

ASSEMBLY

24 February 2016

Title: BAD Youth Forum Annual Report 2015	
Report of the Divisional Director Education, Youth and Childcare	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Divisional Director: Jane Hargreaves, Divisional Director Education, Youth and Childcare	
Accountable Director: Dr Helen Jenner, Director of Children's Services	
Summary	
<p>This report to Councillors highlights the achievements of the Barking and Dagenham (BAD) Youth Forum 2015. The report gives information about each of the sub-groups of the forum and for the first time includes information about the work of the Young Mayor, who was elected for the first time in 2015.</p> <p>Each year the BAD Youth Forum holds democratic elections in schools and offers the opportunity to nominate and elect youth representatives. Through the election process, 60 young people are elected to the forum annually. The young people bring a range of experiences and knowledge with them and work together in smaller sub-groups to achieve a common aim. The sole focus of the forum is to support young people to express their views and affect positive change for all young people working, living or studying in the borough. Young people, through the forum, are regularly able to express their views, share these with the appropriate people and aim to influence the decisions made on their behalf that affect their lives, as well as take direct community action.</p> <p>Each year the forum splits itself into three sub-groups, each focussing on different areas. In 2015 these were; anti-bullying, healthy lifestyles and Young Inspectors (Young Inspectors is a project that runs each year as part of the forum's work). Each of the sub-groups successfully planned projects they believed would have an impact on other young people. An anti-bullying sub-group was formed after discussions regarding young people's wellbeing and the negative impact bullying can have on young people physically, emotionally and mentally. A healthy lifestyles project was commissioned by Public Health with a focus on the rising levels of obesity. Young people worked hard to research the issue and develop a workshop they could take to youth groups that would educate young people about exercise and healthy eating. The Young Inspectors sub-group focussed largely on inspecting pharmacies in order to ensure quality condom distribution services are available for young people but also partnered with Trading Standards to carry out test purchases of age related products e.g. cigarettes, alcohol and knives.</p>	

<p>The Young Mayor has worked hard this year to establish herself in her role as the first ever Young Mayor of Barking and Dagenham. The Young Mayor, Angelica Olawepo, has attended many events and has also raised money for her chosen charity, Young Minds.</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>The Assembly is asked to note the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum Annual Report for 2015, and recognising the financial pressures that the council is under, provide support for its work.</p>
<p>Reason(s)</p> <p>To receive the BAD Youth Forum Annual report in accordance with the Council Constitution.</p>

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In January 2015 democratic elections were held in every secondary school (not including Trinity School as they have an alternative system for nominating representatives). From these elections 65 young people were elected to join the forum.
- 1.2 At the start of the forum year, young people participated in a team building day and two induction sessions to help them to understand their role more fully and grow in confidence being in a new group. At these meetings many issues were raised e.g. crime, bullying, transport, education and many more. Following these induction meetings young people elected a forum Chair, Deputy Chair and the new Young Mayor.
- 1.3 Discussions in the Monday sub-group highlighted that the majority of the group felt that they had suffered some form of bullying in their lifetime and all members knew someone who had been bullied. The young people felt that schools vary in their approach and effectiveness in dealing with bullying and that young people themselves do not always possess the necessary skills to deal confidently with bullies and protect themselves. In addition, the nature of bullying was changing fast with the introduction of new technologies. As a result the group decided their focus for the year would be about tackling bullying and educating other young people about the issue.
- 1.4 The Tuesday sub-group were commissioned by Public Health to develop a project to address the rising levels of obesity among young people in the borough. The young people thought hard about how to create something interesting that other young people would be willing to participate in. The group decided to create a workshop that would involve physical activity (to raise awareness of how fun and beneficial exercise can be), educate young people about healthy eating and raise awareness of the local Streetbase reward scheme that can be used to collect points and pay for a free swim.
- 1.5 The Young Inspectors sub-group focussed largely on pharmacy mystery shopping

inspections, due to the success of inspections in 2014 and continued drive to bring down teenage pregnancy rates. The inspectors were trained by returning experienced Young Inspectors. Following their training, young people carried out a series of inspections of pharmacies that offer the Come Correct condom distribution scheme locally and various other sites such as leisure centres and Subwize, Alcohol and Substance misuse support service.

