

STUDENT HEALTH & WELLBEING IN READING



Students holding Healthwatch Reading's Student Guide to Services at a Freshers Fair

**Final report of an engagement project with people studying at
Reading College and the University of Reading**

December 2020

Introduction

This report presents the final set of findings of an engagement project carried out by Healthwatch Reading between September 2018 and February 2020.

Our aim was to understand the health and wellbeing concerns of people aged 16 and over, who were studying at university or college in Reading, and their awareness of local health and wellbeing services.

In total we surveyed 279 students: 172 in 2018, mostly first-year students and 107 in late 2019 and early 2020. The second part of our survey, concentrating on second and other later-year students, was carried out after a stakeholder group suggested we find out whether students’ awareness of services, and health needs, changed over time. While we found awareness of most services did improve from first-year levels, over time, there were still worrying gaps, with fewer than 50% of students in both groups not knowing where to find Reading’s NHS sexual health clinic and fewer than 40% of both groups unaware of how to get help for serious mental health conditions. For both sets of students, coping with stress and worries remained their top health concern.

As well as capturing views of students, Healthwatch Reading also designed a Student Guide to Local Services - a double-sided A5 card directory of GPs, pharmacies, sexual health, mental health and other services - that we have distributed to students and some GP surgeries.

This report makes five key recommendations, on page 19, but we were delayed in sending these out to providers and commissioners for a response, by the Covid-19 outbreak. Our national body Healthwatch England advised us to suspend activities that would put pressure on services at this time. However, at the time of publishing we had not received a final response to the report due on 25th September 2020 down to Covid-19 pressures.

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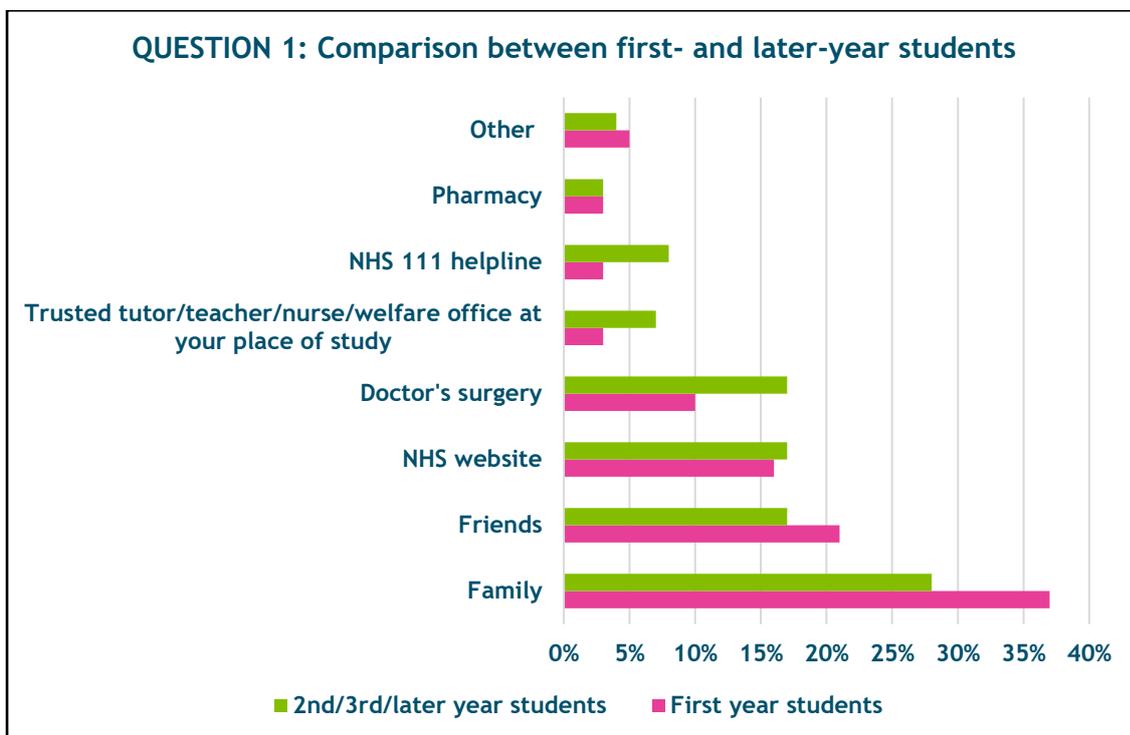
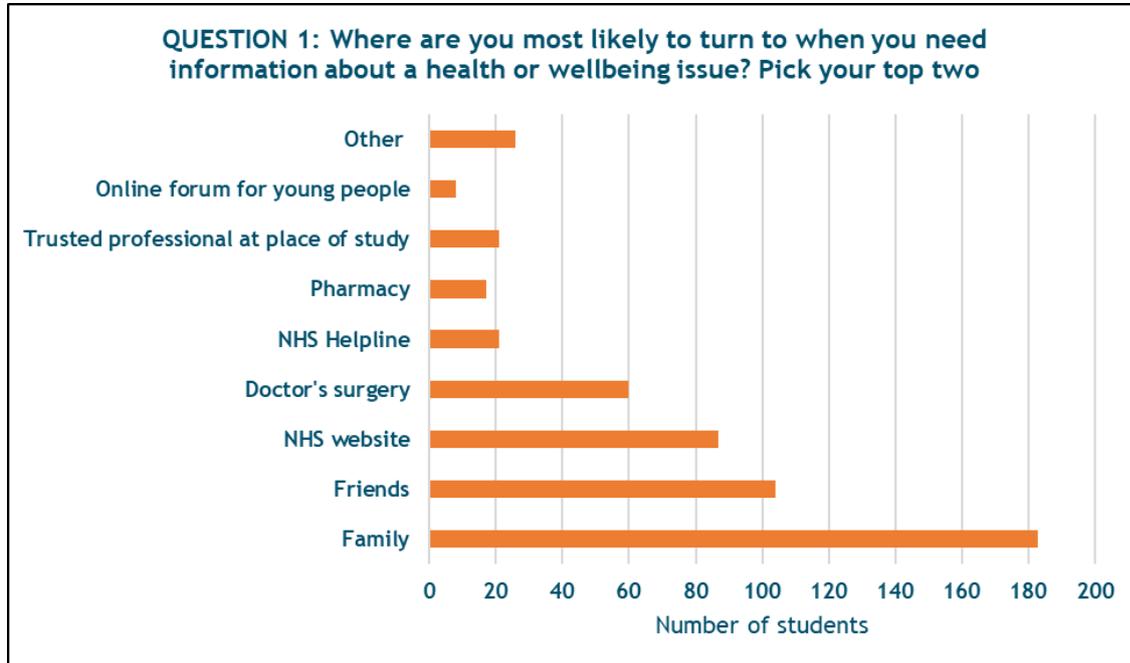
Summary of survey findings

