



Finding a Voice

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Looking at the drug issue in Bridlington and what services are available for young people to access related support.

healthwatch
East Riding of Yorkshire

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Disclaimer

All the views, opinions and statements made in this report are those of the public who participated in our research.

This report analyses the data collected with regard to what individuals thought about the use of illegal drugs within the Bridlington area, and whether or not they are aware of services available to them.

This perception may not fully reflect the work being carried out in the local area. Nevertheless, it is the perception of participants whose information Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire have collected.

About Healthwatch

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to make sure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In summary Healthwatch is here to:

- Help people find out about local care.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care.



Foreword

Healthwatch Youth and Community Outreach worker attended East Riding College in Bridlington, with the aim to work with a Health and Social Care student group. As part of a social action project, the students were encouraged to choose a subject they felt passionate about and one they felt Healthwatch could support them to make a difference in their chosen field of health and social care.



Healthwatch had previously attended East Riding College Beverley to speak to the group about their aims and work within the community which inspired the group. They wanted to find out more about what they could do to make a difference to their local community.

After contacting Healthwatch to request whether a project, led by the students, could be supported by their expertise, a weekly group was established. Over a number of weeks the students have created a focus for their project, implemented research and collated their findings.



“The students chose this project because of the impact it is having on their community and young people. I am extremely proud of the commitment and participation shown by them while being involved in this project”



Ruth Wray, Curriculum Leader, Care and Early Years, East Riding College

Why this subject?

The students were nervous about choosing the sensitive issue that is illegal drug use, but appreciated that it was a topic that was important and indeed very close to many of them.

They wanted to find out if other people agreed with them that there was a drug issue in the local area, they also wanted to establish if people knew where related support could be accessed and what services were available to people who were using or effected by illegal substances.

They were passionate to find out more about the linking of drug use to mental health issues, and identify if the two subjects often went hand in hand. People using drugs could result in experiencing poor mental health and people with mental health issues could turn to using drugs as an escape.

The students were keen on identifying where individuals could access support from services in their local area, in a confidential and non-judgmental way.



“There are probably loads of services out there, but the problem is we don’t know about them. They need to come to us.”



Executive Summary

Aims and Objectives

This report examines the findings of the research conducted by students at East Riding College, Bridlington campus, in partnership with Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire (HWERY) about the use of drugs in the area, and local services.

The report looks at whether the public believe there is a drug issue in Bridlington, and whether or not they have been directly affected by drug use. The survey looks at whether or not people knew where to access illegal drugs, where they can access help and whether they feel supported by local services.



It looks to establish whether there is enough information for young people about what services are available and how they can access these services in a confidential way.

Methodology

The East Riding College students worked alongside Healthwatch East riding Of Yorkshire (HWERY) and collected the data in the following ways:



Face to face approach

Students approached fellow learners and staff across the college campus and surrounding area, asking them to complete paper copies of the survey. To protect confidentiality and promote honesty in their feedback, we provided people with blank envelopes so that they could hand back their completed surveys anonymously.

Online Survey

The survey was available for members of the public to fill out online for those who didn't wish to complete a paper copy. The students created posters, where a QR code gave them direct access to the survey online. They placed these posters across all communal areas



within the college, including on the back of all toilet doors to encourage people to complete the survey.

It was also made available through the HWERY website, social media and was shared with other local partnerships. Local organizations who requested the survey shared this with their staff. HWERY also asked East Riding College if they could share the survey electronically with all students and tutors.

Highlight of Findings

- We received feedback from 165 people, which is a great response given the size of the class that we worked with.
- A huge 83% of people told us they believe there is a drug issue in Bridlington.
- The majority of people surveyed said that they knew who to go to if they wished to purchase illegal drugs.
- Young people told us that there is not enough awareness around what services are available to them or how to access them.



“Google says that there are loads of services available around here, but most of them I’ve never heard of. How do I even access them?”



