



*Cassandra Harrison, CEO, Youth Access*

*Katie Hickmott, Rights Advocate with Our Minds Our Future*

 **YOUTH ACCESS**

**OUR MINDS**  
**OUR FUTURE**

# Why we're here

- To remind you of the '*why?*'
- The vision: Our Minds Our Future manifesto
- The reality: our priorities for how to get there

# Quick icebreaker

**Given the current economic climate – what do you think are the biggest challenges for young people's mental health and how will we overcome them?**

*Type your answer in the chat box.*

# Lay of the land

- Young people's lives have turned upside down!
- Lots of political change and economic challenges
- Professionals are burned out
- We're hopeful about power of local and opportunities for ICSs
- Government consultation on new mental health plan
- Only way forward is together!

Policy briefing  
**'Generation COVID'? Socio-economic factors impacting young people's mental health in the wake of the pandemic**  
March 2021

 YOUTH ACCESS  
Championing advice and counselling

This is the first of three briefings developed by Youth Access to support our members, the wider youth sector, commissioners and policymakers to anticipate and respond to the scale of need among younger generations over the coming year and beyond. It pulls together research from a wide range of sources to summarise the major socio-economic challenges facing young people in light of the pandemic, and their impact on mental health.

For sources of the information provided in this briefing and further readings on the topics covered, click the  icons where they appear in the text.

### Introduction

The varied and disproportionate impact the pandemic is having on young people has led many to refer to them as 'Generation COVID'. From mass job and income losses, to being trapped in abusive households, and paying rent for university accommodation they can't use, each new day seems to bring another news story of the blight of Coronavirus on the lives of the young.

This is deeply concerning for the wellbeing of 16-25s, whose mental health and emotional needs were already inclining steadily before the pandemic. Mental health is inextricable from our place in, and treatment by, wider society - the more unequal a society is, the worse its mental health outcomes. What's more, the major socio-economic risk factors for mental health are some of the very areas of our lives most profoundly impacted by the pandemic, while the building blocks of good mental health and adolescent development have been much harder to guarantee, if not entirely prohibited.

**“ Mental health inequalities are economic and social inequalities.**

Commission for Equality in Mental Health

Knowing this, it comes as no surprise that pre-existing inequalities in mental health have been exacerbated by the pandemic - including young women, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and young people living in poverty - already experienced the worst mental health prior to the crisis.

As we prepare for a period of recovery and seek to understand the true cost of the pandemic to young people's mental health, we must get to grips with its effect on their lives as partners know all too well. Based in communities up and down the country, Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services (YIACS) provide youth-led, 'whole life' support to some of the most vulnerable young people that addresses the socio-economic factors impacting their lives, as well as their mental health and wellbeing. They have been at the forefront of innovating to meet the challenges of the past year, and ensure their services continue to reach the young people who need them most.

**“ Mental health doesn't stop when you step out of the counsellor's office, and neither should mental health support...Our support should extend beyond mental healthcare services into our everyday life to reflect the intersection between our mental health needs and the economic, social and cultural factors which affect young people's lives.**

Rights Advocates, Our Minds Our Future Manifesto

### What does this briefing cover?

This briefing looks at the major socio-economic issues facing young people, and their impact on mental health, following nearly a year of unprecedented disruption to the UK. The information contained is based on the most up-to-date studies and evidence, as well as insights from Youth Access members, and covers areas including education, income and debt, poverty, housing, and employment. Each issue is looked at in turn alongside a consideration of the specific needs of young people who face particularly large obstacles.

The briefing does not cover every aspect of young people's lives - indeed, the full impact of the crisis won't be known for years to come - but nonetheless attempts to take a broad view of the issues, based on the available and emerging evidence.

The term 'young people' used throughout this text refers to 16-25-year-olds, unless otherwise specified, while 'children' denotes young people aged under 18.

**“ [The scale of deterioration in mental health since the pandemic] is of a magnitude unlike anything we have seen in recent years.**

Institute for Fiscal Studies

**“ Having a support network that spans outside of the family unit is especially important during the crucial time of adolescence when young people need to be able to leave their family home, branch out into the world and become an adult.**

Young Ambassador, No5 Young People's Counselling Service

www.youthaccess.org.uk  
@YouthAccess  
 

**Young people want to be  
involved - and have a  
right to be - but we're not  
always!**

# A rights-based approach

- Young people have the right to **"the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health"** (UNCESCR)
- And to be **involved in decisions** that affect them– at the individual and the system level (UNCRC)
- And we make **better decisions & policies** when we're led by them!

*"The service is designed to **improve, prevent, diagnose and treat** both physical and **mental health** problems with equal regard. It has a duty to each and every individual that it serves and must **respect their human rights.**"*

NHS Constitution

# The Our Minds Our Future Manifesto

[ourmindsourfuture.uk/england](http://ourmindsourfuture.uk/england)

*We want a rights-based approach to mental health care. This means:*

- 1. Experts who understand the unique** issues facing young people in today's world.
- 2. Services made for us** - online and in-person, in schools, colleges and unis, and informal settings like youth clubs, drop-ins and text-based support.
- 3. Services made with us** so we're part of decisions being made about our own mental health care and the wider system.
- 4. Equity, diversity & accessibility,** making sure services cater to everyone, accounting for differences and preferences.
- 5. Help when we need it,** avoiding long waiting lists, arbitrary thresholds and cut-offs.
- 6. Education & training for all** – so young people and all professionals working with us understand mental health and where to get help.
- 7. A 'whole life approach' to mental health** that extends beyond the counsellors office or clinic, to offer individualised support with the economic, social and cultural issues that affect our wellbeing.

