



YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON THE LANCASHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

January 2013



What is PULSE?

We are young people representatives (aged between 12 – 22 years) from different groups across Lancashire (e.g. Youth Council, Health Action Groups, Young Carers, Long Term Health Conditions, CAMHS, Children in Care Council) who have come together to form a new county group to look at young people's health and wellbeing issues.

We believe that children and young people's views about health and wellbeing are important and should be gathered, shared, listened to and acted upon.

We aim to:

- make a positive difference to children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- make sure the voice of children and young people is heard by decision makers.
- advise these decision makers on how to make health services and health education more children and young people friendly.

To do this, we will:

- meet together monthly and bring information from our groups and take information back out from the meeting. For example: we have asked our groups about health priorities for young people and what they think about the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In this way we can gain the views of a larger number of young people from different backgrounds across the county;
- provide opportunities to hear the voice of other children and young people who do not come to our meetings;
- focus on a few health issues identified as priorities by young people and those relevant to young people included in key plans and strategies;

Our current priorities are:

- **Emotional Health and Wellbeing**
- **Substance Misuse (including alcohol and tobacco)**
- **Access to health information**

- get consultations out widely to young people if they link with our priorities;
- invite decision makers to our meetings, to our presentations and go to their meetings to listen to them, be listened to and challenge them to make changes based on what young people are saying;
- run our own projects that support our priorities.

Our group is open to anyone. It is really good the way we all mix together and have fun, while learning new things and looking at health issues. Although we all have different opinions, we all listen to each other and at the end we come to an agreed decision.

Aims of the Report

- To give young people's views on the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Promote the work of PULSE
- Explore how the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board and PULSE could work together in the future

Throughout this report there are questions, in speech bubbles, for the Health and Wellbeing Board from PULSE. We have also used thought bubbles to share our thinking or put forward suggestions for the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider.

PULSE would like to request feedback from the Health and Wellbeing Board on our questions and suggestions. We would also like to know how our views have influenced the work that is happening as part of the strategy.

Background to the Report

Two of the new Public Health Directors, Debs Harkins and Mike Leaf, came to a PULSE meeting on the 25th October 2012 to talk to us about the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board and to find out our views on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Following a presentation, we worked in three groups to decide which parts of the Strategy were most important to young people. We were given 14 cards, one for each different part of the Strategy. Each group placed the cards onto a continuum according to how important or not important they felt each issue was for young people.

At the next meeting we looked at where the different groups had placed each card and discussed:

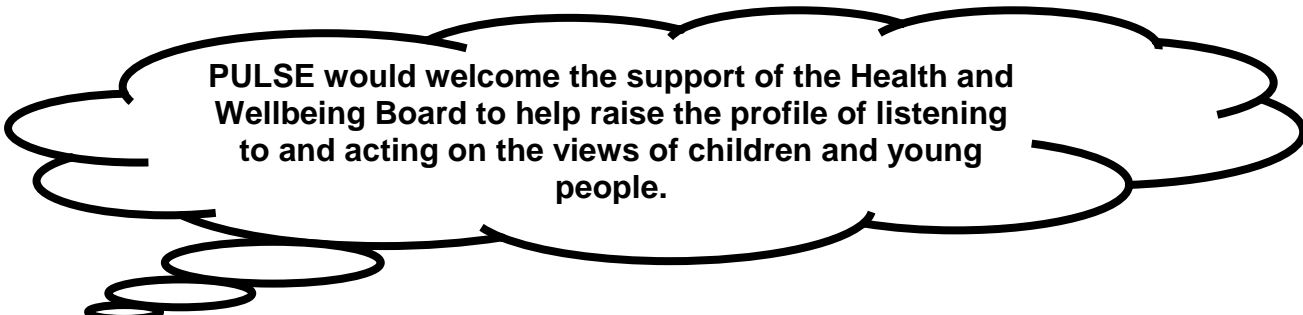
- how each issue impacts on young people;
- why we thought the groups had placed the cards where they had;
- any ideas we had for what should be done in each area that would help make a difference to young people.

We carried out the same activity with some of our participation groups and brought the results back to our next meeting. Seven groups of young people (50 in total) took part in this activity. All of these views have been included in this report. Some of the priorities/ actions do not have seven dots on the continuum as some groups did not give a response to this part of the strategy.

A small group of young people from PULSE worked with Annette McNeil and Nicki Turner, from Lancashire County Council's Children and Young People's Integrated Health Service, to decide the layout and content of the report. Annette and Nicki used our words and views to help create a first draft, which they sent out to us to

read and suggest changes. We met again to discuss the final content which we then shared with the full PULSE group. Final amendments were made after this meeting.