- 1.6 Young people participated in three full forum meetings that brought the whole forum together. These meetings enabled young people to learn about local and national democracy, with the third meeting being held at the Houses of Parliament, hosted by Jon Cruddas, MP.
- 1.7 The Young Mayor scheme was new to Barking and Dagenham this year, following its announcement at the Youth Parade in 2014. Our first newly elected Young Mayor, Angelica Olawepo, has attended several events throughout the year and represented young people and their views at each of these events. The Young Mayor has also raised £800 for her chosen charity, Young Minds.

2. Proposal and Issues

Sub-groups work outline

2.1 Anti-bullying project

- 2.1.1 Having identified that bullying remains an issue for young people by speaking about their own experiences, the group spoke to peers and other young people of a similar age. The young people discovered that bullying is having a large impact on young people's lives.
- 2.1.2 Young people researched the issue of bullying and discovered that the increased use of the internet, chatrooms and instant messaging has added a new dimension to bullying. Cyber bullying has become a large problem as a result of young people being able to easily access the internet and use free messaging services such as Instagram and Whatsapp. As a result of this increased access, it is possible for young people to be bullied or harassed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week sometimes in a very public and humiliating way.
- 2.1.3 Young people decided to participate in a full day of training from Kidscape, the anti-bullying charity. The young people were trained as Anti-bullying Ambassadors. Through this training young people gained a great deal of knowledge about the extent of the problem nationally as well as a wealth of skills they could use to train other young people to become anti-bullying ambassadors.
- 2.1.4 Following this training, young people created their own shorter version of the training which they then offered to deliver in schools directly to young people. Four schools have participated in this training; Jo Richardson, Eastbrook, Warren and Riverside. The forum has received extremely positive responses from both young people and their teachers. A total of 70 young people participated in the workshops across the four schools.
- 2.1.5 In addition to their anti-bullying project the young people decided they would also like to participate in a social action event to help people in their local community.

After careful consideration young people opted to work with a local shelter which offers free hot meals for people on a Friday and an opportunity to interact with others and gain some support. The young people fundraised before the event and purchased toiletries to take on the day to hand out to residents. The group collected over £80. One the day of the event young people worked hard serving meals, chatting to residents and then cleaned up after everyone had left.

2.2 Healthy Lifestyle sub-group

- 2.2.1 With levels of obesity among young people high in the borough, Public Health approached young people asking them to create a project to highlight the benefits of healthy lifestyles, looking in particular at healthy eating. The group discussed the most effective way to get this message out to young people. After much deliberation the group decided to create a workshop for young people that would include healthy eating and physical exercise.
- 2.2.2 Young people approached youth workers within Integrated Youth Service (IYS) and asked to work with them over the summer to present their workshops. Young people then focussed on the content of the workshop. Healthy menus of food to be provided at the workshops were created following a cooking session with an IYS Health Youth Worker.
- 2.2.3 The group met with Phil Oldershaw from the Streetbase team and discussed the benefits of the scheme. This formed part of the workshop later delivered to young people, to encourage them to make healthy meal choices in school. The group also chose some physical activities for the participants to get involved in.
- 2.2.4 The workshops were delivered over the summer holidays across all of Integrated Youth Services' Summer programme i.e. Marks Gate Community Centre, the Vibe Youth Centre, Gascoigne Youth Centre and Sue Bramley Youth Centre. More than 80 young people participated in the workshops, all young people evaluated that they enjoyed the sessions and more than 50% said they would now participate in more exercise and think twice about the content of the food they eat.
- 2.2.5 In order to support the project financially the two volunteers on the programme applied for an O2 Think Big grant of £300 and were successful. The process helped them to gain skills in writing a funding application and explaining their project when interviewed over the telephone. The money was used to pay for resources for the project which included instructors for physical activities and a pedometer to give to young people who participated in the workshop.

