



**Inspection:** Slough Youth Offer

**Report Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> Aug 2023

**Prepared By:** Slough Young Inspector Members

**Inspection Start Date:** Sept 2022

**Inspection End Date:** November 2023

**Reporting To:** Sue Butcher - Chief Executive, Children's Services & Slough Children First and Ketan Gandhi - Associate Director - Community & Public Protection, Slough Borough Council



## The Background

We are a group of young volunteers in Slough who are trained to gain skills in research methods, communication and presenting in order to carry out local inspections. We are excited to investigate services, offers, places and organisations in Slough that young people can use, to ensure they are youth friendly and we provide a critical eye to offer suggestions for improvements.

This inspection took place over the course of a few months. Part of the planning for the inspection was meeting with young people and seeking advice and feedback from the focus groups we would carry out. These focus groups were carried out in Baylis Court School and Eden Girls School. Young Inspectors also asked members of Slough Youth Parliament and family members.

## Objectives

- ✚ Ensure that children and young people participate and have an impact in the decision making of the organisations that work with them.
- ✚ Evaluate services that work with children and young people to assess and evaluate how well they are doing.
- ✚ Advise on improvements and report on their findings.
- ✚ Encourage existing services to reflect on their practice and implement change.

## Standards for Young Inspectors

- ✚ Safeguard the interests of young people.
- ✚ Report their findings accurately and truthfully.
- ✚ Consider the consequences of their work or its misuse for those they inspect and their users and that their methods or conduct will not adversely affect those they inspect.
- ✚ Investigation should be based on the freely given informed consent of those investigated. This involves providing full explanation of what the inspection is about, why it is being undertaken and by whom.

## Introduction

In September 2022 we met with Ketan Gandhi - Associate Director - Community & Public Protection, Slough Borough Council. During this meeting we learned of the obligation for all local authorities to have a youth offer. Further discussion identified that Slough's local offer was out of date and in need of review. This led to our decision to complete an inspection of the current youth offer in Slough.

We examined Slough's youth offer on the council website based on its content and appeal. We each rated it out of 5, 1 being the worst and 5 being the best. We found the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to have the most engaging and attractive website for the youth because of their interactivity, updated information and colour. The website we found the least appealing was Slough's website due to its outdated information and dull appearance.

