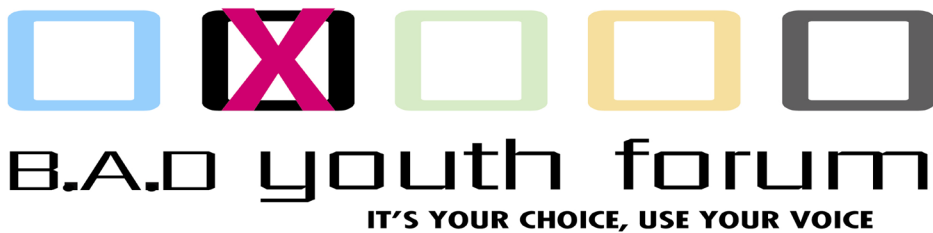


Overview 2023



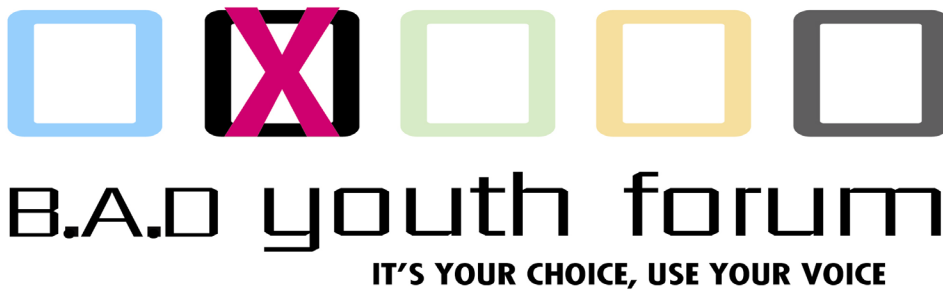
Introduction and background

The BAD Youth Forum was created in 2001 to give young people a formal and recognised platform to express their views and make a positive impact in their community.

In 2023, the Youth Forum saw a return to larger numbers with greater participation from young people. Without the restrictions of Covid, Youth Workers were able to visit schools at the end of 2022 to promote the Youth Forum and encourage young people to nominate themselves. A total of 52 young people participated in the Youth Forum throughout 2023, which is our biggest number since 2019. Returning members demonstrated great leadership skills at the start of the Youth Forum year, welcoming new members and leading the initial team building activities.

At the start of the year the whole Youth Forum met on three occasions, before splitting into smaller sub-groups. The young people participated in a team building event first, followed by a Full Forum meeting to understand the Youth Forum better and lastly, an election session where the Chair, Deputy Chair and Young Mayor was elected. During the Full Forum meeting young people discussed a range of issues that they felt were important to themselves and other young people across the borough. Some of these issues included: sexual harassment, gangs, cost of living, mental health awareness, crime, education, and health inequality. As always, the Youth Forum attracted a diverse group of people in 2023. The numbers of SEND young people participating increased to 5, with some members having significant needs. Youth workers adapted to meet these needs, ensuring participation and inclusion throughout the year.

Community Action Sub-group achievements 2023



Introduction and background

Sexual harassment and sexual assault

At the start of the Youth Forum year, young people were concerned about the rise of Andrew Tate and his social media presence, as well as other misogynistic material across social media platforms. Young people felt this was having damaging effects on young people. Living in a borough with high rates of domestic abuse and domestic violence, young people are already aware of the negative view some young people have of what a healthy relationship is. From the very beginning of the year, the young people felt passionate about discussing this issue and addressing it.

There is widespread feeling amongst young people that sexual harassment and sexual assault is acceptable amongst many other young people, and has become so normalised that young people have come to expect it and often do not challenge it. Youth Forum members felt deeply dissatisfied with that and wanted to understand young people's thoughts, feelings and experiences better. In order to capture this information, young people designed a survey which was hosted on the One Borough Voice platform.



Sexual harassment and sexual assault questionnaire
 This questionnaire is confidential and anonymous

The members of the Barking and Dagenham (BAD) Youth Forum feel there is an increase in sexual harassment and sexual assault in the borough, young people are often a victim of these crimes. We would like to raise awareness of this and ask you for your thoughts on it. The information young people give us will be shared with schools, local Councillors and the Council so it can be addressed and effectively dealt with. The survey is completely anonymous, we do not ask for your name or contact details. We would appreciate you taking 2 minutes to complete this questionnaire. Thank you!

What defines sexual harassment:

The Equality Act 2010 says someone sexually harasses another person if they:

'Engage in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and the conduct has the purpose or effect of either violating the other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This unwanted sexual conduct can happen in person, on the phone, by text or email, or online. Both the harasser and the victim or survivor can be of any gender.'