Key statistics

- Two-thirds (66%) of all students would turn to family first when seeking information about a health or wellbeing issue
- The services that students were most confident of finding in Reading were a doctor’s surgery (72%) and a pharmacy (71%)
- The services students knew *least* how to find were the local NHS sexual health clinic (29%) and the Reading Walk-In centre (46%)
- The top three health issues for students were: coping with stress and worries, their weight and diet and coping with depression or a diagnosed mental health condition
- Only 30% of respondents said they would know how to access help for serious mental health issues
- Only 41% said they would know how to access free and/or emergency contraception
- Only 44% said they would know how to access help to cope with stress or anxieties
- Students called for more information to be available to help them find services or cope with issues, particularly to help them manage their mental health needs.

Survey findings in full

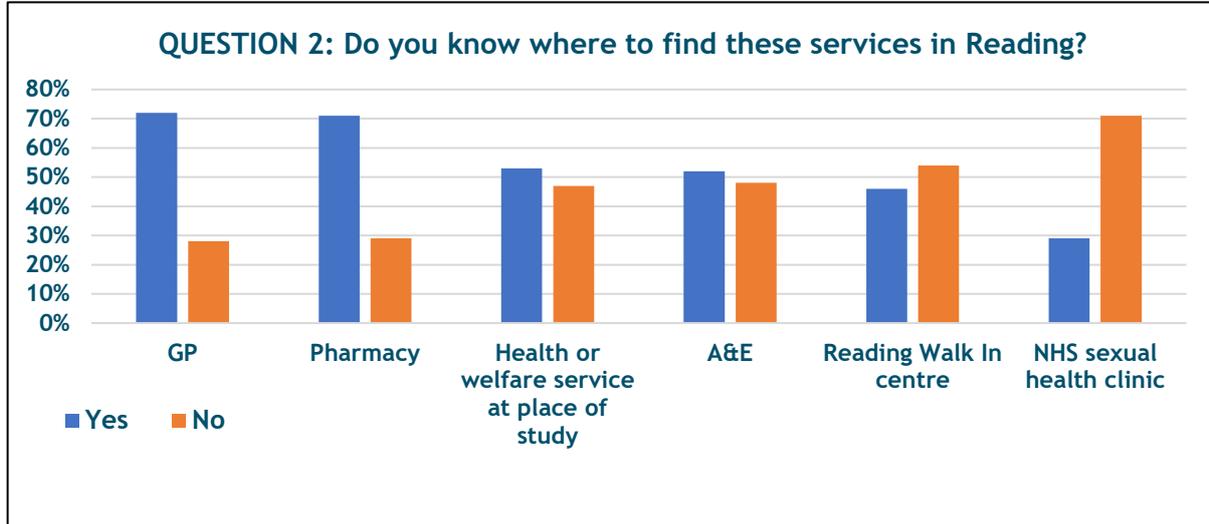
Trusted sources of information



Family and friends are the top two trusted initial sources of information for all students, although this lessens for students in later years, when they are more likely to turn to other services like their doctor’s surgery.

Awareness of local services

We asked students about this in two different days - by named service (question 2), or by health issue (Question 3)

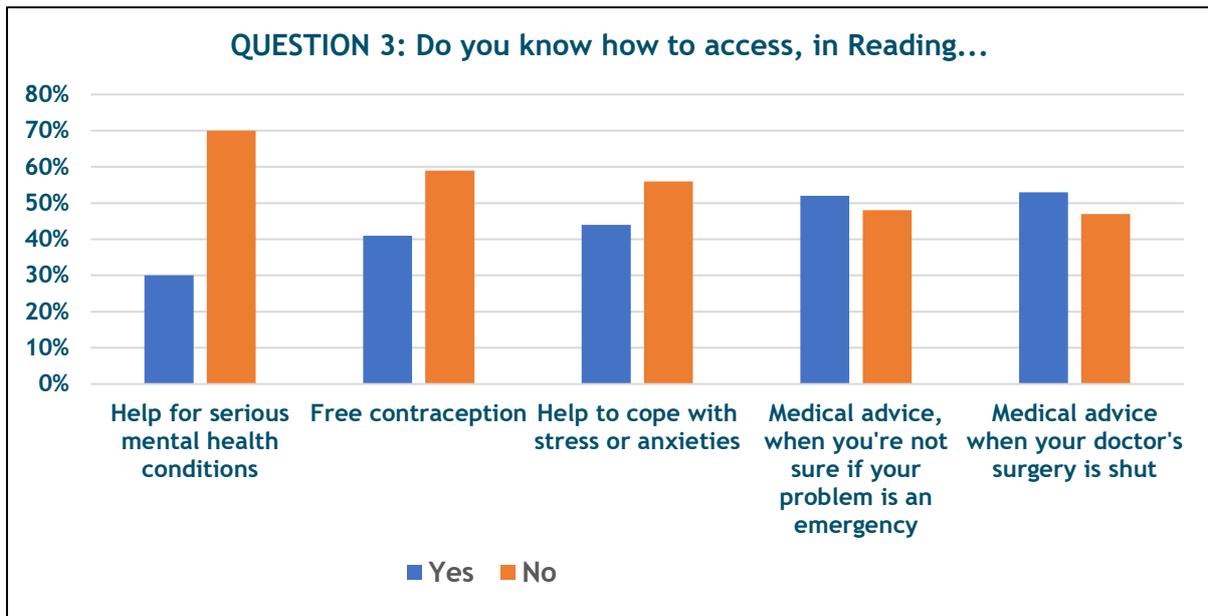


QUESTION 2 Table:

