

A summary of the meeting between BANES youth groups and BANES councillors

Groups present: [Youth Forum](#); [Care Experienced Council](#); [Keynsham Now](#); [Boys In Mind](#); and [Project 28](#)

Councillors present: [Sarah Warren](#) and [Kevin Guy](#)

On the 1st December 2022, 21 young people from 5 different local youth groups met with BANES councillors Sarah Warren and Kevin Guy. This followed a similar meeting with councillors Romero, Stephenson-McGall, and Appleyard in July 2022.

It was a fantastic opportunity for young people to ask the Council any burning questions. The event included a group discussion as well as smaller 1-to-1 chats with the councillors.



The event kicked off with questions surrounding the climate emergency, with topics including: the use of electric cars, which offices in BANES use gas, and problems created by the privatisation of buses.

We then had an interesting discussion on how the council can connect with young people in BANES to get them involved in local government. Some suggestions from young people include:

- Using PSHE lesson at school to explain how the council works and making council documents more accessible
- 'teach politics in primary schools'
- 'have young people involved as councillors'
- Wording Council information and resources more accessibly

It also brought up the issue of youth voice (which many of the youth groups champion) with one young person stating 'It'd be good to have more say in the things that matter to young people.'

There was then a passionate discussion on mental health with another young person suggesting that 'We need mental health online support worldwide.' Some young people suggested that having a sustainable planet will not necessarily make people feel better (mentally). This also posed the question: how can we have a positive outlook on saving the planet if we are not happy within ourselves?

As a bonus, the young people were taken on a brief tour of the council chamber and the banqueting hall!

Our meeting concluded with a vote on what young people want to focus on in future collaboration. The result was to focus on positive mental health. Our next main action is to create a positive mental health resource, for example a video, and/or to signpost to existing resources.

We will also have another meeting in 2023, to collaborate on promoting positive youth mental health. Young people will decide on the format of the meeting, and staff are collecting their feedback on how to make it even better than the last two. We hope that youth groups who couldn't make it on 1st December will be able to join us for the next meeting!

By Indra Black, Youth Forum participant