

**Obesity and weight management
What do young people & parents think?**

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About AYPH

- Bridges the world of **policy, practice and evidence** to promote better understanding of young people's health needs.
- Supports **young people's participation** in health and wellbeing
- Supports the development of youth friendly health services and **improved practice**
- Collate and disseminate **useful information** in reader-friendly formats for practitioner and policy audiences (Key Data on Adolescence, YP Health updates)
- Work with our members to **share innovative examples** of work in the field (events, twitter, publications)

- What do young people think about obesity?
- What can support young people and families to engage in weight loss programmes?
- What are the barriers to getting help and some of the solutions?

What do young people think
about obesity?

"I myself have been obese since I was 11, I have tried many methods to lose weight, these are all very expensive or aimed at older people."

"Sports classes etc are usually full of much fitter people so it is intimidating to go to these."

"Not excited about break time because their friends might run around but they can't"

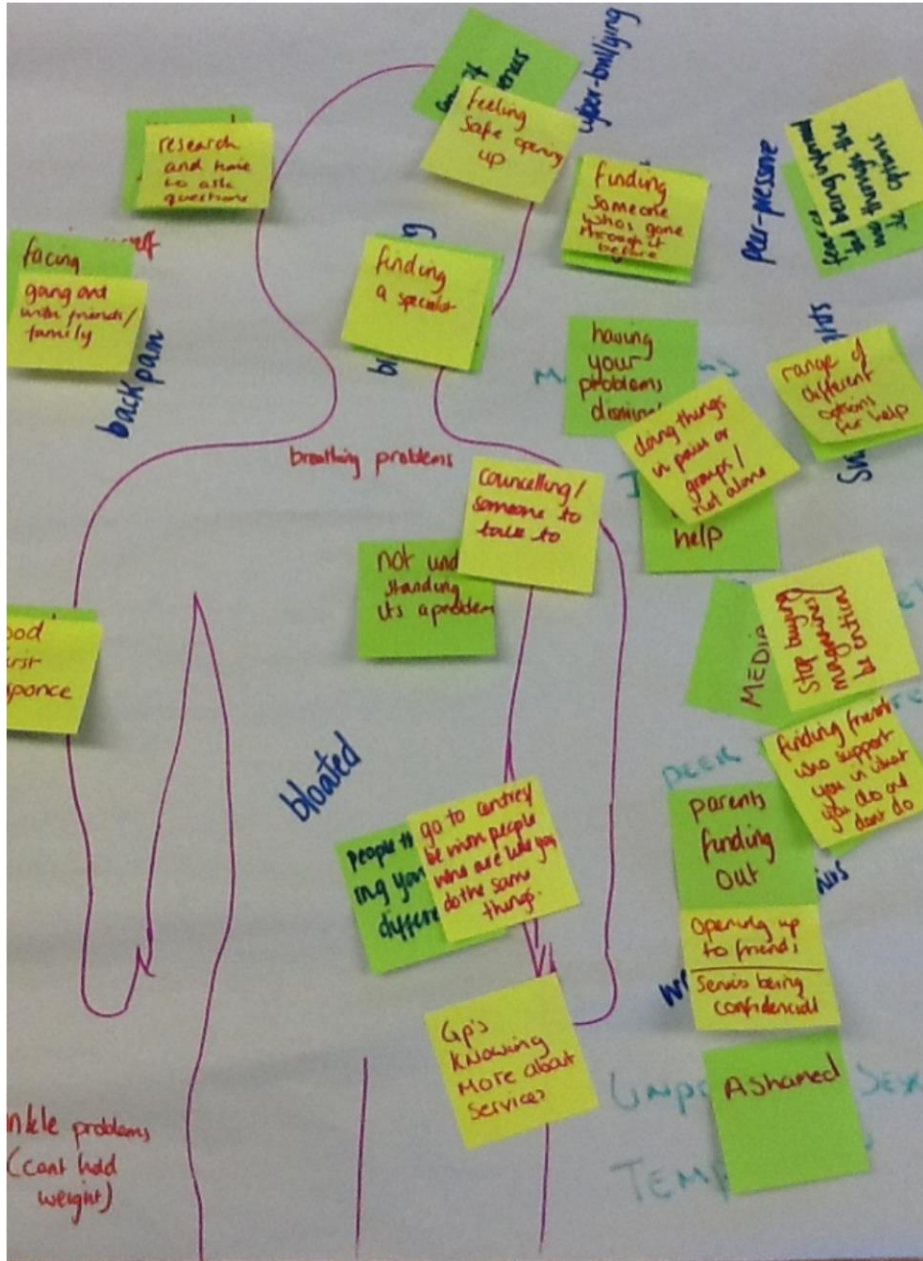
"Childline or NHS 111 should cover these issues"

"Don't want people to worry about you so you hide it"

"Believing nothing will help"

