

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 June 2026

Medway Youth Council Conference Report 2026

Report from: Medway Youth Council

Author: Medway Youth Council

Summary

On 10 March 2026 Medway Youth Council (MYC) delivered its annual Young Peoples Conference DigiCon: The impact of Digital Technology on young people. With an ever-digitising society, MYC sought to capture young people's experiences of living, learning, socialising and developing in the current digital landscape. The report makes key recommendations from young people about how these issues raised could be addressed.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Committee is asked to note the Medway Youth Council Annual Conference Report 2026 and the recommendations made as a result of findings from the conference.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. The terms of reference for the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Chapter 4 Part 5 paragraph 22.2(b) of the Constitution) states; "to fulfil all the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to children".

3. Background

- 3.1. Medway Youth Council is a diverse youth led organisation that looks to have the voices of young people in Medway heard. Our members come from all backgrounds and are active in the wider community. We are often involved in activities and events hosted by partners and stakeholders. We help young people to build skills needed for the future, both politically and in all aspects of life.

- 3.2. The 2026 conference was held on 10 March 2026; 17 local schools and groups were represented with 107 participants (86 students and 21 teachers). Schools and groups involved included:

Abbey Court, Bemix, Bradfield's, Chatham Grammar School, City of Rochester, Fort Pitt Grammar School, Hundred of Hoo, Holcombe Grammar School, Kings Rochester, Midkent College, Rainham Mark Grammar School, Rainham School for Girls, Sir Joseph Williamsons Maths School, St John Fisher, Robert Napier School, Thomas Aveling School and Victory Academy.

- 3.3. MYC are proud of the variety of schools and groups that attended, which has allowed us to have students and young people from various economic, academic and cultural backgrounds engage and participate at the event.

- 3.4. This year the conference was about drawing awareness to the impact digital technology may be having on young people in Medway. MYC chose this increasingly important theme to focus on, due to its remit to represent young people who live, work or learn in Medway. The continuing and ever-changing digital lives that young people and adults navigate is new and complex and the topic continually comes up in MYCs engagement and consultation with young people. We also consult with groups of young people across Medway at community events, Child Friendly Medway's City Halls, through other services, via our Youth Voice Network and our bi-monthly young persons survey the One Big Question.

- 3.5. Message from the Medway Youth Council Vice Chair, Will Kitney

"I've been on council for a few years now and in this time have worked with the Youth Council on each of their annual conferences during this time. I found that at this particular youth conference our members and those who attended all worked really hard to contribute to the ongoing conversations around digital safety and the use of technology. During the build up to this conference the Youth Council had been having continuous conversations with young people around digital resilience and the use of AI. In the past few years social media and digital safety have been a constant conversation in the background for the Youth Council, as we have heard from many young people through our engagement and consultation that this is something that greatly affects their lives.

Overall, we found that the conference was successful in hearing from young people and we were able to gather the information we were looking to find. Although Medway doesn't seem to be an outlier when compared to national statistics around this digital conversation, its young people share the same concerns about being on the digital frontier. Our members were able to integrate well with the schools and groups at the event, stimulating good responses from each table. I enjoyed the smooth work from our council members who were able to run an engaging event and appreciate the meaningful conversations that we had from the young people, teachers, partners and guests. Thank you all for your participation".

4. Headline findings

- 4.1. The findings from the Medway Youth Council (MYC) conference demonstrate that digital technology is a significant and complex part of young people's lives, bringing both opportunities and challenges. Survey results and workshop feedback indicate that while many young people feel confident using digital tools, there are clear gaps in confidence when responding to risks, particularly in seeking support from trusted adults.
- 4.2. The recommendations outlined in this report are therefore focused on strengthening local systems to support young people to be safe, informed and resilient in digital spaces. In particular, the emphasis on creating clear, youth-friendly reporting pathways, supporting managed access rather than restriction-based approaches, and improving digital literacy (including AI awareness), is aligned with the evidence gathered from young people during the conference.
- 4.3. There is also a strong rationale for shifting the local narrative from "screen time" alone to broader digital resilience and content literacy, reflecting young people's lived experience that digital engagement is often necessary for learning, communication and social connection.
- 4.4. **Sustainability:** The recommendations support long-term sustainability by promoting responsible digital behaviours and awareness of the environmental impact of digital technologies, including the increased use of AI and associated resource demand. This aligns with the need to embed digital sustainability into local strategies and behaviours.
- 4.5. **Diversity and Inclusion:** The conference engaged a diverse group of young people from across Medway, including representation from a wide range of schools and educational settings. The recommendations place emphasis on accessible and inclusive information, co-production with young people, and ensuring that both services and digital policies reflect different needs and experiences.
- 4.6. A full Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) will be required should these recommendations result in changes to policy or service delivery, to assess the impacts on groups with protected characteristics and ensure equitable access to support.
- 4.7. **Conclusion:** Overall, the recommendations are proportionate and evidence-based, reflecting direct engagement with young people. They prioritise education, prevention and co-production, supporting Medway to develop a balanced and sustainable response to the growing role of digital technology in young people's lives.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. On the lead up to and at the conference a survey was completed by 99 young people across Medway. This suggested some key information which included:

