

## Appendix 2

### JD/ Health watch

I still find it difficult to admit that I suffer from a mental illness. It's been three years since I received a diagnosis and, despite affecting everything from my ability to wake up for school in the morning to the amount of restful sleep I get at night, society's notion that I can 'snap out of it' is unrelenting. At times, my resolve would weaken and I would find myself reverting to habits I had prior to the onset of my depression in an effort to 'snap out of it'.

It wasn't long before I realised that in order to feel better, it would take help and time. My journey to good wellbeing felt slower once it became apparent that recovery was not a linear process. I understood this, as did those that counselled me but my immediate environment - school- was full of peers and teachers who wanted to help pupils with mental ill health but didn't know where to begin.

I wasn't expecting Hillingdon Healthwatch's programme to make much of a difference to attitudes to mental health in an educational environment where exams are usually made out to be the 'be all and end all of life'. The pressure on every person (especially students) involved in a secondary school is immense and previously, I had thought that this pressure was unbelievable. Through countless hours of campaigning: by holding assemblies for all year groups, designing and analysing surveys to gauge the school's attitude towards mental health and having gotten an education on mental health from Kim, the stigma against mental illness in Barnhill has fallen drastically.

The survey results speak for themselves. As for me, I wouldn't have been able to be so open about my mental health journey if this programme hadn't taken place at my school!

## Appendix 3

Extracts from An interview between a Young Person and a CNWL Core CAMHS Clinician.  
Looking at their perception of the service and how they have experienced it.

### CASE HISTORY

YP: Before CAMHS I was on my own, even before the school counsellor I was on my own and then I had the counsellor and I had someone to talk to every week.

.

AS: So finding those friends online who wanted to talk to you and give you attention

YP: They gave me a reason to want to live I guess, cause I was suicidal before as well. By the time I was that bad, I was talking to my friends a lot. I did have one real life friend but then she left and that's what triggered to me to go further and further down the spiral so I had no one else at school. I was excluded out of everything

YP: Yeah and then it got to the point where schools started again and then it started tiring me out because I had to talk about my feelings and I also have people being negative at school and then it just got to a point where I just didn't want to move out of my bed. It was like the one place where I knew I was safe was my bed.

YP: I struggle with a lot of things, I lack self confidence that has been completely disregarded by people. I have a medical condition, teacher didn't even know I had that...my grades slipped. As time went on, I couldn't see light at the end of the tunnel. I completely just lost my will to live until I went online gaming and met some people and we started talking about futures.

AS: You were made to look at what a future would look like

YP: We started talking about maybe getting a house together and just live together in the future and I started seeing light at the end of the tunnel. We don't talk about that anymore.

YP: Treated people for mental problems, I don't know. I kind of figured since I'd never been to one of these before, I kind of let my imagination run wild but it just kind of thought maybe it is one, maybe it isn't.

AS: Maybe having some information about what CAMHS actually is would have been useful. We're not a prison, we're not a mental health institution and we're not going to keep you here, that kind of information.

So in what way do you feel like coming here has impacted or not impacted?

YP: Since I came to this one, since you moved here and started CBT. We started talking about my future and what aspirations I had for the future. So that kind of gave me more reason to look forward to the future than the present.

AS: So she did more of the stuff that you found helpful with your friends about thinking about the future.

AS: So thinking about some of the things we've spoken about, about the things you would want more information on, what advice would you give someone else who was coming into CAMHS? Another young person like you, what advice would you give to them?

YP: Don't hide anything, be open. You're not going to be helped if you bottle everything up. And it isn't a mental institution.

So it's kind of similar to the advice question, but what do you think young people should know about CAMHS?

YP: It's a welcoming place after you get through the six months of waiting

AS: It's a welcoming place, anything else?

YP: I don't know, I guess if you have a problem you shouldn't keep it up inside, you should talk to someone, someone who could help you, like the counsellors, the therapists.

AS: How would you say, what is CAMHS?

YP: It's a place where you can openly talk about your feelings without worrying about other people judging you. I know a lot of people worry about how they will be judged when talking about things that have happened to them

AS: So it's like a safe place?

YP: Yes

AS: So that was all the questions I had. Was there anything you felt I've missed from your story in CAMHS that you would want to share with us?

YP: Well its not just about helping you get through depression, its helping you towards your future to forget about your past. Your past may be there but it's not there forever but you'll get through it and in the end you have another chapter in your life, don't waste it now.

AS: What does CAMHS mean for you now?

YP: Just to feel understood and helped in things that other people don't understand

AS: If you had to explain CAMHS to a friend how would you explain it?

YP: I don't know

YP: It just helped me feel better and manage things more as well long term

AS: So you feel like you picked up skills? What kind of skills do you feel you picked up?

YP: Just help around certain thoughts and challenging them and practical things like being able to do more things like going out and everything

AS: So what kind of advice would you give to other young people coming into CAMHS? So maybe people similar to you where they might have been forced to come to CAMHS or they didn't have much of a choice about coming into CAMHS, what kind of advice would you give them?

YP: I just think it's important to have an open mind because if you're not willing to engage it's not going to be helpful, you've just got to try

AS: Thinking back to when you first came to CAMHS, would your advice be to come with an open mind?

YP: I was like there's nothing they can do so there's no point but its gets to the point where you've just got to try.

AS: So you feel like if someone had said that to you it would have been good advice for you. What could they have said to convince you at that time?

YP: Just that things can be done, you can be helped and stuff

AS: Yeah so feeling like things can change. Is there anything you think young people should know about CAMHS? Do you feel like there's any myths or misconceptions about CAMHS?

YP: *It's not a bad thing to come to here it's just for help and support you don't have to feel ashamed*