This includes:

- ☞ Sexual gestures.
- ☞ Leering, staring or suggestive looks. This can include looking someone up and down.
- ☞ Sexual innuendos or suggestive comments.
- ☞ Unwanted sexual advances or flirting.
- ☞ Sexual requests or asking for sexual favours.
- ☞ Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life.
- ☞ Someone discussing their own sex life.
- ☞ Commenting on someone's body, appearance or what they're wearing in a sexual manner.
- ☞ Spreading sexual rumours.
- ☞ Standing uncomfortably close to someone without actually touching them.
- ☞ Displaying images of a sexual nature.
- ☞ Taking a photo or video under another person's clothing – what is known as 'upskirting'.

What defines Sexual Assault:

When someone touches another person in a sexual manner without their consent. Or when someone makes another person take part in a sexual activity with them without that person's consent. It includes unwanted kissing and sexual touching.

This also includes:

Can you please take two minutes to answer the following questions?:

Age:
 11yrs 12yrs 13yrs 14yrs 15yrs 16yrs 17yrs 18yrs 19yrs

Gender:
 Male Female Prefer not to say Other

1. Have you experienced, or know someone who has experienced, any form of sexual harassment or sexual assault? Please refer to the previous list for examples of harassment and sexual assault (if answered NO or NOT SURE then jump to question 4)

YES NO NOT SURE

2. Where did this happen? (You can list more than one location in the box)

3. Has it had an effect on your mental health?
 YES NO NOT SURE

4. How are offenders of sexual harassment and sexual assault dealt with in your school and any youth groups you attend? (Please write in the box below)

5. Which gender do you think sexual harassment or sexual assault happens to the most?
 Male Female Other

6. Why do you think sexual harassment or sexual assault happens? (Please write in the box below)

7. What more can be done in schools, youth groups and the community to prevent sexual harassment or sexual assault towards young people?

8. Would you feel comfortable enough to report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault?

YES NO NOT SURE

9. Would you know how or where to report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault?

YES NO NOT SURE

10. Are you aware of the support available and who to talk to if you have experienced any form of sexual harassment or sexual assault?

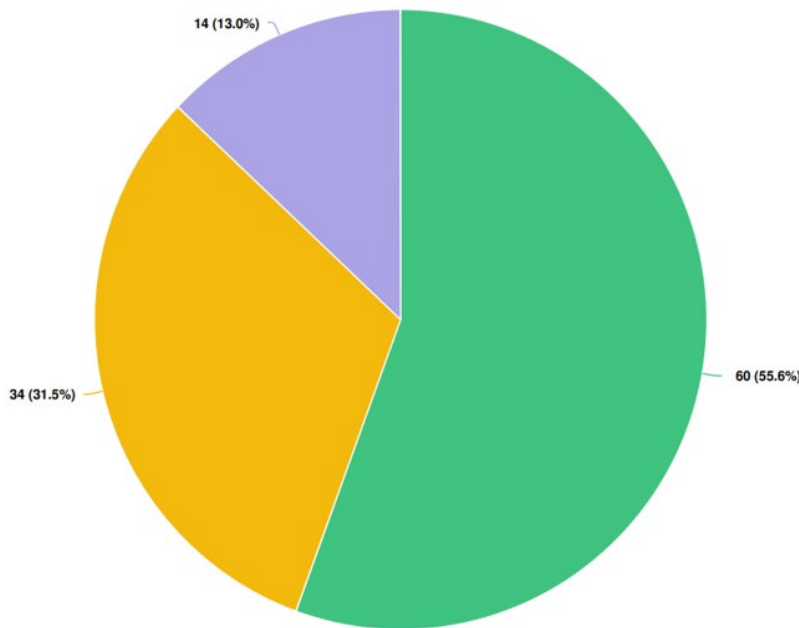
YES NO NOT SURE

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey – Thank you! 😊

If you have been affected by completing this survey, please contact the support services below:

The survey questions were quite powerful, ensuring they were clear questions young people could answer honestly. The survey was distributed via all schools, with Youth Forum members hoping to speak to their peers and encourage young people across the borough to complete the survey. Very few responses were received, therefore young people opted to speak to their peers in the community and at youth centres to capture their views. A total of 108 responses were collated, here are some charts and tables highlighting responses from young people:

