

Sevenoaks Youth Council



Meeting of Sevenoaks Youth Council 05th March 2025 at 6.00pm

House in The Basement,
In the Basement of the Stag Community Arts Centre,
London Road,
Sevenoaks,
TN13 1ZZ

Youth Council Members:

Simba Li- Chair	Bea Hayward
Rosie Blackmore- Vice-Chair	Lizzie Hunt
Harry King- Treasurer	Cristian Hunter-Garcia
Bianca Agarwal	Sharma Ishwar
Aryanna Mahdavi Ardestani	Riddley McDermott
Catherine Barden De Leon	Ayaan Motwani
Dexter Buhmann	Madeleine Politzer
Catherine Campbell-Pitt	Elif Sabanci
Charlotte Doe	Jospeh Soanes
Elena-Teodora Dragoi	Ines Wang
Ayush Gautam	Aditya Vara
Maya Goodrich	

In attendance: Linda Larter, Town Clerk, Daren Mountain, Manager of House in the Basement Youth Café, Ieuan Chandler-Wilson, Committee Clerk

AGENDA

1.	Apologies for Absence To receive and note apologies for absence. To note the resignation of Miko Keen from the Sevenoaks Youth Council.	
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting To receive and adopt the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 15 th January 2025.	Attached (Pages 3-5)
3.	Finance Report To note the balance of the Youth Council budget 2024/25.	Attached (Page 6)

4.	Current Matters To receive and note the Current Matters report.	Attached Pages (7-9)
5.	House in the Basement [HiTB] Youth Café House in the Basement - Home (weebly.com) To receive and consider HitB report	Attached Pages (7-9)
6.	Re-stringing Guitars at House in the Basement The Lewis project have offered to re string & tune the two bass guitars at HitB which do need doing at no labour costs, apparently the strings for both will be £80-£100 To consider funding re-stringing of guitars for House in the Basement.	
7.	Skate Park Event To consider ways that we can fund another Skate Park event this year.	
8.	Climate Change Youth Forum How can we encourage young people to attend a Youth Forum.	
9.	Mental Health Survey Report To receive and comment on the report from the Mental Health Survey.	Attached
10.	Sevenoaks School Triathlon- Volunteer Opportunity To note we have been approached by the organisers of Sevenoaks School Triathlon asking if Youth Councillors would like to help at the event at any of the areas, hand out medals or meet and greet the young triathletes from different schools.	Attached (Page 21)
11.	Date of Next Meetings To note the dates of future meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 7th of May at Sevenoaks Town Council Chamber, TN13 3QG. • TBC- at Annual Town Council Meeting held on 12th May 2025 at 7pm in The Town Council Chamber. 	-

Minutes of the meeting of the Sevenoaks Youth Council
Held on 15th January 2025

at Sevenoaks Town Council Chamber, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 3QG,

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 6.46 p.m.

Present:

Youth Council Members:

Simba Li- Chair	Apologies	Lizzie Hunt	Absent
Rosie Blackmore- Vice-Chair	Present	Cristian Hunter-Garcia	Present
Harry King- Treasurer	Present	Ishwar Sharma	Present
Bianca Agarwal	Present	Miko Keen	Absent
Aryanna Mahdavi Ardestani	Present	Riddley McDermott	Present
Catherine Barden De Leon	Apologies	Madeleine Politzer	Absent
Dexter Buhmann	Absent	Elif Sabanci	Present
Elena-Teodora Dragoi	Present	Jospeh Soanes	Absent
Ayush Gautam	Absent	Ines Wang	Present
Maya Goodrich	Apologies	Aditya Vara	Absent
Bea Hayward	Absent		

In attendance: Linda Larter, Town Clerk; Daren Mountain, Manager of House in the Basement Youth Café; Ieuan Chandler-Wilson, Youth Committee Clerk.

1. **In the Absence of the Chair, Vice Chair Rosie Blackmore Chaired the meeting.**

2. **Apologies for Absence**
Received as shown above.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Youth Council held on 13th November 2024**
RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Youth Council held on 13th November 2024.

4. **Election of a Social Media Officer**
The Youth Council held a vote to elect a Social Media, Officer. The Vice-Chair noted that the potential amount of work would be too much for one person to carry out it was decided that the position should be split to ease the workload. However, the Youth Council noted that the person who uses the account must be sixteen or over. The Youth Council noted that those under sixteen could write the posts and another person over sixteen could post them on social media. Aryanna, Ishwar and Riddley placed their names forward for the post.