- MYC found that 57% of young people said that screens and their phones are affecting their lives both positively and negatively.
- When asked what the right age is to receive a phone, young people said between the ages of 10 – 14 years old with 41% suggesting between 12 and 13 years old.
- 52% of young people said social media had both a positive and negative affect on their lives, with 63% saying they compare their lives to others on social media at least sometimes.
- 82% of young people said they know how to report harmful content on social media. 54% said when something goes wrong online, they block, mute or report, with 18% ignoring it, 11% talking to their friends about it and 8% approaching a trusted adult.
- 48% said that 6+ hours per day was too much screen time for a young person, with 1 in 3 struggling to manage screen time on their own.
- 70% of young people said that they use some form of AI weekly, with 64% using generative AI or voices assistants.
- 80% of young people said they find AI helpful to some degree, with 63% confirming they have used AI for their homework and schoolwork.

5.2. Please note this data was collected via the DigiCon young person’s digital survey after the annual conference event.

6. Risk management

6.1.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of engagement from young people	If recommendations are implemented without ongoing co production, there is a risk that solutions do not reflect young people’s needs or are under utilised.	Continue to engage MYC and wider youth voice networks in design and delivery of actions; embed feedback mechanisms.	B III
Ineffective implementation across services	Without clear ownership and coordination, actions (e.g. reporting pathways, AI framework, digital	Establish clear governance, defined leads, and cross service coordination; align with existing	BII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	literacy initiatives) may be inconsistently applied across schools and services.	strategies (e.g. Child Friendly Medway).	
Digital inequality	There is a risk that some young people (e.g. those with SEND or limited access to devices/support) may not benefit equally from proposed changes.	Ensure inclusive design, accessible materials, and targeted support for under-represented and vulnerable groups.	C II
Over-reliance on restrictive approaches	If policy responses focus on bans rather than education, this could reduce opportunities for positive digital use and engagement.	Maintain focus on balanced, evidence-based approaches (managed access, education, resilience) informed by youth feedback.	C III
Rapid pace of technological change	Digital platforms and AI technologies evolve quickly, which may make policies or interventions outdated.	Develop flexible frameworks, review regularly, and involve young people and partners in continuous updates.	B III

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

7. MYC Annual Conference Recommendations

7.1. As a result of the Conference findings, MYC made the following recommendations:

7.2. MYC recommends that although young people have the tools to report online issues, that they may not have the confidence or support of adults to do this.

Creating a clear youth friendly local reporting support pathway may help focus the conversation and give clearer guidance to young people.

- 7.3. MYC recommends that to tackle the impact that social media is having on young people, that managed access policies are the focus over bans, with young people involved in shaping school and council digital policies. That training be created and delivered to the appropriate adults supporting young people to have a supported digital response.
- 7.4. MYC recommends that in response to the increasing use of AI, that Medway creates a responsible AI use framework for schools and services. Embedding AI ethics, careers and environmental impact into youth led AI literacy workshops for students and teachers.
- 7.5. MYC recommends that to tackle the concerns around the use of screens that we shift the local digital wellbeing focus away from screen time messaging towards content literacy, helping young people understand how to be digitally resilient.
- 7.6. MYC recommends that in order to address the negativity surrounding or caused by digital technology, that positive youth created digital spaces are promoted to increase confident participation over passive consumption.
- 7.7. MYC recommends that the local council treats AI and digital use as an environmental issue by embedding digital sustainability into its strategy, setting green standards for digital procurement, and working with young people on responsible, lower impact digital use rather than bans.

