

Course: BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care
Module: Independent Project (BMHP6020_BIRM)

Component 1: Element 1 - Project Proposal

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Element 1 - Project Proposal

Title: Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Services for Young People Aged 16–25 in the UK

Aim:

This project aims to critically explore the major structural, social, and systemic obstacles to the access of mental health services by young people aged 16-25 years in the UK and will suggest evidence-based solutions to enhance access to services.

Objectives:

- To define and examine the current organisation and delivery of mental health services for young people aged 16–25 in the UK.
- To analyse key barriers to accessing services, including long waiting times, transitions between CAMHS and adult services, stigma, and limited resources.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of existing UK mental health policies and frameworks in addressing access challenges faced by young people.
- Proposing evidence-based recommendations to improve service accessibility, early intervention, and the continuity of mental health care for young people.

Background/Rationale:

In the UK, mental health challenges among the youth have been on the increase of late, with anxiety, depression, and self-harm being of great concern in the matter of public health (Rouquette et al., 2024). With the growing need to support its population, the mental health services are inaccessible, especially to people aged between 16 and 25 years who usually face challenges in rejoining the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) (Rethink, 2023). This transition gap often causes people to spend long waiting times, disengagement in services, and a lack of fulfilled mental health needs. In the context of health and social care, mental health services should be made available promptly to avoid negative consequences in the long run, such as low educational achievements, unemployment, and social exclusion (Wilson and Finch, 2021). Despite the focus of national policies like the NHS Long Term Plan on early intervention, there is a lack of consistency in implementation across services.

Methods:

The proposed study will rely on a secondary research methodology based on assessing scholarly journal articles and UK government reports, NHS policy reports, and publications of renowned organisations like NICE and the World Health Organisation. The sources will be chosen according to their relevance to the UK mental health services, credibility, and publication date of no more than five years. The thematic review will be used to analyse the data and determine common barriers and gaps in policy implementation (Batra, 2021). Some of the ethical issues to consider are proper citing, academic honesty, and plagiarism in line with the university requirements.

5) Resources:

- Google Scholar
- NHS Digital
- NICE guidelines
- University online library
- academic journals
- policy documents
- reliable databases
- research software
- online references.

Timescale:

Project Timeline 2026

	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	July 2026
Proposal Approval	Feb 1–28				
Literature Review	Mar–Apr				
Data Analysis		May 1–31			
Final Submission			Jul 1–31		

The 2026 project spans February to July, starting with proposal approval, followed by literature review, data analysis, and concluding with the final submission.

Self-reflection as a researcher (any strengths or challenges):

My strengths as a researcher are that I have good writing skills in academic research, and I am also able to critically analyse policy documents. One of the major challenges can be

dealing with a large scope of literature; however, I hope to improve my time-management and systematic review abilities during this project.

References

- Batra, R. (2021). A thematic analysis to identify barriers, gaps, and challenges for the implementation of public-private-partnerships in housing. *Habitat International*, [online] 118, p.102454. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2021.102454>.
- Rethink (2023). *Falling through the cracks: Why Young People Struggle to Transition to Adult Mental Health Services*. [online] Falling through the cracks: why young people struggle to transition to adult mental health services . Available at: <https://rethink.org/news-and-stories/news-and-views/2024/falling-through-the-cracks-why-young-people-struggle-to-transition-to-adult-mental-health-services/>.
- Rouquette, O.Y., Dekel, D., Siddiqi, A.-M., Seymour, C., Weeks, L. and John, A. (2024). Mental health and its wider determinants in young people in the UK during 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic: repeated cross-sectional representative survey. *BJPsych Open*, 10(6). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2024.726>.
- Wilson, H. and Finch, D. (2021). *Unemployment and mental health*. [online] The Health Foundation. Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/briefings/unemployment-and-mental-health>.