

**Education Scrutiny Committee**  
Meeting to be held on 15 July 2014

Electoral Division affected:  
All

**"We all need a little help at times" Lancashire Youth Council Consultation report.**

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**Executive Summary**

In September 2013 the Chair of the Lancashire County Council Education Scrutiny Committee asked members of Lancashire Youth Council to carry out a consultation that would enable them to identify any barriers to education that young people encountered.

From the ensuing research and consultation process the Youth Council identified a number of points:

- 69 of the 80 young people responding to the survey said they had faced difficulties which impacted on their learning.
- The main issues quoted as affecting young people during their learning were: bullying, mental and emotional health issues and family and friends issues such as bereavement and financial difficulties.
- 43 respondents quoted a variety of channels from which they had received support, ranging from friends, family, school, college, external agencies and specialists.
- 21 young people suggested that what would help would be a better understanding of emotional health and well-being and personal support, with someone to talk to.
- The Youth Council have found through this consultation that the majority of young people who identified that they have barriers to learning tended to be aged 15+

From these points it has been identified that young people are facing a number of issues that are construed by them as barriers to learning, many of which are being addressed both within the education establishment and by external partners and organisations.

**Recommendation**

Education Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the findings of the Youth Council's consultation with young people on 'barriers to educational learning' and in particular on the three recommendations identified by the Youth Council and as set out in this report.

## Background and Advice

In September 2013 Lancashire Youth Council were asked to develop and deliver a consultation that would identify the barriers to learning that young people face in Lancashire. Members of Lancashire Youth Council worked to devise a questionnaire in partnership with the Head of Young People's Service and the Chair of the Education Scrutiny Committee (See Appendix A).

The questionnaire was then distributed to the District Youth Councils, Children in Care Council, Young Carers Forum and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Youth Forum and received eighty responses from across eight of the Lancashire districts. The age range of the respondents varied from aged eleven to nineteen with forty seven being age sixteen and below.

Members of Lancashire Youth Council helped distribute the questionnaire and encouraged young people to complete it and worked to ensure that a diverse range of young people were consulted with. The results should be considered as a small scale survey and the Youth Council felt that if they were to do this piece of work again they would recommend distributing the questionnaire to a wider group of young people including schools, youth work provisions and voluntary youth organisations. The details of the results and feedback from young respondents to the questionnaire are documented in Appendix B.

Key findings in addition to those presented above:

- The majority of young people responding did reference an issue they had faced which they felt impacted upon their learning. The issues they raised broadly fell into three categories: bullying, mental health and family/friends issues. Some young people reference issues with access and travel, disability and school/college courses. (see Appendix B for the full list of issues raised)
- 11 young people out of the 80 respondents stated that they hadn't had anything negative impacting on their learning.
- 6 of the young people consulted felt that there was very little, and in some cases no support offered to them in order to continue with their learning development.
- 22 respondents said the support they got was helpful, whereas 8 felt it wasn't.
- Young people quoted a variety of support channels that they had used which could be shared with schools/colleges to ensure that others are made aware of these support channels (See Appendix B, responses to Question 2). There is a whole range of agencies who can and do work in partnership with schools to offer wrap around support for young people. The responses also heavily referenced the valued support of parents and other trusted adults in support young people with difficult issues.
- 8 districts are represented, with South Ribble having the most respondents with 23 and West Lancashire receiving the lowest with 2 responses. Districts with no responses were Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale and Wyre

## **Existing Campaigns and Initiatives**

It would be useful for the Education Scrutiny Committee to be aware that the Youth Council takes an active interest in this area of work and two of their chosen campaign areas are Emotional Health and Well-being and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing group specifically want to raise awareness of the issues affecting young people and try to remove the stigma around mental health. They have made a display which is being taken to different locations around the county, starting with Morcambe library in July 2014.

Currently the SRE group are working with UCLAN on a European research project on teenage relationships 'Stir it up' (safeguarding teenage intimate relationships) which seeks to raise awareness of 'healthy' relationships and where to go for support if this develops into a controlling or 'unhealthy' relationship. The youth council is utilising social media to promote this through the use of cartoons.

The Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Board (PULSE) have initiated a support project called 'Life's Up's and Downs' which offers practical tips and advice for combating emotional health and well-being issues.

The Youth Council were also involved in developing the Lancashire Anti-Bullying Charter which all schools have been asked to sign up to. This sets out the rights and responsibilities of young people and asks schools to develop an action plan for ensuring young people are aware of their responsibilities and that their rights are upheld.

The SRE group also developed the SRE Charter for all secondary schools in Lancashire which asks schools to commit to recognising that Sex and Relationships Education is important to young people and how they will ensure young people are informed and educated in this area.

The Youth Council have also recently helped re-design the marketing materials for the Young People's Service telephone, text and web talk service which is available 365 days per year for young people to use. They wanted to highlight the issues that young people may be facing so that young people would understand more clearly what the service could potentially help them with. They came up with a list of key issues which they feel young people face and these have been incorporated into the posters promoting the service.

## **Youth Council Recommendations following the initial consultation exercise**

Lancashire Youth Council recommends that further work is done to identify specific needs that young people may require help with to overcome barriers to learning:

- 1) Further awareness raising should be undertaken to ensure that young people, schools and colleges are familiar with the work of the Youth Council campaign on Emotional Health and Well-being and the work of Pulse (Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Board) on 'Life's up's and Downs'. These campaigns and initiatives are working to raise awareness of the issues affecting young people, offer support and advice and remove the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- 2) Further consultation should be undertaken with a larger sample group, perhaps focusing on specific groups of young people such as particular age groups/gender groups. Additionally further work could be done with the groups of young people who were already consulted with to look at what may already be available or could be provided to support these young people and their education establishments in overcoming the barriers they face.
- 3) Lancashire Youth Council felt that it may also be beneficial to share the consultation findings with LASSH (Lancashire Association of Secondary School Heads) and the Lancashire College Principal's groups so that they can be made aware of the issues and help that young people felt they needed throughout their education. They could also be reminded about initiatives such as the Bullying and SRE Charter and be encouraged to promote services which young people can access for support.

## **Consultations**

Lancashire Youth Council gave out 110 questionnaires and received 80 responses from young people aged between 12 and 19 years old from a variety of youth forums, including targeted groups. For detailed results from the consultation please see appendix B.

## **Implications:**

### **Risk management**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of Background Papers**

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