Comparison between students, answering ‘yes’, to knowing where to find services

	GP	Pharmacy	Health/welfare service at place of study	A&E	Reading NHS Walk-In Centre	Sexual health clinic
First year students	69%	66%	54%	47%	40%	24%
Later-year students	85%	94%	51%	73%	65%	49%

Awareness of named services among all students was highest for the primary care services, GPs and pharmacies, and lowest for the local NHS sexual health clinic. Later-year students had a higher awareness of all the named services, except for services at their place of study, but only slightly and this may be due to a lower number of respondents from this group.



QUESTION 3 Table:

Comparison between students, answering ‘yes’, to knowing how to access:

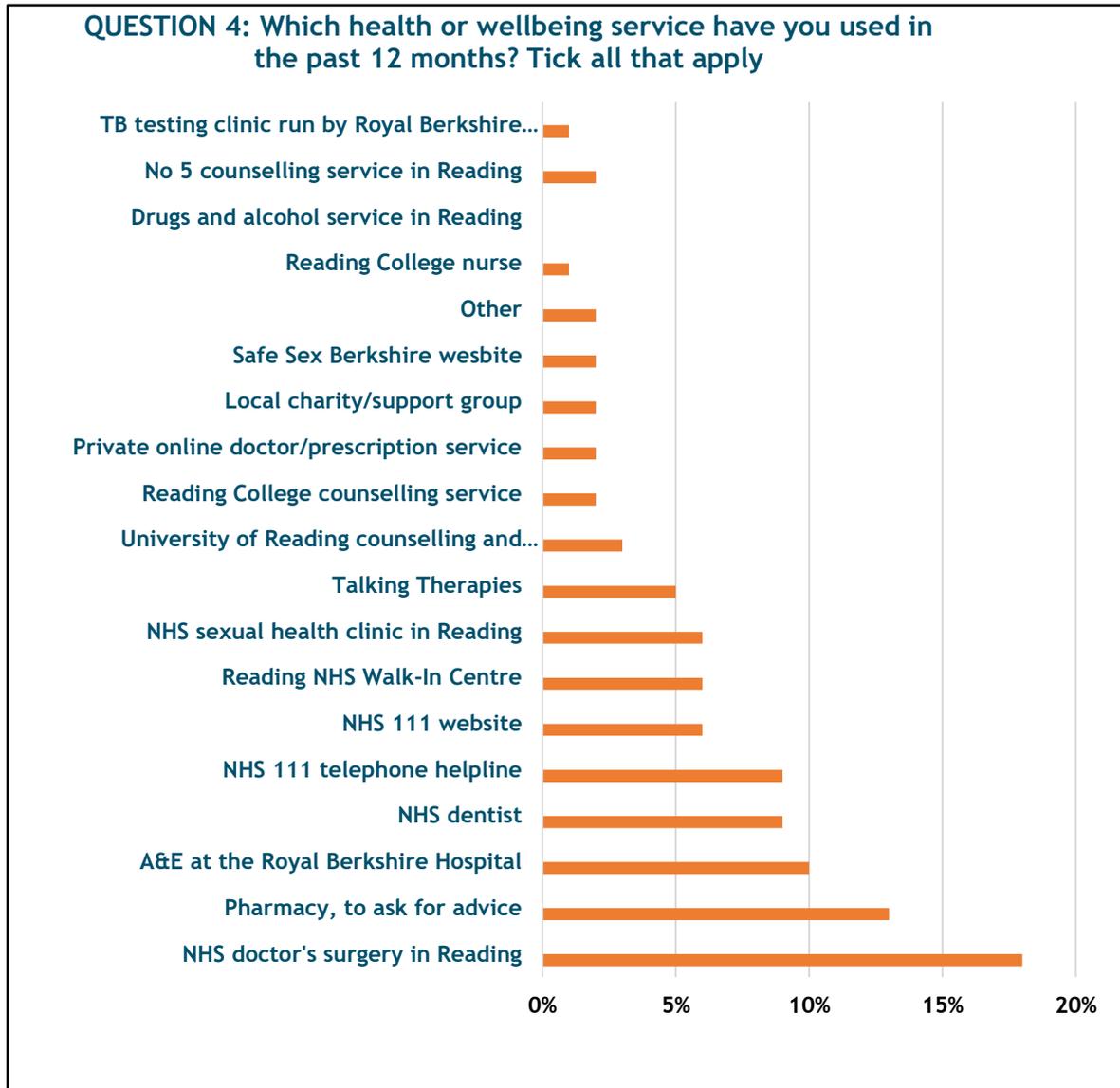
	Help for serious mental health conditions	Free contraception	Help to cope with stress or anxieties	Medical advice, when you're not sure if your problem is an emergency	Medical advice when your doctor's surgery is shut
First year students	28%	38%	44%	49%	34%
Later-year students	37%	51%	45%	63%	45%

Low awareness of sexual health services features again with only 41% of all students saying they knew how to access free contraception.

Students appear to gain some knowledge, as they go through higher education, about how to get help for various issues, apart from how to cope with stress or anxieties. The highest ‘yes’ score was only 53% (for knowing how to find medical advice when their GP surgery was shut) suggesting there is more to be done to increase students’ ability to get help for various scenarios.

