

ASSEMBLY

24 February 2015

Title: Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum Annual Report 2014	
Report of the Divisional Director of Education	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Divisional Director: Jane Hargreaves, Divisional Director of Education	
Accountable Director: Helen Jenner, Corporate Director of Children's Services	
Summary	
<p>This report is a summary of the work and achievements of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum during its January to December 2014 sitting.</p>	
<p>The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum is a borough-wide platform for young people to express their views and help shape services. Members of the Barking & Dagenham Youth Forum are democratically elected each January through schools and youth groups to represent their peers. Through their participation, young people develop youth-focussed campaigns based on topics most important to young people in Barking and Dagenham. The campaigns aim to raise awareness of the issues being tackled and to bring about change that will positively impact young people's lives. Through regular consultations, Council officers and partner agencies have the opportunity to promote services, gather feedback about policies, strategies and services as well as gaining a youth perspective on how services can be improved and promoted to young people locally. In addition, a single member of the Forum sits on the Children's Services Select Committee as a co-opted member.</p>	
<p>The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum Young Inspectors sub-group provides local services with the opportunity to have their services inspected by trained, experienced youth inspectors. In 2014, the Young Inspectors sub-group were commissioned to carry out inspections of local pharmacies distributing free condoms to young people aged 13-24 years old under the pan-London C-Card Scheme and local sexual health clinics also offering sexual health advice and services to young people. The Young Inspectors underwent training with youth workers and a representative from Terence Higgins Trust and completed a total of 52 pharmacy inspections and 2 sexual health clinic inspections. A representative of Young Inspectors attends the local Patient Engagement Forum meetings, feeding back the progress and outcomes from the group and offering a youth perspective relevant to agenda items being discussed.</p>	
<p>The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum members have gained many skills through their participation in the forum, including communication, leadership, negotiation,</p>	

presentation and social skills. These are essential life skills which young people can utilise in a variety of settings. In addition, they represent a very positive image of young people in the borough, and support the Council's objectives to enable social responsibility and encouraging civic pride. The Forum was rewarded with a Youth On Board award from the British Youth Council this year, as well as successfully submitting a funding bid to O².

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is recommended to note the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum Annual Report for 2014 and in doing so:

- (i) Agree to continue to provide Member support for the Forum and its associated campaigns and utilise the Forum to deliver against the Council priorities of enable social responsibility, encourage civic pride and growing the borough;
- (ii) Agree that Members who are School Governors should continue to encourage their schools to work in partnership with the BAD Youth Forum and aid schools to promote pupil voice through the provision of a robust school council;
- (iii) Support the Forum's aim for greater consistency in sexual health lessons in schools and that schools be encouraged to utilise the resources and lesson plans created and supplied by the BAD Youth Forum;
- (iv) Agree that Members should continue to raise a positive profile of young people throughout the borough through the work of the Forum and support recommendations made by Young Inspectors through inspections;
- (v) Support the proposal that regular newsletters with updates about the work of the BAD Youth Forum and UK Youth Parliament representatives be sent to school council leads; and
- (vi) Agree that the Children's Services Select Committee receive a report from officers on the Council's response to recommendations made by the BAD Youth Forum.

Reason(s)

To receive the BAD Youth Forum Annual report in accordance with the Council Constitution.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In January 2014, 65 young people were elected to the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum. The young people were elected from all secondary schools and Trinity Special School, which has two representatives and a key worker who supports the young people during sessions.
- 1.2 At the beginning of the forum year, all members attended two full forum sessions and debated current youth issues that the forum might tackle in 2014. As a result of this meeting two sub-groups were chosen, '**Raising a positive image of young people**' and '**Health**' - focussing on Teenage pregnancy and Sexual Health. One subsequent full forum meeting took place later in the year in the Council Chamber.

A question and answer session was held with senior council officers, Police and Health officials giving young people the opportunity to challenge them about current policies or issues that young people face.

- 1.3 The **Young Inspectors** have continued as a sub group of the forum in order to sustain the programme from its funded pilot phase in 2011-12. The programme continues to be effective, surpassing expectations this year with regards to the number of inspections and the standard of qualitative data gathered.
- 1.4 To further support the Youth Forum's drive to reach and engage a wider range of young people a promotional DVD has been developed by the Forum this year and recently used in school assemblies. Youth Workers visited schools three times to gather nominations, instead of the usual once, offering young people more opportunities to speak to youth workers and put their name forward. This places the Forum in a strong position to work effectively in 2015.

