**Voices of the East**

**Thursday 28th March 2024**

**Meeting 3 – 18:00 – 19:00**

**In attendance**

Essex

Suffolk

Hertfordshire

**Minutes**

Social media vote – The groups first challenge was to think about how the voices of the voices of the East group could best use social media to promote our work. **YouTube** or **Instagram** were the two that got the most discussion with both bringing up the following points:

* YouTube – Certain videos can really reach a wide audience. It is easy for lots of different people to use. More young people use it.
* Instagram – It is popular. Reels are a good idea. Instagram is the newest one.

There was also some questions about how **TikTok** could be considered in the future. Other comments were that applications such as **Facebook & Twitter** were too old and that messages didn’t go anywhere.

Mental health – We then looked at the list given to us by young people on how we could focus on the chosen topic area of mental health, with a link into loneliness. There were some mixed views around the virtual room:

* Podcasts – Many young people use them and listen to them – **4 votes.**
* Lessons – More lessons on mental health because we don’t talk about it enough when we are younger & it has the ability to reach lot’s of different people – **8 votes.**
* Comic – The idea of using comics may work because young people may like them and it may also help them to read. However, these could take more time & money to produce was some of the feelings from the group – **4 votes.**
* Videos – They could reach more young people and can be very popular – **4 votes**.

This group felt the idea of clubs was not the most positive as if done wrongly can end up making young people feel lonelier and have a negative impact on their mental health.

We the went on to discuss the key reasons why some young people may be feeling lonelier based on initial feedback we have had from the voices of the East group:

1. There is still a lot of **bullying** happening with young people seeing they had witnessed this more than once.
2. **Changes in schools** can be hard to manage and that the impact of covid was affecting young people’s social skills.
3. There is not enough education about people’s **differences** which doesn’t help at all.
4. **Family challenges** was also highlighted as something that a fair number of young people experience, and this can have an impact.
5. **Exam stress** is particularly challenging in both year 6 and year 11 while at school.

Regional awards – Finally, the group added some more suggestions to the interactive board that has been started within the today previous meetings of the day. Suggestions added included inspirational speakers, helping the local community, developing life skills and being creative were just a few suggestions.

**Next round of meetings – 9th May (6pm – 7pm)**

**10th May either 10:00 – 11:00 or 13:30 – 14:30**

**Throughout June or July there will be local in person meetings across local authorities.**