

## **Appendix C**

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# **Final Report Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation 2024**

**12 January 2024 – 17 March 2024**

**Improvement Team, Family Services**

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

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# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings from the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-2028) Consultation which will be presented as an appendix to the paper at Cabinet on requesting permission to publish the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy in May 2024.

The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is fundamental towards their development to live a healthy and happy life. Children and young people face a myriad of challenges and stressors such as family environments, peer relationships, academic pressures, Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and so on. As a result, there is growing recognition on the importance of prioritising mental health and wellbeing from a young age and fostering environments that promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Barnet Council are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people by providing early intervention and support, reducing stigma surrounding mental health and empower the next generation to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

During the collaborative development of the strategy, the consultation process facilitated the participation of children, young people, and the broader community, allowing them to share their perspectives on the council's initiatives aimed at enhancing mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people throughout the borough. This report sets out the findings from the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-2028) consultation.

### 1.1 Response to the consultation

- A total of 39 questionnaires were completed
- All responses were from residents
- Additionally, two focus groups were held, with parent champions and residents, with a total of 8 participants.

### 1.2 Summary of consultation approach

- The consultation ran from 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire and summary consultation document, along with a child-friendly questionnaire and summary and two focus groups.
- Paper copies and an easy-read version of the consultation were also made available on request.
- The consultation was promoted via Engage Barnet, the CAMHS Youth Board, Barnet Active Creative and Engaging (BACE) winter holiday sessions and Barnet First E newsletter.

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## 1.3 Summary of key findings

### 1.3.1 Views on the strategy's priorities and principles

- 94% (37) of respondents agreed with the proposed principles outlined within the strategy
- The remaining 6% (2) neither agreed nor disagreed with the principles
- All respondents either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the strategy's priorities

### 1.3.2 Qualitative Findings

- Parent champions highlighted the urgency for such a strategy to be published
- Parent champions agreed with the priority areas and principles, and in particular the 'Equitable' principle in relation to support for children with disabilities and the difficulties they may have in accessing the appropriate mental health support.
- Actions suggested as part of the strategy's implementation included involving Barnet's schools in the final 'A System for Success' priority, along with highlighting the impact of physical wellbeing on the mental health of children and young people within our communications campaigns
- Comments made via questionnaires highlighted the need for raising awareness of the existing mental health offer.

## 2. CONSULTATION METHOD AND RESPONSE

### 2.1 Introduction

The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been subject to a formal public consultation.

This report sets out the full findings from this consultation. The findings will be considered by Cabinet members on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024, where the final decision on the publication of the strategy will be made.

### 2.2 Summary of consultation approach

The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation was approved 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The consultation officially opened on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and concluded on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

In terms of service-specific consultations, the council has a duty to consult with service users where there are proposals to vary, reduce or withdraw services. Where appropriate, separate service-specific consultations have already taken place or will take place in the next few months for the 2024/25 savings. The outcomes of these consultations are being reported into Directorate decision-making processes.

Whilst this strategy does not propose specific variations, reductions or withdrawals of services, this consultation was completed in line with the strategy's priority around

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engaging with young people, the My Say Matters Strategy and the Community Participation Strategy.

## 2.3 Technical details and method

### 2.3.1 In summary, the consultation was administered as follows:

- The general consultation consisted of an online questionnaire published on <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk> together with a summary consultation document which provided background to the development of the strategy, the aims of the consultation and the draft strategy.
- paper copies and an easy-read version of the consultation were also made available on request
- Children and young people who completed paper questionnaires were provided with an age-appropriate summary of the priorities and principles of the strategy
- A focus group was held virtually with Parent Champions, who were provided with the consultation document in advance of the focus group.
- A public focus group was held as a response to
- The consultation was promoted via Engage Barnet, the CAMHS Youth Board, the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Board, Barnet Active Creative and Engaging (BACE) winter holiday sessions and Barnet First E newsletter.

