



Case study

Accountability

Wiltshire | How is the YVV accountable?

Who?

Wiltshire Assembly of Youth is an elected group of 22 young people from across Wiltshire who represent young people's views and make sure young people are listened to. In 2009 WAY ran a large scale consultation with young people across the county through online surveys, face to face focus groups and school and youth group workshops to help set the priorities for the current Agenda for Action.

We took responses from over 3,000 young people to a series of open questions. This gave us the top four issues to be worked on for a 3 year period. They were: Transport, Life Opportunities, the Environment and Health, in particular **mental health and emotional wellbeing**. The Voice & Influence team supported WAY with resources and time and enabled them to reach groups of young people who might ordinarily be missed from other consultations e.g. Looked after, Disabled, NEET.

What?

Using the information gathered through our consultation WAY approached the V & I team with the idea of holding a conference to promote mental health awareness and to improve services and support for children and young people across Wiltshire. We wanted an event where young people could meet with a range of mental health professionals, Local Authority workers, Commissioners and other key decision makers. They decided to develop a **Be Kind to Your Mind Mental Health Conference**.

The aim of the conference was to develop a Young Mind's Matter Charter which would help raise awareness of the impact of mental health issues on young people, guide professionals working with young people on how to talk about and address mental health, make it an accessible topic and to challenge the stigma associated with mental health disorders. WAY wanted the Charter to be introduced into schools, youth centres, voluntary sector youth groups as well as to get buy-in from local health care providers (GPs, schools nurses, counsellors, healthy schools team workers, Young Minds representatives etc).

How?

The V & I team, with WAY's assistance, took the proposal to the Head of Wiltshire Council's Commissioning and Performance Team to get their support too. WAY were awarded £2,500 to put

towards the running costs and the idea was passed to the lead commissioner for Emotional Health and Wellbeing to be put on the Agenda for the following EHW Sub-group meeting. As a direct result of this, WAY were approached by a number of local organisations including Relate Mid-Wiltshire, Healthy Minds and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service with offers of help. Working closely with these organisations WAY was able to develop a conference programme.

Posters advertising the conference as a chance to 'have your say on mental health' were sent to schools, youth centres, voluntary sector groups and young people's forums.

How it works:

The conference was held on February 17th 2012, during half term holidays, and ran all day. Sixty young people aged 12-19 attended. Representation from professional bodies was also very good (and in fact WAY had to limit organisations attending to ensure a balance between professionals and young people). To develop the Charter's principles young people worked in partnership with: NHS Wiltshire, Oxford Health, CAMHS, Healthy Minds, Educational Psychology Improvement Team, Wiltshire Integrated Youth Service, Children and Care Council, Relate Mid-Wiltshire, Off the Record, Wiltshire's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Wiltshire Council's Corporate Director.

On the day there were a series of workshops as well as open discussions around ways of reducing stigma and promoting positive emotional wellbeing. From this WAY were able to identify themes, key areas of concern (both for young people and professionals) and issues for further work and inclusion into the Your Mind Matters Charter.

A report of the conference was drawn up and circulated to those organisations and groups that provided support for information (a copy of the report is available).

Outcomes:

There were more requests to attend from professional organisations than confirmed young people attending. To maintain a balance and to ensure that conversations were young person led, WAY took the decision to limit the number of professional bodies attending to those bodies they felt were best placed to offer information or use what young people said effectively.

The biggest challenge was ensuring that the conference was accessible to as many different young people as possible from across a large rural county. One of the issues cited in the initial consultation was the wide variations in access to professional support depending on where you live. To get young people there we:

- Asked youth workers to bring young people from their areas
- Reimbursed car parking fees for those who came via car –share.
- Held the conference in a central location with good bus routes to try and minimise travelling time and expense to young people.

The major outcome of the conference is the Young People's Mental Health Charter – 'Your Mind Matters'- that is currently going through a design process The Charter has been agreed by Wiltshire Council's Emotional Health and Wellbeing sub-group and will be officially presented to the Children and

Young People's Stakeholder Partnership (formally Trust Board) for ratification. The Charter will be officially launched by WAY at a launch event.

Impact:

Impact is still to be determined. Together with WAY we will assess schools, youth centres and other groups that take up the Charter annually using surveys and focus groups to ensure that those bodies signed up are upholding the values in the Charter.

From the service perspective, we want to see an increase in the number of available counselling appointments for young people in schools, as well as acquiring additional funding for the maintenance of existing LA and private services. We will get regular updates from the Stakeholder Partnership on this. Young people's mental health provision will be a regular agenda item at the Partnership meetings while the review of services takes place.

Learning points:

- Set a timescale to work towards so that young people could see the elements coming together slightly quicker and keep the motivation high.
- Partnership organisations provided a wealth of technical and practical information
- Take guidance from young service users when looking at formulating activities and discussions.

All elements of the conference were lead and facilitated by young people. You can find a short film of the day at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZMS9fiEBvQ&feature=BFa&list=PL498E851C0C2C1D78>