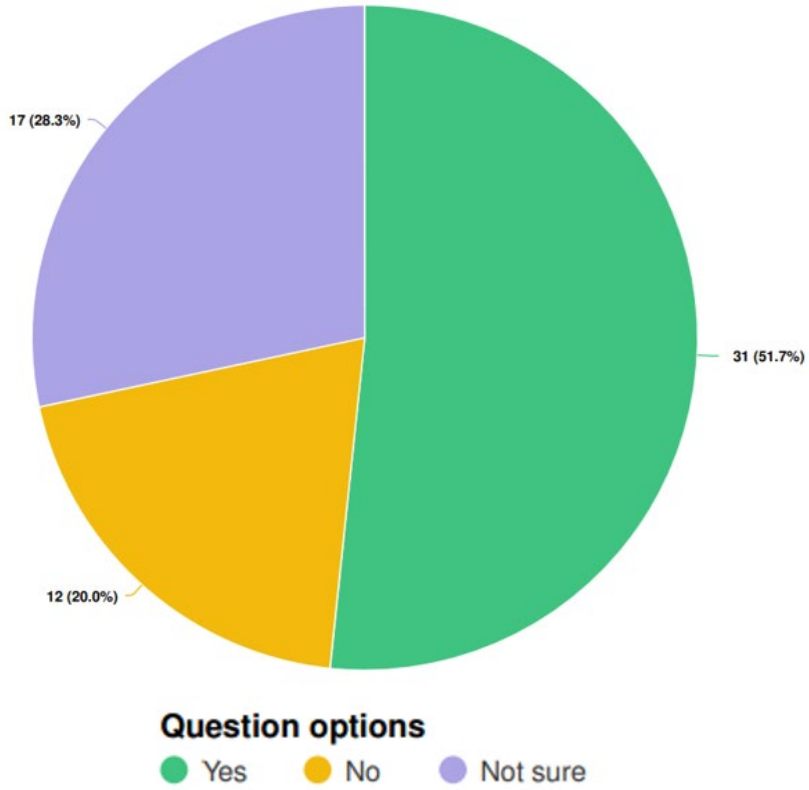
Have you experienced, or know someone who has experienced, any form of sexual harassment or sexual assault?