Use of services

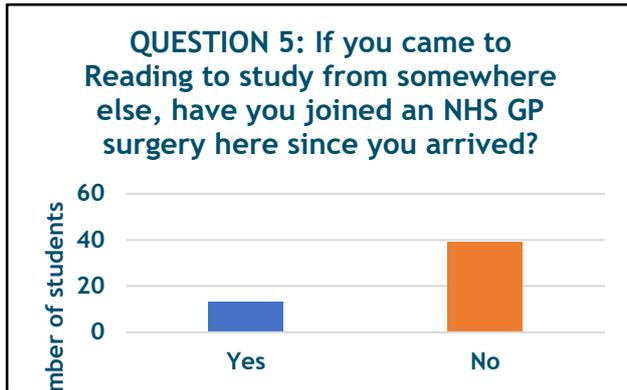
We asked two questions about use of services, only in the second phase of our project, on the suggestion of a stakeholder group from the first part of the project. We asked students to tick from a list of services they recalled using in the past year and we also asked those who had moved to Reading to study, if they had registered with a GP in the borough and if not, why.



Students said they had mostly used their doctor’s surgery, an expected finding given that primary care handles the majority of all NHS contacts by the general public.

Mental health services - such as Talking Therapies, the No 5 counselling service and wellbeing services run by the college or university - had relatively low use, despite students telling us in other questions of their issues with stress and anxiety.

The low use of the Safe Sex Berkshire website and the sexual health clinic could be due to low health needs in this area, or low awareness as seen in other answers.

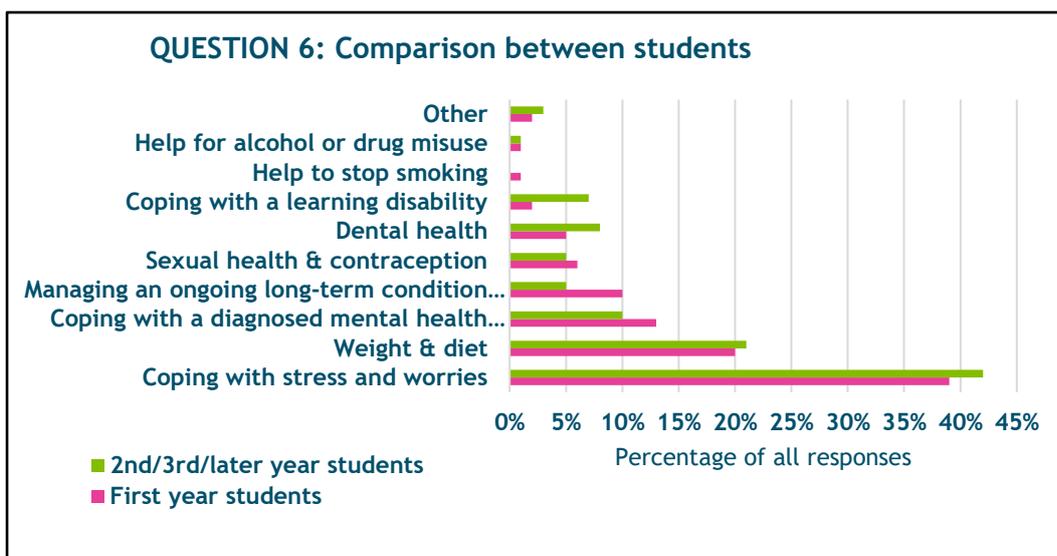
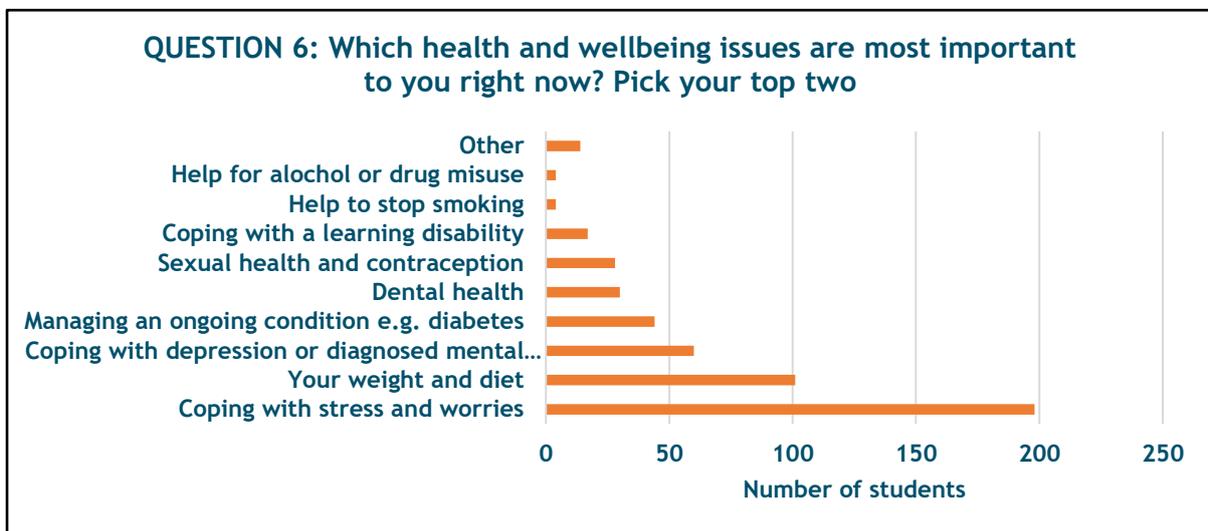


Of the students who answered this question, only 37% said they had registered with a local GP when they moved to Reading for study.

The main reason for not registering was wanting to stay with their home-town doctor who knew them. Other reasons included the fact that their home town was just outside of Reading so they didn't need to travel

far to see their GP or they had a long-term condition they preferred to be managed by a familiar GP.

Students' health needs



The top two health concerns remained consistent across the students' year groups: coping with stress and worries and their weight and diet.

Students’ suggestions

In the first phase of our project, we received 79 responses to a question asking first-year students which topic they wanted more information on, to help them find help or understand their health or wellbeing issue.