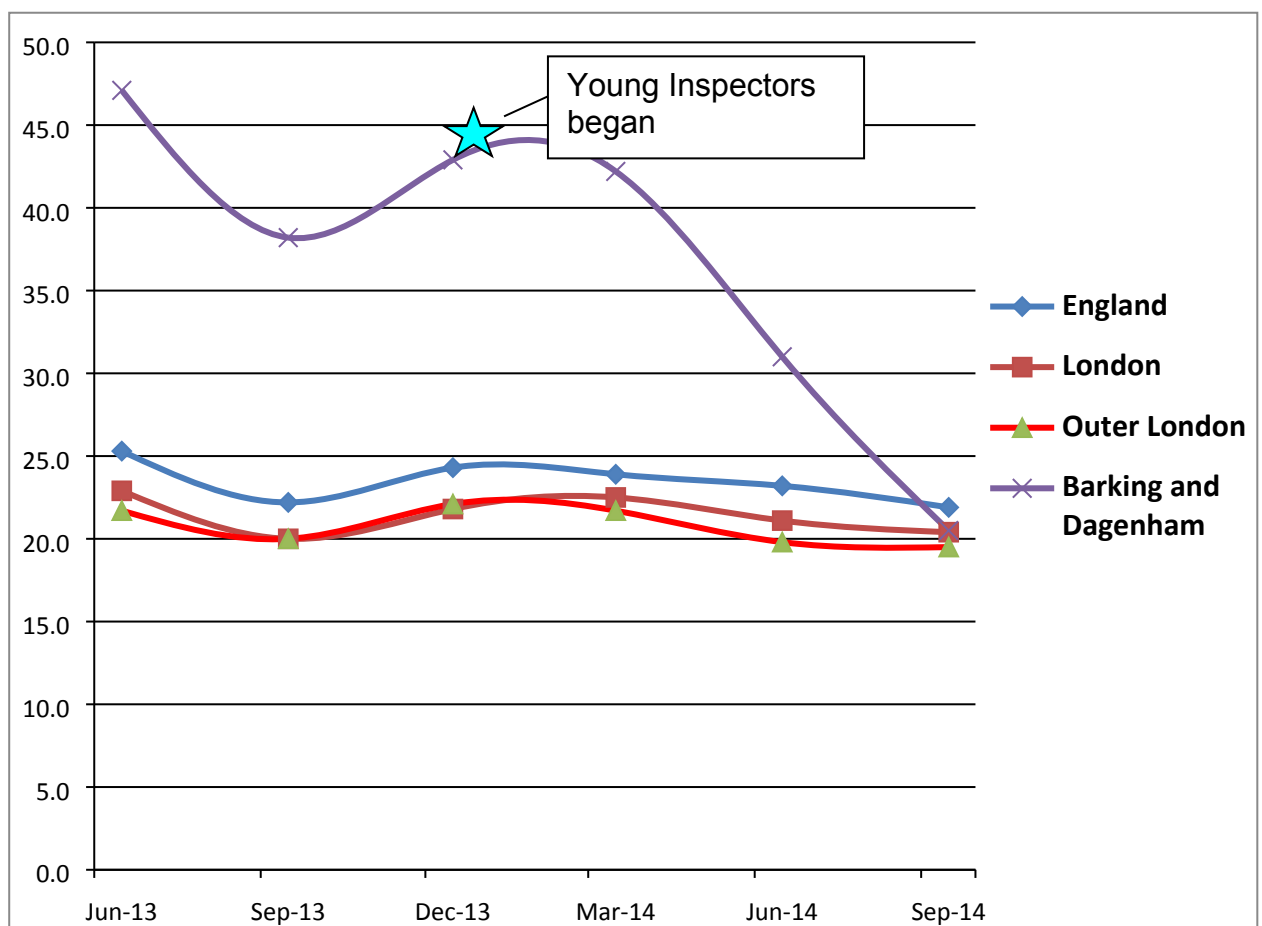
2.3 Young Inspectors

- 2.3.1 At the start of the year 20 new Young Inspectors participated in intensive training to learn to become a Young Inspector, this was delivered by youth workers and experienced Young Inspectors. The young people learnt how to carry out inspections of pharmacies and inspections of all other types of services, where each type of inspection has a different type of report to complete.
- 2.3.2 During the course of 2015 the Young Inspectors carried out 58 pharmacy inspections. 11 other inspections of services also took place, such as borough run leisure centres Abbey and Becontree in order to support the work of the Healthy

Lifestyles sub-group, with the inspections focussing on how easily young people can access physical activities in the borough or get support if they are struggling with their weight, Subwise substance misuse service for young people and the physical activity team.

2.3.3 There appears to be a strong correlation between the introduction of the Young Inspectors programme and employment of the Health Youth Workers and a decline in Teenage Pregnancy (TP) rates in the borough. Most recent data (published 24/11/15 for Jul-Oct 2014) demonstrates that the TP rate for Barking and Dagenham has dropped for the 4th quarter in a row and is now at it's lowest level for at least four years, at 20.5 per 1000 under 18s. The first quarter of this decline coincides directly with the quarter when Young Inspectors began their work inspecting pharmacies in January 2014. This is a drop of 33% on the previous quarter, and 46% on the same quarter in 2013. The figure of 20.5 is also at London Average, with London as a whole actually having seen an increase on the same quarter in 2013 of 2%. LBBBD rolling annual TP rate has fallen to 33.8 from 38.3. This rate of decline of 11.7% is well above London and England performance, which has remained static.

Figure 1. Graph showing the quarterly teenage pregnancy rates in Barking and Dagenham and the commencement of the Young Inspectors programme



2.4 Young Mayor

2.4.1 The first ever Young Mayor was elected in February 2015, after the Leader of the Council and Mayor Kangethe formally announced there would be a Young Mayor at the Youth Parade in 2014. Six young people stood for election, each young person delivered a speech encouraging the wider forum to vote for them. Angelica Olawepo was democratically elected as Young Mayor.

