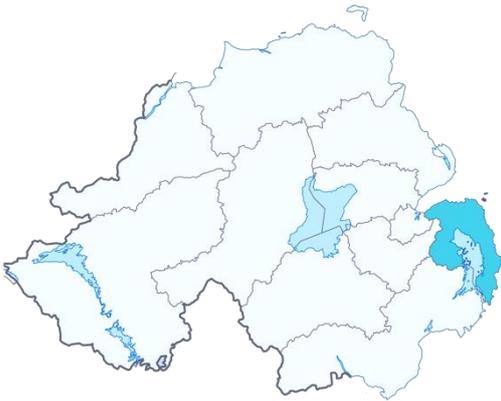


Ards and North Down

# Local Assessment of Need

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# 2020 - 2023



1<sup>st</sup> March 2020



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# Introduction & Methodology

# Introduction

The Department of Education (DE) invests approximately £34m in Youth Work in Northern Ireland to support and encourage children and young people to mature and reach their potential as valued individuals and responsible citizens. The DE notes that effective youth work enables children and young people to identify their personal and social development needs and involves them in shaping the services designed to meet those needs and improve both their own skills and life chances in order to create a better future for themselves and their communities. Effective youth work therefore contributes to the DE vision of *every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.*<sup>1</sup>

According to the National Youth Agency *Youth Work offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity, experience decision-making, increase their confidence, develop inter-personal skills and think through the consequences of their actions. This leads to better informed choices, changes in activity and improved outcomes for young people.*<sup>2</sup>

Youth Services in Ards and North Down are delivered by a range of diverse groups and organisations, including statutory, voluntary, uniformed and church based, many of which are supported with grants from the Education Authority (EA). These range from rural groups with small memberships to large urban organisations.

Youth provision is delivered directly to children and young people in a variety of settings including; youth centres; area based projects, outdoor learning centres; schools; outreach and detached and specialist programmes particularly focussed on improving outcomes for children and young people and enhancing their inclusion and participation.

Youth Services in Ards and North Down are constantly innovating and evolving to meet the present and emerging needs of children and young people. Youth work can be categorised broadly into two types, Generic and Targeted.

## Generic Provision

Generic youth provision ensures that supportive environments are made available to a significant proportion of children and young people throughout our communities. This allows them to enhance their personal skills, levels of motivation and general resilience and to develop their ability to interact with other young people and adults.

## Targeted Provision

Targeted provision seeks to address the direct impact of exclusion and marginalisation, addressing key themes of work, such as risk-taking behaviour, sectarianism and racism, disaffection and low levels of attainment in school, whilst also focusing resources on specific groups of children and young people who are most marginalised, such as those from Section 75 groupings. The targeting of provision is aimed at meeting policy imperatives and ensuring that Youth Services are positioned to tackle the impact of economic and social deprivation, particularly as deprivation and exclusion affects the ability of young people to make the most of their life chances and general education.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, 2013, Priorities for Youth – Improving Young People’s Lives Through Youth Work, Department of Education, Bangor.

<sup>2</sup> <https://nya.org.uk/careers-youth-work/what-is-youth-work/>

Structured formal planning takes place throughout Youth Services (regionally and locally) in order to effectively allocate staff and resources in response to policy priorities, DE targets and an objective assessment of need. Local planning, therefore, is part of a coherent planning framework established within EA Youth Services.

## Purpose

An Assessment of Need is the first phase of the process of informing the direction of a policy or strategy to support a particular group or issue. A systematic assessment of need ensures that decisions made are subjective and evidence based. The purpose of the Local Assessment of Need is to identify the big picture in terms of the needs and inequalities facing children and young people and vulnerable groups whose needs are not currently being met and who experience poor educational, health or social outcomes. This needs assessment will identify unmet need and inform service planning and resource allocation ensuring improved outcomes for children and young people and a reduction in inequalities.

This assessment of need will therefore assist the EA Youth Service to identify needs, determine priorities, allocate resources and make organisational decisions and improvements. As the first phase of the planning process, it will involve collecting information about its target population, children and young people, decide what needs are being, determine what needs are not being met and identify emerging need.

Understanding the needs of children and young people, demographic changes and the geographical differences in which they reside allow planners, managers and providers to ensure that the right services are available in the right place at the right time

# Methodology

*Priorities for Youth* maintains that the strategic planning and resourcing of youth work must address the assessed need for youth work interventions. Therefore, an effective assessment of need is particularly critical given that DE funded youth work must be set within the context of prioritised age ranges, priority groups and a clear definition of the need for targeted interventions, alongside an element of non-targeted provision that is assessed as needed.

Quantifying the needs of young people in Ards and North Down is a complex and difficult task. There is a clear variation and level of needs across the region, with some areas facing greater challenges than others. Northern Ireland is a large geographical area with broad ranging and diverse needs and issues.

A range of quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used to inform this Assessment of Need. The most up to date data and statistics from a range of government and statutory sources along with recent, relevant reports have been analysed and examined. An extensive consultation with young people and key stakeholders was also undertaken.

The information gleaned from the research has been collated and analysed and the evidence gathered has been used to compile this report, highlighting the key issues and levels of need affecting young people in Ards and North Down.

Where possible quantitative and qualitative data have been used to inform this needs assessment. The information and data used in the assessment of need process came from a variety of sources, including the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Department of Education, Health Trusts and other government and statutory statistics.

All the information used was publicly available and is objective and unambiguous. The datasets were also related to outcomes and had a clear focus on educational underachievement and disadvantage.

Within this document, assessed needs are set within a framework for planning that takes into account current government policy, in particular those identified by DE in its policy document, *Priorities for Youth*. The following are some of the key themes that have been identified, although this list is not exhaustive: demographics, deprivation, education, health and wellbeing, proximity to services and crime and disorder.

## Desktop Research

Desktop research was also used to gather and analyse qualitative information from a range of sources. These sources were generally from government departments or other statutory agencies. The information collected from these sources helped identify key priority areas of need within Ards and North Down. A review of recent, relevant literature was also undertaken. Evidence gathered from these documents and reports was used to support the original findings and helped inform the overall report.

## Surveys

Stakeholders' voices, especially those of young people, are vitally important to both DE and EA in the design and delivery of Youth Service provision.

A survey focussing on the following six key areas of enquiry was designed for young people and administered using Survey Monkey;

- Health and Wellbeing

- Learn and Achieve
- Good Relations
- Participation
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity
- Living in Safety and Stability

The areas of enquiry were identified based on key policy directives such as the Programme for Government, Children and Young People's Strategy and Priorities for Youth. The areas of enquiry are also in line with existing practice areas in EA's internal Target Monitor.

A total of 697 young people in Ards and North Down responded to the survey. Children and young people from a range of statutory, local and voluntary youth groups involved in DE funded youth work participated (68%). Children and young people not currently involved in Youth Services were also canvassed (32%).

46% of respondents were male, 48% female, 3% identified as 'other' and 3% 'preferred not to say'.

42% of respondents described their home as being in a rural location.

A similar survey based on the same areas of enquiry was designed and distributed to youth workers and volunteers. There were 29 respondents to this survey. Youth workers and volunteers from a range of statutory and voluntary youth groups involved in DE funded youth work in the Ards and North Down area took part in the survey. The survey responses were analysed and helped inform the Assessment of Need.

## Stakeholder Engagement Events

EA Youth Service organised a series of stakeholder engagement events examining:

- The Needs of Rural Young People.
- Supporting Children and Young People's Learning.
- The Emerging Needs of Children and Young People.
- The Health and Wellbeing Needs of Children and Young People.
- Research and Innovation.
- Children and Young People and Inclusion.

These events were co-designed and delivered by young people. Along with young people, key stakeholders from a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations attended and participated in these events.

The findings from these stakeholder events have also been used to inform the Assessment of Need.

## Public Stakeholder Consultations

A public stakeholder consultation event was held on Tuesday 7 January 2020 at Ards Arena Youth Resource Centre. The initial findings of the Local Assessment of Need were shared and discussed and participants were invited to contribute to the findings along with identifying any gaps in needs identified.

## Local Advisory Group

The Ards and North Down Local Advisory Group were also consulted on the Local Assessment of Need for the Ards and North Down area. Key stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary sector had the opportunity to contribute to the findings of the six key areas of enquiry along with identifying any potential gaps in the Local Assessment of Need.



# Ards & North Down in Numbers

# Ards and North Down in Numbers

## Headline Figures

- 46,359 children and young people live in Ards and North Down.
- 3,338 (7.2%) live in an area of deprivation.
- 8,159 (17.6%) live in a rural community.
- One in five young people have a mental health need. (8,159 young people).
- 845 young people identify as LGBTQ. (14-25).
- 9,045 are engaged in youth work.
- 5,399 (23.1%) of all pupils in Ards and North Down are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 5,051 (21.2%) of all pupils have a Special Educational Need or a Disability.
- 358 Newcomers attend schools in Ards and North Down

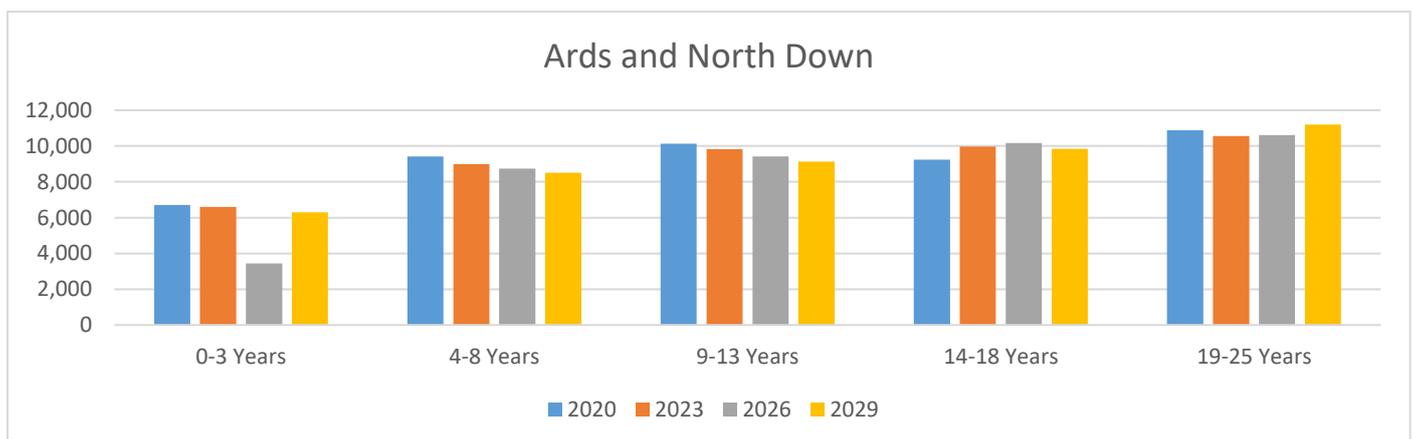
## Demographics

The estimated population for Ards and North Down Borough Council for 2019 is 161,023 of which 78,190 (48.6%) are male and 82,833 (51.4%) are female. Less than one third of the total population of Ards and North Down, 46,508 (28.9%) are aged 25 years or under. (NI average 33.1%).

**Table 1 – Population Age Bands 2019**

0-3 Years	4-8 Years	9-13 Years	14-18 Years	19-25 Years
6,851	9,510	10,018	9,045	11,084

**Chart 1 – Projected Population 2020-2029**



**Table 2 – Projected Population 2020-2029**

Age Groups	2020	2023	2026	2029
0-3 Years	6,712	6,589	3,436	6,293
4-8 Years	9,411	8,993	8,743	8,504
9-13 Years	10,127	9,824	9,413	9,129
14-18 Years	9,231	9,961	10,172	9,844
19-25 Years	10,878	10,566	10,618	11,205

According to figures released by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in 2017, 7.2% of children and young people from Ards and North Down live in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas within Northern Ireland. Currently, this equates to approximately 3,350 young people living in areas of and experiencing high levels of multiple deprivation.

NISRA also reported in 2018 that 17.6% of young people from Ards and North Down live in what has been designated as a rural area. Currently, this equates to approximately 8,159 young people living in a rural community.

### **Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM)**

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure was published in November 2017, identifying small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland. The results are presented by small areas known as Super Output Areas (SOAs). Northern Ireland is divided into 890 of these SOAs which are ranked according to deprivation using seven domains, or distinct types which in composite form is known as the Multiple Deprivation Measure. These are:

- Income Domain
- Employment Domain
- Health Deprivation and Disability Domain
- Education, Skills and Training Domain
- Access to Services Domain
- Living Environment Domain
- Crime and Disorder Domain

The Ards and North Down area consists of 86 Super Output Areas.

- 3 Super Output Area are ranked in the top 100 most deprived in terms of multiple deprivation.
- 8 Super Output Areas are ranked in the top 100 most deprived in terms Income Deprivation Affecting Children.
- In 2012/13-2014/15, 15.4% of the population were in relative poverty (before housing costs) in Ards and North Down, compared with 20.4% in Northern Ireland.
- In 2012/13-2014/15, 17.6% of children were in relative poverty (before housing costs) in Ards and North Down, compared with 23.0% in Northern Ireland.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) are neighbourhoods identified as experiencing the most severe multiple deprivation and have been chosen to receive support under the Department for Communities People and Place strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. In total 36 neighbourhoods have been identified to receive support. There is 1 in Ards and North Down: Bangor.