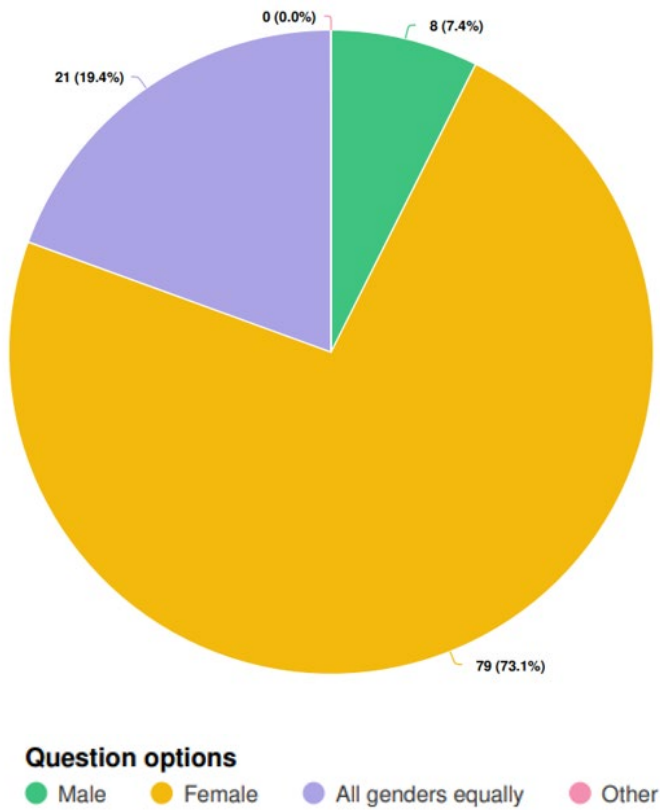
Question options

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

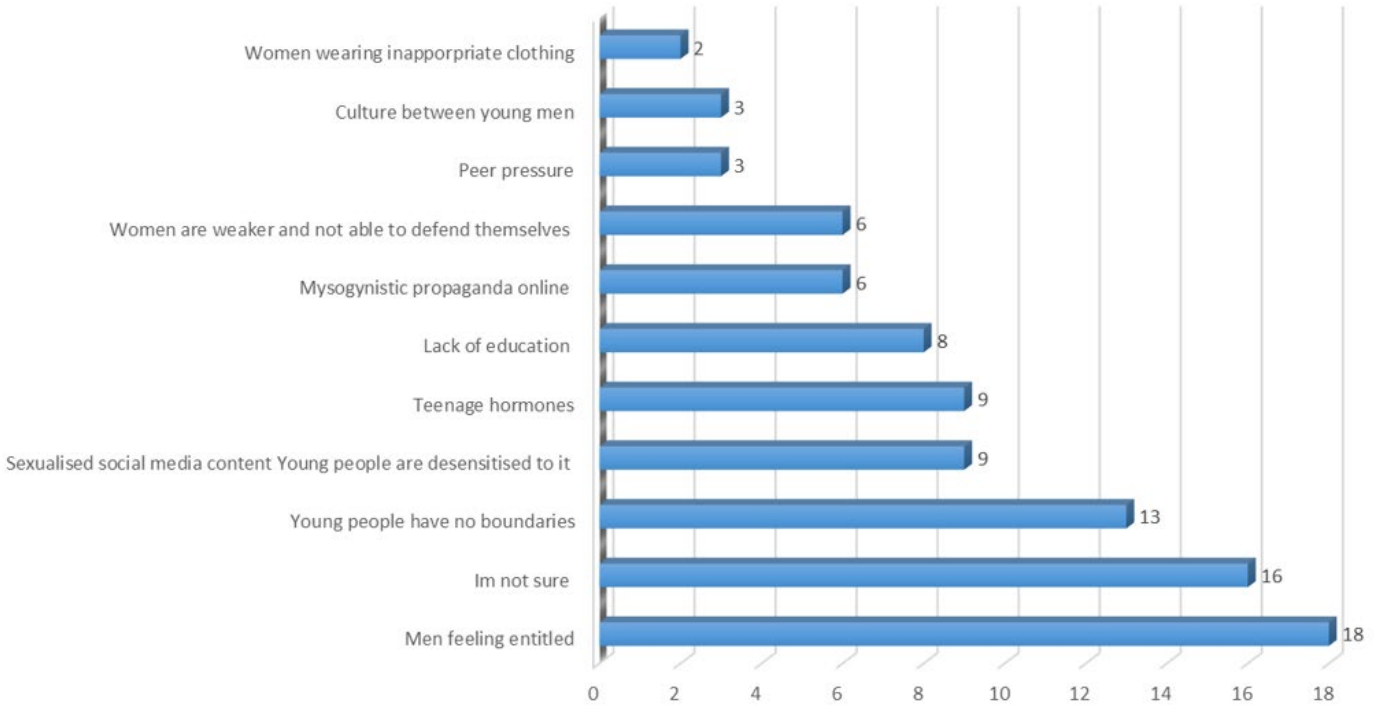
Has it had an effect on your or their mental health?



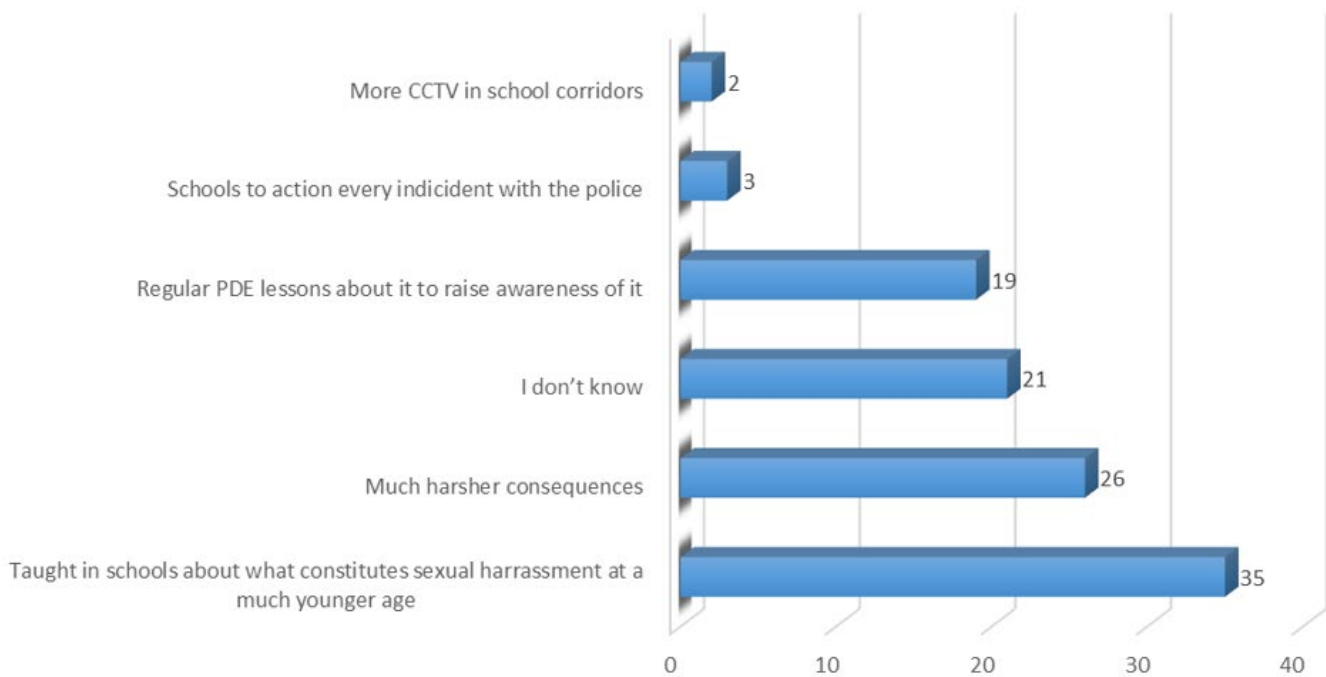
Which gender do you think sexual harassment or sexual assault happens to the most?



