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SHAPE



Welcome to SHAPE's Quarterly Newsletter for October 2024!

Hello!

Welcome to SHAPE's quarterly stakeholder newsletter. With so many initiatives taking place through the SHAPE Programme, we think it's very important that we keep our stakeholders and partners updated.

Please note: This newsletter will cover two quarters of activity from March - September due to a pause in communications during local and national elections.

We hope you enjoy our update.

The SHAPE Team

Youth Elections: A Promising Start to 2024

The 2024 youth elections and Make Your Mark campaign in February set a dynamic tone for 2024.

The national Make Your Mark Survey really puts forward the most important topics young people value.

Ranking 9th in the UK, 10,632 young people from Sandwell voted in Make Your Mark. This year, the three most important topics were:

1. Crime & Safety
2. Rights, Equalities & Democracy
3. Education and Learning.

We also saw an overwhelming response with 24 young individuals expressing interest in becoming the next Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for 2024-2026.

Seven finalists ran inspiring campaigns, rallying an impressive 8,766 votes from 166 institutions across Sandwell over a four-week period.

We are thrilled to congratulate Angela Hangero and Kashvi Khanna as Sandwell's elected MYPs. They will be campaigning to combat drugs and knife crime and improve digital literacy and mental health.

Their passion and commitment to representing youth voice promises an exciting and impactful term ahead.



National Takeover Challenges

So far this year, we have held four takeover challenges including Sandwell Council Leader's Meeting, SHAPE Strategic Board, Joint Executive Group and West Midlands Police Board. All of the takeovers were incredibly successful and allowed a variety of young people from SHAPE Youth Forum and schools across the borough to have their voices and opinions, on lots of different topic areas, heard. Following all of the takeovers, there has been an action plan put together for the council and its partners to address the wants and needs of the young people.



Sandwell Council Leader's Meeting

The Takeover of Sandwell Council Leader's Meeting, was attended by young people (aged 13-22) representing SHAPE Youth Forum and Q3 Academy Tipton, as well as Sandwell

Council apprentices and work experience students from Bristnall Hall Academy.

During the takeover, the young people discussed a number of issues with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Kerrie Carmichael along with full cabinet, as well as the Chief Executive, Shokat Lal and Assistant Chief Executive, James McLaughlin.

Amongst the topics raised were mental health issues in children, youth engagement in politics and increasing the apprenticeship offer across Sandwell.

In the takeover, it was decided that the council and its partners should organise events in each local area/ town/ school where apprenticeships can be promoted, where young people who are already apprentices can attend the events and tell others their story. We should also look at how we can increase youth engagement across the borough, and promote engagement opportunities more widely.

SHAPE Strategic Board

In the SHAPE Strategic Board takeover, young people discussed topics including youth voice, school councils, advertising opportunities for young people across the borough and issues young people face in today's society.



Following on from the takeover, SHAPE have formed a Sandwell Youth Forums' Networkers Meeting, where youth voice leads can come together to share best practise in youth participation, discuss issues young people are facing and work collaboratively with young people and professionals to co-produce Sandwell's Children and Young People's Engagement Strategy.

The council and its partners need to work together more effectively to advertise and promote opportunities, like SHAPE, for children and young people to get involved with. We also need to work with the youth in Sandwell to work to achieve the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities status.



Joint Executive Group

The Joint Executive Group consists of Primary and Secondary school headteachers. In the takeover, young people discussed topics including bullying, mental health, GCSE's and exam stress, quality of education, transition and youth voice.

Following on from the takeover, the Sandwell Transition Team have been working with SHAPE Youth Forum to share ideas about how the transition process can be made easier for young people in Sandwell.

There was also an ask that primary schools should work on:

- Giving pupils someone to talk to
- Equipping pupils with skills to help their families, for example money management
- Listening to student voice more

- Raising awareness of signs of bullying.

Furthermore, secondary schools should work on:

- Giving students more support to increase resilience
- Providing more support in exam season to manage revision and exam stress
- More trusted adults for young people to talk to, and somewhere for them to talk
- More places for young people to hang out with friends
- Further training and development opportunities for students.