Table 3 - Ards and North Down most deprived SOA's

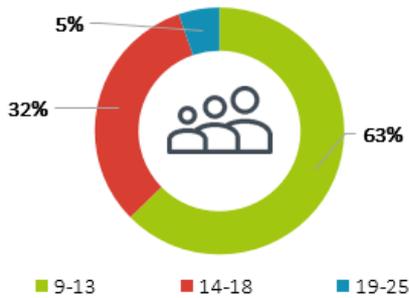
Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017			
Most deprived SOAs within ARDS AND NORTH DOWN LGD			
			
INCOME	EMPLOYMENT	HEALTH AND DISABILITY	EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING
<b>Rank</b> 41 Scrabo 2 62 Central 75 Glen 1 95 Conlig 3 121 Clondeboye 1 150 Gregstown 1 155 Loughview 1 168 Kircubbin 2 173 Harbour 1 178 Whitehill	<b>Rank</b> 83 Scrabo 2 103 Portaferry 2 148 Central 161 Donaghadee South 1 167 Glen 1 180 Ballyrainey 192 Conlig 3 202 Harbour 1 206 Ballywalter 1 218 Portavogie 1	<b>Rank</b> 86 Conlig 3 139 Portaferry 2 159 Central 162 Scrabo 2 173 Glen 1 219 Dufferin 220 Comber North 1 249 Donaghadee South 1 261 Ballyrainey 270 Loughview 1	<b>Rank</b> 45 Glen 1 59 Comber North 1 79 Scrabo 2 107 Central 116 Scrabo 1 124 Clondeboye 3 133 Loughview 2 134 Whitehill 163 Donaghadee South 1 169 Gregstown 2
			
ACCESS TO SERVICES	LIVING ENVIRONMENT	CRIME AND DISORDER	MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION
<b>Rank</b> 35 Killinchy 1 103 Kircubbin 1 109 Killinchy 2 120 Carrowdore 1 133 Portaferry 1 151 Lisbane 1 152 Carrowdore 2 157 Portavogie 2 187 Ballywalter 2 203 Portavogie 1	<b>Rank</b> 21 Harbour 1 43 Cultra 47 Bryansburn 1 60 Killinchy 1 64 Harbour 2 91 Holywood Demesne 139 Lisbane 2 144 Bradshaw's Brae 2 189 Ballyholme 191 Ballymacconnell 1	<b>Rank</b> 6 Harbour 1 55 Central 115 Bradshaw's Brae 1 121 Comber East 1 127 Donaghadee North 1 138 Glen 1 140 Clondeboye 2 147 Bloomfield 1 172 Conlig 3 178 Harbour 2	<b>Rank</b> 71 Scrabo 2 97 Glen 1 99 Central 134 Conlig 3 174 Harbour 1 199 Donaghadee South 1 219 Portaferry 2 223 Ballywalter 1 225 Portavogie 1 231 Scrabo 1
For each domain, as well as the overall multiple measure the 890 SOAs in NI are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 890 (least deprived).			

# Survey Headlines

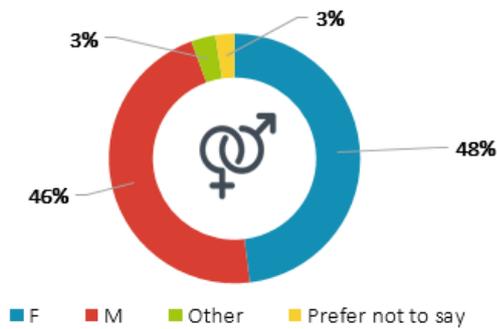
# Survey of Need - Who Responded

## Young People

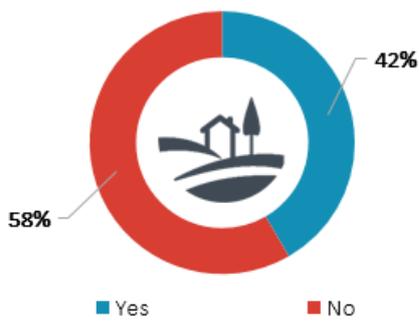
Age Category



What is your Gender?



Do you live in a Rural Area?

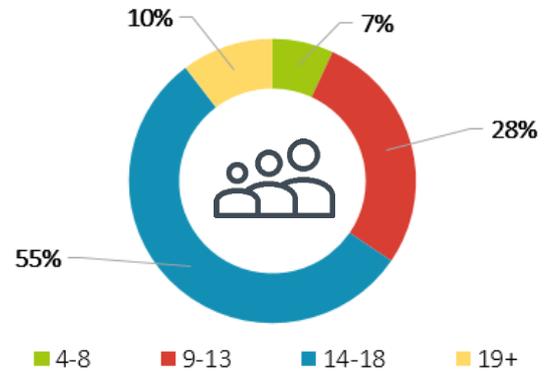


Participation

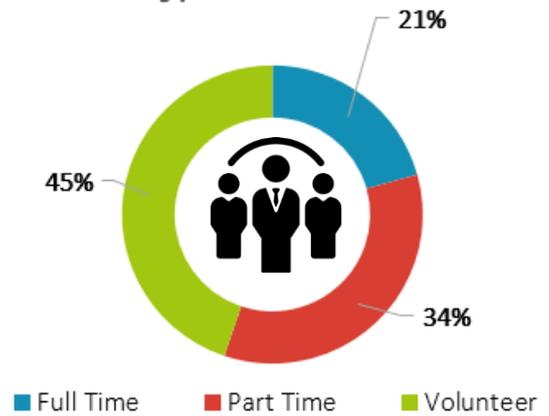


## Youth Workers

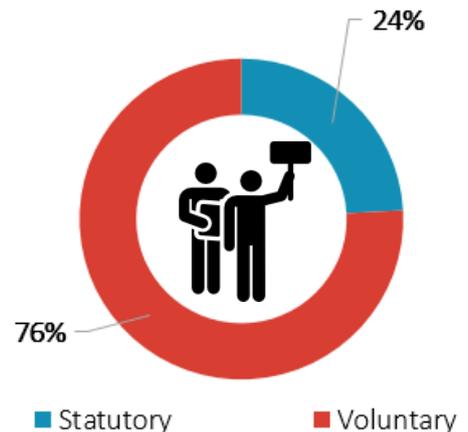
Age Category



Type of Worker



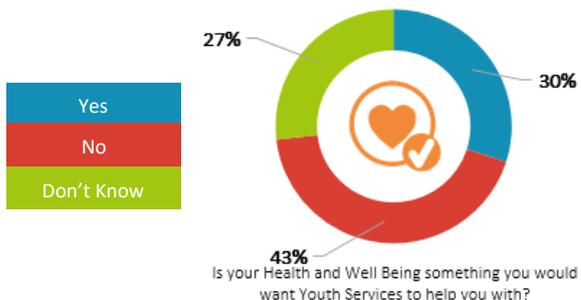
Sector



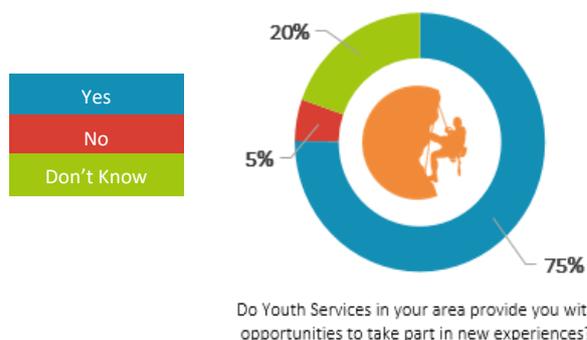
# Survey of Need – Headline Findings

## Young People

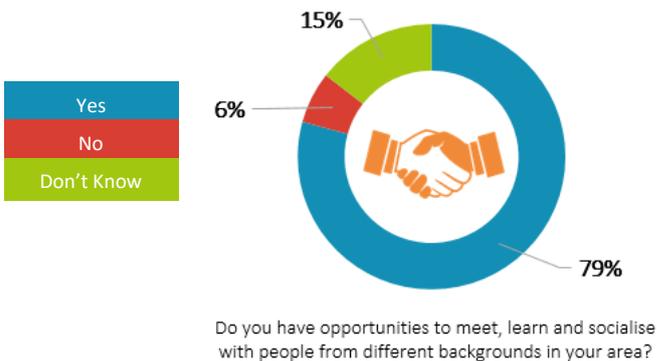
### Health and Well Being



### Learn & Achieve

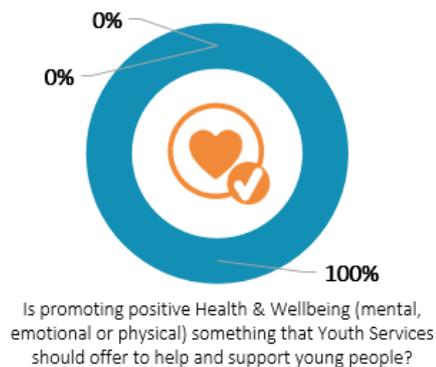


### Good Relations

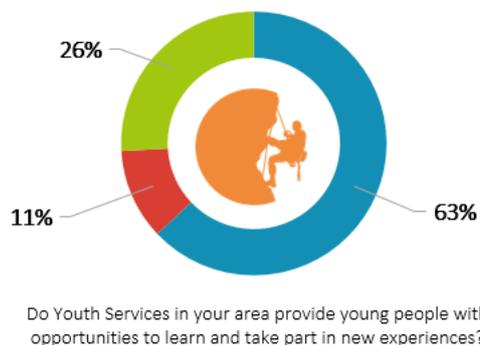


## Youth Workers

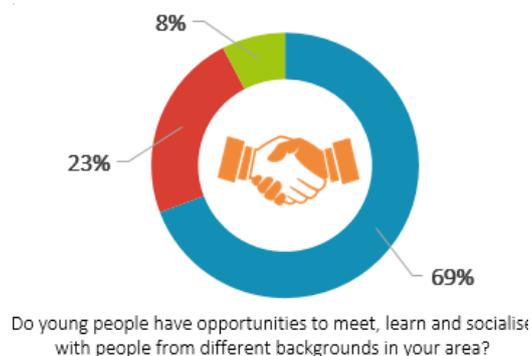
### Health and Well Being



### Learn & Achieve

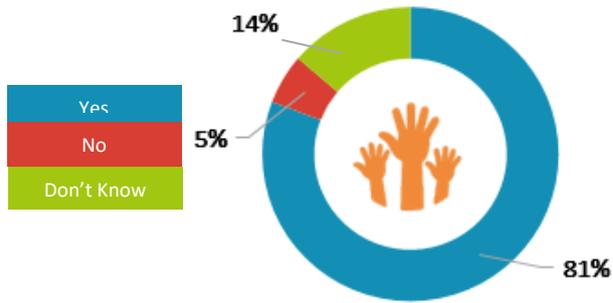


### Good Relations



## Young People

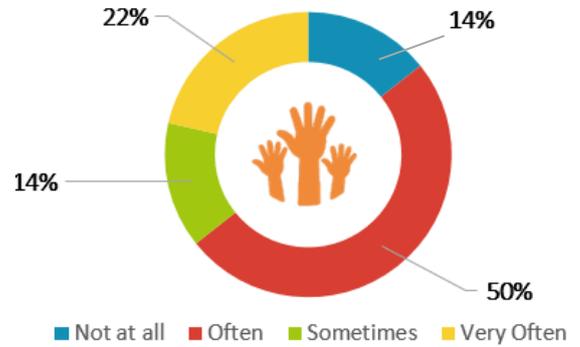
### Participation



Do you have opportunity to take part in Youth Services in your Area?

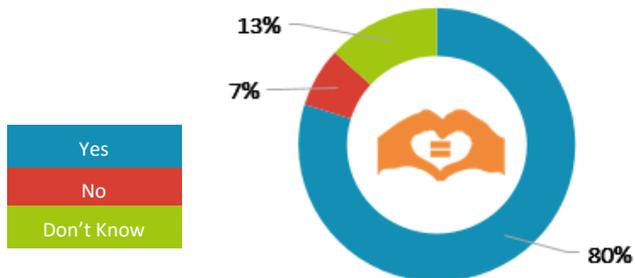
## Youth Workers

### Participation



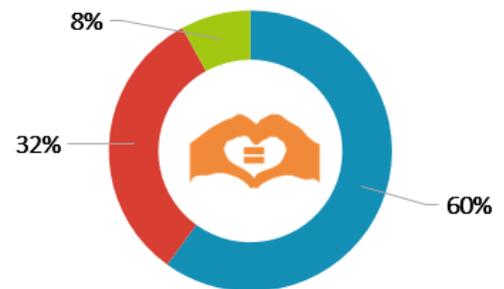
Please rate how often young people in your area have opportunities to participate in Youth Services

### Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity



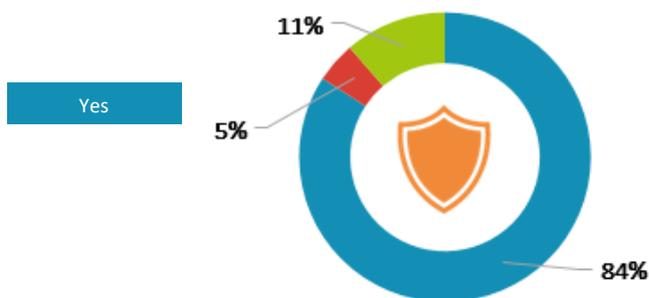
I feel I have the same opportunities in life and am treated the same as other people?

### Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity



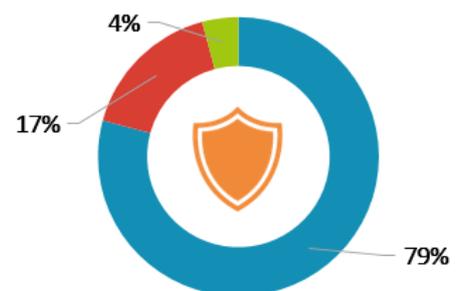
I feel I have the same opportunities in life and am treated the same as other people?

### Living in Safety & Stability



I feel safe in my own community?

### Living in Safety & Stability



Young People that you work with feel safe in their own community?

# Health & Wellbeing

# Area of Enquiry 1: Health and Wellbeing

## Key Facts

- Male life expectancy in Ards and North Down is 79.3 years. In the most deprived areas it is 75.4 years.
- Female life expectancy in Ards and North Down is 79.3 years. In the most deprived areas it is 80.6 years.
- In 2011/12-2013/14, the standardised rate for alcohol-related admissions in Ards and North Down was 669.4 per 100,000 population
- In 2012, the teenage birth rate for mothers aged under 17 years in Ards and North Down was 2.9 live births per 1,000 females. In the most deprived areas it is 14 per population.
- For the period 2010-2014, the crude suicide rate in Ards and North Down was 12 suicides per 100,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 271 per 100,000 population.
- In 2017, 31.7% of children aged 0-2 years in Ards and North Down were registered with a dentist.
- In 2017, 75.1% of children aged 3-5 years in Ards and North Down were registered with a dentist.
- There has been an increase in the standardised prescription rate for mood and anxiety disorders throughout Northern Ireland between 2012 and 2016. By 2017, the standardised prescription rate stood at 200 per 100,000 people within Ards and North Down. For the Northern Ireland the figure was 213 per 100,000 people.
- In 2016/17, 19% of Ards and North Down children, in Primary 1 had a BMI that fell within the overweight or obese range. In addition, 25% of Year 8 children fell into the same category.
- From 2010-2016 the standardised incidence rate for cancer within Ards and North Down was 569 per 100,000.

## Why is this measure important?

The promotion of health and wellbeing and maintaining a healthy population is the basic goal of any society. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is not just about being physically fit, it is also about being mentally and emotionally fit. Research has shown that enjoying a healthy lifestyle can improve one's physical appearance, increase one's lifespan, boost one's immunity against diseases as well as improving one's quality of life and mental and emotional health and wellbeing.<sup>3</sup> Poor mental health is proven to affect children and young people's educational attainment and their ability to form positive relationships which in turn can lead to increasing isolation, sense of happiness and threaten their future opportunities and role in the community.

## What are the factors that can negatively impact on a young person's health and wellbeing?

Whilst health outcomes are getting better within Northern Ireland there are a range of social determinants which are responsible for significant levels of unfair health inequalities. The World Health Organisation has described these as, the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of their daily lives.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, health inequalities are directly linked to one's social status and this may explain some of the growing inequalities that many vulnerable people and communities in Ards and North Down face in terms

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-benefits-of-exercise.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](https://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/)

of their general health outcomes, their mental and emotional wellbeing and their life expectancy. In his report Fair Society, Healthy Lives, Michael Marmot stated that inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society. It was also noted that reducing these health inequalities can bring about considerable benefits to both individuals and communities.<sup>5</sup>

A recent study noted that inequalities in health outcomes are more likely to affect those without equal access to resources or support. It stated that children and young people living in low income households and in the most deprived communities are more likely to be obese, have lower life expectancies and are more likely to have worse physical, mental and sexual health outcomes.

Vulnerable and marginalised groups of children and young people, including Children and Young People Looked After, those with Special Educational Needs or a disability, those from ethnic minorities, young carers, young people identifying as LGBTQ or those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences are also more likely to have poorer health outcomes than their peers.<sup>6</sup> Within Ards and North Down significant numbers of children and young people fall into these groups. Poor health outcomes are also linked to poor educational outcomes

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<sup>5</sup> [www.ucl.ac.uk/marmotreview](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/marmotreview)

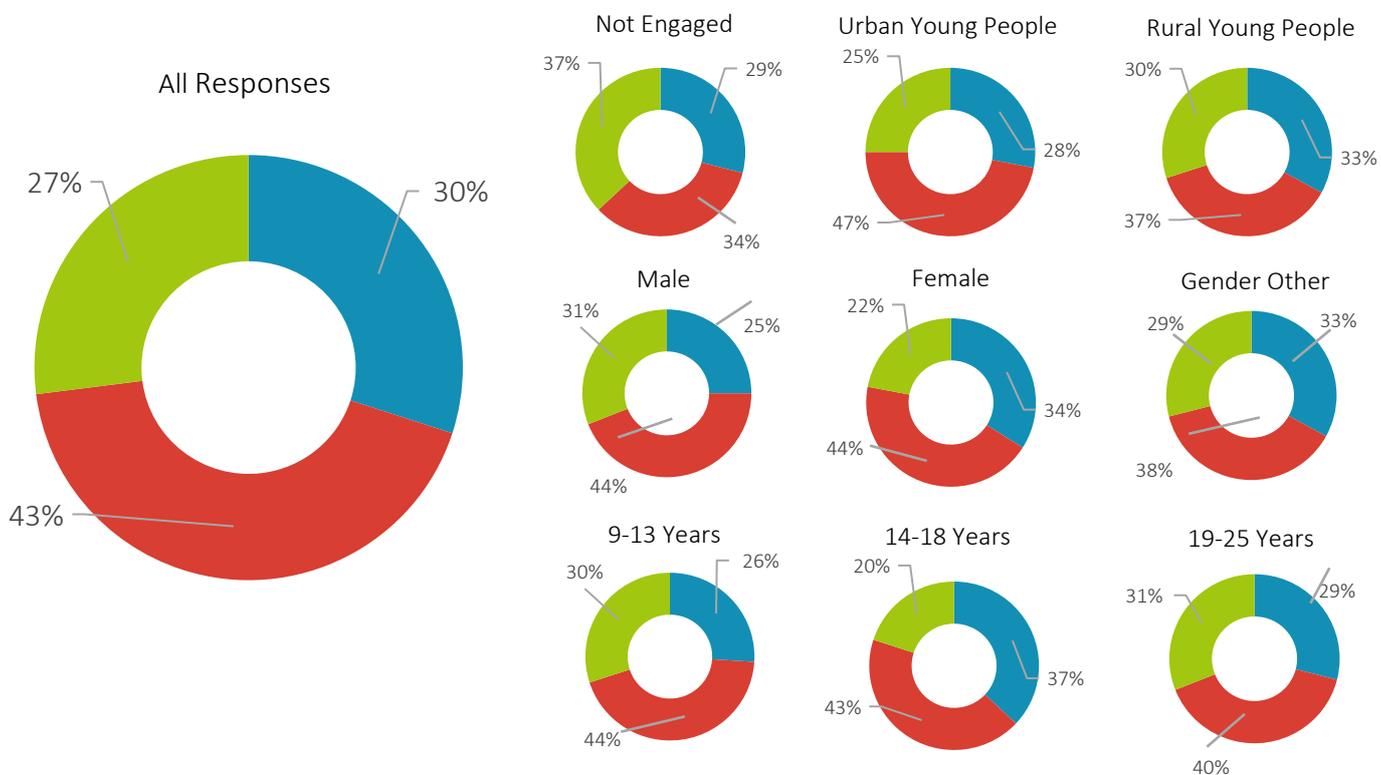
<sup>6</sup> The Association of Young People's Health, 2019, Key Data on Young People 2019, AYPH, London.

# Survey Findings – Health and Well Being

■ Yes 
 ■ No 
 ■ Don't Know

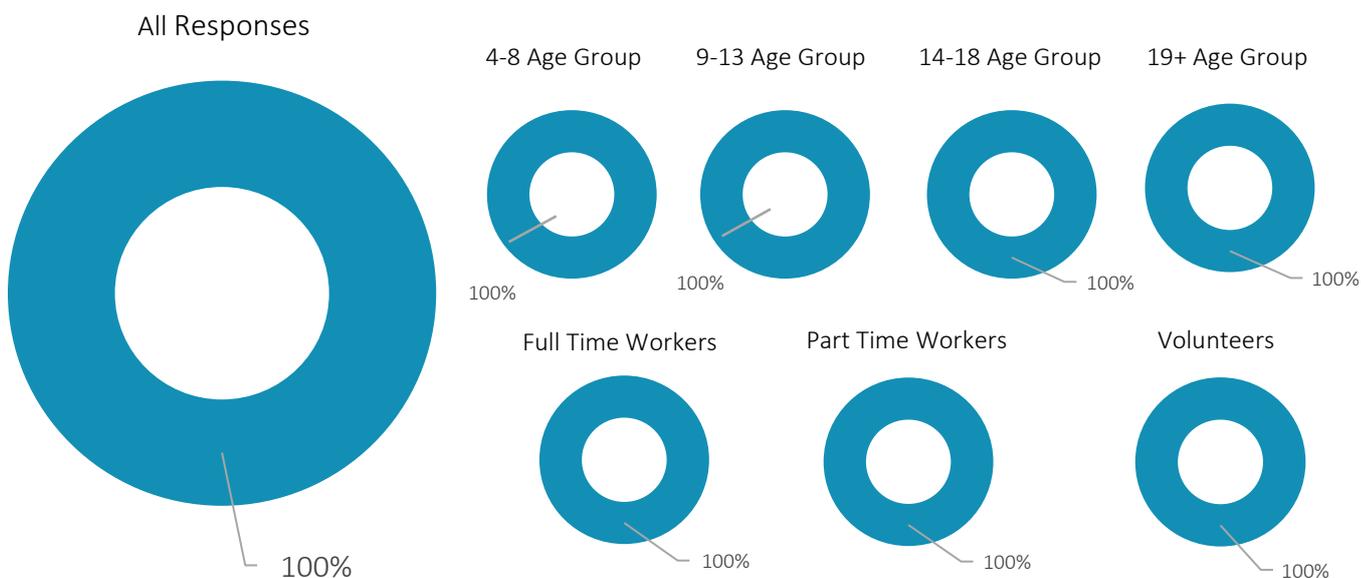
## Young People

Is promoting positive Health & Wellbeing (mental, emotional or physical) something that Youth Services should offer to help and support young people?



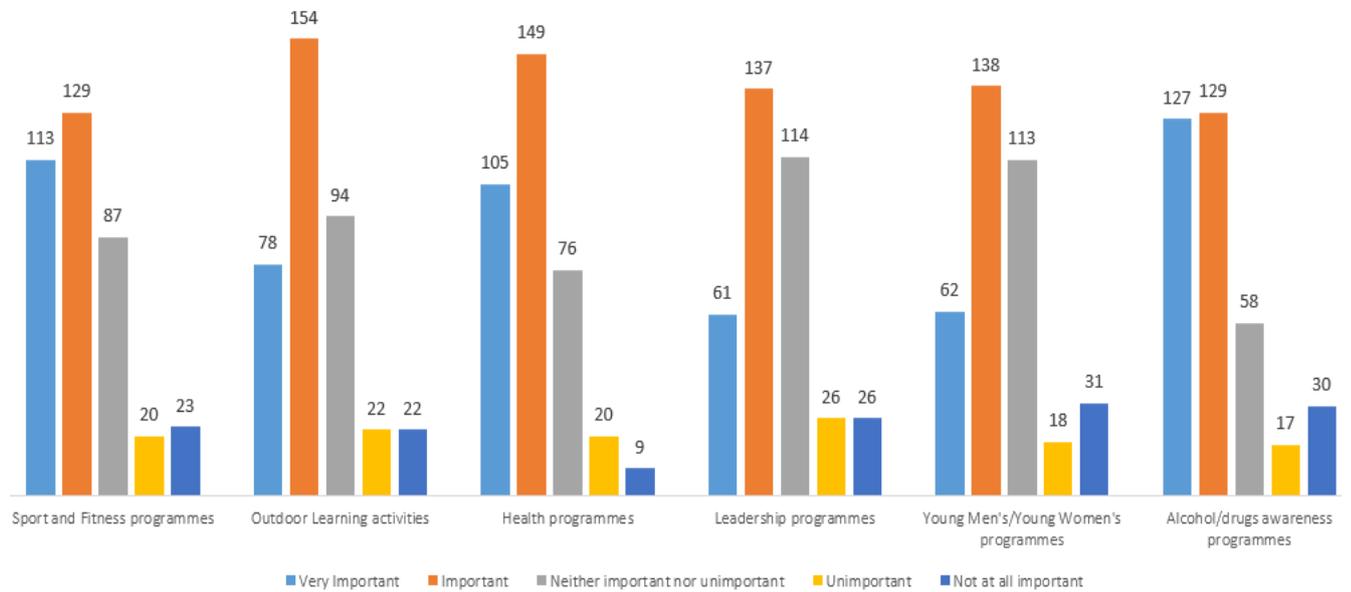
## Youth Workers

Is promoting positive Health & Wellbeing (mental, emotional or physical) something that Youth Services should offer to help and support young people?