Why do you think sexual assault or sexual harassment happens?



What more can be done in schools, youth groups and the community, to prevent sexual harassment or sexual assault towards young people?



Whilst waiting for survey responses to come in, the group decided to create some products they could give to young people as a way of highlighting the issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault, hopefully instigating conversation and providing a way to educate their peers. The groups discussed various options, but ultimately agreed on oyster card holders, lip balms, rulers and banner pens. Funding that the Forum secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was used to pay for all of the products. Each item displays a QR code taking them to the Rape Crisis support website, specifically to the 'What is sexual harassment?' page. Here are some photos of the items:



As part of the 16 days of activism, the group handed these products out and will encourage other young people to volunteer their time to share this important message.

Having collated the information from the survey, two representatives from the group presented at a Women's Safety Forum meeting, chaired by Councillor Worby. The group shared their findings and spoke about their plans for the future, including during 16 days of activism. This was well received by the Safety Forum, with members of the Forum being very impressed with young people's innovative response to this issue. Young people would like to see support from local decision makers to address this issue and, most importantly, improve education for young people about healthy relationships, understanding the definition of sexual harassment and sexual assault and know how to report it and get help.

Elevate Her



The group participated in a workshop with Elevate Her. The focus of the workshop was sexual harassment and unwanted attention. This workshop helped the group to understand the issue from other people's perspectives and appreciate how big the issue is in our borough and across the country.

Tender workshop

Tender Education & Arts visited the group to ask for feedback on a tool kit they will be sharing with schools to raise awareness of gender-based violence. The group discussed their own experiences and experiences of their peers of sexual harassment and sexual assault, they viewed the content of the tool kit and gave feedback for improvements.



BD Money - Money Matters

The group were invited to create a Young Persons tab on the Council's BD Money webpages, to ensure there was information relevant to young people. They specifically wanted to include information on the financial process when applying to university, banks accounts, bursaries and scholarships. They ensured the language was young people friendly and the information was helpful and appropriate. Young people contributed lots of ideas which were taken away by the team, the final page was presented at a later session, which young people were happy with. Young people hope this proves to be a useful resource to other young people.

Young Mayor

Sub-group achievements 2023



B.A.D youth forum
IT'S YOUR CHOICE, USE YOUR VOICE



The Barking and Dagenham Young Mayor is supported by a sub-group of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum. The group work alongside the Young Mayor, supporting their fundraising efforts throughout the year.

In 2023, a student of Eastbrook school Regina Mudibo Pamba was elected to be the borough's 9th Young Mayor. Regina has been a passionate member of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum for 4 years before being elected as Young Mayor. Regina was keen to take on a new challenge within the Youth Forum and develop new skills. After delivering a powerful speech to her peers, Regina was delighted to be elected!

Choosing the Young Mayor's charity

Every year the Young Mayor sub-group work together to shortlist charities to fundraise for that go out to a youth vote. In 2023, the shortlisted charities were:

- Sickle cell society
- Barking Foodbank and
- Centrepont

The voting was very close. with more discussion from the group, they opted to fundraise for Centrepont and support the Barking Foodbank with volunteering hours too.

At the start of the year, the group deliberated the complexity of fundraising in a cost of living crisis. Young people understood the difficulties residents of the borough were facing and knew they needed to factor this into their planning.



To understand the charity better, the group invited a Fundraising Officer from the charity to one of our sessions. They spoke about the reasons why young people become homeless and the charities aim to end youth homelessness by 2037. The group asked questions about fundraising and started to explore ideas.

Given the cost of living crisis, the Forum knew that fundraising would be a challenge this year.

