge Wells and has a comfortable living room where young people feel safe. We discussed the possibility of this being a venue for drop-in advice sessions which could be attended by Ryder House residents as well as other young people from across Tunbridge Wells (including young residents of Salvation Army Housing Association).

FutURe Store

The FutURe Store is the result of a collaboration between Town and Country Housing, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and 360 Employment Evolution to support young people into employment and training opportunities. They are based in the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre in Tunbridge Wells and have run various events, including a ping pong tournament

And others

We engaged with other local organisations who work with young people including: Town & Country Housing, 360 Employment Evolution, Samaritans, TWGGS, Skinners, Tunbridge Wells Rugby Club Youth Section and the Kent Youth County Council.

5. Proposals for next steps

Secure commitment from staff and trustees

- Share the results of our project internally and secure buy-in to the long term objective of making our service more accessible to young people.
- Investigate other sources of funding to support our objective.
- Develop staff and volunteer training session to increase awareness of the specific needs of young people.

Look at how to design our service to meet the needs of young people

- Use technology to improve access to our service and introduce wider use of email and webchat.
- Develop branding which can be used to differentiate our service to specifically target young people.
- Develop materials on topic areas that are relevant to young people (e.g. financial capability, renting for the first time, employment basics) which can be available online and downloadable from our website and form the basis for outreach visits.
- Hold drop in sessions aimed at young people, in partnership with other agencies which are hosted at a venue familiar to young people.
- Develop an outreach programme which can be targeted at different audiences (e.g. vulnerable young adults, sixth formers going to university, those not in employment, education or training).

Find partners and build relationships with youth agencies

- Continue our engagement with those agencies mentioned in this report and build relationships with others locally who work with young people.
- Develop a fast-track referral programme for local agencies to ensure that when a young person with problems has been identified they can be seen by an adviser with minimum delay.

Promote the service

- Maintain our current social media presence (Facebook and Twitter) and build our audience on Instagram in order to reach more young people. Investigate affordability of online advertising.
- Use an outreach programme to raise awareness of our service.
- Look at how Search Engine Optimisation can be utilised to raise our online profile.

Involve young people

- Ensure that young people have a say in new developments by engaging focus groups and continuing to refer back to them.
- Recruit more young people as volunteers for Citizens Advice by promoting the benefits of volunteering and liaising directly with schools and colleges.

Bibliography

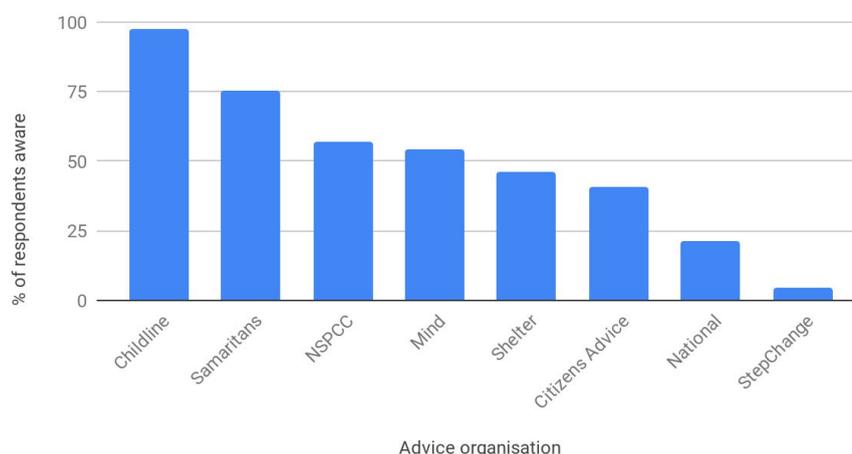
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Romer et al	Beyond stereotypes of adolescent risk taking.	2017
Youth Access	Opening your doors to Young People	2010
Youth Access	The Social Determinants of Young People's Mental Health	June 2015
Youth Access	Altogether Better Charter	2017

Appendix 1

Review of other advice organisations

In our survey we asked about levels of awareness of eight different charities. Childline came out top with 97.8% of respondents having heard of them and being aware of the services they offer. Second was Samaritans with 76.4%. NSPCC and Mind followed with 57.3% and 54.5% respectively. Shelter had 46.6% and Citizens Advice 41.8%. National Debtline and StepChange had fairly low levels of awareness with 21.6% and 5.7% respectively.