In addition to this report, seven members of PULSE attended the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Event on the 16th November. We were very keen to be involved in this event and put our views forward. Although it was very positive that we had been invited and supported to attend, our feedback from the event is that we didn't feel that some of the adults valued our input because they saw us as 'just a young person' with little to offer. One of our young people reported that when they were eventually given the chance to make their point, the group of adults in their workshop rated their point as one of the most important that had been made. We feel that this example does help to show that there is still work to be done on helping some adults to see the importance and value of listening to the views of children and young people.



PULSE would welcome the support of the Health and Wellbeing Board to help raise the profile of listening to and acting on the views of children and young people.

Young People's Views on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

In her presentation, Debs Harkins explained that the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Strategy has identified four priority areas: Maternal and Child Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Long Term Health Conditions and Improving the Health and Independence of Older People. We will give our views on these first, including where each group placed each priority on the continuum, according to how important they felt they were to young people.

KEY:  = the position on the continuum where each group placed priority/ action



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Not Important Quite Important Important Most Important



All groups placed this priority as most important to children and young people. PULSE agrees that this should be a high priority. Emotional health and wellbeing has already been identified by PULSE members and wider groups of young people as a really important issue and has been selected as one of the key priorities for PULSE. Many members of PULSE are also involved with other groups of young people that are working on improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We feel that lots of young people are affected badly by mental health and wellbeing issues which can have an impact on everything, including day to day activities. This doesn't just affect the individual but may impact on the whole family.

There are lots of pressures that young people are under which might affect how we feel about ourselves and how we cope. A consultation carried out by the North Lancashire Health Action Groups (which involved over 1,000 young people) found that there are a range of issues that could affect young people's emotional health and wellbeing e.g. family splits/divorce; family deaths/ illness; bullying; stress due to school or college work; boyfriend/girlfriend/ friendship problems; weight issues; depression; sexual assault; domestic violence; eating disorder; self harm. Low self-esteem, or a lack of self-confidence can be caused by, or be a result of, any of these. The North Lancashire Health Action Groups found that this figure was higher in schools with young people from wards with high deprivation scores.

Out of those who had a problem, 66% of young people recognised there was a change in their behaviour which included getting angry; behaving badly/getting in trouble; isolating self/withdraw from social life; letting self go; giving up on school work; no motivation; less confidence; depression; self harm; over-eating/under-eating; smoking/alcohol/drugs.

When asked what strategies they used to help them cope, young people reported a range of ways which included not thinking about their problem; talking with people; medication; and counselling. However the most popular answer was simply that they

did not cope, or used negative ways of coping such as alcohol/drugs, fighting, not going to school or self harm.

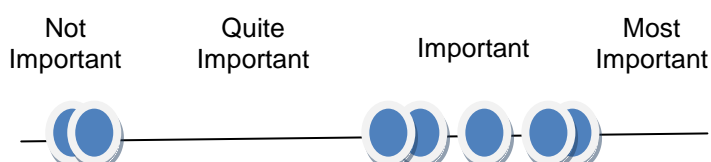
Young people involved in this consultation don't feel that this issue is talked about enough. We don't feel that there is enough education about emotional health and there aren't enough people who are around who can help us. We would like teachers and other adults who work with children and young people to have training so they can recognise the signs, ask if we are OK and be able to refer us for help. There should be lessons in school to help children and young people recognise symptoms, learn how to deal with issues and find out where we could get help. We would also like information on where to get support (e.g. leaflets, posters, talks in assemblies and lessons, Facebook, radio) and confidential help available at school and other places where young people go.

How will the Health and Wellbeing Board make sure that children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is considered and supported as part of this strategy?

PULSE would welcome further discussions with the Health and Wellbeing Board about how young people's views could help to influence actions to support mental health and wellbeing.