Group Sleepout



Many of the group members had exams in May/June, so the first event was in August. The group slept outside at the Vibe Youth Centre, with just a sleeping bag on the floor. The group felt it was important to experience this for themselves. During the evening they wrote postcards to homeless young people, created message boards to be displayed around them and most importantly recorded content for a short film telling others they were sleeping out to raise money and to encourage other donations. The group enjoyed the experience and



gained an appreciation of how hard rough sleeping can be as the night got colder. **The event raised a total of £373.**



After the sleepout event, the Council's Comms team edited our video content and added a short message from the Leader of the Council. This was distributed on all council social media platforms and by the Leader himself. The video can be viewed here -

https://youtu.be/hAoZ5mUj_bw

This raised a further **£38.**

The young people were proud of this piece of work, they planned the event themselves with support from Youth Workers and worked hard to gather donations.

Dagenham and Redbridge Football Club

Every year the group are given permission to bucket shake at a football match, we are always grateful for this opportunity. Our long standing member, and passionate DRFC supporter, James, led the fundraising efforts on the day. The group spent 3 hours speaking to fans, moving around the bars and function room to gather as many donations as possible. **In total the young people raised £142.32**



Broadway Theatre bucket shakes

In December, Broadway Theatre kindly offered to have donation buckets available at all of their public performances to raise money for the Young Mayor's charity. **This raised a total of £32.38.**

During 2023, the Young Mayor sub-group raised £585.38.

Foodbank volunteering

As part of the group's commitment to giving back to the community, the group opted to volunteer at Barking Foodbank in their warehouse. The group spent the whole day sorting and weighing donations, ensuring everything was in date order and arranged by product into boxes. The group heard about struggles local people are facing and how this is affecting them. They were challenged to

understand stereotypes and

misconceptions of the people who use foodbanks. They learnt about the increase of foodbank usage nationally and who is now using them. Physically the group found the work challenging but also rewarding. They were praised for their hard work and positive attitude to supporting their community.



Wellbeing bags

As the year was drawing to a close, the group wanted to use some of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund we had been allocated to support local homeless people. Youth workers made contact with the Rough Sleeper Worker and Homeless Outreach Worker to ensure the bags could be distributed to 18-25 year olds who are rough sleeping or living in hostels. The group thought hard about the items that would be most useful, and ensured there was a focus on mental health. After a shopping trip to buy some of the products and lots of ordering online, the group were ready to pack the bags. The bags contained a power bank, re-usable water bottle, gloves, warm socks, deodorant, notebook, sexual harassment and sexual assault promotional products from the Community Actions sub-groups work (pen, oyster card holder and lip balm), condoms, information about the c-card scheme and how to register. A total of **160** bags were made and distributed to local people.



Young Mayor events

Broadway Theatre



The Mayor and Young Mayor were invited to the Broadway Theatre to officially announce the 2023 pantomime. They also enjoyed a tour of the building.



Women's Empowerment Month awards



Regina enjoyed the opportunity to attend the WEM awards and introduce one of the acts on the night. Regina found the experience inspiring and exciting.

UKON Careers Project launch

Regina loved having the opportunity to attend this youth focussed event, she officially opened the event and participated in activities with other young people.



Mayor Making and Civic Parade



Regina attended the Mayor Making event and Civic Parade in May 2023. Regina enjoyed attending the events and witnessing this prestigious event for herself. Regina was excited to deliver her speech and meet Councillors and other guests from across the borough.

Transgender Remembrance Day



On 20th November, Regina attended the Transgender Remembrance Day. Regina attended the flag raising and the event that followed, speaking during an open mic part of the event to demonstrate her allyship with Transgender people.



Young Carers events

Regina was invited to participate in 2 Young Carer's events this year. The invitations came through after hearing Regina speak at an event and due to the Mayor fundraising for Young Carers. Regina enjoyed connecting with Young Carers and their workers. She attended their prom event and also a sponsored 5k walk.

Partnership for Young London



This campaign was orchestrated by the Mayors Fund for London, the nonprofit organisation that is patroned by the Mayor of London, to help and improve diversity within the built sector in London.

Regina got involved as part of her ongoing work for Partnership for Young London, an impartial, youth led and youth run research group in the Guildhall. Regina says “Writing an evaluation on this campaign really interested me, so I asked whether I could take part, I did an interview and I was selected along with three other people! It is a three month long process, we started in October and my first work for this evaluation project was attending an event at City Hall and collecting information on people that were willing to take part in the research!” At the conclusion of the campaign, Regina wrote a blog which was shared across London by Partnership for Young London.

Cultural Education Partnership Annual Conference

In November, Regina was invited to the Cultural Education Partnership conference as a guest speaker. Regina presented about leadership and what this looks like to young people in the borough. Regina’s speech was inciteful and well received. Regina enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this exciting opportunity.



Colin Pond Scholarship Awards

Regina attended the 7th Colin Pond awards, handing out awards to the highest achieving GCSE students in the borough who have chosen to stay in borough at post-16. Regina enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate their success.

