

## Terms of Reference

### Secondary Research (Needs Analysis)

#### Adolescents' Experiences of Health & Wellbeing in the UK: Health Inequalities, Mental Health and Gender

December 2020

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Plan International UK are requesting submissions from suitably qualified and experienced researchers or consultants to conduct a Needs Analysis exploring adolescents' experiences of health & wellbeing in the UK.

This Terms of Reference outlines a summary of Plan International UK's work in this field, the purpose of the Needs Analysis, and details of how to apply.

A second Terms of Reference is also being advertised for a researcher, consultant or agency to undertake a review of approaches to tackle poor mental health and health inequalities in young people. Further details can be found on our website, or by emailing [UKgirlsrights@plan-uk.org](mailto:UKgirlsrights@plan-uk.org)

A summary of definitions of the terms used in this document can be found in Appendix 1.

#### About Plan International UK

Plan International UK is a global children's charity. We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. As an independent development and humanitarian charity, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing vulnerable children, especially girls, so that they can realise their rights.

At Plan International UK we believe that girls' rights are universal, but across the UK as well as internationally, girls' rights are threatened by poverty, gender inequality, violence, unfair policies and ingrained discriminatory attitudes.

As girls' lives and the world around them changes at an unprecedented rate, we need to be more responsive to their needs and have mechanisms in place that can channel their insights and experiences into our programme design, research, campaigning work and policy recommendations. Therefore, Plan International UK has established a UK Programmes team to design and deliver high quality, gender responsive programmes to promote girls' rights and gender equality.

Our programmes aim to ensure all girls can ‘learn, lead, decide and thrive’ by working with stakeholders to fulfil our vision of a society free from gender inequality where every girl can realise her rights and fulfil her potential.

For more information about Plan International UK’s work visit [www.Plan-UK.org](http://www.Plan-UK.org)

## About the Young Health Programme UK

The [Young Health Programme \(YHP\)](#) was established in 2010 and is a global community investment initiative by the pharmaceutical company, AstraZeneca, in partnership with NGOs. The YHP supports Sustainable Development Goal 3.4: ‘by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.’

In 2020 Plan International UK partnered with AstraZeneca UK to bring the Young Health Programme to the UK, with the goal of supporting young people in the UK (aged 10-24 years) to **realise their right to good mental health and wellbeing, regardless of their gender**. This programme will be conducted over five years from 2020 to 2025, providing young people with the knowledge, tools and support that they need to create and shape the future of their health and wellbeing, **tackling health inequalities with a focus on mental health and wellbeing**.

Child health outcomes in the UK are worsening, particularly for those in the poorest communities (Nuffield Trust, 2018). It is increasingly clear that where you live can impact how you realise your rights and access services. There is also a growing evidence base that links mental health challenges in young people with negative long-term health outcomes, including increased likelihood of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease and cancer.

Numerous factors can further compound health inequalities, including geography, social exclusion, socio-economic factors and gender. Evidence shows that girls and boys experience puberty, wellbeing and health-related issues in very different ways, and that our experiences of health and wellbeing can be influenced by our gender (The King’s Fund, 2020).

As global experts in gender equality and girls’ rights, **we will ensure our approaches to tackling young people’s health inequalities are gender transformative**, recognising the differing needs and lived experiences of girls and young women, boys and young men, and those who identify as non-binary or transgender.

To tackle poor mental health and wellbeing in the UK we will adopt bold and innovative solutions, engaging young people and professionals to understand the link between young people’s wellbeing and mental health, and longer-term health outcomes. To do this:

- We will listen to young people and co-create gender transformative interventions with them;
- We will convene experts to lead a national conversation on the health inequalities experienced by adolescents, with a focus on gender;

- We will develop a joined-up approach that responds to the needs of young people at local and national levels.

To realise our ambitious vision, we will **employ our proven models of change across three pillars: research, programmes and advocacy.**

## Background to the Needs Analysis

There is a growing **evidence base that links mental health challenges in young people with negative health outcomes**, including an increased likelihood of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In recent years there has been an increased focus upon the health inequalities faced by segments of the population and an acknowledgement of these inequalities within policy and practice, including within the NHS Long Term Plan (2020).