West Midlands Police Board

Nine young people representing SHAPE Youth Forum, Shireland Collegiate Academy, Q3 Academy Tipton, Sandwell Valley School and Perryfields Academy, were given the opportunity to chair the meeting, discuss issues around crime and safety involving younger people with senior police officers including Sandwell Chief Superintendent Kim Madill.



Many topics were raised during the takeover, including vaping, gangs and youth violence, social media and Stop and Search Panels.

West Midlands Police commented that the 'young people's feedback was invaluable'.

The actions formed from this takeover, and also previous takeovers, will form part of a general SHAPE Survey action plan for Sandwell Council and its partner agencies.



SHAPE Youth Forum

Since January, SHAPE Youth Forum has been involved in community improvement in Sandwell.

Their impressive efforts include discussing regeneration projects across the six towns within the borough, collaborating with Communications Officers to create a seamless transition webpage for those moving from primary to secondary school and conducting a thorough review of the 2024 SHAPE Survey.

Also, members have played a crucial role in the youth panel for Sandwell Council staff recruitment, ensuring that young voices are heard in the decision-making process. Their dedication and innovative ideas are shaping a brighter future for Sandwell.

Over summer, SHAPE Youth Forum played a vital role in some of our biggest events, including the SHAPE Your Talent Final, SHAPE Our Future Conference, and SHAPE Youth Summer Fest. Their contributions were vital in making each event a success.

On 3 October, SHAPE Youth Forum took part in an Anti Knife-Crime workshop, inspired by Sandwell hosting the Knife Angel in October.

The workshop included discussions on differences between youth crime and adult crime, and the social indicators that contribute to knife crime. We also looked at the impact and influence of social media, music and movies, on young people's behaviours. Forum members also got to visit the Knife Angel and reflect on the meaning behind the creation of the sculpture.



Looking in to the future, SHAPE Youth Forum are beginning to work in collaboration with Multistory and renowned creative artist Steven "Polarbear" Camden on a new initiative called Green Roots. This project will engage young people in Sandwell to collectively explore environmental and social justice issues, encouraging meaningful change in their community.

SHAPE Our Future Conferences

The annual SHAPE Our Future Primary and Secondary Conferences took place in June at West Bromwich Albion Ground.

The conferences provide a platform for young people to express their views, support young people with the key issues affecting them, raise awareness of the local support services available in Sandwell and offer schools the opportunity to network and share best practise.

The agenda for both events were informed by the Annual SHAPE Survey results from 2023.



SHAPE Our Future Primary Conference

There were 12 Primary Schools with 85 students in attendance at the conference.

The workshops focused on the following topic areas that were highlighted as key issues affecting primary school aged young people in Sandwell:

- Transition to secondary school
- Positive body image
- Online safety
- Cost of living/ money management

As part of the schools' presentation showcase, they were given the opportunity to conduct a three-five minute presentation on a public health project idea for their school. The two schools with the best project were awarded £2,000 to turn their project idea into a reality.

Congratulations to Burnt Tree Primary School and Tividale Primary who were awarded the funding!



Overall, the students felt they learnt the most about money management and being more positive and the teachers felt that the opportunity to learn ideas from other schools was the most valuable

Here are a few quotes from staff and children who attended the day:

- *"A wonderful day with friendly staff and excellent workshops."*
- *"Great day – all valuable sessions. Lovely to socialise with other schools and agencies. Children loved the day."*
- *"Fantastic day."*



SHAPE Our Future Secondary Conference

There were six Secondary schools with 60 students in attendance at the conference.

The workshops focused on the following topic areas that were highlighted as key issues affecting secondary school aged young people in Sandwell:

- Vaping
- Crime and transport safety
- Cost of living
- Revision tips

During the day, we also hosted a lively school debate, where the students discussed topics such as curfews to reduce crime, banning vapes and the harms of social media.

Overall, the young people learnt most about money management and they really enjoyed the rich discussion in the youth debate. The teachers felt that their students gained a lot from the day and that the conference is a great platform which gives young people a voice.



