

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sevenoaks Youth Council**  
**Held on 07<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

at Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, TN133QG,

**Meeting Commenced:** 6.00 p.m.

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.00 p.m.

**Present:**

**Youth Council Members:**

Simba Li- <b>Chair</b>	Present	Lizzie Hunt	Absent
Rosie Blackmore- <b>Vice-Chair</b>	Present	Cristian Hunter-Garcia	Absent
Harry King- <b>Treasurer</b>	Present	Sharma Ishwar	Present
Bianca Agarwal	Present	Riddley McDermott	Present
Aryanna Mahdavi Ardestani	Present	Ayaan Motwani	Present
Catherine Barden De Leon	Present	John Ng	Present
Rosie Blackmore	Present	Madeleine Politzer	Absent
Dexter Buhmann	Absent	Elif Sabanci	Absent
Catherine Campbell-Pitt	Present	Drago Schwalber-Janaway	Present
Charlotte Doe	Present	Jospeh Soanes	Present
Elena-Teodora Dragoi	Apologies	James Tang	Present
Ayush Gautam	Absent	Ines Wang	Absent
Maya Goodrich	Absent	Aditya Vara	Present
Bea Hayward	Absent		

**In attendance:** Linda Larter, Town Clerk and CEO of Sevenoaks Town Council; Holly Brazier, Deputy Manager of House in the Basement Youth Café; Ieuan Chandler-Wilson, Youth Committee Clerk.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Received as shown above.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Youth Council held on 05<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

It was noted that during the last meeting, elections were held for a Social Media officer. Aryanna reported that since starting the Instagram page the youth council have posted four items, had 36 followers and was following 93 accounts. It was noted that many of these accounts were primarily businesses and organisations to help give the Youth Council a starting base.

It was suggested that to gain more followers they should post more regularly, with this in mind Aryanna asked for Youth Council members to come up with posts that they could put on the Instagram page. The Youth Council suggested:

- Putting a biography post on the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer, and other Youth Councillors at a later date.
- Posting about what was agreed at the meetings,
- Continuing to promote events for Young People at House in the Basement.
- Agreed expenditure e.g. Purchase of the VR Headset with photo.

**RESOLVED:** 1) To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Youth Council

held on 05<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

2) To generate more Instagram posts.

3) All Youth Councillors were asked to follow and share the Instagram Account.

**3. Finance Report**

The Youth Council heard from Harry King that since the last Youth Council meeting the VR Headset for House in the Basement had been ordered. It was also noted that a further £500 would be received on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

**RESOLVED:** To note that the current balance for 2024/2025 was £1,850.37

**4. Current Matters Report**

**RESOLVED:** To accept the Current Matters Report.

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

The Youth Council noted that the report from House in the Basement had not been attached to the agenda, we apologise that the information was missing from the agenda and have attached the report as an appendix to the minutes.

**6. Re-Stringing Guitars at House in the Basement**

The Youth Council heard that The Lewis Project has offered to re-string two guitars at House in the Basement and had been informed that it would cost around £80-£100.

**RESOLVED:** the Youth Council agreed to fund the re-stringing of the two guitars at £80-£100.

**7. Skate Park Event**

The Youth Council noted that over the summer holidays, Sevenoaks Town Council works with Kings Ramps to supply a Skate Park event for young people of all capabilities to enjoy. It was noted that Kings Ramps hosts the event and provides professional Skateboarders, BMX and Scooter riders who put on demonstrations throughout the day and provide sessions throughout the day for young people who want to learn new skills or simply start out in the sport.

It was noted that the event costs up to £2,000 to provide, with the sponsor's Logos for the event being placed on the promotional material such as Banners, Flyers and Posters.

The Youth Council noted that this would be a good way of promoting the Sevenoaks Youth Council, it was noted that they would also be interested in having a stand at the event and having their logo on promotional literature.