### 2.3.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents' views on the draft Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy, with particular focus on the priorities and principles outlined within it.

Throughout the questionnaire and where applicable, hyperlinks were provided to the relevant sections of the consultation document.

## 2.4 Response to the consultation

A total of 39 questionnaires were completed – 15 were submitted online via Engage Barnet, one written response was received via email and 23 were completed on paper questionnaires.

### 2.4.1 Response profile

The table below shows the profile of those who responded to the consultation.

**Table 1: Profile of those who responded to the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation via Engage Barnet**

Stakeholder	%	Number
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A Barnet resident	100%	9
A person working within the London Borough of Barnet area	0%	0
A Barnet business	0%	0
Representing a school	0%	0
Representing a voluntary/community organisation	0%	0
Representing a public sector organisation	0%	0
Other	0%	0
Prefer not to say	0%	0
<b>Total who answered this question</b>	60%	9
Not Answered	40%	6
<b>Total response to consultation</b>	100.0%	<b>15</b>

**A follow up, open question requesting further detail on the stakeholder type garnered the following answers:**

- CAMHS youth board
- Young local residents

The 23 paper questionnaire responses from children participating within the Winter BACE scheme were Barnet residents, along with the BICS service user who provided a written response via email.

## 2.4.2 Profile of protected characteristics

The council is required by law (the Equality Act 2010) to pay due regard to equalities in eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people from different groups.

The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

To assist us in complying with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 we asked the respondents on Engage Barnet to provide equalities monitoring data and explained that collecting this information will help us understand the needs of our different communities and that all the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely in accordance with our responsibilities under data protection legislation (such as the General Data Protection Regulation or the Data Protection Act 2018).

Due to the low completion of these questions, it has not been possible to do any demographic analysis on the consultation findings.

## 2.5 Calculating and reporting on results

- The results for each question are based on “valid responses”, i.e., all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question.
- Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded - i.e., respondents could give more than one answer.

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- Due to the small total sample size the findings have been reported on in terms of percentages and numbers.
- All open-ended responses have been classified based on the main themes arising from the comments, so that they can be summarised. It should also be noted that there were very few open responses provided.

## 3. RESULTS IN DETAIL

### 3.1 Views on the strategy's principles

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposed principles within the strategy. The following four tables show the level of support for each priority from those who completed the questionnaire via Engage Barnet.

All services and offers of support will have accessibility at the forefront of our delivery	Number	%
Strongly agree	13	92.86
Tend to agree	1	7.14
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

We will make our mental health and wellbeing support equitable, by designing our services in ways that reflect the various needs of Barnet's children and young people.	Number	%
Strongly agree	12	86.71
Tend to agree	1	7.14
Neither agree nor disagree	1	7.14
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

We will ensure that our mental health and wellbeing services are evidence-based, so that we have the necessary support to meet the changing needs of Barnet's young people.	Number	%
Strongly agree	12	92.86
Tend to agree	2	14.29
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

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Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

We will ensure that we are effectively monitoring the impact of the of our support, to make sure that we are achieving the outcomes we've set out within the strategy	Number	%
Strongly agree	12	92.86
Tend to agree	2	14.29
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Responses to the follow-up question requesting any further thoughts, considerations and suggestions around the principles included:

- 'Particularly like the emphasis on accessibility and equitability'
- 'Why not separate or subdivide emotional wellbeing from mental health'
- 'I believe it should be taken into consideration that most young people like a relatable figure so having young adults helping implement the support may cause a higher turnout'
- 'Clear information on: where to get help, help available'

With regard to the strategy's principles, children and young people were provided with the child-friendly summary of these principles below:

1. Mental Health support is easy to find and access
2. All young people in Barnet can be supported, no matter who they are
3. The support available is what you need, and is relevant to you
4. Mental Health support makes a positive difference to the lives of young people

They were then asked if they thought that these were good principles, with the options of 'Yes', 'No' and 'Not Sure'. 100% of respondents chose 'Yes'.