Long Term Conditions



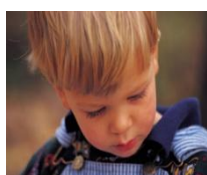
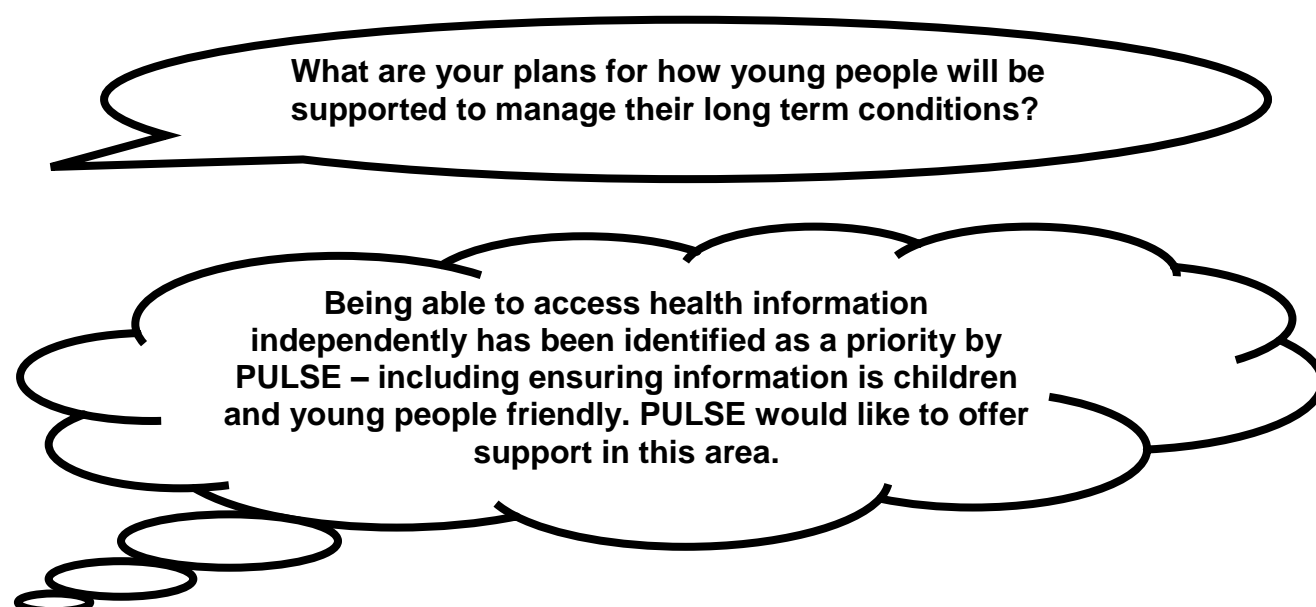
Some of the members of PULSE have long term health conditions so we know how important this can be for young people. Everyone has the right to have a happy life and the chance to reach their full potential, no matter what conditions they have.

We recognise that having the right equipment and correct medication will help to ensure that young people with long term conditions can do the things that they want to and that other young people can do.

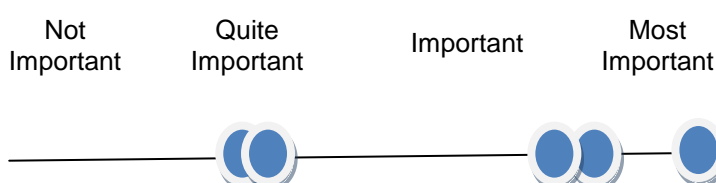
It is important that young people are supported to manage their long term conditions themselves, as much as possible, to help them both now and in the future. To do this they need to be able to access health information independently, which is written in a young person friendly way and is available in places where young people go. In a consultation on the Public Health White Paper, young people referred to the importance of being able to access interesting, engaging, accurate and high quality information that could help us understand how to be and stay healthy.

It is also important that the right support is in place for when young people become adults. As well as supporting the young person with their long term conditions, it is important to offer help with any mental health and wellbeing needs, including emotional needs, they may have. Living with a long term condition can be emotionally straining and it is important that this aspect is not forgotten.

The two groups that placed this priority as not important did this because they felt that a lot is already being done and that these conditions are generally well managed.



Maternal and Child Health



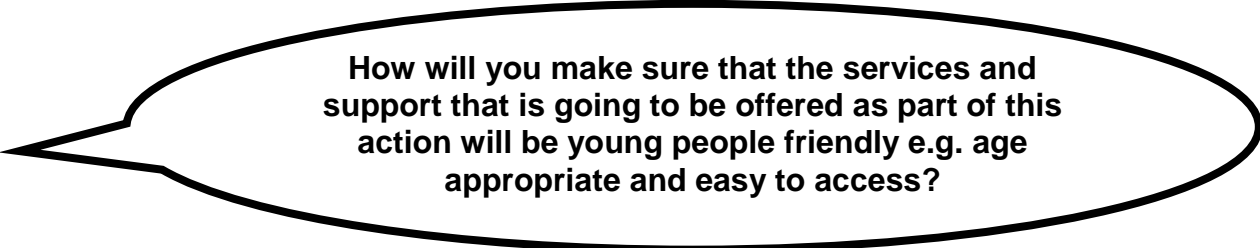
At first some groups from PULSE placed this as less important to young people. However, when we discussed it further we realised that this will support and have an

impact on young people in the future. We recognise that acting early will help to prevent health issues in teenage years and later on. For example, it's important that strong bonds are developed between mother and child as early as possible because this will help reduce other problems, e.g. emotional health and wellbeing issues, later in life. We also recognise that this priority could offer support to teenage mothers; to young carers who may need to support relatives who have health issues, both physical and emotional; and to young people who are in families who have, or are expecting, a baby. It is good that the focus will be to improve the health and wellbeing of all children and young people as well.

