

Children and Young People Plan 2024-2029

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Background

The **Children and Young People Plan (CYPP)** sets out our partnership vision and priorities, for the next 5 years, to make sure children and young people and their families are at the heart of everything we do in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

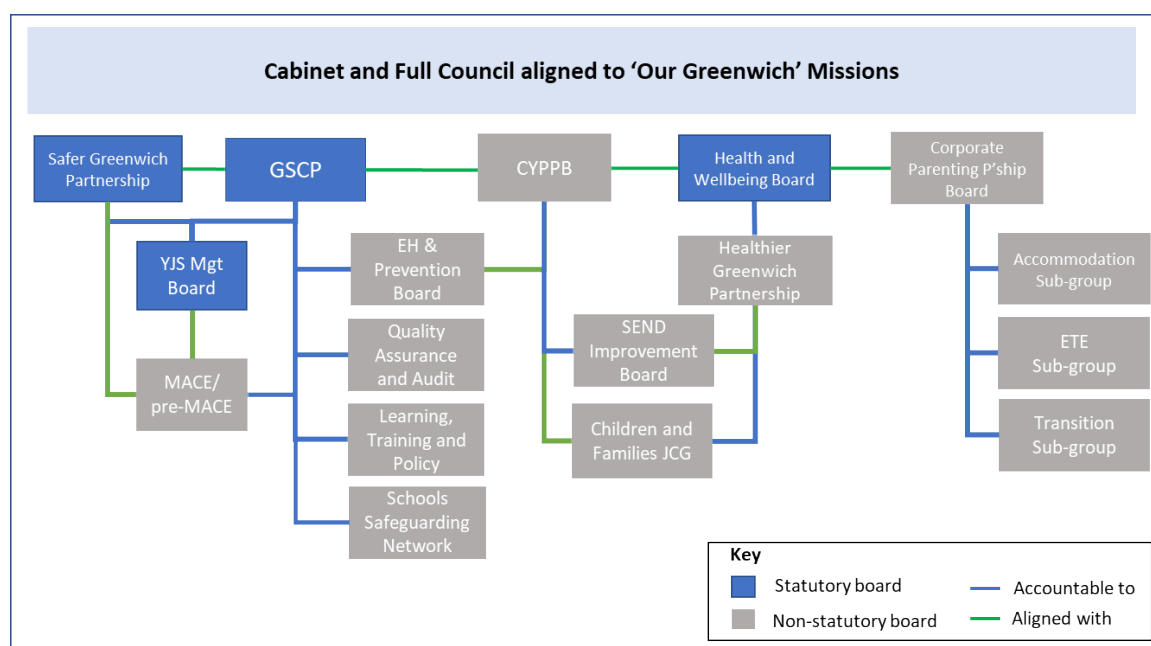
This plan has been developed in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers and professionals. Delivery of the plan is overseen by the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board, with membership from a wide range of organisations that are committed to delivering our vision for children and young people. These organisations include:

- the NHS
- the education sector
- the community and voluntary sector
- the Police
- the Royal Borough of Greenwich

Greenwich Young People’s Council is our council of children and young people, elected to represent young people across the borough, will also be working alongside the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board to oversee delivery of the plan, as well as scrutinise and provide constructive challenge.

This plan sits alongside other key strategies and aligns with the ‘Our Greenwich’ corporate plan and other partnership plans, particularly the Greenwich Health and Care Plan. This is outlined below.

Figure 1: Partnership Oversight and Delivery Framework



We think Greenwich is a great place to grow up

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is one of the largest of the 33 London boroughs, with an area of 4,733 hectares, and 13 kilometres of Thames river frontage. The borough has a rich heritage set in its maritime and military past, largely associated with the river and more recently as an industrial centre at the Royal Arsenal.

Greenwich is one of 12 boroughs that make up the London Thames Gateway, the UK's largest regeneration area. Predominantly sub-urban in character, Royal Greenwich comprises three main town centres: Greenwich, Woolwich and Eltham.

The Royal Borough has a population of 298,000 as of 2023¹. Approx. 65,800 (22%) of the population are under the age of 18.

