

YOUTH CONFERENCE REPORT 2019



East Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

active connected
vibrant
COMMUNITIES

FOREWORD



Spending time at the 2019 Youth Conference made me realise once again how proud I am of all our young people who so obviously want to learn, take part and make a difference in

their lives and their communities.

Seeing them in the workshops in particular, sharing their ideas and experiences, was particularly enjoyable and everyone had a positive contribution to make to the various topics which included mental health, bullying, peer pressure and relationships – things that are important for all of us to talk about.

Events like these take so much work to organise and I would like to thank everyone involved for putting them together, especially our Children and Young People's Cabinet who, along with the Vibrant Communities team, made them run so smoothly and successfully. All of the topics and activities that were chosen for the different age groups were directly relevant to young people across East Ayrshire which made it so much easier for everyone to get involved.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and that it gives you a real sense of the enthusiasm and enjoyment that our young people displayed over both conferences.

Claire Leitch
Depute Provost, East Ayrshire Council



Throughout 2019 I have been part of our Children & Young People's Cabinet, continuing the work of the YOYP 2018 Legacy through many different events.

Of the most prominent events the Youth Conferences that we held in November 2019. Members of the Youth Cabinet put forward to be part of the Steering Group who oversaw organising the Conferences. As a steering group, we were given full control on how we wanted it run, from the venue to the content and the workshops, with assistance along the way from the amazing and supportive Vibrant Communities team.

We consulted with young people on what they wanted from the Conferences, and what they wanted the theme of the day to be. Using this, and the feedback from previous years, we aimed to make the best Conferences yet!

The Conferences were really successful; with a new venue and fresh faces, it was two days of learning and all about working as a team in the Steering Group.

I hope you enjoy reading about the fantastic Conferences as much as we have enjoyed organising it. As with every year, the Youth Cabinet has had such an amazing platform to make a huge impact and we hope this will continue into 2020. Please make sure to share the report with others, as raising awareness about the Youth Cabinet ensures that young people in East Ayrshire can continue to have these opportunities.

Thank you!

Ewan Carmichael
Children and Young People's Cabinet Member



INTRODUCTION



East Ayrshire's Annual Youth Conferences have been another brilliant success for 2019. Our two Youth Conferences were part of East Ayrshire's National Youth Work Week and were co-organised and delivered by the Children and Young People's Cabinet.

Youth Cabinet members began the organisation process in May 2019, creating a consultation for other young people as well as reflecting on the feedback and experience of the previous year. The consultation, with over 500 responses, raised four predominant themes to explore and develop workshops around. These topics were: Bullying; Mental Health; Relationships; and Healthy lifestyles.

Over the two days at the conferences, young people from education establishments across East Ayrshire, as well as youth work providers, participated in the workshops and also had the opportunity to hear from the youth cabinet themselves who highlighted the great work they are doing in East Ayrshire.



The conferences were a great success and demonstrated the strong partnerships Vibrant Communities continue to have with school establishments and with young people in East Ayrshire.

The youth conferences were part funded by Cashback for Communities, invaluable funding that allows us to continue the large scale events and support young people to take a leadership role in the delivery of the events.

Cash Back for Communities programmes take the ill-gotten gains of crime, recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and invests them into community programmes, facilities and activities. This grant enabled us to transport young people from across our authority, create information packs, and host an interactive programme for all young people attending.

PROGRAMME

Our Youth Conferences were designed to target different age ranges of young people. Monday's conference invited pupils from Primary 7, Secondary 1 while Tuesday's conference included young people aged 14+ as this encouraged our college and youth work partners to send young people who may not attend school.

This year, the conferences moved venue to Take a Bow Opportunity Centre to give us more break out space to accommodate the activities the young people wanted to incorporate.

The aim of the conferences was to provide an educational day for young people aged 11-25 years old. The development of the workshops and programme for the day came from the successes of a 2018 workshop that had a premise of the game "Guess Who". Young people felt they liked workshops to be games-based with an effective and powerful message throughout the game.

To do this, 4 workshops were created:

Mental Health: a game of Snakes and Ladders

Physical Health: A Hopscotch of Activities

At the Junior conference only -

Anti-Bullying Cluedo:
solving the many reasons why!

At the Senior Conference only -

Mature Relationships:
Blockbusting a path of Responsibility



Each conference was opened by members of the Children and Young People's Cabinet - Ewan Carmichael and Aimee Purdie. Each welcomed young people and encouraged them to enjoy the day and take away the messages from the workshops. Our Tuesday conference also invited Claire Leitch, Depute Provost and Children's Champion to welcome the pupils to an enjoyable day.

Participants were split into 3 groups and rotated around 3 workshops throughout the day.



In the main hall, young people participated in a Physical Activity Workshop. On Monday, they were given an opportunity to trial boxing, Tri-Golf and learn about healthy sugar intake. Tuesday's attendees rotated around boxing, weightlifting and learned about healthy sugar intake as well.