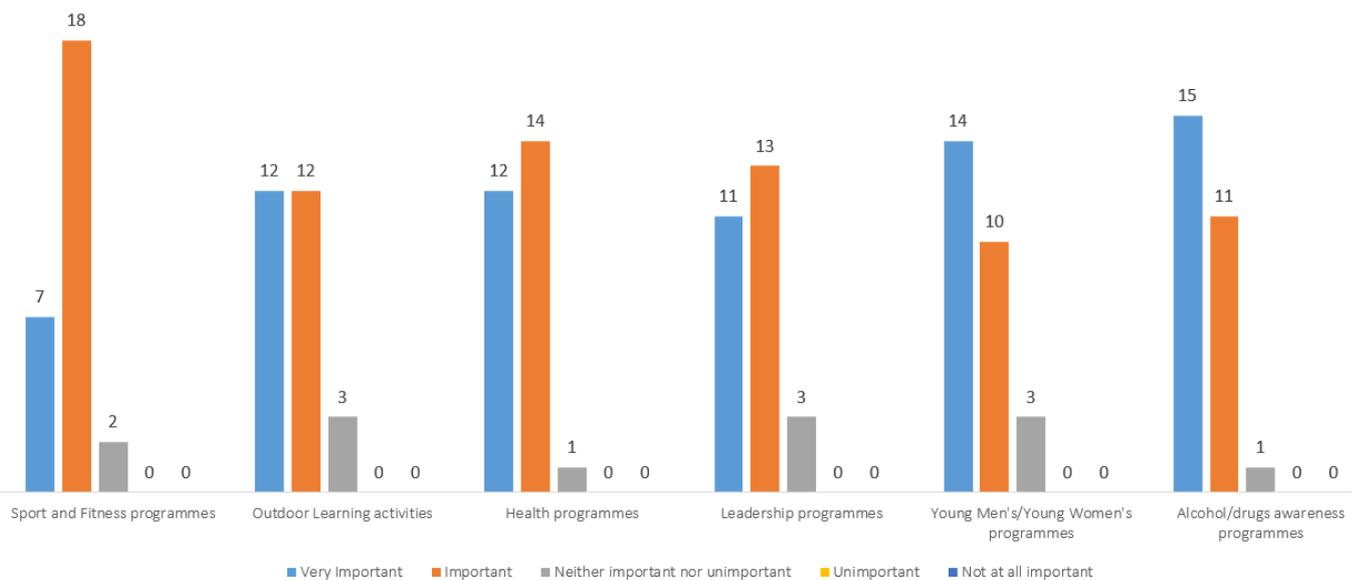
## Young People

**Health and Well Being** - What activities or programmes would you like Youth Service in your area to provide to help with your Health Wellbeing?



## Youth Workers

**Health and Well Being** -What activities or programmes should Youth Services in your area provide to support positive Health and Wellbeing amongst young people?



## Public Consultation Summary of Responses

- Youth Service should support young people across a range of health and wellbeing issues.
- Youth Services should support young people to develop their own coping mechanisms particularly in the area of mental health and wellbeing.
- The delivery of Youth Service programmes should be based on the assessed needs and preferred delivery method identified by young people.

## Local Advisory Group Consultation Summary of Responses

- Youth Services should ensure young people have choices in terms of support for their health and wellbeing issues
- Specialist health advisors in local youth centres could provide young people with essential guidance and advice
- Greater access for young people in areas such as family planning within relaxed environments where young people feel safe and where they can talk about sexual health
- Need to consult with young people further to identify how best youth services can support young people in the area of health and wellbeing

## Discussion

Increasingly the health and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people in Ards and North Down need to be considered in its broadest sense, emphasising mental and social health, as well as physical aspects of health. It has been well documented that young people living in areas of deprivation are more likely to endure health deprivation, disability or have a mental health issue. Vulnerable young people are also more likely to be absent from school which will negatively impact on their educational attainment.

Of the 46,359 children and young people that live in Ards and North Down, 3,338 (7.2%) live in an area of deprivation. Statistics for those pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in Ards and North Down also needs to be considered as almost a quarter of all pupils - 5,399 (23.1%) are eligible for FSM's. This would indicate therefore that approximately 2,000 young people are not living in areas of deprivation but are living in communities outside of the top 50% Super Output Areas.

Local knowledge and information from other sources are therefore key to be able to identify where young people who are living in relative poverty are living as they are not in communities identified by multiple deprivation statistics.

There are 86 Super Output areas in Ards and North Down. Five Super Output Areas are within the top 20% (Central, Conlig 3, Glen 1, Harbour 1, and Scrabo 2), eight are within the top 25% (Central, Conlig 3, Glen 1, Harbour 1, and Scrabo 2, Ballywalter 1, Donaghadee South 1 and Portaferry 2), and 33 are in the top 50% most deprived areas in Ards and North Down. There is one Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

Of the 46,359 children and young people that live in Ards and North Down, 8,159 (17.6%) live in a rural community. Eight Super Output Areas are within the top 20% deprived in terms of access to services; Portaferry 1, Kircubbin 1, Portavogie 2, Carrowdore 1, Carrowdore 2, Killinchy 1, Killinchy 2 and Lisbane 1.

Feedback directly from children and young people participating at a series of stakeholder engagement events hosted by EA Youth Service recognised that the issues affecting the health and wellbeing of young people were complex and multi-faceted. It is therefore surprising that less than a third of all respondents to the Youth Service survey (30%) stated that they would want Youth Services to help them with their health and wellbeing. Just under a half of respondents (43%) did not want the youth service to help with this aspect of their lives and just over a quarter (27%) didn't know if the youth service could support them in this area.

The survey revealed that more young people (37%) in the 14-18 age band identified that they would like Youth Services to help them with their health and wellbeing compared to the lower age group (9-13's) at 26% and the older age group (14-18's) at 29%. All youth workers and volunteers (100%) suggested that Youth Services should be promoting positive health and wellbeing to support young people.

When asked what type of programmes or activities the Youth Service should be offering to help young people with their health and wellbeing the top 3 overall answers were:

- Alcohol and Drugs Programmes
- Health Programmes
- Sports and Fitness Programmes

The response were slightly different when examined by age band. Alcohol and Drugs programmes along with health programmes were within the top three answers for the 9-13's and 14-18's. The 9-13's and 19-25's also identified sport and fitness programmes within their top three answers however the 14-18's also included gender based programmes and the 19-25's outdoor learning programmes and leadership programmes which Youth Services should be delivering to help with young people's health and wellbeing.

There were no differences between urban or rural respondents' top 3 answers. According to the Health Foundations recent report "A Healthy Foundation for the Future" the stresses young people experience in their social environment are complex. Persistent stress places a greater burden of wear and tear on the body termed "allostatic load." Socioeconomic disadvantage in adolescence and early adulthood has been associated with higher allostatic load which has been associated with multiple chronic disease outcomes.

In the Health Foundation Report young people felt insecure in matters relating to housing, employment and education which produced a life marked by uncertainty resulting in them finding it hard to think ahead and envision a time when they could flourish. The report identifies 4 key assets that act like building blocks to enable young people to effectively transition to adulthood. They are appropriate skills and qualifications, personal connections, financial and practical support and emotional support. They categorise young people into 4 distinct groups as they navigate this transition - those that start ahead and stay ahead, those that believe it's not what you know it's who you know, those that get better with a bit of help and those who are struggling without a safety net. Providing emotional support and a listening ear gives young people a chance to be open and express their goals in life a task many youth workers often perform for the young people in their care.

In the Ards and North Down ENGAGE, Community Planning Newsletter (Winter 2019 edition), the impact of social isolation and loneliness is highlighted as having an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of residents within the Ards and North Down Borough Council area. Social isolation has been linked to socio-economic status and therefore those experiencing poverty may suffer from poor mental health arising out of the effects of being poor. Within Ards and North Down a Poverty Forum has been established to help address some of the issues experienced by individuals and families along with the establishment of three foodbanks in the Newtownards and Bangor areas.

The Children and Young People Strategic Partnership's Locality Planning Group in Ards and North Down (ANDLPG) recently conducted a needs assessment of children between 0-18 years old. 37 young people and 116 parents responded to this survey. The most popular issues identified by young people were suicide and mental health, drugs and alcohol usage and lack of support services. Parents also identified mental health

as the top priority but also identified motivation and confidence levels of young people, along with opportunities for young people in terms of youth programmes or activities in the evening or at weekends. Parents also identified the need for help to support their own children.

The findings of the ANDLPG Needs Assessment report concluded that the mental health of children and young people in Newtownards is a key concern, stipulating that children and young people face an array of issues within their home, school and community environment which can be inextricably linked to poor mental health. It was also recognised that drug use and associated problems noted by both parents and young people is a significant issue children and young people face in the Ards and North Down area. It was identified that the 'availability and accessibility of drugs coupled with the growing presence of paramilitary influence' was also a key issue in Ards and North Down.

At one of the stakeholder engagement events<sup>9</sup> held in Ards and North Down key stakeholders and young people recognised that the causes of health and wellbeing issues for children and young people are complex and health and wellbeing remains a priority issue for young people. The Youth Service has an important role to play in supporting young people in this area. Stakeholders identified the causes to include;

- Peer Pressure
- Social media
- External factors e.g. school, family, community

Recommendations as to the role Youth Services could have in supporting young people in the area of health and wellbeing included; through peer support programmes, school based interventions, outreach and detached work; by providing safe spaces for young people particularly in the evenings and at weekends, through stronger links with leisure centres to provide opportunities for young people to access fitness facilities and by providing residential and/or international experiences.

At another Stakeholder Event<sup>10</sup> (June 2019). Stakeholders identified that particular support is needed for young people in relation to drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping and with other addictions. The provision of 'quiet spaces' and 'safe spaces' for young people within Youth Services was also recommended to support young people with mental health issues and issues.

The links between health and deprivation are well documented. The most common mental health problem affecting children and young people is severe and persistent behavioural problems.<sup>7</sup> Children and young people from low-income families are four times more likely to experience mental health issues than those from higher income families.<sup>8</sup> Young people from the LGBTQ community are also more likely to have suicidal thoughts and are three times more likely to have made a suicide attempt at some point.<sup>9</sup> Other vulnerable groups such as young carers, children and young people looked after, young parents and NEET young people also display disproportionately higher levels of poor mental health.<sup>10</sup> Research undertaken by EA reported that children and young people from rural areas noted that social isolation and limited opportunities to participate in Youth Services or other recreational activities had a detrimental impact on the mental health.

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<sup>7</sup> Green, H. et al. (2005) The mental health of children and young people in Great Britain 2004, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

<sup>8</sup> Morrison Gutman, L., Joshi, H., Parsonage, M. & Schoon, I. (2015) Children of the new century: mental health findings from the Millenium Cohort Study, London, Centre for Mental Health.

<sup>9</sup> Statham, H., Jaclva, V. & Daly, I. (2012), The School Report: The experiences of gay young people in Britain's schools in 2012, London, Stonewall.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/CentreforMentalHealth\\_ChildrenYoungPeople\\_Factsheet.pdf](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/CentreforMentalHealth_ChildrenYoungPeople_Factsheet.pdf)

**Learn & Achieve**

# Area of Enquiry 2: Learn & Achieve

## Key Facts

- In 2017/2018, 90.4% of year 12 pupils from Ards and North Down achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C or equivalent.
- In 2017/2018, 72.8% of year 12 pupils from Ards and North Down achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C or equivalent including English and Maths.
- 5,051 pupils (21.2%) in Ards and North Down have a Special Educational Need.
- 5,399 pupils (23.1%) in Ards and North Down are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 4,541 (19.1%) pupils attend schools in the Ards and North Down area that have been designated as rural.
- 358 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in the Ards and North Down area.
- Whilst there are no specific numbers for Ards and North Down, the most recent figures reveal that 498 Looked After Children were supported by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Ards and North Down.

## Why is this measure important?

Education can have a transformational impact on the lives of children and young people. Education is a positive factor in ensuring that young people thrive, learn and achieve allowing them to enjoy a prosperous and rewarding life. It is also a means of breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation and a powerful way of stopping young people engaging in risk taking activities, crime or anti-social behaviour. As a society, we aspire for every child and young person to learn and achieve and reach his or her potential to become an active citizen. Acquiring a worthwhile education can make this a reality.