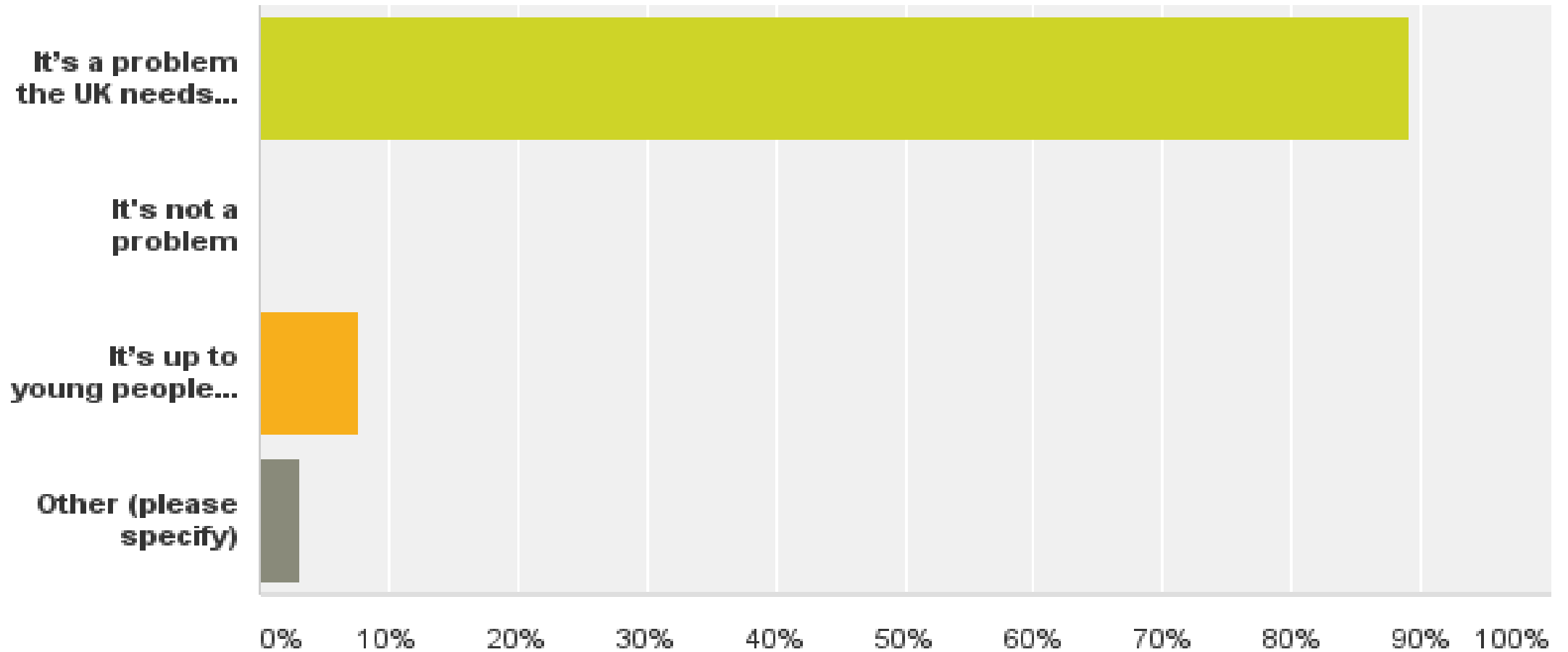
"Why doesn't the GP give people a gym pass?"

If my emotional problems and addictions had been sorted out when I was a lot younger say 11 or 12 I wouldn't still be obese and putting a strain on the NHS."
(Female, aged 20-24)



Do young people understand the health implications of obesity?

What do you think about young people being very overweight or obese?



What can support young people and families to engage in weight loss programmes?

What motivates young people to get involved?

- To lose weight – ‘the right time’ and good opportunity
- I’d tried other things - this was something different
- Wanted to build confidence
- To help other people – so doctors can help more people in the future

How can we support young people's engagement in weight loss programmes?

- Variation in activities for different age groups
- Different methods, not just 'eat more fruit and veg!'
- More action and less education
- Include a way to monitor progress over time
- Meet up with other young people – shared experience
- Incentives eg Gym pass
- Advertise it on Facebook
- More teen-friendly (eg have an app)

What did Parents think about good engagement?

- Focus on emotional wellbeing
- Accessible information
- Incentives vouchers, gym membership
- Non medical focus, settings and language
- Support for parents and YP to make a decision – e.g. effective self assessment tool

BUT THE TIME NEEDS TO BE RIGHT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENGAGE

How can we best involve and inform parents?

- National Child Measurement Programme can feel like judgement without support – need support in place for it to work
- Need to find ways to reduce in stigma for parents
- Need to give parents tools to find out more about the particular needs of their YP
- Prevention including through advice at schools is important

What are the barriers to
getting help and some of
the solutions?

What are the barriers to getting help?

- Parents – don't want them to find out
- Health professionals – being judged or wasting the GP's time
- Friends – fear of how they'll react or increase in bullying
- Denial - not understanding it's a problem
- Not knowing how or where to get help
- Stigma - feeling ashamed and embarrassed.