2. Proposal and Issues

Sub-groups' work outline

2.1 Raising a Positive Profile of Young People

- 2.1.1 The sub-group felt it was important to raise a positive profile of young people in the Borough, acknowledging young people's commitment to their borough and encouraging other young people to take pride. The young people planned and organised a range of events to achieve this.
- 2.1.2 The first event took place at Bennetts Castle Lane Care Home in the Easter holidays. Young people expressed an interest in helping elderly residents in their local community and learning more about what it was like to be a teenager years ago. The care home was contacted and arrangements were made to paint the dining hall. Young people also prepared some musical entertainment for the care home residents and spent time with them talking about their experiences of being a teenager.
- 2.1.3 The second event was a charity car wash. Young people researched local and national charities and opted to support the Mayor's chosen charity - Teenage Cancer Trust. The young people designed leaflets and hand delivered them to homes and businesses in the local area. Young people created a list of the resources they needed and ensured enough members were able to attend the event. The young people raised a total of £73.00 for the charity, including washing the Mayor's car.
- 2.1.4 The third event was a litter pick at Pondfield Park and painting the teenage seating shelter. Young people felt that parks could be better used by young people and that in some cases the parks could be cleaner and in better condition. The young people created a list of parks to clear up and then consulted more than 200 young people to ask their views. The top two parks were visited by the Forum members and Pondfield Park was chosen. The group cleared six bags of rubbish and painted the seating shelter, improving the look and cleanliness of the park. The Leader of the Council visited the sub-group in action.

2.1.5 The group also worked on a short presentation to raise awareness of World AIDS Day and created some information cards to be distributed in schools by Forum members. Each Forum member took the information and resources in to schools and acted as World AIDS Day ambassadors. The group raised close to £100 by selling World AIDS Day ribbons in schools.

2.2 **Health: Teenage pregnancy and sexual health**

2.2.1 The sub-group had various discussions about the importance of sexual health education in schools and felt that in recent years the numbers of lessons have reduced. Some young people expressed concerns that some schools as an alternative now hold a day once or twice a year where topics such as this are discussed with students. For those who are absent that day, they miss any opportunity to receive this vital information. There was a mixture of positive and negative experiences of sex and relationship education in schools amongst the members, depending on what school they attended. The group felt this was also an issue and that education should be more consistent across the borough. Some young people feel the lessons are taught to the wrong year group, which runs the risk of young people being poorly educated until, in some cases, it is too late. With high numbers of teenage pregnancy and STI's among 16-24 year olds, the group opted to tackle the issue.

2.2.2 The group devised a range of activities, short films and exercises for students to participate in. These include:

- A filmed appointment at a sexual health clinic to help dispel any fears young people may have about visiting a clinic to get condoms or sexual health advice
- An interactive and visually appealing quiz
- A short film introducing contraception methods
- An 'unlucky dip' exercise
- A short film about STI's
- Condom demonstration
- Beer goggles to help simulate the difficulties young people could face when attempting to correctly use a condom when under the influence of alcohol

2.2.3 The group have worked with Jo Caswell, Health and Personal Development Advisor, to develop lesson plans that can be used by teachers along with these resources. This will be delivered to schools early 2015.

2.2.4 In order to purchase some of the resources given to schools the young people successfully bid for a Think Big grant from O2 for the bid limit of £300.

2.3 **Young Inspectors**

2.3.1 Funding was received from the Public Health grant to support the Young Inspectors and focus their inspections on sexual health services in 2014 in order to contribute to reducing the borough's teenage pregnancy rate. The group underwent a range of training which taught them how to be effective Young Inspectors and how to specifically inspect sexual health services offering condoms, in particular pharmacies and sexual health clinics. The Young Inspectors were taught about the detailed process they should be taken through each time they carry out an inspection, which includes use of the Frasier guidelines (where appropriate), a

condom demonstration, mention of the pharmacy/clinics confidentiality policy, being offered a Chlamydia test and explaining other tests on offer to young people. The group developed close links with the Terence Higgins Trust and used this relationship to continually update their training and feed back their findings directly to commissioners of the service as well as at the Integrated Reproductive and Sexual Health Board and Patient Engagement Forum.

2.3.2 Having been trained, the Young Inspectors completed a range of supported and independent inspections. A total of 52 inspections were completed from April to December, greatly surpassing the target set by Public Health. Young people completed a detailed report for each inspection highlighting their opinions of their experience, the staff they encountered and whether they met the standards expected by commissioners e.g. Frasier guidelines, offering a condom demonstration.

