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| TITLE OF REPORT: Anchor Institutions – Young People Reflections and Recommendations | |
| HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - 16 June 2022 | CLASSIFICATION: Open |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED ALL WARDS | |
| Group Director N/a | |

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Anchor institutions are large organisations that are firmly rooted in an area and are likely to remain so. For instance, local authorities, hospitals and NHS organisations. These organisations offer employment to many people and are in a position to influence and benefit the local community.

The City and Hackney Integrated Care Partnership Young Public Representatives wanted to understand how young people perceive the anchor institutions in our local area, and explore their views about how these large organisations could better serve their local communities. The young people we spoke to broadly felt **encouraging young people into the workforce of the institutions and finding ways to allow them easier access to the workforce** was the theme that resonated the most with them. This theme links with the Hackney Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority of supporting greater financial wellbeing, as well as improving social connectivity and mental wellbeing for young people as they are supported to move into the workplace.

The North East London Integrated Care System identified Children and Young People, and employment and workforce as two of the four flagship priority themes for the area. Healthwatch Hackney identifies engaging with and working alongside Young People as a priority in its draft strategy for 2022-2025. This shows an appetite within the system for improving our local offer around opportunities for Young People.

The Young Reps decided that this report will focus on the insights around this theme, and present recommendations derived from these insights.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The City and Hackney Public Representatives are a group of local people that volunteer their time to feed into the C&H Integrated Care Partnership, taking part in governance meetings to bring the patient perspective and reflect the wider voice, offering engagement sessions and focus groups to influence and collaborate on ICP projects, and conducting their own outreach engagement and peer research to bring the wider voice to decision making bodies.

The young Public Representatives are a sub-group of the C&H Public Representatives, made up as follows:

- 12 Young Public Reps
- Age range - 19 - 29 yrs.
- 5 female, 7 male
- 66% Black/Black Mixed Heritage, 25% White British, 8% White Turkish

The Young Public Representatives used a guided conversation/open survey approach to speak to young people within local networks, and two of the Young Reps led a session with the London Borough Hackney Young Futures group. They spoke to 27 young people, gathering over 100 comments. The prompts below were used as a guide only, and the young people were encouraged to talk in more detail about the areas they felt were important.

Guided conversation prompts used as follows:

- *How, in your opinion, do local organisations such as the NHS and the Council engage with the local community?*
- *Is there anything specific that these organisations could do differently to improve connections with the local community and involve them in their work?*
- *What sorts of things could/should large local organisations such as the Council and NHS do to use their size and scale to support a good local economy?*
- *What could/should large local organisations such as the Council and the NHS do differently to hire people in a way that helps the local community? What do you feel would be important to make this work locally? We think of hospitals as being focused on improving health, often when things go wrong for people. What ways could local hospitals and the NHS help people with their wider health and wellbeing?*
- *What practical steps should local anchor institutions take to become more environmentally sustainable?*

2.2 The Young Reps asked young people aged between 16 and 25 if they were aware of ways in which local organisations like the NHS or London Borough Hackney engaged with residents. The majority of young people felt there was little or no attempt to communicate with young people as a specific group, either to share information or to ask for their thoughts and insights. There was some awareness of literature and community discussions, but those that were aware of engagement from the NHS or LBH had only become aware of this through their volunteer roles with either LBH, Healthwatch Hackney or the Integrated Care Partnership.

"I personally feel like they don't really engage with the local community like that. They don't!"

"There is very little engagement, letters and flyers mostly."

"They look to host community discussions."

"Until I joined the Healthwatch programme, I wasn't aware of any engagement with the local community if I'm honest."

"Now that I am a [C&H ICP] Public Rep I am part of engagement and focus groups often. Before that though, I didn't see anything."

2.3 The Young Reps asked young people how local organisations could improve the way in which they engage with residents. There were some great suggestions. There was an appetite for newsletters that presented a more honest picture – acknowledging challenges and telling residents how they are being addressed. As we move out of the pandemic there was a real keenness for fun events and community discussions that residents can attend in person. There was a feeling that people are more comfortable engaging with smaller organisations and local charities, and anchor organisations might benefit from partnership working to utilise this.

“I feel like if there was somewhere that people had access to leave some sort of feedback then that would be good.”