Lots of our discussions focused on the importance of helping to make young people fully aware of the consequences of having a baby and becoming a teen mum. Some girls are saying they want to get pregnant and more should be done to educate them on the impact that this decision can have. When young people talk about what health issues are important to them, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) comes up time and time again.

Lots of consultations show that young people do not think SRE is adequate. We feel more information and knowledge about sex would help us to delay having sex for longer and make it more likely we would practice safe sex. Building self esteem and self confidence would help us cope better with the many pressures to become sexually active. More time and a higher priority should be given to Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in schools, which includes SRE. There should also be better training for teachers so they feel more confident to deliver this in the classroom. Although SRE was identified as an important priority for young people, PULSE chose not to have this as a main priority because there is already another young people's group championing this, namely the SRE Campaign Group, as part of the Youth Council. This group is working hard to develop a SRE Charter for Schools to help make sure that this important subject meets the needs of young people in Lancashire.

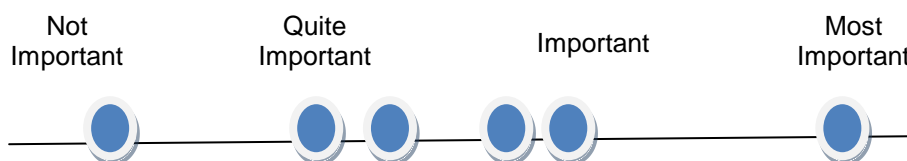
As well as having better SRE, young people want more widely available, better quality and accessible local sexual health services. However, many worry about being seen using these services and being labelled for doing so. Some are put off from going as they worry about being judged by the staff for using them. Making sure services, such as access to contraception, are easily accessible, based in places that young people already go and are young people friendly, is key.



How will you make sure that the services and support that is going to be offered as part of this action will be young people friendly e.g. age appropriate and easy to access?



Improving the Health and Independence of Older People



Not surprisingly this issue was seen as being less important than other issues for young people. However, PULSE recognises the link between this priority and the action around Loneliness in Older People and Mental Health and Wellbeing.

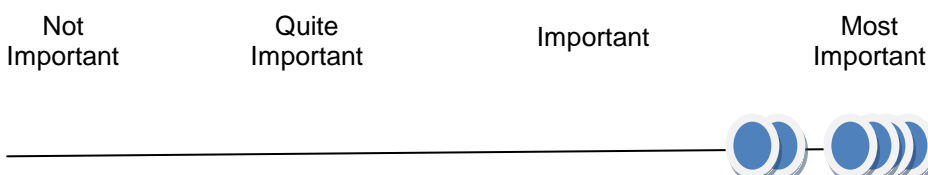
The groups that placed this higher up the continuum felt that older people do not have a voice, just like young people. They are a vulnerable group in our communities and so need help and support to be healthy and independent. When you get older, your health and independence can easily change.

Ten Actions

In her presentation, Debs also explained that ten actions have been identified. Early response to domestic violence and support for carers were seen as being of higher importance to young people. However, all of the remaining actions were identified as being important to young people by at least one of the groups.



Early Response to Domestic Violence



Stopping domestic violence early was felt to be very important to young people of PULSE and the other groups who took part in this activity. We recognise that domestic violence isn't always about physical, violent behaviour but can be emotional and/or sexual abuse as well. This issue is often hidden away and not spoken about. There is a concern that children and young people can get overlooked if the focus for support is mainly on the adult who is affected. It was felt that not supporting children and young people who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse would have a long term effect on emotional health and wellbeing such as trust issues in future relationships, shyness, anger management issues and a belief that violence is right.

We feel that it is really important to make sure that young people are supported as well as the 'victim'. It is also important that this issue is discussed in PSHE lessons to help raise awareness with young people. We also feel that there should be training for staff so they can spot the signs and offer support/ signpost to help. Offering

counselling/ support to young people, so we can talk to people to help them to cope with this issue, is also important.

We feel that it is important to encourage everyone to talk about domestic violence rather than turning a blind eye to opportunities to intervene.

How will you consider young people's thoughts and feelings on the subject to make sure children and young people don't get forgotten in this important area?

How will support be offered to children and young people through this strategy?



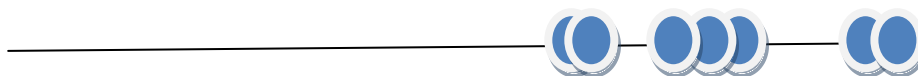
Support for Carers

Not
Important

Quite
Important

Important

Most
Important



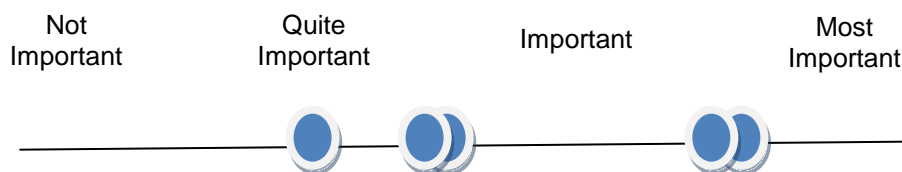
All groups rated this as important or very important. Some members of PULSE are young carers themselves, or know people who are, and therefore are very aware of the impact that this can have on young people who have caring responsibilities. Carers need support to enable them to keep physically and emotionally healthy as caring for someone can be stressful, hard work and can lead to feelings of guilt on both sides. Being a young carer can also mean that young people miss out on some of the usual teenage things.