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# Our current priorities

- **Fund the Hubs!** A joint call for a national rollout of 'early support hubs'

**FUND THE HUBS**

Centre for  
Mental Health



Children & Young People's  
Mental Health Coalition



The  
Children's  
Society

**YOUNGmINDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

 **YOUTH  
ACCESS**  
Championing advice and counselling



# Early support hubs/YIACS

*"I was diagnosed with anorexia, but because I was still a 'healthy' weight, I couldn't access support... In the end I was forced to pay for private treatment."*

Hubs are:

- Youth-friendly, non-clinical setting, tailored to young people
- Easy to access – travel links, walk-in
- No wrong door, no thresholds, self-referral

100+ Youth Access members (64 YIACS) cater to 145,000 young people – imagine a full rollout!

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# Our current priorities

- **Fund the Hubs!** A joint call for a national rollout of 'early support hubs'

 **Cassandra Harrison** @CassHarrison\_YA · Oct 4  
Fab session at #cpc2021 planned and delivered by brilliant young people from @YPASLiverpool and @YouthAccess looking at how to get to a mental health system that respects young people's rights. #FundtheHubs



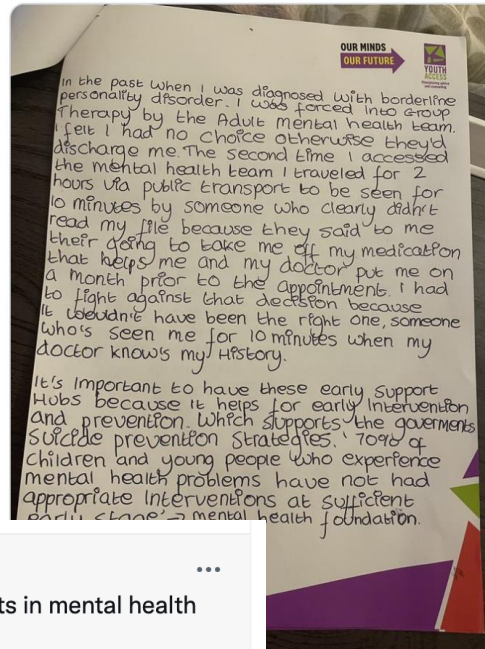
 **Royal College of Psychiatrists** @rcpsych · Jun 9  
The College is supporting the @CYPmentalHealth @YouthAccess @childrensociety @MindCharity @YoungMinds and @CentreforMH campaign to call for the Government to #FundTheHubs and provide early support for young people's mental health

6 20

 **Stephen Fry** @stephenfry · Oct 27  
The evidence is clear - the UK Government either invests in mental health or betrays the next generation.

@RishiSunak do the right thing, #FundtheHubs so our young people get the support they need.

**Make Our Rights Reality** @MORR\_RIGHTS · Jun 8  
#OurMindsOurFuture Rights Advocates are calling on their MPs to #FundTheHubs - because young people have a RIGHT to early & accessible mental health support 🙌  
Join them and take action - ask your MP to support the #FundTheHubs campaign 🙌 RT and SHARE  
[bit.ly/FundTheHubs](https://bit.ly/FundTheHubs)



 **YPAS Liverpool** @YPASLiverpool  
Thank you to @GillianKeegan for taking time out, to listen to our #youngpeople about their experiences using our services and the #FundTheHubs campaign. Drop in to our hubs anytime your in #Liverpool #mentalhealth @LivCAMHSFYI @MYARAISETeam @poolcouncil @gyroliverpool



5:49 PM · Sep 27, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

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# Government call for evidence

Closed consultation

## Mental health and wellbeing plan: discussion paper

Updated 25 April 2022

Youth Access Retweeted



YPAS Liverpool @YPASLive... · 18 Jul

We provide transformational services for young people every day driven by the knowledge that holistic support at the earliest opportunity prevents problems from escalating & gives young people the tools they need to thrive ✨

#FundtheHubs in every area  
#YAMembers @YouthAccess



3 replies 10 likes



Youth Access Retweeted



Youth Charity MAP @map... · 18 Jul

We provide services for young people every day, offering support in every aspect of a young person's life, at the earliest opportunity, to stop problems escalating & to give you the tools you need to thrive ✨

We need our government to  
#FundtheHubs!  
#YAMembers @YouthAccess



2 replies 7 likes



# COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

4/5/2022

*Young people*

# Have your say

on the Government's New Mental Health Plan via our collective consultation response

# Our current priorities

- Government's 10-year mental health plan & **Fund the Hubs!** Next steps?
- Developing **'experts who understand'**
- Supporting services and practitioners to better **involve young people** in decisions and collective action
- An honest look at **equality**

# What can you do?

- Listen to young people! We have a voice, how can you use it and make sure they're heard in this process?
- The Our Minds Our Future manifesto is for everyone! Use it as a starting point, share your progress, speak to us about it!

**#OurMindsOurFuture**

***ourmindsourfuture.uk/England***

***cassandra@youthaccess.org.uk***

- *Join the call to #FundTheHubs*