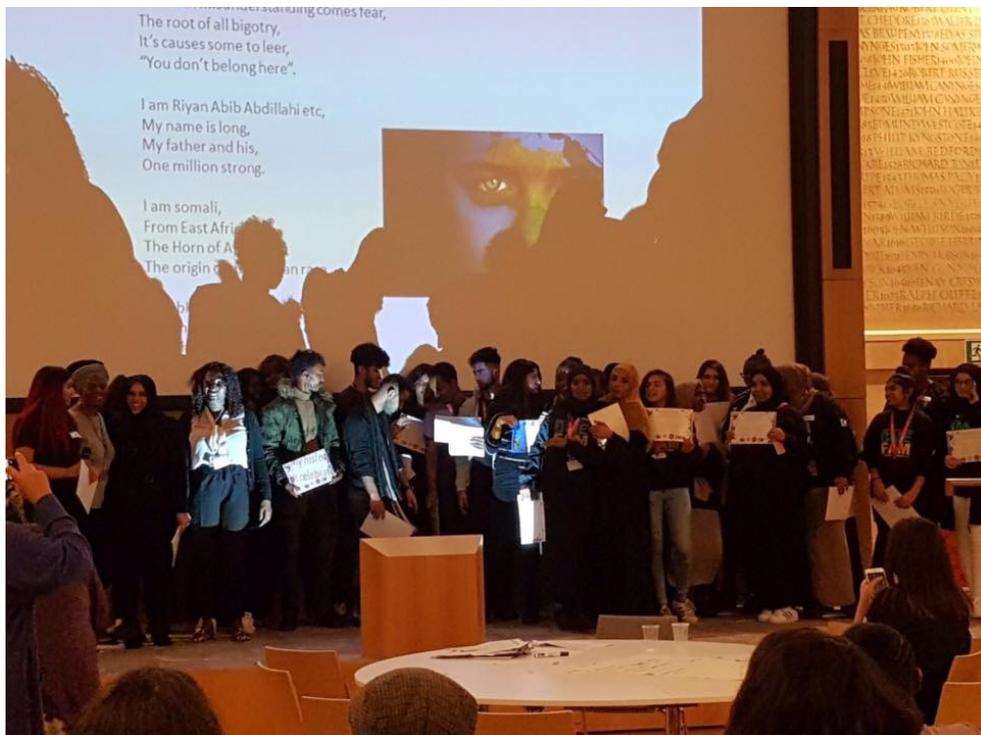




Equality of Voice Conference

20th November 2017

Hosted by Unity Youth Forum





Background

Unity Youth Forum is a forum that is run by and for BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) & RAS (Refugee and asylum seeking) young people, to ensure their voices are being heard within Bristol City Council and wider communities. The group meet twice a month to work on their manifesto campaigns, discuss and debate issues that affect BAME and RAS young people and then represent their views to decision makers so we can have our say to make changes and influence decision-making processes.

The group felt that they needed to get the views of a wider cohort of BAME & RAS young people in Bristol therefore Unity youth forum developed and carried out a consultation asking the views of BAME and RAS young people aged 11-19 up to 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities across Bristol to find out what the issues are and experiences for young people. The young people decided to host a conference as an opportunity to speak about issues that affect them and their experiences 'Equality of Voice Conference'. The event was to bring awareness to how BAME & RAS young people feel, emphasise that there are issues that they are facing and to challenge decision makers to ensure they have voice and influence on changes they would like to see happen in the future.

Introduction

The Equality of Voice conference took place on Monday 20th November 2017 hosted by Unity Youth Forum at City Hall. Over 155 people attended the conference, 112 of those were young people. The aims and objectives of the conference were:

- Raise awareness of the issues facing BAME and RAS young people
- Celebrate Black history
- Opportunity and platform for Young people to have their voices heard
- Present the findings from the consultation report

To meet the aims and objectives the conference included a presentation of the findings from the consultation, a selection of excellent speeches, poems & performances by young people, workshops and Black history. The event will help raise awareness and in turn encourage young people to speak up and be heard.

Summary of Consultation findings





Before the conference Unity Youth forum carried out a consultation asking the views of BAME and RAS young people aged 11-19 up to 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities across Bristol. The aim of the consultation was to find out what the issues and experiences for young people including; identifying any gaps in services and barriers for BAME and RAS young people accessing youth provision, establishing the levels of hate crime and how it could be reported. There was a total of 108 responses this number was disappointing considering there are approximately 14,000 BAME and RAS young people of this age living in Bristol. The majority of the responses were from young people living in Central Bristol (Easton, St Paul's & Barton Hill). 51% of the young people said that there was not enough activities in their area and would like to see more sports, Open Access youth clubs and more opportunities to volunteer. One of the questions we asked was 'Do you think there are any barriers to BAME or RAS young people getting involved in activities and if so, please tell us what they are?'