We feel strongly that the needs of young carers should be considered as part of this strategy as well as the needs of adults who are carers. This includes more support for young carers to stay in education whilst caring for relatives and more opportunities for young carers to have fun doing the things that their friends are doing. In some cases there may be a need for financial support and support to make their accommodation suitable.

The Health and Wellbeing Board may wish to seek the views of how things could be improved for young carers through the Young Carers Forum which is commissioned by Lancashire County Council and coordinated by Barnardos.



Identify those who are at risk of admission into hospital and provide appropriate intervention



This was considered to be of high importance to young people by two groups. Reasons given included young people missing out on school (and impact that this might have on their future) and missing out on their social life through the need to keep going into hospital.

For older young people, one group felt that the children's ward is not always most appropriate for them and this may affect how they feel about being in hospital. This may impact on their emotional health and may even result in them refusing to go back in because the care they receive doesn't meet their needs. One possible suggestion put forward was to have separate teenager wards (14 – 19 years and up to 25 year olds if young person has additional needs) or give young people the choice at 16 for the young person to decide whether they want to go on the children's ward or adult ward.

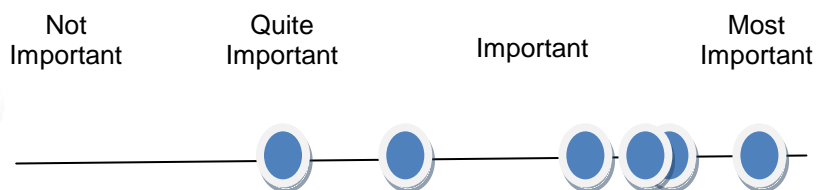
One group felt that there are other more important areas for development than this at present.

How will you make sure that the appropriate interventions within this part of the strategy meet the needs of children and young people?

How will you identify children and young people that are at risk of admission into hospital?



Smoking in Pregnancy



Most of the young people in PULSE felt that this action was important; recognising the impact that smoking in pregnancy has on the future health of the unborn baby. It was felt that the group who placed this lower down had probably not considered the wider picture and recognised this link. It was felt that when tackling this issue it was important to consider teenage parents and the issue of other adults smoking in the home around a pregnant mother. Awareness needs to be raised of the impact of smoking in pregnancy. We also want this action to include not just tobacco but other substances, such as cannabis.

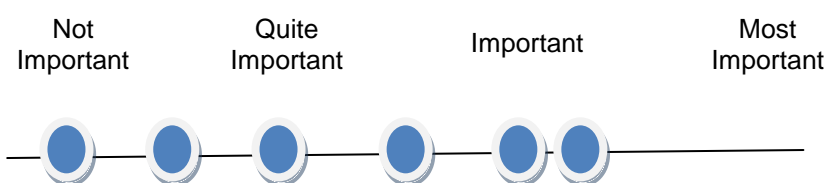
PULSE is concerned that many people, particularly teenage mums, may be reluctant to admit that they smoke due to a fear of being judged. It is important that professionals working in clinics are not judgemental and that services are young people friendly. Training on working with young people should be delivered to members of the CYP Workforce.

Early intervention and prevention was felt to be important by the young people which includes more drugs, alcohol and tobacco education in schools, starting at an earlier age and smoking cessation sessions available for young people to help them stop smoking before they become pregnant.

PULSE has identified substance misuse, including tobacco, as one of their priorities so would like to offer to support the Health and Wellbeing Board with this action.



Alcohol Liaison Nurses



Although this action wasn't placed as high as other issues on the continuum, we recognise that lots of young people are drinking, with binge drinking identified as a particular problem. Young people in the group said they knew other young people who have been taken to hospital because they have drunk too much alcohol.

It was felt that some groups placed it lower down because they didn't know much about alcohol liaison nurses. Another group felt that this action was not important because alcohol liaison nurses would not be much use or that there are already services out there to support with alcohol issues.

PULSE would welcome more information on this subject.

