

Youth Voices:

Improving Access to Youth Support Services in Brighton & Hove for Ethnically Diverse Young People

October 2024





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been the product of a lot of work by many different people and organisations. In particular, TDC would like to thank:

- **Zac Thorlby** – Peer Researcher & Podcast Producer
- **Dimah Al-Saedi** - Peer Researcher
- **Jingxiong Xu** – Peer Researcher
- **Amie George** – Peer Researcher
- **Gurur Deniz Uyanik** – Peer Researcher
- **Mattie Strong** – Hope Hack Youth Steering Group
- **Liv Thompson** – Hope Hack Youth Steering Group
- **Caitlin Storey** – Hope Hack Youth Steering Group
- **Maia Goodwin** – Hope Hack Youth Steering Group
- **Zoe Byrne** – Hope Hack Youth Steering Group
- **Sylvina Pereira** – Hope Hack Youth Steering Group
- **Mark Cull** - [Different Noise](#) - Project Management
- **Alice Banfield** - [Alice Banfield Research](#) - Research Lead
- **Martin Burrows** - [Inclusive Insight](#) - Peer Research Consultancy
- **Darren Abrahams** - [Human Hive](#) - Trauma-Informed Consultancy
- **Roman Waters** – TDC Youth Coach
- **Esme Young** – TDC Youth Participation Coordinator
- **Michelle Hunter** and the team at [AudioActive](#)
- **Nats Spada, Ed Aplvor** and the team at [Platform B](#)
- **Brighton & Hove Youth Employability Service**
- **Longhill High School**
- **Brighton and Hove Youth Participation Team and the Youth Council**
- **The TDC Albanian Support Project**
- **Terry Adams** – [Anonymous Arts Research & Consultancy Ltd.](#), Project Management and report Co-Author
- **Adam Muirhead** – TDC Director of Youth Work and report Co-Author

...and everyone who helped with the various aspects of building this critical insight.

Thank you to **Brighton & Hove City Council** and to the **Brighton & Hove Violence Reduction Partnership** for funding this critical piece of work.

“I think something that’s really stood out for me is that we’ve really been there, kind of every step of the way, for every point of this research, which has also been really nice”

-Zac, Peer Researcher

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Trust for Developing Communities (TDC) conducted research commissioned by Brighton & Hove City Council and the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership to improve access to youth support services for ethnically diverse young people in Brighton & Hove.

The study addressed the disproportionately low engagement of these young people with existing services, focusing on identifying barriers and proposing actionable solutions to enhance inclusivity, awareness, and accessibility.

This report is comprised of three strands/data sets:

1. Youth-led '**Youth Voices**' research project
2. TDC '**Hope Hack**' event report
3. AudioActive '**Amplifying Voices**' event report

The report will be used to inform future commissioning by the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership, and comprise part of the Fairer Brighton & Hove Strategy, led by Brighton & Hove City Council.

Young people want youth support services to:

1. Increase Awareness of Youth Support Services - Actively review and update information about youth support services to ensure it reflects inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility. Use targeted outreach through social media and community spaces. Ensure resources, including peer advocates, teachers, and youth workers, are available to promote services and dispel misconceptions about who can access them. Focus on real-life stories and examples that resonate with the challenges young people face, including racism and discrimination.

2. Create Safe and Inclusive Spaces - Ensure youth support services create a welcoming, supportive, and confidential environment. Staff should be well-trained, professional, and culturally representative of the young people they serve. Building trust and making young people feel understood by staff who share or understand their cultural background is key. Explicitly communicate the confidentiality and inclusivity of services to build confidence and ease fears about parents or other community members finding out.

3. Deliver Flexible and Consistent Support - Offer flexible service delivery that reflects the diverse commitments of young people. Ensure that support is consistent, accessible, and adaptable to individual needs. Provide both in-person and remote options, along with varied types of support (e.g., one-to-one, group work, leisure activities). Create an environment where young people can actively contribute to improving the service, and ensure staff remain professional, approachable, and reflective of the communities they serve.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The following terms are used at varying points in this report to represent the young people who are the subject and the object of the research in this report. Each have strengths and limitations to acknowledge.

Ethnically Diverse is useful for highlighting inclusivity and celebrating a range of identities without focusing on power imbalances.

Global Majority is empowering and shifts the narrative, providing a global and affirming perspective for young people.

Racially Minoritised is critical for recognising structural inequalities and focusing on the need for change.

THE PODCAST

The Peer Researchers who delivered the Youth Voices project worked together with Platform B to produce a podcast to accompany this report, sharing their reflections on the process and findings.

Launched in 2016, Platform B is Brighton & Hove's not-for-profit, youth-led radio station broadcasting on 105.5FM, DAB+ and online. The station is directed by a new wave of DJs, producers and presenters who are re-imagining and diversifying the medium. To listen to the podcast, scan the QR code below, or click this [link](#).

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The premise of this research is an acknowledgement that the use of Brighton & Hove's youth-focused services by young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds is comparatively low and disproportionate to their population in the city.

The Trust for Developing Communities (TDC) was commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council and the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership to research actions to improve ethnically diverse young people's access to youth support services in Brighton & Hove. TDC sought to deliver the project in a way that was co-produced with the young people who were to be the subject of the research, wherever possible.

The study focused on identifying solutions to overcome both real and perceived barriers to accessing youth services in Brighton & Hove for ethnically diverse young people, including helping them understand the benefits of them. It also aimed to find ways for these services to improve their performance as open, accessible, and inclusive spaces where ethnically diverse young people feel confident and comfortable seeking support.

It is anticipated that the findings from this research will help to inform the Fairer Brighton & Hove Strategy, and the future commissioning activity of a range of stakeholders.

NB: In this study, 'support services' are defined as 'youth support services' where young people can go (either online or face-to-face) to get information, advice, help, and support. Examples include youth clubs, sports clubs, health clinics, summer holiday programmes, events and targeted support offers around things like mental health or substance misuse.

“By young people and for young people, and that’s not something I’ve really seen...”

– Amie, Peer Researcher

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research study was to understand ethnically diverse young people's access and engagement with youth support services in Brighton & Hove to help improve outcomes for young people.

Suggestions and recommendations from the young people participating in the research have been collated on what changes and actions they consider necessary to increase their use of youth-focused support services.

Primary Questions to be asked:

- 1. How aware and engaged are ethnically diverse young people of youth support services in Brighton and Hove?**
- 2. What barriers exist for ethnically diverse young people accessing and engaging with youth support services in Brighton and Hove?**
- 3. What can be done to improve access to and engagement in youth support services in Brighton and Hove?**

The following questions were asked to elicit actions that support service providers can undertake to increase the engagement of young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds:

- 1. What can service providers do to make ethnically diverse young people feel supported when they walk through the door?**
- 2. What can service providers do to help ethnically diverse young people feel they want to go to the service for support?**
- 3. What can service providers do to make their social media posts, posters and information 'feel inclusive'?**

“It's something different that I've enjoyed and I think it's very beneficial and there should be more stuff like this”

- Amie, Peer Researcher

YOUTH-LED METHODOLOGY

Youth Voices Peer Researchers

A group of five young people were recruited from representative ethnically diverse communities and trained up as 'Peer Researchers'. They then constructed the entire project, including setting the central research questions, the objectives, methods and analysis. These processes intentionally sought to leverage the perceptions and insights of the Peer Researchers to enhance the research.

“I think having so much agency, which definitely was like a bit challenging at times. [...] But like being able to do that with other young people is like kind of so special, and so rare.”

– Zac, Peer Researcher

Youth Voices Delivery Team

Experienced TDC research and youth work staff supported the Peer Researchers, along with a team of external experts, including:

- **Different Noise:** Youth Participation specialists who project-managed the early phases of the research.
- **Human Hive:** A Trauma-Informed Specialist Counsellor who advised the project on ensuring the research and researchers avoid actions or approaches that might prompt/cause discomfort or traumatic triggering amongst research respondents or Peer Researchers themselves.
- **Inclusive Insight:** Community-led Research Specialists, consulted on the approach and ethics to be adopted in the research.
- **Platform B:** A youth-led media production company, worked with young people to create a media project based on the research.

Youth Voices Research Methods

The central data collection activity consisted of:

1. Youth Voices Survey (Quantitative)

An anonymous online survey was open to young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds aged 13-19 who live, study, or work in Brighton and Hove. The survey was incentivised with voucher prizes for five people drawn randomly from the responses.

The questionnaire sought to obtain respondents' levels of awareness of youth-focused support services and identify their perceptions of barriers limiting or preventing their use. Respondents to the survey were asked to suggest and recommend changes that would increase use amongst ethnically diverse young people. Forty-four (44) eligible young people took part in the online survey. Many other responses were received, but deemed ineligible for either not being tied to Brighton & Hove, or not being from an ethnic background.

2. Four Youth Voices Focus Groups (Qualitative)

Seventeen (17) young people participated in four (4) focus groups which were held between June and July 2024. The Peer Researchers facilitated each focus group, with support and oversight from TDC staff .

The focus groups sought to obtain depth of insight on the research issues, based on some of the insight already gathered from the survey. These sessions were intentionally solution-focused to ensure that we did not ask young people to dwell on historic, and potentially traumatic, events in the past, which could have the effect of re-traumatising people.

NB: The respondents to the research did not have to have experience or have ever been to a youth-focused service to participate.

“It’s nice to see that young people do have a lot to say and that they have been thinking about this, and have a lot to offer”

- Zac, Peer Researcher.

Supplementary Research

This report is supplemented by other relevant research, conducted since March 2024 with young people in Brighton & Hove, including:

1. Trust for Developing Communities: Hope Hack Event report

Delivered by a group of local young people, this day of creative input and workshops (1st March 2024) allowed over 60 local young people to express their views, opinions and perspectives on their hopes for the future. Their findings were presented back to strategic decision-makers in the city, including Leader of the Council and Chair of the Children’s Committee. A short film from the event is available to watch online [here](#).

2. Audio Active: Amplifying Voices event report

An event (12th April 2024) and subsequent report aimed at providing a platform for young black musicians, dancers, and artists from Brighton to showcase their talents while fostering dialogue between young people and decision-makers within the city. A couple of short films give a flavour of the event, available to watch [here](#) and [here](#). Voices of young people were captured on the subject of their experiences of racism and inclusive youth services in a short film, available online [here](#).

FINDINGS: YOUTH VOICES SURVEY

Forty-four eligible respondents took this online survey.

Q: How old are you?

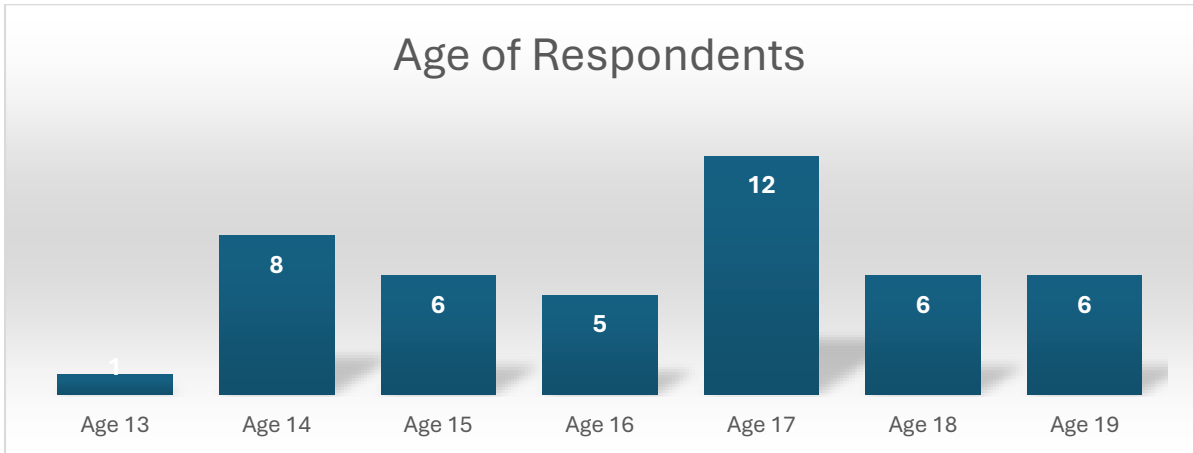


Figure 1 - Age of Respondents

Q: What is your gender?