“Newsletters, even if it’s to get across what is going on & how it’s working on being fixed.”

“These organisations could look to broaden the channels - do more outreach work in the community, digital outreach, fun-days, hosting events and community discussions, etc.”

“Emails maybe? Questionnaires, lines of communication.”

“Using local organisations, structures and community members to do engagement, through GP surgeries, ensuring they are working with communities to understand their specific needs.”

2.4 The Young Reps asked how anchor institutions could invest in the local community. Some young people suggested ways in which organisations could use their financial advantage for the good of the area. They heard ideas about big organisations like the Homerton and local authorities combining their resources to create pop-up community hubs.

“Invest in smaller community organisations, that are already doing amazing work but may lack the funding or support to deliver the works to the levels they want it.”

“Zero carbon, reducing plastic, reducing heating, double glazing, solar panels, main issue is having sustainable food options not just big supermarkets that have loads of food waste.”

“The local authority must own or control some of the empty shop premises you see. Instead of them just sitting there empty, could they use them as a place people could go to get discounted fruit and veg, baby food and other essentials?”

“They [LBH] could join up with the Homerton to pay for free gym passes or swimming sessions. That could be part of what attracts people into the hub”.

“There could be regular events at the hubs laid on by the Homerton or LBH, talking to people about ways they can get involved. Like volunteering for gardening groups to make spaces owned by Homerton or LBH more attractive. Or there could be a session about joining the Public Reps. Stuff people might not know about that is interesting and helps stop people feeling isolated.”

“They could put on afternoon teas, or group walks to local parks. People would become members of the hub to benefit from the low cost fruit and veg etc and through becoming members begin to get involved in the other activities.”

2.5 Overwhelmingly, considering how organisations could invest in the local community, young people spoke about workplace opportunities. They felt the biggest thing that local anchor organisations could offer young people was a secure income and career options.

“There should be mandates for local employment numbers, upskilling local residents to be able to get jobs in the area, additional support for people

working for them who live in the local area, invest in local companies by commissioning them to deliver services in the area, place based care.”

Young people told us the best long term approach these big organisations could take to supporting and benefiting local young people is ensuring young people are accessing employment opportunities. This will help give those young people financial stability (in line with the Hackney Health and Wellbeing strategy, which identifies this as a priority).

The young people we spoke to told us there was a lack of opportunities for internships, work experience or volunteer experience. The Young Public Reps investigated this and discovered that there are existing opportunities, some of which are listed below:

- Work experience at Homerton Hospital allows young people to shadow a variety of roles, both clinical and administrative.
- Internships are available at Homerton, including level 2 internships that would not be dependent on exam qualifications.
- Management Trainee programme at London Borough Hackney.
- Hackney Council supported internship programme
- Hackney Council supported internship programme (SEARCH project)
- Young Futures Legacy Programme (LBH)
- Youth Parliament (LBH)
- HCVS Youth Champions

The Young Public Reps conclude from this that the barrier for young people is not lack of opportunities, but lies in the way in which these opportunities are publicised and presented to young people.

The Young Public Reps wanted to understand why more local young people weren't taking up paid roles, internships or work experience with these organisations. They heard that the first barrier to bringing local young people into the workforce was overcoming trust issues and helping the young people to want to pursue roles within the organisations. Larger organisations were often associated with the government

as a whole, or with bad experiences that had affected the young person's perception of the organisation. This could be counteracted by a warm and positive interaction with staff members when residents use the organisations and services. The Community Police Officers were identified as an example of positive interactions rebuilding trust between young people and authorities/organisations.

"People my age don't jump at the chance to work for what they see as government type organisations. We feel like the local council is just the same as the government, the NHS is owned by the government. And why would we trust the government we hear how bad they are all the time."

"Young people lack trust and respect for authority figures, often because they've had bad experiences or people they know have."

"It feels like it's the people at the top that don't care. Then how can they recruit from the local young people if the young people don't trust the organisation?"

"It's always on the news how bad the pay is if you work for the NHS. Like they don't pay their nurses enough to live on. That doesn't sound like someone I want to work for!"

"If a young person has had a bad experience, like not been taken seriously at the hospital, or been messed around by the council about housing benefit, then they aren't going to trust those people. So no way will they want to work for them."