2.4.2 During the course of the year the Young Mayor attended and/or hosted 15 events, most notably the visit from Her Majesty the Queen, and a number of 50th Anniversary borough events. The full list includes:

- Induction with Mayor & Council
- Inaugural Women's Empowerment Awards 2015
- Community clear up event at Marks Gate
- Annual Ceremonial Council - Mayor Making
- 50 Years of Fashion event at Marks Gate
- Celebratory party – Pastor Bright
- Her Majesty's visit to the borough
- Youth Parade
- National Citizen's Service graduation event
- Young Mayor's charity fun day
- National Citizen's Service dragons' den
- Alcohol Awareness Week event at Barking Abbey School
- House of Faith congregation
- Box for Peace event at Barking Mosque
- Mayor's Christmas Party

2.4.3 Angelica chose Young Minds as her charity to fundraise for, after careful consideration and discussions with the Youth Forum and students at her school. Angelica hosted a Young Mayor's Charity Fun Day at Barking Learning Centre and raised £800 for her chosen charity.

2.5 Consultations

2.5.1 As in previous years, the BAD Youth Forum participated in a range of one-off consultations in 2015. These include:

- **Catering service regarding healthy choices and cleanliness of the dining areas in some schools:** Young people shared their experiences of eating at school and asked about the quality and value for money. It became clear there is a big difference in the standards between some of the secondary schools in the borough. Young people also contributed ideas to the new name for the catering service the council offers to schools. As a result of the consultation, menus have been adapted in secondary schools.
- **Streetbase consultation about the use of the card and making it more accessible and popular with young people:** Young people met with Phil Oldershaw to learn about the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Phil demonstrated the sugar content in many foods and drinks young people consume. The young people were informed about how to use the Streetbase

cards and the benefits of using the cards, i.e. saving up your points to use them for a free swim or other locally based activities for young people.

