

Tackling discrimination online: the Anne Frank Trust UK
empowering young people to 'Switch off Prejudice'.

Press release

Embargoed till 00:01 July 12

Young people from schools across London and the Midlands will gather today at a conference in the capital spearheaded by education charity the Anne Frank Trust UK to showcase their own self-styled social media campaigns promoting positive social causes.

The teenagers, around a hundred Anne Frank 'Ambassadors' aged between 13 and 16, are among the first to have taken part in the charity's innovative new programme Switch off Prejudice, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Anne Frank Trust's highly-acclaimed schools programme - (empowering young people to tackle all forms of prejudice and discrimination) - takes an online focus, nurturing digital resilience and an awareness of online discrimination in participants and their peers.

The Switch off Prejudice programme has been informed by Survation research* commissioned in 2016 by the Trust which revealed that some 55% of young people had witnessed racism online and up to 50% had personally experienced some form of hate-speech online.

The Anne Frank Trust's national Ambassadors' conference will give youngsters the opportunity to showcase their work - on self-chosen subjects ranging from female empowerment to eradicating racism from sport - and to take part in a series of workshops on challenging discrimination run by award-winning spoken word artists Dean Atta and Vanessa Kissule, and vlogger and youtube favourite Grace F Victory. Also at the event, Anne Frank's step-sister and a co-founder of the Anne Frank Trust, Eva Schloss will share her experiences and conduct a Q and A session with her young audience.

Head of Education Delivery at the Anne Frank Trust, Shona Gibbs said: "Children and young people not only encounter incidents of prejudice and discrimination face-to-face, but increasingly in the online world and on social media. Switch off Prejudice is a new programme from the Anne Frank Trust UK that helps young people to recognise the dangers of online hate speech and to be responsible and respectful online citizens. Ultimately we're empowering young people to challenge all types of prejudice and discrimination through positive social media campaigns."

Stacey Gayle, a teacher at Acton High School said: "Prior to taking part in the Switch off Prejudice programme, I had five very knowledgeable but timid pupils. I have watched each of them blossom, and become confident in their beliefs, and passionate about their campaign. They have been treated like young adults from the very first session, I only wish every year 8 student could be involved. We will be signing up to this programme every year it runs!"

Eva Schloss said: "I am delighted to be able to take part in the Anne Frank Ambassadors' Conference. It's so important that young people in our society continue to learn through the message and story of Anne Frank that prejudice or discrimination against any group of people must not be tolerated."

Lord Bourne, Department for Communities and Local Government said: "I really value the work of the Anne Frank Trust and I'm pleased that we have been able to support the work it does to

challenge hatred and prejudice in schools. The Trust should be proud of its work to ensure new generations of young people learn about where prejudice and hatred can lead. There can be no greater tribute to Anne's memory."

Ends-

Students from the following London schools will be participating in the conference: *Acton High School: Phoenix High Schools, White City: Gummley House Catholic School, Isleworth: St Ursula's Catholic Convent School, Wimbledon: Woodside High School, Wood Green: Swanlea High School, Tower Hamlets.*

*In 2016 the Anne Frank Trust commissioned polling company Survation to conduct research among over a thousand 11-16 year olds across the UK about their exposure to and experience of online hate-speech. The findings are helping to inform a new digital strategy that will ultimately underpin all the Trust's educational activity. See link for a summary of results: <https://goo.gl/TueVoA>

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Notes to Editors

About The Anne Frank Trust UK

Prejudice and discrimination harms individuals, communities and society. The Anne Frank Trust UK is an education charity. We use Anne Frank's life and diary to empower young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination. We partner with schools, local authorities, criminal justice education services and others, to deliver education to young people in a variety of settings, predominantly in schools. Our interactive and impactful programme includes an exhibition of Anne Frank's life and diary combined with workshops, peer education and an ambassador programme.

The Anne Frank Trust UK was established in 1991 by family and friends of Otto Frank, following his wish for an educational organisation to be set up in memory of his daughter Anne.

www.annefrank.org.uk

About the Anne Frank Trust Schools Programme

Independent research has shown that The Anne Frank Trust's Schools Programme increases students' levels of confidence and respect for others. The full impact report is at www.annefrank.org.uk/impactreport

About the Anne Frank Trust Ambassador Programme

Young people coming through the schools programme can go on to become Anne Frank Ambassadors – receiving further training from the Trust and going on to be increasingly proactive about spreading Anne's message in their own schools and local communities.