

Terms of Reference

Improving Adolescent Health in the UK: Review of Approaches to Tackle Poor Mental Health & Health Inequalities in Young People

December 2020

Plan International UK are requesting submissions from suitably qualified and experienced researchers or consultants to conduct a review of approaches to tackle poor mental health and health inequalities in young people. This Terms of Reference outlines a summary of Plan International UK's work in this field, the purpose of the review, and details of how to apply.

A second Terms of Reference is also being advertised for a researcher, consultant or agency to undertake a Needs Analysis into adolescents' experiences of health & wellbeing in the UK, exploring health inequalities, mental health and gender. Further details can be found on our website, or by emailing 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

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 Review

Plan International UK are preparing to deliver the YHP UK five-year programme to support young people to realise their right to good mental health and wellbeing, regardless of their gender, and will utilise 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.

We are seeking to commission a consultant or agency to undertake a review of a range of approaches that have been delivered to tackle poor mental health in young people and to address health inequalities in the UK and globally, and produce a paper that will assist Plan International UK in developing this programme.

We are seeking to explore the **specific health needs of children and young people and understand the link between young people's wellbeing and mental health and longer-term health outcomes in the UK**, including what impact inequality factors may have on young people's mental health and wellbeing. We also want to understand how gender affects mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

The review will present an overarching picture of 'what works' in tackling poor mental health and health inequalities amongst young people, and highlight gaps in provision and approach. This will be used to enhance the Youth-Centred Design process and complement the more localised aspects of the 'Listen to Them' process, whereby young people will be consulted to gather their perspectives on 'what works'. This will be conducted by Plan UK staff and partners in spring 2021.

Objective of the Review

Through this review, Plan International UK are interested to learn about the range of interventions that tackle poor mental health for and with young people, with a specific focus on those that embed a rights-based approach, and are co-created or shaped

by the young people they seek to support. Plan UK is also interested to learn about specific interventions that seek to tackle broader health inequalities for and with young people, from a rights-based perspective.

A vast array of programmes, approaches and interventions have been created to tackle youth mental health problems, many of which have been evaluated and assessed for their effectiveness, both in the UK and globally.

Plan International UK are also seeking to understand which are the most effective tools, strategies or approaches to tackle poor youth mental health, and promote good mental health and wellbeing, from a rights-based perspective.

A rights-based approach is one that empowers individuals to know and claim their rights, and ensures that those who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling those rights, including power holders and institutions, are held accountable.

A rights-based approach to healthcare for young people may include ensuring that young people know their rights as they relate to their health and wellbeing; youth have opportunities to participate in decision-making about their health; they have a voice about the healthcare they receive; can access information they need to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing; and are listened to and respected.

For the purposes of this review, Plan International UK are particularly interested in interventions that address emotional and behaviour disorders, as opposed to hyperactivity or less common disorders. A full definition of these terms can be found in Appendix 1.

The objectives of the Review are to:

1. Present insights into 'what works' to address poor mental health and health inequalities amongst young people. This should cover:
 - A range of youth mental health interventions, including those that sought to promote good mental health and wellbeing, tackle poor mental health, or both. We are interested in learning about those interventions which have been deemed to be successful, and also those that have been unsuccessful, and why.
 - A summary of specific youth mental health interventions that have adopted a rights-based approach, and the effectiveness of these.
 - A summary of a range of successful interventions that seek to tackle health inequalities for and with young people.
 - A summary of interventions that are gender-responsive, i.e. those that consider the impact of gender on young people's mental health, for example, specific interventions targeted at adolescent boys or adolescent girls.
2. Present a summary of any identified gaps in knowledge or practice, based on the review of existing interventions.

3. Provide in depth perspectives of successful mental health interventions through interviews with 10 people working in a variety of strategic, research, services, programme roles and any other relevant roles.
4. Identify a range of key players in this field, including regional and national charities and NGOs, governmental committees, public bodies and individuals who may join a Community of Practice later in the programme.

Project Deliverables

1. The key deliverable is a review paper that meets each objective outlined above. The paper will consist of:
 - Existing or recent youth mental health interventions in the UK (and globally if relevant), outlining why they were successful or not successful
 - Existing or recent interventions that tackle health inequalities for young people in the UK, outlining why they were successful or not successful
 - A summary of interventions that 1) take a gender-responsive approach and 2) take a rights-based approach, including how effective they were and why.
 - A list of key players in the fields of adolescent mental health and health inequalities
 - A summary of identified gaps in knowledge or practice, based on the review of existing interventions as outlined above.
 - An overall summary of the information gathered which states key findings.
 - A summary or transcripts of a range of interviews with professionals who have experience of delivering high quality adolescent mental health interventions
2. Presentation of the overall findings and debrief session with Plan UK staff
3. The paper should be fully referenced and written in plain English where possible.
4. 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 primary and secondary research. The review paper should draw from recent, published research and data, both from the UK and globally, and the researcher's own expertise and critical thought. All information should be fully referenced and attributed to existing, reputable sources.

Ideally the evidence and data will highlight interventions for young people from across the UK and will include both large-scale interventions and smaller, community-based approaches. We welcome the researcher/consultant to use their judgment to decide the value of including a particular intervention in the review.

While we are seeking to understand the range of interventions being conducted to support youth mental health in the UK, we recognise that there will be a significant amount of good practice from elsewhere in the world. Again, we welcome the researcher/consultant to use their judgment to decide the value of including a particular international intervention in the review, if it appears to be translatable to a UK context.

Audience

This paper 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-£10,000 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 th January 2021 at 9 a.m.
Informal interviews with prospective applicants	Week of 1 st February 2021
Contract and safeguarding policies signed	By Friday 5 th February 2021
Work commences	Week commencing 8 th 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 25th 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

Please contact Plan International UK with any questions or queries by emailing 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 defines adolescence 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 (Plan International).

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>

For the purposes of this review, Plan International UK are particularly interested in interventions that address emotional and behaviour disorders.

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>