Awareness of the services offered by Advice Organisations



We carried out an analysis of the various charities to explore what they offered young people and whether this links to the difference in levels of awareness.

Childline

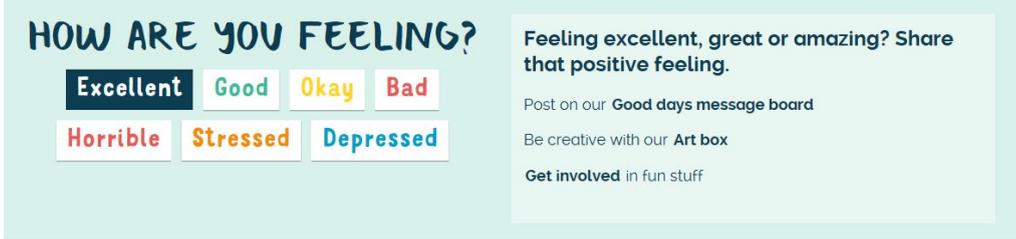
From our survey

Childline was the best known of the organisations in our survey with 97.8% of our respondents aware of what they do.

Website Design

Childline is a service operated by the NSPCC, the brand was re-launched in 2016 with a new, mobile accessible website. The website is well designed with a welcoming theme specifically targeted at young people, it feels uncluttered and information and services clearly labelled.

There are games and interactive features throughout and an 'emotions selector' which helps direct a client to the most relevant section.



The website also hosts a message board dealing with issues from bullying and abuse to trans identity and puberty where young people can communicate on the issues that are affecting them.

Interaction

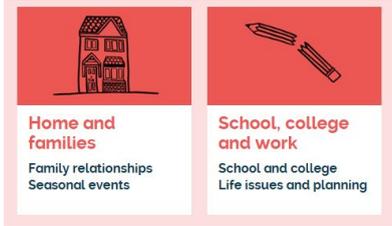
Childline offers a number of different ways to get in touch: a free phone line, an email address and a webchat option. You can create an account in the Childline 'locker' where you can store information and messages. There is a video explaining what happens when you contact Childline. Childline have a YouTube channel, Facebook and Instagram accounts (but not Twitter). Young people are informed that the information they post on social media will not be confidential and counselling is not offered via these channels. They also have a 'agony aunt' type service - you can write a letter to 'Sam' and some will be answered and published online.

Youth specific

All Childline services are targeted at those aged 18 and under. The information and advice on the website is grouped into topics which will apply to young people specifically. Childline's YouTube channel has nearly 17,000 subscribers and works with popular YouTubers who present videos on various topics (e.g. recovering from an eating disorder, how to talk about your mental health).

Strengths

The website design is engaging, easy to follow and clear. Both colour and graphics are used to good effect to separate the information and advice into topic areas. The 'problem page' is a good way of finding out and responding to issues which are affecting young people.



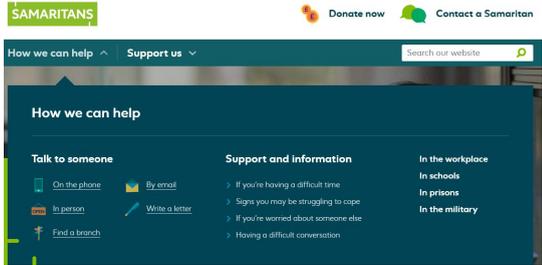
Samaritans

From our survey

76.4% of our respondents were aware of the Samaritans and knew what they did.

Website Design

The website is clear and well designed with a consistent theme.



The website is well structured and easy to follow. It has a section containing practical ways to cope as well as showing the different ways of getting in touch.

Interaction

The Samaritans are a listening service - they don't offer specialist advice and won't tell you what to do but they will signpost to other organisations (including Citizens Advice) who can help if you need advice in a particular area. They run a free 24-hour phone line, you can also see them in person, send an email or write a letter. They did offer a text message service but this is no longer advertised on their website.

Samaritans have a well established outreach services. They have teams of volunteers who are trained to deliver talks to schools and they have links with prisons, the military and the railway industry. Their programme 'DEAL - Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening' is available to download from their website with lesson plans for teachers.

The Samaritans have invested in Search Engine Optimisation to ensure that their website appears at the top of any search relating to suicide.

Youth specific

Their website is aimed at everyone and anyone rather than being youth specific. They have an education team who you can contact for more information if you are a school or university who would like a visit or resources. In 2015 Samaritans visited over 600 schools and youth groups.