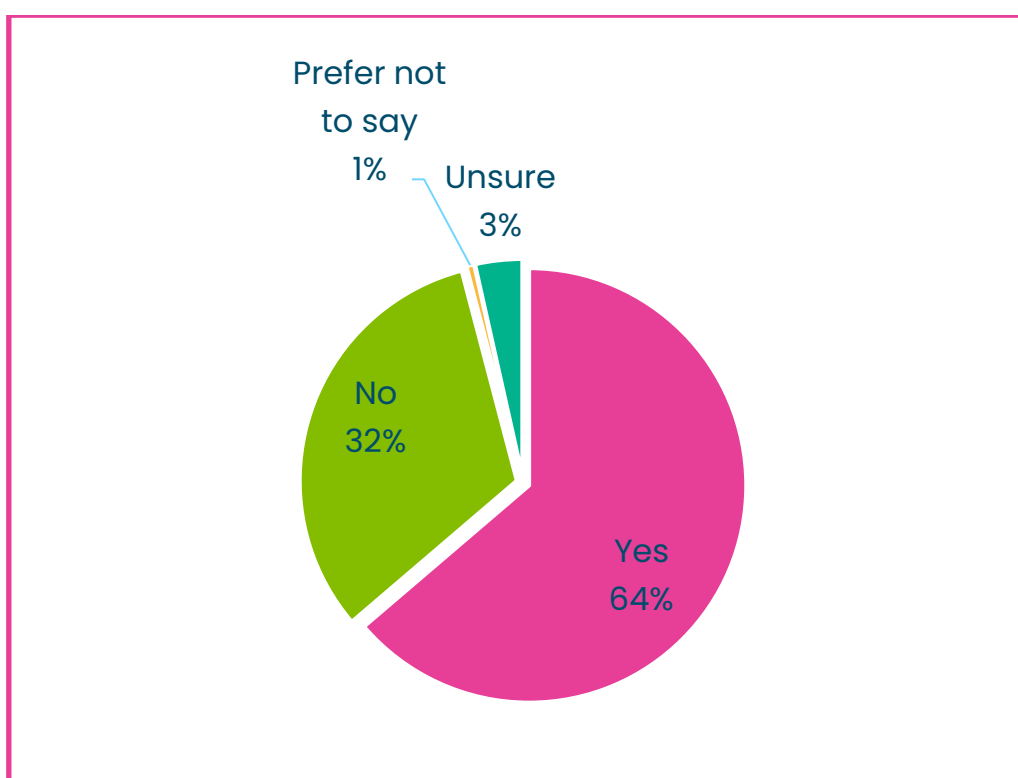
Looking at the data

Our survey targeted young people, and we therefore ensured that those who completed the survey were under 25 years old.

Access to drugs

“Do you know where to access/purchase illegal drugs?”

64% of people surveyed said that they would know where to go to access or purchase illegal drugs. When speaking with students in confidence, most of them told us that they would be able to have drugs delivered to the college by the end of that 30-minute session.



Social Media

Students told us that social media had become very popular with advertising drugs, and that there were specific accounts set up to offer young people access to illegal drugs in the Bridlington area. Tik Tok seemed to be the most popular social media platform that students reported to us that was being used for this purpose. We decided to include this question in our survey, to find out if other members of the public had similar thoughts.

There was a 50/50 split on this question, with half of the people we surveyed saying that they had experienced being offered drugs on social media.

“Do you have an idea of the age of people offering drugs?”

We asked this question because people had told us that a lot of younger children were involved in drug dealing within the Bridlington area. We left this as an open-ended question, to allow people to give us more specific information.

Below are some examples of what people told us in the survey:



“Main dealers are older, about 20 to 30 years old, but they use younger runners. I’ve seen 13 year olds doing drug runs”

Anon



“Most people are young...about my age”

Anon



“Younger kids are used for drug runs because they don’t get in trouble if they are caught. The dealers know this.”

Anon



“Little kids get caught up in it. They’re offered trainers and iPhones one minute, and the next minute they’re selling bags of powder on the streets. Kids like 10 to 12 years old!”