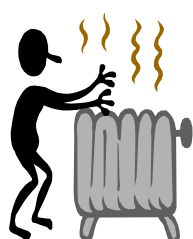
It was suggested that alcohol liaison nurses should have a preventative, early intervention role specific to children and young people. This could include working in schools and linking to hospital A&Es to identify those young people who are attending and step in to offer support. It would also be a good idea for the alcohol liaison nurses to link with GPs and pastoral care teams in schools, (based on the idea that young people may speak to GPs and teacher before anyone else) and deliver information about their service as part of the PSHE curriculum or through assemblies. It was also felt that, to make sure that the service is young people friendly, there should be training to support the alcohol liaison nurses to work effectively with young people.

The messages given to young people about their drinking shouldn't focus entirely on 'Don't do it' – information should be given about how to keep safe when drinking and how to reduce any harm caused as a result of unsafe drinking.

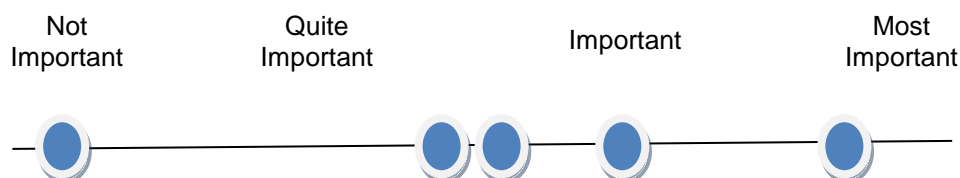
Relevant information for young people should highlight the impact of unsafe drinking.

How will you make sure that children and young people's needs and views are used to help influence the development of the smoking in pregnancy and alcohol liaison nurse actions?

Both the smoking in pregnancy and alcohol liaison nurse actions link to one of PULSE's identified priorities, substance misuse. PULSE would welcome further discussions with the Health and Wellbeing Board about how young people's views could help to influence the development of both of these actions.



Affordable Warmth to those who need it most



The young people of PULSE recognise that this is an issue that affects young people and not just the very old and very young. We feel that long term conditions such as asthma would be impacted on and living in a cold house could mean that young people may be more at risk of developing respiratory illnesses and other more serious illnesses. We also recognise that living in a cold, damp atmosphere may lead young people to develop depression/ mental health issues. It may also mean that young people are less able to concentrate on their homework and lead to them falling behind with studies, affecting their future career prospects.

Suggestions put forward included providing alternative heating sources for those most vulnerable (e.g. calor gas and halogen heaters); providing warm clothes for vulnerable people (e.g. free jumpers and onesies); and supporting people to properly insulate their homes. This includes giving them information and help so then they know how to properly insulate their homes. It was also felt that some people might not trust the people who ring up offering them free insulation because they think it might cost them money and it's a trick.

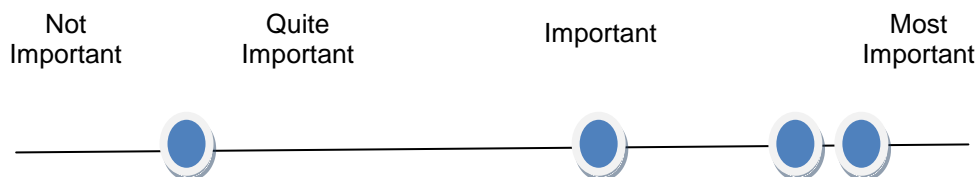
One group of young people felt that this action requires a multi agency approach and isn't necessarily an important priority for health services.

How will you decide if someone is vulnerable?

How will you make sure that people who are vulnerable get help (i.e. some people are too proud to ask for help)?



Joined Up Support for Vulnerable Families (First Pregnancy)



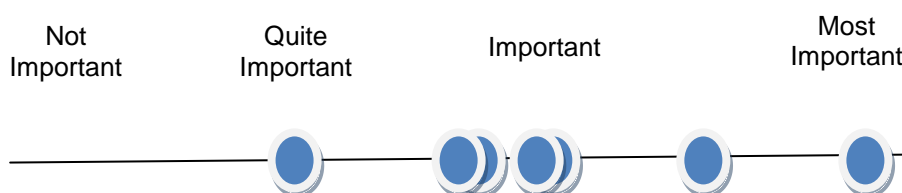
It was felt that the group from PULSE that placed this lower down on the continuum had perhaps not thought about how this impacts on children and young people. Young parents were felt to be vulnerable and should be included for this joined up support. Getting help early was seen to be important and would help support children and young people's physical and mental health now and in the future. Providing help early was also felt to lead to less, more expensive, support in the future.

As with the discussions that took place around Maternal and Child Health, we feel that things need to be put in place to address young people having babies very early. Some young people suggested that shocking young people into not wanting a baby by sharing the reality of having a baby (e.g. using real care babies and films showing the reality of looking after a baby). This would help to challenge media images that tend to glamorise teenage pregnancy. Again, better SRE was suggested as a way of helping to address this.

Why is this only for first time pregnancies? What happens if diagnosis of mental health issues/ long term conditions, which may make a family vulnerable, comes after the first pregnancy (i.e. post natal depression)?



