

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee

BROMLEY YOUTH COUNCIL MANIFESTO 2013/14

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1. Summary

- 1.1 To update Committee Members on the current Bromley Youth Council Manifesto Campaign Programme.

2. The Briefing

- 2.1 Bromley Youth Council is the elected youth forum of the London Borough of Bromley, which enables young residents of the Borough to have a voice in local decision making and encourages young people to take part in campaigns and projects to address the issues that affect them. The work of the Bromley Youth Council is managed and supported by the Bromley Youth Support Programme's Youth Involvement staff team.
- 2.2 Bromley Youth Council (BYC) has an elected and co opted membership of 37 young people aged 11-19 years old (up to 25 with a disability or special education need). Bromley Youth Council promotes key functions including youth leadership, volunteering, youth democracy, listening to young people and putting young people at the heart of decision making. The Youth Council hold bi-annual elections across Bromley Schools, colleges, Youth Clubs and Voluntary services. In addition the Youth Council has co-opted representatives from the Living in Care Council, Bromley Young Advisers. The Youth Council has representatives on the British Youth Council and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.
- 2.3 Each year the Youth Council host a youth manifesto event, to which all borough secondary schools and colleges are invited to send representation. The event is planned, delivered and evaluated by youth councillors and supported by youth support work programme staff. Key decision makers in the borough, including elected members, officers and service managers are invited as guests, to listen to the views and concerns and answer questions from young people either living, being educated or growing up in Bromley. The outcomes from this event contribute to and complete the BYC Manifesto for the forthcoming year. A copy of the 2013/14 Youth Manifesto is available from the lead contact for this report.
- 2.4 The Manifesto 2012/13 identified Bullying as the key issue, with gangs, sex and relationship education, and employment as the next most prioritised concerns. Bullying became the primary campaign. The Youth Council ran a successful 'Bullying or Banter campaign' involving all secondary schools on the borough, youth clubs and voluntary sector services. The Youth Council has produced an End of Year Report detailing the impact of the individual campaigns as well as reporting individual and group outcomes and achievements. A copy of the End of Year Report 2012/13 is available on request from the lead contact for this report.

- 2.5 At the manifesto event in March 2013, 81 young people from 15 schools and colleges identified their priority issues as a mandate for the Youth Council. Mental Health was identified as the key issue, with Youth Activities, Staying safe and Tuition Fees as the next most prioritised concerns. The initial identification of issues at the manifesto event formed the basis from which campaign plans for these concerns were drawn up by youth council members.

Mental Health was identified to be the Youth Council's primary campaign for 2013 with the others as secondary campaigns.

- 2.6 The proposed work plan and aims and objectives of the primary campaign are the subject of the remainder of this report. Information on the Youth Council's secondary campaigns is available from the contact officer for this report.

3. MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The campaign intends to address the following key priority areas:-

- Young People felt that they were not aware of the breadth of mental health issues facing young people and that they often made assumptions about issues such as anxiety, depression, stress etc which were not accurate or helpful. They would like to raise awareness amongst young people of mental health issues.
- They were concerned that services available to support young people with mental health issues were not widely known and young people were not clear how they could go about accessing these services and who they could talk to if they had concerns or worries. They felt there needed to be better information available about services able to support young people concerned about mental health issues.
- Young people felt there was a lot of mis-information and myths surrounding mental health issues. They were concerned that some young people are reluctant to admit they have concerns as they are scared that people will judge them, make assumptions about them or treat them as 'mad'. Young people wanted to challenge the myths about mental health and the stigma of those suffering from mental health issues.
- Young people recognised that adolescence can be a confusing, pressured and stressful time for them. Many of them experience difficult and stressful situations, in addition to those experienced by all teenagers such as exams, relationships, adolescence, transition, some have additional stress e.g. from family relationship issues and breakdown problems etc. Young people were keen to look at the issues which effect mental health and wellbeing in young people and raise the profile of these 'life events' and the possible impact these can have.

4. MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN PROPOSED WORK PLAN

- 4.1 To address the issues the Youth Council are proposing to:-

- Design and distribute an information leaflet in partnership with Public Health to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and the services available to support young people.
- Produce an information film for use in schools/colleges and community facilities to raise awareness of services and how to access them.
- Work alongside Public Health to offer training to schools, colleges and Governors about mental health issues in Adolescents.

- Deliver an awareness campaign with a focus around anti –bullying week '*I'm not Mad*'. In addition explore using Bromley Youth Support Programme summer programme to speak to young people and distribute leaflets etc.
 - Use BYSP Facebook to facilitate and support the campaign and signpost young people to appropriate help.
- 4.2 The Youth Council is currently in the process of seeking funding and exploring opportunities to resource the campaign. A full work plan for the primary campaign is available from the lead contact officer for this report.

5. CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

- 5.1 The Youth Council will produce a mid term progress report, which will be available early October 2013; copies will be available on request via the lead contact officer for this report.
- 5.2 The Youth Council will also produce an End of Year Report which will look at the impact of the campaign as well as reporting individual and group outcomes and achievements. This will be the subject of a briefing for elected members in early 2014.