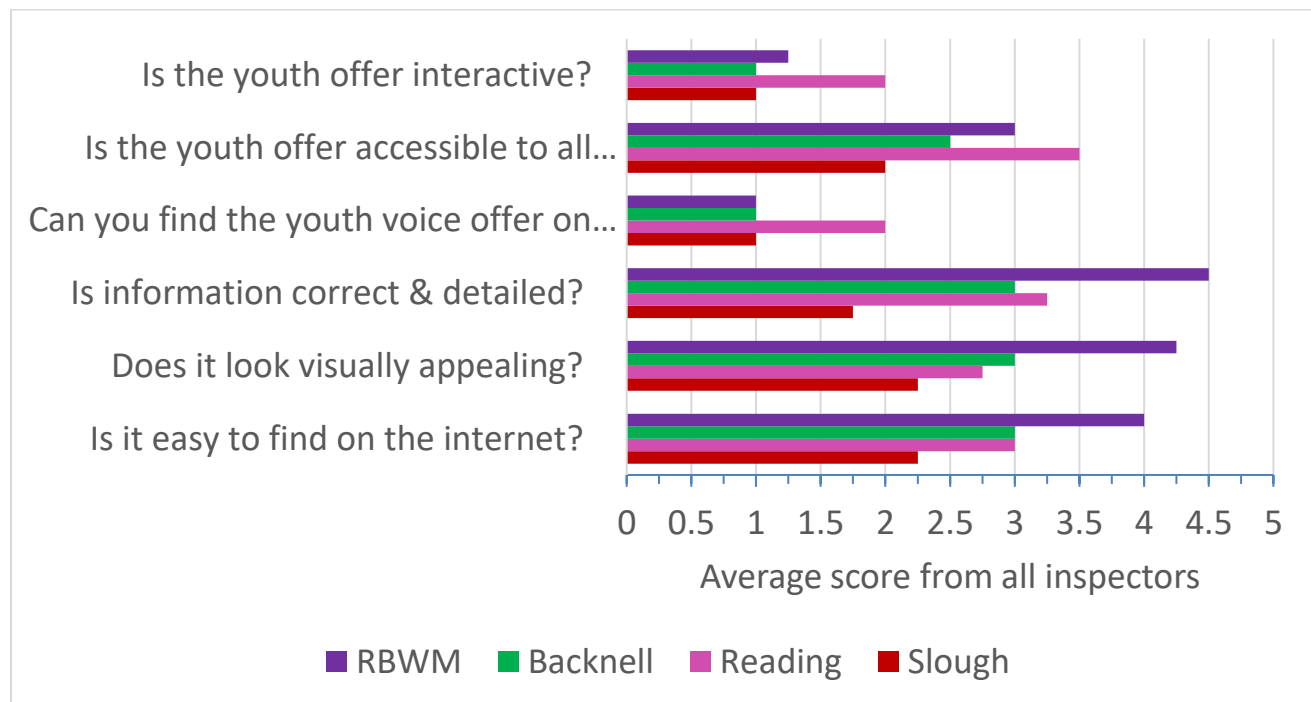


We learnt Slough's youth offer was outdated, not informative and not appealing for the youth compared to other council youth offers. We compared it to all the boroughs in Berkshire. Overall, we saw a big gap within the Slough Borough Council website, as there were not enough listed opportunities for the youth.

## Scope

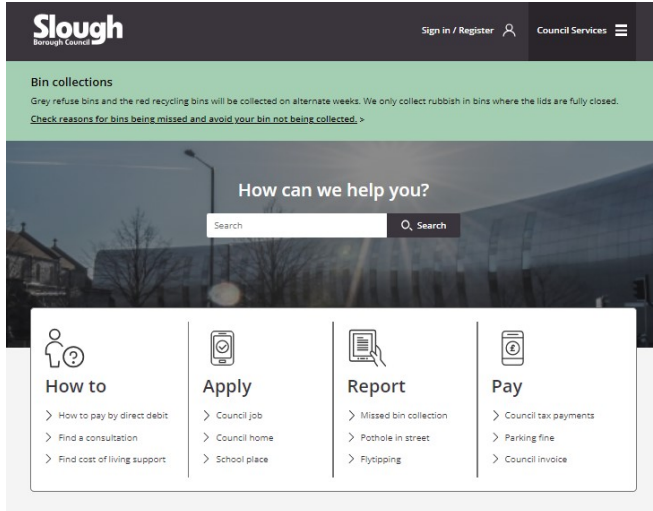
We decided to individually score the website based on content and appearance. The content, appearance, and accessibility of the youth offer on average scored a 2, which shows that the website is pretty bad on our scale. The interactivity of the youth offer scored a 1 on average, which is awful on our scale. 4 members participated in the scoring of the youth offer website. \*refer to appendix 2&3

Below are our scores for each local authority website we looked at.



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We compared it to all the boroughs in Berkshire. Overall, we saw a big gap within the Slough borough council website, as there were not enough listed opportunities for the youth.



Sloughs branding used to be a darker shade of red, which gave a uniqueness to the logo and website. Currently, the website seems very generic and dull, with the grey and white colour scheme. The red should still be noticeable on Slough's website. Throughout our inspection we found out that the websites appearance impacted how people viewed the council and its offers. Most people said that other surrounding borough websites were much more appealing. Whilst undertaking questionnaires students told us that more images and videos should be added to the website to make it more engaging.