- **NEET consultation about what we think the council could do to encourage young people to stay in education, employment or training:** The Council are continually looking to lower NEET rates, with this in mind the Group Manager for Integrated Youth Services met with the Youth Forum to ask their views about what more could be done to encourage young people to stay in EET. This information was fed back to careers advisors and NEET trackers in order to offer more appropriate support to NEET young people, and contribution to the borough's participation plan.
- **Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) - online consultation regarding young people's rights:** Young people were asked a series of questions about their rights. Their responses fed in to a country wide survey which will help to shape the future work of CRAE.
- **Public Health England - consultation about raising awareness of safe sex, in response to a rise in sexually transmitted infections:** The forum were consulted on how best to educate young people, through a leaflet, about how to stay safe when having sex. This leaflet will be distributed around the borough.
- **Police survey:** Our Young Inspectors developed a questionnaire, aimed at young people, to find out how police can best communicate with them. We had over 1000 responses. This is the first time a survey like this has been conducted and the Police were very impressed with the response. The responses will be used to inform the way that police interact with young people and what information they share with young people, with a summary report currently being written.
- **Mental health consultation asking young people for their experiences of accessing mental health and finding out what the barriers are:** This consultation came from a Patient Engagement Forum (PEF) meeting. After attending the meeting a youth representative requested Gemma Hughes (Clinical Commissioning Group) attend a session with our members to talk about young people's issues. The young people fed back to Gemma their positive and negative experiences of accessing mental health services. This information will be used by service providers to improve the current service on offer and to attempt to breakdown some of the barriers that young people face when trying to access mental health services.
- **Healthwatch consulted with 2 sub-groups about making their leaflet more appealing to young people:** A draft has been made to date which young people have added further amendments to. The final document will come back to the newly elected forum in March to give their final approval before going to print. All of the ideas young people suggested have been used throughout the leaflet, making it attractive and appealing to young people.
- **Active.mob:** We met with Active.mob, a social enterprise commissioned to work in the borough by Public Health, to discuss what the issues are in Barking and Dagenham for young people regarding teenage pregnancy to help inform a video project around young people views on teenage pregnancy in the borough.

2.6 Children's Services Select Committee

2.6.1 The Chair of the forum has attended all formal and informal meetings arranged by the CSSC. The Chair helped formulate the CSSC's current workplan by asking that anti-bullying work be included, has given his views about education and presented a request to the committee to allow the BAD Youth Forum to present their anti-bullying workshop in order to gain the committee's support and sign off. The Chair has spoken confidently at the meetings and has gained experience and confidence in attending formal meetings and expressing his views.

2.7 Other events/meetings the BAD Youth Forum have participated in

- Chair of the forum attended the Growth Commission meeting to talk give a young people's perspective on the positives and areas for development in the borough;
- Regularly attended the Public Transport Liaison Group meeting;
- Patient Engagement Forum meetings arranged by the local Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Two representatives sit on the Chief Officers Group meeting led by the Youth Offending Service looking at out of court disposal orders and whether the right decision has been made;
- Members attended the borough Youth Parade;
- All members participated in a democracy and election session the week of the General Election. Young people were given the opportunity to discuss the major policies political leaders were discussing and attempted to put these policies in order of priority dependent upon a pre-chosen background they were assigned. Young people learnt about the importance of making the right choices based on your needs, and how to be considerate of the wider public's needs when choosing who to vote for. Young people had a mature debate about why different issues such, health, education, immigration and national security are important;
- Held regular meetings between each sub-group and the Leader of the Council;
- Members from across all sub-groups participated in the regeneration project in Marks Gate; painting the subway and litter picking in the area. This project promoted social responsibility and from their participation young people gained a greater appreciation for the need to work together to make improvements in the borough, that not only benefit themselves but other people in the borough as well. The positive atmosphere and integration with other groups ensured young people really enjoyed their time at the event as well as learning from it; and
- Question Time full forum session. On 1st July 2015 the whole forum were invited to attend a full forum meeting held in the Town Hall chambers. A series of panel members were invited which included representatives from LBB Education, Police, Transport for London and Health. Young people were able to quiz the panel of policy/ decision makers about issues that affect young people and as a result raised the panels awareness of these issues and what young people would like to see happen to positively change the areas that have a negative impact on young people. The young people asked challenging questions and led thought provoking discussions with panel members.