RESOLVED: All three will help to create posts for the Youth Council Instagram account with Ishwar and Riddley writing the posts and Aryanna posting them on the Social Media Platform.

HitB Manager and Youth Committee Clerk will also add or tag in the YC Instagram account where appropriate.

5. **Finance Report**

RESOLVED: 1) To note that the current balance for 2024/25 was £2,165.37
2) To note that the current balance of the Youth Charity Account was £18.00.

6. **Current Matters Report**

RESOLVED: To accept and note the Current Matters Report.

7. **House in the Basement Youth Café (HiTB), Managers report:**

The Chair noted that Daren's report was incredibly positive with four young people conducting their Duke of Edinburgh. Daren reported that House in the Basement held a Christmas meal for thirty-five young people which had been catered for by Perfect Cuisine for free.

It was also noted that Daren had gone to Trinity School to talk about House in the Basement and what they offer as well as the Sevenoaks BID (Business Improvement District), it was noted that as an outcome of this talk, a young person put their name forward to join the BID steering group.

8. **Funding For a VR Headset for House in the Basement**

The Youth Council received a request from Daren Mountain to help fund the purchase of a VR Gaming headset for young people who attend House in the Basement to use.

RESOLVED: To fund the purchase of the VR Gaming Headset at £379.00 from the Youth Council Budget.

9. **Greatness Recreational Ground Survey**

The Youth Councillors heard that Sevenoaks Town Council had previously distributed a Survey regarding Greatness Recreational Ground and as an outcome of this, it had been recommended that they move the Playground from its current location near the car park to further up close to the Football Stadium. It was noted that a survey had been drawn up for Public Consultation to give feedback on the proposed relocation of the playground.

RESOLVED: The Youth Council considered the proposal to move the play area seemed to be a good solution to avoid crossing the car park from the field, however, were too old to be users of the facility.

10. **Mental Health Survey**

The Youth Council received 250 responses from their Mental Health Survey that were sent to the Secondary Schools in Sevenoaks for Students to fill in anonymously. It was noted the data in its current format is useful but if the responses were categorised it would help to see the types of trends in the data.

The Chair pulled attention to the fact that 25.10% of young people which is sixty-two of the 247 young people answered the Question: "How comfortable you are talking about your Mental Health?"

It was also noted that on question 10: “What could be done in your local community to raise awareness about Mental Health?” one of the responses mentioned Youth Clubs and Youth Events, the Youth Council noted that perhaps more publicity around House in the Basement to draw more attention to the work Daren and his team do.

RESOLVED: 1) To compile the data into a workable document that can be shared and used by Schools and other Youth Organisations. To create Social Media posts to draw attention to House in the Basement.

2) To place on the next agenda the ability to provide training for young people to support others with mental health assistance.

11. Upcoming Events

It was noted that the following events will be taking place:

- Open Mic Night Friday 31st of January 2025,
- Free Photography Session Wednesday 19th February 2025,
- Darts Tournaments at House in the Basement every last Wednesday of the month.

12. Date of Next Meetings

RESOLVED:

- Wednesday 05th March 2025 at 6 pm at House in The Basement,
- Wednesday 07th May 2025 at 6 pm at the Town Council Offices,

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

2024/25

[illegible]

2024/25

	Expenditure £	Income £
Starting Balance: 01/04/2024		£ -
Budget allocated: 0.00		£0.00
Cake Sale		£ 18.00
	£ -	£18.00
Available Funds	£ 18.00	
	£ 18.00	

Sevenoaks Town Council
Youth Council Meeting – 15th January 2025

Current Matters

NB: Updates are shown in red.

Item	Minute No	Item	Status	Latest update
	11)- 1/11/2023	Priorities	After the Workshop the Youth Councillors discussed some of the ideas that had been suggested, it was noted that Mental Health was one of the key themes. It was also suggested that more can be done for the promotion of local sports clubs and mentoring schemes.	A draft Survey and poster have been prepared.
	12)- 17/01/2024		<p>Resolved: It was noted that the Youth Council agreed that the Environment should be their main Priority.</p> <p>Resolved: It was noted that the Youth Council agreed that Mental Health and Well-being should be their Second priority with Community being their third.</p>	
	9)- 20/03/2024		<p>During the last meeting the Youth Council mentioned a Survey for young people to use for any mental health issues and to report incidents like bullying and to help sign post young people to where they can get help. It was suggested that a poster could be created for young people to have at school and the Town for them to know who to contact for help any issues be that at home or at school.</p>	
	12)- 15/05/2024		<p>RESOLVED: To receive and note that a Draft Survey had been created.</p>	
	13)- 15/05/2024		<p>RESOLVED: To receive and note a draft mental health poster had been created.</p>	
	08)- 10/07/2024		<p>RESOLVED: The mental health posters and surveys are to be sent to schools at the start of the new school year in September</p>	