We conducted 2 focus groups, one at Eden Girls' school and the other at Baylis Court School, both of which are multi-cultural, and for girls aged between 11-16. We were unable to carry out 2 planned focus groups in mixed sex schools due to one youth rep leaving and another school not being able to accommodate our request.  
\*refer to appendix 1

#### **Eden Girls' school:**

At Eden Girls' school the focus group consisted of 10 pupils and overall they thought the Slough youth offer was poorly presented with Reading voted better than Slough. The pupils noticed the format of the website was dull and not easy to read. Also, they found the information was ineffective in providing opportunities and activities, as well as the website not being interactive.

#### **Baylis Court School:**

At Baylis Court School the focus group also consisted of 10 pupils who had similar views to the pupils at Eden. They did not have access to viewing the Slough Youth Offer website but instead gave their suggestions



as to what it should provide for the youth after hearing a brief explanation of it. A few examples were links to youth clubs, work experience and opportunities for young people in an easy to access way.

Feedback from focus groups, our own observations and website inspections will inform our recommendations at the end. \*refer to full questionnaire in appendix 4

Below are the answers to each question asked at the focus groups. Answers from both groups have been combined.

Q1. In three words, what does youth offer mean to you?

**Changes Learning Rubbish More Recycling Voice**  
**Have a say Development Change Offer/Activities**  
**Opportunities Heard Needs Improvement Activities**  
**Options Not treating us all the same Understanding Youth**  
**Engagement of High Street Youth Clubs Boring**  
**Attractiveness**

Q2. Where do you look for services or support & is this information easy to find?

**Go to surrounding cities Nowhere to look**  
**Google Reading/London Upskill teachers**  
**Government website – takes time**

Q3. What are the main barriers to taking part in activities or accessing services locally?

**Timings (knowing when things are on and open)**  
**Things are closed Price Locations/distance**  
**No information is spread**



Q4. What do you think are the solution to the barriers?

**Transportation (Minibus service)**    **Safer Areas**  
**Put on socials**    **Money**    **School advertise stuff**  
**Slough billboards**    **Funded activities**

Q5. What would you like included on Slough youth offer?

**Culture experiences/groups**    **Career advice**  
**Work experience (it no longer happens at school)**  
**Athletics**    **Arts – Drama, Dance and Music**  
**Guest speakers from industry/business**  
**More job and volunteer opportunities**

Q6. Where would you like this offer advertised?

**Summary information linking to website**    **Tiktok**  
**Video on platforms including details**    **Instagram**    **Billboards**  
**School notice boards or assemblies**    **Social Media**    **Schools**  
**Posters – supermarkets**    **Emails and newsletters**

Q7. What do you wish the people in power knew & what is on offer for you in Slough?

**Ice-skating**    **Aiming things for age group**    **More security**  
**Tournaments**    **More advertising**    **Stop building flats**  
**Better school system**    **Cinema**    **High teacher turnover**  
**Salt Hill activity centre**    **Schools competitions**  
**Add more shops and restaurants**    **Clothes shops**    **Variety to offer**  
**More toilets and better upkeep**    **Activities like roller skating**    **More modern things in Slough**    **Youth Conference**  
**Modern designs and layouts of website**    **More interactive**  
**Older generation thinking need to change with the generation**

Q8. Any other thoughts /comments you would like us to know?



**Website – colourful with pictures**  
**Something has to be done**

**Social media interaction**

**Always has these surveys but don't see the outcome**

**What we would like to see next – An updated Youth Offer**

The Slough Young Inspectors, have compiled a set of recommendations aimed at fostering growth, development and the well-being of their peers. These suggestions are crafted with a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by young people in today's rapidly evolving society and job markets. The focus is on creating inclusive, practical and empowering initiatives that resonate with the diverse needs of Slough's youth. This report encapsulates a range of innovative ideas, spanning career development, educational support, technological engagement, community involvement, diversity promotion and health & safety enhancements.

Below you will see what we want included in a modern youth offer, compiled into 6 sections, to support the needs & growth of today's youth population, so they can successfully, happily and healthy develop into adults who can contribute meaningfully to their community and live a rich independent life. These suggestions are not only a reflection of the aspirations and concerns of the young people in Slough but also a roadmap for stakeholders, including educators, policymakers and community leaders, to collaboratively work towards a brighter, more inclusive future for all young residents.