The staff are not relatable -
No Somali Workers, no
BAME workers

Language barrier, cultural
barriers and
understanding

We aren't always taken
seriously, thought to be bad
behaved or unreliable

61 young people said they had been a victim of Hate crime but the number of young people reporting was very low and the number for knowing how to report was even smaller.

No I didn't report it. I was getting off the bus with my friends. We all wear head scarves which is a symbol for our religion. We heard some Caucasian people nearby talking loudly about how we were going to bomb and that they should be careful. They basically accused us of being terrorists without knowing anything about us.

Basically, I was in yr6 and I was walking to school for the first time, so I got out of my house and walked across the road and this white man said 'Go back to you F'ing country you black B, you terrorist!' so I was crying my eyes out and I ran to school and told my teacher and head teacher and police. I didn't go to school for 2 days and my self-confidence had decreased massively. My teachers gave me support and guidance.



I was abused in the street, told horrible things and nobody stopped to intervene. I felt targeted and isolated and this has made me fearful of going out ever since. Thankfully I have been able to talk to my Youth Forum Unity about it and they have supported me to report and help make things better for me which has helped me feel more confident and not to self-blame.

When asked how would you report a hate crime, 32% said they didn't know how to report it. Only 9% said they would inform the police and 59% said they would tell someone.....



Tell a responsible adult.

Report it to SARI

I would report this crime online by using a secure website that is high in confidentiality.

If it is an extreme case such as being physically attacked then, I would report it to the police.

If I wanted to report a hate crime, I'd most likely tell someone which can support me at school. I would trust talking to someone I know (such as my friends or a trustworthy teacher) more than talking to the police.





The findings from the consultation were clear that there was a lot to deliver in terms of raising awareness of how to report hate crimes.

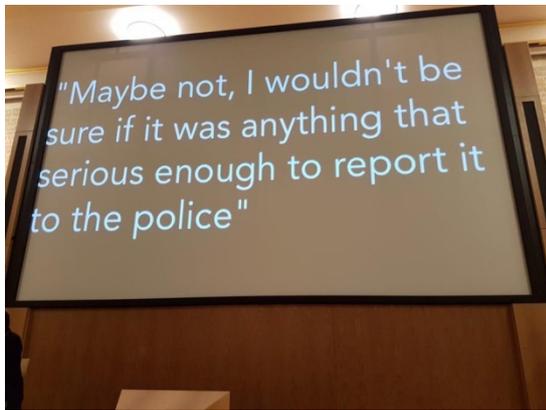


Table discussions

As part of the conference we also asked the participants to answer some of the questions asked in the consultation:





How can we inform young people how to report hate crimes?

- *Social media
- *Police
- *SARI
- *Education
- *Advertisement
- *Local radio
- *Leaflets
- *Local newspapers
- *Social workers, teachers, other professionals
- *Faith groups
- *Youth groups
- *Peer mediators
- *Anti-bullying sessions
- *Know what a hate crime is
- *Hold events/ workshops to inform young people on how to report
- *Make it easy to access e.g; social media, school
- *Train people/ leaders to be able to deal with situations appropriately
- *Protected reporting
- *School groups & presentations
- *How to identify and recognise it
- *Interview people
- *Post social pages – twitter, Instagram, snap chat
- *Have respectful dialogue
- *Standard knowledge and legal rights

What are the barriers for BAME & RAS young people getting involved in services?

- *Perceptions and stereotypes
- *Feeling nervous – not having someone to go with
- *Not having support form family
- *Difficulties finding out about services and activities
- *Language barriers
- *Mental barrier
- *Not enough appeal
- *It's uncool
- *No one told me about it
- *Schools don't do much
- *Fro non BAME & RAS it's out there readily available for them.
- *Services are not promoted – raise awareness
- *Negative labels
- *Lack of diversity – people not looking like us
- *Adults need to step back to allow to lead
- *Accessibility
- *Service are not relevant – adults decide on what they think YP need
- *Over protective parents
- *Distrust of services
- *Travel – where are the services located



What can we do to prevent hate-motivated behaviours?

- *Stop people from being disrespectful
- *Stop people from being racist
- *Change the way you are and prove people wrong
- *Don't act the way they want
- *Groups of people from different backgrounds so they can be made aware of different cultures and backgrounds
- *Challenge the person and ask why they think that way.
- *Ignore the negativity

What is a hate crime?