Like most London boroughs, Royal Greenwich is not a homogenous borough and there is significant variation in affluence across the borough and between wards. Across the borough, it is estimated that 38% of households have an income under £25k (a common measure of relative poverty). 1 in 4 children residing in parts of Woolwich are living in poverty, compared to 1 in 10 in parts of Eltham.

Some of the Royal Greenwich headlines are:

- As of March 2024, 94% of Greenwich schools were judged to be good or outstanding compared to the England average of 90%.
- Greenwich children get the very best start to their education with 70% achieving a good level of educational development in 2023 compared to the England average of 67%.
- The proportion of Greenwich pupils achieving the expected standard in KS2 reading, writing and mathematics combined (67%) was in the top 10 in England; RBG pupils were also in the top 10 for those achieving the higher standard (12%).
- 48.4% of Greenwich pupils achieved a strong pass (grade 5 to 9) in English and maths at Key Stage 4, compared with the England average of 45.5%.
- Whilst Greenwich, like England as a whole has seen an increase in absence in recent years, absence and persistent absence in Greenwich Primary and Secondary schools remains below the England average.
- The proportion of 16-17 year olds in Greenwich that are not in education, employment or training (EET) continue to compare well against England averages – 3.6% as at end of 2023-24 reporting year.
- Re-offending rates are lower for Greenwich young people (26.1% compared to England average of 34.3%).

Our achievements since our last plan

There have been a range of achievements against our previous priorities;