"Everyone that works for an organisation needs to really positive when they interact with residents. It really changes the way you think about an organisation of the people in it are caring and warm, then maybe you could see going to work there some day as an option."

“If even the receptionists, the nurses, the work coaches, whoever they are, if everyone that works for that organisation is positive and gives a good vibe it entices people in to want to work there.”

“When you think about trust, young people don’t trust the police. But the community police officers have really improved that situation. They are positive and they work hard to make good associations and connections with young people. There should be people like that for all these anchor organisations. People whose job it is to build up those good relationships while representing their organisations.”

The Young Reps heard that the way in which organisations communicate with young people about opportunities is pivotal to changing perceptions and encouraging young people to consider this type of career by broadening their understanding of the roles available.

“Broadcasting the opportunities - There’s such a range of jobs to promote. You need to let people know what’s out there, otherwise they get a picture stuck in their head about what working for these organisations means, and it doesn’t cover all the different things they could be doing.”

“People don’t even know what the jobs are in the NHS apart from doctor or nurse. So if you’re not super good at sciences you wouldn’t even think of working for them. How are we supposed to know that there is other stuff we could do, no one tells us?”

Young people were clear it was important that existing staff actively sought out opportunities to come to talk to them where they are. They wanted to hear real people describing the work they do, and their journey from school into that role. They wanted to hear from people that look like them and have shared some of their experiences. They wanted to hear relatable stories from relatable people.

“Go to youth hubs and talk about working for the Homerton, LBH or whatever. Get the staff to come and talk about their journey to get there. How did they go from school to where they are now, not just talk about what they are doing now, that makes it feel out of reach?”

“Build up a network of places where you meet young people - colleges, youth hubs etc. Then go back a few times, build a relationship with the young people so they start to trust you and take an interest, rather than swooping in for one assembly, talking at them then disappearing again.”

“Get people that have experience of getting into the work place in different ways. People that didn't go to uni, but spent time volunteering, or internships, whatever. Get them to talk honestly about it, the hard bits too, so the kids get that it might be difficult but it can be done and its worthwhile.”

“There must be people that lived our type of lives. You know, local school, council estate, the difficult stuff, that has found a way into good jobs. Those are the people that should come talk to us. Real people.”

“Role models are important. If these kids see a young black man they make certain assumptions. Then when they hear actually I'm working and this is what I do they are surprised and it gets them thinking. People like that need to be trailblazers, then help younger people to aspire to doing the same thing.”

“Get the representation right! Let young people see people that look like them talking about the choices they have.”

They suggested frontline staff were well placed to talk about opportunities and plant the seed around moving into the workforce when they talked to young people in the course of their work.

“Get the frontline staff to talk about the opportunities as they meet people in the course of their work. When people come in to pay their bills or council tax,

when they meet with healthcare staff, that's a face to face opportunity for someone to be talking about their own experience of working there in context, which feels meaningful."

"St John's Ambulance could do stuff to raise awareness about jobs at the hospital or with NHS. People like those guys, we trust them, they come to the school to do first aid courses."

Volunteering, work experience and short work programmes were seen as an excellent route into employment. These were seen as ways to gain experience and confidence, as well as allowing people to experience the type of work without having to make a longer term commitment. This was seen as a way to ease anxiety around committing to work that may not suit the young person.

"There needs to be more of a drive to reach young people in schools. After school clubs would also be a good place. They need to increase awareness of the local offer. Having other young people come into the school to advise, signpost them to clubs, extra courses. Say a teenager is interested in working for the NHS, it would be great to have slightly older young people that they would trust going in to tell them about what they could be doing now. Like joining Youth Parliament, Young Hackney, LBH Young Futures. To start getting experience."

"People that can't do things because they missed getting qualifications, maybe they got in trouble and have a criminal record, maybe they haven't got off to the best start in the workplace, they still want the chance to do something with their lives. Often they just don't know where to start. That's where volunteering could build up their confidence and help them find their path again."

"Get young people involved by offering them work experience. Make the work experience interesting and go and tell them about it ahead of the time they need to choose work experience at school."

“Work experience and then make sure people can follow up the work experience with something, volunteering maybe, so they can keep moving forwards with it.”

