



11MILLION Takeover Day

11MILLION Takeover Day is organised by **Sir Al Aynsley-Green**, the Children's Commissioner for England, where children and young people are invited to work alongside adults to make a change and get involved in decision making.

A national call-out was made to decision makers in government, politicians, local councils, businesses, charities, schools, youth projects, emergency services and the results from last year's event were amazing.

At least 17,000 children and young people worked alongside 700 organisations during Takeover Day 2008, including Ed Balls MP, Secretary of State for Children and Phil Hope MP, Care Services Minister.

11MILLION Takeover Day is about giving children and young people opportunities to make a positive contribution in their communities. Many organisations regularly work with children and young people to gather their views and involve them in decision making and Takeover Day is a great opportunity to shine a spotlight on what they are doing. For those who do not normally include children in their daily activities, Takeover Day can help to bridge some of the gaps and misunderstandings between the generations.

During the last Takeover Day, hundreds of events were organised across the country and you can read about a few of them on the next few pages and also on the 11MILLION website: www.11million.org.uk

MENCAP staff magazine, and interviewed some of the students taking part in 11MILLION Takeover Day. They also interviewed Sue Berelowitz, the Deputy Children's Commissioner for England, who made a special visit to Mencap for Takeover Day. Tom invited Sue to visit Chelmsford New Model Special School, which she accepted and will be visiting the school in the near future. Jessica and Andrew worked on the MENCAP anti-bullying campaign for the day.

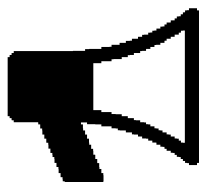
All the students enjoyed their day and gave their views at a recent student council meeting.

Tom said: 'I had fun learning about the MENCAP website and interviewing young people and Sue'.

Jacqueline remembered that she 'enjoyed the journey to London, especially when our teacher's rucksack was caught in the doors of the tube train'.

'I learned about the bullying work that MENCAP do, and watched some videos', said Jessica.

Brett found many aspects of the visit exciting, saying that 'I wrote something for a magazine, used a Dictaphone and a big digital camera'.



Columbus School and College in Essex visited the MENCAP office in London

Six students and three members of staff from Chelmsford New Model Special School in Essex visited the offices of MENCAP in London. This visit was part of 11MILLION Takeover Day and the students were going to spend the day seeing how the workers at MENCAP spent their days working.

The students had to walk to Chelmsford train station to get the train into London, and when they got to Liverpool Street station they had to use the underground tube train and then walk to the MENCAP office.

The students arrived at the MENCAP offices and were told what they would be doing for the day. Jacqueline and Annabelle spent the day with MENCAP staff working in the offices. Brett and Tom produced an article for the



Brent Takeover Day experience in London

Petergaye, Chair of Brent Youth Parliament; and James, Vice Chair of Brent Youth Parliament report on Takeover Day in Brent

Being part of 11MILLION Takeover Day was a magnificent experience for us. It allowed us to make valuable decisions, for instance, as the editor of our local magazine for the day, I got to have a say in what goes in the magazine; No young person has ever had this opportunity before.

When adults agree to take part in days like the 11MILLION Takeover Day, it shows that they want young people to get experienced for the job market in the future and it also shows young people that their opinion is needed and valued.

The good thing about 11MILLION Takeover Day is that it's open to every young person, no matter what their

class or ethnic background is. So it is an opportunity for every young individual.

This year, in Brent, we had five events going on for the 11MILLION Takeover day. Some young people shadowed the leader of the council, our local Roundwood youth club was run by the young people, one of our primary schools (Park Lane) was taken over by pupils, and James with seven other young people acted as young advisers to the Chief Executive of Brent Council and I, Petergaye, became editor of the Brent Magazine – an opportunity to experience. I encourage every young person to take part because it is an opportunity they will never forget.



Fairbridge Takeover Day plans an adventure park

Fairbridge works with young people aged 13-25 that other organisations find difficult to engage – giving them the self-confidence and skills they need to change their lives. The young people often face multiple issues, ranging from school exclusion and homelessness to anti-social behaviour, crime and substance misuse. They often lack family support and exist on the margins of society. You can find out more information about Fairbridge here: www.fairbridge.org.uk/north_manchester

Jacqueline

I was invited to take part in the 11MILLION Takeover Day. This day was focused on creating ideas for an 'Adventure Park' in an area of Bury. There were about six young people asked to take part at Fairbridge North Manchester. First of all we did an ice breaker to get to know each other. The facilitator told us a bit about the project and what the aim was.

We then split in to groups and discussed different ideas and we each took on a different role. My role was to put myself in the shoes of an old person and think

about what effects the Adventure Park would have on me as the old person.

We had to consider noise, old people being intimidated, and location so everyone can access it etc. The day gave me the opportunity to talk about what issues young people have when it comes to having something to do. It also made me appreciate the concerns of other members of the public.

I got to work with different young people and discuss matters that are important to all people. I learnt how to communicate with others and how to look at things from another point of view. I am more confident in group work and expressing my views and opinions.

These ideas are now being passed onto the relevant people along with other people's ideas and then a decision will be made.

I really enjoyed working with new people and having a say in what happens in my community.

Quotes below from two young people at Fairbridge who took part in the day – in their own words:

'For the 11MILLION Takeover Day I managed to learn how to co-operate with new people. It has given me new ways to learn what people do in different business aspects.'

'The 11MILLION Takeover Day that took place last week was stunning, spectacular and special. On this day Fairbridge North Manchester (FNM) revealed how they operate, where they operate and all the people involved in this operation. For example, we had several staff speaking about their role at FNM which I found quite resourceful. Also, they had organised an event where, we as the young people, gave our opinions on a project that Bury council is proposing. I felt fortunate that Bury council had carefully considered myself and others to take part. This proves the enormous desire for young people's opinions and perspective of society by Bury council and other organisations. After all, we are the future of tomorrow.' ■