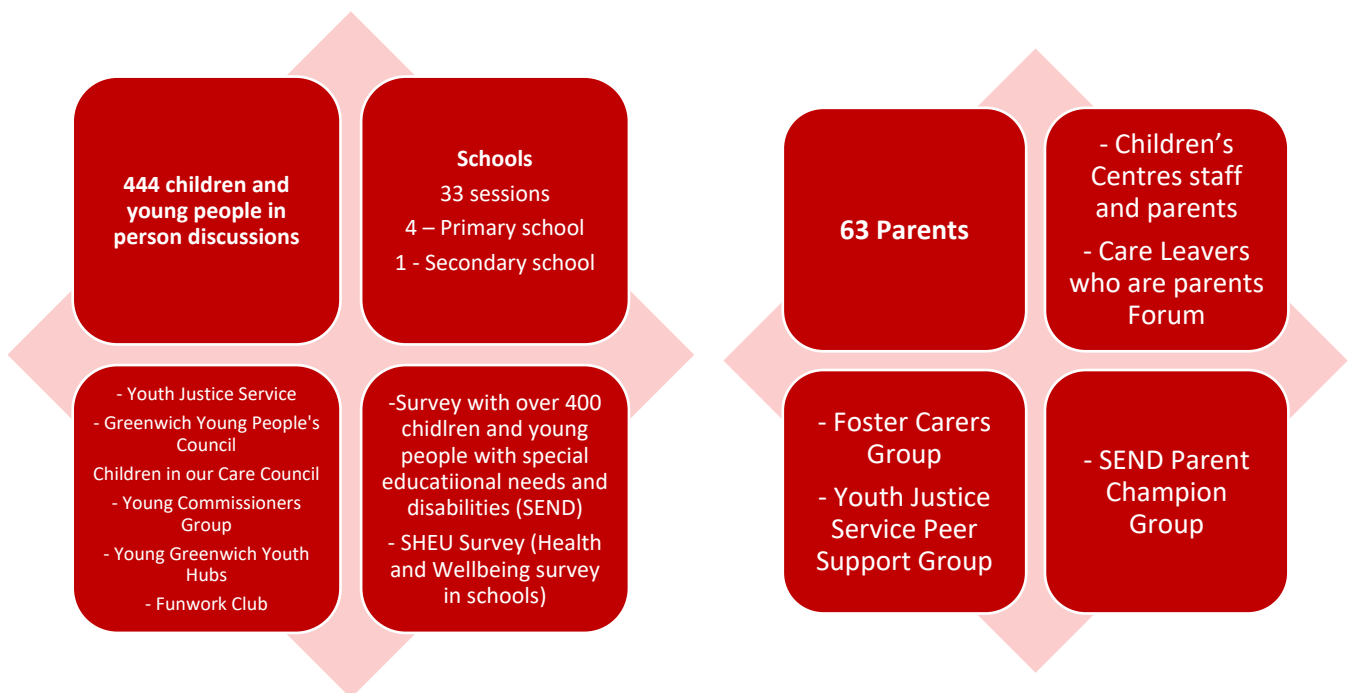
Priority	Key Achievements
<p>Priority 1 - Good physical health and an active lifestyle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Holiday and Activity Fund Programme – which aims to support children and young people eligible for Free School Meals, as well as provide access to food, activities, physical activity and nutritional education interventions. • Delivery of the Young Greenwich Healthy food, Heathy weight and Physical Activity and Sexual Health programmes. • Development of a specialist weight management service for children and young people with severe obesity. • The RBG Superzone has expanded to work across the borough boundary with Bexley in line with the One Thamesmead approach. Nine RBG schools have been able to access additional funding to support the health and wellbeing agenda, investing in a range of activity from mental health related training through to environmental improvement to playgrounds and breakfast clubs. • Development of a good food retail programme, with a specific focus on the shops in the local Arnott Close parade; the shops now selling a greater percentage of healthier foods, accepting Health Start vouchers and achieving Good Food in Greenwich healthy retail charters. • Delivery of a photovoice programme where young people voice is nurtured through narrated photographs, to be featured in a local photography exhibition. • Training for community organisations to consider healthier food options as part of events and community engagement opportunities. • Active travel improvements through further investment in TfL interventions for local schools, improved bike and scooter shelters and a traffic camera for the area to help with traffic calming.
<p>Priority 2 - Positive mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have secured additional ICB investment in 2023/24 for Greenwich of £425,195 to support plans to reduce waiting times for Specialist CAMHS and ICB investment of £273,805 to develop improved waiting list support for families. • Delivery of a mental health and wellbeing (MHWB) funding programme to improve children, young people and school staff mental health and wellbeing in the recovery from the pandemic - £850,000 of funding allocated to 92 settings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched an Integrated Clinical Team a 2-year pilot within RBG Children’s Services to support joint working across mental health services and children’s services. • Established Care Leaver MH worker post within Children’s Services. • Wellbeing Engage Hubs in schools are being established in 8 schools, with a hub and spoke model to other secondary and primary schools in the borough from Summer 2024. The Engage Hubs will provide support to children and be a bridge between school based and whole family work to improve attendance impacted by a range of factors including individual or parental anxiety and mental health, young carers or involvement in criminal behaviour. • Delivery of the Young Greenwich Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme - Mental health support and mentoring for young people including counselling for LGBTQ+ children and young people (ages 8-18).
<p>Priority 3 - Supporting our children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and challenging behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the number of supported internships available in the borough. • Undertaken extensive consultation with children, young people and parents/carers (428 children and young people responded and 116 parents) to inform the development of the new SEND strategy. • Established a Transition Team within the Local Authority to strengthen the collaborative planning from year 9 onwards. • Delivered a co-produced Short Breaks and Integrated Therapies offer. • Co-produced our Local Offer with children and young people and their families. • Involved children and young people with SEND in the recruitment for all senior SEND posts in Children’s Services. • Established a Dynamic Support Register to better support children and young people with a Learning Disability, or Autism, or both who are at the risk of crisis. • Delivery of the Universal Young Greenwich programme which supports young people up to 25 with SEND.
<p>Priority 4 - Achieve well at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 and be well prepared for adulthood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered the Be Great in Greenwich event which connects high-achieving children in our borough with Greenwich schools who can provide a full and challenging academic experience. • Developed a school strategy to support all children attending Greenwich schools, with a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable children.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered the Young Greenwich Educational Attendance and Attainment Programme.
Priority 5 - Protection from harm at home, online and in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the Young Greenwich universal programme which supports approximately 4,500 young people per year alongside the targeted Risk and Exploitation programme – a structured programme of activities including mentoring. Delivery of the Young Greenwich School Nursing service, which also supports children and young people with risk and resilience. Established a parenting support service for parents of teenagers - providing groupwork, counselling and one to one coaching to help parents with their own mental health support and needs around relationships with their children. Successfully bid for ongoing funding from the VRU to deliver a crime reduction Peer Parents Champions Programme.