Healthy Weight Environmental Measures



Being a healthy weight, particularly eating healthily, was recognised as an important issue for young people by most groups.

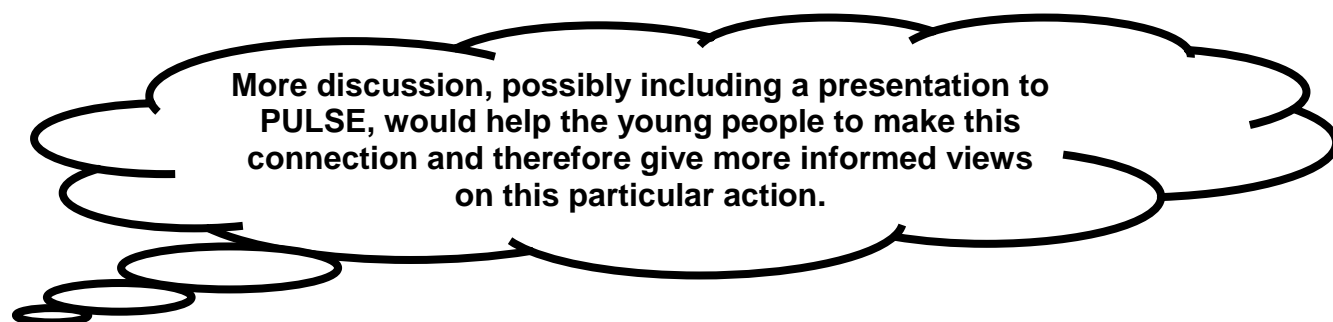
Being an unhealthy weight has an impact on body image, confidence and mental health. It can also lead to bullying. More support is needed to help obese young people to make healthier choices to try and prevent their long term health being affected.

Young people recognised the influence that the media and food advertising has on encouraging them to make less healthy choices. It was also felt that some young people prefer junk food instead of meals and fill themselves up on food full of sugar, fat and calories. There was also the suggestion that some young people don't realise or care about the impact that over eating and not doing enough exercise has on their future health.

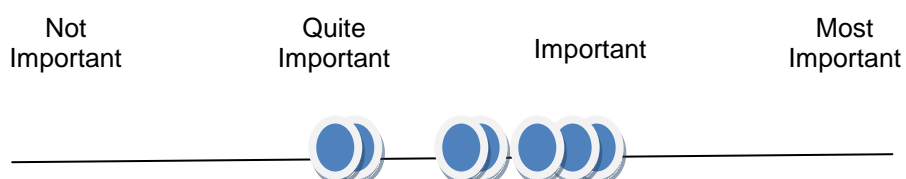
A comment was also made that the focus of this action shouldn't just be about over eating but should also focus on not eating enough.

As with many of the other actions, better education and information designed specifically at young people were put forward as suggestions. Another suggestion was to ensure that good healthy food and more opportunities for exercise were offered in schools.

We recognise that many of the groups failed to see the connection between the choices they make and the lack of choice that might exist due to the environment around them, which is the focus of this action.



