**East of England Young People’s forum**

**Thursday 25th January 2024**

**Meeting 1 – 10:00 – 11:00**

**In attendance**

Cambridgeshire

Luton

Suffolk

Bedford

**Minutes**

It was great to have a range of areas represented as moved into our second round **Voices of the East** meetings. Following feedback from previous meetings about how these meetings should be run we were able to do an interactive quiz with the group as a starting point – how many people in the world do you think have autism???

Once the 5 questions had been completed, we went on to discuss how we could get more young people involved in our network. Voices of the East felt we could:

* Produce some posters/leaflets
* Create some social media adverts
* Target special needs schools – it’s now what you know it’s who you know
* Visit schools & tell them about it
* Word of mouth
* Get information in education newsletters

We will continue to work with partners across the region to help action these ideas.

Up next, we had a vote! All 3 meetings will be voting on the first chosen focus topic which will then direct our summer term work. The poll was very split across the group, but **mental health** was just top within this group. It will be interesting to see what comes out of other groups throughout this round.

In February we are asking local groups to hold their own engagement meetings (further information to be circulated) so that there can be some in person contact. This is what young people are asking for & we hope it will be start of a big movement across the East. As part of these engagement meetings, we asked the group to suggest ideas on games/activities that would engage a group of young people and they suggested:

* A quiz
* Board games – Uno/Connect 4
* Disability snap – use some cards to create awareness about different disabilities
* Facts about each other – 2 truths, 1 lie
* Art
* Lego + building blocks
* Word association games

We will be providing an overview for each local area.

The final element of this meeting was to discuss rewards for young people who may be engaging in the group. Two comments really stood out from Cambridgeshire as they spoke about the fact they get to come to these meetings and speak out is very much part of the reward! Other ideas included vouchers, treats (food!), awards/certificates, Tokens, A trip, Prizes, or a recognition award. We will scope the feeling across the East of England.

And that was that! As mentioned, February will bring our in-person meetings with a short survey to complete so that we collect the Voices of the East! **The next set of virtual meetings will happen on the 28th of March 2024.**