**Slough Young Inspectors Recommendations for Our Slough Youth Offer**

### **1. Careers, Jobs & Training:**

**Workshops:** Attend career development workshops to enhance skills and knowledge in year 8 – to support making informed choices for their GCSE options. Show young people how to recognise their skills, hobbies & interests and how these could be linked to future employment choices.

For older students teach them how to present, speak in public situations like networking events and behave in professional settings.

**Networking/Q&A's:** Engage in conversations with professionals to gain insights into different career paths and what their day to day roles are actually like. Include parents & local businesses representing a variety of industries to represent the variety of young people's interests & skills.

**Mentorship:** Year 7, 11 & 12 students to gain short term mentorship on one to one basis from someone in their desired future career. This will help them as they study & work towards applying to positions & courses in their desired field.

**Peer one to one:** Utilise local alumni to provide one to one support to young people transitioning in years 11 & 13, to talk to them about what the next steps are like and share their experiences. This will better prepare young people to move on, hearing valuable advice from those who they identify with.



**Work Experience:** For many young people this is the only way to get any experience of the workplace, how organisations work and what they are practically good at & enjoy on a day to day basis. Provide work experience to all year 10 students across Slough, via schools as a mandatory element. Support students to find high quality placements where they will gain meaningful insight to inform their career decisions & aid in applying for employment.

**Employment Education Training (EET) Support:** Access for young people to gain individualised high quality advice and guidance for employment, education and training options. Support for CV creation, job & course applications, volunteering options and mock interviews. For those under 19 (or up to 25 if a care leaver or SEND), support back into or to maintain an EET destination where needed. Structured support for year 12 students to support with university course, funding applications and higher apprenticeship applications.

**Entrepreneurship & Self – Employment:** A programme to explore innovation and problem solving and understand current industry trends & needs. A chance for interested young people in Slough to see how the things they are good at & love could be transformed into a business. They will learn about types of self-employment, funding opportunities for start-ups and responsibilities to consider.

**Library:** Section to provide subject specific resources & references for A level students to enable them to complete practice questions for maths & science, enhance subject skills & knowledge & prepare for exams.

## 2. Youth App

A space for young people to create a professional profile, learn about a variety of career pathways and access the one stop shop for local support services and things to do in Slough. It will include a section also on what finance is available for students, who is eligible & how to apply. All youth offer opportunities can be listed here in an easy to access format.

## 3. Skills Hub

Workshops & tutorials to open up the world of technical skills and careers. Shows how to utilise tech safely and learns about the Media, Music, STEM and computing. Here people will learn how to use equipment, test out & develop skills and explore different non-traditional employment options.

Slough Music Service, Beats Routes and Resource Productions offer shared here.

## 4. Youth Voice Matters

Leaders & decision makers commit to work with Slough Youth Parliament & Slough Young Inspectors to engage meaningfully with our work, all year round and learn about what young people want, need, suggest and are concerned about. These groups will advocate, campaign, inspect, provide opportunities for young people to contribute to decision making and celebrate the achievements of Slough's Youth.





Community bus – to be provided @ local pick up points or schools to help young people get to events and youth groups, as transport is expensive, non-frequent and sometimes inaccessible for young people. This would allow the youth to participate in different opportunities and activities and allow better access for those who are disadvantaged. A funded community bus (buses) would underpin a commitment to the entire youth offer to provide a viable way for individuals to take part in and integrate into their community.

Leadership to explore and apply for youth innovation fund or similar funds to support young people to host their own events or develop ideas that would benefit others locally.

## **5. Promoting Diversity**

An annual inter-faith week or culture day in the form of a community festival hosted in high street, Slough. This will support community cohesion and feeling proud about where we live, by learning about other people's traditions, languages, cultures through a mix of music, poetry, art, workshops and more.