Anon

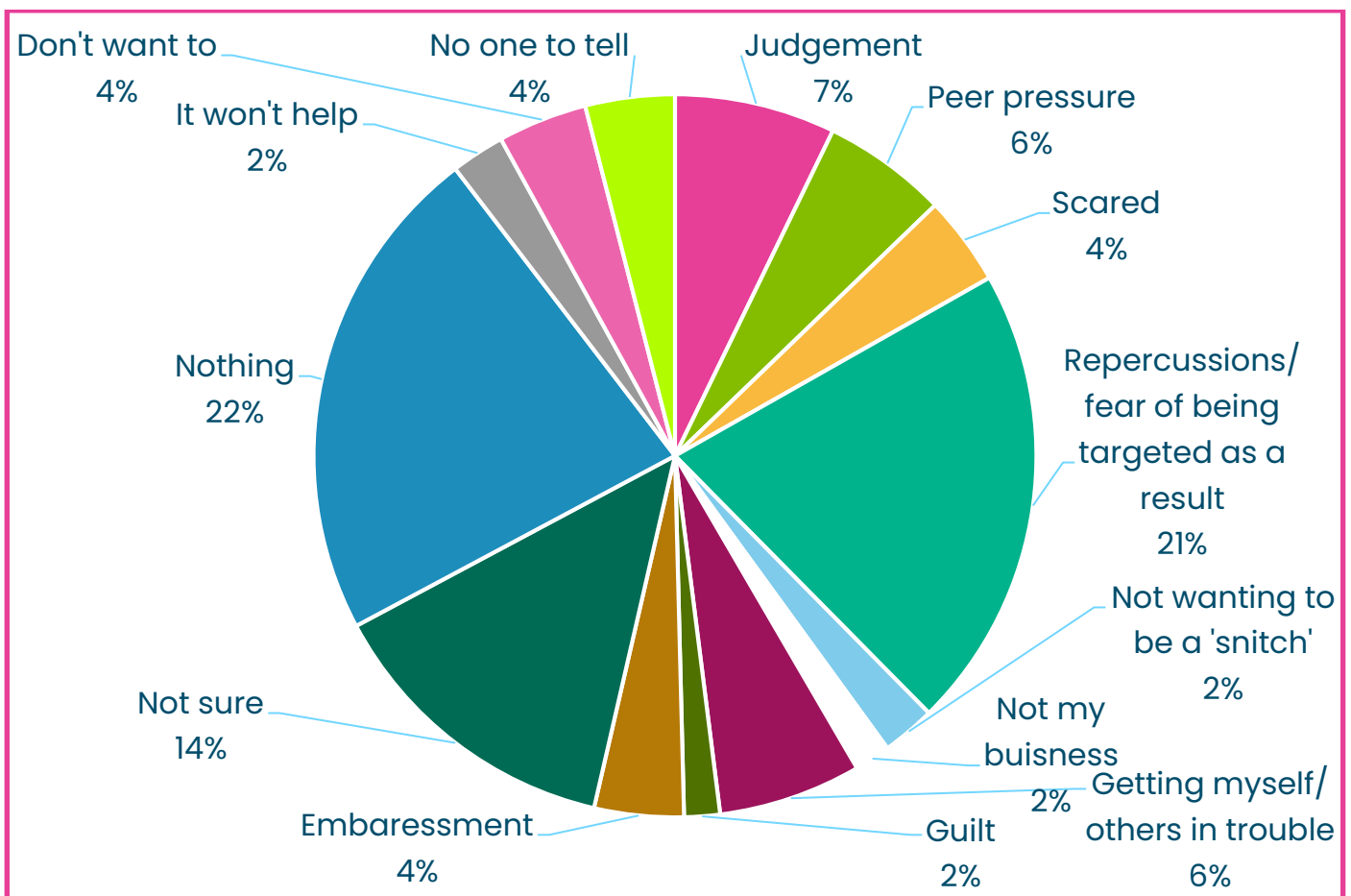


“What might stop you from speaking out about this?”

We wanted to know what would stop individuals from either reporting or speaking out about people who were involved in drug dealing, to explore any common thoughts and feelings.

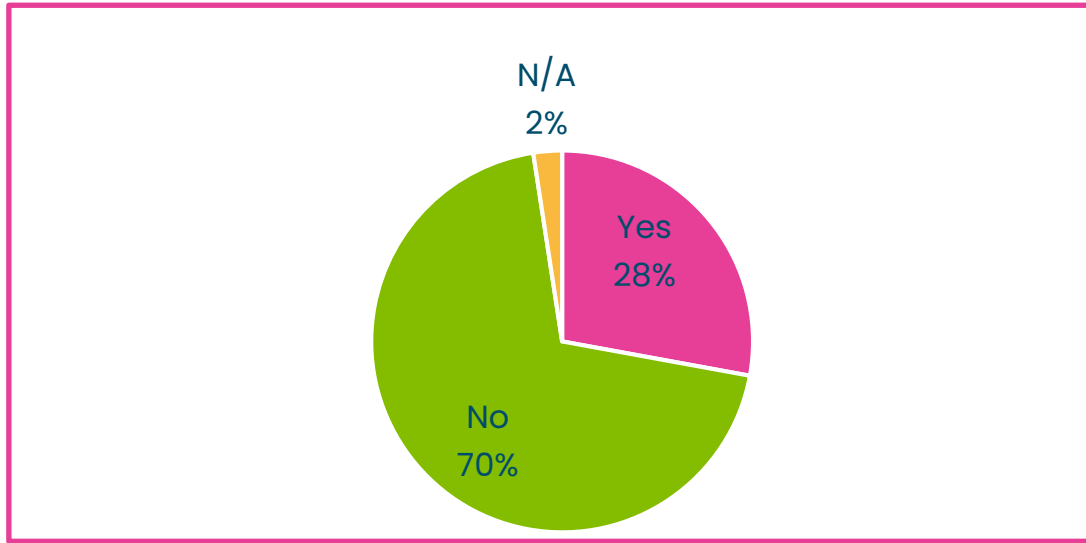
Whilst 22% of respondents said that nothing would stop them from speaking out, the majority of people said that they wouldn't say anything due to fears around repercussions or getting into trouble and feeling judged, scared or pressured by others.

Interestingly 14% of people said that they were not sure as to why they would not report it, but still would choose not to.



Local Services

“Do you feel supported by local services?”



70% of individuals that we surveyed said that they do not feel supported by local services. Some people gave us additional information on this question to justify their reasoning, and some examples are as follows:



“I don’t know about them so how can I feel supported by them?”

Anon



“There isn’t enough support in Bridlington.”

Anon



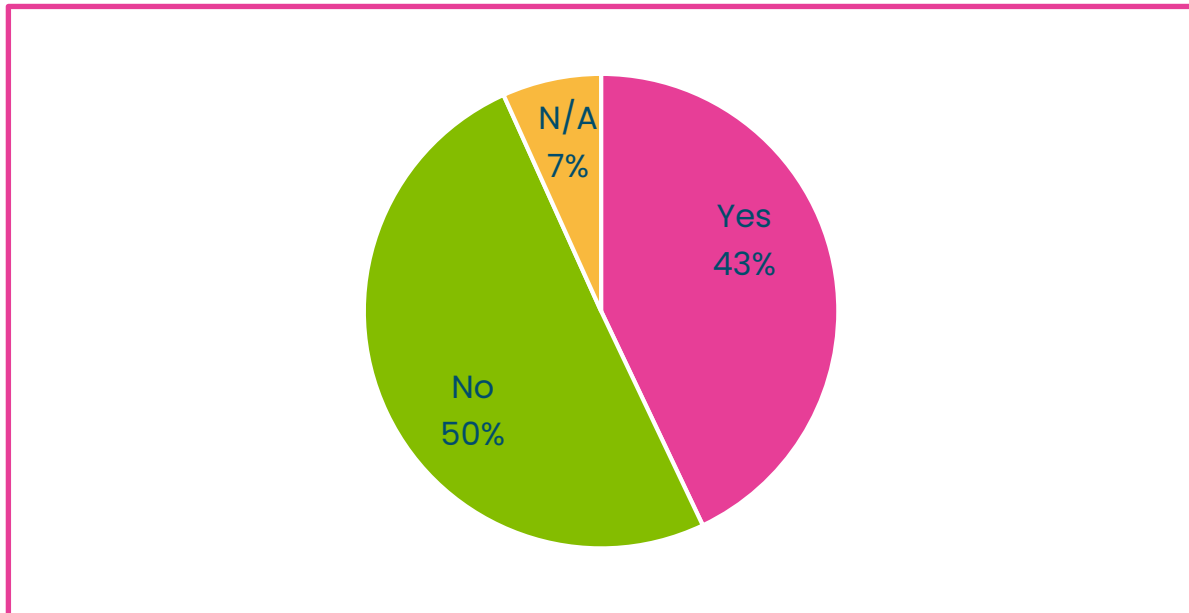
“No because the police let a lot of it slide in my area. I can see it all over snapchat so it can’t be hard to track.”

Anon



Do you know where you would go to access support?

We asked individuals if they knew where they could access support in relation to drug dependency and general mental health support, and 50% of people responded that they didn't. People told us that they didn't know if any specific services were available for this.