We understand that **gender can further compound health inequalities** and that the health-related experiences and needs of young people may be different depending on their gender.

Therefore, we are seeking to commission a consultant or agency to undertake a national Needs Analysis which will **present an overarching picture of young people's health and wellbeing in the UK, with a specific focus on mental health and health inequalities experienced by adolescents.**

Plan International UK will deliver the YHP UK five-year programme using a **Youth-Centred Design methodology** to ensure the programme is co-created by those it seeks to serve, is iterative and adaptive to differing contexts, and is responsive to young people's changing needs.

Youth-Centred Design encompasses three stages: find them, listen to them, and design with them. These processes will be conducted locally in programme delivery areas, to establish a hyper-local picture of need. Youth-Centred Design will help us to identify and 'find' young people who would benefit from engaging in the programme, listen to and consult with them, and co-design and create interventions to meet their needs.

In order to target our resources and apply the Youth-Centred Design process effectively, and therefore develop a programme of depth, **we need to understand the broader context for this work, across the UK.**

This Needs Analysis will provide rich data to enhance the Youth-Centred Design process and complement the more localised aspects of the 'Find Them' process which will be conducted by Plan UK staff and partners in spring 2021.

## Purpose and Objectives of the Needs Analysis

### Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to explore the **specific mental health needs of adolescents and help us to understand the link between young people's**

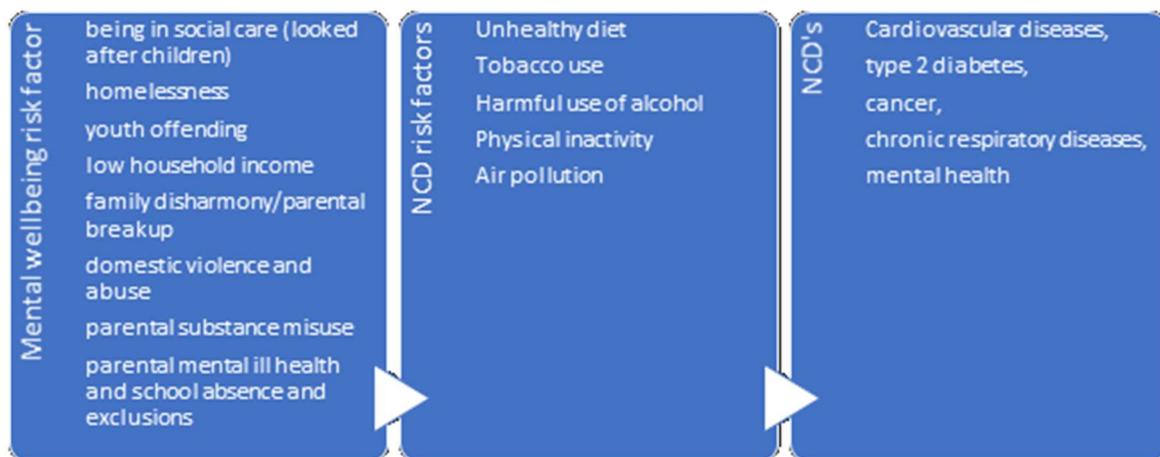
**wellbeing and mental health and longer-term health outcomes in the UK**, including what impact socio-economic inequality has on young people's mental health and wellbeing. We also want to understand how gender influences mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

We are particularly **interested to explore the risk factors that affect young people's mental health and wellbeing, which may therefore impact on young people's experiences of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in later life.**

The five main risk factors for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are:

- Unhealthy diet
- Tobacco use
- Harmful use of alcohol
- Physical inactivity
- Air pollution

We know that various factors can increase the risk of young people developing poor mental health, as outlined below, and therefore we are keen to learn more about the links between mental wellbeing risk factors and NCD risk factors, which therefore may later increase young people's risks of NCDs.



The information presented in the Needs Analysis will form the basis of an initial programme development process and will help to shape the commissioning of comprehensive primary research later in the programme.