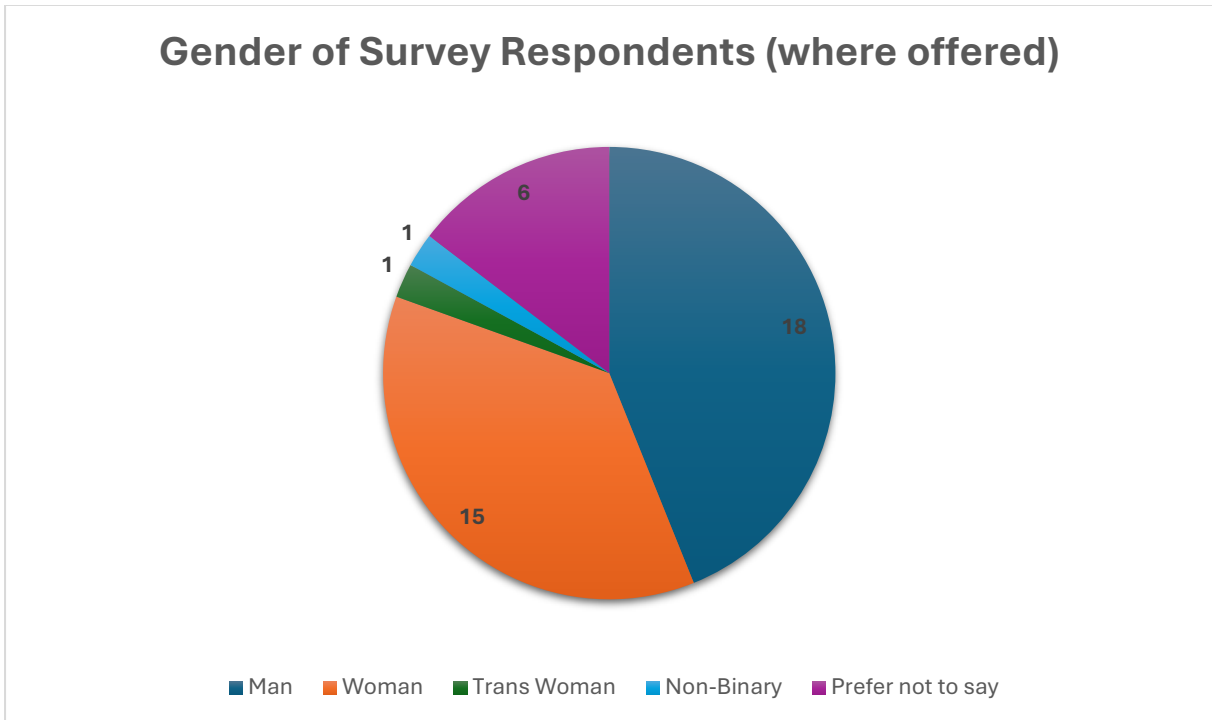


Figure 2 - Gender of Survey Respondents

Q: How would you describe your ethnicity?

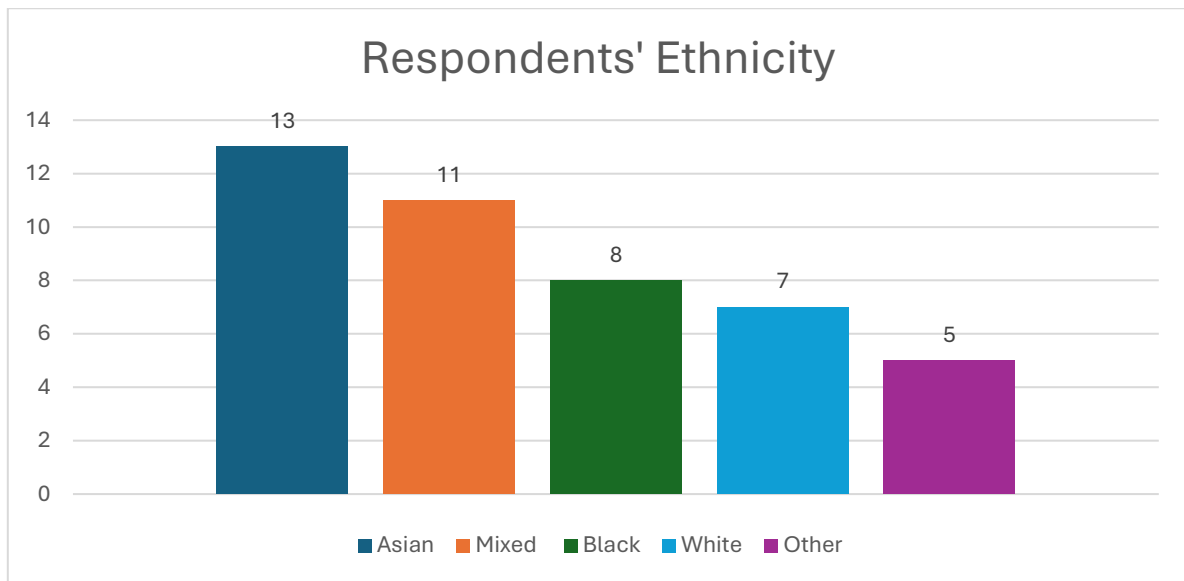


Figure 3 - Ethnicity of respondents

The countries associated with the respondents' ethnicity were broad, including China, Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan, Japan, Jamaica, South Africa, Persia, and Egypt. White respondents included those from African, Eastern European and Gypsy & Irish Traveller background.

Q: Prior to this survey, have you used any youth support services in Brighton & Hove

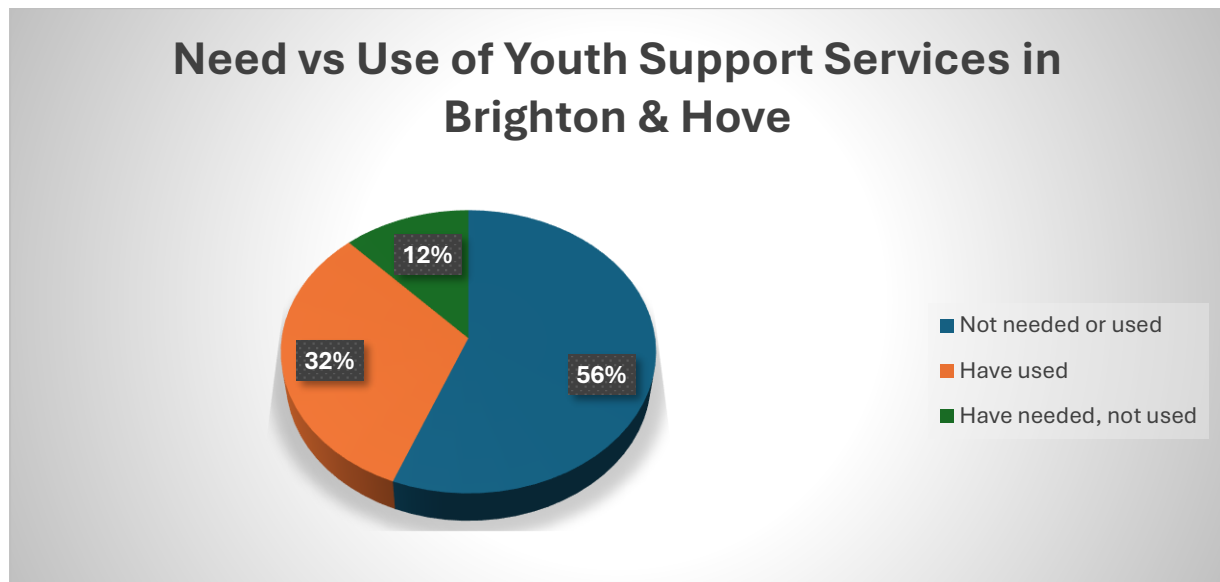


Figure 4 - Use of Youth Support Services by Survey Respondents

Over half of the respondents (56%) said they had not needed to use a youth support service. Around a third of respondents (32%) said they had used a youth service – all of these respondents were aged 16 to 19. 12% needed to use a youth support service but did not. If these findings are representative of the wider population, it would suggest a significant number of young people in Brighton and Hove whose support service needs may still need to be met.

Q: Which, if any, of the following categories of youth support services have you heard of in Brighton & Hove. *Answers below are from those who have not used services before.

Awareness of Youth Support Service	%
LGBTQ+	54%
Mental health and wellbeing	50%
Drinking, drugs and smoking/vaping	39%
Housing, money and benefits	39%
Young carers	39%
Activities and things to do	36%
Relationships and sexual health services	32%
Education, volunteering and jobs	25%
Violence and abuse	21%
Disabilities and neurodiversity	14%
Ethnically diverse youth support services	14%
Physical health and food	11%
I have not heard of any youth support services in Brighton & Hove	18%

Figure 5 - Awareness of Existing Youth Support Services by Survey Respondents

Respondents' were most aware of LGBTQ+ (54%) and Mental health and well-being (50%) youth support services. Other typical youth support services respondents were aware of are 'Drinking, drugs, and smoking/vaping' (39%), 'Housing, money and benefits' (39%), and 'Young Carers' (39%). Many who listed 'Young Carers' also listed 'Mental Health and Well-being' as youth support services they were aware of.

Only fourteen per cent (14%) of respondents cited awareness of 'Ethnically diverse youth support services'.

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked **which service types they had needed but did not use**. The most common responses were **Activities and things to do** and **Mental Health and Well-being**.

Q: Where did you find out about the youth support service you used?

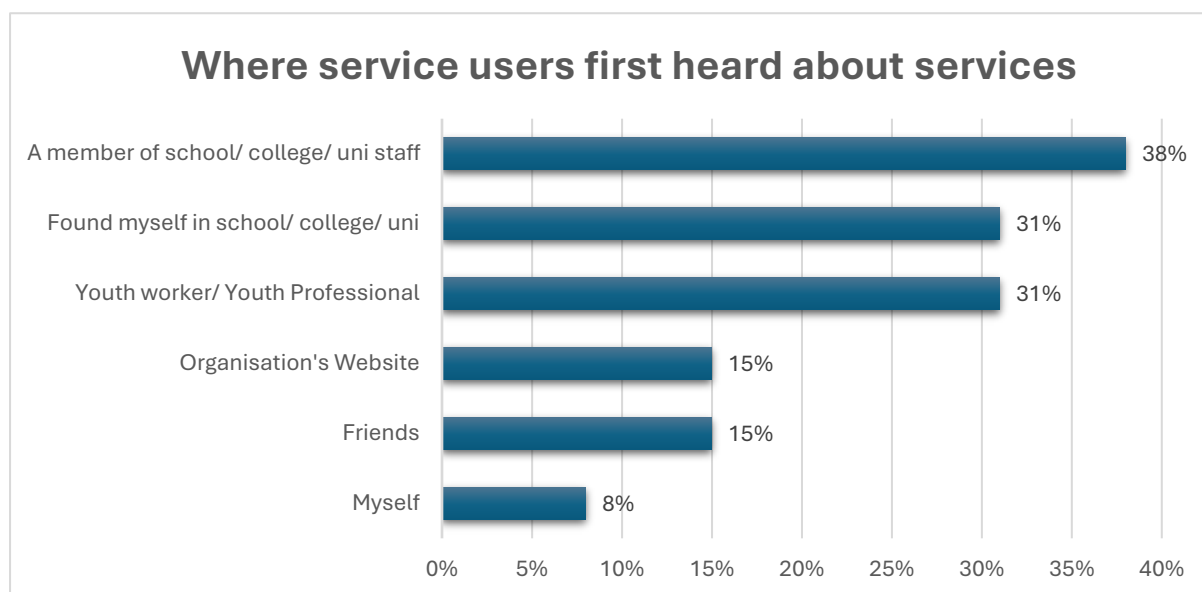


Figure 6 - How Respondents Became Aware of Supportive Youth Services

Of those who could recall, the most common response was that a school, college, or university staff member told them about youth support services. Through Youth Workers/Youth Professionals, and finding out information themselves in school, college, or university were also common ways to discover youth support services.

Q: Where would you go to learn more about youth support services, once you'd become aware of them?

Respondents were asked about sources they would use or who they would go to learn more about them in a follow-up question to how they first became aware of youth support services.

Information Source	%
Ask a member of school/college, or university staff	44%
Another trusted adult in my community	22%
Friends	22%
Look for information myself in school/college or university	20%
Organisation's Website	20%
Youth worker/youth professional	15%
Instagram	12%
TikTok	12%
Reddit	7%
Another child or young person in your family	7%
Twitter	2%
Facebook	2%

Figure 7 - How young people learn about support services

Not surprisingly, these responses reflected the previous question’s responses. Forty-four per cent (44%) said they would ask a school, college, or university staff member. Twenty-two per cent (22%) said they would seek information (themselves) in school, college, or university. Another common approach from respondents was to ask a trusted adult in their community (22%). The same percentage (22%) said they would speak with Friends to learn about youth support services. Organisations' websites also appear likely to be popular (20%) for many who want to know about youth services.

Social media platforms were mentioned, although not extensively. The most mentioned platforms were Instagram and TikTok, both at 12%

“Just having the chance to choose what we want to research – something that supports all of us and young people, yeah, was definitely really nice”
- Amie, Peer Researcher

Q: What might stop or hinder ethnically diverse young people from using youth support services in Brighton and Hove.

Reason	%
Don't offer support at times that would make it easy for me to use them	32%
Have long waiting lists	22%
Did not understand the cultural beliefs and values of people like me	20%
Don't understand people with intersecting identities, e.g. young people who are ethnically diverse and LGBTQ+	15%
Don't provide information and support that's culturally relevant	15%
Have unfriendly staff	15%
Don't feel inclusive	12%
Don't provide privacy, e.g. other people can hear what you're talking about	7%
Don't include images of young people like me on their posters or social media	7%
None of these	27%

Figure 8 - Reasons that might stop young people accessing services

Respondents' most common response to why ethnically diverse young people may not use support services was the belief that the support is not offered at times that would be convenient. 32% of respondents gave this response, suggesting that, in principle, respondents from this background would access the support services if there was greater flexibility and convenience in their use. Another common response was the perception that there would be long waiting lists to access these services. It is unclear why this view was held. However, it could be related to a broader perception of long waiting times for specific services that they had awareness about (e.g. mental health referrals for CAMHS).

20% of respondents replied that the services need to understand the cultural beliefs and values of people like themselves. Further data analysis shows that many who gave this response were young people with intersecting identities.

15% of respondents responded that the services do not provide culturally relevant information and support and need help understanding intersecting identities.

Q: What do you feel might prevent ethnically diverse young people in Brighton and Hove from using youth support services in the future?

Reason	%
If young people felt fearful or anxious about asking for help	51%
If young people didn't know where to go for guidance and support	34%
If young people felt, they would be discriminated/treated differently	20%
If young people felt pressured to use youth support services	17%
If young people felt fearful of personal information being shared with others	12%
If young people's family/community wasn't being supportive	12%
If young people felt, they didn't qualify to use youth support services	10%
If young people felt there was a stigma around using youth support services	10%
If young people didn't want to discuss their issues or concerns with others	7%
If young people did not trust professionals/staff running youth support services	7%
If young people had language barriers	7%
If young people had a bad experience themselves in the past of youth support services	5%
If young people heard that a friend had a bad experience of youth support services in the past	5%
If young people found it difficult to get to youth support services (e.g. travel or financial challenges)	2%
None of these	5%

Figure 9 - Reasons for not using services in future

The responses to this question provide a fascinating insight into the perceptions of young people from diverse backgrounds and their concerns with support services. Just over half of the respondents (51%) said young people may feel fearful or anxious about asking for help and support. Further research to sustain what the basis of fear and anxiety is would be crucial to overcome these perceptions.

Over a third of respondents (34%) said many young people needed help knowing where to go for guidance and support. This response is supported by earlier findings, where respondents said they did not know of services or services required but had no access to them. This finding suggests that more work needs to be done to raise awareness amongst these young people about accessing support services.

20% of respondents said young people may be prevented from using support services because they perceive they would be discriminated against or treated differently. This response reflects a fear of bias or discrimination against them because of their identity. It is worth noting that 12% of respondents felt the family or community would need to be more supportive of them using a support service. A further 12% felt fearful that their personal information might be shared with others.

Open-text Questions

In a series of open-text questions, survey respondents were able to go into more detail about some of their thoughts and ideas, in response to the following questions.

Q: What other things might stop ethnically diverse young people using youth support services in Brighton & Hove in the future?

- Just feeling unwelcome
- Lack of relatability
- Fear
- Bullying
- Racism
- It may cost money
- Not sure
- The fear of their family finding out.
- Ensure what types of people would qualify and what kind of help they could get. People might be nervous about whether they would be allowed or even deserve the help offered, so they should have complete clarity on who can ask for help and what is explained clearly.
- Not used to experiencing support
- None
- Family may disregard it
- No one to go with, shy, feel excluded
- Don't have anyone to relate to who is the same as them
- Fear of parents/family finding out.
- Their religious beliefs do not allow them
- The feeling of inferiority sometimes (often tied to systemic problems related to one's skin) leads one to feel they must make up for it and solve their problems themselves.

Feeling as though young people are not allowed, undeserving or that services are unrelatable was a prominent feature in responses. Overcoming fear for some who wishes to use the service was also highlighted, particularly in relation to parents finding out, which may have a relationship to perceived barriers based on someone's religion.

“So with fear, I think it's like one of the biggest impacts [...] especially when someone is coming from growing up differently, coming from a different background and have a strict household.”

- Dimah, Peer Researcher

Q: What else could youth support services do so they'd be somewhere ethnically diverse young people would want to go for support?

- Advertise well
- Stop victimising people
- Even if it's not an emergency make sure you can still help out. They want help and listen more
- Run by the participants, free roam, INCLUSIVE staff
- Be more welcoming
- Not racism
- Mosques, churches, in places like Brighton met where there is a large percentage of people from different places
- Honestly, just anywhere safe and casual. Places like BYC (Brighton Youth Centre) are perfect, somewhere low pressure and colourful where someone going to look for help doesn't feel like they're being interrogated or like they might get in trouble for saying something- I think avoiding business etc and formal looking environments is a good idea.
- Teaching and educating young people
- Anonymous Q&As
- Make sure on their website or info that ethnic people are welcome and have a reason to be there
- Make more known about
- I suppose they'd have to be ethnically diverse themselves.
- Parents
- Before this, I knew of none of these services. Please put more mediums of awareness into schools
- Confidentiality

Youth support services should focus on creating welcoming spaces by, in particular, ensuring ethnically diverse staffing/environments, while improving awareness through targeted advertising and outreach in diverse communities – with parents, in mosques and churches etc. They should also ensure confidentiality, avoid formal or intimidating settings, and provide opportunities for youth participation, so that young people have opportunities to be part of running provision, demonstrating the power-sharing nature of a service.

Q: What is a recommendation you would give to youth support services?

Lastly, respondents were asked for a recommendation they would give to youth support services in Brighton & Hove to ensure they are more inclusive for ethnically diverse young people.

- Listen to them, I know it sounds obvious but a lot of people who come from different countries can't speak to people at home about a lot of things. A lot of the time they just want to be able to talk to someone
- Support
- Open and clear communication about the service
- I would recommend being more seen so people know about in general because people may know about it but can't access it
- Not racism
- Be there
- Making sure that before they report information to social services/ the police that they are 100% sure that it won't be putting the person at risk - and asking the individual THEMSELVES about if it would put them at risk
- By engaging and sharing clubs for me, introducing me to other opportunities and communities. Would love to be in communities to engage with other people and know more, like in global social club
- More awareness/ public information
- Make them feel included and talk about different situations they might be in
- Have someone in the group who is actually ethnic or understands what ethnic people are like and believe in
- Have more people from different cultures
- Be u [sic]
- Stand by thinking that you never know the patient and keep in mind to not be conclusive as some of the largest details shall not ever come light sometimes
- Make themselves more accessible. Promote these events more and talk at schools etc...

“people still mention a component of embarrassment and worry that their family and friends might find out as barriers”

- Jing, Peer Researcher

Respondents recommended greater openness and transparency to support services if they wanted to be inclusive of ethnically diverse people. They also recommended ensuring awareness and providing clear public information. In addition, respondents believed there was a need to ensure greater cultural relevance, that it was essential to see more people from different cultures, that there would be staff who understood their ethnicity, and that services would be able to respond to situations that might be ethnically culturally relevant to young people with empathy.

SUMMARY: YOUTH VOICES SURVEY

Overall, the findings confirm the concern that young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds may not be accessing the support services they need. Significant proportions of young people from diverse backgrounds require assistance from support services but struggle to access them.

Fear. Fear plays a big part in why respondents believe young people from diverse backgrounds do not use support services. Half of the respondents felt fear and anxiety about asking for help as a factor preventing access to services. The open-text responses that expanded upon this mentioned that fear of parents finding out that they were accessing support would be a significant factor. This seems linked to other responses about personal information being shared with others. Services must clearly explain what will happen after someone reaches out, particularly whether their information is shared with parents or statutory services.

Awareness. The respondents' level of awareness of support services varied. Many who had become aware had done so through school, college, or university. This was either through a staff member directly telling them about the support services or through the young people themselves researching support services from the resources in the school, college, or university. Others became aware through youth service or support professionals.

Service Promotion. A significant factor in accessing services is whether young people know that support services exist and how to access them. Young people will take the initiative to go out and find information for themselves. Therefore, it is essential to ensure this information is readily available and provides sufficient information for young people to know how they access the service. The findings suggest the importance of ensuring that information about youth services is also available and present in communities. Young respondents said they would respond to trusted members in their community who could provide information on youth support services. Likewise, many also said they would respond positively to information if it came from their friends.

Staffing. Many saw the cultural relevance of the support service staff as a factor that might affect use. Some respondents believe that the services do not provide culturally relevant information and support, while others believe that the services need to understand people with intersectional identities by employing people who innately understand, themselves.

Timings and Waiting Lists. A common reason given that may hinder young people from diverse backgrounds from using youth support services was that the support services do not offer their services at times that would be easy or convenient for young people to attend. Another typical response was that there would be a long waiting list to access the services.

Cultural Factors. Many respondents (20%) believe they would be discriminated against or treated differently because of their identity. Lack of support from their community and family is also a factor in why young people from diverse backgrounds may not use support services (12%).

In their spontaneous responses, respondents spoke of the need for openness and transparency in the services to ensure young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds feel comfortable accessing these resources. This is particularly the case about how their information is to be shared. There was also a strong belief that the services needed to be more practically and visibly representative of them. Staff and leaders who shared their identities, cultural backgrounds, and ethnicities would be seen as vital if more people from ethnically diverse backgrounds were to use these services. Lastly, a solid and open commitment to inclusivity, non-discrimination and anti-racism was crucial to getting more young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to use and access support services.

FINDINGS: YOUTH VOICES FOCUS GROUPS

The qualitative research revealed a specific need for more awareness of youth support services amongst these respondents. In addition, some respondents needed clarification on how a youth support service would be defined. The majority felt this term related to services that supported young people facing life challenges, as opposed to services that enable young people to access activities, such as leisure and entertainment.

The uncertainty in defining youth support services is likely to represent a barrier for some young people who may benefit from support services but believe that because their issue is not life-threatening, the services available may not be appropriate for them.

Some respondents felt that mental health issues could be a barrier to seeking help from support services. The specific factors that this represents should be discussed in detail. However, responses given to other questions relating to barriers to using support services suggest that for some, mental health issues may be a factor in who to and how to approach support services.

Several themes emerged from the qualitative interviews that substantially influence how young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds access support services.

Of the themes identified, there were four main areas.

1. **Judgement**
2. **Fear**
3. **Self-belief and motivation**
4. **Practical limitations**

Judgement. Respondents felt that amongst young people, there was a certain degree of self-consciousness that caused them to be concerned with how others might see their use of accessing a support service. Other respondents were concerned that accessing support services may go against their parents' beliefs or instructions. This response suggests that some young people believe their parents may disapprove of them accessing these types of services. In some instances, the views of their parents were a reflection of their beliefs and values. In these cases, young people felt they would be unwilling to go against their parent's beliefs and values.

Fear. For many respondents, the feelings of fear when using support services may be due to a lack of or limited information on how these services typically work and the standards of professionalism they operate under. For example, some respondents said that young people may fear disclosing information about themselves to staff they did not know or were unfamiliar with. This was due to the perception that they needed to know if the staff could be trusted with their information.

One of the biggest issues that I heard [...] was the problem about “Is it actually confidential? Will people know what I'm discussing here?”

- Deniz, Peer Researcher

Other notions of fear involved how young people feel about themselves in unfamiliar situations. Feeling out of place and talking with someone they do not know or have a connection with caused some respondents to feel young people like them would not be comfortable in those environments. This sense of discomfort was also referenced by some who said they felt using a youth support service may cause them to feel like outsiders within these types of environments. In addition, the fear of potential racial stereotyping is a factor that causes concern for many respondents.

Self-belief and motivation. The need for more information and knowledge on the extent and breadth of use of support services may be causing some to believe they do not warrant or qualify for help with their problems.

Some respondents believe that when they experience life challenges and difficulties, they should seek to handle them themselves and not use outside support services for assistance. Many young people felt pressure to be independent and do things independently and in their own way. However, this approach requires that they refrain from asking for help and support when needed. Some respondents were clear that although they may have a situation requiring some support, they did not want to bring others into their matter but sought to resolve it themselves.

The respondents said there were also young people who, although they had a problem or concern, did not believe it was sufficiently severe to warrant intervention from a support service. The definition of severe in these instances still needs to be explored. Lastly, it was recognised that some young people would be unwilling to accept that they needed support with an issue they had. This approach meant that young people were at significant risk of ignoring their problems.

Many of the responses above are reasons young people have needed support services but have yet to access them.

Practical limitations. Some respondents strongly felt that the services available to support young people could be more convenient and flexible. Given that many young people in this research were either at school, college, or university, they may have felt that their study requirements made it difficult to find or access a support service compatible with their studying requirements.

The location of the support service was, in some instances, also recognised as a barrier to accessing the services. There was a perception that getting to these services and their transportation links may be complex or costly. The potential for language difficulties to represent a barrier to accessing services was also mentioned.

Many respondents recognise that language barriers are a problem for some young people, specifically those whose first language is not English.

SUMMARY: YOUTH VOICES FOCUS GROUPS

The qualitative findings have provided more depth to the barriers and potential solutions to increasing access to support services amongst young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

An interesting finding was the extent to which respondents needed clarification of what is meant by a support service. Many believe support services are characterised by the fact that they only deal with young people facing challenging life circumstances, as opposed to services that provide general social activity-based support.

This respondent group was lowly aware of support services, including the range of services and the issues they support and address. Low awareness of the nature of support services caused misconceptions about who should and could access these services. Some young people believed their life challenges were not sufficiently severe to warrant their access to services. Others thought the service they may require was not available.

Four main categories of factors were identified that prevent many ethnically diverse young people from accessing support services, discussed above:

- 1. Judgement**
- 2. Fear**
- 3. Self-belief and motivation**
- 4. Practical limitations**

Respondents identified four solution areas to encourage young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to use support services more.

- 1. Relevance**
- 2. Sharing Stories**
- 3. Creating Safe Spaces**
- 4. Service delivery**

Relevance. Hearing from staff and young people who share their culture and identities and how they benefited from accessing and engaging with support services was identified as a potentially effective way of overcoming barriers. This information could address receptions around the appropriateness and relevance of the services to young people with their backgrounds.

Sharing stories. Examples of actual cases where support services have successfully provided valuable beneficial support. These examples could be available on social media platforms or in printed material advertising the support service.

Creating safe spaces. Respondents considered it essential that the environment in which the service was delivered was welcoming and that the staff reflected the range of people accessing the service. There should be an appropriate mix of different identities and cultures, with staff who express kindness, are good listeners, and adopt a positive, sensitive, and enthusiastic approach to their work and engagement with young people.

Service delivery

It was essential to ensure that promotion marketing and advertisements for support services were available and could be accessed from different sources and platforms (in-real-life and digital).

Acknowledging the commitments young people have to education, family and friends, it was considered necessary that the service offered flexible delivery options to accommodate young people's circumstances. A range of options for engagement, including one-to-one sessions and small groups (online and in-person), were suggested. It was considered necessary that there was consistency of staff and that staff working with the young person were appropriate to the circumstances and background of young people.

It was also acknowledged that the services should address essential life challenges that many young people will require and provide opportunities to engage in social activities, events, and leisure.

BRIGHTON & HOVE HOPE HACK

The Brighton & Hove Hope Hack took place on the 1st March 2024 and brought together over 60 young people from schools and colleges across the city to bring their insight and understanding to highlighting issues for young people and propose solutions. The proposals from workshops were immediately fed back to strategic stakeholders in the city, including Leader of the Council, Bella Sankey, who were present on the day. The event itself was developed by young people who steered the planning and delivery, with support from TDC, the [Hope Collective](#) and [UrbanFlo Creative](#). It was funded by the Brighton & Hove Violence Reduction Partnership, Brighton & Hove City Council and the Hope Collective.



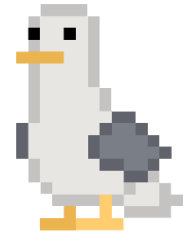
A report from the event is available (Appendix 1), along with a short film outlining the process and outcomes. You can watch the film by clicking [here](#) or by scanning the above QR code.



The below boxes have pulled out parts of the Hope Hack report that speak to issues being raised in the Youth Voices research. Many of the statements pertain to formal education settings, but the sentiments are applicable across a range of other services supporting young people. The first section highlights ‘findings’, or issues of concern to the young people at the Hope Hack. The second section gives focus to some of the proposed solutions.

Brighton & Hove HOPE HACK Report

FINDINGS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE



Funding and Resource Allocation: Insufficient funding leads to a lack of inclusivity, unequal access to education resources and support, and understanding of challenging behaviour

Trusted Support and Safe Spaces: Desire for a trusted teacher for confidential support instead of immediately contacting home, along with the need for safe spaces and designated areas for students with additional needs.

Voice, Choice and Inclusion: Students want their voices and choices to be heard in school decisions and recognition and support of learning difficulties and diverse backgrounds

Mental Health Support: Insufficient mental health support, long waiting lists for help, and high thresholds for receiving support.

Safe Spaces and Choices: Desire for safe spaces, flexibility to leave class if needed, and choices in communication methods.

Immediate Support: Need for support while waiting for formal mental health services, including independent advocates and supportive youth groups.

Meaningful engagement and Political Education: Need for more diverse and genuine engagement with young people, including political education and council involvement.

Equality and Inclusion: Young people from ethnically minoritised communities feel they need to work harder, face categorisation, and lack tailored communication and inclusion.

Community Safety: Rising crime rate in Brighton, including racism and hate crimes creating a sense of danger among young people

Role Models and Celebration of Diversity: Need to celebrate differences, provide positive role models, and address underlying issues causing crime.



Brighton & Hove HOPE HACK Report

SERVICE DEMANDS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Safe Spaces and Mental Health Support: Create safe spaces in schools for mental well-being support, especially in secondary schools, and destigmatise mental health issues through education and awareness.

Teacher Training & Trust: Ensure teachers have time to build relationships and are trained to support different needs, with mandatory training on inclusion, diversity, casual sexism, and understanding challenging behaviour.

Flexible and Inclusive Learning: Provide flexibility for different types of learning, allow students to leave the classroom when needed, and ensure education accommodates all religions and celebrates cultures.

Address Discrimination: Actively address racism, homophobia and discrimination.

Increased funding: Secure more funding for education priorities, addressing inequality in resource access due to poverty.

Student Involvement and Advocacy: Involve students in decision-making processes and have independent third-party adult advocates available within schools or colleges.

Additional Resources and Clear Pathways: Provide more resources like 'stim toys' and noise-cancelling headphones within schools, and develop clearer pathways to mental health support.

Youth Hub and Support Services: Create a hub for young people to get help with housing, employment, and cost of living issues. And share positive youth stories, such as getting out of debt, to counteract negative narratives.



Celebrate Difference: Conquer racism, transphobia, and homophobia by celebrating difference and promoting diversity.

Role Models: Increase the visibility of positive role models.

Children's Book: Develop a children's book featuring a non-binary child exploring different cultures and ways of life.

AUDIOACTIVE: AMPLIFYING VOICES

The Amplifying Voices event, organised by Audio Active on 12th April 2024, stands as a testament to the commitment of Brighton and Hove City Council and various voluntary organisations in amplifying the voices of Global Majority Young People (GMYP).

The event brought together over 100 attendees and aimed to provide a platform for young black musicians, dancers, and artists from Brighton to showcase their talents while fostering dialogue between young people and decision-makers within the city.

Brighton is known for its progressive stance on diversity and continues to make significant strides in certain areas. However, for many Global Majority Young People (GMYP), their experience can be complex. For some young people, while the city proudly flies the rainbow flag, it sometimes feels like that's where the conversation about diversity begins and ends.

Moreover, being dual heritage can add another layer of complexity. The struggle to fit in, being labelled as “half,” and living in what some young people called ‘a grey area’ can impact their sense of identity and mental health. Many spoke of overt experiences and racism and micro-aggressions, which was further compounded by the fact that reporting such incidents often felt futile.



Amplifying Voices

FINDINGS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Representation and Diversity. GMYP seek better representation in city services, with a priority on black youth, autistic individuals, and diverse cultural expressions. More inclusive youth music and creative arts provisions are needed.



Youth Support and Services. There is a need for comprehensive youth support services, including mental health and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) resources tailored to GMYP. Free and accessible community spaces and more youth workers in schools were requested. Increased training for service providers to combat ingrained cultural stereotypes is essential.

Community Engagement. More community events showcasing GMYP creativity and promoting intercultural engagement are necessary. Examples include pop-up food markets and intersectional events that bring diverse communities together.