Sevenoaks Town Council
Youth Council Meeting – 15th January 2025

Item	Minute No	Item	Status	Latest update
			2024 with a completion deadline of the end of September.	The deadline has been extended to Wednesday 13 th of November. Entries have now been received and placed for the Youth Council to review.
	7)- 17/01/2024 7)- 15/05/2024 7)- 10/07/2024	Youth Council Charity	<p>Resolved: The Youth Council agreed to support Friends for Families over their two-year term.</p> <p>Representatives from Friends for Families attend the Youth Council Meeting it was mentioned that the Chairty would be delighted to receive any funds that the Youth Council could raise and mentioned the charity would be happy to give the Youth Council boxes with the charity name on for events. The Youth Council discussed the different ways they could raise money either through a raffle held during school or Sevenoaks Town Council events or doing cake sales or “Bake off” challenges at House in the Basement.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To hold a fundraising cake sale in September 2. To hold a fundraising Halloween Disco and Fancy-Dress Competition in October. 	<p>Charity representative has been invited to the meeting on 15th of May 2024.</p> <p>Youth Council attend the first Sevenoaks Bike Festival, they raised £18 for their chosen charity. Halloween Disco has been cancelled.</p>
	11)- 17/01/2024 7)- 20/03/2024	Climate Change Youth Forum	<p>Resolved: To note the first meeting of the Climate Change Youth Forum will be taking place on the 28th of February 2024 at 6pm.</p> <p>Resolved: To note the next meeting of the Climate Change Youth Forum, takes place on the 17th of April at 6pm with Guest speaker Trevor Kennet, Head of Direct Services at Sevenoaks District Council on “<i>Recycling in Sevenoaks</i>”.</p>	Trevor Kennet was unable to attend due to a bereavement. He will be invited to a future meeting.

9



Sevenoaks Youth Council



MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY REPORT

Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

Introduction

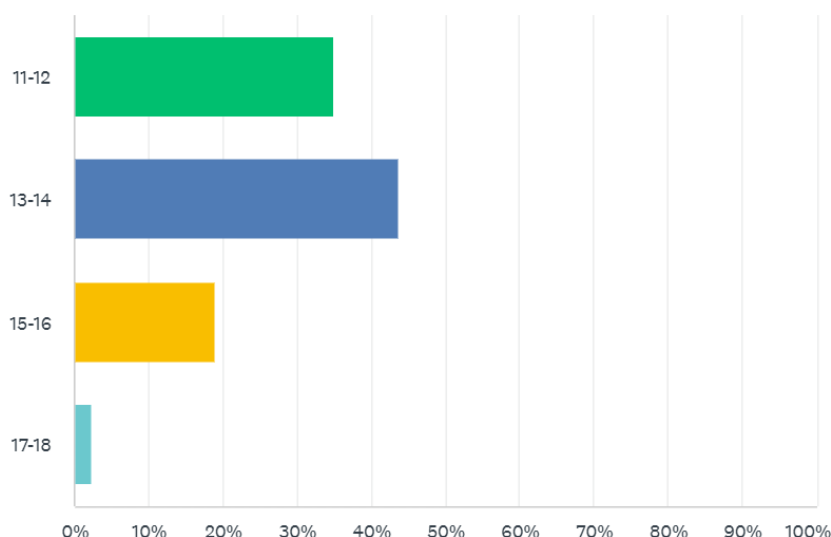
On September 9, 2024, the Sevenoaks Youth Council created and launched its Mental Health Survey targeting young people aged 11–18. This was distributed through local schools and youth organisations in the Sevenoaks town area, accompanied by posters signposting available support. The survey was designed to capture authentic, anonymous feedback about mental health from young people. It ran for two months, closing on November 13, 2024, having received 250 responses.

The largest age groups were 13–14 years (43.78%) and 11–12 years (34.94%), with smaller percentages for the older age brackets.

- **Response Count:** 250 responses (with minor variations across questions).
- **Age Distribution:**
 - 11–12 years: 34.94%
 - 13–14 years: 43.78%
 - 15–16 years: 18.88%
 - 17–18 years: 2.41%

Note: Some questions had slight variations in response numbers due to skipped items.

