

Improving psychosocial screening for young people with the creation of the HEEDSSS app

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1. Background:

- Leading causes of death in young people include suicide, violent crime, road traffic collisions and other external causes.
- These are non-random preventable events, amenable to public health and public policy initiatives and every episode of health care is an opportunity to reduce subsequent risk of harm.
- HEEDSSS (Home Education/Employment Eating Activities Drugs Sex Suicide (mood) Safety) is an internationally renowned and validated tool which delivers psychosocial screening to young people. With the provision of an accessible directory of local and national resources it is hoped that young people can be better signposted to services to reduce the likelihood of future harm.



5. Learning points

- Projects like these take time so be realistic and try and build a strong team
- Remember to be focused on the problem, not the solution
- Think about sustainability from the very beginning and particularly sustainable funding.

2. Aim:

- To improve signposting to support services for adolescents with psychosocial risk factors.
- This will be achieved by the development and introduction of an interactive app for health care professionals across the Wessex region (3-6 months)
- This in turn will hopefully reduce long term avoidable harm in young people (12-24 months)

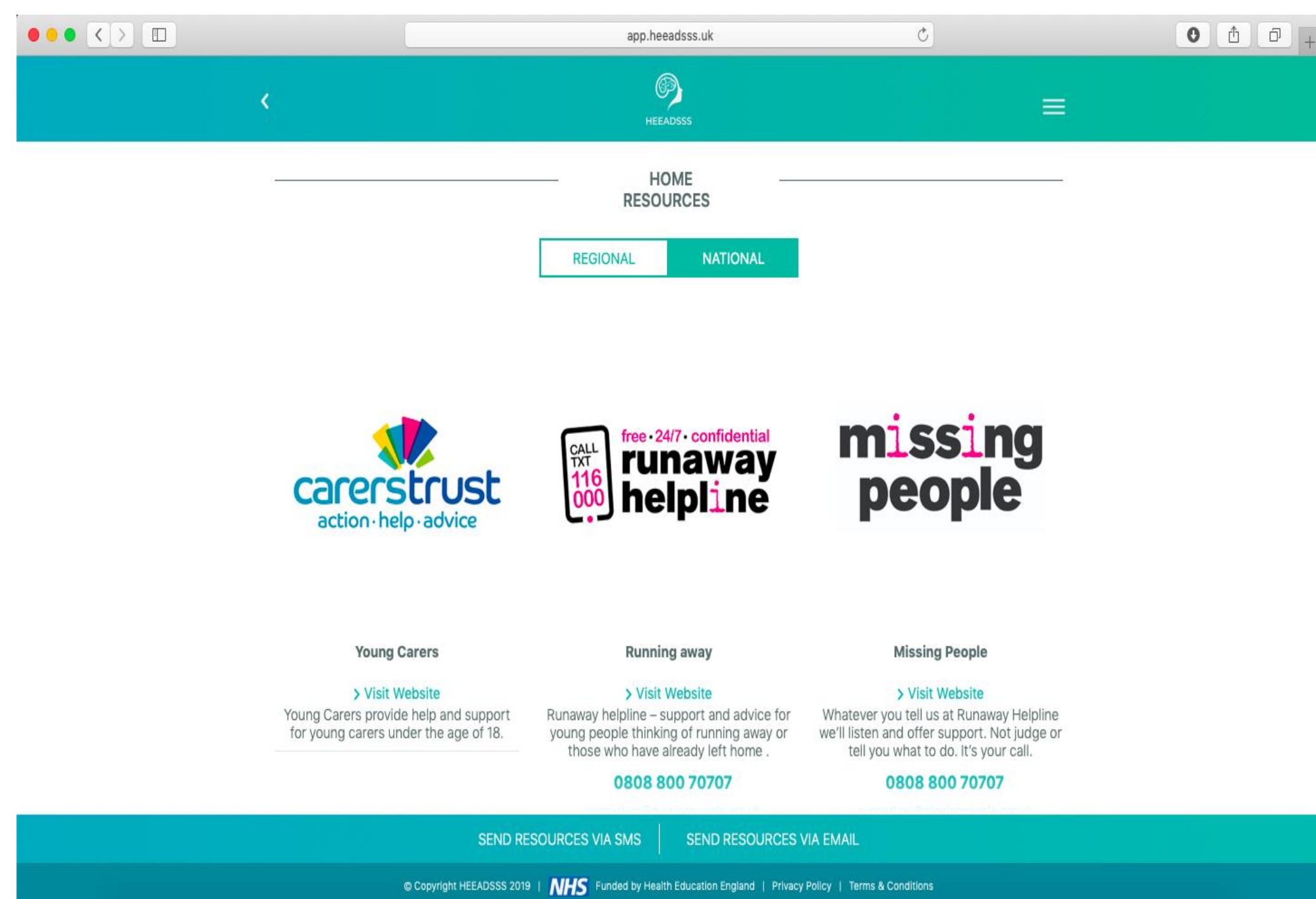


Figure 1: Screenshot of app with national home resources shown

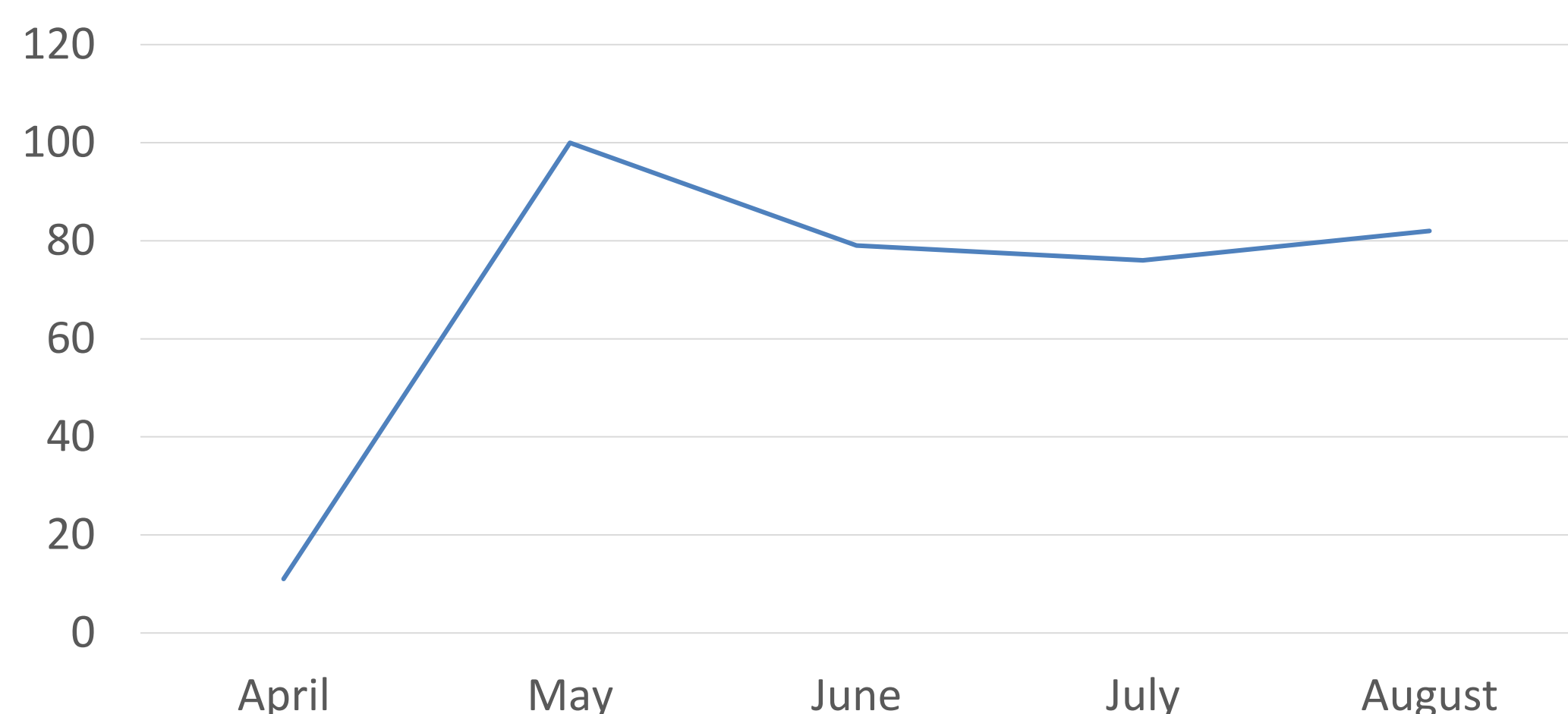