These workshops were designed to invite young people to trial a new activity they may not have experienced before and as a sign posting opportunity for young people to join one of the many sport clubs affiliated to the Sports Council. Our additional Sugar Intake workshop should also be noted as having a big impact on the young people who mentioned it in their evaluations.



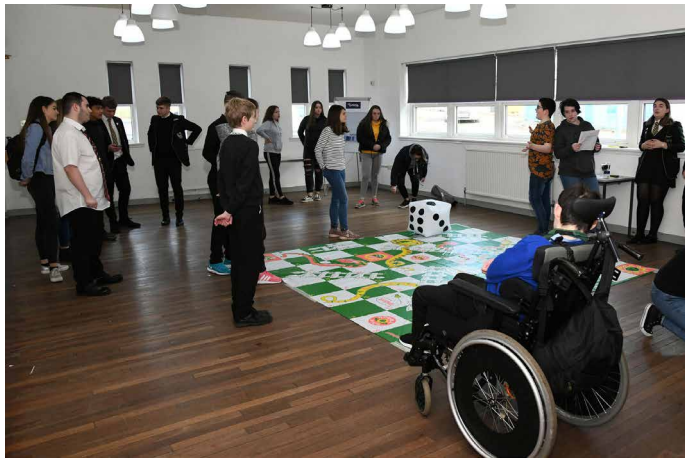
Upstairs, at our Junior Conference, Ryan Bartolo and Sinead McBride who were supported by Louisa McEvoy, played a game of Cluedo with young people. This workshop's aim was to explore the many reasons why someone felt they were being bullied. Participants moved around the board to make accusations about things they had heard had happened to Max. The workshop ended with an important discussion about bystanders and encouraging young people not to sit back and watch their friends being bullied and instead to support them and seek help when necessary.

The youth cabinet wanted to have a different focus for the senior conference, so instead pupils participated in Blockbusters.

This workshop, based on the television game show, was a competitive game that encouraged young people to answer questions on topics such as Peer Pressure, Sending Nude Images, Alcohol and Drugs, Relationships and STIs and LGBT+. In addition to the questions, feedback and background information on the law was given to the questions and encouraged participants to understand what the law states on these topics. This workshop was extremely well received and young people all thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Across the two days, the final workshop was Mental Health Snakes and Ladders. The young people played a game of giant snakes and ladders whilst answering different scenarios about mental health. Working in groups, the aim was to discuss and make sensible choices to move up the traditional game.

At lunchtime, school catering provided a hot meal option for participants of Chicken Katsu curry or Veggie curry. In addition to this, participants could have funny photographs taken in the photo-booth, write on graffiti boards or just chill with friends.



There was also a market place of information stalls suitable to the target age range with information about Barnardos, Vibrant Communities Befriending and Suicide Prevention information. NHS gave information about the C-Card to senior pupils at the request of youth cabinet members.

In the afternoon, participants completed their third workshop and finished the day with thanks from members of the youth cabinet, Sinead McBride and Kirsty Ewart.

Each year at the youth conferences, East Ayrshire Council includes a "vibrant voices" workshop to hear the views of young people on up and coming transformations within the council. This year, young people were told of the Youth Cabinet's work and the impacts of the transformation were explained. As part of this, young people were asked 2 questions:

1. Give some ideas of how you think we can improve digital opportunities across the council, this may include computers and wifi etc, what would help you?
2. The council are also looking to change people's behaviours around recycling, what can you as young people do to encourage others to recycle more or change habits?

Through discussion at their tables, young people were provided with the chance to give their opinion which has been passed onto East Ayrshire's Transformation Team as suggestions from young people.



IMPACT: Junior

Our conferences were a great success and young people noted their enjoyment and the impact the conference had on them as shown below. Across the two youth conferences, 165 young people participated with 154 forms being returned.

CONFIDENCE



61%

felt that they were
more confident

INVOLVEMENT



61%

felt that they are
more involved in
their school or
community

TEAM WORK



73%

felt they had
improved their
team work skills

RESPONSIBLE



75%

felt that they are a
more responsible
person

COMMUNICATIONS



80%

felt they have
improved their
communication
skills

EMPLOYMENT



67%

felt they have
improved their
chances of
employment

IMPACT: Senior

CONFIDENCE



56%

felt that they were
more confident

INVOLVEMENT



72%

felt that they are
more involved in
their school or
community

TEAM WORK



83%

felt they had
improved their
team work skills

RESPONSIBLE



67%

felt that they are a
more responsible
person

COMMUNICATIONS



69%

felt they have
improved their
communication
skills

EMPLOYMENT



55%

felt they have
improved their
chances of
employment

This feedback highlights how the young people engaged fully in the day and have taken valuable information away with them. The evaluations also asked young people to give feedback about what they enjoyed, what they have learned and how they will use what they have learned.

