



Case study

representative

Hillingdon Council | How we ensure all young people are represented by the Youth Council

What?

The Youth Council is an elected body and over a period of time have had quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive of the Council. At these meetings young people from the Youth Council had the opportunity to look at the policies that had been agreed by the Council. The Youth Council decided that it wasn't enough that the council just sent through policies for them to see and expressed the view that we would like to be involved earlier in the development of those policies to make sure the voice of young people in Hillingdon was considered from the beginning.

How?

To make the involvement of young people more meaningful it was agreed that representatives of council departments would meet the Youth Council on a monthly basis. To put this in place the Youth Council used the relationship they had with the Chief Executive. We also put a request through the Youth Service management team to be part of the decision making process. The Head of Youth Service raised this with Corporate Management and between them they got agreement for the monthly meetings with representatives from 11 departments to meet the Youth Council monthly. The meetings are governed by agreed terms of reference.

How does it work?

After a year the process was evaluated and although a number of departments were engaged in the process some were not. A new proposal was put forward and now the Youth Council meet on a monthly basis with four link officers from three Directorates:

- Planning, Education, Employment, Community Services and Social Services.
- Adult Social Care and Housing.
- Education and Youth Service represented by Head of Youth Service.
- Deputy Chief Executive

Link Officers hold management positions and represent all the Departments in their respective Directorates. They take responsibility for going back to individual Departments to raise issues. The

agendas for the meetings are set jointly through the Youth Council consultations and from issues arising from the youth surgeries held in youth centres together with items raised by the Link officers. The meetings look at emerging policies and debate the impact on young people.

The terms of reference are being reviewed to reflect the changing situation in the local authority and how the officers and the Youth council can realistically work together. To aid working together the Link Officers had an induction session with the Youth Council at the beginning of the process.

An example of how it can work for young people is the work the group has done on transport. Through the Deputy Chief Executive of the Council the Youth Council undertook a survey with young people on their views on school transport.

The results of the survey were then presented to managers from Transport for London. Transport for London said they would want to meet the Youth Council regularly. The young people now want to look at Oyster Card being as an identity card to help reduce the number of times that young people are challenged by TfL staff over their date of birth when travelling on public transport.

Impact

The impact on the young people in Hillingdon is measured through the actions taken as a result of the monthly meetings with the Link Officers who report back on action taken as a result of their joint discussions. The Link Officers are also held to account through the quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive.

The impact on young people is measured through the annual Youth conference where feedback on work undertaken by the Youth Council is gathered. The Conference gets responses from a wider group of young people on Council policies.

The feeling is that over time respect for the Youth council and young people has grown.

Learning points:

- Involvement of the Chief Executive helps hold officers to account.
- Link Officer role works as it is well defined.
- Terms of reference should be regularly reviewed to mirror actual situation.
- Terms of reference should be recognised and signed off by Council.