Policing. Young people highlighted issues of racial profiling and aggression from the police, advocating for greater accountability and trust-building initiatives between police and communities. Recommendations included recruiting more diverse police officers and addressing systemic issues like drug misuse and knife crime.

Social Care. There were concerns about the cultural competence of foster carers and social workers, as GMYP often feel isolated in placements outside their communities. Recommendations include better recruitment of culturally competent foster carers and social workers from diverse backgrounds.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. GMYP experience a lack of culturally sensitive mental health support. Feelings of isolation and "living in a grey area" were common, particularly among mixed-race individuals. There were calls for targeted recruitment of mental health professionals from diverse backgrounds and the creation of safe spaces for young black men to discuss their emotions.

Education and Training. There is widespread dissatisfaction with how Black history is taught, with a demand for its integration into the curriculum beyond Black History Month. GMYP also want stronger sanctions against racism in schools, more representation of black role models, and improved support for students of colour, particularly those with learning difficulties.

Healthcare. Some young women from GMYP communities reported inadequate healthcare responses and long wait times. They stressed the need for culturally relevant care and more diversity in mental health services.

Amplifying Voices

SERVICE DEMANDS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Representation: Ensure services and programmes are designed to meet the needs of GMYP, including targeted support for mental health and SEND.

Community Events: Organise more events that provide platforms for GMYP to showcase their talents and connect with the community.

Education Reform: Incorporate Black history into the standard curriculum, with a balanced portrayal of positive and negative aspects. Schools must take more proactive measures to combat racism.

Policing: Implement training to address racial biases and build trust between police and GMYP. Recruit diverse officers and ensure community-based programmes tackle substance misuse and knife crime.

Mental Health: Ensure mental health services reflect the diversity of Brighton and provide culturally sensitive support.

Social Care: Improve recruitment of foster carers and social workers from GMYP communities to enhance cultural competence and provide better support for GMYP in care.



AUDIOACTIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research highlights several systemic factors that are preventing young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds from engaging and accessing youth support services. Although these barriers to engagement are often based on long-standing attitudes and perceptions, they can be satisfactorily addressed. However, given the extent to which some of the attitudes and perceptions have existed and been prevalent among these young people, actions taken to increase access may take time to embed successfully, and the results from these initiatives show a measurable difference.

The actions required to increase engagement in support services for young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds can be divided into three broad categories.

1. Raising Awareness

The research found that many respondents needed more knowledge and understanding of youth support services. There is uncertainty regarding the breadth of areas they cover, the life problems they seek to address and who they are for.

It is recommended that a review of the information sources on youth support services is undertaken. The review should explore the following.

- Does the imagery used reflect inclusivity.
- Is there appropriate use of social media platforms
- Is there a need for specific targeting of marginalised groups (ethnicity, LGBTQ+)
- Are the printed materials available in places these young people are likely to frequent (e.g. schools, colleges, universities, community spaces, youth clubs)
- Is online information accessible, up-to-date, sufficiently detailed and providing relevant guidance on accessing services
- Does the copy contain real-life cases and examples of support services pertinent to the circumstances and life challenges these young people may face (e.g. racism, prejudice, discrimination, disenfranchisement), sharing stories of successful support to young people like them?
- Are there sufficient peer advocates, teachers, youth workers, and community representatives with knowledge of and promoting youth support services?

Successfully raising awareness will help reduce misconceptions commonly held by young people from ethnically diverse communities on the nature and remit of support services. Raising awareness should also consider that for some young people, their families, communities, and friends may have (negative) views and perceptions of youth support services that need to be addressed/managed.

“A lot of young people did say that sometimes they don't seek support or they expect other people not to seek support because they believe that their situation is not bad enough. Whether this is racism they faced or whether this is mental health or just any kind of struggle that they have.”

- Deniz, Peer Researcher

2. Creating Safe Spaces

Services need to ensure young people have ways to learn more about how support services operate and their professional standards. Young people must feel they are entering a place that will address their fears, judgements, self-belief and motivation regarding the need to use support services.

It is recommended that service providers ensure that the service creates a positive, consistent, and supportive environment. Factors to be considered include.

- Ensuring and being explicit that confidentiality is an essential element of the service.
- Ensuring staff are well trained (and supervised), demonstrate high professionalism, sensitivity, empathy, and enthusiasm for their work, and are approachable.
- Ensuring the staff team is representative (e.g. culture, identity) and inclusive of service users.
- Ensuring the service is seen as trustworthy.

Providing assurances that the service is welcoming and accessible will create a stronger sense of inclusivity, which will be instrumental in promoting recognition and acceptance that these services are for them.

“So, after reading everything, when we put all the questions and answers together, the main thing people really emphasise on was bringing a person of culture into the support service ... They want to feel like they can relate to someone”

- Dimah, Peer Researcher

“When you get someone who already understands that, like, they already know the struggle, it would just be easy”
- **Dimah, Peer Researcher**

3. Service Delivery

The nature of the support service delivery will determine the extent to which these young people will initially engage with them and then continue to access them. It will be essential for support services to ensure they are perceived as offering a flexible but consistent service.

It is recommended that service providers consider the following factors in the delivery of their services.

- They are reflective and responsive to the circumstances and commitments of young people (e.g. school, college, university, family, work, social life). Therefore, they offer flexible options for accessing and engaging with the services.
- They provide details on the location of the services and information on transportation links, ensuring that location and distance are not seen as barriers to use.
- Offer consistency in how the young person is supported and by whom. Where possible, ensure staff working with the young person are seen as relevant to their background, culture or identity.
- Ensure there is a visible sense of inclusivity and accessibility.
- Create a collaborative environment where young people can confidently comment on the service they receive and contribute towards its effectiveness.
- Ensure staff demonstrate professionalism and are positive,
- In addition to addressing complex and challenging life matters, the service should offer information or opportunities for young people to engage in social and leisure activities and events.
- Ensure young people know the options for using and working with the service. This will include remote/online and in-person options for support. It will also include different types of support sessions such as one-to-one, group work, guided reflections.
- Young people need to believe that these support services are appropriate for them and their life challenges.

“It’s genuinely the most important thing not to forget that one size does not fit all”
- **Deniz, Peer Researcher**

These recommendations will collectively enhance awareness and understanding amongst these young people of the value and benefits of engaging with youth support services. As previously stated, increasing this service user type will take time. Nevertheless, as awareness grows and ethnically diverse young people engage more with support services, it is more likely that 'word of mouth' information and recommendations from service users will see the number of young people engage multiply even further.

“I just want to say a massive thank you to all of the young people who participated in this research. In the survey and in the focus groups, this would not have been possible without their time and energy”

- Zac, Peer Researcher



APPENDICES

1. Brighton & Hove Hope Hack Report

2. AudioActive Amplifying Voices Report

BRIGHTON & HOVE

HOPE HACK EVENT



SUPPORTED BY:



HOPE COLLECTIVE

urbanflo
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Trust for
Developing
Communities



VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP
SUSSEX

REPORT

2024



INTRODUCTION



The **Brighton & Hove Hope Hack** was a youth event held on the **1st March 2024** at the i360 in Brighton, creating a space where young minds converged to envision a fairer, safer society.

The event was delivered by a group of **local young people** working with the Trust for Developing Communities (TDC), with other support from the Hope Collective, Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership, Brighton & Hove City Council and Urban Flo Creative.

SCAN TO
WATCH OUR



HOPE HACK
EVENT FILM



hope hack

(NOUN)

definition: a day-long workshop that aims to give young people a voice and focuses on their hopes for the future, coordinated across the UK by the Hope Collective.

ABOUT THE HOPE COLLECTIVE



The Hope Collective, a **coalition of national youth organisations**, was formed on the 20th anniversary of Damilola Taylor's tragic death, inspired by his hope for a better world.

It serves as a platform to co-design solutions, amplify youth voices, and advocate for long-term systemic changes.





**THE
HOPE HACK
YOUTH
STEERING
GROUP:**

**CAITLIN STOREY
MATTIE STRONG
LIV THOMPSON
SYLVINA PREIRA
MAIA GOODWIN
ZOE BYRNE**

PLANNING THE EVENT



photography by DIENSEN

The event's **planning and execution** rested in the capable hands of a youth steering group, supported by TDC. Their meticulous planning, from venue selection to workshop themes, ensured a day that resonated with the city's youth. Their insights created the conditions for an open and purposeful gathering, addressing themes crucial to young people's lives.

ABOUT THE EVENT



Gathering around **100 stakeholders**, including over 60 young people from diverse backgrounds, the day began with an inspiring speech by **AFLO the Poet**, which set the tone for meaningful discussions.

This was followed by a **panel discussion** featuring young people with firsthand experience of the issues. These discussions fed into the main workshops. The event concluded with a series of presentations from the workshop groups, where participants shared their findings and solutions with local VIPs, politicians, and senior Council Officers.

FOUR WORKSHOPS

explored critical issues:

1. **Education**
2. **Mental Health**
3. **Cost of Living, Housing & Employment**
4. **Racism, Division & Community Safety**



WORKSHOPS

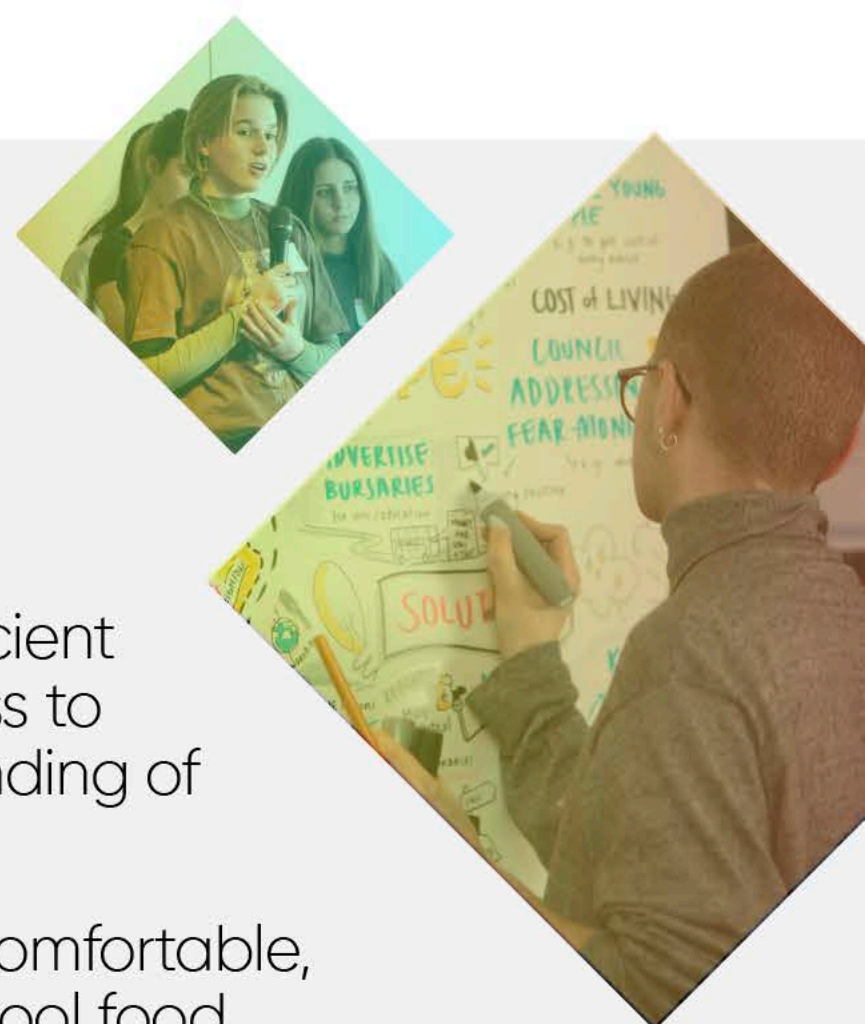
In the **morning sessions**, young people identified the key issues that needed attention in the city.