We asked people where they would go if they required immediate support, and they responded with a wide range of answers. No one gave any details of any specific service that they would use, and the majority would rely on either their family or the college to help them to find support.

“If a new service was developed in Bridlington to address these issues, what would that service look like?”

Healthwatch East Riding did some collaborative work with Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust, who were interested in the work we were doing with East Riding College and informed us that they were hoping to open a new service in Bridlington aimed at supporting young people.

A representative from the Trust attended the college alongside HWER one week, to gain insight into what a good service would look like for the young people of the local area.

We also included this as an open ended question in our survey, and below are some keywords that were common amongst most of the answers given.



Conclusion

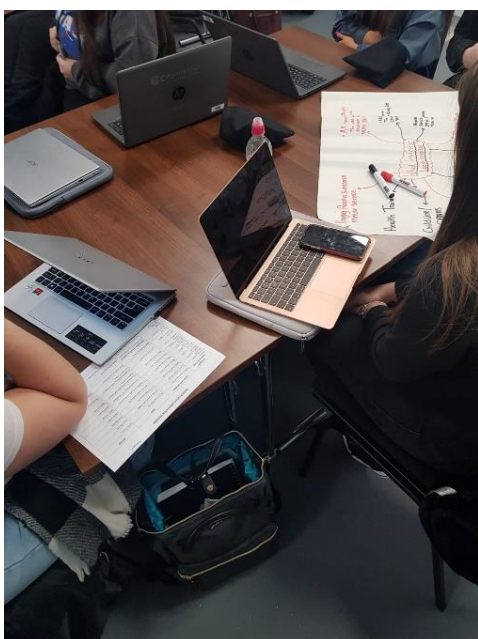
As we started the project, the students expressed their thoughts about what they expected to find during the process, and predicted the majority of people would agree that there was a drug issue in Bridlington. They also thought people would be unaware of what services were already available locally or how to access them.

Students asked us to invite Professionals from the services providing advice on substance misuse, we were delighted the following people attended sessions 4, 5 and 6

- Emily Holliday – East Riding Partnership
- Bethia Dennis – Public Health/School Nurse Children Services
- Sergeant McLaughlin and Joanne Finnon – PCSO Humberside Police



Young people told us that after researching local substance misuse services, it was clear that there were organisations and services available but that these services needed to be made more accessible and offered in a variety of ways to engage with local young people.



What the survey highlighted therefore did not come as a surprise, it confirmed that young people in Bridlington felt unsupported by local substance misuse services, even if they knew they existed they did not feel able to approach or ask for help for fear of being judged or the ramifications due to the nature of the subject.

Young people who engaged with us, told us that they would be pleased to see a new service to help tackle the drug problem in Bridlington and support individuals who were involved in this. They were very vocal about what they would like to see and expressed the desire to be involved at every stage to ensure it is a safe and confidential space for people to access.

Healthwatch ERY identified a number of organisations and agencies offering services and advice on drugs and alcohol in the area, with the willingness of the students to engage this would be an ideal opportunity and time to work in partnership to provide the facility the students are asking for.

Our Recommendations

- Local Partners offering information and advice on substance misuse, must review their current communication and engagement plans when targeting young people, and make appropriate changes to these plans to ensure that they are effective in reaching young people in Bridlington.
- Partners offering information and advice on substance misuse need to review their publications and marketing model to ensure that they are appropriate for reaching their targeted audience.
- All Partners working with young people should consider working in collaboration with East Riding College and its students, to inform young people of what services they can offer and how they can access support.
- Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust need to ensure clear and open engagement channels with local young people on the development of any new service before it is implemented, and take on board the comments individuals have made about what that service should look like.
- Humberside Police should review their methods of engagement with young people, to build greater trust between them and build a positive partnership within the local community.
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council Safeguarding team need to work in collaboration with Humberside Police to ensure protection of the children identified in this report.
- East Riding College to work with other partners to provide help, support and signposting for Students expressing concerns.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution and involvement with this project:

- Ruth Wray and her Health and Social Care students
- Emily Holliday – East Riding Partnership
- Bethia Dennis – Public Health/School Nurse Children Services
- Sergeant McLaughlin and Joanne Fannon – PCSO,
- East Riding College, Bridlington Campus
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust
- Humberside Police



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