



# Trying to Connect: the importance of choice in remote mental health services

(Young people data cut)

## Summary

- The coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on the nation's mental health. It has also seen the NHS dramatically change how it delivers services, including moving to phone or online to stop the spread of the virus. As restrictions ease, it's vital we learn from changes, both positive and negative, made during these unprecedented times.
- In the winter of 2020-2021, Mind gathered people's experiences of accessing NHS mental health services by phone or online ('remotely'). We gathered experiences from those age 13+. This included:
  - An online survey of over 1,900 people in England and Wales:
    - 4% were aged 13-17 and 13% were aged 18-24
    - 244 respondents were young people who had been offered remote support
    - 193 respondents were young people who took up the offer of remote support
  - In-depth interviews by phone or video call (three were aged 13-17 and two were aged 18-24)
- Mind's new report, [Trying to Connect](#), outlines our findings. This briefing outlines the findings for young people (those aged 13-24)
- Due to the smaller sample size of young people we say that there is a 'difference' between young people (aged 13-24) and adult (aged 25+) if there is a  $\geq 10\%$  difference.



## The 'offer' of remote support

- **13% of young people declined the offer of remote support** (similar to adults – 15%)
- **72% of young people who took up the offer of remote mental health support would have preferred to have support face-to-face** (more than adults – 61%)
- **Only 8% of young people who took up the offer of remote mental health support preferred the offer of remote support over face-to-face** (similar to adults – 16%)

“I don't think it's the same and wouldn't work for me. I would prefer face to face and for someone to be there with me that I trust for support.” (13-17 year old)

## What's working for young people

- **Over a third (39%) of young people who took up the offer of remote mental health support found it easy to use** (less than for adults – 51%)
- **Nearly a third (31%) of young people felt their mental health got better having used this support** (less than for adults – 42%)
- **28% of young people thought the wait for support was shorter because it was remote** (similar to adults – 31%)
- **59% of young people said not having to travel made remote mental health easier** (less than for adults – 72%)
- **A quarter of young people (25%) said anonymity of remote support made things easier** (similar to adults - 17%)
- **Half of young people (50%) felt that greater flexibility on when they could access remote support made things easier** (similar to adults – 46%)

“I have much preferred the phone sessions as getting out of the house to attend face to face appointments has always been difficult and was the main reason I hadn't sought help earlier.” (18-24 year old)



## What's not working for young people

- **Nearly half (47%) of young people who took up the offer of remote mental health support found it difficult to use** (more than for adults – 32%)
- **Nearly a third (32%) felt their mental health got worse having used this support** (similar to adults – 24%)
- **14% of young people often/always had technology issues when using remote mental health support** (similar to adults – 9%)
- **45% of young people often/always had communication problems** (e.g. struggling to express how they felt to someone by phone or online) when using remote mental health support (more than for adults – 30%)
- **36% of young people often/always found it distressing not having someone physically with them when using remote mental health support** (more than for adults – 23%)
- **Over half (55%) of young people often/always were concerned about confidentiality** (being overheard at their home or where the health professional was working) (more than for adults – 29%)
- **38% of young people felt that remote mental health support was often/always used as a 'stop gap' before getting the help they needed** (more than for adults – 27%)
- **45% of young people often/always felt uncomfortable speaking by phone or online using remote mental health support** (more than for adults – 29%)

“I found it hard as I couldn't talk to someone face to face and they couldn't see in person how much I was struggling.” (13-17 year old)

“I would have liked to have sessions over the phone or video call and this was offered to me but I didn't feel able to because I live at home with my family and I would have had to talk with them around.” (18-24 year old)



## About Mind

We're Mind, the mental health charity for England and Wales. We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.