

Report on the activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth
for
Children's Select Committee
05 September 2017

1. **Introduction**

This report offers a summary of activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY) during the period April – August 2017.

2. **Meetings**

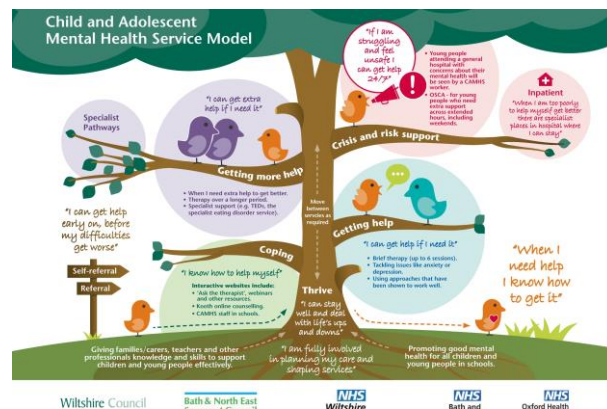
WAY members have met on four occasions since the last report. Two of these have been whole group meetings at County Hall, one was online, and one was duplicated as a trial across the UK Youth Parliament constituencies of West, North and East Wiltshire. May and June were whole group meetings at County Hall, and in July the group held an online meeting. In addition, the three members of the UK Youth Parliament attended a Regional Convention in Exeter, and the Annual Sitting at Liverpool Hope University.

3. **Progress on the Agenda for Action**

WAY seeks to organise its activities in relation to its Agenda for Action which has five priorities:

Priority 1: Improve emotional wellbeing and mental health support for young people

WAY members met with Lead Commissioner for Child and Adolescent Mental Health to offer views on the new service to be launched in April 2018. Members were involved in the design of an illustrative interpretation of the service to help children, families and professionals understand how it will look.



WAY members, along with members of the Children in Care Council, prepared a film clip for the home page of the www.onyourmind.org.uk website which welcomes visitors to the site.

Priority 2: Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

No specific work has been carried out in this period, although the link with the Healthy Schools has been maintained and young people will be reviewing the next round of applications for Healthy School status as well as having input into a review of the standards.

Priority 3: Bullying

WAY members are working on the development of podcasts to be aired during [Anti-Bullying Week 2017](#) (13-17 November). These audio recordings will consider specific themes and areas of concern. One podcast with a focusing on racial discrimination has already been recorded. The podcast will seek to explain the causes of bullying but, crucially, will give positive messages about coping with and tackling bullying behaviour. WAY would like to promote the podcasts alongside [Wiltshire's Anti-Bullying Charter](#) which was launched in 2016. BBC Radio Wiltshire has expressed interest in this piece of work and is liaising with WAY via the Council's Communications Team.

Priority 4: Public Transport

WAY held a discussion activity about the transport issues they and their peers face. They reported their concerns as being:

- The financial implication of fares for children increasing at age 16, when they are still in compulsory education or training;
- Disincentives attached to purchasing annual or weekly tickets – sometimes this is more expensive depending on journeys taken;
- Infrequency of rural bus routes, and lack of coverage for some areas;
- Lack of capacity on buses at peak times;
- A lack of **safe** alternatives to using public transport, i.e. poor safe cycling routes, lack of railings, footpaths and walkways in some locations;
- The sense that Wiltshire is a corridor rather than a destination (e.g. train timetables do not enable easy commuting within the county);
- The view that the Council waits for accidents to happen before it acts (e.g. on highway infrastructure projects).

WAY would like to raise the profile of these issues. To date, WAY has been invited to attend a meeting of bus company representatives within the Salisbury area (to be arranged). WAY will also convey its concerns to members of the Youth Safeguarding Board at a joint meeting in September.

Priority 5: Environment

No specific work has been carried out in this period.

4. Other activities

- Rebecca Richards represented her peers at a Regional Convention of the UK Youth Parliament in Exeter in June. Rebecca met young people from across the region and attended a variety of workshops. She will report back to the WAY in September.
- Members of UK Youth Parliament Cecilia George, Kirstie Stage and Matthew Jamieson attended the



Annual Sitting at Liverpool Hope University. Here, they worked with UK Youth Parliament members from across the regions and countries, and took part in the Big Debate, setting the manifesto for Youth Parliament. Both Matthew and Cecilia presented policy motions.

Speakers for the event were Rt Hon John Bercow MP, and Margaret Aspinall, Chairwoman of the Hillsborough Family Support Group.

- WAY members, alongside members of the Children in Care Council, took part in the selection process for the appointment of Corporate Director Children's Services. They formed a Youth Panel, setting the questions for candidates and interviewing them as part of the process.
- Kirstie Stage was selected to give evidence to the [Youth Select Committee](#) on body image, and attended the House of Commons to do so in July.

5. Development of WAY

WAY discussed future options for how best the council and its partners listen to and act on children

and young people's voice. This included exploring the option of a joined up / partnership approach to youth voice influence which would endeavour to enhance the profile of UK Youth Parliament members. WAY members were in favour of such a development, as long as youth voice is strengthened and representation enhanced.