A great place to promote opportunities for intergeneration experiences such as summer read between teenagers and infants or young people being able to volunteer for Christmas or Easter to support elderly groups or residential homes.

## **6. Active, Healthy, Safe**

- Keep the young people of Slough active to increase our physical health.
- Bring us together in groups to share & learn, increase a sense of community and learn team building skills we can use for life.
- Share where we can get support, to look after our bodies, minds and emotions.
- Support posters on the back of toilet doors for mental health, bullying, sexual health, FGM, abuse, exploitation and period product support
- Signposting to national/local sexual health & other youth NHS offers

Enhanced offer for young people to meet their mental health and SEND needs, to include:

- Well-being rooms in schools/colleges for those who need time out.
- All staff who work with children & young people to be able to be trained in mental health first aid and SEND awareness, so they can recognise when they need support and respond usefully.
- Ensure school/college staff communicate well so they share the additional needs of individuals and implement their support plans, whilst respecting their privacy.
- Provide support for young people with additional needs to access one to one support where needed to allow them to take part in activities, groups, events and other youth opportunities.
- External support for counselling or therapy, made easy to understand and access.

Active Slough, Sports activities & clubs, local clubs such as cadets, scouts, guides, recreational and outdoor activities, DofE, Together as One, Spectrum, SWIPE, church youth groups and any other YES or local youth groups can be shared here.



## Our recommendations for the website and communication

1. Creating a one stop shop website that is on offer for Slough's youth instead of having to look in numerous places with out of date information or not being able to find anything at all.
2. Implement visually striking website that's colourful to establish a captivating online presence.
3. Utilise infographics and short videos to visually present data for enhanced appeal.
4. Making sure words used are one's young people would search for or would be linked via search boxes so its youth friendly i.e. 'Looking for a job' instead of 'information, advice, guidance'. Enhance website interactivity by incorporating links.
5. Work with Slough's youth to conduct polls to collect a broader range of data and opinions.
6. Include information on how to get involved in i.e. sports, work placements, library access, volunteering opportunities, youth groups (cadets) including creative offers (music service etc).
7. Promote the youth offer to places we will see it i.e., school, community centres, local groups and social media.
8. Ensure accessibility by providing video content with subtitles, other languages and options to adjust page colours for individuals with visual impairments or colour blindness.
9. Facilitate easy expression of interest online for youth voice opportunities or sign up to opportunities via a newsletter.
10. Tailor content to resonate with both parents and students for maximum engagement.

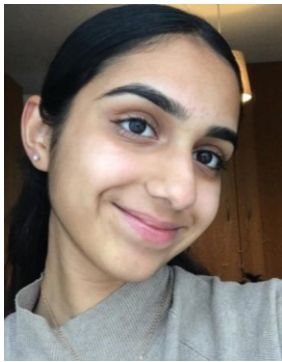
## Thank You

Thanks for taking the time to read this report. We look forward to you carefully considering the content shaped by the voice of young people in Slough and our recommendations, before following up with us on how this will be acted upon.

We also want to thank all the youth who took part by having their say and Eden Girls School and Baylis Court School for allowing us to host focus groups.



**Meet the team that carried out the inspection:**



Maha Kahn



Amirah Basharat Gurleen Kaur



Basant Kaur



Yasmeen Amod

**Supported by the Youth Voice team, Nadine Barrett, Patrick Harrison and Claire Giacobbe Youth Voice Team – Slough [sloughforyouth@slough.gov.uk](mailto:sloughforyouth@slough.gov.uk)**



## What we gain from being involved



During this process, we realised we didn't really have an identity. After a discussion with the youth voice team, this new logo was created.

It holds people to account and makes better environments for young people - Yasmeen

I think being a young inspector is important because my role helps improve services and provides more opportunities for young people.  
in my local area - Amirah

Being a young inspector is important as it allows me to make changes to my environment so others can benefit from it - Maha



## Appendix

### Appendix 1 – Focus group evidence

FOCUS GROUP MEDIATOR NOTE TAKING

SLOUGH  
YOUNG  
INSPECTORS

Q9 WHAT DO YOU WISH THE PEOPLE IN POWER KNEW & WHAT IS ON OFFER FOR YOU IN SLOUGH?