During the **afternoon sessions**, young delegates developed their proposed solutions and prepared their presentations back to assembled adults with the power to make changes.

KEY FINDINGS

EDUCATION

1. **Funding and Resource Allocation:** Insufficient funding leads to lack of inclusivity, unequal access to education resources and support, and understanding of challenging behaviour.
2. **Uniform and School Food:** Issues with uncomfortable, expensive uniforms and unsatisfactory, costly school food.
3. **Life Skills and Modernized Curriculum:** Lack of life skills education leaves students feeling unprepared for the future; calls for curricula that accommodate diverse backgrounds and focus on practical skills.
4. **Discipline and Rules:** Unfair disciplinary strategies, particularly concerning phone usage and isolation as punishment.
5. **Trusted Support and Safe Spaces:** Desire for a trusted teacher for confidential support instead of immediately contacting home, along with the need for safe spaces and designated areas for students with additional needs.
6. **Voice, Choice, and Inclusion:** Students want their voices and choices to be heard in school decisions and recognition and support of learning difficulties and diverse backgrounds.
7. **Mental Health Support:** Insufficient mental health support, long waiting lists for help, and high thresholds for receiving support.



MENTAL HEALTH

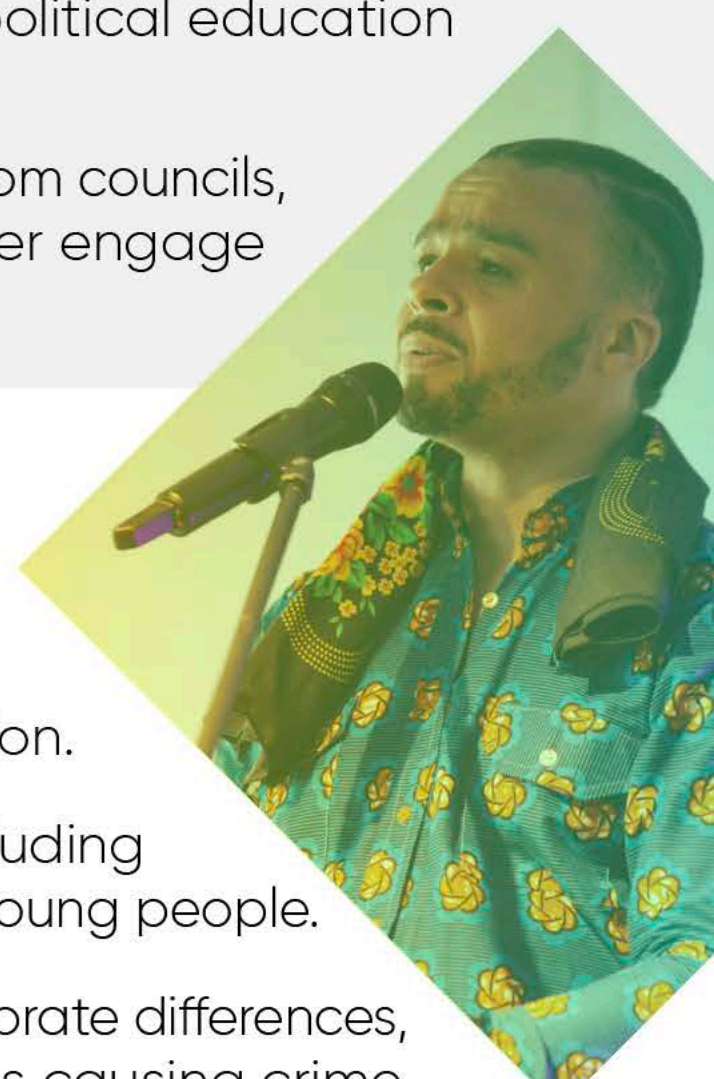
- 1. Understanding Mental Health:** Mental health needs more awareness and understanding. Plus there is a lack of mental wellbeing support in schools, need for better school-life balance and understanding from staff.
- 2. Cost of Living Impact:** Stress from financial pressures and its knock-on effect on mental health.
- 3. Safe Spaces and Choices:** Desire for safe spaces, flexibility to leave class if needed, and choices in communication methods.
- 4. Diagnosis Challenges:** Difficulty in getting diagnoses for ADHD and autism is impacting mental health support.
- 5. Immediate Support:** Need for support while waiting for formal mental health services, including independent advocates and supportive youth groups.

COST OF LIVING, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

- 1. Interconnected Issues and Employment Barriers:** Cost of living, education funding, and employment pressures are interlinked, affecting young people's prospects, with barriers like the need for experience, qualifications mismatch, job cuts, and rejection cycles.
- 2. Affordable Housing and Homelessness:** Lack of affordable housing and rising homelessness, particularly in expensive areas like Brighton.
- 3. Life Skills Education:** Lack of education on life skills, finances, and job application processes, leading to uncertainty about the future.
- 4. Meaningful Engagement and Political Education:** Need for more diverse and genuine engagement with young people, including political education and council involvement.
- 5. Improved Communication:** Improved communication from councils, including social media updates and focus groups, to better engage and inform young people.

RACISM, DIVISION, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 1. Equality and Inclusion:** Young people from ethnically minoritised communities feel they need to work harder, face categorisation, and lack tailored communication and inclusion.
- 2. Community Safety:** Rising crime rates in Brighton, including racism and hate crimes creating a sense of danger among young people.
- 3. Role Models and Celebration of Diversity:** Need to celebrate differences, provide positive role models, and address underlying issues causing crime.



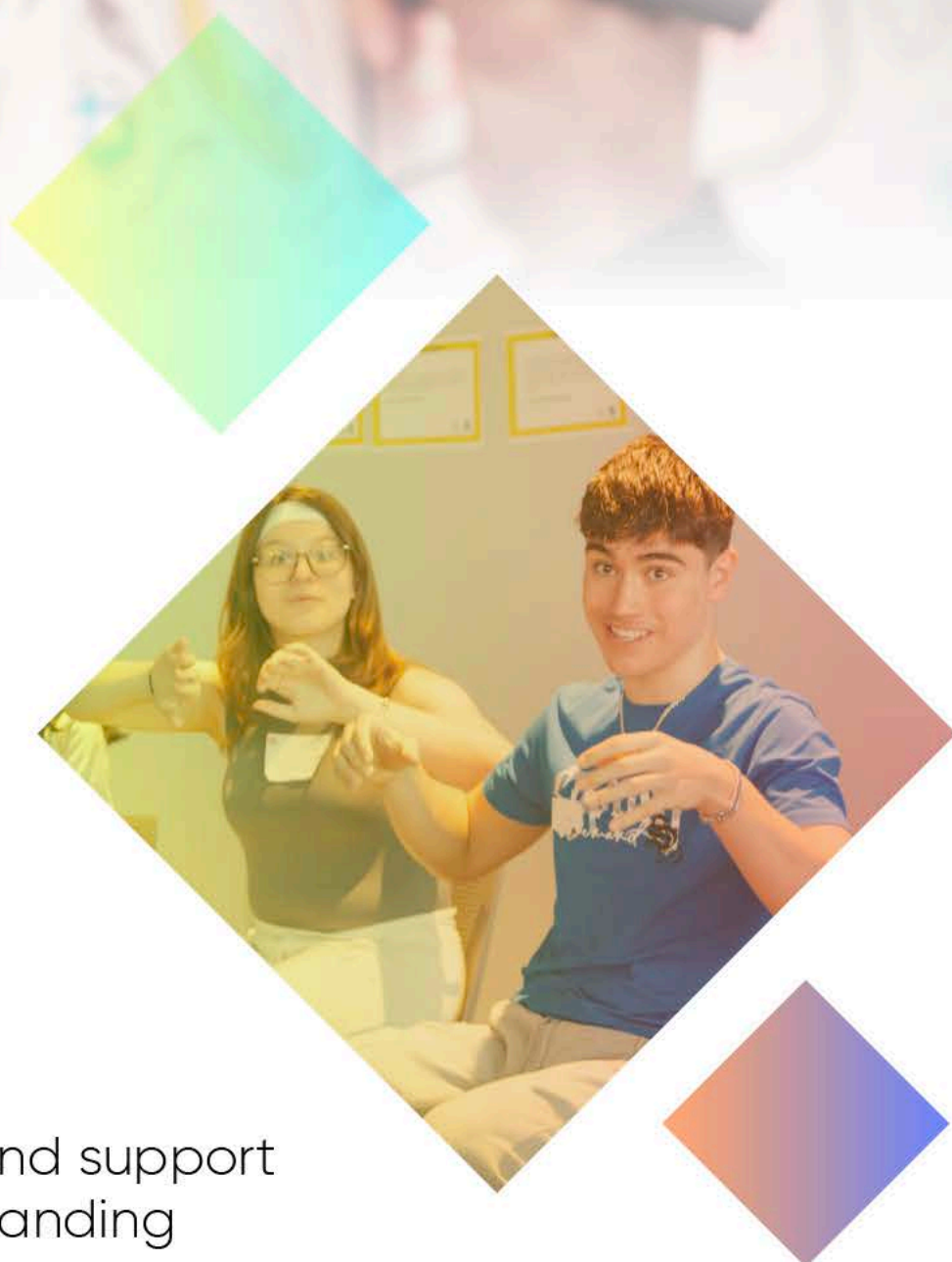


SOLUTIONS

After a **morning of discussions** around these topics, the groups then got back together to share their ideas of how to **make changes** related to these issues.

EDUCATION

- 1. Recognition and Support:** Recognise and support learning difficulties, and adopt more understanding approaches to behavioural problems.
- 2. Teacher Training and Trust:** Ensure teachers have time to build relationships and are trained to support different needs, with mandatory training on inclusion, diversity, casual sexism, and understanding challenging behaviour.
- 3. Flexible and Inclusive Learning:** Provide flexibility for different types of learning, allow students to leave the classroom when needed, and ensure education accommodates all religions and celebrates different cultures.
- 4. Educational Choice and Student Voice:** Increase freedom of choice in education and allow students to have a say in the curriculum, especially in PSHE and life skills.
- 5. Address Discrimination:** Actively address racism, homophobia, and discrimination.
- 6. Increased Funding:** Secure more funding for education priorities, addressing inequalities in resource access due to poverty



MENTAL HEALTH

- 1. Safe Spaces and Mental Health Support:** Create safe spaces in schools for mental well-being support, especially in secondary schools, and destigmatise mental health issues through education and awareness.
- 2. Counsellors and Support Groups:** Increase the availability of counsellors within and outside schools, and establish support groups for those on waiting lists for further mental health support (e.g., CAMHS).
- 3. Communication Choices and Classroom Flexibility:** Allow choices in communication methods, such as using phones or SMS, and permit students to leave class if needed, whether dysregulated or just needing the toilet.
- 4. Student Involvement and Advocacy:** Involve students in decision-making processes and have independent third-party adult advocates available within schools or colleges.
- 5. Support With or Without Diagnosis:** Provide support with or without a diagnosis, and offer education and information on obtaining diagnoses and support without a diagnosis. Formal mental health services, including independent advocates and supportive youth groups.
- 6. Additional Resources and Clear Pathways:** Provide more resources like STEM toys and noise-cancelling headphones within schools, and develop clearer pathways to mental health support.



