

# SYMBOL

SEFTON YOUTH MAKING BETTER  
OPPORTUNITIES WITH LEADERS

# COST OF LIVING



Thursday 08th June 2023

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# SYMBOL

Sefton Youth Making Better Opportunities with Leaders (SYMBOL) meetings are an opportunity for young people to meet and work collaboratively with key decision makers in Sefton.

Young people are involved in the planning and delivery of SYMBOL activity and attendees vote on the topics that are important to them.

Being a part of a SYMBOL activity means a young person can play an active role in their community, with a direct line of communication with key decision makers, such as Councillors, Senior Managers from Sefton Council and representatives from Public Health, Merseyside Police and more. SYMBOL meetings are held three times a year.

SYMBOL meetings have covered topics including:

- Education
- Mental and Physical Wellbeing
- Climate Change
- Racism and Division

# THE MEETING

The meeting took place on Thursday 08th June 2023 at Bootle Town Hall.

The theme for this meeting was Cost of Living - this was decided by the young people at the last meeting.

During the meeting we discussed what young people had noticed about the cost of living crisis and what could be done locally to help young people during the cost of living crisis.

Youth groups and young people with an interest in youth voice were invited to the event.

In total there were 40 participants at the meeting, 24 of which were aged between 13-24.



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## GUEST SPEAKERS

The first guest speaker on the evening was Andrea Watts - Executive Director (People) Sefton Council.

Andrea gave a presentation about the current situation in Sefton relating to the cost of living crisis and the actions that the Council has taken.

Some key points were:

- 5206 food vouchers have been provided to families and residents who are struggling
- 620 people were given access to Winter Clothing Grants
- 663 vitamin supplements were given out to children under 19 at Family Wellbeing Centres and the May Logan Centre
- All 13 Family Wellbeing Centres are now fully kitted with period poverty boxes

# GUEST SPEAKERS

The next speaker on the evening was Debbie Shelley - South Sefton Food Bank.

Debbie talked to young people about the opportunities that South Sefton Food Bank offers to the community. The young people also actively participated by asking some questions.

Some key points raised were:

10,137 vouchers were redeemed from children from April 2022 - March 2023

This food bank also offers things other than food:

- Help with gas and electricity
- Vodafone SIM cards
- Projects such as cookery and level 1 courses

There is also a pantry accessible to the community where people can purchase 10 items for £3.50.

# WORKSHOP 1

Young people were given 5 different topics (leisure, food, transport, housing/home, other) and were asked to give examples on what they noticed in relation to the cost of living.

## FOOD

Ordering a  
takeaway is  
expensive now

The price of my  
favourite sweets  
have gone up

Weekly  
shopping has  
inflated

Essentials have  
increased in  
price but  
decreased in  
size

Food banks are being used more  
and more which means people  
are finding themselves in a food  
crisis

# TRANSPORT

More people are walking and cycling

Young people need ID for trains or you get charged an adult ticket

Insurance and price of cars has increased a lot

I have noticed taxis are dear

Petrol and diesel have increased

Bus tickets are more expensive for young people but reduced for adults

Getting to college is more

Transport strikes were due to the cost of living and low wages which caused serious problems for work and education



# HOUSING

The bidding prices of houses have increased

Electricity and gas have increased a lot

Mortgages are increasing each year or even each month which stops people buying houses or makes them have to move

Water bills

Interest rates have gone up

Household items are more

People renting are paying more

# LEISURE

Bowling is more than it used to be

Gym membership has increased

X-Box games have gone up

Going swimming is too much money - £7 for an hour

Theatre and cinema tickets are too expensive now - around £10 for a cinema ticket

Book prices have increased

Subscriptions to streaming services like Netflix have increased massively due to the success

# OTHER

Shoes/trainers  
are more  
expensive

Online education  
has increased such  
as online courses

Parking for cars

School uniforms have become  
unaffordable for some, meaning  
that kids are going to school  
without PE kits for example

Hygiene products  
are a lot more

Clothing is more  
expensive but  
bad quality

# WORKSHOP 2

The young people at the meeting were asked to create posters to find solutions to the Cost of Living Crisis locally.

Young People said:

Free school meals, uniform and supplies

More support for mental health

Free taster days for activities

More free youth clubs

Free public transport to get to school

Free therapy for children and young people

Vouchers for school supplies

All young people should be given a travel pass

Help young people to get a job

Give young people warm places to go

Vouchers for during school holidays

Reduced cost for school meals

Spaces in school where young people can go when their mental health is bad

Cheaper access to swimming pools

# RECOMMENDATIONS

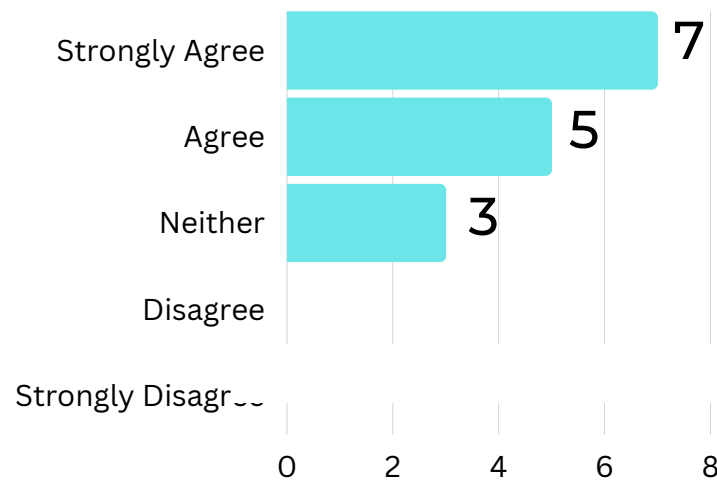
Having reviewed all of the comments from the young people and listening to the Guest Speakers, Sefton Young Advisors have pulled together the following recommendations;

1. Sefton Council should raise awareness through social media or posters etc of support available such as South Sefton Food Bank and community spaces for both warmth and leisure.
2. Sefton Council could recommend that schools adapt their uniform rules to make sure it is accessible for all children.
3. We recommend that the Council revise and decrease prices of leisure activities such as swimming, for example introducing a reduced entry fee for young people on one evening a week.
4. Public transport fees could also be revised, for example abolishing the upfront cost of the 16-17 and 18-25 discount cards. And, for transport staff to accept other forms of official ID like a Citizen Card.