## What are the factors that can negatively impact on a young person's ability to learn and achieve?

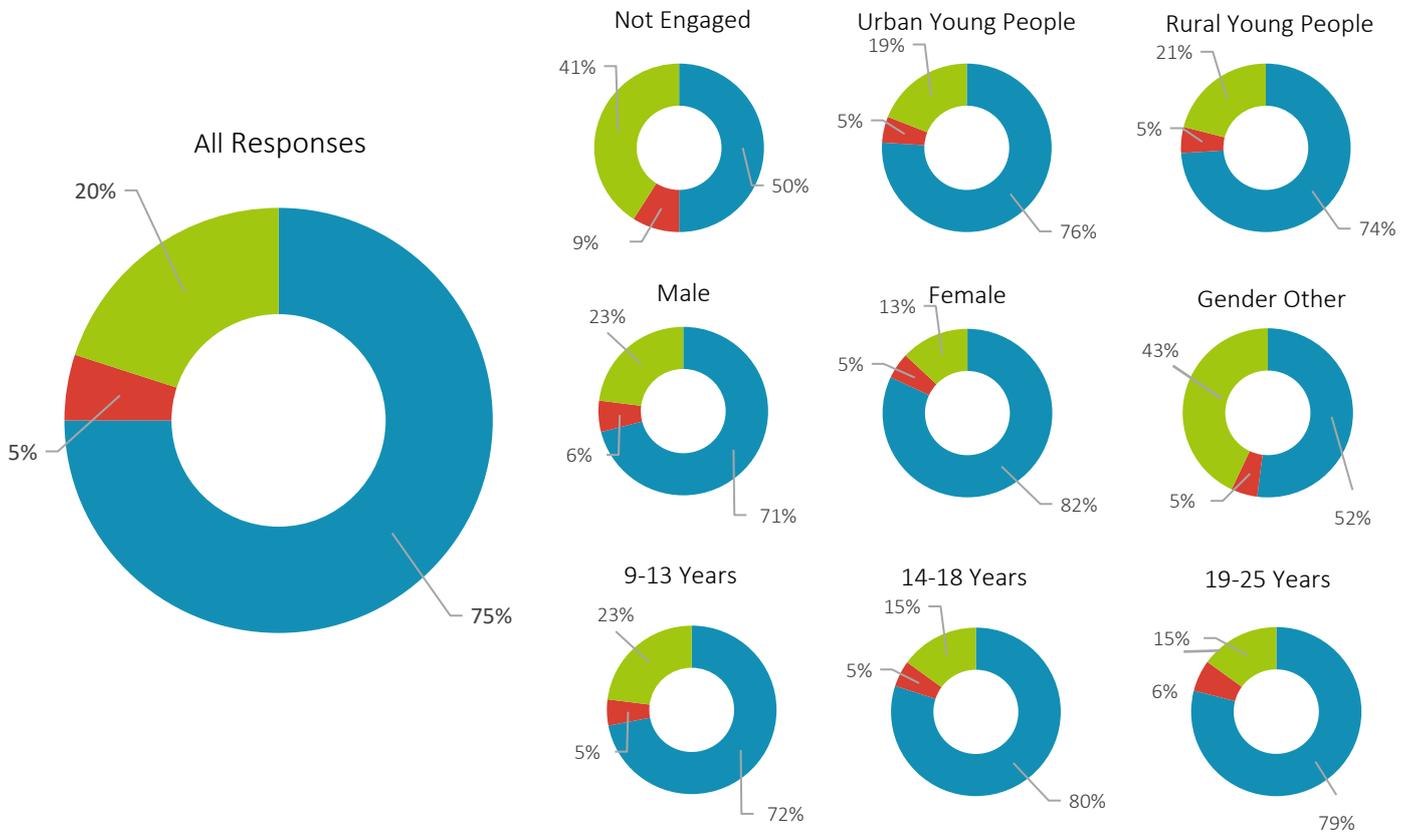
Educational attainment in Northern Ireland has increased among all children and young people over the last number of years, however, there remains a tail of underachievement which is prevalent among vulnerable groups, including those living in deprived areas, having a Special Educational Need or disability, being a child or young person Looked After, being a newcomer, being a young carer, coming from the Travelling Community or another minority group and being from a Section 75 group. This list is not exhaustive, however, failure to address the gap in educational attainment from these groups will ensure that vulnerable young people will continue to face a future with limited opportunities and greater social and economic challenges.

# Survey Findings – Learn & Achieve

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Don't Know

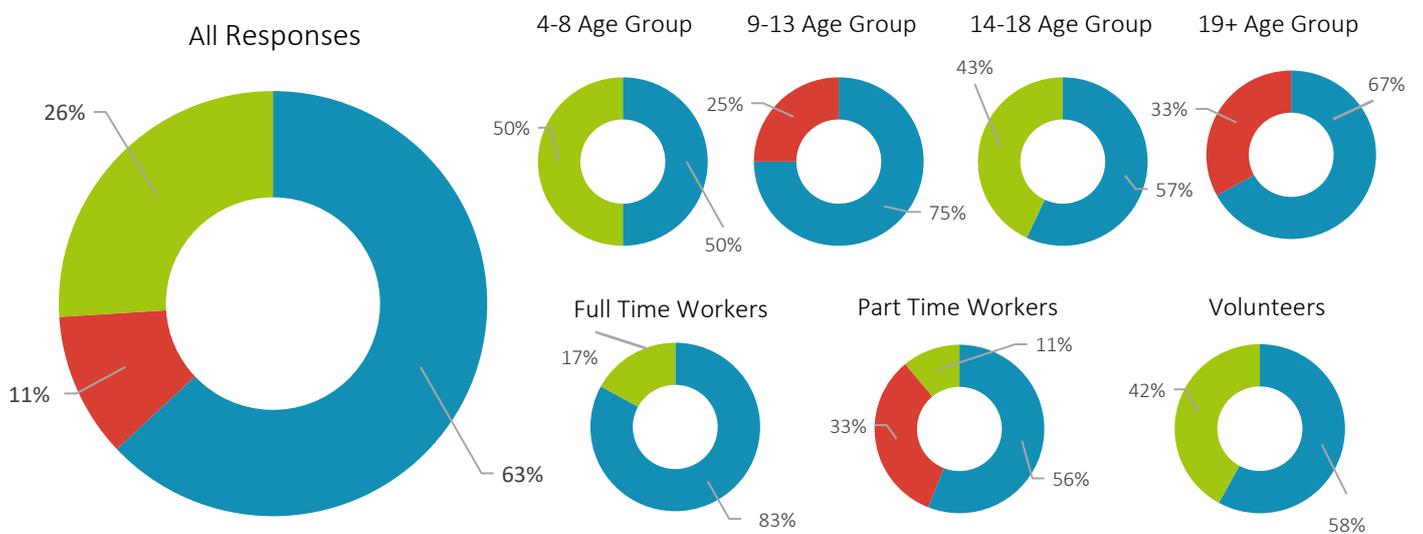
## Young People

Do Youth Services in your area provide young people with opportunities to learn and take part in new experiences?



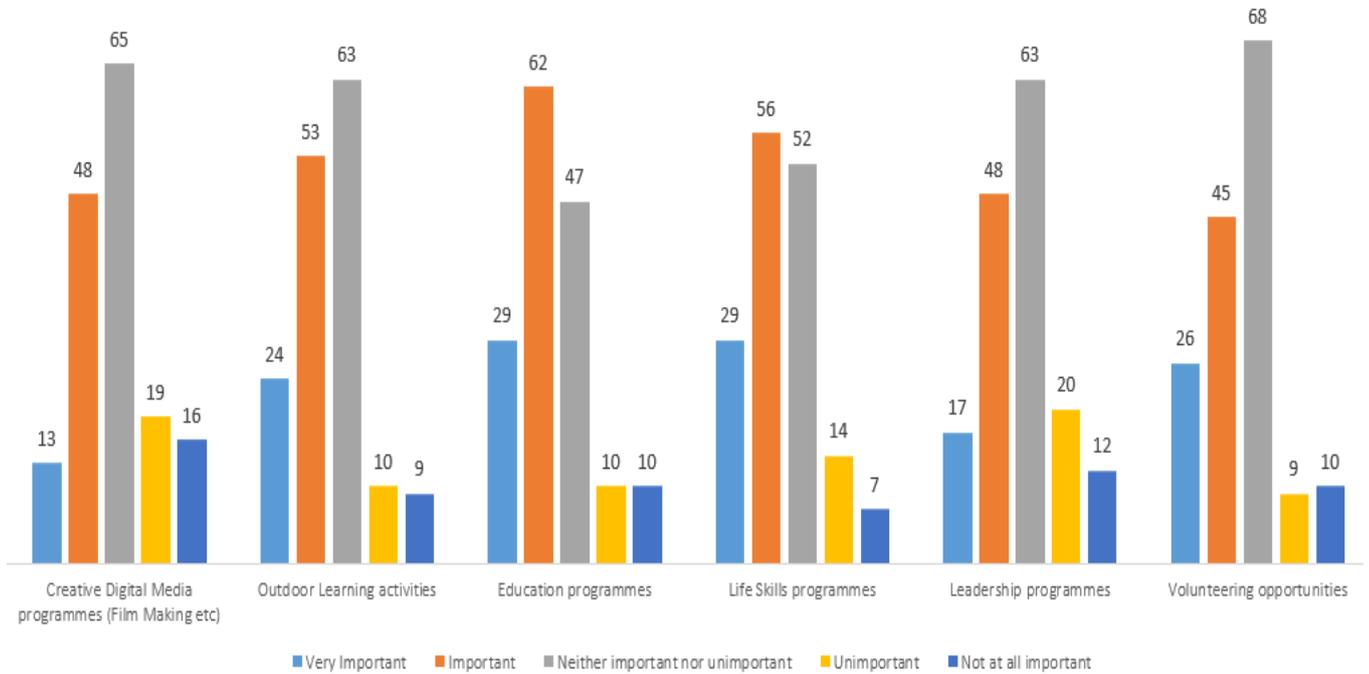
## Youth Workers

Do Youth Services in your area provide young people with opportunities to learn and take part in new experiences?



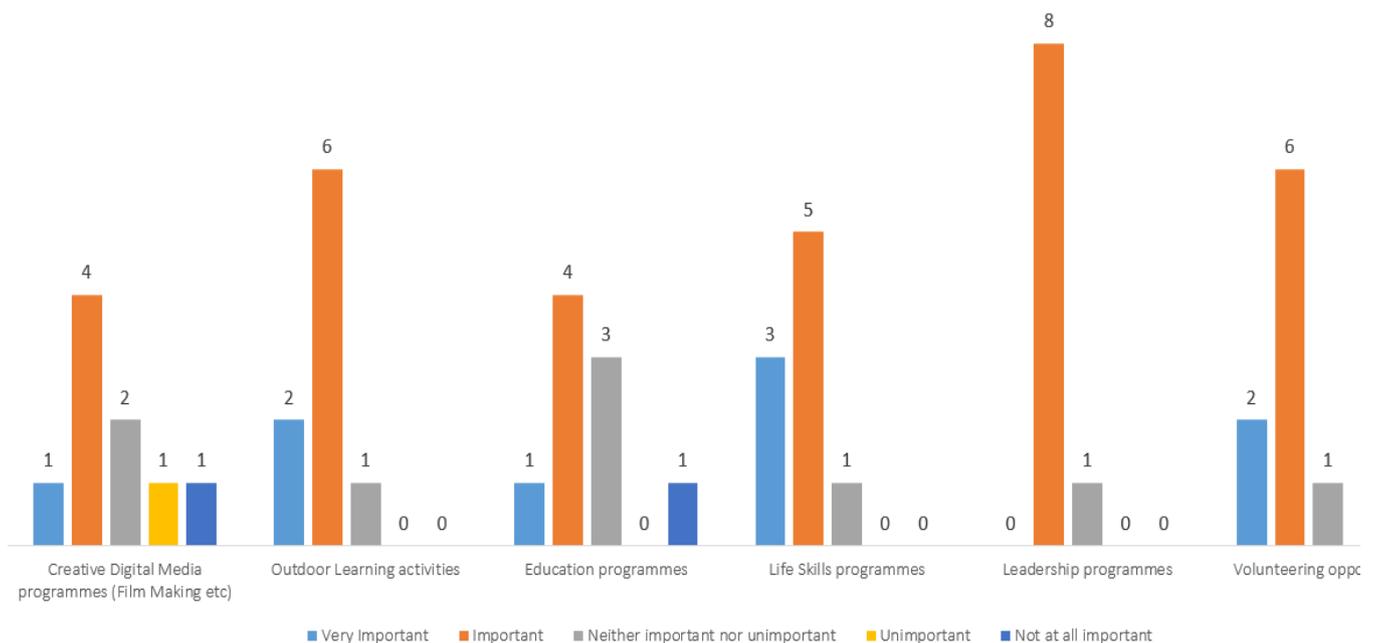
## Young People

Learn & Achieve - What opportunities should Youth Services in your area provide to help you learn and achieve?



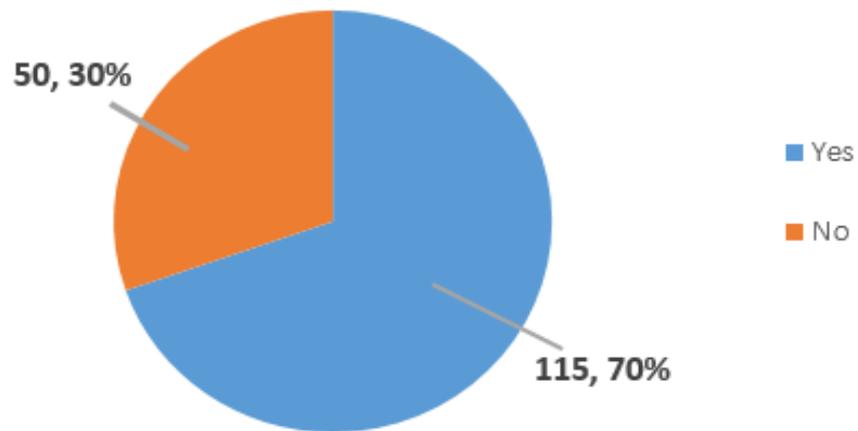
## Youth Workers

Learn & Achieve - What opportunities should Youth Services in your area provide to help young people learn and achieve?