2.8 Forward plan

A detailed workplan for the BAD Youth Forum is devised each year upon election of new representatives. There are a number priorities the forum will consider in 2016. These are:

- Continuing to inspect pharmacies that provide the C-Card with a view to continuing to positively impact on teenage pregnancy figures
- Link closely with the condom distribution scheme co-ordinator within Integrated Youth Services to ensure the process of feeding back to pharmacies the strengths of their service as well as what young people feel needs to improve
- Further incorporate the Young Mayor scheme in to the work of the forum, enabling the newly elected Young Mayor to benefit from the skills, support and knowledge of the forum
- Continue to uphold the boroughs priorities of encouraging civic pride, enabling social responsibility and growing the borough.
- The Forum will ensure that Riverside school is fully integrated into the forum, and will work towards involving ELUTEC, Goresbrook School and Riverside Bridge.
- Sub-group priorities for 2016 will be decided in February once the new Forum is elected.

3. Other Issues

- 3.1 **Corporate Policy and Customer Impact** – The work of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum contributes directly to two of the Council's three overarching priorities, enabling social responsibility and encouraging civic pride. This year, the Forum have undertaken a number of social action projects, ranging from anti-bullying workshops to community clear ups, that all reinforce the principle of taking responsibility for improving your own community. Similarly, the work of the Forum overall is concerned with young people volunteering their time to make improvements to services for the community. The Forum's work also contributes to specific areas within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Children and Young People's Plan, and 14-19 Participation Plan. Customer impact has been most visibly demonstrated in the borough's teenage pregnancy figures which shows the contribution that the young inspectors programme is making to improving access to sexual health services for young people.
- 3.2 **Safeguarding Children** – This year, the BAD Youth Forum have chosen anti-bullying as one of their themes. With the advent of new technologies, preventing and tackling bullying is becoming increasingly complex, with a wide range of partners able to play a role in prevention. By educating young people directly about the signs of bullying and the first steps you can take to stop it, particularly at those younger students in school, the Forum is seeking to empower young people and provide peer led resistance and resilience to bullying in all it's forms. It is important therefore that this workshop is seen by all of the borough's schools, rather than the 50% that have booked it to date.
- 3.3 **Health Issues** – The healthy lifestyles sub-group, supported by funding from Public Health, developed a fun and interesting workshop that young people were keen to participate in. Rather than trying to recruit new young people to attend a workshop, the workshop was taken to their existing youth groups which ensured we were

meeting them in an environment where they felt safe and able to fully participate. For some young people obesity is an embarrassing subject to talk about, but by having young people delivering the workshop in an environment where they feel most at ease, it removed much of young people's anxiety and they were more inclined to participate.

A significant achievement this year in terms of health outcomes is the significant drop in the borough's teenage pregnancy rates. Whilst the reasons for this are multi-faceted, there is a correlation between the start of the decline in rates and when the Young Inspectors began their programme of inspections in January 2014. The rate of inspections has continued, with over 50 inspections completed in 2015 alone. All inspection findings contribute directly and immediately to the feedback and training that pharmacies receive around the condom distribution scheme, thereby driving up the quality of the service that is delivered.

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

List of Appendices: None