8. Climate change implications

- 8.1. Rising digital demand increases a council's hidden carbon footprint. Medway young people and their teachers are high-frequency users, leading to increasing need for AI services, adding to emissions.
- 8.2. Digital growth affects local water resilience, even when infrastructure is regional. Planning decisions involving data centres must align with local plan water-stress policies.
- 8.3. Climate action plans need to include behavioural digital demand, not only transport or housing.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 9.2. The conferences core budget was majority funded by the Medway Youth Council itself, with generous support from Young Medway, Councillor Adam Price and Councillor George Perfect. The MYC extended their gratitude for this.

10. Legal implications

10.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

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Appendices

1. Outcomes of Artificial Intelligence (AI) workshop
2. Outcomes of Social Media workshop
3. Outcomes of Digital Resilience workshop
4. Teachers survey
5. Market Place and Q&A Panel
6. Feedback

Background papers

None.

Appendix 1 Outcomes of the Artificial Intelligence Workshop

In this workshop, students and young people were initially asked to observe various images displayed to them and to use voting paddles (marked yes and no) to state whether they determined the image to be real (a photograph taken by a person), or fake (an AI generated image). MYC members leading the workshop took an account of how many young people in the room were able to recognise the AI generated ones. Although not unanimous, the majority of the young people taking part were able to easily recognise the AI generated ones, leading to various table discussions on the progress of AI as well as its benefits and drawbacks. Young people were also encouraged to list the AI they are aware of or are currently using. This helped form their idea of what AI is potential could be and how it could benefit their lives if they were able to design it.

1) What do you know about AI?

Although young people were able to recognise many of the AI generated images, there were some young people that were unsure. The conversation in the room then became about the different forms of AI, with young people noting that it isn't always easy to recognise that what they are using is AI. One young person said, "AI is used for things it shouldn't be used for". Many young people didn't realise that voice assistants like Siri or Alexa are forms of AI, leading to discussions around how AI has automatically been adopted by society, but with little awareness and education around its use. One young person said, "I cannot go one day without seeing something AI generated".

2) What do you use AI for?

MYC asked young people in the room and later the teachers who attended the event, what AI do you use and what do you use it for? The responses from the young people centred around using generative AI to create images, videos and content but also to seek information and ask questions. The response from teachers was very similar but with more of a focus around chat bots and voice assistants. Both said that they use some form of AI at least once a week and use it to assist them when it comes to schoolwork and homework preparation and completion, "I use AI to help me with homework, to come up with ideas". Some young people mentioned that AI is a double edged sword, that it could be one of the greatest tools that supports us "creates opportunities for education and to find answers", but could also deprive us of those opportunities and "damage the environment where polar bears live, by using gallons of water".

3) How should AI be used?

We asked the young people to design their own AI that would be both beneficial to them and others. From this we received a multitude of responses ranging from space exploration and creating holograms to diagnosing medical conditions and providing care and support. At the top of the list young people clearly highlighted that they would like AI mostly to be able to make their lives easier and be able to complete basic jobs around the house including cooking, cleaning, shopping and finances.

How should AI be used?	No. Y/p mentioning	% answering
Basic Jobs around the house (Cooking & Cleaning)	37	32%
Online Shopping	16	14%
Stress Relief	12	10%
Homework	9	8%
Architecture	7	6%
Outfit ideas	7	6%
Advice	7	6%
Medical Diagnosing	6	5%
Control other electronics	4	3%
Transport	4	3%
Technology (Coding, Holograms)	4	3%
Homework	3	3%
Friendships	3	3%
Babysitting	2	2%
Space Exploration	2	2%

The general conversation in the room when we held this part of the activity was that although it was preferable for AI to complete mundane jobs for people, doing the hard work that no one wants to do. What young people meant by this is that they wanted to design something that made life easier and less stressful at home and in school. One young person said that “AI is used with pretty much everything nowadays” with another saying, “We should look at how to teach young people how to use AI, because they’ll need it”.

Appendix 2 - Outcomes of the Social Media workshop

Within this workshop young people engaged in a room voting system where they were asked questions, invited to discuss them around their tables and then hold a room vote to gather their responses. MYC understand that the digital landscape is ever changing and wanted to gather young people's views as a temperature check to understand how young people are engaging with social media and its various platforms.

1). Is Tiktok the most popular app for young people?