Young people were then asked if they had any suggested principles that should be adopted.

Open responses to this question included:

- 'Every young person should be accepted for their beliefs and feelings'
- 'The support you get is not just to overcome your fears, but to build a strong relationship with people who care about you'



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- 'Young people should not feel trapped and forced to say their feelings'
- 'People are made comfortable always'
- 'This is perfectly fine'

### 3.2 Views on the strategy's priorities

Similarly, those young people provided with child-friendly questionnaires were provided with the child friendly summary of the priorities below:

1. Young people know what support is available to them
2. You are listened to, and we use your feedback to make mental health support as good as it can be
3. The places where you can get support for your mental health and wellbeing are close to you and easy for you to get to
4. The professionals that provide mental health and wellbeing support are working together to make the support as useful as possible

They were then asked if they thought that these were good areas for us to focus on, with the options of 'Yes', 'No' and 'Not Sure'. 100% of respondents chose 'Yes'.

Young people were then asked if they had any suggested principles that should be adopted, or any further comments on the proposed priority areas.

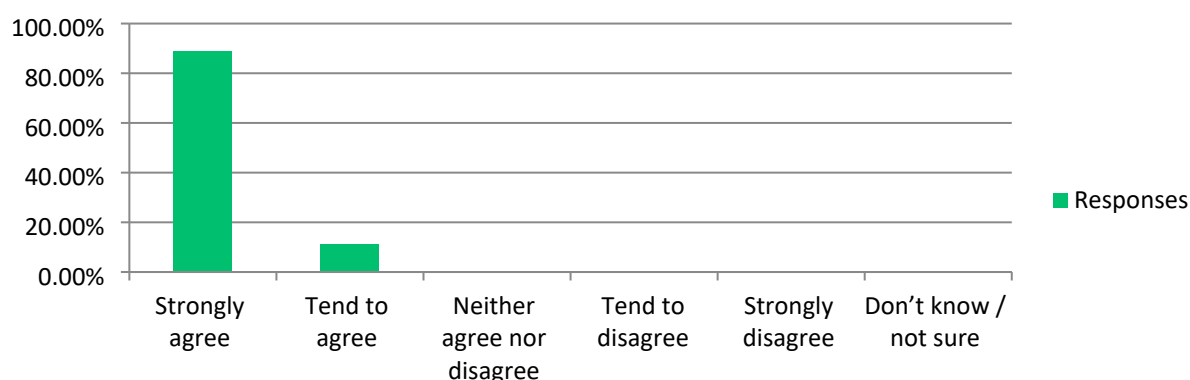
Open responses to this question included:

- 'Preparing young people for when they become adults'
- 'People should not feel like they are forced to attend'
- 'Everyone gets to express their emotions and not feel as if their voice is not heard'
- 'To have more fun'
- 'More advertisement for this support'
- 'Each person gets a voice and a chance to speak so that no-one will be excluded / left out'
- 'Every person, no matter how they behave, look, act should be able to live a life of peace'
- 'If young people are scared or worried they should know who to talk to'
- 'I think that social workers / adults who are passionate about mental health should individually visit children who need help in school and outside of school'

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with each of the proposed priorities within the strategy, and to which extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the outcomes associated with each priority. The following graphs and tables show the level of support for each priority and its outcomes from those who completed the questionnaire via Engage Barnet. Open-response follow up questions were asked around each priority and its outcomes to garner qualitative feedback. However these questions were skipped by all 15 respondents.

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**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the priority 'Raising Awareness' is the right area for us to prioritise? (Please tick one option only)**



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the outcomes we want to see within this priority?