Who we spoke with

We wanted to make sure that the development of objectives within this plan was led by children and young people, so we asked what is important to them. The consultation process included face-to-face conversations and discussions with children and young people from reception to year 13 students, and depending on their age they completed interactive surveys to gather collective ideas:



Our Vision and Objectives 2024 – 2029:

Greenwich Young People’s Council have developed the following vision statement for the Children and Young People Strategy 2024-2029:

*We, the children and young people of Greenwich, envision a future where we have the power to shape our lives. We want a community and young people that are confidently **POISED** for action and collaboration:*

Positive and Hopeful

Passionate about our potential,

Open in communication,

Inclusive of everyone,

Supportive of our needs,

Safe for all,

Equal in opportunities,

Diverse and celebrated,

Listen to our voices, empower us, and let's create a future we can all look forward to.

To inform the development of this plan, we spoke to children and young people, parents/ carers, and professionals working with children across the borough including in primary and secondary schools, youth clubs, children’s centres and participation groups. We have developed a thematic framework to capture this feedback.



Our Future

We want better access to opportunities and work experience across a range of industries and improved career guidance.

What children and young people told us...

- **Opportunities** – 70% of all children consulted identified education and opportunities as their top 3 most important things for children and young people. Children and young people identified that they required further assistance and opportunities to gain voluntary work, placements, apprenticeships and internships. They also highlighted that often those that were available were in specific areas that not all children and young people wanted to progress in and therefore were not seen as relevant or providing them with the necessary opportunities to support their employment progressions.
- **Education** – 70% of all children consulted identified education and opportunities as their top 3 most important things for children and young people. Children and young people consistently identified education as an important element in future success.

“Education and opportunities are crucial for children because they lay the groundwork for their future success and well-being.” (Young Person at Young Greenwich Youth Hub)

- Children and young people wanted to have more of a voice in the curriculum and choices of subjects earlier.
 - Children and young people responding to the SHEU survey¹ identified that 76% of students want to learn more about managing money. Financial and life skills training was requested across multiple consultation groups, particularly care leavers.
-

Our commitment to children and young people:

1. Increased work experience and employment opportunities.
 2. Improved support in education settings.
-

Our Safety

***We want to feel safe at home, in the community and online,
with support to build resilience***

What children and young people told us...

- The centre of Woolwich was regularly highlighted as an areas where children and young people say they feel unsafe. , Some were unable to identify why they felt unsafe, others highlighted cleanliness issues, drunken behaviour, mentally unwell and homeless people in the area which added to feelings of being unsafe, as well as historical issues such as previous serious incidents (e.g. stabbing incidents) that continue to influence their perception.
- The SHEU survey highlights that of the children and young people that responded only 38% (40% male, 38% female) would contact the police if they needed support.
- **Online safety** remains a concern to children and young people, including access to unsuitable materials. Other key findings from the SHEU survey included:
 - SHEU survey indicated that 22% experienced sexting from their partners (2%²/ 32%³)
 - 45% had illegally downloaded material (22%)
 - 46% viewed pornography (43% female, 46% male) (2021 - 13%)⁴
 - 42% Racism / extreme views (46% female, 38% male) (2021 - 15%)⁵
 - 46% hyper-masculinity (misogyny) (53% female, 38% male)
- Children and young people also highlighted concerns about hate crime online and the feeling that perpetrators are protected behind the screen.
- Although children and young people recognised that their parents were capable of monitoring and understanding social media issues, it was felt that they needed more support as young people to know how to keep themselves safe, building resilience, understanding digital footprints and consequences of posting material and understanding of social media laws.
- Many recognised the potential for addiction to social media which they believe has grown since the pandemic. Others highlighted the impact of controversial social media personalities on causing division.
- Children and young people felt that bullying is still a big issue and although schools had anti-bullying policies and assemblies to highlight bullying issues, these have unfortunately contributed to normalising bullying and reduced the impact of these initiatives. Children and young people wanted to see other methods to deal with bullying such as approaches to make perpetrators more aware of the impact of their behaviour on the victims.

² Comparison to SHEU survey 2021 years 8/ 10/ 11

³ Comparison to SHEU survey 2018 year 12

⁴ Comparison to 2021 SHEU survey years 8/10/ 11

⁵ Comparison to 2021 SHEU survey years 8/10/ 11

“A lot of children get bullied and can't do anything about it due to them being scared of what could happen afterwards if they decide to stand up for themselves” (Year 10 Student)

“Online bullying is very bad, it can happen on any platform, from Roblox, to YouTube.” (Year 7 Student)

- Some children and young people were aware of the risks of exploitation and grooming online although they agreed that more support to be aware of the various methods being used online for example gaming credits, so they can have the tools to keep themselves safe.
- It was highlighted that views amongst children and young people seem to be becoming more polarised, in part due to the significant issues taking place nationally and globally, alongside exposure to entrenched views on social media. Children and young people identified the links between these extremes viewed and bullying and discrimination – often under the guise of humour.

“Children are polarised on issues – war and racism have increased this divide.” (Year 13 Student)

- Some children felt the use of humour and jokes was being used more regularly to disguise discriminatory behaviour including racism. Children and young people highlighted that there are worried about the increase in discrimination including homophobia, xenophobia, ableism and disability.

“I believe that racism is a big thing for children as a lot of children go through it and people think it is a joke.” (Year 10 Student)

Our commitment to children and young people:

1. Improved safety within the borough.
2. Support to keep themselves safe online.

Our Health

We want to be supported to be healthy, this includes understanding how to help ourselves and where more support is needed, we want choices that we can access easily

What children and young people told us...

- Mental Health and Wellbeing – 63% of all children consulted identified mental health and wellbeing as their top 3 most important things for children and young people. CYP felt MH needs had increased since COVID, mainly from isolation and anxiety of parents and children in leaving the home for school. However, many children highlighted **access to these services** had become more difficult or longer waiting lists due to the increase in demand.
- Children and young people identified that they would like further **improved support in schools**, particularly counselling and Mental health services where they felt the wait times and capacity were continued issues whereby needs for this service had increased since returning from COVID, pressure from exams (where often schools would have a fast-track service for these children), and pastoral care.
- SHEU Survey⁶ findings highlighted specific areas for children and young people;

Identity, emotions and feelings:

- 40% (43% male, 37% female) ‘thought they looked ok’ the way they looked with 6% ‘hating’ (8% female, 4% male) and 14% (18% female, 9% male) ‘not liking’ the way they looked.
- 36% of children said they ‘weren’t satisfied at all’ (8%) (9%) or ‘not very satisfied’ (28%) with their lives at the moment.
- 51% (30% female, 18% male) stated there are lots of things about myself I would like to change.
- 1/3 of children took a day off school because they were worried – 45% female, 21% male.
- Children and young people who identified the council as a potential source of support ranked mental health and wellbeing **as** the highest

	Often/ always			Sometimes			2021 Comparison*
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Sad	15%	37%	24%	50%	84%	66%	45%
Angry	15%	26%	20%	50%	69%	58%	67%
Depressed or hopeless	13%	23%	18%	31%	56%	43%	43%
Lonely	17%	26%	23%	43%	56%	50%	24%

Sleep:

- 20% (17%) of children slept for 5 or less hours the night before survey. 64% of respondents stated they had slept less than 7hrs the night before the survey
- 22% (13%) of children said the amount of sleep they had wasn't enough to stay alert and concentrate.

“Good mental health enables children to effectively manage their emotions, cope with stress, and navigate challenging situations. This equips them with important skills for regulating their behaviour.” (Attendee at Young Greenwich Youth Hub)

“There has been a huge impact on mental health and wellbeing which is then impacting learning and behaviour. The pressure of exams also significantly impacts wellbeing but there are not enough resources.” (Year 12/13 Student)

- Children and young people asked for there to be more **awareness of activities** for them outside of school. They reported that they generally felt the activities available in Greenwich were good but the way it was communicated should be improved and that being able to search by age groups would be useful.

“Develop a better way to communicate with children and separate activities into age groups” (Year 8 Student)

- **Environment** – children and young people remain concerned about their environment, pollution and the climate emergency. Although Greenwich had ample green spaces, it is recognised that playground equipment needed upgrading and renewing in many parks.
- Road safety particularly around schools has been highlighted as a cause for concern. It is felt that the 20 mph speed limit was often not adhered to around schools.
- Having a clean environment was highlighted in many discussions including clean streets and dog fouling being an issue. Young people want owners of dogs needed to be more responsible.