Strengths

Clear and well presented website. Detailed resources and lesson plans for schools. Each branch of the Samaritans has an education team and trained volunteers to deliver talks in schools. Investment in SEO ensures they appear at the top in internet searches.

NSPCC

From our survey

57.3% of our respondents knew what the NSPCC did. Compared to the 97.8% who knew what Childline do this would imply that many young people are unaware that NSPCC run Childline as one of their services.

Website Design

NSPCC's website has a more subdued colour palette and serious feel compared to Childline's, reflecting the fact that it is aimed at adults rather than young people themselves. The focus is very much on child abuse and how NSPCC can help both practically (through their helpline and Childline) and through their national campaigns and work in schools.

Interaction

NSPCC run a helpline and online reporting service allowing concerned parties to report suspected abuse. They also have an information helpline for those who need advice on what to do when dealing with vulnerable children. **Youth specific**

Those aged 18 and under are directed to Childline. NSPCC run various campaigns including 'Speak Out Stay Safe' which is delivered nationally to primary schools using the character Buddy to deliver the message that children should be able to speak out if they feel unhappy and raising awareness of Childline. NSPCC has a YouTube channel with over 18,000 subscribers where videos relating to their campaigns are available.

Strengths

Effective use of young people's testimonials and short vignettes for each topic.

Kerry's story

The difficulties of returning home after having been placed in care

"My parents split up when I was a toddler and my dad left home. My mum's violence and tempers dominated my childhood and her drug and alcohol addictions meant she wasn't able to look after herself, let alone care for me. Instead I was trying to look after her from a very young age. We never had any food in the house, we had no carpets or curtains and she spent any money she received on her addictions.



Extensive work in schools including resources and training. Effective video campaigns on social media to support this work in schools.

Mind

From our survey

54.5% of our respondents were aware of Mind and what they offer.

Website Design

The website is well laid out with information clearly signposted and categorised.

Don't know where to start?
Start here.

We can help you make choices about treatment, understand your rights or reach out to sources of support.

- > A-Z Mental health
- > Information & support
- > Find your local Mind

There are links to real people's stories and links to information and advice as well as signposting to other agencies.

Interaction

Mind offers an Infoline which you can call, text, email or write to and a separate Legal line. They also have a Blue Light Infoline which is specifically for those involved in the emergency services. There is a webchat function but this can only be accessed if advisors are available when you are online and there is no queueing facility.

Mind has an online support community called Elefriends which started off as a Facebook group for those wanting to discuss their mental health. It is now a standalone website which is also available as an app and is moderated between 10am and midnight.

Mind also have a presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Youth specific

Mind have a network of independent local charities which offer their own mental health services and support. West Kent Mind offer the MH4 Schools which is a project supporting schools with mental health first aid training.

Strengths

Good example of a moderated online community. High profile campaigns and supporters - e.g. the Heads Together campaign joining together 8 mental health charities and supported by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry. Use of celebrity ambassadors to open up a conversation about mental health e.g. Stephen Fry.

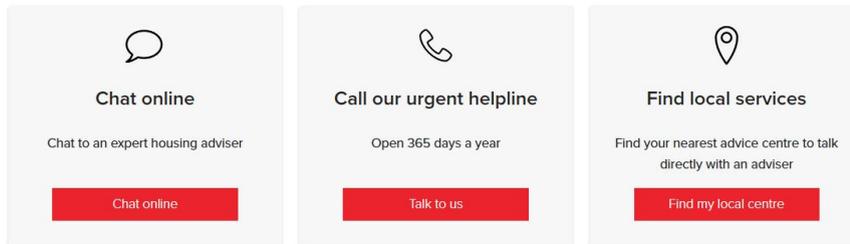
Shelter

From our survey

46.6% of young people were aware of Shelter and what they did.

Website Design

The website has a simple theme and the front page is a donation screen. There is not much colour used but the advice on various housing topics is clear and well organised.



Interaction

Shelter offer a helpline number where you can talk with an advisor. There are local shelters around the country where you can have a face to face appointment (based in larger towns and cities).

There is a webchat function available but this is often unavailable and there is no indication of waiting times.

There is the option to share your story to raise awareness about housing problems. These are shared on Shelter's YouTube channel with 1773 subscribers. Shelter also have a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Youth specific

There is no specific targeting of young people although some of the topics covered are specifically relevant to young people e.g. what to do when you are homeless at 16/17.

Strengths

Simplistic layout and use of YouTube to make share stories and advice.