## Research Questions

The Needs Analysis paper should answer the following research questions:

- **To what extent do mental health problems affect young people in the UK?**
- **Do health inequalities affect youth mental health? If so, how?**

- **What role, if any, does gender play in exacerbating poor mental health and health inequalities in young people?**

## Objectives

**Therefore, the objectives of the Needs Analysis are to:**

- Advance Plan International UK's knowledge on key mental health issues affecting young people in the UK, the risk factors that can lead to poor mental health, and help Plan International UK understand the prevalence and scope of those issues
- Advance Plan International UK's knowledge on the nature and prevalence of health inequalities amongst young people in the UK
- Advance Plan International UK's knowledge on whether there is a relationship between poor mental health and health inequalities in adolescents in the UK
- Help Plan International UK understand the role gender may play in young people's experiences of their mental health and wellbeing, and identify some of the needs and/or benefits of taking a gender-responsive approach to health programming
- Present opportunities for future research to address the issues presented and the gaps identified in research
- Present an overall national picture of need for Plan UK to develop a robust, regional programme of support, delivered to young people and wider stakeholders. The UK Programmes Team at Plan UK will take the findings from the Needs Analysis to plan Youth-Centred Design interventions and develop iterative programme activities.

## Project Deliverables

1. The key deliverable is a needs analysis paper. This will consist of:
  - Compiling and summarising existing recent data and research (ideally 3 years or less) on adolescents' experiences of health inequalities in the UK
  - Compiling and summarising existing recent data and research on adolescents' experiences of poor mental health and wellbeing in the UK
  - Presenting a gendered perspective to the above data and research where possible, for example, presenting a summary of the differences in mental health reporting of adolescent boys versus adolescent girls
  - Compiling and summarising data related to the impact of COVID-19 on young people's mental health and wellbeing, and health inequalities, if available
  - Identifying and summarising crucial government policy changes or policy gaps related to the topics.
  - Identifying and presenting gaps in research and data, including potential topics or key questions for future primary research
  - Presenting an overall summary of the data gathered including key findings
2. Oral presentation and debrief session with Plan UK staff
3. The paper should be fully referenced and written in a plain English style.

- Weekly communication with the consultant/researcher will be conducted throughout the project either by telephone call or through a weekly email note on progress.

## Research Approach

This project requires secondary research. The needs analysis paper should draw from recent, published research and data (no older than three years unless the research or policy is significant) from the UK and the researcher's own expertise and critical thought. All data should be fully referenced and attributed to existing, reputable sources.

Ideally the evidence and data will highlight issues affecting young people across all four nations of the UK, but we recognise that some data, policy and practice will differ according to nation and that the project is relatively small. Therefore, we do not expect in-depth analysis on every nation.

If little or no UK data/research exists on a particular theme, but reputable sources can be identified elsewhere in the global north which may present useful comparisons, the author(s) can include it within the needs analysis, with the clear distinction of its international source.

## Audience

The Needs Analysis paper and accompanying presentation/debrief documents will not be published, so the audience is relevant staff at Plan International UK. We may set up an advisory group for the Young Health Programme UK project and may share the paper confidentially with the advisory group.

## Intellectual Property Rights

Plan International UK retains Intellectual Property Rights of all the research we commission, (unless the research is explicitly in partnership, where we would share the IP Rights with the partner), but we would always give credit to the researchers in any external publications. For this project, we would retain IP Rights.

## Budget

The budget is £5,000-£7,500 inclusive of any VAT payable and expenses. Expenses must be agreed by Plan International UK before being incurred. Payments will be made upon submission of an invoice, by BACS.

## Timeline

Application deadline	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 9 a.m.
Informal interviews with prospective applicants	Week of 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2021

Contract and safeguarding policies signed	By Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
Work commences	Week commencing 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
Final deadline	To be discussed with the applicant; expected 6-8 weeks from date of project commencement

## Application Process

We welcome applications from researchers/consultants who meet the following criteria:

- Significant expertise and knowledge of mental health and/or health inequalities, particularly related to adolescents
- Experience of applying gender and rights-based lenses to research and analysis
- Understanding of and commitment to gender equality and girls' rights
- Experienced researcher with expertise in conducting similar reviews
- Excellent writing skills, including the ability to write clearly and create coherent, structured papers

To apply, please submit the following documents:

- An expression of interest that covers your relevant expertise, overall experience, and the ability to meet the deliverables. Please also summarise how you intend to approach the project. Two A4 pages maximum.
- CV
- At least one example of previous similar work
- Please include a budget breakdown (e.g. day rate) and confirmation of ability to meet the timeline.

