

Session One – The mental health and wellbeing of our young people

Attendees: Sue Merriman – Youth Council
Nimah Mahon – Youth Council
Father David Evans – The Changing Room Counselling Service
Faye – Den 101
Carla Thompson - Changing Room Counselling Service
Sam Bird – Development Manager
Sarah Langdon – Brereton Millions
Nicola Lynes – Transforming the Trent Valley
Jane Reynolds – SCYVS
Alicia – Youth Council
Ted – Youth Council
Anya Tregay – Youth Council
Mrs Horton – Etchinghill Teacher
Mrs Lewis – The Hart School
Olivia Lyons – Youth Council
Hilary Goodreid – Town Clerk

The Changing Room

David Evans / Carla Thompson – from The Changing Room Counselling Service. Started in 2018 – researched around social needs in the community. Mental health came up time and time again. In one year, there were 4 suicides of young people – underlined the need for support of young people.

Carla Thompson – Originally was just Carla on own in a room in the church. First 6 months that was how it worked – then students from Staffs Uni, Keele Uni, Walsall College – needed to have 100 hours of practical experience so Carla took them on, and the team has rapidly grown over the years to 8 fully qualified counsellors. Covers Rugeley, Brereton, Armitage, Cannock, Hednesford and wider afield in Staffordshire.

The Changing Room is a free service, and Carla is the senior therapist / counsellor and heads the programme. Looking forward to Covid restrictions ending so that they can offer peer support (project called Turning Point) – support from others who have been through the Changing Room process. Looking to include therapeutic arts, gardening, crafts etc.

Debt advice will be coming on stream soon linking with the Penk Money Advice [Penk Moneywise Penkridge - Community Money Advice](#)

Rugeley Youth Council

Anya spoke about the Youth Council which undertakes a number of projects in the community on issues that affect the youth of Rugeley. Negotiated with ARRIVA new bus passes – enabling the youth to get easily and cheaply to schools around Staffordshire. Looking at changes to the Skate Park so it becomes more suitable for wider youth recreation. Also working with partners to develop new play equipment for slightly older children in Elmore Park so that it keeps young people outside in fresh air – good for wellbeing.

Youth Council and SCYVS run Mental Health and Well Being Plan – specialised mental health plan for young secondary school aged children to help themselves.

Youth Council have a website [Rugeley Youth Council](#) created by the youth council: populated with self-help packs. Wellbeing initiative – self help apps / websites and advice if you think that your mental health has deteriorated beyond self-help. Mental health for young people is a very personal subject and makes it harder to reach out. Also, young people feel that their mental health is invalid. Includes access to PAPYRUS and SAMARITANS and advice on how to talk to a GP and how to access mainstream services. The Well Being section is under the projects tab: [Projects — Rugeley Youth Council](#).

Den 101

Faye and Owen started Den 101 in Rugeley. The venue is above Brewery Street – the old Riley Snooker Hall. A promo video for the initiative will be launched in the next couple of weeks. Aim to become a hub for 11 – 17 year olds. Link in with services that Rugeley offer and bring it into one place. Built a counselling room. Have a classroom to be used as a homework room which contains a full IT suite; cinema room so stream films and presentations. Big main event hall. Giving young people a safely place to hang out with free Wi-Fi. Qualified youth workers. How will children access? Must be a membership only club – subscription to begin with so they can keep track of who is on the site. Drop in between 4pm – 9pm weekday's and on the weekend as well. Hoping that the 17th May will be launch. If restrictions stay the same – then they will allow children in their year group bubbles. Hoping to have open events to launch. Want to provide counselling and covid bounce back support.

Plan to look at a lot on the year 6 transition – introductions with older year groups. Looking for staff and volunteers – email info@theden101 website: www.theden101.co.uk

Primary School Experience

Mrs Horton – from the primary perspective – affected age groups differently. Lessons have been created to allow children to openly express their concerns; to say its OK to feel the emotions and recognising the emotions, shielding issues etc are all covered in lessons. Different strategies to help manage. It's OK to have the emotions, opening up the communication between children and staff. Point families to support that they may need – signposting other services.

Transforming the Trent Valley

Nicola Lynes – opportunity for using nature to help in developing mental wellbeing. Connections between nature and wellbeing / wildlife / spotting. Sessions at Etchinghill on Wednesdays to get in with nature.

Brereton Youth Group

Youth Council partners with Brereton Youth Group – Sue Merriman – volunteering youth group – young people sign up to do projects that match interest in the community. One thing was to develop a woodland walk which includes a remembrance area – creation of a remembrance area. Created natural play, mud kitchens, sawing. Freedom for young people to run and enjoy outdoors. Linked to Rugeley Rifle Club. For every hour the young people volunteer, they cash in the 'hours' in exchange for maths and English lessons, cooking lessons etc. Now included membership of other groups through 'earning'. E.g., if you cannot afford to go to Den 101 – volunteer with Brereton Youth Service and 'earn' the membership. Help to develop young people's CV.

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Judith – has planters in Etchinghill and wondered if schools could take on maintenance of this – Chancel has a garden club. Wants to see all schools to have gardening clubs. Council link to Greening Rugeley initiative. Cllr Lyons – links to Rugeley in Bloom initiative. When they initially launched – did presentations to primary school children to get the programme rolled out area wide. With covid, a smaller scale Rugeley In Bloom will happen to promote looking after green areas / hanging baskets throughout Rugeley.

Church in the middle of the Pear Tree – patch of grass and looking to do gardening on this open piece of land.

SCVYS – Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services

Jane Reynolds – SCVYS – support young people and charity groups. Run a youth voice to support young people. D & T vets have a project for people to grow bee friendly flowers. Children could do a growing project – SCVYS have many rectangular ice cream tubs that would fit on windowsills – can this be linked to schools / groups as a project? If anyone wants help to setting up a group, SCVYS is a great support group. Look at County Line and Drug issues in wider groups.

Rugeley Community Church

Chris – mental health and wellbeing – run an ACTIVE8 project for primary school children – sports and crafts. Had to reinvent through the pandemic – deliveries to families of food, activities, and online resources – linked to events as well e.g., pancake day, easter eggs etc. Planning in August to return to a full ACTIVE8 programme for 4 weeks over the summer at the centre. More details to come.