“Equipment in parks needs updating, and improvement. Greenwich Park and Eagle Way Park are recent good upgrades.” (Year 5 Student)

“There is a lot of pollution and litter – bins overflowing, dog poo. It makes the place look dirty.” (Year 4 Student)

Road safety – “school crossings, speeding cars, and scooters being used incorrectly. Need more cycle lanes.” (Year 6 Student)

Our commitment to children and young people:

1. Improved awareness and access to emotional mental health and wellbeing support for Children, Young People and their parents/ carers.
2. Increased awareness of activities for children and young people across the borough.

3. A cleaner borough.

Our Relationships

We know our family and networks are important and we want support to maintain positive relationships and we want support for our families who are struggling with the stress of issues such as the cost-of-living crisis

What children and young people told us...

- Our Relationships: 70% of all children consulted identified family/ friends and relationships as their top 3 most important things for children and young people.
- Family – This was a significant positive element for CYP and who advised that family was a source for children to feel safe, supported and cared for. CYP acknowledged that they understand parents are struggling due to Cost of Living, stress and other factors and want to assist their parents, but aren't always aware how they could – i.e. applying for benefits. Creation of an index of ages and support options (journey of the child) benefits etc.

“Family is very important to me because at the end of the day, if something ever happens to me they will be there to take care of me and be there for me.” (Year 6 Student)

“Family and friends are the most important because they help with the other worries.” (Year 10 Student)

“We chose family friends and relationships because it shapes you as a person and could also affect your wellbeing.” (Year 7 Students)

“Children shouldn't have to suffer through neglect from parents / carer or guardian.” (Year 6 Student)

- Friends were again referenced generally as a source of positive support, however it was also highlighted that there was additional pressure from negative peer groups to be involved in things that CYP may not normally want to be involved in i.e. bullying/ criminal activity.

“If someone had no friends they might be depressed and upset.” (Year 6 Student)

“Because we all need a family and some friends to talk to and we also need someone to trust.” (Year 5 Student)

“It is important to have good, trustworthy people around you that can boost you when you're and challenge you physically and intellectually in order to strive in each aspect of life.” (Year 12/13 Student)

“I think being surrounded by certain groups of people can really affect young people, so if they have good relationships with people around them they will overall have better mental health.” (Year 9 Student)

- **Personal Relationships** – Children and young people told us that they can see there are positive and negative influences from their personal relationships. They felt more judged at times by parents/ carers and peers, which they believe has an impact on their perception of themselves.
- SHEU survey findings highlighted
 - 22% experienced sexting from their partners (2%⁷/ 32%⁸)
 - 51% (30% female, 18% male) stated there are lots of things about myself I would like to change.
 - 40% (43% male, 37% female) ‘thought they looked ok’, 6% ‘hated’ (8% female, 4% male) the way they looked and 14% (18% female, 9% male) ‘didn’t like’ the way they looked.

“I chose relationships since the support system available affect a young persons performance. Having the right influence determines a future.” (Year 11 Student)

Our commitment to children and young people:

1. Improved support for families and friends to be resilient.
2. Support parents to strengthen children’s social, emotional and mental health needs.
3. Support to maintain positive personal relationships.

Our Support

We want to know what support is available and if we are struggling, how to access it and that it is accessible when we need it

What children and young people told us...

- **They would like the right type of support, at the right time and in the right amount.** They recognise the need for different levels of support that is regularly reviewed.
- Parents and carers, as well as children and young people also told us that they felt this didn’t happen due to processes and systems, waiting times and thresholds which made accessing required services and support difficult or protracted.

“It is a shame that we wait for children to be in crisis before the support is in place, surely prevention is easier/cheaper/less traumatic?” (Foster Parent)

- There was a sense from parents and carers of the true value of Child centres and early years support, these assisted with the progress to nursery, early detection of issues and assessments of developmental concerns. This supported the notion of intervening early as an important factor for parents and carers in supporting their

⁷ Comparison to SHEU survey 2021 years 8/ 10/ 11

⁸ Comparison to SHEU survey 2018 year 12

children to achieve later in life. Additionally, there was an impression that the council and partners often left their intervention too late.

- Children and young people told us that there are groups that **need additional support** for examples children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. They also suggested that due to resource pressures and increased numbers of children with complex needs, dedicated support for children and young people with additional needs had reduced.

