



GP Champions Project

What every GP practice can do to improve young people's health

1 Appoint a 'champion' in the practice for young people's health

Find one person to 'champion' young people's health and give them time at practice meetings to explain what's happening and why.

2 Let young people register with a GP

Work with your reception team to make young people's registration easier. Vulnerable young people such as those leaving care or the criminal justice system, refugees and the homeless are sometimes denied registration as they lack the correct documentation and proof of address.

3 Accessible and flexible appointments

Have a variety of ways to make an appointment - not just phone triage, which is impractical for young people in school. Take a flexible approach towards young people who are late or miss an appointment. Use text or email reminders to avoid 'DNAs'.

4 Make the waiting room more welcoming for young people

Work with young people to get their view of the waiting room and get suggestions to make it less intimidating and more welcoming for their age group. Some young people would rather wait outside if they find the waiting room stressful.

5 Listen to young people and give them time

Listen to young people and take their concerns seriously. Remember they might find it more difficult than adults to talk about the underlying problem and to articulate the reason for seeing a GP.

6 See young people on their own, with no lower age limit

Make sure reception staff know that young people can make an appointment and see a GP without a parent - and prioritise them. Get a parent/carer/friend out of the room for part of the consultation and stress that the young person can always see you on their own.

7 Book a follow-up appointment

Young people often won't disclose their main concern at their first consultation. Arrange to see a young person yourself in a week's time if you sense they have more to tell you. Have a system in place to follow-up if they don't return.

8 Feel comfortable around confidentiality

Organise practice training around confidentiality and ensure reception staff are included and your policy is displayed.

9 Record your data accurately

Consider practice training around data entry. You could create a new template for adolescent health consultations.

10 Use data to see where improvements can be made

See what the audit options are available within the practice and use data to identify trends and make improvements. Consider commissioning the voluntary sector to address specific health issues.

11 Gather feedback and complaints

Pilot an anonymous feedback form for young people immediately after their consultation. Make sure the practice has a clearly displayed complaints procedure and that young people's feedback will be taken seriously.

12 Involve young people in patient participation groups

Consider as a practice how young people can contribute to your patient participation groups - remotely or in person. They need to have a voice!

Background

These points were recommendations from the **GP Champions Project**, which ran for three years across 10 pilot areas. Each site had a lead GP linked to a voluntary sector organisation and aimed to find innovative ways of improving the health of young people aged 10-24. It was run by two charities, the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) and Youth Access, in conjunction with the Royal College of General Practitioners' Adolescent Health Group. It was funded by the Department of health.

Young people participated in the work in all 10 sites, including those who are marginalised, such as the homeless, young offenders, care leavers and BME communities.

New services set up during the project included: pop-up GP clinics in colleges of further education and a youth club, voluntary sector counselling in GP practices, new referral pathways for mental health services, online consultations via Facebook and leaflets for young people on going to the GP.

For more information on the project go to www.ayph.org.uk/our-work/young-peoples-participation/gp-champions where you can download a free GP Champions Toolkit for Primary Care and a guide to commissioning the voluntary sector to provide effective primary care services for young people.

For more information contact: info@youngpeopleshealth.org.uk