When asked, the young people in the room agreed that Tiktok is currently the most popular social media app for young people. Although this wasn't unanimous in the room vote, most agreed that Tiktok was the current favourite with many using it for entertainment purposes and also to keep in contact with their friends.

2). How does social media mostly make you feel (good/bad)?

43% said that social media made them feel good, 8% said that it made them feel bad and 49% said that they were unsure. Table discussions highlighted that many young people said using social media was beneficial but had its drawbacks, with one young person saying "it can make you feel a mix of things depending on what you are searching up" and another saying "it helps you connect with people and give you ideas, but it can be used for online bullying too".

3). Do you act differently online?

When this question was asked in the room MYC noted that many either were unsure or did not want to answer the question. 22% in the room answered that they do not act differently online with one young person saying, "I have never acted differently, as I am who I am". 13% said that they have in some way acted differently online with one young person saying, "there's only so much of your personality you can show online" and others suggesting that "everyone acts differently to everyone". The remaining 65% had some great discussions about what it means to act differently in any space and with different people, that being online is not different to being IRL (in real life).

4). Have you ever lied online?

Following the previous question about acting differently online, MYC found that 30% of the young people agreed that they had lied at least once online. Many of the table discussions were similar to the previous question with many young people saying that by being online you are not completely yourself and by default lie in some way. The conversations focused on the nature of your digital self and various profiles online with one young person saying, "I have lied about my age before to use age restricted apps" and another saying, "I am more truthful online than I am in real life".

5). Does social media make you more connected with each other?

The majority of young people in the room agreed that social media helps them to feel more connected with each other, especially with their peers. Conversations at the tables mentioned that adults mostly use social media to browse where young people use social media to communicate, that there are also cultural differences involved when used especially between text and in person. One young person highlighted that “Sometimes it’s necessary or compulsory to be online” with another saying, “without it I wouldn’t be able to talk and share stuff with my friends”.

6). The UK government is currently looking to ban children under 16 from social media. Would you support this?

MYC invited young people to discuss this on their tables with 40% disagreeing with a social media ban and 27% saying they would support some level of a ban. Throughout the room the general response to this question was that young people did not want a blanket ban saying, “Why would we ban people under 16 from social media when it’s such a big part of society”. Although some young people spoke about the issues surrounding social media “a lot of bad people use social media to target teens”, others said that “I think it shouldn’t be taken away as people make friends online and they will struggle to make friends without it”. Other conversations included comments on how schools have already initiated bans on phones in schools with some students saying, “schools agreed to ban social media without discussion, straight away”.

Appendix 3 Outcomes of the Digital Resilience workshop

This workshop focused on young people's ability to be digital resilient and respond to digital issues rather than react to them. MYC asked young people to take part in a simulated activity where they followed a fictional young person named 'Alex' through their day making choices around their use of technology available to them. The task was to be safe in a digital place and for each young person to vote on what they think this fictional young person would choose when presented with digital options.

1). Alex goes to school in Medway, how much time does she spend on screens in school per day?

Young people highlighted that often when they are asked how many hours a day, they spend on screens, that it is often not taken into consideration how many hours they are on screens in school. The majority of young people answered that they are on screens between 1 – 4 hours a day whilst in school, with those in SEN schools requiring more screen time due to their needs.

2). Alex is playing Fortnite and receives a friend request and invite to play with a random player. Do they accept it?

When asked this question, discussions around the tables centred on the difference between what it means to be a friend IRL (in real life) and on a game or in a digital space. Most of the young people voted not to accept the friend request but to accept the invite to play in a game together. The reasoning behind this was that if someone is a friend online, they have a greater degree of access to you, but if you play a game with them there is less pressure to be their friend. The young people said that "It's O.K. to play with others online, but don't accept their requests" and "if someone is completely random you shouldn't accept their request".

3). Alex downloads a free app on their phone, but it then asks her to pay for upgrades and extras, what should they do?

When presented with this situation, many of the young people said that they would always seek out the free and limited versions of a game or app. That if they were prompted to pay for extras or a premium version that they would usually delete the app and find a cheaper, free or better one. Only a few young people mentioned about sharing or using another person's personal account to access a premium account, saying that this happens most of the time with Spotify or Netflix. More than half of the young people mentioned being scammed by an app or free trial and signing up and having to pay for a subscription.

4) Alex is messaged by someone they don't know on Roblox who is offering free Robux (In-game currency) for a trade, should Alex accept the offer?