- *Discrimination based on difference - race, nationality, age, culture, sexual orientation, disability, job, status.
- *It can happen anywhere (even a place of worship).
- *Verbal or physical or systematic e.g; financial
- *Also can be an inaction
- *Can be pre-meditated or spontaneous
- *A crime due to ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religious beliefs, culture.
- *Essential to what the person feels
- *Types; verbal, physical, emotional
- *Isolates a person
- *Discriminates against a person
- *Difficult to tackle
- *About power
- *A mechanism in which an institution discriminates against someone
- *Partly unconscious bias
- *A crime based on discrimination or prejudice, targeted at specific people, not a random crime



Why do hate crimes occur?

- *Social Deprivation
- *Peer pressure
- *Misguided information
- *Uniformed sources e.g.; media, community
- *Territorial
- *Closed minded
- *Don't accept difference
- *Personal opinions
- *Pressure
- *Prejudice due to discrimination – race, sex, religious beliefs
- *Upbringing
- *Don't accept difference
- *Bad influences
- *Political events
- *Misunderstanding
- *Lack of cultural exposure
- *Past experiences
- *Scapegoating
- *Resistance to change
- *Power in balance
- *Jealousy
- *spitefulness
- *Lack of understanding/education
- *Anger
- *Isolated upbringing
- *Ignorance
- *Scared of difference
- *Prejudice
- *Media bias/influence
- *Bias environment

Speakers

Mayor Marvin Rees (video message)

Marvin spoke to the young people about his experiences and journey becoming the first Mayor of African descent in Europe. Marvin spoke about how his background and where he grew up made him insecure compared to the 'rich kids' but he doesn't see it like that now, he is now more resilient and that has given him the power to overcome barriers. He advised the young people to take opportunities when they arise because hard work and talent are not always enough.

He concluded to say he will be making space and making opportunities for marginalised people in this city and that he and his cabinet are here to support and help in any way they can.

Young people

Media Bias and Me by *Mohammed Aidid and Sabrina Mohammed*

This speech addressed the increase in media bias towards Muslims' and ethnic groups and how news coverage has helped influence the rise in hate crimes and Islamophobia. Although the media and technology has advanced we are still going backwards – the media plays on people's fears and reinforces stereotypes of ethnic minorities. The negative language used to describe black people 'thugs', 'super predators and 'sub human'. Many media images of





Black men are linked to criminality or poverty and the positive depictions are often limited to sports and music. Despite these representations being factually inaccurate they are often left unchallenged and this representation is dangerous in a world with young people who are engrossed in media.

White privilege by Iman Tazaoui

Iman spoke about what White Privilege means using real examples of how white privilege happens socially, politically and economically.



Black History Month 300years by Sapphire Lees

Saphires spoke passionately about the History of Black history Month but reinforced the message of not dwelling on slavery but remembering it and celebrating the successes of Black people. Black History Month is a reminder that we are capable of great things, we are capable of being educated, we are capable of loving relationships, we are capable of being winners and winners we will be.....'So my message today is that 300 years Black people were slaves and for 300 years no one spoke but because of those 300 years we are strong'.



Scenes from Syria by *Farouk Al Sayed*



Evaluation

The conference was an opportunity to give young people a voice and to raise awareness of the issues for BAME and RAS young people. The overwhelming feedback received was very positive, indicating that the conference was a success. We asked the young people who are members of unity to complete evaluation forms and Young people and adults who attended to complete a different evaluation form below is some of the feedback:

Feedback from Young People

What did I learn? *Improved confidence *Planning and running an event * that I can work well under pressure *I'm a very natural speaker *

I enjoyed? *The Speeches and Poems *The whole event *The performances *

I felt I was good at? *Communicating with the people on the table *

What could have been better? My mind set on some subjects

Feedback from Adults

What was the best part of the event for you? *Hearing the young people all representing themselves. *Performances at the end, group discussions *Stories of young people's experiences * Young people being empowered to speak for themselves. *Great poetry and informative *Information about Syria. *



If you were running the event, what would you have done differently?

*Get the young people to speak slower – otherwise superb *Nothing *Make sure that all opinions are respected and assumptions aren't made of people. The minority of white people's views were disregarded and ignored – this needs to change. * Acoustics were poor. *It was fantastic. *Nothing it was perfect. *start it a bit later.

Next Steps

- Use the information from the consultation and table discussions to start to make some changes – include in Unity youth Forum Manifesto.
- Set up a meeting with the Mayor and Unity Youth Forum.
- Publish the poems and speeches written by the young people.
- Take the conference into schools for young people to deliver peer education.
- Develop the conference into an exhibition.

With thanks to in no particular order Unity Youth Forum , Youth and Community Work Team, CYN, Bristol City Youth Council, and every else that contributed and supported the Event.