1. more adverts.  
iceskating.
2. Aiming things for age group  
Salt Hill activity Centre.
3. Variety on offer.  
Youth conference.
4.  
Add more shops.  
more restaurants  
Teacher turnover.
5.  
Stop building flats.  
Schools competitions.
6.  
more security  
Safer
7. tournaments.  
Clothing shops.
8.  
Activities - Roller skating.
9.  
more toilets &  
better upkeep
10.  
Cinema.  
Better school systems.

### Appendix 2 – Websites reviewed

2.1 [Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.](#)

2.2 [Slough Borough Council – Slough Borough Council.](#)

## Appendix 3 – Website review

## Website review form – Slough Youth Voice Offer

Use scale

1= Awful, 2=Pretty bad, 3=OK, 4= Quite good, 5=Excellent

Questions	Slough Offer	Reading Offer	Bracknell Offer	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead offer
Website	<a href="#">Slough's youth offer page</a>  Also check out <a href="#">Family Information Service pages that need updating and modernising</a>  Links from Berkshrie youth hub to Slough resources need updating, worth contacting them too  <a href="#">Berkshire youth Hub Slough</a>	Young people's zone run by an independent company who offer services to children, young people and families on behalf of the council  <a href="#">Young people's zone</a>  <a href="#">Reading Youth Council</a>	Bracknell The Wayz youth club website under maintenance  <a href="#">Youth Council</a>	Can see the SEND local offer and leaving care but no page/offer for all young people  Just a list of links on jobs or services not all related to this age group. Can't find the info on their youth parliament/council either
Is it easy to find on the internet	Amirah 2 Basant 3 Gurleen 2 Yasmeen	Amirah 4 Basant 2 Gurleen 3 Yasmeen 3	Amirah 3 Basant 3 Gurleen 3 Yasmeen 3	Amirah 4 Basant 4 Gurleen 4 Yasmeen 4
Notes on findability				Easier to search for
Does it look visually appealing?	Amirah 2 Basant 3 Gurleen 2 Yasmeen 2	Amirah 3 Basant 2 Gurleen 2 Yasmeen 4	Amirah 3 Basant 4 Gurleen 3 Yasmeen 2	Amirah 4 Basant 5 Gurleen 4 Yasmeen 4
Notes on visual appeal	Dull colours Not very appealing			Colourful, more organised

Questions	Slough Offer	Reading Offer	Bracknell Offer	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead offer
Is information correct and detailed	Amirah 1 Basant 3 Gurleen 2 Yasmeen	Amirah 3 Basant 3 Gurleen 3 Yasmeen 4	Amirah 4 Basant 3 Gurleen 3 Yasmeen 2	Amirah 5 Basant 4 Gurleen 4 Yasmeen 5
Notes on information	Not many links across the board. Does not provide any real answers	Couldn't find this info across the borough		
Can you find the youth voice offer on social media young people often use? 1-5	Amirah 1 Basant 1 Gurleen 1 Yasmeen	Amirah 1 Basant 1 Gurleen 1 Yasmeen 5	Amirah 1 Basant 1 Gurleen 1 Yasmeen 1	Amirah 1 Basant 1 Gurleen 1 Yasmeen 1

**Appendix 4 – Questionnaire**

Q1. In three words, what does youth offer mean to you?

Q2. Where do you look for services or support & is this information easy to find?

Q3. What are the main barriers to taking part in activities or accessing services locally?

Q4. What do you think are the solution to the barriers?

Q5. What would you like included on Slough youth offer?

Q6. Where would you like this offer advertised?

Q7. What do you wish the people in power knew & what is on offer for you in Slough?

Q8. Any other thoughts /comments you would like us to know?