Of all of the questions during this activity, this one drew the largest response and liveliest discussions around the tables. Most of the young people mentioned that they had at one time played Roblox and had been scammed by other players offering trades and in-game currency as a reward or incentive. One young person said, "Never take something from strangers, always a scam" with another saying, "If you're being offered Robux online it's a scam". This was something that seemed to

resonate with most of the young people, who either had first-hand experience with this or who were aware of it. Young people said that they were aware of this level of scamming but that had found out by experiencing it several times before realising that it was a scam.

5). Alex sees some content online that makes them feel uncomfortable, what should they do?

When presented with digital content that was either inappropriate or made the young people feel uncomfortable, they had a mixed response, with most saying that they would mute, block and report the content, but when questioned further said they would more than likely ignore it and swipe/click it away. Some young people said, “always screen shot, block, swipe and then report” with others agreeing “I’d always screenshot what I saw and send to my friends and then probably block and report”. Some young people said that they had very little confidence in their reporting leading to the outcome they wanted saying “I can’t be bothered to report stuff online, what actually happens anyway” and “Ignoring harmful content is the easiest way to deal with it, especially if the content is only personally offensive”.

6). What do you do when you’re online and something goes wrong?

When asked this question the young people had a mixed response similarly to the previous question of seeing inappropriate content online. Many said they would turn to their peers rather than seek out a trusted adult, or not say anything at all, depending on the content. When the conversation opened up to include any negative interaction or instance in a digital place the responses included a level of confidence to know how to report content or people, however in reality many said that they often don’t use the report functions on games and platforms, as they don’t think it achieves their desired outcome. One young person said “I would take a break and ignore harmful content, but it’s everywhere, I’m not reporting everything I see, it’s easier to swipe it away”, which was reflected across the other tables in the room with others saying “If ever found something bad or tough online I’d just log off”.

In summary, young people highlighted that they have to be digitally resilient because it is the way the world is. Society adopts technology at a rapid pace, often quicker than young people are able to know how to navigate it. Young people are frequently at the forefront of technological advancement, making and breaking it before we are aware of it. Many of the young people we spoke to at the event already had several negative digital experiences, whether on social media, using digital tools like AI or just navigating their increasing digital lives.

Appendix 4 Teachers Survey

Many of the young people we were consulting with as part of the conference came from local schools and colleges, which gave us an opportunity to engage with their support workers attending on the day. These teachers kindly agreed to take part in the same survey we asked young people to complete; here is the data we collected from 19 staff members:

Questions on AI

1. 79% said that they use AI tools a few times a week with many saying daily. 47% said they mainly use voice assistants like Siri and Alexa with a further 35% using chatbots.
2. 95% of the teachers said that they find AI helpful in their daily lives, with many of the teachers expressing that their use of AI was centred around efficiency, using it for creativity and structure around lesson plans. They also used it to support the marking process of students work to quicken the process.
3. The teachers had concerns around how unregulated AI is, highlighting issues around its reliability, accuracy and how young people may be using it. There was also some concern around job availability and security.
4. 74% said they had used AI for schoolwork/homework, noting that it has supported them in their job role to deliver lessons and evaluate/mark students work. 53% said that they didn't know if the use of AI was affecting their learning with 27% saying it affecting them negatively and 20% saying its positively affecting them.
5. 63% said that they were confident knowing what was true or false when given information by AI with 27% not being confident. 53% said that they thought AI would create both opportunities and problems for people with 47% saying they believed it would cause more problems.

Questions on Social Media

1. Teachers said they use Facebook and TikTok the most, with Facebook being used to connect with others and TikTok for entertainment. 58% of the teachers said that they use social media to keep in touch, with 32% using it for entertainment. 68% said they mainly use social media to watch/consume content.
2. 74% said that social media gave them mixed (positive and negative) feelings, with 47% saying that they sometimes compare themselves to others online, 16% saying they often do this and 27% saying they never do this.

3. 89% said they knew how to report harmful content with 11% highlighting that they were not sure. 84% said they were confident setting up their own privacy settings.
4. 68% said that it has both a positive and negative impact on young people, with 42% saying they would support an under 16 ban on social media. 42% said they support it with limits and considerations and 16% said they don't support it.