Children and their families know what support is available to them and how to access it	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The Local Offer is accessible and provides accurate and up to date information on the services available	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

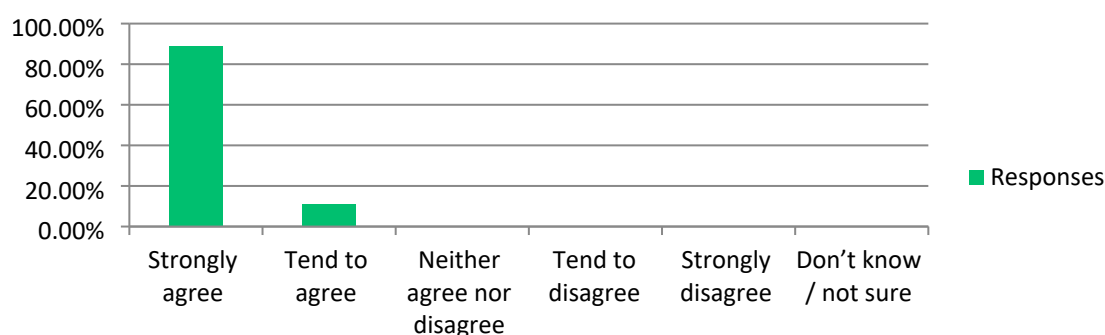
Communication campaigns are relevant to current issues and needs, and are targeted to achieve increased engagement and support to children and young people	Number	%
Strongly agree	7	46.67
Tend to agree	2	13.33
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0

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Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Professionals working together to create a system that is joined up, and improves the experience of children and their families	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the priority 'Engagement with children, young people and those with service experience' is the right area for us to prioritise? (Please tick one option only)**



**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the outcomes we want to see within this priority?**

Insight-informed service design and delivery	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0

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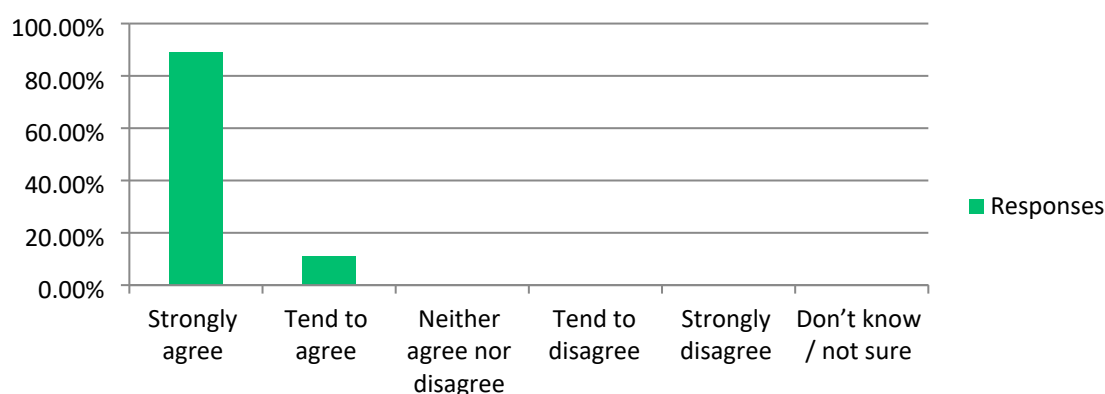
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Barriers to access are identified and mitigated early	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Children and Young People are aware of opportunities to support in the co-production of mental health and wellbeing support services	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the priority 'Nearby and relevant support' is the right area for us to prioritise? (Please tick one option only)**



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the outcomes we want to see within this priority?

Ease of access to advice due to increased trust and reduced stigma	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Increased understanding of how to support children and young people's mental health within communities	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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There is access to a range of services that provide early help to children and their families	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

