

Appendix 1: Draft policy on promoting positive images of young people

Kent County Council will continue to work hard to make sure that the image of young people in Kent is positive, fair and reflective of the young residents living in the county.

This will be promoted by the Communication and Media Centre through publications, online (kent.gov.uk), social networking (Twitter), events and information issued to and discussions with the media.

Although we must accept that there will be those stories which paint a negative picture of young people in the national and local media, we must consider them in context and highlight how these stories refer to a small minority of individuals and should not be seen as an example of young people as a whole.

Through close working relationships with the media, partners, young people and colleagues, we will continue to use positive language and images which celebrate rather than criticise young people and help them to promote themselves.

A key part of promoting a positive image is to publicise those initiatives which represent the achievements of young people and how they have 'gone the extra mile' to take part in positive activities. These include:

- Try Angle Awards recognising individuals' triumphs over adversity
- Kent School Games which encourage participation and pride
- Elite young athletes
- Young Consumer of the Year competition
- Apprenticeships
- Kent Youth County Council
- Peer mentoring in schools
- Positive Activities for Young People project
- Volunteering Awards and role of young people in these
- Kent Youth County Council
- Work within schools and youth centres
- Activities with Community Wardens

The *Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011* will be used as an important part of KCC's commitment to positive images in line with the document's aim to 'improve the life chances of children, young people and their families across Kent'. We should be aware of the issues raised in the current plan and the updated version expected in April 2011.

Although Kent TV will not continue, in order to maintain the representation of young people through digital technology, a focus on young people is going to be a key part of any digital service KCC has in the future and as far as

possible will be driven by young people - covering their priorities, their issues and providing an outlet for work and content. There will also be a focus on careers guidance. Discussions are ongoing and the Kent Youth Service and CFE will be heavily involved in the next steps.

The policy is not just about being seen to be promoting positive images of young people; it is going further to celebrate the part they play in local communities, the activities they take part in and making sure their voice is heard. We are a large authority and have the opportunity to make a real difference to the perceptions of young people among other residents and the media and should use all available resources to improve and recognise those who will shape the county in the future.

Drafted by Lisa Whitbread. Approved by Jane Clarke.
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