**RESOLVED:** The Youth Council agreed to provide £750 towards the event.

**8. Climate Change Youth Forum**

The Youth Council noted also that the Climate Change Youth Forum had previously been held by inviting schools during the school day to attend, while it had started well there were a number of logistical factors involved for the schools. The Youth Council suggested that the meetings could be held in tandem with the Youth Council as the Environment is one of their key priorities for their term.

It was noted that Sevenoaks Climate Action Network (SCAN) had invited the Youth Council to have a stall at their Climate Fair event that will be taking place on the Vine Gardens on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. The Youth Council came up with the following suggestions for their stall:

- Raffle,
- Bake sale,
- Leaflets and flyers made from seed paper,
- Information on where to recycle glass bottles and vapes.

The Youth Council heard that Falmouth Town Council have produced a reusable party kit that is free for the community to hire as part of their Plastic-Free Pledge. It was noted STC staff were trying to find out more information about the kits.

**RESOLVED:** 1) For the Climate Change Youth Forum to be merged with the Youth Council.  
2) For the Sevenoaks Youth Council to have a stall at the Climate Fair, STC staff to purchase seed paper for printing flyers and leaflets for the Youth Council to give out at the event.

#### **9. Mental Health Survey Report**

A summary of the report had been circulated with the agenda.

The Youth Council heard from Ridley that he had complied with the individual responses received from the Mental Health Survey in Questions 3, 9 and 10. Riddley expressed that given that the survey was done within schools, another wider-reaching survey could be done for young people who are home-schooled. The Chair thought it was best currently to concentrate on the School Survey.

Riddley noted that the most common answers that appeared when compiling the data were exams/tests and homework. The chair asked what council members thought could be done to help support those who were struggling with exams and homework. The youth council suggest the following:

- Talking to Teachers, Parents or an individual outside of the home such as a Youth Worker.
- Advertising where to get advice within schools,
- Provide links and posters to organisations like Kooth where young people can go to get help,
- Hold informal revision sessions and/or language sessions at a venue like House in the Basement.

**RESOLVED:** To include parts of Riddley's report in the Mental Health Report for schools and other Youth Organisations.

#### **10. Sevenoaks School Triathlon- Volunteer Opportunity**

The Youth Council heard that the Knight Frank Schools Triathlon had been in contact asking if any youth councillors would like to volunteer during the event on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May to greet the triathletes as they arrive, Steward triathletes along the course and hand out medals.

**RESOLVED:** For representatives of the Youth Council to attend the event via the poster previously circulated.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED:**

- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> of May at The Town Council Chamber, TN13 3QG,
- **TBC-** at Annual Council Meeting (Mayor Making) held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7 pm in The Town Council Chamber.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

Sevenoaks Town Council  
Youth Services Working Group- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025