(Question 1) Age:



Questions 2 and 5 have been left out of this survey due to a data issue. These questions asked young people to rate their feelings on a scale from 1 to 5. However, the collected data was recorded on a scale from 1 to 100, with extreme variations. Some responses were also entered manually, making the data unreliable. As a result, these questions were not included. The questions were:

Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

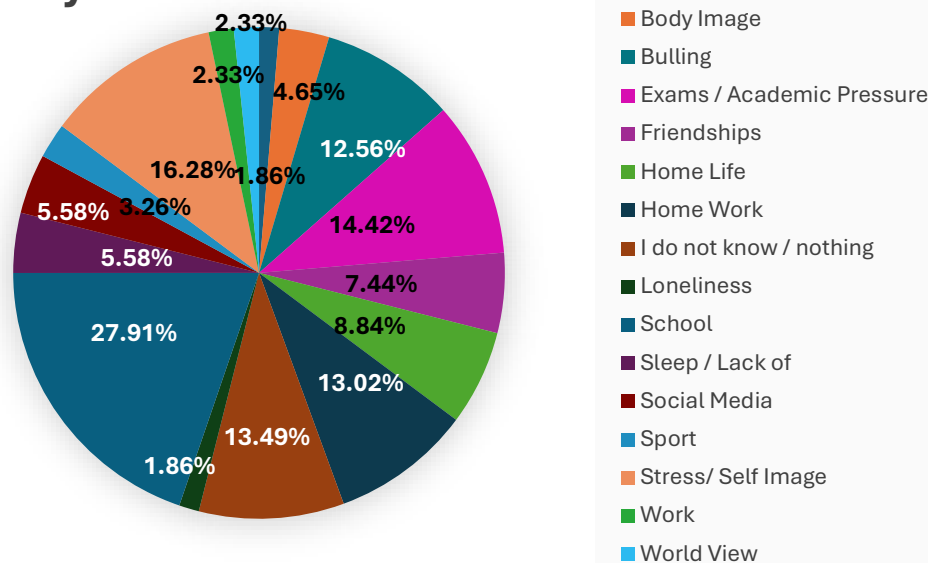
- (Question 2) On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your mental wellbeing currently? (1 being very poor and 5 being excellent)
- (Question 5) On a scale of 1 to 5 how stressed are you generally? (1 being not stressed at all and 5 being extremely stressed)

(Question 3) What are some factors that negatively impact your mental health?

A total of 215 young people responded to what they felt negatively impacted their mental health, while 35 skipped the question. Analysis of open-ended responses revealed several key themes:

- **School-Related Stress:**
27.91% (60 respondents) mentioned school as a primary stressor citing factors such as exams and overall academic workload (14.42%), and homework (13.02%).
- **Stress and Self-Image:**
16.28% (35 respondents) highlighted issues related to stress, anxiety, and self-esteem (including concerns about how others perceive them, mindset issues, and self-criticism).
- **Homework:**
13.02% (28 respondents) identified homework specifically as a source of pressure that adversely affects their well-being.
- **Uncertainty:**
13.49% (29 respondents) of responses indicated that they did not know.
- **Additional Factors:**
Other responses pointed to bullying (12.56%), Home Life (8.84%), negative experiences with social media (5.58%), lack of sleep (5.58%), and feelings of loneliness (1.86%).

What are some factors that negatively impact your mental health?