Themes of the free text responses were:

1. Mental health (17%)
2. Stress (9%)
3. GP (8%)
4. Anxiety (6%)
5. Depression (5%)

‘Mental health conditions e.g. panic attacks’

‘Help for anxiety’

‘Coping with stress during exams’

‘Trauma therapy’

‘Emergency contraception’

‘How to stop cough, cold etc and issues related to climate difference between countries’

Coughs and colds’

‘Closest GP’

‘Repeat prescription’

‘Managing stress’

‘Dealing with anxiety’

‘Help with depression’

‘Vitamins to improve balanced diet/cheap and healthy meals’

We invited comments and suggestions for improvements in the second phase of our project and received 18 free text responses. The three main themes were better health or care support, more promotion of services and improved access to services. Mental health featured in half of the responses:

“I have found accessing appropriate mental health assistance difficult.”

“I have been given antidepressants and talking therapies but this still is not helping the underlying long-term anxiety and depressive nature of having a long-term health condition.”

“Please provide a doctor on the internet, it would be useful.”

“Availability of face-to-face appointments for mental health therapy services is a must.”

“To book an emergency appointment with my GP is very hard and usually full. It is not always the best way to [instead] visit the Walk In Centre in Broad Street, as my [own] doctor would know more.”

“Have more advertising posters and information in RUSU [Reading University Students Union] and on the website. Maybe hold events to raise awareness of mental health.”

“Physio wait list over a year.”

“I used [one GP’s surgery] in my first year and had a negative experience when talking about mental health (they just gave me drugs), I then joined University Medical practice which I have had a better experience with.”

“Counselling and wellbeing service [at place of study] is very helpful resource and waiting times are better than those within NHS. However, the limited number of sessions per year per student should be extended, and it would be helpful if they offered other forms of therapy, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).”

“Pop up/workshops for mental support and wellbeing.”

“Advertise about them [services] more.”

“I didn’t know the college had a nurse.”

“Can we have access to the Reading College Gym or free gym for young people with mental health issues.”

“Making the information more available would help in emergency.”

“It’s a long time from when I find out that I’m not feeling well to when I solve it.”

“Give students more information on how to find counselling.”

“I wish there was more support for stress with workload, and financial support (such as bursary) to be exposed to all students so that they are aware there could be some help.”

Background information

About Healthwatch Reading

We are the local patient and public champion for NHS and social care services. We are independent of the NHS and Reading Borough Council. People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard, such as young people. We champion what matters to people and work with others to find ideas that work.

Under Healthwatch legislation, organisations must provide a written response to our reports and recommendations.

Why we carried out this project

Despite Reading long being a university town, and also the base of a further education college, no in-depth local engagement has taken place to understand students' health needs and awareness of services.

In 2018, student health became a national cause for concern, particularly students' mental health, in the wake of a spate of publicised suicides in Bristol. This spurred the government to set up a national taskforce on the issue.

As well as creating an opportunity for students' voices to be heard, we also wanted to understand how we could better fulfil our own information and advice function in helping students find the services they need.

How we carried out this project

Two of our staff team ran a stall at freshers' fairs held by the University of Reading and Reading College in September 2018. We handed out paper surveys which were completed by 172 students, the majority of whom were first-year students. The well attended fairs enabled us to gather a high number of responses in a short space of time.

We then held a workshop in December 2018 to discuss the initial findings of this survey with representatives from university and college counselling and wellbeing services, and the University Health Centre, an NHS GP surgery. They were keen to compare the experience of first-year students with those in their second or other years of study.

The second phase of our project ran from late 2019 to February 2020. Reaching second, third and later year students was more challenging without one central event where they were congregated. We ran an online survey that we promoted via social media, and also visited the college and university on key dates such as during mental health week to hand out paper copies of the survey. We were assisted by the college's marketing officer, and the university's student welfare officer, in these efforts. We collected 107 responses in total.

Discussion and recommendations

National research and policy on student health

Half of all young adults will access higher education by the time they are 30, according to a 2018 report by Universities UK (UUK).¹

However there has been ‘very little in the way of systematic UK research on the health needs of students’, says a 2017 report by the Association of Young People’s Health (AYP)².

‘Anecdotal evidence’ of university students’ needs, according to an NHS England paper in 2016, states:

- as many live away from home for the first time, they may engage in risky behaviours such as drinking, drug use and having sex, that need health interventions;
- without immediate family support they may rely more on GPs for mental health support as well as needing greater help to navigate local services;
- students with long-term conditions need extra support transitioning both to new NHS services and from children’s to adult’s services;
- foreign students may also have greater health needs (e.g. if they come from high-risk TB areas) or need additional support understanding how the NHS works.

All these factors add up to students being considered ‘atypical populations’ of NHS GP university practices, the NHS paper adds.³

Mental health needs of students, in particular, have been a focus of national attention. The national media debated the risk of suicide among higher education students in 2018, particularly after it was reported that 11 Bristol University students had taken their own lives within 18 months⁴. Suicide is the biggest killer of young people, but the rate among university students is lower than suicide among the general population, according to a 2018 Office for National Statistics study.⁵

Student health is specifically mentioned only once in the NHS Long Term Plan, the 10-year blueprint for the health service published (pre-Covid) in January 2019. It says: ‘NHS England is working closely with Universities UK...to build the capability and capacity of universities to improve student welfare services and improve access to mental health services for the student population, including focusing on suicide reduction, improving access to psychological therapies and groups of

¹ Universities UK (2018) [Minding Our Future Starting A Conversation About the Support of Student Mental Health](#)

² Association for Young People’s Health (2017) [An overview of research on key issues in student health](#)

³ NHS England (2016) [Guidance Note GP Practices serving Atypical Populations](#)

⁴ BBC News online (24 September 2018) [‘Bristol university suicides spark mental health alerts’](#)

⁵ Office for National Statistics (2018) [Estimating suicide among higher education students, England and Wales: Experimental Statistics](#)

students with particular vulnerabilities. The LTP also announces 'a new approach to young adult mental health services for people aged 18-25 will support the transition to adulthood'.⁶

The LTP was followed by the government launch, in March 2019, of a taskforce known as the Education Transitions Network to look at how students moving from sixth-form or college to university can be better supported in their crucial first year. Its members included UCAS, the National Union of Students, Student Minds, Universities UK, the Association of Colleges and the Office for Students.⁷ No update has been published since on the network's work.