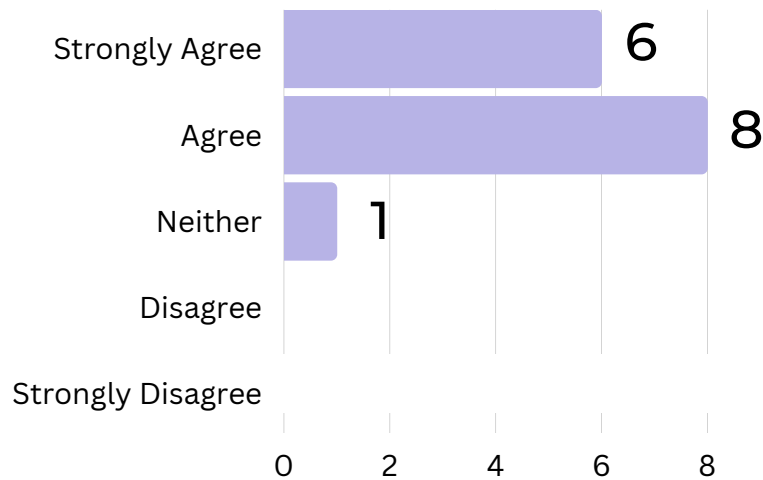
# FEEDBACK

15 responses in total were collected from the young people at the meeting, this was collected via survey monkey.

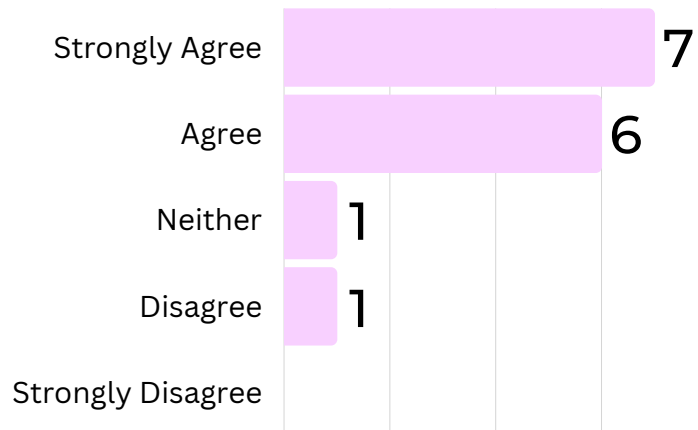
Q1 - This event has met my expectations...



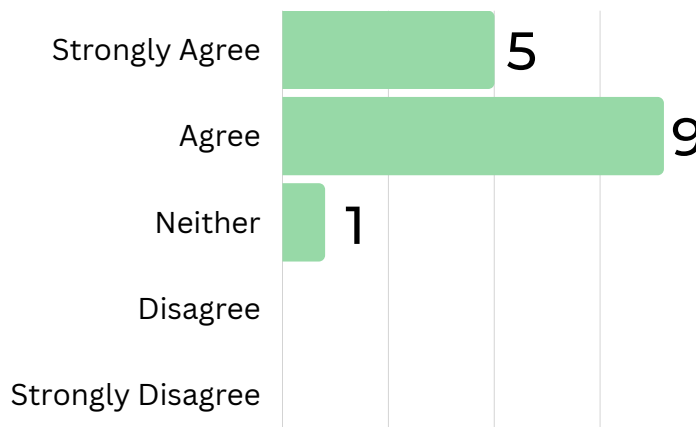
Q2 - The delivery of this event has been professional and of a high quality



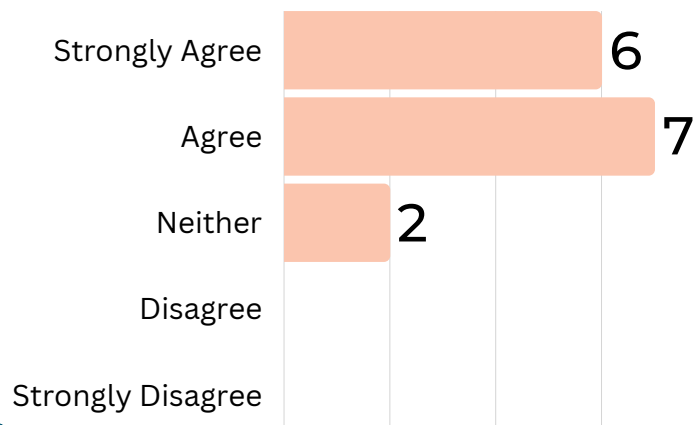
Q3 - I will go to/recommend SYMBOL in the future



Q4 - I feel that I know more about the topic now than before the event



Q5 - I feel that I was fully involved and able to participate in the event





Q6 - Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve this event for the future?

More interactive

More participation from young people

No, it was amazing

More information before the event

Bigger text - make it dyslexia friendly

More snacks

Q7 - Any other comments

I am glad this event has taken place