“SEND children, children living in poverty/ low-income environments.” (Year 12/13 Student)

“Some people have a learning disabilities like ADHD or autism and they might need special attention so they can achieve great things.” (Year 5 Student)

Children and young people told us that they could see the links between **cost of living**, stress, and mental health and the impact on their parents.

The need for safe and stable housing was mentioned by many children and young people who recognised the impact this has on other areas of their family lives.

“The cost of living can be really expensive and can affect people’s mental health. Affects parents and children.” (Year 5 Student)

“Because it can have an impact on the other options because if you can see that your family is having a hard time and it can have an effect on your mental health, school etc.” (Year 8 student)

“The cost of living is an issue plaguing both young people and adults. when a young person sees their parents struggling on how to pay bills and provide basic amenities makes them feel depressed.” (Year 11 Student)

Our commitment to children and young people:

1. To be able to access support, from the right person, at the right time and in the right amount.
2. Support for children and young people with additional support needs.
3. Support for their families to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

Our Voice

We want to be heard, influence change and decision-making that has an impact on our lives.

What children and young people told us...

- They want to be able to share their views and be heard and have influence in services that will affect them. Children and young people highlight that they are experts in their lives and want to have the opportunity to have a say in their lives.
- They want to help shape their education and what they learn in school.
- They also want transparency around how decisions are made and to understand why an outcome has been reached even if it isn't what they had asked for.
- Children and young people are keen to ensure that they are making positive changes for all children and young people in the borough.
- They want to understand how they have influenced decision makers, policies, strategies and partnership plans.

“I want to change the world – make it magical” (Year 1/2 Student)

Our commitment to children and young people:

1. To have opportunities to influence decision-making at all levels.
2. To improve communication so that all children and young people are aware of the CYPP and the opportunities, activities and support in Greenwich.

Based on the feedback from children and young people, we have made a number of commitments. These will act as a framework for the delivery of partnership activity with children and young people over the course of this strategy.

Theme	Our Commitment
Our Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase work experience and employment opportunities. • Improved support in education settings.
Our Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved safety within the borough. • Support to keep themselves safe online.
Our Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness and access to emotional mental health and well-being support for Children, Young People and their parents/ carers. • Increased awareness of activities for children and young people across the borough. • A cleaner borough.
Our Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved support for families and friends to be resilient. • Support parents to strengthen children's social, emotional and mental health needs. • Support to maintain positive personal relationships.
Our support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to access support, from the right person, at the right time and in the right amount. • Support for children and young people with additional support needs. • Support for families to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.
Our Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have opportunities to influence decision-making at all levels. • To improve communication so that all children and young people are aware of the CYPP and the opportunities, activities and support in Greenwich.

Greenwich Young Person’s Council (GYPC) Priorities

Based on the feedback from children and young people, the Greenwich Young People’s Council have highlighted 5 high-level priorities which will be the primary focus for the CYPPB partnership.

- Identity, Emotions and Feelings.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Pollution, Litter and Safety.
- Work experience and future opportunities.
- Cost of living/ Poverty.

Alongside Our Voice which is a central foundation of the Children and Young People Partnership 2024 – 2029, the priorities identified by GYPC are outlined below and have been mapped against the thematic framework.

Our Future	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing work experience opportunities for children and wider offers. 2. Improving career advice and offering career days at schools.
Our Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Parking and Speed Limits near schools better monitored and fines should be issued. 4. Increase training in online safety resilience to CYP and parents. 5. Cleaner Greenwich – cigarette butts and dog fouling, monitoring and fines being issued.
Our Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Understanding the impact of trauma, and difficult life experiences including discrimination. 7. Improved MH/ counselling capacity and services in school. 8. Increased knowledge of support available.
Our Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Tackling racism and misogyny. 10. Improved bullying mediation including restorative justice.
Our Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Advising young adults of access to benefits to reduce pressure and stress on families. 12. Increasing donations and assisting families in need i. e. school uniforms. 13. Improve life skills training and managing money within PSHE.

Delivering our commitments

The Children and Young People Partnership Board is responsible for delivering against our commitments. The Board is co-chaired by the Leader of the Council and a representative from the GYPC. Agreed actions will incorporate areas of focus identified by the Greenwich Young People’s Council, who will work alongside the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board to oversee and scrutinise the delivery of this action plan and progress against the priorities.