

CULTURAL FREEDOM:

KEY THEMES THAT HELP OR HINDER YOUNG PEOPLE'S CAPACITY TO THRIVE THROUGH DEVELOPING THEIR CREATIVE POTENTIAL.

A NEW DIRECTION

We create opportunity

Wellbeing

Champions a happy and healthy London that provides emotional security for young people

Research into the concerns of young people in London highlights a lack of physical exercise due to overcrowding, lack of access to green space, awareness and concern about high levels of pollution and some evidence of increased incidences of mental health problems.

More than 110,000 children in London, or around one in 10, suffer with significant mental ill-health. Nearly 40,000 suffer from anxiety and over 10,000 from depression (Public Health England, 2016).

Rates of anxiety and depression in young people have risen 70% in the past 25 years (RSPH, 2017).

The percentage of 15-year-olds in London reporting low life satisfaction are higher than the England average in every London borough (except Havering). (Public Health England, 2016).

There has been a shift from universal to more targeted provision, focusing on the young people who are perceived to have the highest needs. This has led to a lack of early help for young people and fewer opportunities for young people to engage in positive activities with peers.

The shift towards more targeted, project-specific funding has also an impact on the continuity of provision for young people. Practitioners highlighted that it has led to more rapid turnover of projects as funding is typically shorter-term. As a result, it is now more difficult to sustain projects that young people may already be engaged in (London Youth, 2017).

Girls' reported happiness dips sharply around the age of 11-12, going from being higher than boys' mean happiness to lower. This may be due to the start of social media usage, which is more prevalent among girls at this age (The Children's Society, 2017).

Childhood obesity rates in London as a whole are higher than the England average (23% of children in year 6 compared to 20%). The negative effects of childhood obesity are not evenly distributed among children in London: children from a deprived background are more likely to be obese. Obesity rates are highest for children from the most deprived areas (Trust for London, 2017).

Despite 18% of London being publicly accessible green space, many people live too far away to enjoy those benefits. According to the London Plan, people should live within 400 metres of a small public green space, such as a local park. Currently, only 50% of London's homes are within that recommended distance (London Assembly, 2017).

"Cultural wellbeing is inherently social" and can play a role in children and young people's mental health through encouraging self-expression, showing them they are not alone. Cultural education structures can provide "'safe spaces', in which young people feel more secure, giving them the opportunity to relax, and make themselves vulnerable in creative ways" (Wilson & Gross, 2017).

Creative activity has been observed to stimulate an understanding of the process of making, giving rise to a greater sense of responsibility and self-reflection, increased confidence and self-esteem and better mental health (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017).



References

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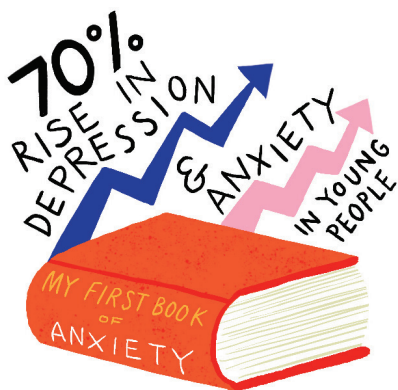
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