2.4 Consultation

2.4.1 Youth forum members participated in a range of one-off consultations facilitated by council officers and external partners. These include:

- Emma Roebuck- Parks Consultation. Young people were asked to give their views on Parsloes, Eastbrookend and Central Park looking at what improvements could be made in each park, what is already good about them and what could be better.
- Alex Perry- Flipside LGBT promotional event consultation
- Helen Jenner/Erik Stein- School council consultation looking at how effective schools are and if they have improved since the school council review commissioned by CSSC
- Young NCB- an online survey looking at whether school is preparing young people for life
- British Youth Council- survey on engagement with European politics
- Joe Aguis, Area Manager, Catering & Hospitality Services - changes to school dinner menu, gathering young people's views about current school meals and what they think needs to be improved and also telling the young people about changes happening in the near future
- Local Government Association and British Youth Council: Have your say on local services for children and young people
- Joe Agius, Area Manager, Catering & Hospitality Services - to get views about the new menu and to learn whether their ideas are along the right track and get suggestions for a new name for the catering service. A further consultation was carried out to discuss the final name for the service.
- NWG Network- Youth Participation Questionnaire- tackling child sexual exploitation
- Developing a Youth Manifesto on Rights and Advice Services- a questionnaire for young people aged 15-25 to give us their views on what should be in a youth manifesto on rights and advice services.
- Anna Freud Centre- Online mental health resource consultation
- Boba Rangelov, NHS Trust - What does a good/bad health service look like?
- Arc Theatre and Jenny Bastock, DV Coordinator- Raised Voices and development of ideas for newsletter raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation

- Public Health consultancy agency- Mental Health Needs Assessment
- Healthwatch consultation

2.4.2 The results of each consultation have helped to shape service delivery in each case.

2.5 **UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)**

2.5.1 In February 2014 two young people were elected (through the BAD Youth Forum) to represent Barking and Dagenham on a regional and national level. Stephen Abordo was elected as Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and Faraz Hanif was elected as Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP). Following their election both young people attended an induction residential which taught them how to effectively represent other young people, how to plan and deliver a successful campaign and other more general skills such as public speaking and being confident to express your views. Both young people gained a great deal of skills from this experience and formed good relationships with other MYP's/DMYP's.

2.5.2 During their term both representatives attended three British Youth Council conventions which brings youth representatives together from across the region. At these conventions young people have contributed to regional debates and participated in training and consultations.

2.5.3 In July the MYP attended an Annual Sitting which offers young people another residential experience focussing on developing youth focussed issues to put out for consultation. The aim of the consultation was to find out what the top 5 issues are for young people in the UK so that these could be discussed at an event for you UKYP representatives at the House of Commons. Ten issues were chosen and the MYP and DMYP then focussed on getting as many votes as possible. Members of the BAD Youth Forum supported this process and successfully obtained 3053 votes. This is an increase of 753 votes from last year, the most ever achieved by Barking and Dagenham representatives.

2.5.4 In November, the MYP attended the House of Commons debate and sat amongst youth representatives from across the UK. The five topics were discussed and from them two campaigns were chosen, a Living Wage for All and Mental Health. These campaigns will be worked on in 2015.

2.5.5 Barking and Dagenham UKYP representatives have contributed to 'Positive Stories', which is a monthly publication by the British Youth Council outlining youth representatives achievements across the UK.

2.6 **Children's Service Select Committee (CSSC)**

2.6.1 The Chair and Deputy Chair of the forum have attended all formal and informal meetings arranged by the CSSC. The representatives have contributed ideas for the CSSC's current workplan focussing on supporting more primary schools to become outstanding, as well as giving their views around the Council's saving proposals.

2.7 Other events BAD Youth Forum have participated in

- Consultation with Council Leader, Deputy Leader and and Lead Members for Children's Services around savings proposals.
- Borough's inaugural Youth Parade.
- Stonewall Education For All Conference, with Flipside LGBT project.
- Chief Executive interviews.
- Planning meeting for the boroughs 50th Anniversary celebrations.
- Attended #talking youth event- an event for 18-24 year olds to discuss employment opportunities in London.

2.8 Other achievements

2.8.1 In 2014, Adam Kaspar, an ex pupil of Trinity School, took on the role of volunteering with the sub-groups. Adam has been an active member for 4 years and at 21 needed extra responsibility within the project. Adam has spent his time in sub-groups planning sessions, supporting Trinity School members, writing evaluations and contributing to the monitoring of sessions with youth workers. Adam has been working through his Silver Youth Achievement Award as recognition of the extra effort and hard work he has put in to his role.