**House in the Basement Youth Café Manager:  
January 2025 report:**

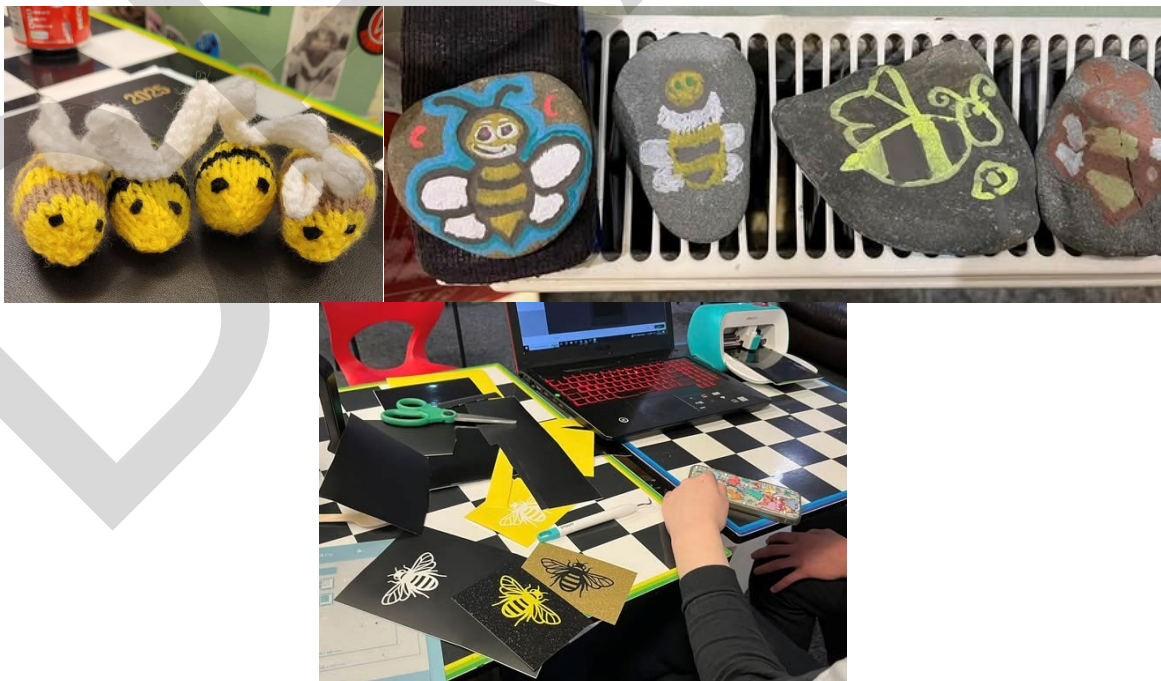
During January we saw 223 young people attend House in the Basement Youth Café, 23 of those were new to House in the Basement. We were open for 17 days throughout the month with 4 SEN sessions that saw 24 Young people attending.

We held an Open Mic Night on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January with 20 young people attending. We are holding another two Open Mic Nights on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> of March & on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> of May.

We are extremely pleased to announce that one of the Young People who have been doing Duke of Edinburgh with us has completed their bronze award.

We have begun creating a LEGO mural for House in the Basement as part of Sevenoaks Town Council's Britain in Bloom entry. To bring this design to life, we welcome any donations of spare or old LEGO flowers, should anyone wish to contribute.

We have also been extremely Busy Bees printing, painting and knitting bees for Sevenoaks in Bloom.



**Sevenoaks Town Council  
Youth Services Working Group- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**February 2025 Report:**

Over February we saw 240 young people and 36 SEN. 14 of these were new to House in the Basement, we were open on 15 occasions and 4 SEN sessions. We also carried out 3 detached sessions.

During the February Half Term, we held a few different sessions including a Photography session on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> of February and a trial gaming workshop hosted by Home and Away Gaming on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> of February. The gaming workshop was very well attended.







# Sevenoaks Youth Council



# MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY REPORT

## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

### Introduction

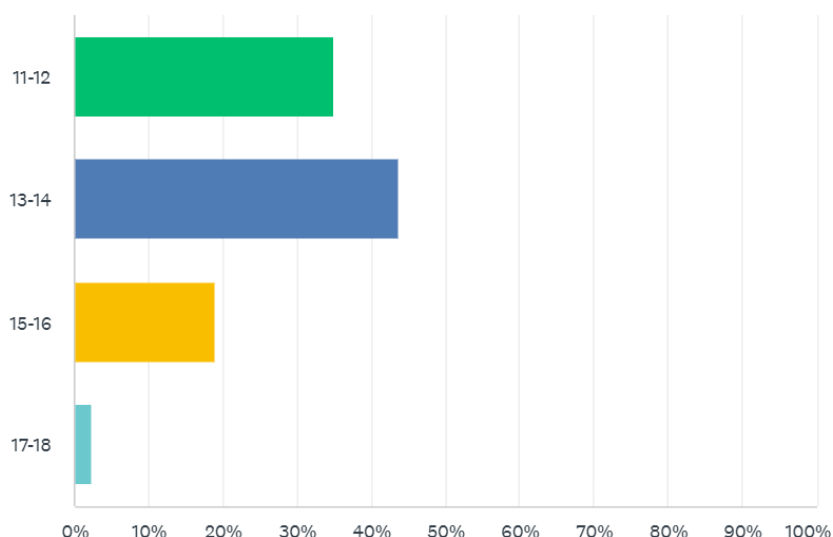
On September 9, 2024, the Sevenoaks Youth Council created and launched its Mental Health Survey targeting young people aged 11–18. This was distributed through local schools and youth organisations in the Sevenoaks town area, accompanied by posters signposting available support. The survey was designed 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:



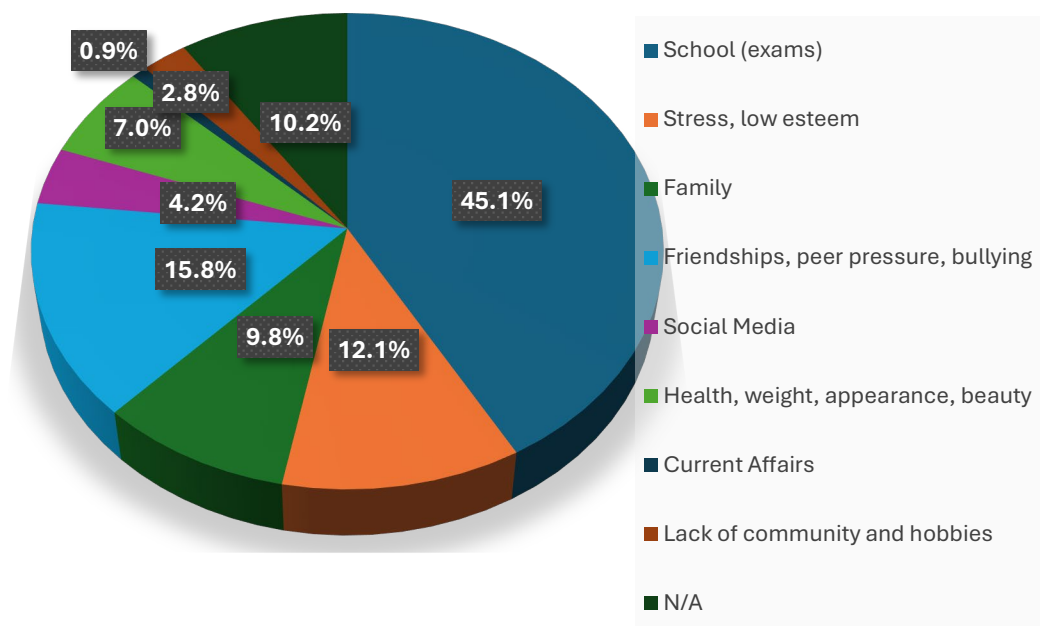
## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

- (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:**  
45.1% mentioned school as a primary stressor citing factors such as exams and overall academic workload, and homework.
- **Stress and Self-Image:**  
12.1% highlighted issues related to stress, anxiety, and self-esteem (including concerns about how others perceive them, mindset issues, and self-criticism), with 7% of respondents outlining that their health, weight, weight, appearance, and beauty as affecting their mental health.
- **Uncertainty:**  
10.2% of responses indicated that they did not know.
- **Additional Factors:**  
Other responses pointed to bullying, friendships and Peer pressure (15.8%), Family (9.8%), and negative experiences with social media (4.2%).