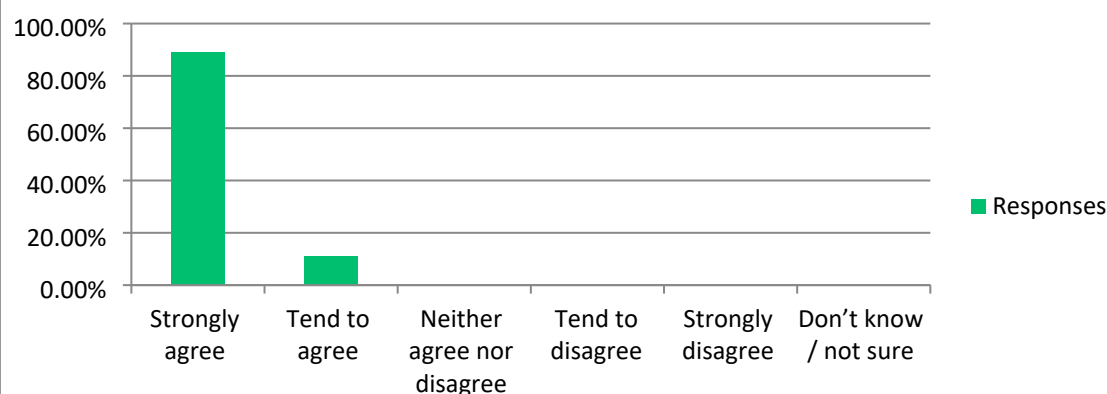
Improved access to services and children experience a reduction in the time they wait for services	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Wrap around support is available while children are waiting for a targeted intervention	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

A reduction in patients accessing A&E for mental health support	Number	%
Strongly agree	7	46.67
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	1	6.67
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the priority 'Suicide prevention' is the right area for us to prioritise? (Please tick one option only)**



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the outcomes we want to see within this priority?

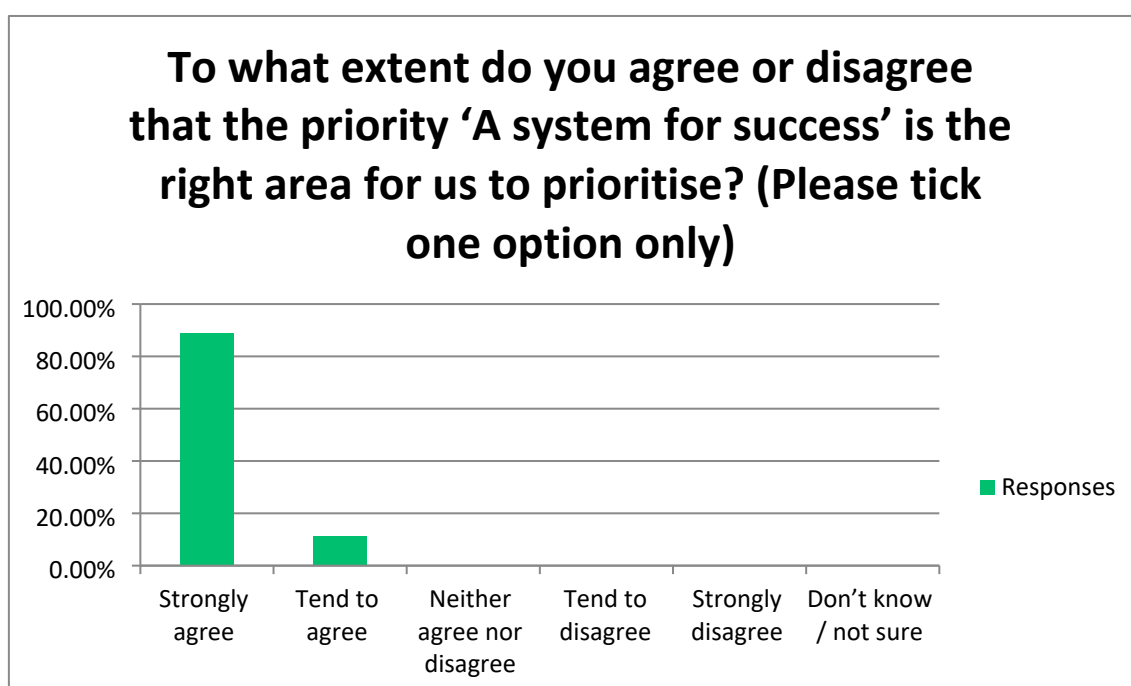
Opportunity and capacity for human intervention and help-seeking is increased	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Access to means of suicide and self harm are reduced for those identified as being at particularly heightened risk	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Number of attempted and completed suicides amongst Barnet's children falls year on year	Number	%
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Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the outcomes we want to see within this priority?