Some of the comments young people left are:

What was the best part of the conference?

"Food, Cluedo, golf"

"I enjoyed the mental health and snakes and ladders - very good"

"The food and talking about mental health"

"The positive atmosphere"

"I liked the curry and the blockbuster"

"Blockbusters and doing recovery position"

"Boxing"

What have you learned from today's conference?

"To not eat a lot of sugar"

"Learned that if my friend is upset, just tell a teacher"

"Don't be a bystander"

"How much sugar there is in items of food"

"Sugar is bad. Always think of alternative ways to handle a situation"

"Roles the youth cabinet has"

How will you use what you have learned today?

"The sugar intake"

"I will do more exercise, be a better person"

"If someone needs help I will know what to do or if I am worried about them"

"Thinking carefully about decisions"

"The salt and sugar quiz to see how much sugar"

"To be more social"

"How to handle situations"

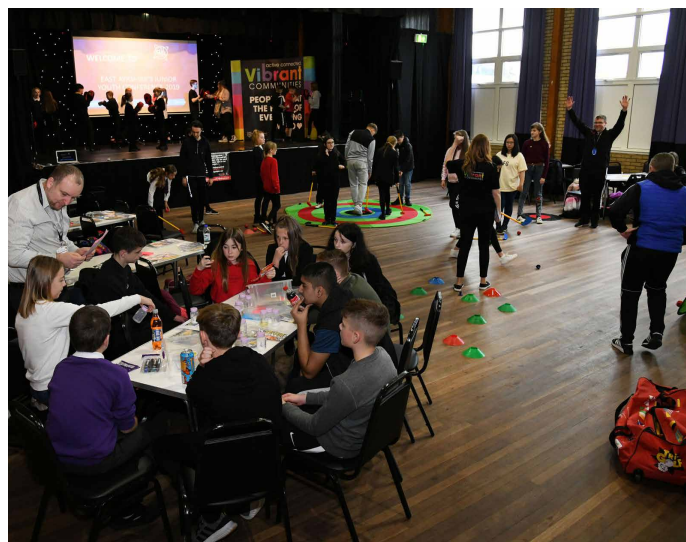
"Use the skills I gained from snakes and ladders and apply them to my real life"

It should be noted that young people highlighted their enjoyment from the Blockbusters workshop and the Sugar intake workshop and they seem to have impacted young people the most. In addition to the great workshops, Vibrant Communities has been asked to develop the workshops into peer education projects that can be delivered in some of our Primaries and Academies across East Ayrshire to raise awareness across the board.

REPRESENTATION

Young people from across the authority were invited to attend. Our junior conference invited young people from each Educational Group. Our Senior Conference invited young people 14+, which saw S3+ pupils from all academies attend as well as Youth Work providers. In addition to this, our Additional Support Need schools were invited to participate in either of the conferences. A full list of representation is below:

- Annanhill Primary
- Auchinleck Academy
- Barnardos
- Barshare Primary
- Catrine Primary
- Cumnock Academy
- Doon Academy
- Drongan Primary
- Gargieston Primary
- Grange Academy
- Greenmill Primary
- Hillside School
- Hurlford Primary
- Kilmarnock Academy
- Logan Primary
- Loudoun Academy
- Mauchline Primary
- Mount Carmel Primary
- Muirkirk Primary
- Nether Robertland Primary
- Netherthird Primary
- New Cumnock Primary
- Park School
- Shortlees Primary
- St Joseph's Academy
- St Sophia's Primary
- Stewarton Academy
- Whatriggs Primary



OUTCOMES

The Youth Conferences have become a vital engagement opportunity with young people for East Ayrshire Council. Each year, representatives are able to question council staff and highlight what they feel needs to be changed or improved.

From this, young people met the following Health and Wellbeing outcomes:

HWB2 – 12a

- Representing my class, school and/or wider community encourages my self-worth and confidence and allows me to contribute and participate.

HWD – 02a

- I understand there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and educational support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

Youth Work Outcomes

- Young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future.
- Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
- Young people create, describe and apply their learning and skills.

Considerations for the future

As always, it is important to reflect on our conferences and where we would like to make improvements for future conferences. In previous years we have changed venues, introduced peer to peer learning and this year we brought in hot meals and physical activities.

Improvements come from the comments in the evaluations that young people highlight to us on each day. Things that have been noted this year are:

“More activities”

“Even more activities”

“The same way but not as many people in the room at once”

“By doing nothing, it was great”

This year, we have received very good feedback that indicates the conferences are a lot of fun and young people are taking the key messages on board. Introducing more activities would shorten the length of workshops so this will be looked at for 2020's conferences.

It is intended that the Youth Cabinet will continue to develop the conferences for 2020 and take more leadership of the presentation and organisation of the events.

This feedback shows the fantastic effort and work that was put into updating the conferences and the co-design with Young People and Vibrant Communities is clearly producing fun, educational days for all involved.

