

STOCKTON YOUTH ASSEMBLY

End of Term Report



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children and Young People

Big plans for the young people of our borough

Introduction

Stockton's Youth Assembly (SYA) was established in 2013, and is made up of young people between the ages of 11 – 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with special needs).

The purpose of the SYA is to give young people a voice by providing a way to contribute to matters affecting them and give the Council a youth perspective when planning and developing services.

There are 19 SYA members representing eight schools, sixth forms and colleges across the borough, universal youth clubs, young carers, looked after children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). This includes Stockton's Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and Deputy MYP, who are Chair and Vice Chair of the SYA.

The SYA's work programme was agreed at the Borough-wide Debate in September 2013, and included the topics:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Sport / Leisure and Youth
- Getting Ready for Work
- Community Safety
- Communities & Environment

The current two year term of the SYA office is now ending and therefore it is time to look back at the huge amount of work that the current members have achieved.

Health & Wellbeing

- SYA Members contributed their views on mental and emotional health and wellbeing, examining the needs of children and young people and whether services were available to meet these needs. Members noted the main issues for them regarding mental health and the support they would like to see made available. The Public Health Team used the views of the SYA to inform their work on the Health Needs Assessment.
- The Children and Young People Partnership, which brings together different organisations to improve children and young people's health opportunities, consulted with the SYA. Following an initial discussion at an SYA meeting regarding how the Partnership could get the views of young people, a Task and Finish group was held to look at different ways the Partnership could engage with young people. The members made suggestions on the best ways to engage with young people at the group meeting, before discussing how these could work in practice.



Sport/Leisure and Youth

- The SYA was consulted on the development of a Sport and Leisure programme for young people. Members highlighted the activities that would interest them, the types of venues they thought would be suitable for activities, and times that would be most appropriate. A Task and Finish group was set up to give further feedback and the SYA highlighted the importance of getting the pricing structure correct, having appropriate venues from which to provide activities that were available for use after school and at weekends; to have reliable public transport and having a diverse range of sports and leisure offer within the programme.

Community Safety

- Following the results of the Crime and Disorder Survey, the Community Safety Team planned to visit schools to address young people's concerns regarding robbery. Before doing so, the team attended the SYA to gain their views on the questionnaire they had devised to take into school. The members made several suggestions for how the information could be presented to young people in schools and discussed their views on crime. The Community Safety Team amended their approach to include the SYA's feedback.

- The SYA contributed to the Police and Crime Panel's (PCP) Task and Finish Group review, exploring the work carried out by the Police and Community Safety in Schools. Members shared their experiences of police working with their schools, noted how they would like a stronger connection with the police and suggested the possibility of trialling a connection to the police or Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) as part of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons.
- Updates were received from the Community Safety Team on statistics and interventions for alcohol related crime and the perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Getting Ready for Work

- The 2013 Make Your Mark Campaign highlighted the top issues in Stockton as the need for Better Work Experience and Apprenticeships, and the SYA took these forward as a local campaign as part of the National Curriculum for Life. The SYA met with the Council's Children & Young People Select Committee to discuss their Scrutiny Review of Education and Employment, and SYA members views helped shape the Select Committee's recommendations to Cabinet. The members spent time engaging with young people in Stockton through schools and youth projects to encourage them to take part in the 2014 Make Your Mark Ballot. The results of the 2014 ballot highlighted work experience as one of the top three issues regionally, and A Curriculum to Prepare Us for Life as one of the top three issues nationally. Better work experience and careers advice were taken forward as one of five topics debated at the UK Youth Parliament House of Commons sitting.



Communities and Environment

- As part of the consultation process to develop a volunteer strategy, Catalyst, who represents the volunteer section in Stockton Borough, held a discussion with the SYA on how to make sure young people are aware of the opportunities for volunteering. SYA Members highlighted that young people do not always know where to go to find out about volunteering, suggesting schools and youth clubs as a way to promote opportunities.
- SYA Members were the first to be consulted on the design of Stockton Borough Council's new website. They gave their views on the appearance of the website, to ensure that it would be "inviting" to young people, and the use of search options.

In addition the SYA

- Took part in the British Youth Council's 2013 national campaign, Votes at 16, via their informal meetings.
- Championed the Young Carers Quest Project, raising general awareness of the contribution of young carers and their needs.
- Received an update on Library Services, including the refurbishment of borough libraries, the services available, and the events being held.
- Was updated on the development of the Give It A Go app, which was first discussed at the SYA Borough Wide Debate. The app was developed in response to the common complaint that there is "nothing to do", and seeks to direct people to activities within Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool areas that they may wish to participate in, thereby reducing anti-social behaviour. The Give It A Go app was developed in partnership with Teesside University, and with involvement of local Councils, community groups and youth groups.



Development Opportunities

To ensure that SYA Members are fully supported to represent young people across the borough and have the confidence to carry out the work of the SYA, it is vital that the skills they have are recognised and they are also given the opportunity to develop new skills to enhance their role. SYA members have therefore:

- Started to complete the British Youth Council's (BYC) Youth Voice Award. This accredits hard work that young representatives do in their communities and also challenges them to try something new, exciting and innovative.
- Attended the BYC's Youth Voice Leadership Development Programme in April 2014. This consisted of seven tailored training courses that supported young people to be successful youth voice leaders in their community. Places have already been booked to take a group of young people to the 2015 Leadership Development Programme.
- Travelled to BYC regional conventions events over the past year and networked to support partners from our area in accessing these conventions including: Eastern Ravens, Billingham Youth Town Council and skate park user groups as well as all SYA members, therefore bringing together a real Youth Voice for Stockton feel to these meetings.
- Held an event celebrating Youth Voice, with groups from across the borough joining together to celebrate young people's involvement in Stockton's Youth Voice opportunities. Stockton SYA invited schools from across the borough that supported the MYP elections process, Eastern Ravens YC Aloud, Billingham Youth Town Council, and CiCC, to encourage inclusive youth voice opportunities and support working in the coming year.
- The Chair of SYA/MYP has been successful in achieving a position on the National Scrutiny Group (NSG). This is made up of young people who work with the Government and Minister to ensure that their views and needs are taken into account when developing policies that affect them. The Chair/MYP has also been successful in becoming a member on the NHS Youth Forum, another national forum that she has a valued voice on.
- The BYC has helped NHS England bring together a group of young people to help shape health services. The group brings together a diverse range of young people to give advice and opinions on healthcare policies and to provide ideas on how services can be improved and hold both Commissioners and the NHS England Board to account for their decision making.
- The Chair of the SYA/MYP has been successful in gaining a place as Procedures Group Lead and will start this role once she has completed her term as MYP in February. This is an excellent progression for her and will leave space for another very active MYP to step into the role.
- The Chair of the SYA/MYP attended the BYC's Annual Sitings with other MYPs to discuss a number of campaigns and work towards the development of the Make Your Mark issues. The Chair of the SYA/MYP later led the debate on Mental Health in the House of Commons on November 2014.
- Volunteered at the Stockton Weekender which helped to increase their confidence of meeting and working with many young people and adults who attended the music festival. The members also got the chance to see the bands play.
- Attended the Stockton International Riverside Festival VIP event, showcasing what young people in Stockton have been involved in and the great work that they do. They were given access to see an art installation as part of the launch of SIRF and also spend time having fun with lots of other young people from Stockton.

Now, the SYA also has a presence on the SBC website, where all the agendas and minutes of the SYA and contact information for the MYP and Deputy can be found.

<http://www.stockton.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youthdirect/stocktonyouthassembly/>

The site will continue to be developed with content relating to SYA activity, and in a format likely to promote effective engagement with young people.