COST OF LIVING, HOUSING, & EMPLOYMENT

- 1. Youth Hub and Support Services:** Create a hub for young people to get help with housing, employment, and cost of living issues. And share positive youth stories, such as getting out of debt, to counteract negative narratives.
- 2. Affordable Housing:** Create genuinely affordable housing so people can stay in Brighton.
- 3. Educational Equality and Opportunities** Advertise bursaries available for education.
- 4. Modernised PSHE and Life Skills:** Rebrand and modernise PSHE to include more relevant topics around life skills, such as step-by-step processes to getting into work, making it engaging with guest speakers.
- 5. Student-Council Engagement and Political Education:** Enhance student voice and influence by having council members visit schools and engage with students, and provide comprehensive political education, particularly on local politics.
- 6. Improved Council Communication:** Improve council communication through social media updates and factual information.

RACISM, DIVISION, AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 1. Celebrate Difference:** Conquer racism, transphobia, and homophobia by celebrating differences and promoting diversity.
- 2. Role Models:** Increase the visibility of positive role models.
- 3. Address Root Causes:** Tackle underlying issues that lead to a lack of aspiration and crime.
- 4. Children's Book:** Develop a children's book featuring a non-binary child exploring different cultures and ways of life.

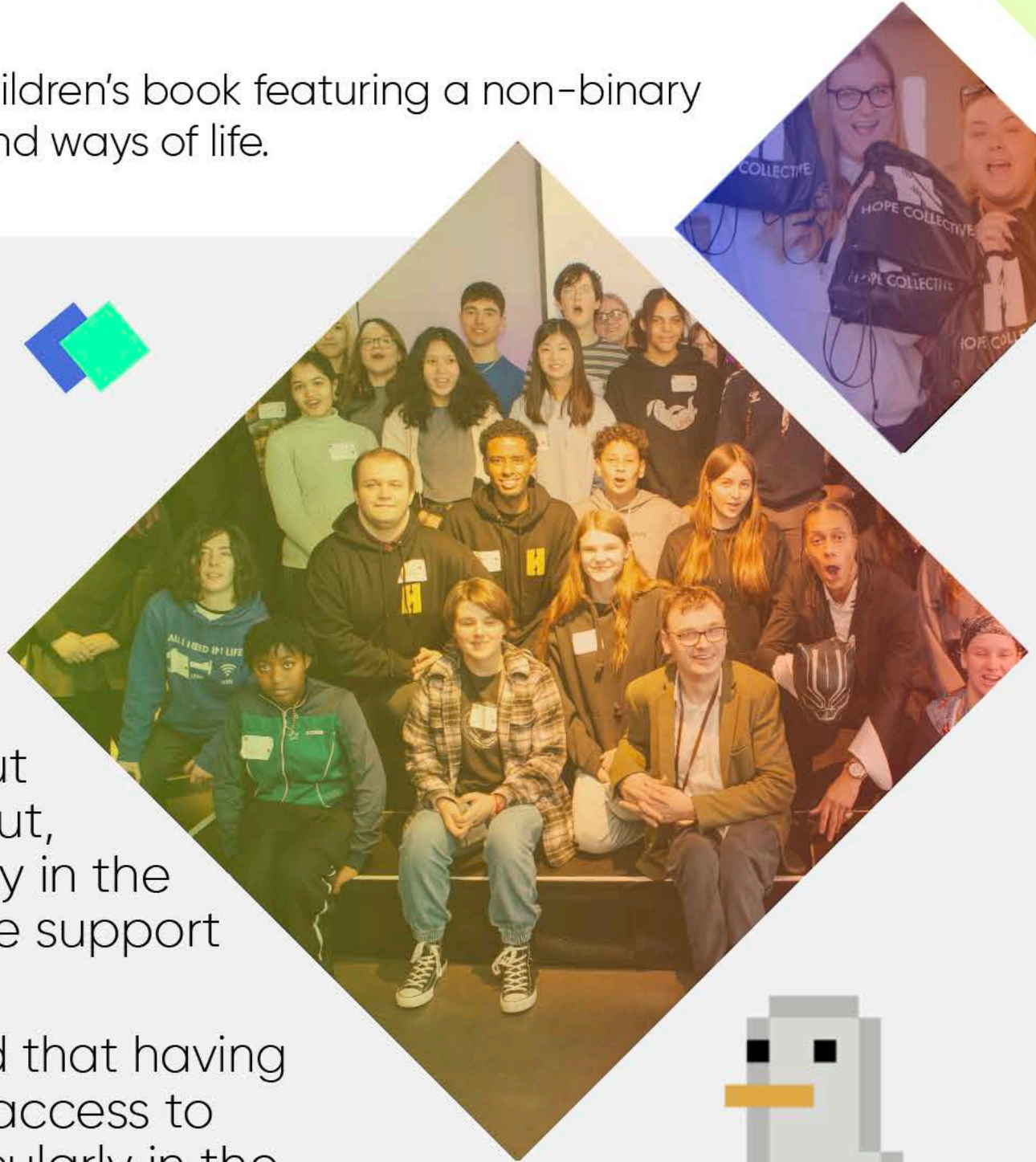
SUMMARY



The Hope Hack uncovered **important insights** into the issues facing young people today.

In **Education**, we talked about how some students feel left out, and there's not enough money in the system for everyone to get the support they need.

On **mental health**, we realised that having safe places to talk and easy access to help is really important, particularly in the long wait for diagnosis. We also talked about how hard it is to afford things like housing and find a job, and how these problems are all connected.



We all agreed that it's important to include everyone, fight against racism, and make our communities safer.

To sum up, the Brighton and Hove Hope Hack shows how young people have a powerful voice and can make a big difference. The ideas we came up with show that we're determined to make things better, just like Damilola Taylor hoped for.

photography by DIENSEN

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HOPE COLLECTIVE


Brighton & Hove
City Council

 VAP
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP
SUSSEX

AUDIOACTIVE



Activate

April 2024

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1. Introduction

The Amplifying Voices event, organised by Audio Active, stands as a testament to the commitment of Brighton and Hove City Council and various voluntary organisations in amplifying the voices of Global Majority Young People (GMYP) aged 11-25.

The event aimed to provide a platform for young black musicians, dancers, and artists from Brighton to showcase their talents while fostering dialogue between young people and decision-makers within the city.

The Event brought together a diverse audience comprising GMYP, their families, friends, allies, and representatives from supporting organisations and statutory bodies. Through live performances, creative consultations, and testimonial recordings, attendees shared their thoughts, feelings, and recommendations, shedding light on crucial issues affecting the GMYP community in Brighton and Hove.

Global Majority Young Person

We believe using the term "Global Majority Young Person" is crucial for fostering inclusivity, empowerment, and solidarity among young people worldwide. By recognising the collective strength and agency of young people from diverse backgrounds and emphasising intersectionality, the term promotes a more equitable worldview.

2. Context

Brighton and Hove City Council, along with various voluntary organizations like Audio Active, Trust for Developing Communities, and Priority 1-54, have long recognised the importance of allocating resources to address the unique needs of the GMYP community.

The Amplifying Voices event provides partner organizations, familiar with this group of young people, a platform to facilitate meetings, collaborations, performances, and the collection of essential testimonies from this often-overlooked community. Moreover, by inviting decision-makers and professionals involved in shaping the services and future of GMYP, both parties have the chance to engage directly and share their insights firsthand.

Over 100 people attended the event, with participants ranging from 5-60 years old, while performers were aged between 13 and 25 years old, with the majority global majority communities, including young refugee and asylum-seeking, their families, friends, allies, service providers, support workers, and key decision-makers from across Brighton and Hove.

This report serves as a comprehensive record of the feedback gathered during the event, serving as a valuable resource and guide for shaping the future service direction for GMYP in the city.

3. Aims and Objectives

The main aims and objectives are as follows:

Organising a unique creative event for Global Majority Young People (GMYP) aged 11-25 in Brighton and Hove, alongside their friends, families, and supporters.

Showcasing young black musicians, dancers, and artists from the city to an audience of like-minded GMYP individuals.

- Introducing the audience to the city's decision-makers and professionals involved with GMYP and the broader community in Brighton and Hove.

Showcasing and celebrating diverse young talent.

- Gathering the thoughts, feelings, feedback, and recommendations of GMYP regarding the city, its services, and the institutions that support them.

4. Methodology

The Amplifying Voices Event offered a platform for GMYP to express their thoughts and opinions in a safe space, while also showcasing their artistic talents. Several musical acts performed at the venue, run and compared by young people all performing their own material.

Young individuals often express a desire for more dynamic, creative, inclusive engagement, rather than the conventional formal methods such as focus groups that often take place in adult spaces. During the event, several creative live consultation activities took place with the audience to authentically capture their thoughts and feelings on a set of issues that affect GMYP in the city. The questions posed were influenced by the perspectives of the global majority staff at Audio Active.

Interviews were conducted through video and audio recordings to capture the firsthand experiences of both the audience and performers. Additionally, family members, allies, and supporting workers were invited to contribute their insights to further enrich the findings in this report.

[YOUNG PERFORMERS VIDEO 1](#)

[YOUNG PERFORMER VIDEO 2](#)

[YOUNG PERSON INTERVIEW VIDEO](#)

[ADULT INTERVIEW VIDEO](#)

5. Key Findings

The following findings are based on feedback provided by GMYP during the event and offer a snapshot into the lived experiences in their communities, the schools and colleges they attend, and services they use.

Safer Cities

Young people were asked what can be done to improve or change services in the city, with several themes emerging. For example, the quotes highlighted the need for greater representation and diversity in services, particularly for GMYP.

This includes prioritising the needs of GMYP, providing more funding for youth music programs, and creating spaces for young people of colour to showcase their creativity. There was also a call for more inclusive youth support services, including wrap-around support and mental health services tailored to the needs of young people from GMC.

Community engagement and events are seen as vital for communication and connection, with suggestions for more diverse food markets, mixed venues, and creative activities. Additionally, there's a desire for more intersectional events to bring together diverse communities.

Education and awareness are highlighted as crucial, with calls for more training to combat stereotypes and address issues like drug selling. Overall, the quotes emphasize the importance of inclusivity, representation, and support for young people from diverse backgrounds.

Insights

Representation and Diversity



We need more representation and diversity in the services we access.
Make black young people a priority.

More amateur youth music provision.

More community events for YPOC to show their creativity.

Prioritise autism in black people and have provision for them.

It's important we are given the opportunities to talk about who we are, and race and racism.

It feels like BLM was just trendy for a minute and then people moved on and didn't make any difference.



Youth Support and Services:



We need wrap-around youth support for young people of colour in the city not just targeted services for certain issues.

More community-based activities for young people.

More integrated youth workers working directly alongside schools.

More specialist youth workers for visual arts as well as music.

More funded and free community spaces for young people 13-17 and 18-24.

Youth services have to be free.

More consideration in the mental health support services for GMYP in the city.



Community Engagement



More creative activities and classes so we can communicate, meet and be heard.

More pop-up food markets with diverse food from our communities not just European food. Food brings people together.

It's definitely very nice to see a mix of black and mixed venues in our communities, we need more of these.

Have a central advertising space for events for all young people.

More youth and intersectional events like this one so that different diverse communities mix and come together and connect.

More street art, graffiti, and places for young people to make and practice their street art and graffiti.



Education and Training



More training for service staff across the board to remove ingrained stereotypes of young people and those from differing cultures so we can have more equality.

More provision to tackle the selling of drugs to young people.

It's important we are given the opportunities to talk about who we are, and race and racism.



Recommendations

- Ensure that services and programs specifically target the needs and interests of GMYP, including dedicated support for issues such as mental health and SEND
- Organise and support more community events that showcase the creativity of young people from GMC, providing platforms for them to share their talents and perspectives of living in Brighton.
- Establish more funded and free community spaces for young people across different age groups, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.
- Support more intersectional events that bring together diverse communities and provide spaces for young people to engage in street art and graffiti, fostering creativity and community pride.

