**Voices of the East**

**Thursday 9th May**

**Meeting 1 – 18:00 – 19:00**

**In attendance**

Essex

Cambridgeshire

Luton

Hertfordshire

**Minutes**

Engagement competition – To start us off we looked at who had been involved across the East of England so far & that by 2025 the area that gets the most CYP involved will received a special voice of the east shield. The group felt that we should be sharing this group on social media and they have asked for all local areas to think about you could do this? There is now a link on our website too - <https://www.multischoolscouncil.org.uk/> .

A young person from Cambridge also mentioned the recent PFA event that they organised and said it was a brilliant way of bringing young people together and that other areas should do it. He had a special mention for Martine from Cambridgeshire council!

Mental health lessons – The group shared ideas on what type of things should be included within more mental health lessons for young people:

* Information on the Phycology of mental health.
* Get young people sharing their experiences.
* Advice on improving mental health.
* Some simple tasks to complete.
* Focus on isolation, especially from family members – ***Isolation was something that came up before and will need to be focused on.***
* Involved some activities & games to keep the lesson fun.
* Do an ‘all about me’ task.
* Have time to have discussions.
* Get young people speaking about it with each other.
* How to access further support.
* Recognising signs so you can support your friends.

Conference planning – Next up was a conversation about planning a conference for 2025 that is for young people to come together. The voices of the east group really want to come together in person. Thoughts and ideas for this included:

* It’s got to be fun!
* It shouldn’t be called a ‘conference’ – it sounds too boring.
* There should be something on mental health.
* Games.
* Have some outside space if possible.
* Make sure there is a chance to be social.
* Get people from the government there to listen to young people.
* Do something on the awareness of disabilities.
* Make sure it’s interactive.
* Opportunities to communicate with others.
* It shouldn’t be too long.
* Have food & drink available.
* Some music.
* Have fidget toys available.
* An ice breaker game.
* A range of topics.
* A chance to move around.
* Some table tennis.
* Lots of breaks.
* A sensory space.

Video competition – Voices of the east will be launching a YouTube Channel in the summer. The idea is to start a competition that young people can get involved with & share awareness of this group. Ideas for this included a video about autism, awareness of mental health, experiences of support, humour, have a mascot involved, use a rap, try to hit different audiences, an introduction into what we do, key issues that effect young people, use existing videos from local areas, personal safety, have a link to other social media platforms, share with schools & think about doing some videos together.

AOB

* The YouTube channel could be called something like Voices of the east ambassadors/advocates.

**The next meetings in June & July will be local area meetings hosted by two local authorities coming together. If you are a young person/professional/group and are unsure of what might be happening in your local area email the person who sent you this meeting link/invitation to ask. If you are still unsure of who that came from, please email** **Kierran.pearce@essex.gov.uk** **who will direct you.**

**On the agenda for the June & July meetings we will be planning out the mental health lessons, creating some posters/leaflets that can share the work of voices of the east, record some videos/audio recordings about this work using some of the suggestions above.**

**Next virtual meetings: Monday 16th September 10:00, 13:30 & 18:00**