Funding, good partnerships and promotion are seen as important factors in making progress on student health.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) said a survey it had carried out in 2019, showed that the majority of colleges were committed to supporting students' physical, mental or sexual health. But they also said that funding cuts or a lack of a ringfenced funds, affected the extent to which they could support this.⁸

Meanwhile the Association of Young Person's Health report adds: 'As with schools, universities and other educational settings can only provide initial support, and need good liaison with local NHS and community-based resources for those with longer term needs'.

Universities UK's report adds that 'we need to improve the links between local NHS services and the support that universities provide'. It called on a 'place-based' partnership approach through new structures such as sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs).

In 2019, a national mental health charter was launched for each of the college⁹ and university¹⁰ sectors.

The local context

Our borough hosts both a college and university. Reading College, based on King's Road is run by Activate Learning, which has 12,000 post-16 learners across its seven colleges who are undertaking technical, vocational or academic qualifications, while 19,000 people undertake academic courses with the University of Reading (although not all at its Reading campuses).

Health and wellbeing services for students are provided through NHS services, an NHS GP practice for university students, and on-site wellbeing and welfare services provided by the college and university themselves.

⁶ NHS England (2019) [The NHS Long Term Plan](#)

⁷ Department for Education announcement (7 March 2019) '[Government creates new student mental health taskforce](#)'

⁸ Association of Colleges (2019) [AoC survey on Personal and Social Development and Enrichment in colleges](#)

⁹ Association of Colleges (2019) [Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter](#)

¹⁰ Hughes, G. & Spanner, L. (2019) [The University Mental Health Charter](#). Leeds: Student Minds

ON-SITE WELLBEING AND WELFARE SERVICES FOR STUDENTS*

Services funded and provided by the education institutions themselves:

University of Reading

Welfare team

Drop-in or appointment service on the main Whiteknights campus for help with settling in, crisis support, relationship issues, harassment, bullying or violence, drug and alcohol issues, caring responsibilities and more.

Counselling and Wellbeing Team

Students can self-refer, and tutors can also make referrals, for a set number of free counselling sessions, offered in person, over the phone, one-to-one, or in groups. Students can contact the onsite team Monday-Friday 9-5pm.

Life Tools

Free talks offered through the academic year on topics such as minimising stress, sleep, exercise, nutrition and mindfulness and general resilience building.

Big White Wall

A free, 24/7 online mental health resource which all students can use anonymously to

- meet and chat with others who may be experiencing similar feelings or situations
- access a range of self-help articles, videos and online courses
- evaluate wellbeing and mental health, set goals and track progress
- express feelings through drawing or uploading images.

It has safety features to create alerts if people express things like suicidal intentions, to prompt Big White Wall practitioners to respond to the messages directly.

Reading College

Counselling

Free, confidential counselling sessions available for all students who need it.

College nurse

Provides a confidential health service on some campuses, including help with contraception, sexual health issues and pregnancy queries.

Student Support team:

Drop-in or appointment service for current students for advice with any safeguarding concerns, financial support, housing advice, relationship advice, drug and alcohol issues, young carer support and more.

***These are how the services were described pre-Covid, but they may be operating differently now for student and staff safety.**

GP services for university students

The University Health Centre is part of an NHS GP practice based on Northcourt Avenue and at the time of this report, is the only Reading doctor’s surgery currently rated as ‘outstanding’ by the Care Quality Commission.¹¹ It has around 31,000 patients, made up of both local residents and university students. Its diverse staff team includes 17 doctors, a physician’s associate, seven nurses, three health care assistants, four practice pharmacists, three practice paramedics, two social prescribers and management and receptionists.

The centre registers new students in bulk each September, usually at the Freshers Fair that is held in the week before students start their studies. It has regular patient newsletters on its website and also runs a Facebook page to get information out.

Chancellor House Surgery on Shinfield Road is also near to the university and takes students who choose to sign up there.

Local student health needs: information from commissioners

The Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Reading - facts and figures which are used to understand which health and social issues need to take priority - does not reference college or university students’ health needs in any depth. Only in a section on loneliness and social isolation, does the JSNA mention the ‘transient student population’ as a possible group of people who had lived in Reading for a short time who might be more vulnerable to loneliness.¹²

Reading’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy - which is due for a 2020 refresh - has a general priority to promote ‘positive mental wellbeing in children and young people’, albeit those aged 5-16 years. No mention is made of college or university students.¹³

Some local authorities elsewhere in England have focused on the needs of college or university students via specially commissioned reports or chapters for their JSNAs, such as York¹⁴, Brighton and Hove¹⁵ and Nottingham¹⁶.

Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group - which funds local NHS services for Reading people - has also not examined student health needs specifically. However, in late 2018 it won funding to provide more mental health education in schools¹⁷.

¹¹ Care Quality Commission, online 25 July 2019, [inspection report for University Medical Group](#)

¹² Reading Borough Council, [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

¹³ Reading Borough Council (2017) [Reading Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020](#)

¹⁴ City of York Council (2017) [York Student Health Needs Assessment Summary Report](#)

¹⁵ Brighton and Hove City Council (2016) [Chapter 4.29 ‘Students’ of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

¹⁶ Nottingham City Council (2016) [Students topic paper of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

¹⁷ Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning online news item 20 December 2018 ‘[Berkshire West is one of 25 areas in England to receive government funding for pilot project working to transform children’s mental health care](#)’

The CCG it also working on a new mental health crisis pathway which could see a new ‘Breathing Space’ café set up in Reading as well as more plans to use NHS 111 to provide 24/7 support.¹⁸

Local students’ health needs: our survey findings

Our survey findings show that students’ top two health concerns remained consistent across different year groups: coping with stress and worries and their weight and diet.