Policing

The quotes from young people paint a complex picture of their perceptions of the police. While some express outright distrust and label police as "bad people," others acknowledge that not all officers fit this characterisation.

Some spoke of the need for increased accountability, citing experiences of aggression and racial profiling, highlighting instances where simply being black has led to unwarranted stop and search, so emphasising the need for fair treatment.

Despite occasional positive encounters, there's a prevailing sense of mistrust and frustration with police responsiveness, indicating systemic issues that erode confidence in the police. These sentiments persist even in diverse communities like Brighton, suggesting that stereotypes and mistrust towards law enforcement are widespread and deeply ingrained, particularly for the young people we spoke with.

Insights



They are bad, very bad people.

I find them [police] aggressive.

I think they get a bad rep, they are not all animals

They need to be held more accountable for their actions.

If I'm walking, minding my own business whilst black I get stopped, being black is not a crime.

Sometimes they were OK and understanding but I've also been profiled in ways I just don't understand.



Insights



There is no trust, I don't think they cared about my problem, it took a long time with my case to get sorted.

There is little trust, stereotypes about GMYP still seem relevant even in somewhere like Brighton that is supposed to be seen as diverse.

More trained police because of dangerous people.

More provision to tackle the selling of drugs to young people.

Tackle the city's knife crime issues.

YPoC need more black male role models in their provisions.



Recommendations

- Implement rigorous training to address biases and stereotypes to promote greater understanding between police and GMC.
- Foster dialogue and community engagement initiatives like community policing to build trust and understanding between police and GMC.
- Recruit diverse police officers so that they reflect the communities they serve.
- Provide more funding to enable the police to undertake dynamic and engaging community-based substance misuse and knife crime programs.

Social Care

The critique of the social care system by respondents suggests a mixed picture, particularly in regards to young people's experiences of foster care. There is a view that young people would like there to be greater emphasis on the recruitment of Black and GM foster carers, to ensure that culturally competent care of Black and GMYP is delivered in an informed way, that respects and enhances their cultural identity. The recruitment of more diverse foster carers will also minimise young people's feelings of isolation and engender a greater understanding of Black and GMYP's lived experiences.

It was however encouraging to hear that there has been cultural competence and anti-racist practice training undertaken within social care, which has included white social workers and white foster carers, to develop a better understanding of the cultural, religious and identity needs of Black and GMYP. We are also aware that there is ongoing work within the community to recruit more Black and GM foster carers, as well as more social workers from diverse backgrounds.

Insights



The care system feels corrupt, I don't think the vetting process for the foster families for GMYP happens well enough, they often don't understand what our lives are like and know some of our natural differences.

There is a lack of placements and foster carers from our communities, meaning GMYP are placed outside of their own communities, this leads to feelings of more isolation there is a need to recruit more Social Workers and foster families from global majority communities and those from culturally diverse backgrounds across the board.

It is good to see that there has been some training for white social workers and foster families to support and understand GMYP but so much more can be done.



Recommendations

- Implement a targeted recruitment strategy to attract social workers and support service teams from global majority communities. This will ensure cultural competence and a better understanding of the needs of the global majority families and young people.
- Increase efforts to recruit foster families from global majority backgrounds for all types of placements, to provide GMYP with placements that better reflect their cultural backgrounds and reduce feelings of isolation.
- Develop and implement comprehensive education and training programs for white social workers to enhance their ability to relate to and understand the unique needs of GMYP.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Brighton is known for its progressive stance on diversity and continues to make significant strides in certain areas. However, for many GMYP, their experience can be complex. For some young people, while the city proudly flies the rainbow flag, it sometimes feels like that's where the conversation about diversity begins and ends.

Moreover, being dual heritage can add another layer of complexity. The struggle to fit in, being labelled as "half," and living in what some young people called 'a grey area' can impact their sense of identity and mental health. Many spoke of overt experiences and racism and micro-aggressions, which was further compounded by the fact that reporting such incidents often felt futile.

Insights



Brighton has done an amazing job as a city of moving certain areas of diversity forward and has been really progressive, but as a black woman sometimes it feels like it begins and ends with a rainbow flag and I feel we can do so much more

I am feeling very happy I like Brighton and Hove (URASYP)

In my college I was the only black person

As a YPoC I feel very visible in this city which leads to me feeling isolated like I stand out

I felt isolated when I was young, but I am starting to feel more hopeful and more positive these days because I'm beginning to feel seen and heard

As a young black man, we don't talk about our feelings mainly because I don't think anyone will listen

It's hard to put into words but I feel like I have to be two people. I can really be me when I'm with my black friends, they get me and I can say anything and not be worried, but when I'm with my white friends I'm never really me and they expect me to act in a certain way...it's hard you know trying to be me

It's hard being mixed-race, being labelled, called half, always living in the grey area, you can be called black by some people, white or light by others, and not knowing where you fit in affects your mental health

When I moved here [to Brighton] it was like the worst thing I've ever experienced in my life. I was so lonely and it took ages before I found people like me [of colour]. School was okay, but it was outside of school...the only good thing was that I became really close with my mum.

It's important to our well-being to have our true identities understood.

There's not much point in reporting things [racism] because in all honesty, if they are racist what can I do to stop them from being like that

I can talk to my mum about stuff like this [racism] but not my dad. He told me about racism he'd experienced, and said I needed to accept it, but why should I put up with it

Instead of Wellbeing Ambassadors have older mentors who are Black in the school to support us with our issues and emotional wellbeing

I can think of a black male student getting into trouble for behaviour but really his mental health is being overlooked

If I hear the N-word I feel powerless and think what's the point? If we call out racism, it's dressed up as banter it's so normalised



Recommendations

- Ensure that mental health support services and educational settings in Brighton reflect the diversity of the community.
- Implement initiatives to address the intersectionality of racial identity and mental health, recognizing the importance of understanding and supporting the unique experiences of diverse communities.
- Foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity among young people of colour in Brighton, addressing feelings of isolation and invisibility through initiatives that promote understanding and acceptance of diverse identities.
- Encourage open discussions about mental health within the community, particularly among young Black men who may face barriers to expressing their emotions, by providing safe spaces and support networks where they can seek help and feel heard.

Young Women and Health

Young women from GMC expressed mixed experiences with accessing healthcare services in the South East. While some report being treated well and receiving adequate care for injuries, others highlight systemic issues such as a lack of resources and long wait times.

Many feel that healthcare responses to gender, minority, and youth communities are inadequate and often fail to address their specific needs and concerns. They stress the importance of culturally relevant information, trust-building, and sensitivity from healthcare professionals to overcome subconscious biases and ensure equitable access to care.

Additionally, there are concerns about the underrepresentation of young people of colour, particularly Asian young men, in mental health support services, emphasizing the need for greater diversity and understanding among mental health workers.

Insights



I broke my arm doing Parkour, it was really stressful, but I was treated well

I don't think there are enough health resources for GMYP as workers we don't know where to refer people.

My experience is poor, there were not enough answers or consideration for GMC and women of colour.

Generally, I think healthcare responses to GMC are pretty poor from health care professionals

There are always long waits for health services.



Insights



In my experience I had to wait 2 hours for an ECG, you shouldn't have to wait this long for medical attention.

As a young black woman, I just try not to access health care at all if I can help it because I don't think I'll get the support I need.

Relevant information from people that they can relate to and trust without feeling judged.

As a woman of colour, I've seen sentiments that black women can handle more pain these sub-conscious and conscious blockers need to be discussed

We want mental health workers who understand our lives and experiences



Recommendations

- Provide comprehensive training for healthcare professionals to increase cultural competency and sensitivity towards the unique experiences and needs of young women from GMC.
- Ensure that healthcare facilities are equipped to address diverse patient populations and provide culturally competent care that is the specific needs of GMC individuals.
- Address the lack of accessible health resources for GMC individuals by improving awareness among healthcare workers about available services and referral pathways.
- Offer culturally sensitive mental health resources and interventions that acknowledge and validate the unique challenges faced by GMC individuals, including addressing stereotypes and biases

Education and Learning

GMYP repeatedly stated that Black history was frequently overlooked and/or misrepresented in education and required greater recognition and representation throughout the school/college curriculum.

Again, there was frustration with the lack of action and accountability from schools regarding racist incidents, along with calls for transparency when reporting such incidents and stronger sanctions for those engaging in racism. Addressing racism and its impact on mental health should be integrated into educational programs to create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Insights



There is a continuous whitewashing of our Black stories and history in education and Black History Month. Black history is all the time not just a month

There needs to be more practical subjects in college for those that are studying ESOL

I was called the N-word every day by other kids at my school all the way through Year 10, nothing was taken seriously by staff until my parents threatened to call OFSTED

There should be more specialist support opportunities for young people of colour that are struggling to make the transition to college.

There needs to be more opportunities for young people of colour with learning difficulties

Black history isn't taught or described as something deliberate or worth any real attention, it's an afterthought, doesn't feel like schools think it is worth truly representing

I always dreaded learning about black history at school because it was always focused on the negative black experiences throughout history rather than anything positive

Once in primary school, someone put a racist comment on a post-it note and it got past around class. It was passed to me and I got really upset. I knew who it was, and I reported it but nothing happened, or at least I don't think it did

We want more opportunities to talk about our race and our identities

We want schools to take more action against racist incidents

When we report a racist incident, we should be told what action has been taken
Micro-aggressions, racism and their impact on wellbeing and mental health should be addressed in PHSRE lessons

Black students have few if any positive role models in schools who look the way that we do

I've had teachers use the 'n-word' in lessons and they tell us they are going to use the word because it's about context in an English book, but I find it difficult. But other teachers won't use the word. But it shouldn't be their choice to use it

I went to [name of teacher] to say that there wasn't enough being done In Black History Month. We had one PowerPoint in tutor time and then [name of teacher] went totally off into another conversation, so we never did anything...nothing'



Recommendations

- Incorporate Black history into the standard curriculum beyond Black History Month, focusing on both positive and negative aspects to provide a balanced perspective.
- Create more opportunities for discussions about race and racism, both within educational settings and in the community, to promote understanding and address systemic issues.
- Implement proactive measures to address racist incidents promptly, including clear communication of actions taken and education on racial sensitivity for all staff and students.
- Increase representation of diverse role models in schools, including teachers, to provide inspiration and support for GMYP.
- Foster partnerships between healthcare providers and community stakeholders to co-create solutions that promote health equity and address systemic barriers to care for young women from GMC.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Amplifying Voices event organised by Audio Active, in collaboration with Brighton and Hove City Council and various voluntary organisations, stands as a powerful testament to the commitment to amplifying the voices of GMYP. This event served as a crucial platform for GMYP to showcase their talents, engage in dialogue with decision-makers, and express their thoughts and recommendations on issues affecting their community.

The feedback gathered highlighted key areas of concern, including the need for greater representation and diversity in services, improved support for mental health and emotional wellbeing, and enhanced education on Black history and racism.

The recommendations stemming from the event emphasised the importance of comprehensive change and reforms in education, social care, policing, and mental health support services. These recommendations include implementing rigorous training to address biases and stereotypes, fostering dialogue and community engagement initiatives, recruiting diverse professionals, and ensuring that mental health services and educational settings reflect the diversity of the community.

Furthermore, there is a clear call for accountability and transparency in addressing racist incidents and more opportunities for discussions on race and identity. It is evident that there is a pressing need for systemic changes to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for GMYP in Brighton and Hove.

Overall, the Amplifying Voices event serves as a catalyst for action, providing valuable insights and recommendations to guide future service direction and initiatives for the benefit of GMYP in the city. It is essential that the feedback gathered during the event is taken seriously and translated into tangible policies and actions to address the unique needs and challenges faced by GMYP in their communities.

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