National Debtline

From our survey

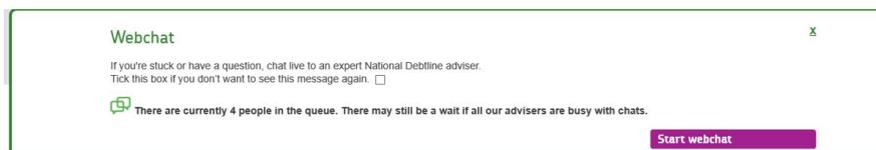
21.6% of respondents were aware of National Debtline and the service they offer.

Website Design

The website is clear and professional, emphasising that they are the official service which offer free advice on debt. This explanation is necessary as when you enter National Debtline into a search engine the official website doesn't usually appear until the fifth result down (after other organisations offering IVAs and other debt solutions). Testimonials are used well on the website and the layout is clear.

Interaction

There is a detailed online guide to debt as well as a comprehensive budgeting tool. Fact sheets on many topics and sample letters which can be downloaded. National Debtline offer a free Adviceline and a webchat service which is available Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings.



Youth specific

Nothing specifically targeted at young people.

Strengths

Very effective webchat service, pops up almost immediately and lets you know how many people are ahead of you in the queue. Clear and well laid out with very detailed information.

StepChange

From our survey

Only 5.7% of respondents were aware of StepChange and their work.

Website Design

Like National Debtline, StepChange appear below other, sponsored results in a search engine. The design of the website is simple and clear. It feature simple information on debt solutions and tools for assessing your situation.

Interaction

StepChange offer an adviceline but they recommend a number of steps before calling (e.g. completing a budget form). They offer online advice through Debt Remedy as an alternative to the telephone line. This gives you the option to save and restart if you aren't able to complete the process in one go.

Youth specific

There is nothing specifically targeted to young people.

Strengths

Detailed online tools and online support service.

Appendix 2

Whatsapp Debt Advice pilot by Manchester Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice Manchester took part in a pilot project funded by Money Advice Trust to use Whatsapp to offer debt advice. WhatsApp is a cross platform messaging system which has end to end encryption. The aim was to reach typically hard to reach groups such as young people and those with English as a second language. Whatsapp was used in three main ways, as an access channel (for new users to access advice), as a follow up channel (as a way of sending supporting documentation after face to face advice) and as a tool for keeping in touch with existing clients. Manchester Metropolitan University published a paper (Cain and Goldring, 2018) which independently evaluated the project and surveyed those who used the service. 101 clients completed an online survey, 6 clients took part in a semi-structured interview and interviews were carried out with key members of staff at Citizens Advice Manchester.

Advantages

The overall consensus from users was positive with 96% saying they would use the WhatsApp service again. Clients commented that it was easy to use, accessible, quick and convenient, anonymous, non-intrusive, messages can be sent out of hours, gives a sense of control, free, easier to send a message rather than make a phone call (especially if English not your first language).

The WhatsApp Debt Advice was successful in reaching younger age groups. The mean age of those accessing the service was 33 years old (age range from 16 to 66). The typical client of Citizens Advice Manchester accessing advice through traditional channels has a mean age of 43. 80% of those who accessed the service were aged between 20 and 40.

Issues

Only one person can use the WhatsApp channel at a time as it is associated with one telephone number. Manchester employed a full time equivalent administrator to manage the account and direct enquiries to the relevant member of the specialist debt advice team.

Those who made contact via WhatsApp still had to be identified and added to Casebook. The pilot project took place before the introduction of GDPR. WhatsApp have since launched a WhatsApp Business App which gives the ability to include an auto-response message. This message could include a privacy notice letting clients know what will be done with their data before they send confidential documentation. Messages are encrypted but WhatsApp collects user data which is stored in the US.

Conclusions

Using WhatsApp as a communications channel was a success but would only be practicable for small numbers of clients. Email and webchat could perform similar functions to WhatsApp but without the complications (GDPR, resources) of adding a whole new channel of communication.

Appendix 3

Branding ideas targeted at young people

BrandMe are a London based design agency whose clients include Ribena and Sainsburys. We had initial discussions about how we could promote our service to young people and what sort of images appealed to this audience. These are the initial results:



Benefits? Work?
Debt and money?
Consumer issues?
Family conflict?
Housing? Law and courts?
Immigration? Health?
citizensadvice.org.uk



Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.

We help people overcome their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.



citizensadvice.org.uk