Participants of a Healthwatch Reading convened workshop to discuss the initial findings, said these findings resonated with their own experience of seeing students. The group - made up of representatives from the from University Health Centre, University of Reading’s welfare service, and Reading College’s counselling service - thought that students needed help to build resilience before coming to university and to understand that some stress and anxiety was normal during what was one of their first major transitions - from childhood to adulthood and perhaps being away from home for the first time without day to day parental support. The approach there was to try to help the student help themselves.

At the other extreme, both the college and university described some overseas students who had come to the UK to study, who were self-harming or experiencing major anxiety because of fears they were not living up to high academic expectations of parents, especially when parents had made a major financial investment in paying for courses.

The university said it had begun developing a suicide prevention protocol with staff and tutors, which would aim to ensure all knew how to refer students for help and who to contact in emergency situations.

The college said it was surprised to find that some of its 16-year-old students, had said they had been prescribed antidepressants for mental health issues but did not seem to have been referred at the same time for some kind of talking therapy.

Both the college and university offer short-term counselling for students and will then refer to local NHS mental health services if students need more specialised, or longer-term support. Some students are reluctant to refer themselves to the local NHS mental health service, Talking Therapies, because they have not ever made their own health appointments or dealt with referral paperwork, without parental support. The college welfare service will support students, particularly the younger age group, by sitting down with them at the end of term to help them physically complete the self-referral to Talking Therapies to ensure students don’t miss out if they need more help.

Some anecdotal feedback shared by students about Talking Therapies to welfare services, is that the students can feel uneasy taking part in group therapy sessions

¹⁸ Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group online news item 8 June 2020 [‘14 point plan of action to improve mental health crisis pathways in Berkshire West’](#)

because other people in the group may be much older than them, rather than being student-only groups. The university said it had heard from some students that there is a push towards online programmes before they can access face-to-face support.

All the group thought it would be useful for mental health resilience to be part of secondary school education to better equip students for new adult life.

The second top concern concerning students was weight and diet.

The workshop participants told us that on the one hand, young people might feel under pressure to have a perfect body image due to unrealistic portrayals on social media. But some of the comments given by students in the survey also suggested they might just want simple advice about eating cheaply due to the financial impact of being students.

The university wellbeing team had been made aware during a previous Fresher’s Week that a poster advertising a weight-loss organisation had been put up by an external organisation, without university authorisation, near the student eatery. The poster included the statement: ‘82% of students put on weight during university’. One student had disclosed to the welfare service that seeing that poster had triggered thoughts related to a past eating disorder that prevented them going into the eatery that day. The welfare service took the poster down and contacted the organisation to ask who had put it up and where the data was from. The statistic was five years old and came from the organisation’s own small survey of students who had used the weight-loss service, rather than from an independent survey about weight among the general student population.

Awareness of services: our survey findings

The workshop participants thought that low awareness among first-year students of some Reading health and care services, could partly be explained by the fact that some of the respondents had come to Reading to study from elsewhere, were new to the area, and had not thought about what services might be available locally. The first year of study was also a busy time with lots of new information to process.

It was perhaps more surprising for students who said they had always lived in Reading, but that might be due to the fact their parents had previously managed, on their behalf, their contact with health and wellbeing services. This might mean there needs to be more ‘literacy’ on using and accessing the NHS, developed with parental support and secondary school Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons.

The workshop participants asked Healthwatch Reading if we could survey second, third and later year students to understand if awareness of local services grew over time. Our findings show that there was a general improvement, particularly among primary care services like GPs (from 69% to 85%) and pharmacies (66% to 94%) and urgent care services like A&E (73% up from 47%) and the Reading Walk-In

Centre (65% from 40%). But awareness of the Reading sexual health service - a (pre-Covid) walk-in service run by Royal Berkshire Hospital called the Florey Clinic - remained just below 50%, up from around one-quarter.

The Reading JSNA’s sexual health summary does not reference students specifically, but states that ‘Reading residents have contact with sexual health services for Sexual and Reproductive Health related care significantly less than the national and regional averages.’ Reasons for this included people getting contraception from other sources, or the service not being appealing to at-risk groups, or down to data collection issues.

Anecdotally we heard that students tended to shy away from visiting ‘pop-up’ information and advice stands on sexual health held on college or university premises, perhaps due to embarrassment, suggesting that other promotion methods are needed to engage

While carrying out face-to-face engagement on this project, Healthwatch Reading also observed that first-year international students lacked full awareness about how the NHS worked - one told us, for example, that if they had a problem they would just go to the hospital, because they did not realise most hospital access had to be arranged by a referral from their GP. Some told us they were not sure if they had registered with an NHS GP.

When we asked later-year students who normally lived outside Reading, whether they had registered with a local GP, less than half said they had. The numbers answering this question are small, so this finding should be treated with caution, but it could have meant that the local NHS is not receiving funding to reflect the actual number of people living here.

Another issue raised about access to services, during our workshop, was the fact that one university accommodation building spanned both Reading and Wokingham boroughs. This had led to one student with complex needs being ‘bounced’ between the two local authorities who did not agree on which was responsible for assessing and/or funding their social care needs.

Overall, it is clear that there is a fragmentation of the various services students need services and the organisations responsible for commissioning them:

- **Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group** plans and funds NHS services such as doctors’ surgeries, hospital operations, and A&E. The CCG also funds mental health services such as Talking Therapies, crisis care and eating disorders services run by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust;
- **Reading Borough Council** plans and funds via its public health function, the local sexual health integrated service (the Florey Clinic), the local drug and alcohol service (Change Grow Live), as well as stop-smoking and weight management services. It also carries out care needs assessments and reviews of adults who need help with daily living (such as people with learning disabilities) and it also partly funds a range of local wellbeing charities;

- **NHS England** funds and plans pharmacy services (which may offer emergency contraception as well as general health advice) and dental services.

Healthwatch Reading has attempted to help students navigate the maze of services by designing a Student Guide to Services (see Appendix 3). During our project, we professionally printed at least 300 copies to distribute directly at college and university fresher’s fairs, and via the University Health Centre. We have shared a PDF of the guide to local organisations so they can print more copies if they wish and we have also developed a more detailed online guide via a dedicate page on our website. The participants at the workshop were positive about this new guide.

Recommendations

1. Given the sizeable proportion of our population which is made up of students, and their ‘atypical’ status, we urge the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board to commission a full assessment of students’ health needs to inform the JSNA and the local health and wellbeing strategy;
2. Given the fragmented nature of commissioning and provision of services, we urge the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board to establish a student health working group made up of student, CCG, RBC, and college and university representatives, as well as providers of service such as The University Health Centre, The Florey Clinic and Talking Therapies, to improve understanding of each other’s remit, any gaps, and opportunities for joint working to address students’ health needs and improve student awareness of services;
3. In addition to any working group, we urge Reading Borough Council to discuss with its commissioned sexual health service, how it can improve the low awareness of this service that our survey identified and to report back on progress made;
4. In addition to any working group, we urge Berkshire West CCG to discuss with its commissioned mental health provider, BHFT, how it can improve awareness of its services and better meet the mental health needs of students, and to report back on progress made.
5. Healthwatch Reading staff should update its student health guide on an annual basis and promote at the start of each new college and university year.

At the time of publication, we had not received a response from commissioners and providers.

Appendix 1

Healthwatch Reading (2019) Phase 1 report of an engagement project with people studying at Reading College and the University of Reading

Appendix 2:

Demographics of all students surveyed in phase 1 and 2 of project:

Total respondents: 279

Gender:

- **Women** comprised 190, or 73% of respondents (118 answered in the first phase, 72 in second phase)
- **Men** made up 71, or 23% of respondents (48 and 23)
- Did not answer: 17

Age

- **16:** 29 respondents, or 11% (14 in first phase and 15 in second)
- **17-18:** 76 respondents, or 28% (54 respondents and 22)
- **19-20:** 73 respondents, or 27% (42 and 31)
- **21-22:** 51 respondents, or 19% (30 and 21)
- **23-24:** 20 respondents, or 7% (14 and 6)
- **25-plus:** 19 respondents, or 7% (12 and 7)
- **Did not answer:** 11

Usual place of residence

- From another part of the UK: 138 (85 in first phase & 53 in second phase) respondents
- Reading is hometown: 62 (31 and 31) respondents
- From an EU country: 16 (11 and 5)
- International student from a non-EU country: 58 (41 and 17)

Ethnicity

This was collected in the first phase only and was self-described rather than chosen from a list:

- 43% said they were 'White British'
- 16% said they were 'Asian British'
- 13% said they were 'British'
- 3% said they were 'Black British'
- 1% said they were 'Mixed'
- 24% gave a variety of other responses including descriptions of religion rather than ethnicity

Appendix 3: Reproduction of Healthwatch Reading A5 Student Quick Guide

TB Testing

Young adults arriving from certain countries to live in the UK are eligible for a simple blood or skin test to check for ‘sleeping’ tuberculosis. Treatment does not affect any right to remain in the UK.
<https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/tuberculosis.htm>

Local Charities & Support Groups

Support U (LGBT+ support)
<https://www.supportu.org.uk/>

BWA (domestic violence support)
<http://www.berkshirerewomensaid.org.uk/>

Other organisations that can help with debts, disabilities, FGM and more, can be searched for on servicesguide.reading.gov.uk

Still unsure where to go?
Want to know your NHS rights?
Then call us on 0118 937 2295 or
visit healthwatchreading.org.uk



HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICES

*A local guide for students from
Healthwatch Reading*

Doctors & Health Advice

University Health Centre

University students can join this doctors’ surgery.
9 Northcourt Avenue, RG2 7HE, 0118 987 4551
www.readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Other local doctors:

Use ‘Find a GP’ search tool at www.nhs.uk

NHS Reading Walk-In Centre

For urgent problems, no appointment needed.
Open 8am-8pm, seven days a week.
1st floor, Broad Street Mall, RG1 7QA

NHS 111 Telephone Helpline

Phone 24/7 to get advice on your health problem.
They can put you through to a clinician or 999 if necessary.

NHS 111 Website

Visit the beta website: <https://111.nhs.uk/>
Type in your symptoms to get immediate advice.

Local pharmacies

For advice on minor illnesses & medications.
Use ‘Find a Pharmacy’ tool at www.nhs.uk

Mental Health Support

Reading College Student Support

Free counselling and health service
Visit <https://www.activatelearning.ac.uk/support/student-support/wellbeing>

University of Reading Counselling and Wellbeing Service

Free counselling, wellbeing & mental health support.
Visit <https://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing.aspx>

Talking Therapies

A Berkshire NHS service for help with anxiety, depression, stress, or phobias.
Self-refer by calling 0300 365 2000 or visit talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk

No 5

Free counselling service for 10-25-year-olds in Reading.
Visit no5.org.uk

Local NHS Dentists

Use ‘Find a dentist’ tool at www.nhs.uk

Sexual Health

Safe Sex Berkshire

A local NHS website giving advice on where to find:

- free testing for all types of sexually transmitted infections
- the Pill, condoms, or other contraception
- emergency contraception after unprotected sex
- pregnancy testing
- help if you have been sexually assaulted or raped

Visit <https://www.safesexberkshire.nhs.uk/>

Drug & Alcohol Services

Addiction support and clean needle services are funded by Reading Borough Council. Find out how to get help at: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/drugsandalcohol>

Accident & Emergencies

Call 999 or visit the Emergency Department, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Craven Rd, Reading, RG1 5AN.

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