



Paper to the Bradford and District Wellbeing Board 28th February 2023

Bradford Citizens is grateful for the opportunity for young people to attend and give a presentation at the Bradford Wellbeing Board on 28th February 2023

Summary:

- 5 MATs in Bradford have collaborated to form Bradford Citizens as an alliance working to bring a strong voice for young people in Bradford. This alliance is seeking to broaden its membership beyond MATs to a range of civil society institutions. Bradford Citizens is facilitated by Citizens UK.
- Young People from MAT Schools in Bradford have been working together to identify issues from their experience that can be tackled in order to improve their lives. Mental Health has come out as a priority and within this issue the young people have identified practical solutions which they would like to present as proposals to decision makers and partner bodies within Bradford.
- To this end a group of young people from different schools will give a presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board and participate in a discussion on their proposals chaired by Cllr. Susan Hinchliffe.

Background

Bradford Citizens is currently an alliance of 5 School Multi-Academy Trusts (BDAT, Beckfoot, Carlton, Dixons and Exceed), with other Trusts joining. The aim is to broaden this alliance among more schools, the University, faith groups, charities and trade unions. The alliance began in March 2021 with a school pandemic summit which was based on listening to 20,000 students in 18 schools. From these stories, we produced the Schools Pandemic Recovery Manifesto and developed actions in 4 areas: effects of racism; mental health experience and support; effects of disadvantage; lost opportunities/LGBTQ+. In April 2021 school students from Bradford participated in a virtual meeting with West Yorkshire mayoral candidates. Actions teams for each of the 4 areas have since identified the changes they want to see, with associated practical outcomes, and students have led meetings with civic leaders in the city.

In 2021/22 students have met with senior leaders including West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin West Yorkshire Mayor, Alison Lowe (Deputy Mayor (Police and Crime) ACC Osman Khan, Therese Patten (*CEO Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust*), Kirsten England (CEO, Bradford MDC), Susan Hinchliffe (Leader, Bradford MDC), Toby Howarth (Bishop of Bradford) and David Scott (Corporate Affairs Director, Morrisons plc). Currently, we collaborate with Born in Bradford/Age of Wonder and have worked with the Alliance of Life Chances (Kathryn Loftus) to connect data with the lived experiences of children to win change. We also connect with Young in Covid.

In July 2022, Young People from Bradford Citizens presented at the 'Tackling Inequalities for our Children' event, held by Centre for Applied Education Research.

We have also met with Richard Cracknell and Kate Welsh to coordinate with Child Friendly Bradford and the CYP Plan.

This process has given opportunity for co-production work with the health trust and school nurse team. In November 2022, Bradford Citizens held a second school summit which involved 6,000 from 20 primary and secondary schools in a listening process. From this, 3 priorities were voted on: the cost of living, mental health and tackling racism.

The work uses applies the method of community organising through a 5-step change model – organising, listening, planning acting and evaluating. Through these steps young people gain skills in leadership, chairing meetings, negotiating and co-production.

Alongside prioritising the voices of young people, Bradford Citizens strengthens its member institutions to engage in civic life in a sustained and significant way.

It should be noted that young people are speak for themselves and not on behalf of their school. Through listen we identify internal solutions (those within the schools/member institutions) and external solutions (those that sit within the wider society of Bradford).

Issues

The specific mental health issues that have been identified by the students are:

Young people as wellbeing ambassadors

- Accessible trained mental health staff in schools
- Support for talking about mental health
- Educating parents/carers
- Self-awareness and body image issues.

In the presentation to the Board these will be presented by the young people in specific detail with practical proposals. It is planned that this will take the form of a 15-20 minute presentation by the young people, with 10-15 minute response and discussion.

Next steps

- The Mental Health Action Team from the schools, is finalising its presentation on 23rd February.
- The Team will attend the Wellbeing Board on the 28th February to give its presentation and participate in the following discussion.
- The Team hopes to work with Board members to follow up on these proposals and emerging opportunities to secure tangible change.

Graham Brownlee, Senior Community Organiser, Bradford Citizens/Citizens UK