Improved interim support in transitions between services	Number	%
Strongly agree	7	46.67
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	7	46.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



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Increased accessibility to mental health and wellbeing services for all children and young people	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	60
Tend to agree	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Increased integrated working across the system	Number	%
Strongly agree	8	53.33
Tend to agree	1	6.67
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Tend to disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know / not sure	0	0
Skipped	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.3. Focus Group responses

Two focus groups were held during the course of the consultation: one with Parent Champions with 5 participants, and a public consultation with 3 resident participants.

Participants in each group were provided with the consultation document several weeks in advance.

#### 3.3.1. Parent Champion Focus Group

Parent Champions shared their experiences of supporting their children in receiving mental health and wellbeing support in Barnet and agreed that the priorities and principles proposed within the draft strategy were key in ensuring an improved

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experience for their children. They highlighted in particular their concerns around waiting times and suggested that the inclusion of this data within the strategy would be helpful in promoting transparency, and for being able to understand their own experiences in the context of the wider service's pressures.

Parent Champions were in particularly strong agreement with the strategy's principles around accessibility and equitability, sharing that their experiences with attempting to get the right support for children with disabilities has been especially difficult, and that by making the mental health system more equitable and accessible, the experience of disabled young people in Barnet may be greatly improved.

They were also in strong agreement with the strategy's priority around raising awareness, highlighting that they were unaware of a number of elements of the local offer, and felt that their experiences within the mental health system may have been improved had their been wider promotion of these resources, including the Waiting Well initiative.

The strategy's final priority of 'A System for Success' resonated with Parent Champions, as they expressed that their experiences had often felt disjointed, with ineffective signposting and inconsistent communication and messaging between agencies. They also expressed the urgency for the publication of this strategy, suggesting that the council should always have had a strategy for the mental health of children and young people.

Suggestions made by Parent Champions included the rewording of some areas of text to ensure clarity, as well as suggestions for inclusions within the future action plan. These included making use of the child and family early help hubs and community centers as spaces for accessing mental health support for young people to support in ensuring that both the accessibility principle and the 'Nearby and relevant support' priority are effectively met, and the development of a standard local offer promotional document to be available at schools, GPs, hospitals and all relevant agencies to ensure consistency in messaging and to promote the lesser known elements of the support offer.

### 3.3.2. Public Focus Group

Three residents requested to be participants in a public focus group. All members were over the age of 18 and two had previous experience of youth mental health services in Barnet, including CAMHS.

Similarly to the sentiments expressed by Parent Champions, they were surprised that a strategy focusing on the mental health of children and young people had not been developed and published in previous years in Barnet.

They were in strong agreement with all priorities and principles, with particularly strong agreement around ensuring that mental health support is equitable, accessible and evidence-based. Participants felt that based on their previous experience of mental health support in Barnet, accessing help had not always been easy, and that the elements of the local offer were poorly promoted.

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Participants showed strong agreement with the strategy's priority around engagement with children and young people, stating that the development and improvement of the mental health system in Barnet requires close working with the young people who will be impacted by it.

### 4. Conclusion

Whilst the questionnaire hosted on Engage Barnet had a considerable drop-off rate along the course of the questionnaire, those that did respond showed consistently strong agreement with the strategy's priorities and principles.

100% of children and young people who responded via paper questionnaires and via email showed agreement with the strategy's priorities and principles, and offered personal insights into their aspirations for the mental health system in Barnet.

Qualitative feedback garnered from the two focus groups were provided a detailed picture on the perception of the strategy from the perspective of parent carers and previous youth mental health services, with the prevailing sentiment across both focus groups being the urgency for a strategy focusing on the mental health of children and young people in Barnet to be published and implemented.