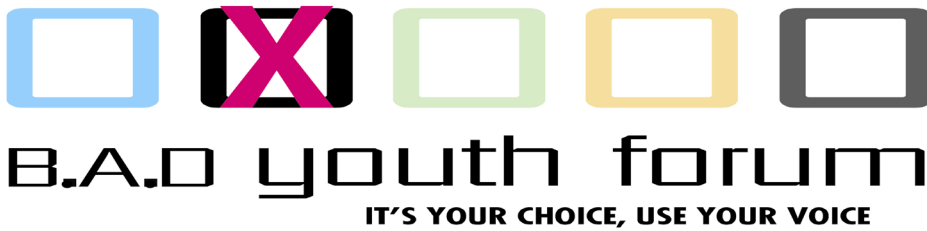


Metropolitan Police Service Choir Service at Westminster Hall

Regina was invited by Superintendent David Rhodes to the Metropolitan Police Service carol service at Westminster Abbey as his personal guest. Regina enjoyed the event and meeting police officers.



Additional Forum activities 2023



Participation and consultation

In 2023 young people participated in a large number of additional events and benefitted from a range of new experiences and opportunities. These opportunities are important for developing young people's interests, skillset and their confidence. During the year young people had the opportunity to participate in the following opportunities:

- Young Inspectors programme
- Full Forum meeting in Barking Town Hall with Councillors
- Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings with Police
- Visit to the Houses of Parliament, hosted by Jon Cruddas MP
- Ben Kinsella workshop
- Contribute to a Peer Review of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Kooth mental health workshop
- Community police meeting
- Special Educational Needs and Disability website development meeting
- Race and Social Justice discussion
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings
- Creating a promotional film for the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum
- Trip to Stubbers Outdoor Activity Centre
- 16 days of activism contribution

Young Inspectors

The opportunity to be a Young Inspector of the C-Card young people's condom distribution service is offered to all Youth Forum members and has been in place for many years. In 2023, 17 young people opted to be trained, they each went on to complete independent inspections of pharmacies that offer the service throughout the year. A total of **76** inspections were completed. Every inspection report was shared with the Youth Health Programmes Co-ordinator, who then contacted the pharmacy to give them feedback and training where needed. Responses from pharmacies were shared with the Young Inspector, ensuring a continuous cycle of quality assurance throughout the year. This cycle is important to ensuring services are fit for purpose and young people friendly, and the service is the best performing in London.

By providing top quality contraceptive services to young people across the borough, it has contributed to a further decrease in teenage pregnancy figures for the borough which has been faster than seen nationally. The latest annual figures (for all of 2021) show, that despite a rise nationally in teenage pregnancy rates, Barking and Dagenham saw figures fall to 12.5 per 1000 young women under 18, compared with 2020 figures of 16.5 per 1000 young women. There is a great deal of work that contributes to ensuring teenage pregnancy figures keep reducing, and Young Inspectors and their collaborative working with the Youth Health Programme Co-ordinator is an important part of this.

Full Forum meeting at Barking Town Hall



Youth Forum members were keen to engage with Councillors and speak about local priorities. This was an action for last year's presentation at Council Assembly. Some of the Cabinet Members met with the Forum and participated in a Question and Answer session. The young people enjoyed the experience of being in the Chambers and speaking with local decision makers. After the meeting, young people feedback their thoughts and feelings about the event and agreed to hold this annually.

Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings

Every year the Youth Forum, hold regular meetings with Police. The young people choose the focus of the meeting and the Chair and Deputy Chair facilitate the meeting. In line with the Community Action sub-group's focus, one of the meetings focussed on violence against women and girls, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. A detailed discussion was held about how this issue is dealt with in schools and the community, by police officers. The group were promised some action around greater involvement with schools' officer and were given information about police initiatives to keep young people safe. The young people enjoyed being asked questions by the police and having the opportunity to ask questions themselves. This ranged from representation in the police service, people's rights to protest, what to do when a situation has been handled badly by a police officer and generally how to stay safe in the community.



Houses of Parliament

During October half term, Youth Forum members participated in a visit to the Houses of Parliament. The group had a tour of the building, learning about its history and significance. Following this, young people met with Jon Cruddas MP. The meeting always has a Question and Answer feel to it, which allows young people the chance to ask questions important to them.



This year, the group focussed on littering and the environment, the MP's top priorities for the borough, regeneration, improving youth aspiration and opportunities for young people and also asking for Jon Cruddas' views on sexual harassment and sexual assault. The young people came away from the meeting with a clearer sense of where the borough is headed, the work that Jon Cruddas is focussing on and how that will positively impact young people and best of all a commitment to speaking with services and schools about the issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault in schools. The Deputy Chair of the Youth Forum led the meeting and has written to the MP, at his request, to continue this conversation.

