

Input from young people

We wanted to hear from young people to ensure that the development of the youth System Level Measure was meaningful and was focused on what matters most to them.

We worked closely with youth agencies to run several youth focus groups and one-on-one interviews. We reached a diverse and amazing group of young people, who shared their experiences and stories and have provided a strong, informed and constructive youth voice to developing the System Level Measure.

60–100 young men and women were involved in some way, including Māori and Pacific males, youth from urban and rural areas, migrant youth, ‘rainbow’ youth, youth with disabilities and young people that access/don’t access services.

We asked them about their recent experience with and views on health services, the challenges and barriers, the most important things to them for good health, and for good health services. Young people also gave their opinions on the System Level Measure options.

How we are responding

- The System Level Measure is ‘youth access to and utilisation of youth appropriate health services’ reflecting youth concerns about the importance of youth friendly services and ease of access.
- The measure has five domains (reflecting the priority issues youth identified) each with a national indicator. The domains are:
 - youth experience of health services
 - sexual and reproductive health
 - mental health
 - access to preventive services
 - alcohol and other drugs.
- Young people supported all the domains for the System Level Measure. They wanted the domains and national indicators to focus on prevention, education, raising awareness and improving access to youth-friendly services. They emphasised the importance of wider social issues, family and community.

Next steps

- District alliances are expected to engage with relevant youth agencies and young people to implement the youth measure.
- The System Level Measure is in development so the sector can test and use the measure and provide feedback. We can modify the measure based on feedback and will finalise it by February 2018.

What young people said



We need more information, a focus on prevention, and opportunities to get involved

Give us more information about the services that are available: cost, location, hours.

I found it very difficult to reach out for help because I had no idea where to go.

I don’t know what I’m entitled to or where I can access free treatment . . . it all seems so expensive.

I am only seen when I am in crisis – suicidal, instead of seeing me early. Crisis could have been avoided if you had seen me early.

We need more prevention, education and awareness for youth – clear simple messages so that they can understand and make informed choices (especially for alcohol and other drugs, sexual health and mental health).

Involve us – I want to see people like me eg, same ethnicity, gender . . . to run programmes.

Youth need to be involved in the design, development and implementation of youth services.



We need welcoming, respectful, and knowledgeable staff and genuine relationships

If you want me to engage in services then genuine, authentic relationships are needed. If I don’t think it is a safe door then I will not enter and engage.

Like I’m being talked to (not down to) and am genuinely listened to.

[Staff] that are really interested in me – non-judgemental and confidential . . . that take me seriously.

[Where I feel] validated . . . respected and not intimidated.

[Staff] need to have the right skills and knowledge . . . and experience of working with young people. They need to reflect who young people are and be relatable.

I want to be in a cultural context without racism, gender discrimination or colonialism.



We need easy-to-access, confidential and local support

Services [that] are easy to access, affordable, appropriate and timely for me . . . in the spaces that I go to.

Key health settings are important but so are other services eg, in schools, social workers, doctors, YOSS clinicians, counsellors, nurses (school based and primary care), cultural healers.

Free wifi, apps and technology that work for young people

Somewhere homely, clean and colourful . . . with heaps of food.

In a small town it was embarrassing to go to the health centre as it feels like you know everyone and the appointment is hard to keep confidential.



Family and environment are important to our health and we know the key issues affecting us

My school, my family and my culture is considered when talking about my health.

Young people were concerned about social issues: bullying and stereotyping, crime, poverty, homelessness, lack of education, domestic violence, unemployment.

They raised priority health issues like: drug and alcohol use, mental health (including self-harm and suicide, depression, anxiety, self-esteem), sexual health (unprotected sex, STIs, under-age pregnancy and abortion).

Pacific, Māori and minority groups were also concerned about obesity, diabetes, skin diseases and rheumatic fever.