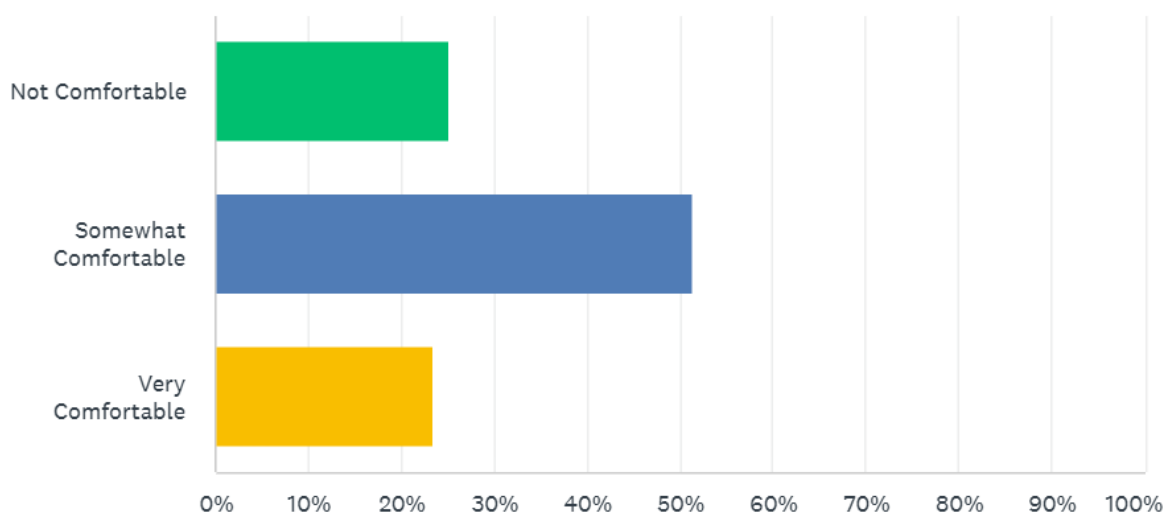


(Question 4) How comfortable are you talking about youth Mental Health?

247 respondents (with three skipping) shared how comfortable they feel talking about their mental health:

- **Very Comfortable:** 23.48% (58 respondents)
- **Somewhat Comfortable:** 51.42% (127 respondents)
- **Not Comfortable:** 25.10% (62 respondents)

While more than 70% of young people reported feeling at least somewhat comfortable discussing mental health, nearly one in four remain reluctant to do so.



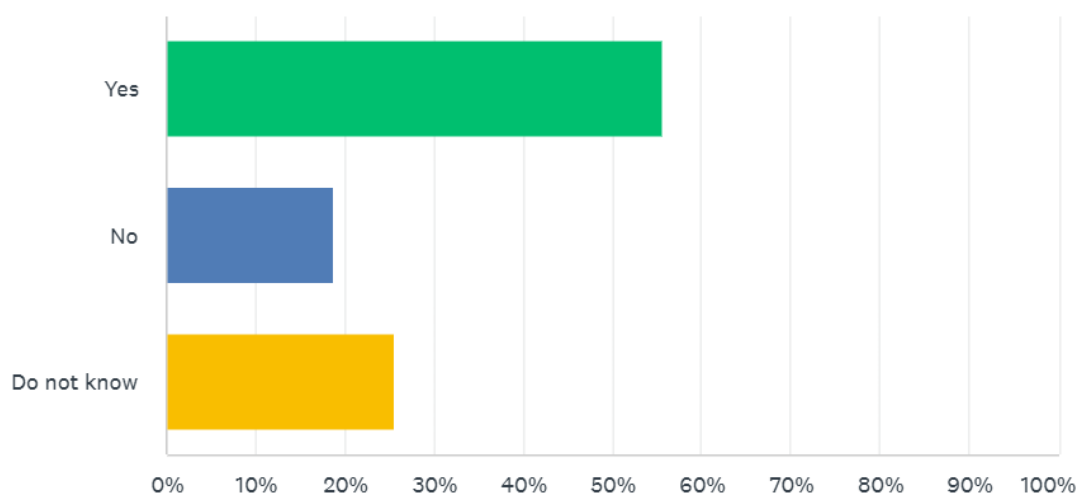
Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

(Question 6) Do you feel you have a good school-life balance?

When asked about their school-life balance (with 246 responses):

- **Yes (Good Balance):** 61.90% (143 respondents)
- **No:** 6.93% (16 respondents)
- **Do Not Know:** 27.27% (63 respondents)

Although a majority believe they maintain a healthy balance, nearly one-third of respondents are either uncertain or feel that their balance could be improved.



(Question 7) Do you practice any of the following to cope with stress/ promote well-being?

Young people were asked about the strategies they use to cope with stress and promote well-being. Of the 231 respondents who answered this question (with 19 skipping), the recorded responses were as follows:

- **Hobbies/Creative Outlets:**
143 respondents (61.90%) reported relying on creative activities to cope with stress.
- **Meditation/Mindfulness:**
16 respondents (6.93%) indicated they practice meditation or mindfulness techniques.
- **Walks in Local Parks:**

Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

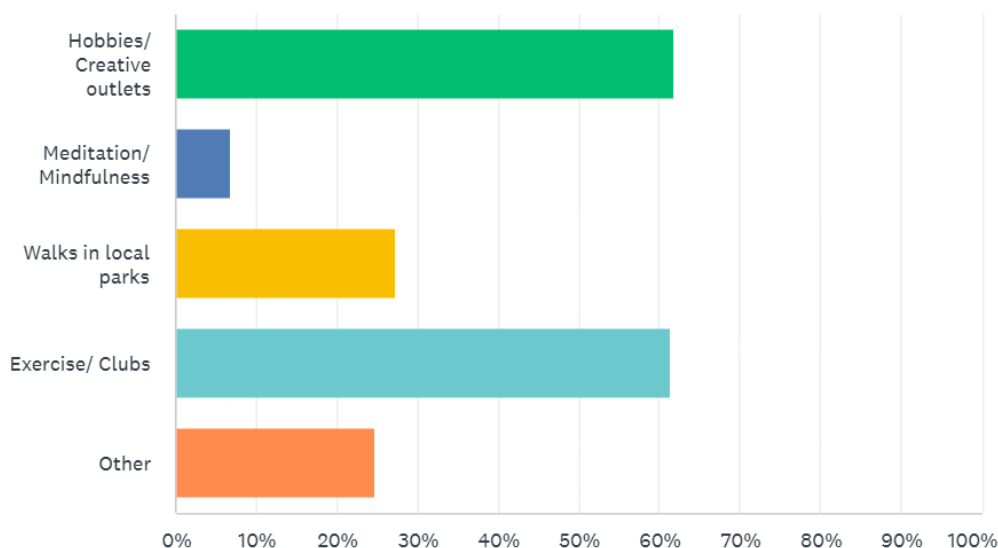
63 respondents (27.27%) selected going on walks in local parks and green spaces.

- **Exercise/Clubs:**

142 respondents (61.47%) highlighted using exercise and or clubs to help cope with stress and general well-being.

- **Other:**

It should be noted that in the survey while there is an “other” option there was no prompt for young people who selected this to fill in how they coped with stress and well-being, 57 respondents (24.68%) selected this option.



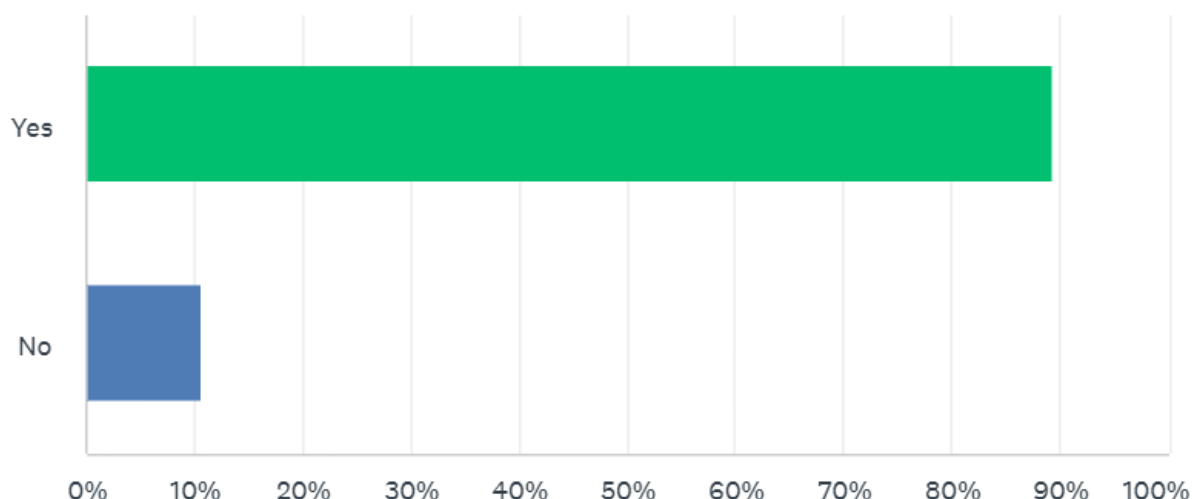
(Question 8) Do you know where to go for help?

In this question, which seeks to gauge the level of awareness of where they can go to seek help, 246 of the respondents answered (with four skipping). This question was put to the young people as a yes or no question and yielded the following results:

- **Yes:** 89.43% (220 respondents) confirmed they are aware of support services.
- **No:** 10.57% (26 respondents) indicated they do not know where to seek help.

The high level of awareness is encouraging; however, the 10.57% who are uncertain demonstrate the need for enhanced signposting and communication about available mental health resources.

Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report



(Question 9) What could your school do to support student's mental well-being?

