

# Children and Young People's Newsletter



**Welcome to our June's Newsletter. As the restrictions eased further there are more opportunities for us to socialise, join events and you might be on the lookout for new things to do. Have a look below at some volunteering opportunities in Westminster.**

## Young Healthwatch Westminster

We are a small but passionate team of young volunteers from in and around Westminster. The group gives us a safe space to express ourselves in regards to our mental health and what we find challenging, helpful and where the gaps in support are. It also provides us with an opportunity to listen to young people locally and look for ways to help them have a voice and feel supported.

A good example of this work is our 'Youth Wellbeing Question time'. We planned, designed, and delivered this event with volunteers from other youth groups with the aim to offer young people the chance to have a conversation with a panel of experts about a range of topics including careers and school, mental health, COVID, physical wellbeing, and the future. We wanted it to be an inclusive and welcoming space where young people could be themselves. The focus was on wellbeing so we created a nurturing space with music, poetry recital and followed up with illustrations of some of the key discussion points.

Young Healthwatch Westminster also offers us a unique opportunity to influence decision making in different ways and at different levels within the NHS and Westminster council. Some of us recently presented at a Northwest London Health and Care Partnership meeting about how COVID-19 has impacted our health, our opinions on the vaccine and where we need more support. It was a really good opportunity to have our say, and this is only scratching the surface of what we do.

**We are always on the lookout for new volunteers to join our team so if you are a young person (14-25) and want to get involved, we would love to have you.** Click on our young people's support page [here](#), or our group page [here](#) for more information. You can also contact Alex below or message us on Instagram.



**Group coordinator and Youth Project Worker at Healthwatch Central West London, Alex Weston, says:**

*"I am proud of the work the volunteers have done individually, and what we have been able to achieve collectively. We've made real strides in our campaign, but we always want to give a helping hand to more young people locally, so if you feel you are able to assist us with this in any way, please reach out to me."*

[alex.weston@healthwatchcentralwestlondon.org](mailto:alex.weston@healthwatchcentralwestlondon.org)

Thank you! Please follow Young Healthwatch Westminster on [@yhwwestminster](#)

## MHST Young People's Forum

The Mental Health Support Team Young People's Forum aims to give young people a voice for a positive future. **Our Child Wellbeing Practitioner is always looking for young people who have accessed our service, are passionate about mental health and would like to share their thoughts about mental health services in Westminster.**

This is a unique opportunity for young people to help us improve the experiences of young people in Westminster. If you might be interested in joining please email: [kbentivoglio@bwwmind.org.uk](mailto:kbentivoglio@bwwmind.org.uk)



# Parent's corner



In this issue we wanted to talk about **screen time and internet/social media use** which became a huge part of our life, especially during the pandemic, when our social contacts became restricted. You might be anxious about the use of screens by your children and the dangers which might be associated with that. See some tips below which can help you to support your child with the screens and internet use:

**Boundaries:** It might be a good idea to sit down with your family and discuss what is the appropriate time of screen and internet use. The boundaries you set will depend on the age of your child. You might also want to agree that they shouldn't go online just before bed or use a phone/tablet during the night, as this may affect their sleep. You can often set timers on tablets or mobiles to limit internet use – but try to help your child manage it for themselves as well, and understand the positive effects of doing a variety of activities. You can also discuss how your child will be rewarded for sticking to those rules and perhaps what would be the repercussions for not sticking to them – they need to be proportionate to the behaviour.

**Set an example:** Talk to your child about your own experience of the internet. Show them how to use the internet in a positive way – to research things, to do homework, to talk to family, and to find out about the world. Children look up to their parents as role models, so behave as you would want your child to behave. If parents check their phones constantly, have them out at mealtimes, or play violent games in front of their children, then it's likely that their children might do the same.

**Be there for them:** Research suggests that most children are actually more cautious than adults online, and that many are good at navigating the internet safely. Whatever happens, it's usually better to stay calm if you find they've come across something you don't approve of. Instead, reassure them that they can always talk to you. Tell them that you won't overreact if they tell you about something they've seen which is worrying them. You'd much rather have them talk to you, rather than keeping it to themselves.

Find more tips on <https://youngminds.org.uk/media/2451/social-media-a-guide-for-parents.pdf> ; <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/digital-wellbeing>



## Meet Our Team corner



### Meet our practitioner Christina:

Hi I'm Christina! I'm really passionate about helping young people realise their potential and helping them to break down barriers that may be limiting them. I have the privilege to work in 4 schools in Westminster including: Marylebone Boys' School, Mary Magdalene Primary, Ark Atwood Primary and King Solomon Academy. In these schools I work as an Education Mental Health Practitioner.

### Few things Christina likes:

I really love exercise and find that it not only helps my physical wellbeing but my mental too! I do also enjoy sitting down to a book with a warm drink. I also really enjoy learning and believe that you're never too old to keep gaining knowledge.

### Christina's perfect day:

My perfect day would need to begin with a good night's sleep! I'd wake up early and read in bed for a while before then doing a super fun but intense spin class! This would be followed by a fun brunch with friends and going home to watch movies with friends and family. Doing all this in a hot, sunny country would make this even more of a dream.

**Thank you Christina for sharing this with us!**