

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DEBORAH GLASSBROOK

TO:	Adult Social Care, Children's Service and Education Committee		
DATE:	31 March 2022		
TITLE:	Response to RVAs Growing up in Reading Report		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Liz Terry	PORTFOLIO:	Children's Services Education
SERVICE:	Brighter Futures for Children: Early Help	WARDS:	All Wards
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This briefing summarises the activity developed by Brighter Futures for Children and partners, including the Council, to the 'Growing Up in Reading' report.
- 1.2 Over 700 young people participated in the research carried out by a Youth Social Action Team supported by Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) and the University of Reading Participation Lab. The key priorities identified by young people were:
 - Mental health and well-being, addressing loneliness; and the need to ensure that young people are heard and have safe space and opportunities to be themselves
 - Being and feeling safe: addressing intolerance in order to ensure community stays safe & diverse; tackling racism and homophobic abuse on-line; and considering the safety & freedom of children and young people when designing and managing public open spaces
 - Creating a sense of community; including supporting all young people in social action; creating opportunities for secondary school children to discuss and gain knowledge about safety, social isolation, activities, and how to maintain well being
 - Widening the diversity of activities and opportunities available for young people; non-competitive environments; open clubs and activities to appeal to older teenagers and BAME youth; more clubs for niche interests and general spaces for young people to be themselves

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the responses progressed by Brighter Futures for Children in collaboration with the Council & key partners

3. The key activity in response to the findings are detailed below. BFfC completed a mapping of the local youth offer in collaboration with RVA. The report concluded several next steps
 - a) Strengthen communication and publicity of the current offer.
 - BFfC and the Family Information Service are increasingly using a range of platforms to promote the youth offer via social media, including via an Instagram page

- The Family Information Service contains a wealth of information regarding existing provision & is accessible to parents/children. A reminder of how to access FIS to be shared with Head Teachers & BFfC teams.
- b) Identify capacity/resource to co-ordinate and develop the youth offer.
- RBCs Housing Department have agreed funding for BFfC to recruit a small team of youth workers who will provide a blend of detached youth work in identified areas & support to local community groups to develop local club provision.
 - Government have confirmed the extension of the Holiday Activity Fund with funding allocation for 22/23 confirmed. This will provide a range of school holiday activities for children eligible for free school meals & other vulnerable children. Commissioning providers for Easter 2022 is completed.
- c) Work together to secure further funding to develop Reading's youth offer with a focus on social inclusion and diversity
- BFfC provided RVA with £10k to develop mental health support for young people in BAME communities
 - The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are funding a 2nd Mental Health Support Team and match funding for CAMHS workers to work solely with children looked after
 - BFfC will re-commission Kooth - an online mental health support offers for all children & young people
 - Children & young people were prioritised for VCS bids to the Covid Support Fund
 - BFfC & RBC have committed to match fund RVAs proposal to Volunteering Futures. Outcome expected April 2022

4. Next Steps will include:

- An opportunity to bid for national Transformation Funding for Family Hubs. These are intended as community-based support for 0-18s. A range of workshops have been held to identify gaps & priorities. Timescales for submitting a bid are yet to be confirmed.
- The next round of the Youth Investment Fund offers the opportunity to bid for youth support in Church, Norcot, Southcote & Whitley. The Youth Diversion network will review and agree any partnership bids.

5. There continue to be a range of opportunities for local young people to have a voice:

- No 5 Young Ambassadors have completed the 'Restart Youth' Report - a focus on the future of mental health services in Reading.



No5 Young People -
Restart Youth report.p

- The Youth Council provides children and young people with structured opportunities to share their views with BFfC and the Council