“They could offer summer programmes to shadow people at the hospital. So you can experience what it would be like and see some of the jobs in action that really you would have no idea what they do. UCLH does this, some really cool jobs like “what does an anaesthetist do?”. Gives you a real goal to work towards when you see stuff like that.”

Several young people spoke about the importance of giving young people another opportunity to gain qualifications if they did not finish school with GCSEs. There was recognition that often difficult life circumstances could interfere with people's ability to sit and pass exams, and that young people would welcome the opportunity to try again but are held back by stigma and fears around cost.

“Give people a second chance to get their GCSEs. Make it so it's easier to go back to studying and take away the stigma”.

“When you do GCSEs it's scary because they make you think if you blow this forget it, you've blown your life. It shouldn't be that way. Plenty of people just have so much to deal with at that age, and maybe a couple years later they could try again and do really well. Maybe offer funding for an incentive. Like an internship but to get your qualifications. Something that makes doing that when you are 21 a good option, not something to be ashamed of.”

“You could combine people doing retakes of maths and English if they didn't get it first time with some other type of training. A package that gets you those GCSEs that you need but something else with it, so it feels more worthwhile to people. It could even be training that leads to a job if you complete the course.”

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn from the themes that emerged from the young people's insights. The recommendations are intended to be taken for consideration by the anchor institutions represented on the board. The recommendations indicate consideration of wider collaboration between anchor institutions going forward could be appropriate.

- Creating a culture in which big organisations like the NHS and local authorities engage with (Informing, involving and listening to) young people as a group using an approach specifically targeted at young people. This means as well as creating resources that are aimed at the younger age group, going out to where those young people are in the community and in schools and in colleges, and talking to them to ask their opinion and tell them how they can get more involved in influencing services or decision making processes.
- Providing local people with newsletters that give a more honest picture of what the organisation is doing, what's on offer and any opportunities, whilst also talking openly about current challenges faced.
- Big organisations partnering with smaller local organisations and charities to provide fun events, community meals, training and volunteer opportunities. The smaller organisations may be more trusted and the bigger organisations have more financial resources to share. These events would tackle social isolation and food poverty, as well as offering opportunities which could improve people's employability leading to better financial wellbeing.
- Anchor organisations working together to create pop up community hubs that local people can become a member of, in empty shop front spaces, offering discounted fruit, veg, baby food and other essentials. Free gym or swimming passes. Baby/toddler clothing exchange. Community sessions letting people know what is available in their area. Group walks and gardening groups. These hubs would benefit local people by tackling social isolation and easing the effects of financial deprivation during the cost of living crisis.
- Mandates for percentage of local employment numbers for anchor institutions, with a requirement to offer training and opportunities to upskill local people to move into paid employment with them (i.e. training with a built in job-offer on completion of training).

- Building trust with young people to encourage them to consider careers with anchor institutions by ensuring any interactions they have are positive. Healthwatch could be asked to facilitate peer training sessions or events in which frontline staff are given the opportunity to meet with local young people in an informal setting to talk with them and learn what a positive interaction looks and feels like from a young person's perspective.
- Homerton/LBH/CCG to produce a series of short videos focusing on the many and varied roles available. The videos should feature real staff that are representative of the local community, and should seek to raise the profile of roles young people leaving school or college would not be aware of. For instance, roles around engagement or equalities or support roles.
- Homerton/LBH/CCG to invite staff members from a wide variety of roles to join a youth outreach campaign, to talk directly to young people about local workforce opportunities and encourage them to take up opportunities. Looking for staff that come from the local area, whose journeys will resonate with local young people, to go out to schools, colleges, youth clubs and other events to talk openly about their own journey into the role they are in.
- Existing volunteering and work experience opportunities tailored to young people to be more widely promoted through social media, outreach programmes, schools and colleges, bus stop billboards, videos. Promotional material should feature local young people to be more relevant and engaging.
- With the support of the Health and Wellbeing Board a group of local young people could take on responsibility for collating existing opportunities and co-producing a comms and engagement campaign to raise awareness of these opportunities. Named leads from ICP organisations could work in collaboration with the young people to achieve this. The Public Reps/Healthwatch Hackney could lead on recruitment and oversight of this project.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) England Regulations 2012 publication of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required

NONE

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