2.8.2 The BAD Youth Forum were submitted by youth workers for a British Youth Council Youth On Board Awards and were successful in the Inspiring Project Award category. The award recognises efforts made by projects to engage young people and give them a voice.

2.8.3 All Forum members have been given the opportunity to work towards the Youth Achievement Awards, mostly at Bronze level. Adam Kaspar, volunteer, has been working towards his Silver award and Paul Cox was awarded his Gold Youth Achievement Award this year, this is the first Youth Achievement Award at Gold level awarded to a young person working with the Integrated Youth Service.

2.9 Forward plan

2.9.1 A detailed workplan for the BAD Youth Forum is devised each year upon election of new representatives. However, there are a number priorities for the Forum in 2015.

- To better integrate the work of the Forum with the Council's overall objectives, and use it to enable social responsibility, encourage civic pride and grow the borough.
- Use the Forum to support the borough's 50th anniversary celebrations.
- Use the Forum to support the borough's objectives to reduce childhood obesity.

3. Financial Issues

Implications completed by: Patricia Harvey, Interim Group Manager, Children's Finance

3.1 There are no direct financial implications for future years arising from this report.

- 3.2 Resources for the period of January to December 2014 have been supported from the Public Health Grant attributable to Children's Services of a total £1.6m and £30k earmarked towards the BAD Youth Forum.

4. Other Issues

- 4.1 **Corporate Policy and Customer Impact** - The work of the BAD Youth Forum contributes to the achievement of the Council's vision and priorities. Both the encouraging civic pride and the social responsibility priorities have sub priorities which relate to raising attainment, and ensuring young people realise their full potential. The work of the forum set out in this report demonstrates this contribution and the important role the forum has played for members as well as in representing the youth across the borough.

As this report is for noting, there are no customer impacts.

- 4.2 **Safeguarding Children** - The work of the Forum in 2014 has contributed to the safeguarding of children and young people in a number of ways. The work to improve Pondfield Park has contributed to improving its image as a safe environment for young people. The work of the Young Inspectors, particularly in testing Fraser guidelines about when it is and isn't appropriate to distribute contraception to young people, have done an enormous amount of work to test the safeguarding policies of sexual health services, resulting in improvements to the service. Similarly, the short film developed by the Forum to show what it is like to visit a sexual health clinic is designed to demonstrate services as being safe and secure to young people.
- 4.3 **Health Issues** - The Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health sub-group have highlighted that there is an inconsistency in the amount of time allocated in schools to educate young people about relationships, contraception, STI's and general awareness of the consequences of unprotected sex is having a detrimental impact on the current rates of teenage pregnancy and STI's which are extremely high in Barking and Dagenham in comparison to London and England. The resources the young people have developed are in response to this and aim to educate young people and give schools simple and easy to use tools to lessen the workload for teachers in this particular area.

The Young Inspectors have inspected the 17 pharmacies that offer the Come Correct condom distribution scheme and have given feedback about their findings to Terence Higgins Trust, the Integrated Sexual Health and Reproductive Board, directly to Matthew Cole during a full forum meeting and managers within Public Health. Young people have raised a range of positive and negative practice that came to light as a result of the inspections which will help to strengthen training for staff within the pharmacies who distribute the condoms. Young people have regularly raised the issue of needing ID in some pharmacies which is limiting for young people who cannot supply the required ID. This issue is being looked in to by Public Health with an aim to breaking down this barrier and offering young people a more young people friendly service.

The Young Inspectors have also completed 2 sexual health clinic inspections: Outpatients East, which showed a vast improvement from their last inspection in 2012, and Youth Zone @ St Kilda's. Although situated outside of the borders of the

borough, data shows that many young residents of Barking and Dagenham utilise this service. The feedback from both of these inspections have been given to BHRUT who take responsibility for reviewing the recommendations and implementing them.

The young people met with Cllr Worby to discuss health issues and also raised these with a representative from leisure. Young people have raised concerns about obesity, smoking and under-age drug use. Obesity will be addressed by a future forum sub-group as it continues to be an issue they feel needs addressing and is a major council priority.

- 4.4 **Crime and Disorder Issues** - The Forum's work to redecorate a shelter in Pondfield Park, and their wider work to promote a positive image of young people, is designed to combat the fear of crime in the borough from all communities. The Forum has demonstrated that young people can and should promote social responsibility and take pride in their local area.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices: None