Applications can be submitted either individually, or as a team with other collaborators or organisations. However, please note that we can only pay one 'supplier' for the work.

**Deadline for applications: Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 09:00**

Applications will be judged on the above criteria.

Please send the documents as attachments by email to [ukgirlsrights@plan-uk.org](mailto:ukgirlsrights@plan-uk.org)

Please contact Plan International UK with any questions or queries by emailing [ukgirlsrights@plan-uk.org](mailto:ukgirlsrights@plan-uk.org)

## **Appendix 1: Definitions of Terms**

The following are provided as a guide to the terminology used within this Terms of Reference. Further clarification can be provided upon commission.

### **Definition of a Child, Young Person and Adolescent**

Plan International UK defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 and a young person aged up to 25. The Young Health Programme UK adolescence is defined as those between the ages of 10-24. We recognise that in some instances it may be appropriate to consider issues for a wider age group.

### **Definition of Gender**

The concept of gender refers to the norms, expectations and beliefs about the roles, relations and values attributed to girls and boys, women and men. These norms are socially constructed; they are neither invariable nor are they biologically determined. They change over time. They are learned from families and friends, in schools and communities, and from the media, government and religious organisations (Plan International UK).

### **Definition of Gender Equality**

Gender equality means that all persons, regardless of their gender, enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlements to all human rights; enjoy the same level of respect in the community; can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives; and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices.

### **Definition of Health Inequalities**

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. Health inequalities can involve differences in:

- health status, for example, life expectancy and prevalence of health conditions
- access to care, for example, availability of treatments
- quality and experience of care, for example, levels of patient satisfaction
- behavioural risks to health, for example, smoking rates
- wider determinants of health, for example, quality of housing (The King's Fund).

### **Definition of Mental Health**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as 'a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'.

## Definition of Mental Health Disorders

The World Health Organisation (WHO) define mental disorders as those characterised by a combination of abnormal thoughts, perceptions, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. WHO suggest mental disorders include depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other psychoses, dementia, and developmental disorders including autism.

NHS England's report 'Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017' groups specific mental health disorders into four broad categories: emotional, behavioural, hyperactivity and other less common disorders.

Emotional disorders Include anxiety disorders (characterised by fear and worry), depressive disorders (characterised by sadness, loss of interest and energy, and low self-esteem), and mania and bipolar affective disorder.

Behavioural (or conduct) disorders include a group of disorders characterised by repetitive and persistent patterns of disruptive and violent behaviour in which the rights of others, and social norms or rules, are violated.

Hyperactivity disorders include disorders characterised by inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.

Other less common disorders include autism spectrum disorders (ASD), eating disorders, tic disorders, and a number of very low prevalence conditions. More information can be found at <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2017/2017>

## Definition of Wellbeing

The UK Government's Department of Health provide the following definition of wellbeing:

"Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values.

Wellbeing exists in two dimensions: Subjective wellbeing (or personal wellbeing) asks people directly how they think and feel about their own wellbeing, and includes aspects such as life satisfaction (evaluation), positive emotions (hedonic), and whether their life is meaningful (eudemonic).

Objective wellbeing is based on assumptions about basic human needs and rights, including aspects such as adequate food, physical health, education, safety etc. Objective wellbeing can be measured through self-report (e.g., asking people whether they have a specific health condition), or through more objective measures (e.g., mortality rates and life expectancy)." Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-and-health-policy>

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) measures national wellbeing, across ten broad areas of life. Since 2014 the ONS have also measured children's well-being using 31 indicators within seven domains. These indicators were developed from the Measuring National Well-being debate and additional consultation. Their website includes a list of the indicators and domains.

The ONS propose the following domains for the children's well-being framework:

- personal well-being
- our relationships
- health
- what we do
- where we live
- household finances
- schools and skills
- future and voice

This is currently under further consultation and development. More information can be found at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/childrenswellbeingindicatorreviewuk2020/2020-09-02>