Questions on Digital Resilience

1. 47% said that their phone was affecting their life in both a good and a bad way, with 11% not being sure how it is affecting them.
2. 63% said they were confident in knowing what information online can be trusted, with 84% saying they were also confident in managing their own screen time.
3. 58% said they block, mute or report when something goes wrong and 79% feel supported by others when dealing with issues online. 95% felt that they understand the risks of sharing personal information online.
4. When asked what young people most need to feel safer and more confident online, the teachers said that they need clearer and reliable information as well as moderation in digital spaces. They said they have concerns with how digital technology is distracting young people and that they are struggling to manage their screen time to the point of addiction.

Appendix 5 Market Place and Q&A Panel

Marketplace

Alongside the 3 workshops, MYC held a marketplace of organisations and local services that allowed students to interact with. We found that we were able to give the organisations involved a way to engage and talk directly to the students and schools about the local offer, helping them make connections and increase interest. Organisations involved were:

- Bfb Labs
- Chatham Town Forum
- Child Friendly Medway
- Electric Medway
- Healthwatch
- Medway Council – Waste Disposal Services (Recycling)
- Medway Parents and Carers Forum
- Medway Youth Service
- MUNA (United Nations)
- Police
- Public Health

Feedback from partners involved in the Marketplace exclaimed that “this was the perfect way to meet with young people and hear from them” as well as “it’s been great to meet so many young people passionate about their community”. Overall, those involved in delivered as well as attending the marketplace found it beneficial in sharing information and raising awareness of support for young people. Some of the young people expressed “I had a long chat with some of the people at the marketplace, I’d never met them before” and “having a chat with the police gave me chance to ask some questions I’d always wanted to ask”.

MYC would again like to thank all our partners and guests who came together to support and hear from young people in Medway.

Q and A Panel

The event also offered a Q&A panel, allowing young people the chance to ask our selected panel of local decision makers and service providers about anything they believed was important. We believe this was essential because it reinforced our ethos of giving young people a voice and a chance to ask decision makers questions. Members included representatives from the Police, Bfb Labs, the Medway

Youth Service and Councillor Adam Price. Below are the questions asked by young people and the responses given:

Q – “Could we possibly fix some potholes at some point?”

“We have been putting new roads down Chatham hill. We don’t have enough funding from the council to fix every pothole, but we do monitor the potholes, when they are dangerous most of the time they are reported and fixed. When reported they put white chalk on the outside, so the community knows they are being monitored and are going to be fixed

– Councillor Adam Price

Q – “Most children must spend lots of money to get to school, how come trains and buses to school aren’t free?”

“It is a personal ambition of mine to have free transport for schools. Not only does it help you get to school but it’s your social life. Even if it can’t be done for everyone, those in care should be prioritised to get free transport. This has been brought up at meetings.”

- Councillor Adam Price

Q – “Could there be more sports clubs in Medway specifically in Rochester?”

“This is important and a priority for us. There are regular running events and the Medway mile which are free events.”

- Councillor Adam Price

Q – “What qualifications do you need to be a policeman?”

“You need a 4 in maths and English and three other subjects, there are three routes, there are direct detective routes where you can do an apprenticeship where you train while learning, and work in the field actively as you qualify. You can do a degree alongside, and it will be paid for by Kent Police. The Kent Police website outlines everything and is easy to use.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q – “How can we prevent the red vs blue fights in Medway?”

“Police have made arrests of people who tried to start the event. A lot of people have done it to get the community revved up about something. I have been to different youth clubs to educate those on why it’s important to not participate in any violence or part of this. There have not been any fights on this topic, and we put all our energy to make sure nothing happens.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q – “How can I be kept safe on social media?”

“We have got a fantastic team online that monitors activity online with young people, we work closely with companies like Snapchat to make sure people are using the platform correctly. We are constantly in and out of schools educating young people on the dangers of social media. We are always visiting the safeguarding teams at schools to talk about this.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q – “Is it the Police’s responsibility to keep us safe online, if it’s not who is it?”

“The police are involved in any criminal activity online. What we do first is educate people and we try to stay on the trends to see what we can do to prevent any dangerous activity online. It is everyone’s responsibility to work together. There are steps to take to keep yourself safe.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q - Is social media a good or bad thing?

“It depends how you use it; you can use it as a tool and to talk to people, it’s important to teach people the best way to use social media then it’s beneficial for society”.

- Darryl Lacey (Youth Worker)

Q – “How will the social media ban for under 16 come into action?”

