



## Tonbridge & Malling Youth Forum Online meeting 29 April 2021

### Attending

9 Young People (Years 7 - 13)

Gemma Record (TMBC)

Karena Harmer (TMBC)

Toni Matthew (Youth Engagement Officer Kent Police)

### Young people's update on current lockdown issues

- Buses seem ok – school is good at making sure everyone wears masks
- Train to and from Tonbridge - overcrowded and some not wearing masks - More school patrols at railway station needed
- Lots of groups gather around the shops at York Parade before and after school – **Action: Toni will look to put some patrols there**
- Struggle to wear masks the whole day, difficult to concentrate
- One young person noted the mental health support they received recently was incredible, including C.A.M.H.S and Single point of referral GP service. Only issue is a lot of young people don't feel secure and safe seeking support so perhaps this needs to be worked on. It was noted that the young person talking about it so openly to the forum may encourage others to seek help if needed.

### Safety Pin

Current project being developed for information and advice for young people on a QR code to go up in shop windows, doctor's surgery etc.

The youth forum looked at the type of information they would like to be available

- Support coping going to school, mental health
- C.A.M.H.S – Instagram page – link
- Young Minds website link
- Assault/ sexual assault helpline – Healthy relationships
- Single Point of Access (young people are able to refer themselves to GP – SPA 08000 112474)
- Fearless – (young person's version of crime stoppers)
- How to write a cv and apply for a job
- Barnardo's be free (10-18 years) – positive relationship services
- We are with you

**Action: KH to put list together ready for QR code**

# TM FORUM YOUTH

## Youth Forum Debate Topic – Freedom of Speech

- Free speech is not a right to hate speech – cannot justify your hate speech for the right for free speech.
- Some platforms ban people on certain words used that they consider offensive, but is not always offensive.
- Social media has a responsibility to filter the content however it also gives them a dangerous power. Tik Tok have been banning videos with LGBT plus hash tags/content which can be very damaging.
- On You Tube difficult to say anything on politics
- Educational content that features damaging imagery/symbols i.e swastika on video – will most likely be demonetised – even if purely educational – may not be offensive yet still censored out

## Future debate topics

- Government voting system
- Online safety/scams
- Things to teach in schools
- Bullying - Cyber bullying is a big problem especially during the pandemic
- Awareness of people with disabilities ie. Deaf, blind, dyspraxia, dyslexia etc. Teachers should be trained to recognise problems early and general well-being. Schools aren't very well equipped for those with disabilities, schools should be more accessible
- Things for young people to do in Tonbridge and Malling – bowling/cinema etc

**Action: KH will look at which topic to cover for the next meeting and involve other Council services**

## We are with you

In previous meetings the issues of young people who are involved with drugs has been highlighted by the Youth Forum. This has been raised as an ongoing issue and has been suggested that it is worse since the pandemic started. In light of this, an online meeting has been arranged on **20 May at 6pm** with an agency called 'We are with you' who help people with drugs, alcohol or mental health issues. Any Youth Forum members who are interested, or know anyone themselves who may be struggling, this session may be useful to help you support them.

# TM YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Forum suggested some topics that they would like the agency to cover such as:

- How they work and the services they offer?
- How to access the services?
- How to support a friend or family member who is struggling?
- The legality involved – people who are involved are usually afraid to seek help of fear of being criminalised.

For more details visit: [www.wearewithyou.org.uk/](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/)

***Action: Youth Forum members to let Gemma know if they would like to attend or if they have any friends that would like to come along.***

## **Next meeting**

The next Youth Forum will be held on:-

Date: 20 May 2021 – (We are with You Drug/alcohol information/support)

Time: 6pm

Online virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams