

# LONDON YOUTH ASSEMBLY

## **Recommendations for the Mayor of London**

When the London Youth Assembly first convened, we decided to focus our deliberations for the remainder of the municipal year on Youth Violence & Crime and Mental health & Wellbeing.

At the London Youth Assembly meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019, we resolved to put together a report for the London Assembly to present to the Mayor of London. The report would contain recommendations on initiatives to reduce of youth violence & crime and improve the mental health & wellbeing of young Londoners.

These recommendations look at how the Mayor of London and London Assembly can work with the London Youth Assembly to deliver these programmes.

The London Youth Assembly is divided into four Sub-Regions. Each Sub-Region has met to make their contributions and these suggestions have been compiled into the following report.

In addition to the recommendations to the Mayor, young people consistently make the case for early engagement in the decisions that affect them. We suggest that the Mayor of London has events focused on young people to provide forums for them to share their views.

In addition, we believe it would be helpful for London Assembly Members to attend Sub-Regional meetings to discuss proposals in detail and talk to young people about the issues in their area.

For an example of where this type of consultation worked well with young people, the Youth Violence Commission invited young people to join the panel. We believe that this was meaningful and representative, and linking directly with Commissioners and decision makers engaged 12,500 young people across the borough of Waltham Forest.

## **Youth Violence and Safety**

### **Key Findings from campaign work**

#### The issue

During discussions that took place at the four Sub-Regional meetings, LYA Members acknowledged that the issue of Youth Violence and Safety is one that impacts all young people in London.

The LYA participants discussed some of the factors that might lead to someone engaging in violence. These include, but are not limited to – drugs, peer pressure, difficult start in life, mental health and school exclusions. In addition, some young people may not fully appreciate the consequences of carrying a knife.

To date, there have been a number of effective programmes targeting the prevention of youth violence in each borough, such as; education, community projects and other targeted work.

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The LYA is keen to work more closely with Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on the issue of youth violence and safety. Young people want police to engage more with them socially and they would like to avoid their only context with the police being when there is an assumed problem, or for the purposes of Stop and Search.

The LYA participants discussed the issue of race in the context of stop and search. There is a misconception amongst young people that only young black boys are being stopped and searched. Police have assured young people that any lawful search must be based on evidence the police have received. However, better communication is required between young people and police on this issue.

## **Recommendations for the Mayor of London**

The London Youth Assembly (LYA) would like to make the following recommendations to the Mayor of London in relation to Youth Violence & Crime:

1. To hold regular Knife Crime Workshops. This has been done in some boroughs and has helped explain the issue to many young people.
2. For the Mayor to hold a summit to educate young people. Education needs to be a focus for any violent crime initiative.
3. To support the LYA to make a knife crime video and link with police and other agencies to ensure the video is factual and to support to the distribution of the video across London and the UK.
4. For the Mayor of London to speak directly to young people and ensure hard to reach and less engaged young people are involved.
5. To hold large London Wide Campaigns & Events throughout the year to engage young people.
6. For the Mayor's Office to organise workshops all over the City, to engage young people in the issue, and educate about knife crime including early engagement. Engaging with young people through youth clubs.
7. To enable more engagement from the Police in local high-risk schools. Year 9 is a pivotal age in secondary school – This would be an ideal time for Police to enter schools and educate students about youth violence and the consequences.
8. For young people to be included on more discussion panels and play more key roles in engaging with decision makers.

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## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

### **Key Findings from campaign work**

#### The issue

One of the key focus areas of the London Youth Assembly is Mental Health and Wellbeing. 'One in eight (12.8%) 5 to 19-year olds had at least one mental disorder when assessed in 2017' (NHS Digital).

Young people are often unaware of the mental health support that is available to them. Equally they are often unaware of the different services available to provide support. It is often difficult to recognise a mental health condition.

Young people in some of the London Youth Assembly Sub-Regions have identified that there may be a reluctance among young people about mental health issues they may be experiencing.

### **Recommendations for the Mayor of London**

The London Youth Assembly would like to make the following recommendations to the Mayor of London in relation to Mental Health & Wellbeing:

9. For the Mayor of London to support the creation of a London-wide wellbeing map of services, which would include information about what the services specialise in and how they can be utilised.
10. For the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Education to encourage student wellbeing to become a measure for school effectiveness.
11. to ensure that the programme to have a Mental Health First Aider in all schools, funded through the Mayor of London Young Londoners fund, is being rolled out.
12. For the London Youth Assembly to work alongside the Assembly and the Mayor of London to educate parents, guardians and carers to help them better understand and identify poor mental health in young people through events and workshops.
13. The Mayor to provide funding to Youth Councils for them to host events to raise awareness of mental health issues.