

# CLAHRC BITE

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A bite-sized summary of CLAHRC research: The design and implementation of an innovative youth mental health service in Norfolk.



## The Norfolk Youth Service – a service model case study

**What?** The Norfolk Youth Service is an innovative example of mental health transformation in the United Kingdom, comprising a pragmatic, assertive and ‘youth friendly’ service that transcends traditional service boundaries. The service was developed in collaboration with young people and partnership agencies and is based upon an engaging and inclusive ethos. The service is evidence-based, social-recovery oriented, and aims to satisfy recent policy guidance.

**Who?** Young people aged 14-25 accessing mental health services in Norfolk.

**Why?** Young people attempting to access mental health services in the United Kingdom often find traditional models of care outdated, rigid, inaccessible and unappealing. Policy recommendations, CLAHRC research and service user opinion suggested that reform was needed to reflect the needs of young people.

## Background

A CLAHRC systematic review of studies found that young people wanted better access to services, more information, and continuity of care<sup>2</sup>.

In addition another CLAHRC project examined 7,476 referrals from 2010 to 2011 and found that 30% of these were either re-referrals or individuals transitioning between different teams. Referral and contact figures suggested that those aged 14-17 were engaging poorly with services at the point of most need. The highest rate of referral was at 18 years old but this age had the fewest contacts (17 year olds, 11.3 contacts / referral and 18 year olds, 5.3 contacts / referral). Males appeared to be particularly disadvantaged in that they were not referred into under 18 services as frequently as females despite there being a greater level of morbidity for males .

## Key Findings

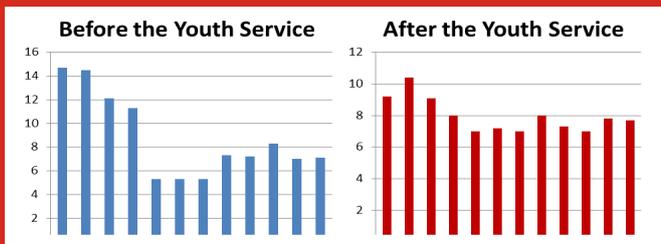
Following the establishment of the Youth Service, researchers re- examined referrals and contacts. After the Youth Service, the rate of service contacts improved for 18 year olds although there is a drop for 17 year olds but a more even distribution overall (17 year olds, 8.2 contacts / referral and 18 year olds, 7.3 contacts / referral ). There was evidence of greater efficiency with more equitable rates of referrals and contacts for those aged 14-17 and fewer contacts with a range of services per referral.

The youth service pilot also demonstrated that service users scored higher on measures of social and occupational functioning and were spending more time in structured activity after intervention.

## Recommendations for practice

The routine collection of outcome measures is currently a priority and CLAHRC have assisted with an ongoing project to use outcome data to improve the efficiency of the Youth Service assessment process.

Another CLAHRC project currently being planned involves reviewing youth mental healthcare service design models in order to assist the future development of Youth mental health services nationally.



## References

1. Department of Health. Future in Mind: Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. 2015. Retrieved from: <http://tinyurl.com/mdqhnz8>.
2. Plaistow J, Masson K, Koch D, Wilson J, Stark RM, Jones PB, Lennox BR. Young people's views of UK mental health services. Early Intervention in Psychiatry, 2014; 8(1), 12-23.

## What is NIHR CLAHRC East of England?

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) East of England is a five year programme of applied health and social care research which focuses on the needs of people with complex problems, often vulnerable, when multiple agencies are involved in their care: young people, frail older people, those with dementia, learning disabilities, acquired brain injuries or mental ill health.

The CLAHRC East of England collaboration encompasses some thirty-six organisations, with research hubs in the Universities of Cambridge, Hertfordshire and East Anglia working closely with individuals and organisations involved in the whole care pathway.

Service users and carers are at the heart of what we do, in parallel with an ambitious public health research programme.

Co-production and collaboration at all stages of the research process are fundamental to making a positive impact through applied health research.

For more information

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