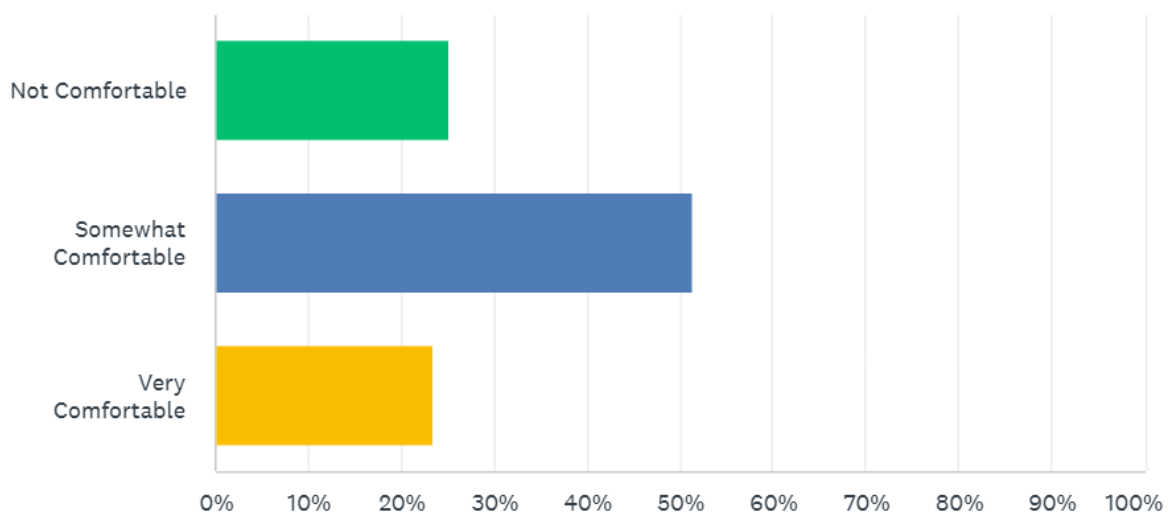
## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

### (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.

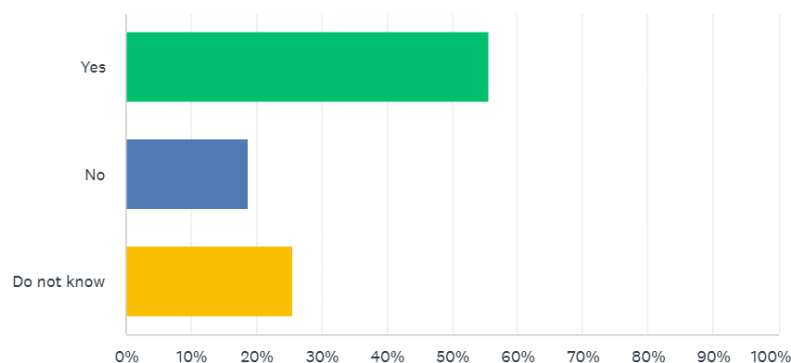


### (Question 6) Do you feel you have a good school-life balance?

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.



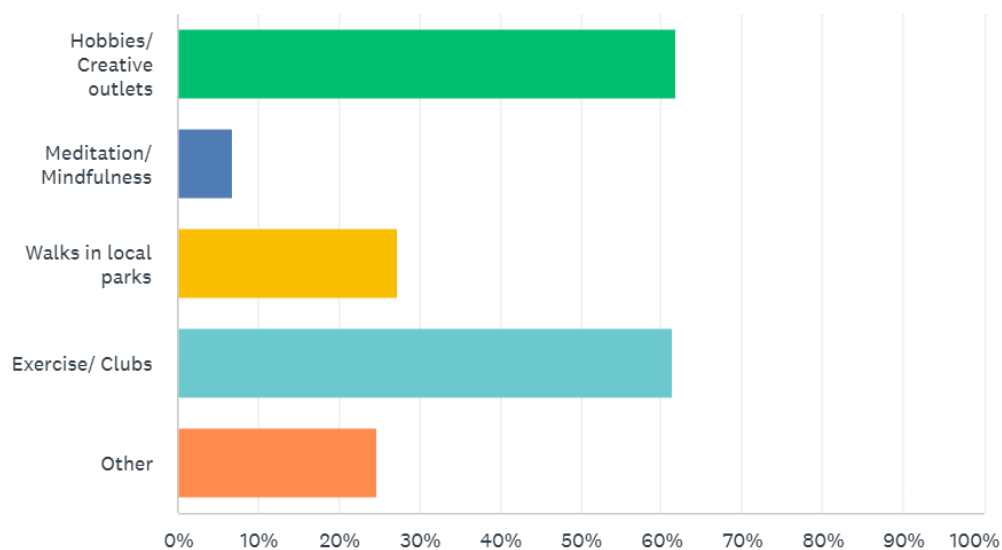
## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