## Young People

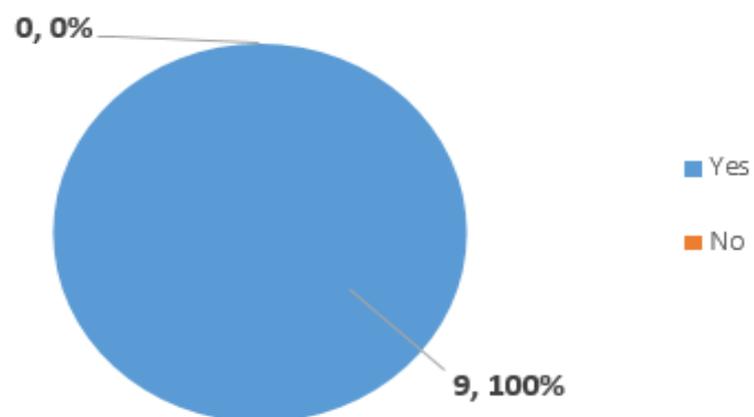
Learn & Achieve - I would like these programmes to be accredited?



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## Youth Workers

Learn & Achieve - Do you think these programmes should be accredited?



## Public Consultation Summary of Responses

- Youth Services should provide more accredited programmes to enable young people to gain additional qualifications. These should however be broken down into manageable sections so delivery is not seen as 'overload' and like school
- Delivery of relevant training and qualifications to enhance CV
- Young people would benefit from lifeskills training including training on how to apply for a job, create a CV along with financial guidance and support
- Youth services should consider how to accredit soft skills
- Programmes need to be outcomes focused to ensure that impact is measured – is anyone better off?

## Local Advisory Group Consultation Summary of Responses

- Youth Services should provide courses that are suitable and relevant
- Youth Services need to consider how can soft skills be accredited
- Accreditation needs to be suitable. A lot of written work would not suit some young people so different mechanisms that lead to accreditation need to be considered

## Discussion

There are 23,775 children and young people attending Primary and Post Primary Schools in Ards and North Down. Ards and North Down compares favourably against the NI average for the percentage of pupils (90.4%) leaving school with 5+ GCSE's grades A\*- C (including equivalents) with only 3 Councils performing higher. This however changes when the GCSE statistics include English and Maths. Ards and North Down drops to 7<sup>th</sup> place in terms of educational attainment by Local Government District (72.8%).

There are also lower numbers of pupils with Special Educational Needs (5,051 pupils - 21.2%) or entitled to Free School Meals (5,399 - 23.1%) compared to the NI Average of 21.8% and 29.5% respectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETi) Chief Inspector's Report 2016-18 raised a number of key points in relation to learning and achieving. The report highlighted that FSM eligible pupils continue to underperform in relation to those not entitled. Boys are still significantly underperforming girls. It was also identified that too many children miss school as a result to suspension or expulsion. In 2016-17, 4,048 pupils in NI of compulsory school age were suspended with 286 of these being primary school aged children. The proportion of boys being issued with suspension is approximately three times that of girls. Another key point raised by the Inspector was that too many young people are leaving school and entering training with low levels of attainment.

There are a total of 68 Nursery, Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools in Ards and North Down. This includes; 6 Nursery schools, 47 Primary schools, 12 Post-Primary schools and 3 Special schools.

Of these, 23 are located in a rural setting - 20 are Primary schools and 3 are post-Primary schools.

Data from the Education, Skills and Training Domain shows that the SOA's in the top 20% most deprived areas where schools leavers were not achieving at least 5 GCSE's (including English and Maths) are; Donaghadee North 1, Ballywalter 2, Bryansburn 1, Loughview 1, Whitespots 2, Donaghadee North 2, Scrabo 2, Carrowdore 2, Ballymagee 2, Comber North 2, Ballycrochan 3, Portaferry 1, Crawfordsburn and Comber West 2.

The proportion of those leaving school age 16/17 and 18 and not entering education, training or employment within the top 20% areas are from the following SOA's; Bryansburn 1, Loughview 2, Millisle 2, Whitespots 1, Glen 2, Portavogie 1 and Groomsport.

In terms of comparable rates of deprivation on the Employment Domain rank, Scrabo 2, Glen 1, Central, Donaghadee South 1 and Portaferry 2, are within the top 20%.

The numbers of Newcomer pupils attending schools in Ards and North Down is lowest across all LGD areas with only 358 Newcomer children and young people attending schools in the Ards and North Down area.

It is also worth noting statistics in relation to absenteeism at post primary schools. High levels of absenteeism has a major impact on young people's learning and achievement of academic qualifications. Across Ards and North Down there are 17 SOA's that are within the top 20% of absenteeism ranking in NI with Ballywalter 2 being the highest ranked 9.

These statistics are important as they provide a guide as to where youth services should be targeted. Resources in Ards and North Down need to be targeted to areas of deprivation in relation to qualifications, employment and school absenteeism as outlined above.

Three quarters (75%) of young people surveyed by Youth Services identified that Youth Services in their area offered opportunities to learn and take part in new experiences. However whilst this is a positive statistic 5% of young people felt that they do not have the opportunity to learn and achieve and 20% don't know if youth services can provide opportunities to learn and achieve.

Across all the age bands surveyed there was a strong recommendation that youth service programmes should be accredited – 67% of 9-13 year olds, 77% of 14-18 year olds and 71% of 19-25 year olds. This demonstrates that young people want programmes offered by the Youth Service to have currency and can provide added value to their chosen careers or future employment.

Across the three age bands young people recommended that Youth Services should offer education programmes and lifeskills programmes which were both within the top three answers provided across all respondents. There was a slight variation with the 9-13's who also recommended outdoor learning programmes whilst the 14-18's and 19-25's also identified volunteering opportunities within their top three answers.

Across both urban and rural respondents the top three answers were lifeskills programmes, education programmes and outdoor learning programmes.

Youth workers identified that the top three opportunities the Youth Service should be providing for young people to help them learn and achieve is through Lifeskills programmes, volunteering opportunities and outdoor learning activities.

Whilst young people in Ards and North Down appear to be performing relatively well in comparison to the NI average for GCSE qualifications, it has been recognised that in particular young men from Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist (PUL) communities are not achieving academically compared to young men from other communities. A study carried out by the Community Relations Council (2014) identified that Protestant boys in NI are seriously underachieving with only Roma and Traveller children getting poorer results. Dr Paul Nolan warned that there would be long term consequences if action was not taken 'They are being locked out of employment. Even if we get investment into places like east Belfast, these kids will not be able to get jobs because they won't have the qualifications'.

As Ards and North Down is mainly a PUL Council area with a number of communities experiencing disadvantage attention therefore needs to be paid to support young Protestant males to achieve and address

key barriers to learning. Providing opportunities to gain accredited qualifications through the non-formal education sector may support these young men, increasing opportunities for further training, education and employment.

At a recent Stakeholder Event which focused on supporting young people's learning, young people identified that they were keen to obtain qualifications through non formal education programmes in the Youth Service. Young people wanted to be co-creators of programmes – co-designing, reviewing and reporting on their own learning needs. The use of creative arts and outdoor learning were identified as preferred methods to engage those who are excluded or disengaged from formal educations.

In the Health Foundations recent report “A Healthy Foundation for the Future” appropriate skills and qualifications is one of the 4 key assets needed to make a smooth transition to adulthood. The report challenges service providers to better match skills to the career aspirations of young people. In the final part of the report exploring how the wider system and policy context shape young people's experiences key questions are asked to improve outcomes for young people.

- How can organisations translate pockets of good practice and make them work as part of a complete system
- In a fast changing world where can young people access appropriate advice and guidance
- What are the impacts of siloed decision-making on other parts of the system
- How can outcomes that are difficult to count be measured and valued
- How can the system pull together to ensure that no one is at a disadvantage

Young people have stated that the results driven culture in schools can be a major source of stress and anxiety and that both the Higher Education and Youth service pathways are equally valid routes helping young people transition successfully. Young people commented that “having authentic and personalised support can be transformational in building confidence and enabling young people to take positive steps in areas such as work, housing and relationships.

# Good Relations

# Area of Enquiry 3: Good Relations

## Key Facts

- There were a total of 2,456 incidences of hate crime recorded in Northern Ireland between April 2018 and March 2019.
  - Racist incidences 1,095 (Ards and North Down 13 incidences).
  - Homophobic incidences 287 (Ards and North Down 6 incidences).
  - Sectarian incidences 891 (Ards and North Down 10 incidences).
  - Disability incidences 97 (Ards and North Down N/A).
  - Faith/Religion incidences 46 (Ards and North Down N/A).
  - Transphobic incidences 40 (Ards and North Down N/A).
- 358 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in Ards and North Down.
- 5,051 children and young people have a Special Educational Need or a disability.
- According to the Office of National Statistics, 4.2% of young people in the UK aged 16-24 identify as either Lesbian, gay or bisexual. In Ards and North Down this equates to approximately 650 young people.
- In 2018/19 4,175 young people participated in 123 T:BUC camps programmes.

## Why is this measure important?

In Northern Ireland, Good Relations is about promoting better relationships between people from different political, religious and racial backgrounds, tackling sectarianism and racism and promoting cultural diversity and inclusion. Good relations seeks to promote mutual understanding, positive cross-community relations and respect for cultural traditions.

The Northern Ireland Executive Good Relations strategy Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) sets out a range of actions and commitments for government departments, communities and individuals who will work together to build a united community and achieve change against four key strategic priorities: Our Children and Young People; Our Shared Community; Our Safe Community; and Our Cultural Expression. This strategy is designed to ensure that the development of positive relationships and structures that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of our society will promote respect, equity and allow citizens to embrace all forms of diversity.

The Good Relations strategy in Northern Ireland is about instilling the values of fairness, equality and respect and improving the quality of life for everyone who lives here.

## What are the factors that can negatively impact on Good Relations in Northern Ireland?

Following years of conflict, Northern Ireland has made great strides towards maintaining a peaceful society. Despite this, there are still a number of factors which ensure that community tensions, polarisation and segregation remain. Politics in Northern Ireland are polarised and many people in Northern Ireland experience some forms of residential, educational, environmental and social segregation.

Where children and young people grow up impacts on their education, who they socialise with and their friendship groups. There are still many single identity areas in Northern Ireland which encounter legacy issues and experience sectarianism. A recent report noted that sectarianism is more widespread in working

class areas.<sup>11</sup> These areas are characterised by social housing and communities affected by division often suffer poverty and deprivation, lack political and community leadership, have limited aspirations and opportunities and have few opportunities to mix with children and young people from other backgrounds. These areas have also been negatively affected by austerity and welfare reform and this economic uncertainty can lead to intolerance, crime and social unrest.

Northern Ireland also has significant numbers of interface areas where inter-community tensions exist. These areas often have weak community infrastructure and children and young people growing up in these areas are more likely to have lower educational attainment, poor career opportunities and engage in anti-social behaviour. Paramilitary attacks are on the increase and growing numbers of young people are being punished and recruited. Many rural areas also demonstrate separate living patterns, although these are not formally recognised as interface areas.

Northern Ireland now has a much more diverse population. There are growing numbers living here who were born outside Northern Ireland, growing numbers of young people identifying as LGBTQ, and children and young people from other marginalised or Section 75 groups who are subject to bullying, racism and intolerance.

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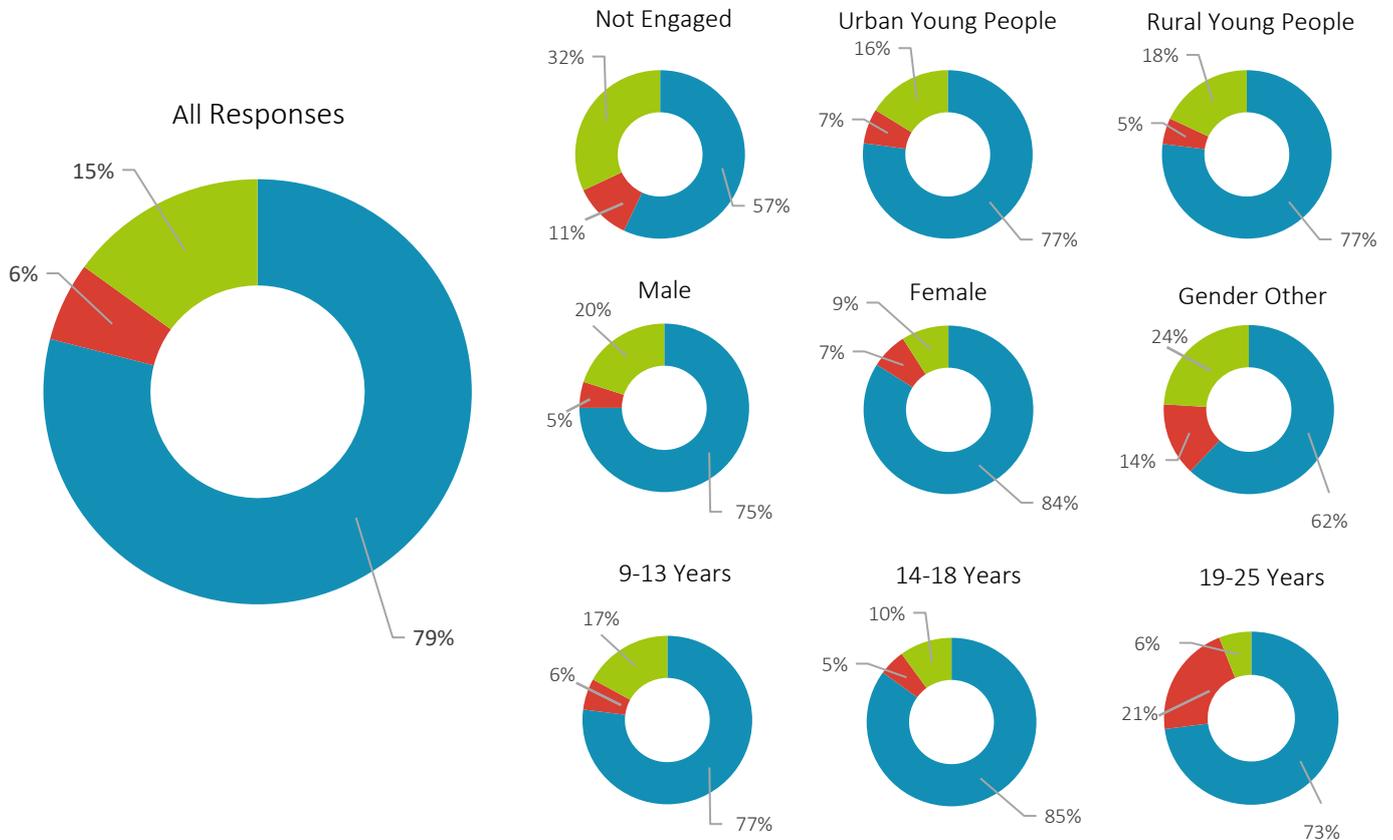
<sup>11</sup> Sectarianism in Northern Ireland – a Review. [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/410227/A-Review-Addressing-Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/410227/A-Review-Addressing-Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland_FINAL.pdf)

