

## **NALC PUBLISHES CASE STUDIES ON YOUNG PEOPLE**

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Young people are the future of local communities, and supporting their development is vital to the growth of local (parish and town) councils. Local councils can help improve the lives of young people by providing access to spaces, services, and information. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) hopes to increase awareness of issues facing young people in local communities and bring positive change to their education, development, and social opportunities.

In November, NALC launched a new suite of resources on young people, including a dedicated web page and a case study publication. This publication highlights examples of best practices and demonstrates actions that local councils can take to benefit young people. Local councils have been undertaking various activities to engage young people, including providing youth groups and services, green spaces, playgrounds, skate parks, fitness and training, and youth councils.

### **Youth groups and services**

The provision of youth services is a fundamental pillar of local governance. Many of our local councils engage young people by establishing youth groups. The purpose of these groups is to provide a safe environment where young people can socialise and build interpersonal skills. Where possible, local councils have premises where young people can drop in to use recreational facilities or participate in more structured activities. These groups are essential to community efforts in curbing crime and anti-social behaviour.

Partnering with local schools has enabled local councils to assist young people in gaining education, employment, and training. Several local councils have set up educational funds to help young people study. For example, Buckland Brewer offers a £500 grant for residents age 16+ to assist with travel and educational materials. Furthermore, health and well-being have become a central tenet of youth services; several local councils have hired youth workers or allocated funding for external providers to deliver youth outreach programmes, sessions for SEND children and LGBTQ+ support groups.

### **Green spaces, playgrounds, and skate parks**

Over the past few years, many local councils have taken the opportunity to upgrade existing or install new recreational and play areas for young people.

These areas are paramount for young people's activity and socialisation. These upgrades may include refurbishing old playground equipment to developing Olympic-standard skate parks.

The substantial cost of this development means that local councils have sought different forms of finance. Several have utilised funding from principal authorities, national funds, for example, FCC Community Action Fund and private firms, for example, environmental management and housing developers. Additionally, local councils can use financial contributions under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Consulting young people is essential when installing or upgrading existing recreational areas. Examples include having children vote for their favourite playground equipment and setting up working groups of local parents. Local councils may also consider the needs of different groups, including improved accessibility of recreational areas and equipment.

### **Fitness and activity**

Keeping young people active is vital to their health and well-being. Public Health England recommends that children between 5 and 18 aim for 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily. Local councils are fundamental to engaging young people in leading active lifestyles and providing opportunities for them to get involved. Local council maintenance and upgrade of multi-use games areas (MUGAs), sports fields and ball courts allow young people to keep themselves active and socialise with their peers.

Some local councils have launched initiatives that engage young people in activities. Chippenham Town Council launched the 'Healthy Heroes' programme to educate local school children and engage them in regular physical activity. Newport Pagnell Town Council has identified local BMX riders who act as 'sports champions' to encourage their peers to get involved.

### **Youth councils**

Local youth councils are forums that allow young people to have their views represented in their local area. Over 620 youth councils are active across the UK at all local government levels. The purpose of such councils is to engage young people in the decision-making process, campaign on issues important to young people and act by liaising with relevant services.

Local councils have engaged young people who live or attend school in their local area to set up youth councils, which act as sub-committee for the local council, set their agenda, and manage their budget. They can make tangible differences in their local communities. Examples from our local councils include fundraising for local charities, production of local recycling guides and running employment support sessions.

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