

ACTIVITY 3: EXPLORING THE HEALTH SYSTEM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

AIM: Young people explore what the health system looks like in their local community.

Preparation:

- Prepare a flip chart and art materials for the group to create a mind map or community health system map. Young people could complete this activity digitally if preferred, using a free online mind-mapping tool like [Miro](#), [Mural](#) or [Figma](#)
- Organise adults and permissions if young people are planning to take the optional community walk outing

Facilitator materials and resources:

- Activity 3 presentation
- [Building Blocks of a Health System](#) video
- [NHS-How does it work](#) video

Participant materials:

- Mapping materials
- Weather appropriate clothing and walking shoes for optional walk

If any of the young people you're working with have personal experience of a childhood illness themselves or have a friend or family member who has been unwell over a long period of time, this activity could trigger upsetting memories and feelings for them. Please be aware of this before starting the activity and be ready to support young people as necessary.

Facilitator introduction

Building on what they learned from starter activity 2, young people will grow their understanding of how a health system operates by investigating the health system that exists within their local community, and by mapping out the systems and the infrastructure that supports their health system.



PART 1: WARM-UP: REFLECTION

1. As a quick warm-up, invite young people to think quietly about a time when they needed some kind of healthcare. Have they ever been to the doctor, the dentist, a mental health therapist, or the school nurse? Have they had routine immunisations or maybe a COVID-19 vaccine? Was it easy or hard to get this care? Were they able to get the care in their own community, or did they have to travel a long way? Encourage young people to focus on the experience of accessing a health system itself, rather than their personal health information/treatment/diagnosis etc.
2. Invite a few young people who want to volunteer to share their own healthcare experience, or an experience they've had with the health system in their own community. But do emphasise that they don't need to share anything they don't want to, and that if their experience involves anyone else, they don't need to say who it is (for example, if a member of their family accessed healthcare but may not want this information shared).

PART 2: COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEM MAPPING

1. Explain that this session is about mapping everything we know about our local health system to get a better understanding of all the services we have access to that help ensure our own right to the best possible health.
2. Split the young people into small groups. Give each group large sheets of paper or flipcharts, and markers or other arts materials like magazines for collaging. Alternatively, invite young people to complete this activity using a free digital mind-mapping tool like [Miro](#), [Mural](#) or [Figma](#).
3. Invite the young people to discuss in their groups what they know about the local health system in their community. Where are the places they go to or might go to for healthcare? The hospital? The doctor? The local clinic? The dentist? The chemist?
4. Beyond healthcare providers, encourage young people to think about all the parts of a health system, and the infrastructure or systems that support its function—management and administration, a government that supports healthcare, supply chains that hospitals and chemists rely on for medicines, hospital support staff, and universities for training healthcare workers, or laboratories doing research, etc. (Resource: [Building Blocks of a Health System](#) (start at 1:15)).
5. Using the chart paper, invite young people to create a visual mapping of this healthcare system information. This might look like a spider diagram that shows the connections between the pieces of the health system, or it might be a collage or more abstract depiction of how the health system works in your community. As an option, create a healthcare map of your community with the locations of health providers marked on it and use this to have the young people plan a community health system walk. Complete this portion of the activity only where it is safe to do so and wouldn't put the young people at risk.
6. At the end of the mapping, debrief the group, asking:
 - Was there anything that surprised you about mapping the health system in your own community?
 - What are the strengths of your community's health system?
 - What did you notice that could be made better in your own community to strengthen the health system and the services available to ensure young people's right to the best possible health?

PART 3: HEALTH SYSTEMS QUIZ OR KAHOOT

1. Invite young people to create their own [Kahoot!](#) based on things they learned about their community health system through their mapping exercise. If your group can't access this, use similar software you do have, or create a pen and paper quiz. Challenge another class or group to swap quizzes. Alternatively, challenge young people to try the ready-made [How much do you know about the NHS?](#) Quiz by the Royal Society of Medicine, review the [BBC facts about the NHS](#) or watch the [NHS – How does it work](#) video from SkyKids.