Here are a few quotes from staff and children who attended the day:

- *"The confidence of my young people was raised again, thank you"*
 - *"Another great conference"*
 - *"Excellent ideas, excellent day, enjoyed it all"*
-

SHAPE Your Talent 2024

This year's SHAPE Your Talent competition has been a spectacular showcase of local talent, with an impressive 75 entries and 125 young people auditioning. The competition brought the community together with over 250 enthusiastic audience members cheering on the budding performers. A special thanks goes out to the dedicated Library staff, Youth Services, Smethwick Brasshouse Community Centre, Oldbury Royal British Legion, who all sponsored the Talent Show Auditions by hosting the events at their venues. Thanks also to our supportive Local Councillors who both attended and made the audition heats possible!

Following on from the auditions, the winning acts were put through to the next stage of the competition, an online public vote. This resulted in an incredible 52,695 votes, which decided our eight finalists.

The competition came to an incredible close with the finals hosted at Sandwell College in June. The sold-out theatre was filled with excited family, friends, and fans, eager to see the finalists shine on stage with outstanding performances. Special guest acts included previous SHAPE Your Talent Finalist, Thea Lowe, Guest Judge Kimberley Maynard, and Bhangra Smash Up.

Huge congratulations to this year's winners, Flo Dawson (8-13 Children's category) and Amira Goldie (14-19 Youth category).

Once again, a big thank you to Youth Services, Sandwell College, SHAPE Youth Forum, and our judges for being a part of this amazing project!

We're already gearing up for SYT 2025, promising it to be even bigger and better!

Applications for SHAPE Your Talent 2025 open in January and [all information will be available on the Just Youth website.](#)



SHAPE Youth Summer Fest 2024

This year's festival took place on Saturday 13 July at Sandwell Valley, West Bromwich. SHAPE Youth Summer Fest is Sandwell Council's freely accessible community-based youth offer. It was created in response to recommendations from young people who wanted more to know what opportunities were available in Sandwell during the summer holiday periods.

The festival promotes and encourages young people's participation in physical activities, performing arts, arts & crafts as well as raising awareness of the various support services available to young people locally. This year's festival attracted over 4,000 visitors.

At King George's playing fields, we hosted a football tournament run by Bustleholme Football club which attracted an additional 2,000 visitors. During the day, The Albion Foundation also held the annual 'Blind Dave's Colour Run' with over 250 runners. Furthermore, in partnership with the National Market Traders' Federation, we held our second Young Traders' Market, which saw Sandwell's Local Winner progress to the Regional Final in Wolverhampton and the

National Final in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Congratulations to the winner, 'Crafts By Mama', we are very proud to call you one of Sandwell's traders!

This year, over 70 providers delivered activities for the young people. This included Dhol drumming classes, soft archery, a bee exhibition, bike riding classes, poetry sessions and a careers expo which featured 35 providers.

Here are a few examples of the impact that the festival can have on increasing the uptake of positive activities for young people and their families are:

- Dartmouth Cricket Club had five new children attend their Cricket session on the Sunday after the event, three new girls attend the girls only Sunday evening session and one person join the walking cricket team, and other further enquiries.
- Sandwell Mobile Library were visited by over 700 young people and their families on the festival day. Everyone, including adults and children, who attended the Mobile Library on the day was provided with a free book, and offered the chance to join the library and learn more about the services offered.
- 335 children engaged in one of the Go Play Provider's activities.
- West Bromwich Leisure Centre gave out lots of free five-day gym passes to encourage adults and teenagers to try the gym.
- Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust signed up 78 young people to their Youth Space forum.



Sandwell Youth Forums Networkers' Meeting

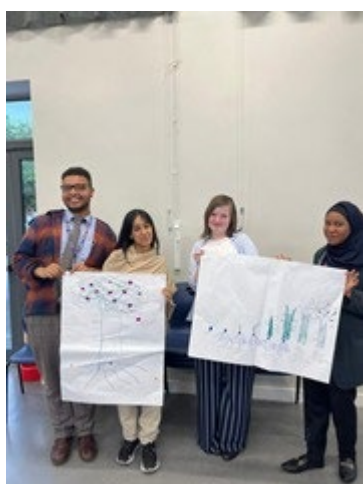
The Sandwell Youth Forums Networkers' Meeting is a multi-agency approach, for youth voice leads and champions in organisations across Sandwell. The members meet every six weeks and have been doing so from March 2024.

