



Young Combined Authority

Young Combined Authority (YCA) Board update, March 2022

Update

It has been a busy few months for the YCA, hosting Mental Health Commission Focus Groups on 21st January, taking part National Youth Assembly Transport meeting with Mayors on 28th February

Mental health Commission Focus Groups

YCA hosted a series of Focus groups to review the findings and recommendations of the mental Health Commission. Focus Groups were youth -led as a number of YCA members received training and lead and facilitated the whole day with support from Aspire4U. YCA members were joined by young people from across the YCA network.

The day focused on 3 of the 6 MHC themes, Racial Inequality, Education and Cost of Living. Below is a summary of the thoughts shared by young people across the region.

Racial Inequality

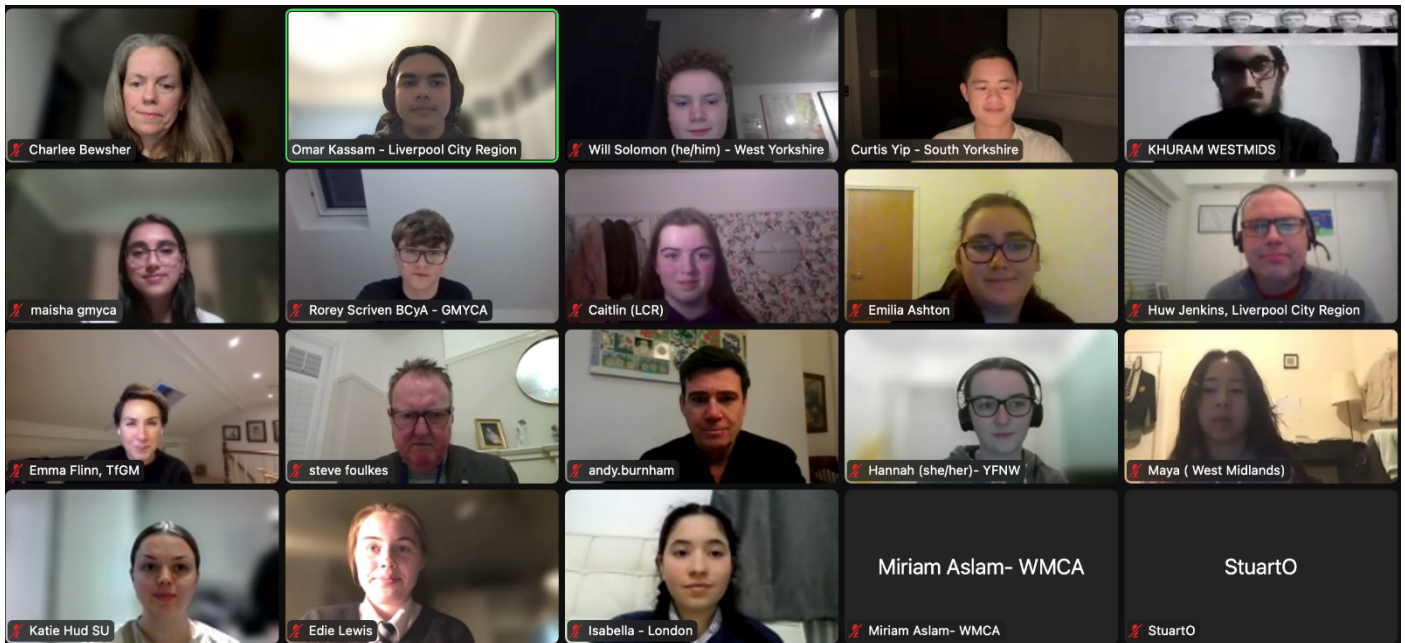
- Frustration around 'going in circles', for example 'community trauma', where governments continue to cause trauma for radicalised communities (such as Windrush).
- Stigma and prejudgement, were raised an issue in some racialised communities and how that contributes towards silence around mental health.
- The group valued the importance of mentioning family trauma as well wider, societal community trauma in racialised groups.
- Mostly agreed with having more therapists from diverse backgrounds, however lived experience and empathy is also important.
- More education needed in schools for young people about different ethnic backgrounds.

Education:

- Expression of need for better mental health support / access in schools, especially from counsellors or practitioners who are able to build trust with young people.
- Importance of listening to students who are 'misbehaving' and getting to the route of the issues (mental ill-health or neurodiversity) and providing support so they can stay in school (avoid exclusions).

Cost of Living:

- General agreement that wages need to be increased to a reasonable living wage / in line with inflation.
- Acknowledgement that cost-of-living issues impacts deprived communities the most.
- Agree with the link between poverty and other issues (like drug use, domestic abuse and ACEs).
- Lack of awareness around support services for cost of living and wellbeing.



National Youth Assembly

YCA's across the country came together to share findings from the National Youth Transport Survey.

They highlighted the need for more affordable public transport and proposed a cross-regional travel card to simplify travel for young people.

Our YCA members raised the need for better infrastructure to support active travel, such as more bike lanes, access to showers at school, and more bike hire schemes.

The young people also drew attention to the perception of public transport being unsafe, but its statistically low and the need to address this if we are to get more young people on buses and trains.

Mayors Andy Street and Burnham were present and suggested taking the survey findings and recommendations to the Urban Transport Group and creating a formal Youth Transport board.

Coming up: YCA/ FSPG Youth Summit

The provisional date is: Wednesday 28th June and the Mayor will be joining our young people as they explore faith and mental Health in partnership with the Faith Strategic Partnership Group.

Any questions, please email: Miriam.Aslam@wmca.org.uk