Stevenage Youth Advisory Board

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2026

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Introduction

Members of the Youth advisory Board were asked to share their responses to eight questions provided by the Chair of the Community Select Committee.

Our responses are as follows …

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Question 1: What are the biggest challenges you face as a young person?

"Getting equal opportunities in things such as employment."

"Exam stress and pressure from others around me"

"Mental health – pressure from school, exams, friendships, social media & worries about the future – young people struggling to talk about how they feel as worried about being judged or not taken seriously"

"Balancing school, work & planning for my future can be challenging. Finding work experience & opportunities can also be difficult, especially when you don't know where to look"

"Pressure around school, exams, money and deciding what to do in the future. Mental health is also a big issue for young people."

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Question 2: Do you think young people feel heard about matters that concern them?

“Not enough they often get overlooked.”

“No.”

“Young people are listened to sometimes but many still feel opinions are not taken seriously enough. Young people should have more opportunities to speak openly about issues such as mental health & see their ideas lead to real change”

“I think some young people feel heard but others don’t. We need to make sure young people are listened to & that their opinions actually lead to change”

“Not always. We are given opportunities to speak, but sometimes it doesn’t feel like our opinions actually lead to change.”

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Question 3: Are there enough opportunities for young people to get life experiences that would help them in the future. If not, what are the barriers?

"Most opportunities require travelling which is hard for young people."

"No, it's very difficult to find placements for work experience and work of any sorts."

"There are opportunities but not everyone can access them equally. Transport, money & not knowing where to find opportunities can be barriers. Young people need activities that support their confidence & wellbeing such as volunteering, clubs, work experience & safe spaces."

"There are opportunities but not everyone has equal access to them. More work experience, mentoring & affordable activities would help young people prepare for the future."

"I don't think so. Work experience and volunteering can be difficult to find, and transport and money can make opportunities harder to access."

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Question 4: Is there anything SBC or other responsible bodies (e.g. HCC, schools, police etc.) could do to make life better for you?

“Have more events for young people to know their opportunities.”

“Not that I can think of.”

“Should be more accessing mental health support for young people. Schools & local organisations could provide more safe spaces where young people can talk without feeling judged. There should also be more awareness around mental health so young people know where to get help before things become overwhelming.”

“They could provide more career opportunities, work experience & activities for young people. Better communication about available opportunities would also make a big difference.”

“Make young people more aware of the support and opportunities available, especially careers, work experience and mental health support.”

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Question 5: Is there anything you'd like to ask us / any thoughts you'd like to make that aren't covered above?

"I would like to know how young people's views can be turned into real action, especially around mental health. I think YP should have a bigger role in decisions about services & support available to them"

"I'd like to know how young people can have a bigger role in making decisions in Stevenage. I'd also like to know how our feedback is used to create real change."

"I'd like to see more evidence of how young people's feedback is actually being used to make decisions."

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Question 6: If you live in Stevenage, how is it as a place to live?

“Stevenage is a nice place to live but it is often boring with not many activities to do.”

“It feels a little dangerous however there’s a sense of community as most people my age all know each other in some sort of way”

“Stevenage has a lot of potential for young people. There are good opportunities & communities but I think we need more safe spaces, activities & support for young people’s mental health. Young people should feel that Stevenage is a place where they belong & can ask for help when they need it.”

“I think Stevenage is a good place to live, with a strong community & opportunities to get involved. However, I think there could be more activities & career opportunities for young people.”

It’s a good place to live with good transport links, but I think there could be more things specifically for teenagers and young adults.”

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Question 7: Do you think you'll be living in Stevenage in 10 years?

"No."

"No as it limits my future career I hope to have"

"I could see myself living in Stevenage if there are good opportunities & the town continues to improve for young people. I would also like to experience living in together places so I cannot say for certain"

"I'm not completely sure. I want to focus on my career & explore different opportunities but I could see myself staying in or returning to Stevenage if it offers what I need."

"I'm not sure. It depends on university, career opportunities and whether Stevenage gives me enough reason to stay."

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Question 8: Do you think you're learning enough about the world around you?

"Yes. I learn a lot from books and social media."

"I don't think I'm ignorant to anything in the world, however I believe that I only learn about politics and things on my own, I don't learn it from school and educational scenarios in my life."

"School teaches us a lot but I think young people could learn more about real-life issues. This includes mental health, where to get support, managing stress, relationships, money, careers & understanding what is happening in our communities. I think mental health education should be a bigger part of preparing young people for life."

"I think school teaches us a lot but I would like to know more about money, careers, politics & real-life situations. Education should prepare us for life not just exams"

"Not completely. School teaches us a lot academically, but we could learn more about money, careers, employment and how the real world works."

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Any further questions?

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to share your views.

We're happy to answer any further questions you have.

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