Self Care – Encouraging People to Take Control of their own Health and Wellbeing

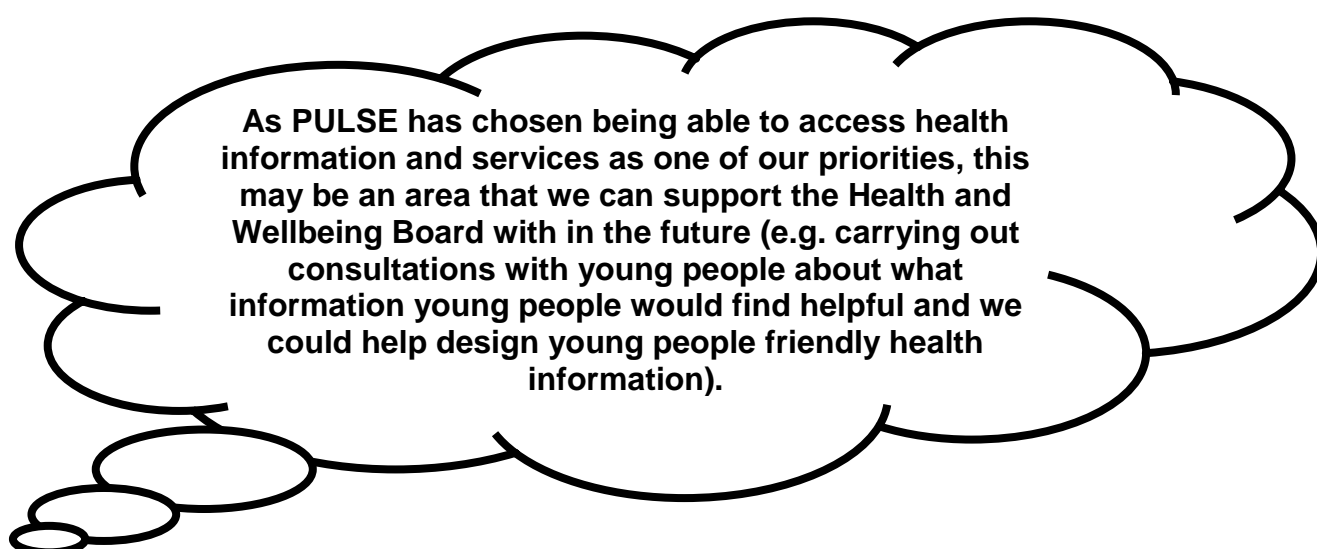


Many of the groups placed this lower on the continuum than other issues. However, although it might not seem important to young people at the moment, we recognise that encouraging people to take control of their own health and wellbeing will help them in both the short and long term. For young people it will also help them to become more independent.

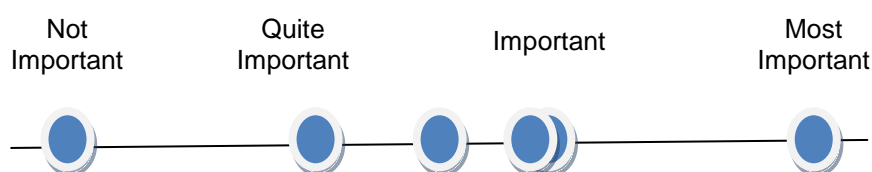
It is natural for young people to take risks and live for the moment. We do not always fully understand the importance of looking after our health and wellbeing now for our future health. There is also a danger that telling us not to do something may make it more likely that we will take part in risk taking behaviour.

We feel that we don't get enough health information and what we do get is often not written in a young person friendly way. Some of us don't have the confidence to access health services or the knowledge about where to go for help. Another barrier for us accessing services is that we don't want to be seen, by our friends or people that know us, when we are accessing specialist services.

Information for young people on how to look after our health and wellbeing needs to be more accessible and needs to be presented in a young people friendly way (e.g. bright, colourful, fun and designed by young people). *Listening to Children's Views on Health Provision – a Rapid Review (National Children's Bureau, May 2012)* shows that children and young people acknowledge the importance of being healthy and having a healthy lifestyle, but do not always feel they have access to the information and advice that would enable them to make healthier choices.



Loneliness in Older People



Two groups thought this was the least important part of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for young people because it doesn't really affect us at the moment. However, other groups recognised that it might do when we are older as it could lead to depression and other conditions. Others felt that it could impact on some young people if they have an older relative.

Young people have a part to play in helping to stop older people feeling lonely by spending more time with them.

In addition to the questions above, PULSE would like to know:

**How much of what is
being planned to be done
in the strategy will be
about children and young
people?**

**How will you work out
how you will spend your
budget and how much will
be for children and young
people?**

**How will you find out
about what children and
young people need?**

**What do you think about
PULSE?**

**What would be the best
way for us to
communicate with each
other?**

**How could PULSE best help
support the Health and
Wellbeing Board and
Strategy?**

**How can PULSE and the Health and
Wellbeing Board best work together?**

Our suggestions for how we could work together in the future

- PULSE would like to support the Health and Wellbeing Board and other decision makers with any of our identified priorities of emotional health and wellbeing; substance misuse and access to health information and services. This could include providing views on proposed actions; carrying out further consultations with a wider number of young people to gain their views on specific related issues to inform future actions; helping to produce children and young people friendly materials and resources etc.
- PULSE would like to support the areas on the Strategy which we feel are most important to young people i.e. domestic violence and long term conditions.
- Representatives from PULSE would like to attend specific Health and Wellbeing Board meetings and would like to invite members of Health and Wellbeing Board to attend specific PULSE meetings.
- Discussions need to take place to work out the best way for:
 - a) PULSE to be kept updated on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Strategy;
 - b) the Health and Wellbeing Board to be kept updated on the work of PULSE;
 - c) children and young people's views to be shared with the Board and wider groups.
- PULSE would like the Health and Wellbeing Board to help them champion the views of children and young people and encourage other decision makers to listen to and act upon their views.

Conclusion

PULSE have highlighted a number of areas from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that are important to young people.

PULSE was established to:

- make a positive difference to children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- make sure the voice of children and young people is heard by decision makers.
- advise these decision makers on how to make health services and health education more children and young people friendly.

In this report, opportunities have been identified where PULSE feel they can offer additional support to the Health and Wellbeing Board. PULSE would welcome a response to the questions and opportunities identified for joint working.

We would welcome a written response and would like to invite you to attend a future PULSE meeting to present this.