# Survey Findings – Good Relations

■ Yes   
 ■ No   
 ■ Don't Know

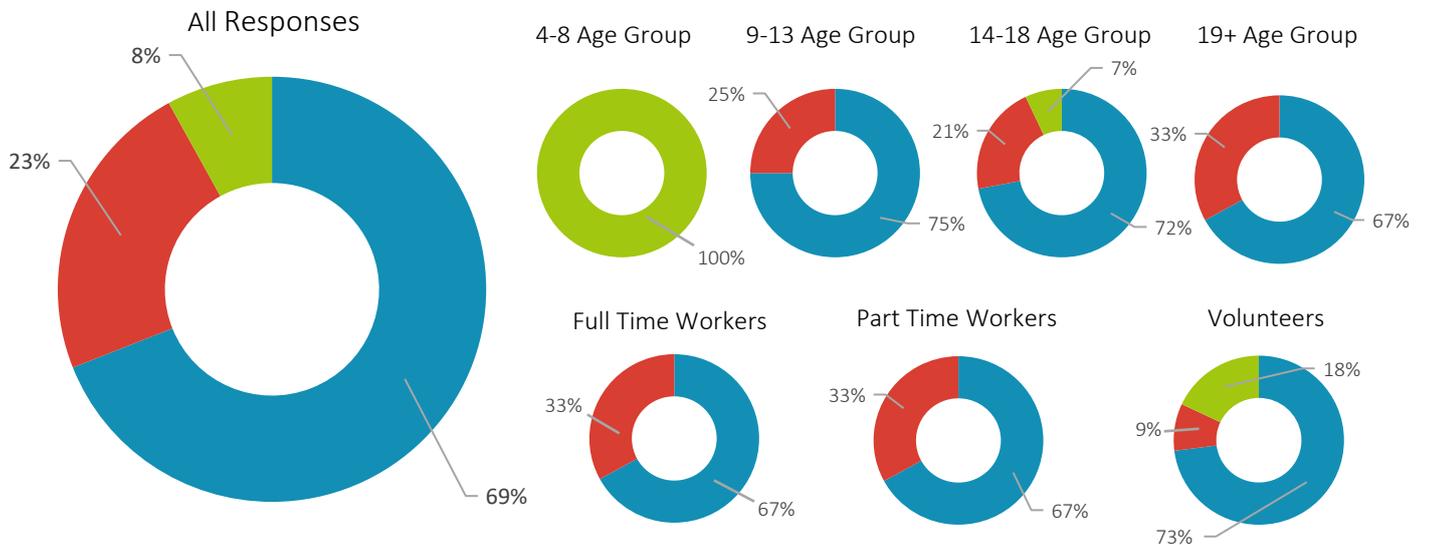
## Young People

Do young people have opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds in your area?



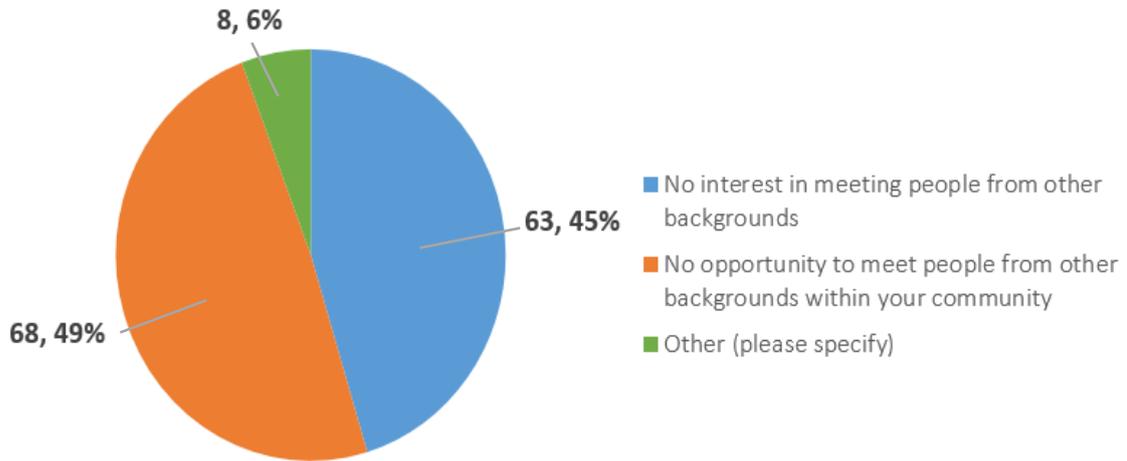
## Youth Workers

Do young people have opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds in your area?



## Young People

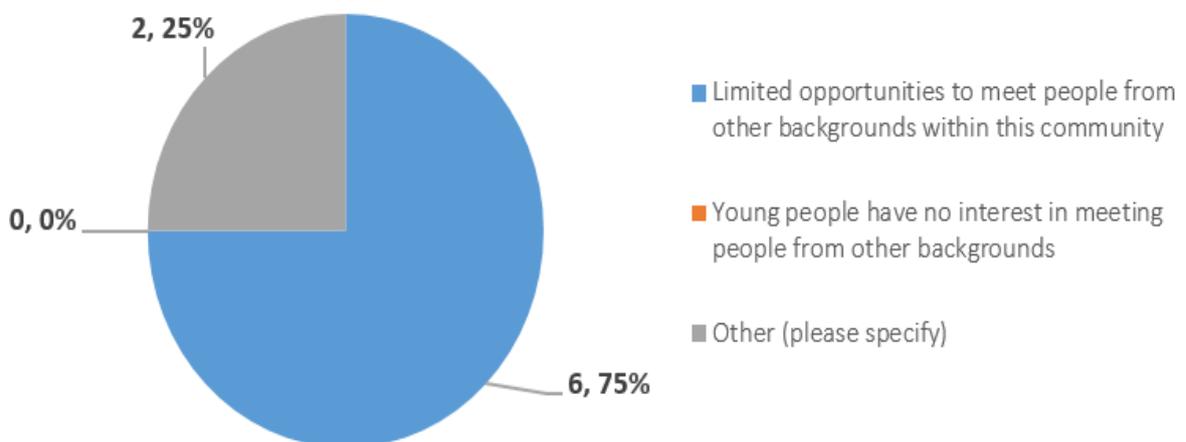
Good Relations - Reasons you believe why you do not have these opportunities?



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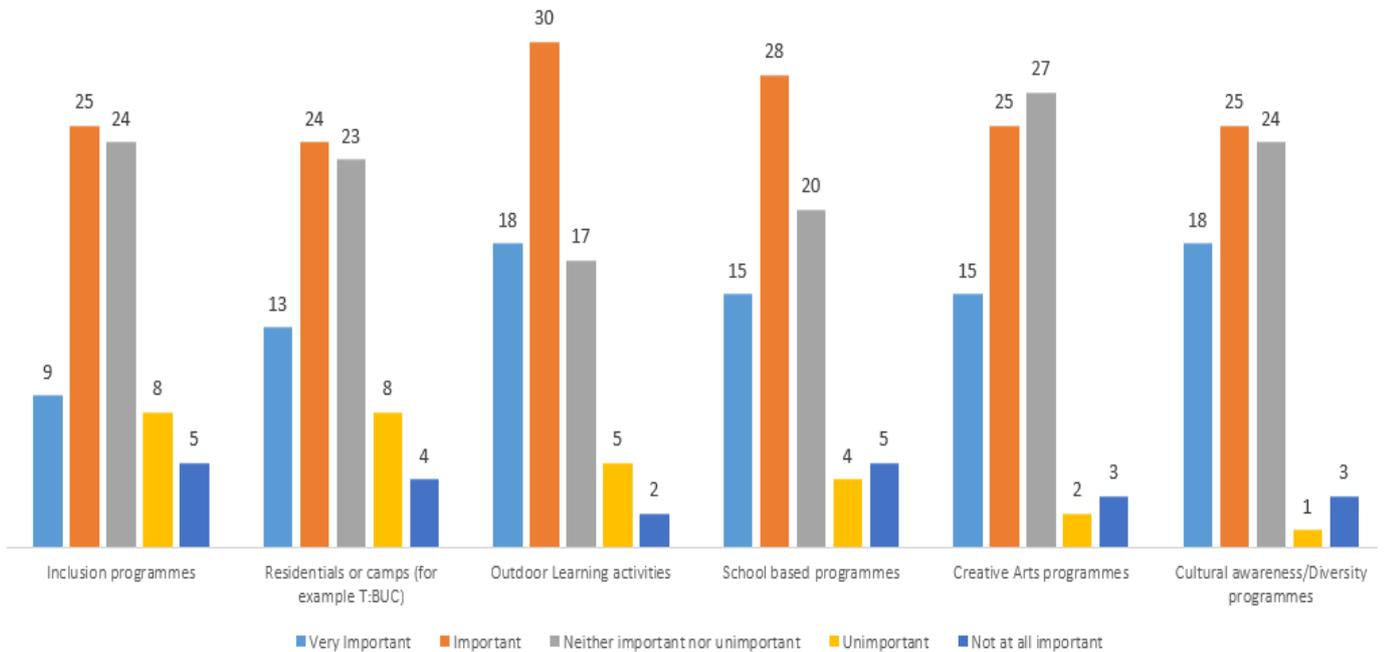
## Youth Workers

Good Relations – Reason you believe why Young People do not have these opportunities?



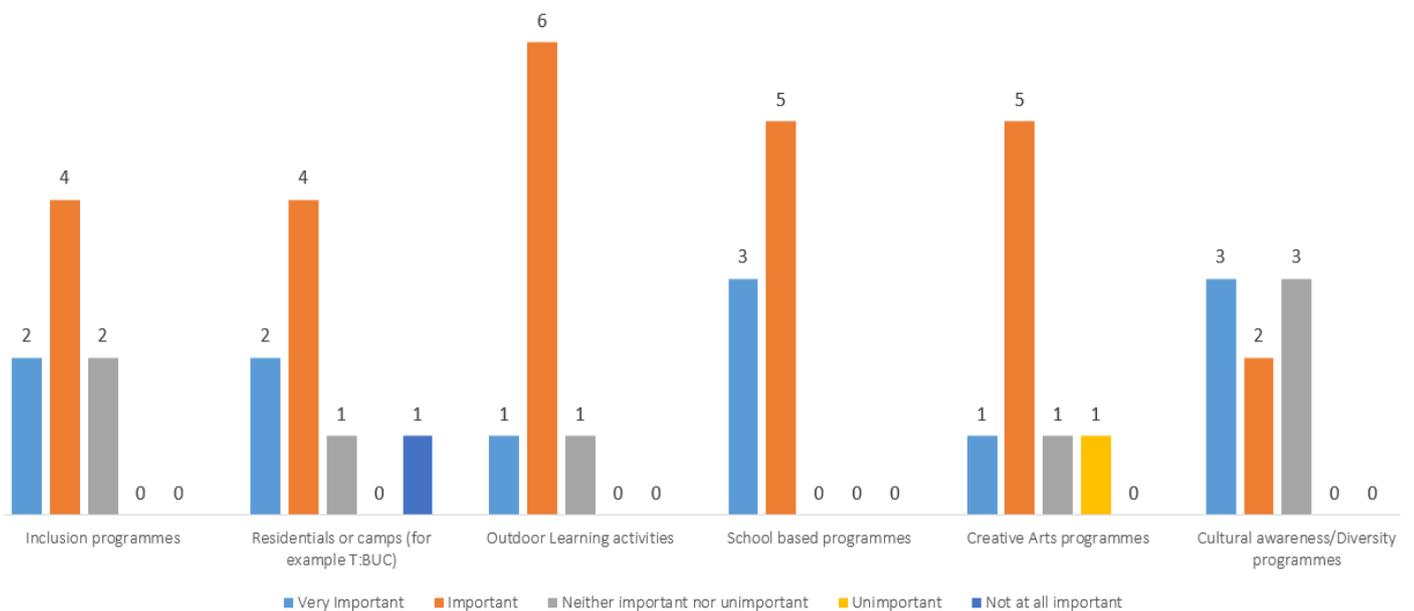
## Young People

**Good Relations** -What Opportunities would you like Youth Services in your area to provide so you can meet people from other backgrounds?