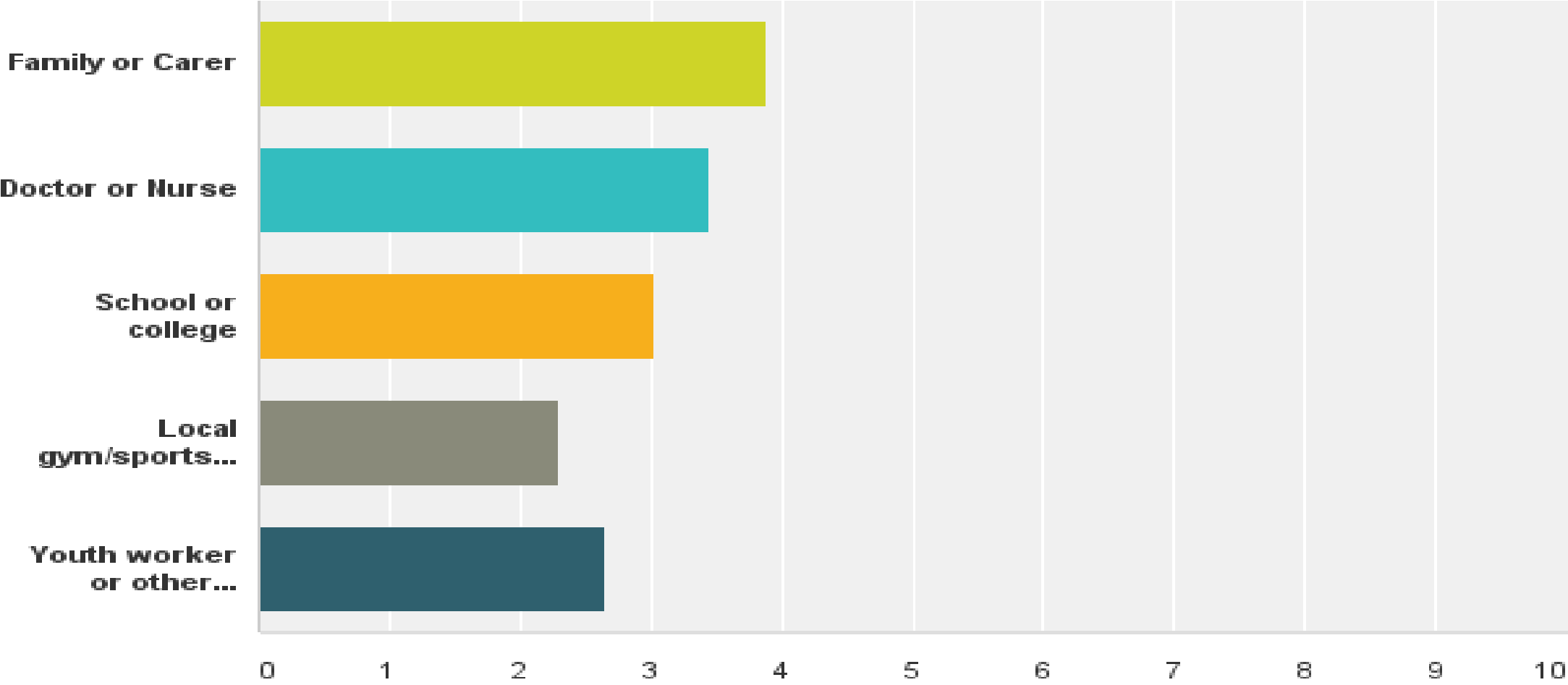
Parents stressed:

- Simplistic common sense advice in one off visits based on a medical model is not helpful
- Link between bullying and weight gain
- Linking weight and health in schools and elsewhere is not helpful

Solutions for getting help

- Admitting the problem
- Feeling safe to open up to someone
- Counselling/someone to talk to
- Parents being honest and not 'protective' and parents' groups
- A range of options to get help
- Talking to someone who's been through it before

Who should give young people information about their weight?



What do parents think supports positive change?

- Need positive practice advice
- Classes on nutrition and weight led by staff who have access to information and support
- Importance of local safe spaces to play
- A whole person approach - understanding of YP lives
- Understanding of impact of stress on weight gain
- Effective communication skills to work with YP
- Importance of services supporting YP aspiration – YP need aspiration to change.

European Youth Tackling Obesity (NCB)

Young people identified internal, emotional factors as the main barrier to making healthy lifestyle choices. Messaging about these issues needs to focus on how young people feel about themselves and their lives.

Key findings include need for:

- Positive and inspirational messaging
- Relevant & reliable information & accessible options for making healthy choices
- Effective targeting of vulnerable groups
- A Youth-led and peer-to-peer approach
- A holistic approach
- A family model approach, building the capacity of parents

www.eyto.org.uk

Implications from engagement work on PROMISE study

- Acknowledgement of young people's emotional needs
- Recognition of their barriers to seeking help
- Support for parents and families

For service delivery....

- Better publicity for weight loss programmes (inc social media)
- Choice of methods to help them lose weight
- Age-appropriate activities and programmes
- Group/peer support

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