This is an opportunity for officers and partners across Sandwell, who would like to engage with children and young people to attend and showcase their projects to find appropriate children and youth forums to engage and coproduce with. Some of the topics and discussions covered at the meeting include:

- Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)
- Child Friendly Borough
- Youth Volunteering opportunities

- Outdoor Activities at Malthouse
- Co-production Charter
- Children's Trust Participation Strategy "Working Together"
- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- SHAPE Survey
- Youth Violence
- Multistory's Green Roots Project

If you are interested in joining the Sandwell Youth Forums Networkers' Meeting, please email shape_events@sandwell.gov.uk



Shaping Youth Voice in Sandwell

A key objective of the Sandwell Youth Forums Networkers Meeting is to review and co-produce a new Children and Young People's Engagement Strategy. The group decided a series of young people's workshops should be held to co-produce the strategy.

The first "Shaping youth voice in Sandwell" event took place at Brasshouse Community Centre on Tuesday 18 June, with 20 young people from SHAPE Youth Forum, Coneygre Arts Centre, Care Leavers Forum and Forum for Independent Young Adults (FIYA) and NHS Youth Space.

The young people gave their views on what and co-production and youth participation means to them. Their responses included:

- *"When you make something by coming together with others"*
- *"A way of working, whereby everybody works together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all"*
- *"Hearing from different young people from different backgrounds and valuing their opinions"*
- *"Not only having a say but seeing what you say being physically actualised"*
- *"Where voices are heard equally and engagement is representative of an entire area"*

The young people also worked on drafting their own participation model for Sandwell, demonstrating how they would like officers across the council and partnership to engage with them.

Overall, they enjoyed the evening and embraced the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Sandwell Knife Angel

During October, Sandwell is hosting the Knife Angel, a 27-foot sculpture, constructed from approximately 100,000 knives and blades that were confiscated from the streets of Britain. The Knife Angel is designed to raise awareness of the impact of knife crime. The weapons, ranging from standard kitchen knives and flick pocket knives through to Samurai swords, knuckle dusters and martial arts weapons, were collected through knife amnesties and surrenders, coordinated in collaboration with all 43 Police Constabularies across the UK.

The SHAPE Team attended the Knife Angel Opening Ceremony, featuring appearances from local leaders and community representatives, as well as various performances.

We are especially proud of our previous SHAPE Your Talent winner from 2019, Sophie Rose de Bear, who performed her winning Knife Crime performance in front of the crowd.

We were also very pleased to see the SHAPE Programme Manager, Neesha Patel, and the SHAPE Project Support Officer, Asha Lawrence, recognised as two of Sandwell's 100 Anti-Violence Champions as part of the ceremony.

It was great to see the community come together to spread the message of peace and unity.

The Knife Angel will be in Sandwell until the end of October, so make sure you come down and take a look! [For more information about the Knife Angel, visit Sandwell's website.](#)



SHAPE Survey Results

The SHAPE survey is an annual online survey, which is used to capture feedback from children and young people across Sandwell and is undertaken through schools. It helps to inform the council about children and young people's needs and supports the objective of becoming a Child Friendly Borough.