Key Findings:

181 of the 250 respondents provided insights into how their school could better support student mental health with 69 skipping this question. The responses reveal several recurring themes:

- **Dedicated Well-Being Spaces:**

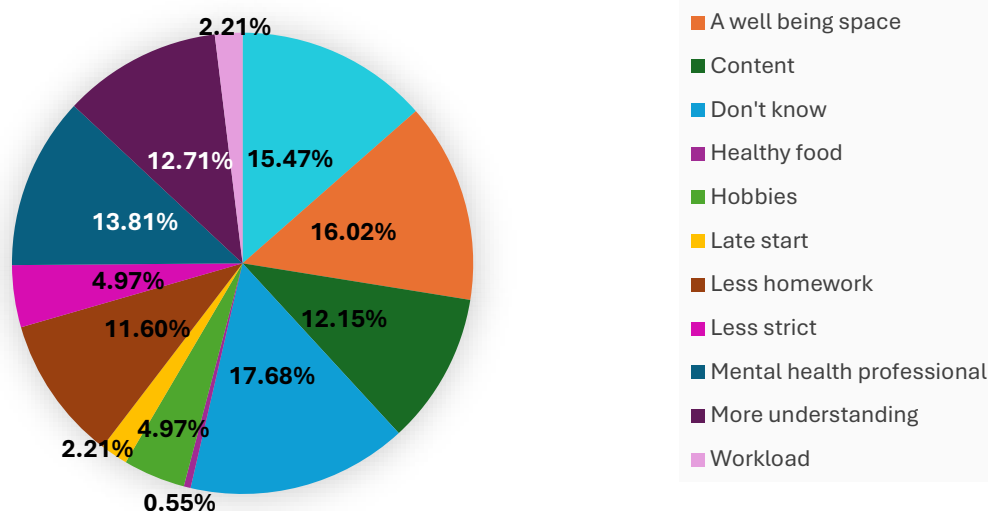
27 respondents (14.92%) proposed the establishment of designated “well-being spaces” within schools. These areas would offer students a quiet environment to relax, engage in mindfulness, or simply take a break from the daily pressures of school life.

- **Mental Health Awareness:**

13 respondents (7.18%) requested that more understanding towards mental health was needed in schools with 20 respondents (11.05%) feeling that more could be done to raise awareness in schools, this included ideas such as, one on one support. 22 of the respondents (12.15%) highlighted that more mental health support staff were needed for students to talk to. 13 respondents requested that more understanding towards mental health was needed in schools.

It is important to note that 22 of the respondents (12.15%) reported that they are content with the current level of support offered by the schools. 32 of the respondents (17.68%) answered that they did not know.

What could your school do to support student's mental well-being?



(Question 10) What could be done in your community to raise awareness about mental health?

Key Findings:

Responses to Section 10 with 166 contributions focused on what could be done in the community to enhance mental health awareness, it should be noted 84 skipped this question. The key recommendations include:

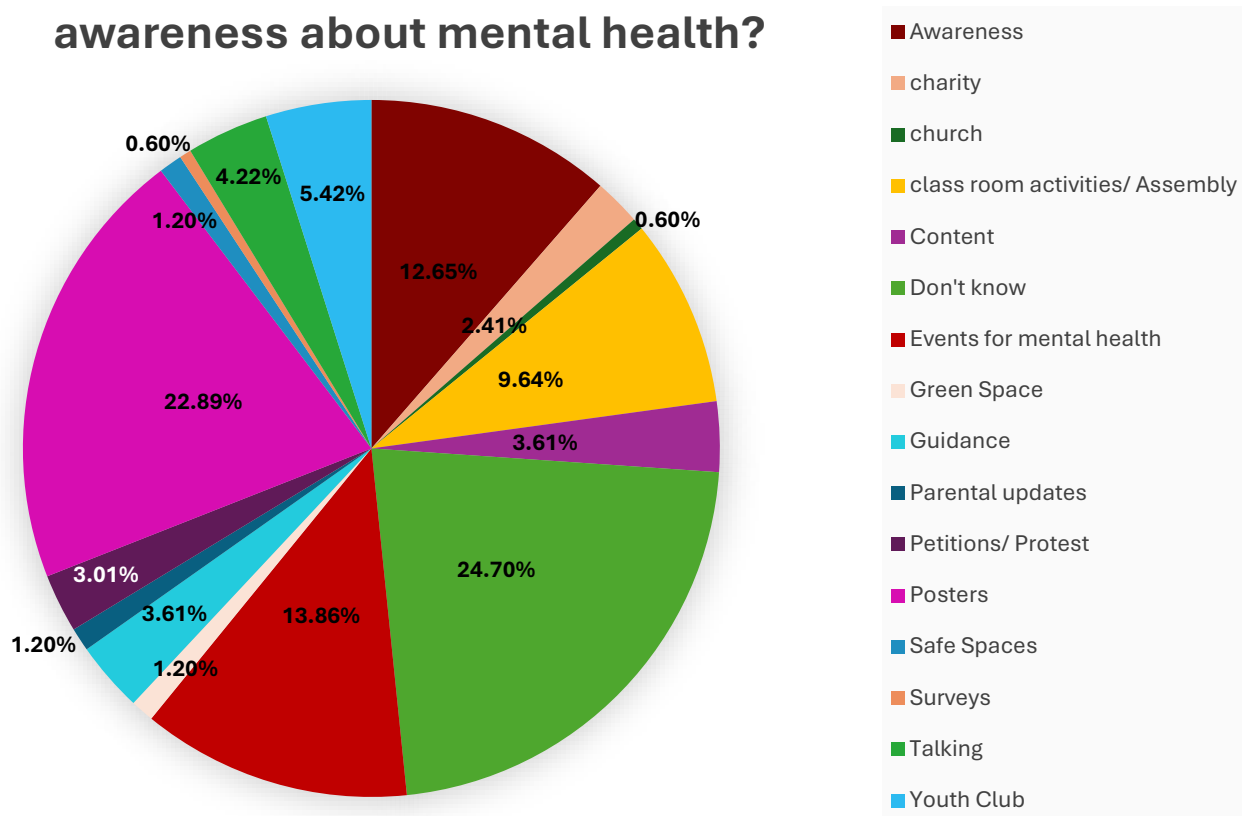
- Organised Events and Campaigns:**
 23 respondents (13.86%) advocated for community-wide events, such as mental health awareness days and public campaigns. 9 respondents (5.42%) requested more youth clubs and facilities within the town as well as more awareness of those facilities that already exist. One of the common requests under this heading was for a specific mental health awareness event.
- Visual and Educational Outreach:**
 38 young people (22.89%) suggested the use of posters, with some suggesting adverts on the Highstreet, and more free talks in schools, community centres, and other public spaces. Alongside this 5 young people (3.01%) mentioned writing petitions or protesting for more awareness of mental health.
- Enhanced Mental Health Education:**
 16 respondents (9.64%) mentioned they would like to see more regular, structured sessions such as assemblies or workshops featuring mental health professionals. 7 respondents (4.22%) highlighted that having someone they could go and talk to about how they were feeling outside of school could help.

Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

It is important to note that 6 respondents (3.61%) noted they were content with the current support but 41 (24.7%) of those who answered this question stated that they were unsure or did not know what could be done to raise awareness for mental health.

The responses indicate that young people see great value in proactive community initiatives that not only educate but also actively involve them in the dialogue around mental health.

What could be done in your community to raise awareness about mental health?



Conclusion

The survey findings reveal that academic pressures, self-image concerns, and experiences of bullying are among the primary factors negatively impacting young people's mental health.

The majority of respondents reported having a good school-life balance and they are relying on positive coping strategies that were key to good mental well-being at school, most notably through creative outlets. However, a significant proportion of respondents feel uncomfortable discussing mental health and/or remain uncertain about where to seek the help required.

The diverse suggestions provided, particularly regarding reduced academic pressure and enhanced support mechanisms display that there are several ways to change school structures to benefit student's mental health as well as a number of additional supports that could be integrated within the local community.

Sevenoaks Youth Council

Sevenoaks Town Youth Councillors are elected to represent the views, issues and opinions of young people across Sevenoaks, to make a difference and change things for the better in Sevenoaks.

Youth Council meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks in the Town Council Chamber.

Since its conception in 2009 the Youth Council has become increasingly involved in initiating and developing events for young people.

All young people are welcome to attend and join the Youth Council.

For more information about Sevenoaks Youth Council please QR code below Or check out our Instagram: @sevenoaks_youthcouncilofficial



VOLUNTEER

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**

at the Knight Frank Schools Triathlon!

Join Team Restless Volunteers and show your support for the work that we do and all the children taking part.

When? Sunday 11th May 2025

Where? Sevenoaks School

What will I be doing?

No experience is needed. Just bring bags of energy and enthusiasm. You'll support us to;

- Welcome budding young triathletes and their families at Registration.
- Help triathletes during their swim, cycle or run
- Steward triathletes along the course and brief them when they arrive
- Hand out medals and sweets to our excited finishers

SIGN UP
TO VOLUNTEER HERE

How long do I need to volunteer for?

You can either help for the full day (8am-5pm) or half a day (either AM or PM)

We'll provide you with a free t-shirt and complementary refreshments.

What next?

Sign up today and we'll let you know all the information you need.

Invite others to join you by sending this link to your friends and family!



Watch the event in action!

**Find out about The
Schools Triathlon ?**

Watch to learn more!

Who Are Restless Development?

We are a global charity who supports the collective power of young people to create a better world,



Got a questions, view our FAQs, or email us on
volunteers@restlessdevelopment.org



@schoolstriathlon