



Social Action Podcast



Podcast as Social Action

In the first term of the 2023/24 academic year, the Boys to Men project returned to ESSA Academy, Bolton. We had worked here before, in the previous academic year. In that instance, behavioural issues in both cohorts made it difficult to produce any effective social action. This gave us extra incentive to produce one of our best social action projects yet during our second visit.

We decided that a podcast would provide the boys with a structured space to explore the ideas we had covered during the early sessions: **What is positive masculinity? Is masculinity important? What sort of man should I aspire to be?** We showed the boys examples of podcasts and multimedia that had explored these topics and asked the boys about their own podcast listening habits. That the boys were already keen consumers of podcasts, helped greatly with our task. The boys spent time creating questions that would be put to volunteers from the Salford Foundation and, on the big day, did a wonderful job as hosts of the first Boys to Men podcast.

“Is being a man important to you?”

Why is it important?

The podcast gave the boys a glimpse into the potential of the podcast format as a platform for positive social change. This is especially important as it is a platform that has too often been rife with misogyny and regressive masculinity. We also hope that by getting the chance to put questions to our staff, the boys gained important experience interrogating their elders and their views on masculinity, so that they might learn more from them and think critically about the world around them. It was also a valuable experience for us as practitioners as we developed new practical skills in podcast making and session planning, as well as cultivating a relationship with a school where the project had not previously flourished.