Ben Kinsella workshop



Having visited the workshop last year, the Youth Forum felt it was important that new members participated in this powerful and thought-provoking workshop. Young people engaged well in the session and gained a better understanding of the devastating impacts of knife crime, as well as, how to administer first aid to anyone who has been stabbed.

Local Government Association Peer Review

Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership invited the LGA to undertake a peer challenge review within LBBDD to focus on the borough's safeguarding children's partnership arrangements. The Youth Forum were invited to participate in the Peer Review with a specific focus on how the Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements could better receive feedback from children, young people, and their families. Youth workers assembled a representative group of young people from the Youth Forum, Skittlz (the children and young people in care council), Peer Support Group and Flipside (the borough's LGBTQIA group). A total of 27 young people attended. The meeting was very insightful and young people demonstrated great confidence in sharing their experience of living in the borough. The young people were praised for their contribution, offering a perspective about the borough that no-one else could.



Kooth Mental Health workshop

In response to the growing need for mental health support, young people opted to engage in a workshop with Kooth (and online mental health platform) to understand the support available to young people in the borough. The young people learnt how to register, gathered information about what they can access on the site and how to look after their mental health. Part of this was understanding signs and symptoms of poor mental health and what options are appropriate for dealing with any issues they are experiencing. 5 young people signed up to Kooth as a result, and others confirmed feeling confident to use the site if they ever feel they need it.



Community Police meeting

Youth Forum members were invited to attend a community meeting by Superintendent David Rhodes. The meeting had many other members of the community in attendance and focussed on the New Met for London plan.



Young people spread across various tables working with other

people in the community. They discussed the plan, how it will be implemented and collated questions to ask of Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe. Young people gained clarification about areas of policing that will affect them in the future and appreciated being able to ask questions.



Special Educational Needs and Disability website development meeting

Two of the Youth Forum members with SEND participated in a meeting with the Council's SEND Family and Co-Production Lead to discuss the borough's Local Offer webpage. Young people gave insight into the information that should be included, useful sites they regularly use and explored what the priorities are for young people with SEND. The young people's views were captured and incorporated into the new Local Offer webpage.

Race and Social Justice (RSJ)

Since the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, young people in the Youth Forum have been interested in exploring schools' role in educating young people about Black history, seeing better representation in the curriculum and the staff team who works with them. The Youth Forum had the chance this year to meet with Education's Strategy, Commissioning & Intelligence Lead and the Inclusion Adviser from the Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership (BDSIP). They presented the RSJ work that is taking place with schools to the Youth Forum, detailing progress and achievements to date. The group then shared their experiences from school, both positive and negative.

It was a lively discussion with young people bringing challenge and thoughtful insight. The Youth Forum were tasked with ways to move forward with the issues they raised and have been offered the opportunity to present at a Headteachers' meeting. These positive steps help young people to feel in control of the change they feel is necessary and is equipping them with new skills such as presentation, appropriate challenge, improved communication skills and confidence.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

Millie Kiseke (Chair) and Humayra Uddin (Deputy Chair) have attended OSC meetings throughout the year. They have brought challenge to the meetings, asking questions from a young person's perspective and sharing their views and experiences. They have been praised for their contributions and thoughtful questions. The RSJ Youth Forum session came from Millie and Humayra attending an OSC meeting and requesting BDSIP to work with the Youth Forum.



Created a promotional film for the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum

Using the UK Shared Prosperity Funding that had been allocated to them, the Youth Forum decided to make a promotional film to recruit new young people to join in 2024. Young people contributed to the content of the film and helped with suggestions on the day. Young people viewed and agreed the film before the final edit. We hope this attracts many more young people to the Youth Forum! To view the video visit <https://vimeo.com/877449714?share=copy>



Trip to Stubbers Outdoor Activity Centre



Every year the Youth Forum enjoy a day trip to Stubbers. It gives young people a chance to socialise with each other, step out of their comfort zone, build rapport with their peers and develop their confidence.



16 days of activism

As our contribution to the 16 days of activism, young people took the sexual harassment and sexual assault products into schools, youth groups and the community to educate other young people about what defines sexual harassment. The products were well received. Youth workers distributed products during nomination sessions in schools during this 16 day period too. In addition, a display board at the Vibe Youth Centre was dedicated to sharing positive messages and information about where to access support. These messages were the same messages distributed 2 years previously when the Young Mayor at the time was fundraising for Refuge.