“It will go down to social media companies rather than police. We don’t have much insight on what’s happening around this. By having a ban, the phone companies will have the bigger role in reinforcing this, they will have to verify their age before using social media apps. It is also down to schools to implement phone bans in school.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q – “What’s it like being in the youth service and how did you get in?”

“For me working in the youth service is lovely, I get to meet people and listen to loads of people’s passions. I started volunteering in youth clubs and have worked my way up.”

- Darryl Lacey (Youth Worker)

Q – “What can be done to educate our parents on social media issues?”

“It’s about learning together and adults looking through things from a young person’s perspective.”

- Lauren Munro (Bfb Labs)

Q – “If there was an under 16 bans on social media, what do you think will happen to the crime rate?”

“A lot of my time is dealt on online bullying and problems, I think there will be a massive decrease. However, if one type of crime decreases another crime can increase in response to it. We will just have to see how it plays out”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q – “In order to work with young people do you need to have a background talking with young people?”

“Each worker has their own experience, you can come from any background, it’s about skills like talking but you can develop these all the time.”

- Darryl Lacey (Youth Worker)

Q – “What do youth services offer?”

“We offer loads of things for 8-18 like youth clubs. We offer outdoor sessions like sports dance etc. we do a lot of takeovers, so free events for young people at places where you normally pay. We also do shutdown which is our under 18 club nights.”

- Darryl Lacey (Youth Worker)

Q – “If you could change one thing about Medway, what would it be and why?”

“The one thing I would like to change would be having free public transport for young people as I think it would benefit young people greatly. By being able to provide this it would help with education and employment. Anything that gives more independence for young people. We also want everyone with a mental health concern to be able to contact someone straight away with no queues. We want young people to be genuinely listened to. Get yourself involved in organisations that make change like the youth council and youth parliament.”

- Darryl Lacey (Youth Worker)

Q – “Do you have apprenticeships in the police force?”

“We have apprenticeships and a work experience week in July where you can learn about the law and how to deal with crime in the area.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Q – “What support is online for young people?”

“Lots really, it’s one of the first places to look if you have access to the internet or a phone. Kooth is out there, but there are also support groups and ways to connect with each other and connect with services, to get what you need and in the way you want it”.

- Lauren Munro (Bfb Labs)

Q – “What would we do about making free transport a reality?”

“We just hold a meeting about ambitions; it has gone down on a sheet over priorities. From the 1st of April an action plan is being made, and we will keep in contact with youth councils to inform young people on what is happening. However, it is looking for funding and support on this.”

- Councillor Adam Price

Q – “How are the police dealing with crime rates?”

“Each year there are new challenges, there are now specific officers in each area in Medway to try and lower crime rates. We put more funding into having police officers in Chatham Highstreet to get crime down there where it did work. We can’t predict what people are going to do but we are looking at statistics to try and be ready to deal with specific crime.”

- PC Callum Ireland

Appendix 6 Feedback

MYC continues to receive very positive feedback regarding the DigiCon conference, from the young people, teachers, partners and guests who attended. We were delighted to welcome a range of schools and groups in Medway and endeavour to be inclusive of young people's special educational needs and disabilities, "They loved this morning's discussions, thank you. It was clearly a well organised event that everyone put a lot of thought into. Thank you for being so inclusive" (Abbey Court).

We have had lots of positive feedback with people asking to come back again next year. When asked for feedback, 9 out of 10 young people participating said that they felt like the event amplified young people's voices, "I got to ask questions and speak out, even if I was loud, people heard me". Young people had high praise for both the marketplace and the Q & A panel, explaining that it "was a different opportunity outside of school to talk to people in the community and meet other schools".

Responses from the partners include:

"I really enjoyed being on the panel and hearing young people's thoughts and questions" - (Medway Youth Service)

"Genuinely pleased to be able to be involved" - (Bfb Labs)

"I was able to talk with so many young people, and they were all up for talking and saying what how they felt" – (Medway Town Forum)

"The questions were tough at times, but great. I'm happy to get the chance to be able to speak directly with young people and answer their questions where I can. It's important that we hear from them". – (PC Callum Ireland)

"It was genuinely youth led and the young people who did lead the sessions were exemplary" – (Attending school staff)

"Amazing event, really representing the voice of young people. It's lovely to see the growth of young people & also how they can support others." – (Marketplace Partner)

"It's been a great chance to meet with young people and hear from them" – (Public Health)