

**IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT ACCESS FOR
YOUNG ADULTS (18–25) EXPERIENCING ANXIETY AND
DEPRESSION IN PRIMARY CARE SETTINGS IN
BIRMINGHAM, UK**



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PREVALENCE

- MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS REPRESENT A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN GLOBALLY AND IN THE UK.
- ACCORDING TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2023), APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 8 PEOPLE WORLDWIDE LIVE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION, WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION BEING THE MOST COMMON DISORDERS.

IN THE UK, DATA FROM NHS DIGITAL (2023) INDICATES THAT

- 1 IN 6 ADULTS EXPERIENCE COMMON MENTAL DISORDERS WEEKLY.
- YOUNG ADULTS AGED 18–25 SHOW THE HIGHEST PREVALENCE RATES OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS.
- OVER 50% OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE ESTABLISHED BY AGE 24.

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS IN BIRMINGHAM SHOW INCREASING DEMAND FOR PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, WITH LONG WAITING TIMES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES UNDER NHS TALKING THERAPIES.

DESPITE SERVICE AVAILABILITY, BARRIERS SUCH AS STIGMA, LONG WAITING LISTS, CULTURAL FACTORS, AND LIMITED SERVICE AWARENESS REDUCE ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT.



RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

YOUNG ADULTHOOD IS A CRITICAL TRANSITIONAL LIFE STAGE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITY DUE TO:

- EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT PRESSURES
- FINANCIAL INSTABILITY
- SOCIAL ISOLATION
- POST-PANDEMIC

THERE IS LIMITED RESEARCH FOCUSING SPECIFICALLY ON:

- YOUNG ADULTS (18–25)
- BARRIERS WITHIN PRIMARY CARE SETTINGS
- EXPERIENCES WITHIN BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITIES

THIS RESEARCH IS NECESSARY TO:

- IDENTIFY PRACTICAL SERVICE-LEVEL BARRIERS
- IMPROVE EARLY INTERVENTION ACCESS
- REDUCE LONG-TERM HEALTH INEQUALITIES.

THE ORIGINALITY LIES IN FOCUSING ON LOCAL PRIMARY CARE PRACTICE GAPS AFFECTING YOUNG ADULTS IN BIRMINGHAM.



RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH QUESTION

WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO ACCESSING PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AMONG YOUNG ADULTS (18–25) EXPERIENCING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN BIRMINGHAM, UK?

RESEARCH AIM

TO EXPLORE BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS INFLUENCING ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG ADULTS AGED 18–25 IN BIRMINGHAM.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. TO EXAMINE YOUNG ADULTS' EXPERIENCES OF SEEKING SUPPORT FOR ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN PRIMARY CARE.
2. TO IDENTIFY STRUCTURAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL BARRIERS AFFECTING SERVICE ACCESS.
3. TO PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND SERVICE RESPONSIVENESS WITHIN PRIMARY CARE SETTINGS.



RESEARCH IMPACT

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

- IMPROVE TIMELY ACCESS TO SUPPORT.
- REDUCE MENTAL HEALTH DETERIORATION.
- ENHANCE WELLBEING AND RECOVERY OUTCOMES.

FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

- SUPPORT EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES.
- REDUCE LONG-TERM HEALTHCARE COSTS.
- CONTRIBUTE TO MENTAL HEALTH INEQUALITY REDUCTION.

FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS

- INFORM TRAINING ON YOUTH-SENSITIVE PRACTICE.
- IMPROVE CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE.
- ENHANCE REFERRAL PATHWAYS

FOR POLICY AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT.

- PROVIDE LOCAL-LEVEL EVIDENCE FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT.
- SUPPORT COMMISSIONING DECISIONS WITHIN BIRMINGHAM.
- CONTRIBUTE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF NHS MENTAL HEALTH PRIORITIES.



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