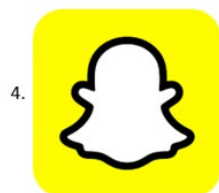
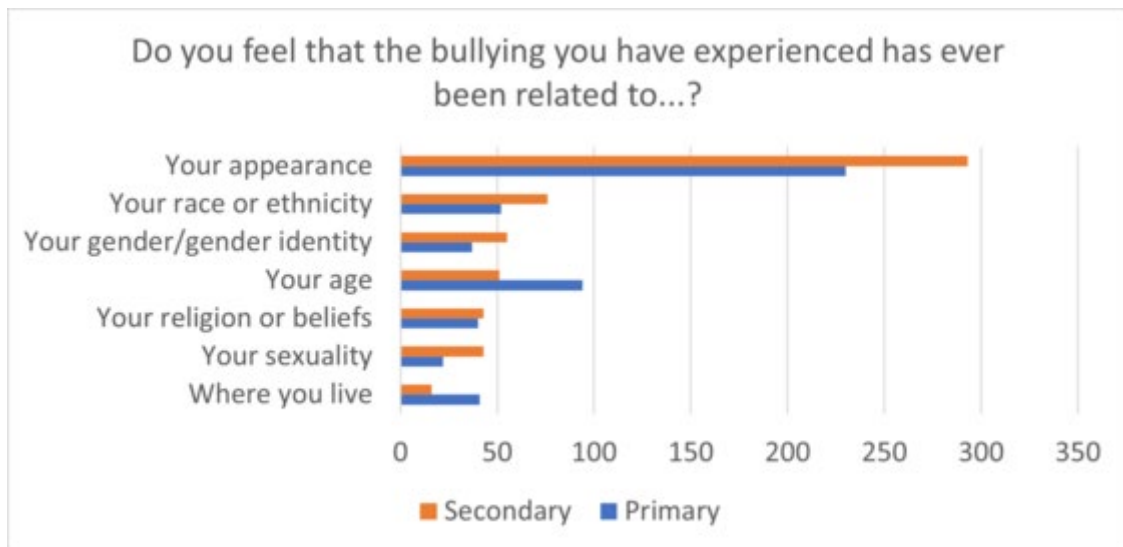
In 2024, we have had our highest number of responses to date, 2,751, representing children from 39% of primary schools and 45.2% of secondary schools in the borough. Wood Green Academy had the highest number of responses this year and have won £250.

The survey covers questions on demographics, mental health and wellbeing, social media, gaming and communications, your local area, education and learning, youth activities, youth voice and social action and your future.

The results of the survey indicate that the top issues affecting young people in today's society vary depending on whether they are thinking about young people in general or their own personal life. School work and exams feature in both categories, as does life after education and completing their exams. Being bullied also features as an issue affecting young people and 25% of young people at both age groups are bullied, with the majority feeling this is due to their appearance.

Substance abuse and crime related issues, appear to be the perception of young people.

	In General	In their Personal Life
1	School College Work/ Exams	Nothing
2	Vaping	School
3	Gangs and Youth Violence	Exams
4	Knife Crime	Family
5	What to do after GCSE's	Bullying
6	Drugs	Appearance
7	Being Bullied	I don't know
8	Getting a Job	Life after Education



The top channels used by all age groups remain the same as last year with the video channels being the most popular. YouTube is the app that is being used the most, by over 95% of both age groups, with WhatsApp utilised by 70% and above.

50% of primary children use TikTok compared to 79% of secondary. 44.4% of primary children use Snapchat compared to 76.7% of secondary.

The three things which would make the area that the young people live in a better place are: cleaner and less litter, safer area or less crime and more or better shops

What 3 things would make the area that the you live a better place?

more or better shops
safer area
cleaner and less litter
less crime

The full report with all the survey results will be available in November 2024.

Just Youth Website Updates

The Just Youth Website is our online information hub for all children and young people in Sandwell. Since our last newsletter was sent out in February, there has been over 17,000 visits to the Just Youth website.

During this time, we have also had lots of new pages go live on the website including:

- **Youth Service's Clued Up Campaign** – New pages about Anti-Social Behaviour and Drugs, Alcohol and Addiction have been added to the website as part of the Youth Services' Clued Up Campaign. The content of the pages were co-designed with young people taking part in the campaign, ensuring that the information included is relevant to young people today.

[The pages can be viewed here: www.justyouth.org.uk/advice-2/clued-up](http://www.justyouth.org.uk/advice-2/clued-up)

- **Transition** - The transition webpage has been created as moving from primary to secondary school is a big time in young people's lives. The pages include a helpful timeline of events, lots of advice, and useful links to videos and websites to help answer any questions young people and their families may have about moving to secondary school.

[The page can be viewed here: www.justyouth.org.uk/transition](http://www.justyouth.org.uk/transition)



Get in touch with us!

Instagram: [@shape_sandwell](#)

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YouTube: [Subscribe to SHAPE Events](#)

Website: www.justyouth.org.uk

Email: shape_events@sandwell.gov.uk

Phone: 0121 569 6164

Location: Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, PO Box 2374, Oldbury, B69 3DE

We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter, and finding out more about what we have been up to.

Kind regards,

The SHAPE Team

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