Figure 2: Run Chart - Monthly screens performed in Wessex using the HEEDSSS App

3. Project design/strategy & changes:

- Phase 1: Development of app. Co-production with local young people and key stakeholders to ensure app is acceptable and valid
- Phase 2: Promotion of app using existing mailing lists and contacts across PIER (Paediatric Innovation education and Research) and Wessex Healthier Together networks
- Phase 3: Monitoring of the app using run charts. PDSA cycles to test promotional strategies and to further hone use of the app i.e. young people to self-screen.

4. Results:

- App developed for web (PC), IOS (Apple) and android platforms.
- Favourable unsolicited review in medical apps journal¹.
- Resources mapped across Wessex (Southampton, Portsmouth, West Sussex, North Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight)
- Good levels of usage with a median of 80 completed screens performed / month regionally (see Figure 2)

1. <https://www.imedicalapps.com/2019/05/heedsss-up-the-popular-screening-tool-comes-to-mobile-devices/>

6. Next steps:

- Secure sustainability funding for administrator and to pay hosting fees.
- Build a wider management team to take it forward
- Develop questions to allow young people to self screen
- Consider sharing more widely with other areas across the UK
- Monitor local attendance to Emergency Departments for preventable injuries to assess effect of increased screening in reducing harm for young people, potentially using a research fellow.

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