### (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:**  
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.



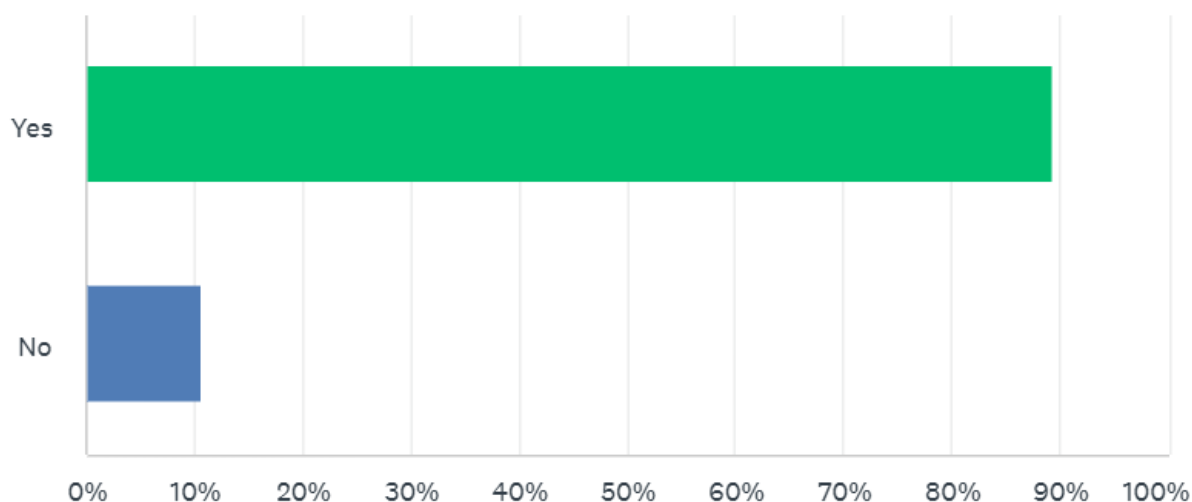
## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

### (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.



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

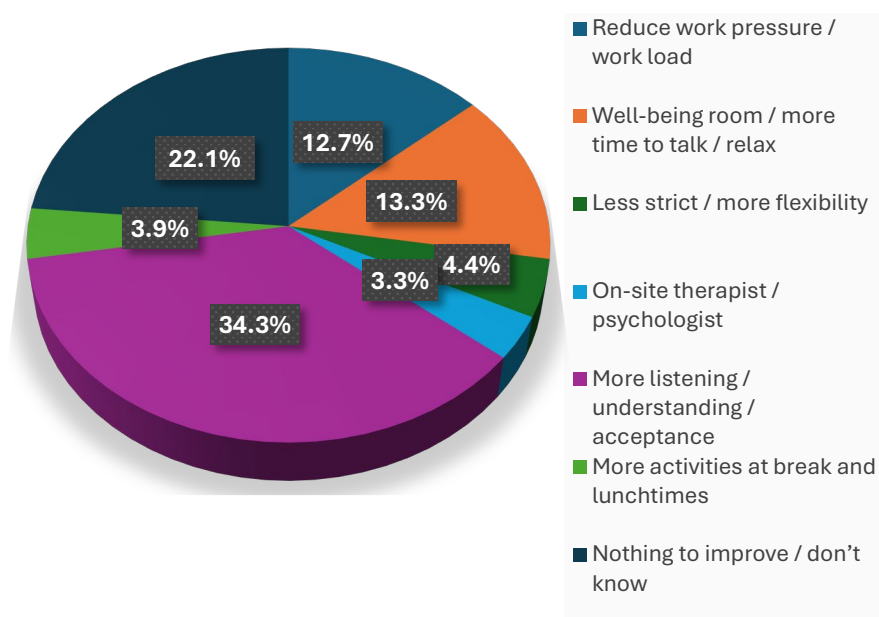
#### Key Findings:

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:**  
13.3% of respondents 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:**  
34.3% of respondents requested that more understanding towards mental health was needed in schools with more listening and acceptance was needed. 3.3% of the respondents highlighted that more mental health support staff were needed for students to talk to. 12.7% of respondents suggested that a reduction in workload and pressure could help improve their mental well-being.

## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

It is important to note that 22.1% of the respondents reported that they are content with the current level of support offered by the schools or that they did not know how the school could improve.



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

#### Key Findings:

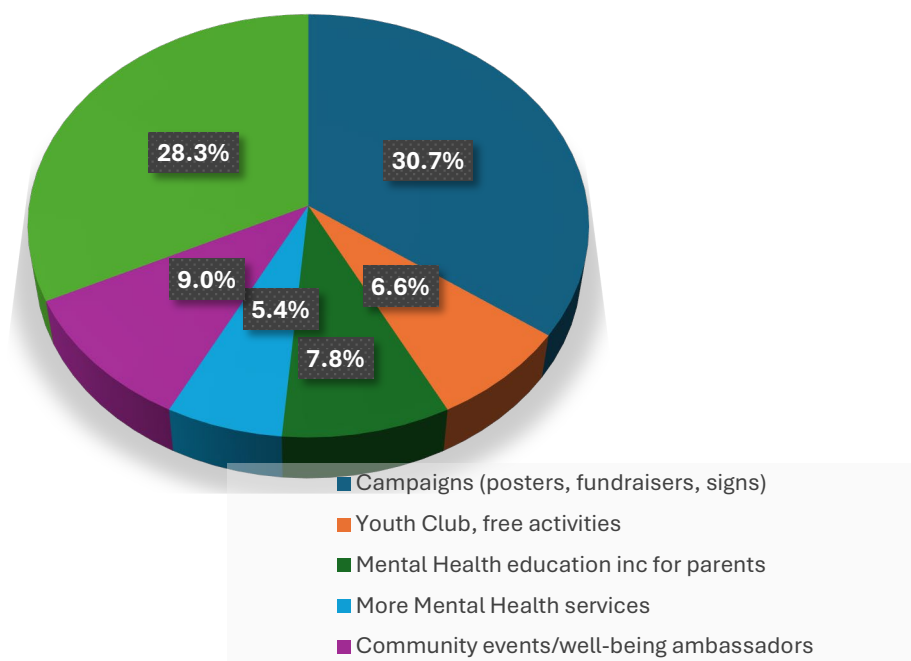
Responses to Section 10 with 166 contributions focused on what could be done in the community to enhance mental health awareness, it should be noted 84 skipped this question. The key recommendations include:

- **Organised Events and Campaigns:**  
30.7% of respondents advocated for community-wide events, such as mental health awareness days and public campaigns. 6.6% requested more youth clubs, free activities 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.
- **Enhanced Mental Health Education:**  
7.8% of respondents mentioned they would like to see more regular, structured sessions such as assemblies or workshops featuring mental health professionals. 5.4% of respondents highlighted that having someone they could go and talk to about how they were feeling outside of school could help.

28.3% 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.<sup>i</sup>

## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report



### 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.

### Recommendations from Sevenoaks Youth Council:

- Encourage schools to create an internal young people's mentorship programme
- Promote via posters and digital information for students about where to get help if concerned about exam pressure
- Also via posters and digitally provide links to independent services for helping with mental health concerns
- More information talks at schools around *It is ok not to be ok* and *where to access help*
- Consider making available space for young people to meet up and share revision notes and techniques and/ or create groups e.g. informal language meet-ups.



## Sevenoaks Youth Council Mental Health Survey Report

### Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to all Youth Council members for their contribution and help in promoting the survey within their schools. Special thanks to Youth Councillor Riddley McDermott for his efforts in correlating data for questions 3, 9, and 10.

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

---

<sup>i</sup> The data for questions 3, 9, and 10 were correlated by Youth Councillor Riddley McDermott, whose valuable contributions are gratefully acknowledged in this report.

# 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**