## Youth Workers

**Good Relations** –What Opportunities should Youth Services in your area provide so that young people can meet others from different backgrounds?



## Public Consultation Summary of Responses

- Youth Services should be responding to identified need regarding Good Relations.
- There should be more opportunities for cross community work.
- Better promotion of Youth Service programmes, particularly TBUC, in schools to broaden the opportunities for young people who may not be engaged in Youth Services.
- More culturally diverse programmes are needed beyond the traditional Protestant/Catholic programmes.
- More collaboration between statutory agencies to deliver good relations programmes particularly in the areas of cultural awareness, diversity and creative arts.
- There needs to be an emphasis on building relationships and this may not necessarily be through programmes.
- There needs to be more opportunities for young people to meet other young people in an informal manner.

## Local Advisory Group Consultation Summary of Responses

- There needs to be more opportunities for young people to meet in schools in an informal manner to build relationships and not necessarily always about programmes
- The Youth Service is clearly having an impact through its good relations work and this needs to continue

## Discussion

Whilst good relations is not formally defined in legislation, the Equality Commission has developed the following working definition to support the development of Good Relations in Northern Ireland - *'The growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'*.<sup>12</sup>

The Northern Ireland Executive's strategy, Together Building United Communities (T:BUC) promotes good relations in Northern Ireland that challenges sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance. It celebrates cultural diversity finding ways for everyone to live, study, work and socialise together without feeling threatened. The T:BUC Strategy, reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

Statistics from the Executive Office report that 70% of children and young people in Northern Ireland had been involved in projects with other schools, 60% had shared classes and 48% had shared sports facilities or equipment. However, less than half of all children and young people (46%), believe that relations between Catholics and Protestants were better than they were five years ago.

Overall 79% of respondents from Ards and North Down identified that they had opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds. Across the age bands the 14-18 year olds had the most opportunities to meet with young people from different backgrounds (85%). The 9-13 year olds were next with 77% of respondents noting this and only 73% of the 19-25's indicated that they had opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds. 6% of respondents felt that they did not have the opportunity to meet and socialise with people who were different and 15% were not sure.

When asked why they did not mix and socialise with people from other backgrounds 45% of respondents indicated that they had 'no interest' and 49% indicated that they had 'no opportunity to do so'.

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<sup>12</sup> Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2008, Promoting Good Relations, ECNI, Belfast.

When asked what opportunities the Youth Service could provide that would enable them to meet people from different backgrounds the overall top three answers were; outdoor learning activities, cultural awareness programmes and creative arts programmes. There was a slight variation across the responses based on age bands. For example both the 9-13 and 14-16 year olds identified that outdoor learning activities was their number one preferred option and their second preferred option was school based programmes. The third top answer for the 9-13's was cultural awareness programmes and for the 14-18's creative arts.

Whilst the 19-25 year olds also suggested cultural awareness programmes and outdoor learning opportunities within their top three answers they also recommended residential or camps as being important or very important.

Slightly more urban (81%) young people had more opportunities to meet others from different backgrounds compared to their rural peers (77%). Again both groups identified outdoor learning opportunities and school based programmes within the top three answers but urban young people also suggested creative arts and rural young people cultural awareness programmes.

Whilst 69% of youth workers identified that young people have opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds in Ards and North Down, almost a quarter (23%) of youth workers identified that they do not, whilst 8% did not know. When asked as to why they felt young people did not have the opportunity to mix three quarters (75%) of youth workers felt that this was because there are limited opportunities to do so. No youth workers identified that it was because there was no interest however a quarter (25%) cited a range of 'other' reasons. Youth workers believe that school based programmes, cultural awareness/diversity programmes, outdoor learning activities and inclusion programmes are the best means by which to provide opportunities for young people to meet however creative arts programmes and residential or camps were also regarded as appropriate responses to achieve more integration.

As a PUL majority Council with a strong Ulster Scots culture, there are limited opportunities for Protestant young people to meet with (Catholic, Nationalist or Republican) CNR young people on a daily basis. Shared Education initiatives within schools has created a range of opportunities however housing and schools remain segregated and contributes to a lack of knowledge of others.

Strong paramilitary influences also remain with a number of loyalist communities across Ards and North Down. Even within these communities there can be different paramilitary groups. For example in one community it is reported that there are no less than five loyalist paramilitary groupings. Tensions between these differing groups can also impact on community cohesion and therefore opportunities for young people to have friendships with 'other' young people even across Loyalist communities can be difficult.

Within Protestant communities there continues to be a strong tradition of cultural expression through the marching season culminating in the 12th of July celebrations. Intra community tension poses a risk to young people at this time in terms of their personal safety and wellbeing. Focused work is necessary to support young people during this period.

It may also be prudent to be cautious regarding the term 'different backgrounds' in relation to this survey. Almost 80% of young people identified that they have opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with young people different backgrounds however it is quite possible for this to be interpreted by young people within communities to referring to estates or geographical areas.

PSNI statistics in relation to hate crime shows that there has been an increase in the number of racist incidents. In the period October 2017 – October 2018 there were 52 racist incidents recorded in Ards and North Down and between October 2018 and October 2019 there were 63, an increase of 11. Information on racist crimes also show an increase during this same period with 33 racist crimes being recorded in 17/18 increasing to 38 in 18/19. Whilst the number of newcomer children is relatively small (358) in comparison to other Council areas across NI work is still needed to be done to enable greater integration and appreciation of diversity.

Between 2017 and 2019 there was also an increase in Homophobic incidents in Ards and North Down (from 12-15). The total number of homophobic crimes during this period remained the same (6 crimes per year).

Sectarian incidents also saw an increase from 2017-2019 with 23 being recorded in 17/18 and 28 being recorded in 18/19. The number of sectarian crimes however reduced in this period from 18 to 13.

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/2019-20/q2/hate-motivation-bulletin-sept-19pdf>



# Participation

# Area of Enquiry 4: Participation

## Key Facts

- The overall attendance figures for schools in Ards and North Down in 2017/18 was 93.9%.
- 4,069 pupils were suspended from schools in Northern Ireland in 2017/18. (3,199 male pupils (78.6%), 870 female pupils (21.4%).)
- Approximately 3,350 children and young people from Ards and North Down live in a deprived area.
- Approximately 8,100 children and young people from Ards and North Down live in a rural area.
- According to the last census (2011) there are 8,000 young carers in Northern Ireland.
- 358 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in the Ards and North Down.
- Whilst there are no specific numbers for Ards and North Down, the most recent figures reveal that 498 Looked After Children were supported by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Ards and North Down.
- According to the Office of National Statistics, 4.2% of young people in the UK aged 16-24 identify as either Lesbian, gay or bisexual. In Ards and North Down Ireland this equates to approximately 650 young people.
- From January-March 2019 there were 20,000 young people (aged 16-24) in Northern Ireland who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This represents 10.2% of all young people aged 16-24.
- 9,045 children and young people from Ards and North Down were registered with a youth group in 2017/18.
- Figures from EA Youth Services reveal that there are currently 2,034 young people volunteering.
- Less than 5 Traveller children and young people attending schools in Ards and North Down
- Less than 5 Roma children and young people attending schools in Ards and North Down

## Why is this measure important?

Participation is the process whereby children and young people can influence decisions about their lives and directly contribute to decisions that affect them. Participation enhances children and young people's personal, social and political development, provides practical experiences and teaches them how to behave responsibly.<sup>13</sup>

Participation can stimulate an awareness of wider societal issues that can negatively affect their local communities. As well as giving children and young people a voice, active participation ensures that they are valued within their own communities and are part of the decision making process that can bring about solutions to the challenges they face.

Participation comes in many forms: attending school or a youth centre; involvement in social activities and clubs; playing sport, music or cultural activities; youth leadership, volunteering and peer mentoring. Meaningful participation can enhance a young person's sense of belonging, connectedness and feeling of being valued, which can contribute to positive mental health.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.niccy.org/media/1330/niccy-advice-benefits-of-engagement-with-children-and-young-people-dec-14.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://mypeer.org.au/design-implementation/youth-participation-2/benefits-of-youth-participation/>

## What are the factors that can negatively impact on a young person's participation?

Research indicates that there are substantial barriers to participation for certain groups of children and young people, particularly the most marginalised and vulnerable.<sup>15</sup> The reasons are many and varied. In some cases there may be a lack of Youth Services or other adequate local alternatives in a community. Children and young people may be disaffected from schools and fail to engage in education and will therefore lack the necessary skills to engage in wider society.

In some instances children and young people may disengage due to social, economic, cultural or language barriers and challenges, for example, living in a low income household or in a deprived community, growing up in a rural area, being a newcomer, a child or young person Looked After or having a disability or Special Educational Need.

Participative activities may be inaccessible due to their location, lack of transport, cost implications or limited digital connectivity. Many children and young people living in rural areas face these challenges. Opportunities to participate may conflict with school or other commitments or be inaccessible due to a disability. It is also possible that children and young people may feel they are not well enough supported or lack motivation and confidence to participate.

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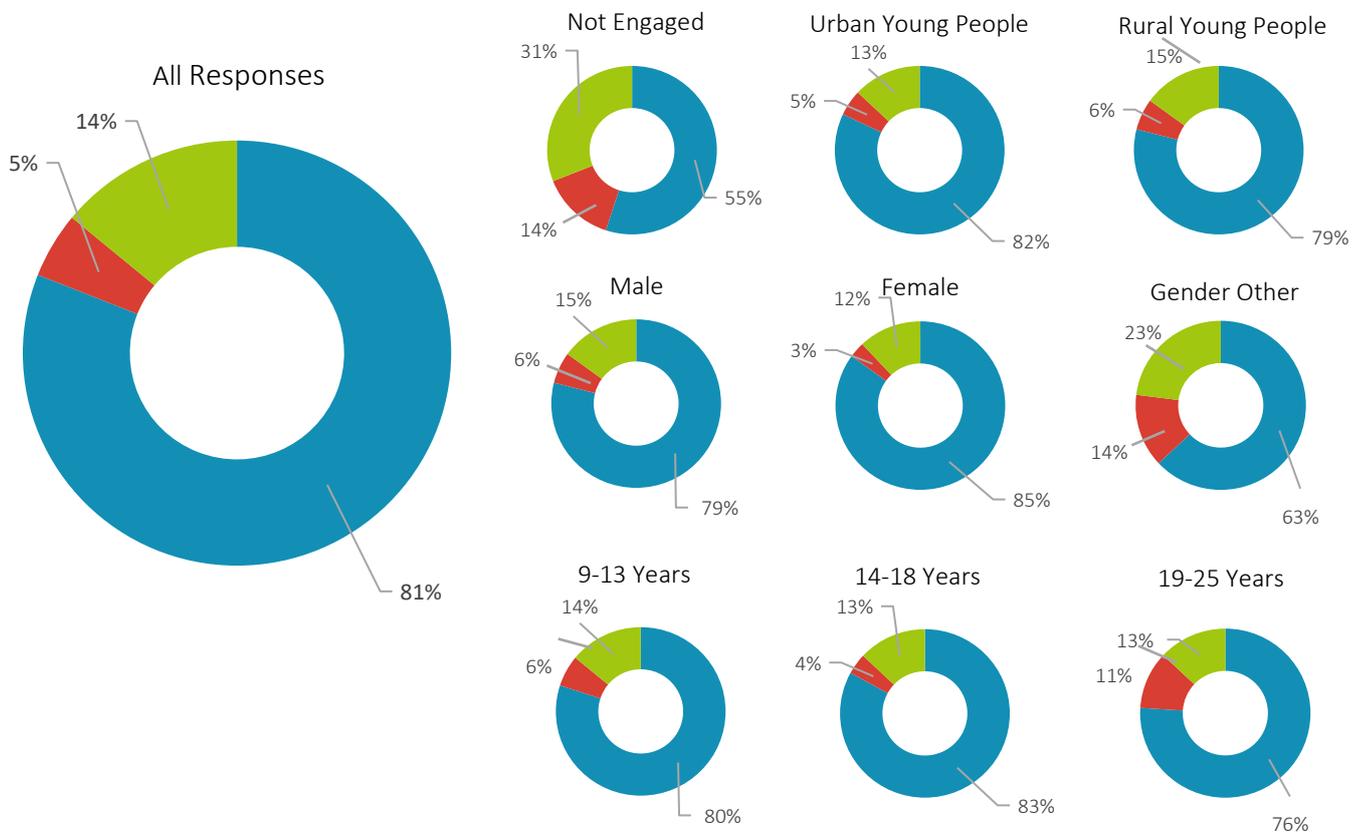
<sup>15</sup>Holdsworth, R. Stokes, H. Blanchard, M. & Mohamed, M. 2006, Civic Engagement and Young people in the city of Melbourne, Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne.

# Survey Findings – Participation

■ Yes 
 ■ No 
 ■ Don't Know

## Young People

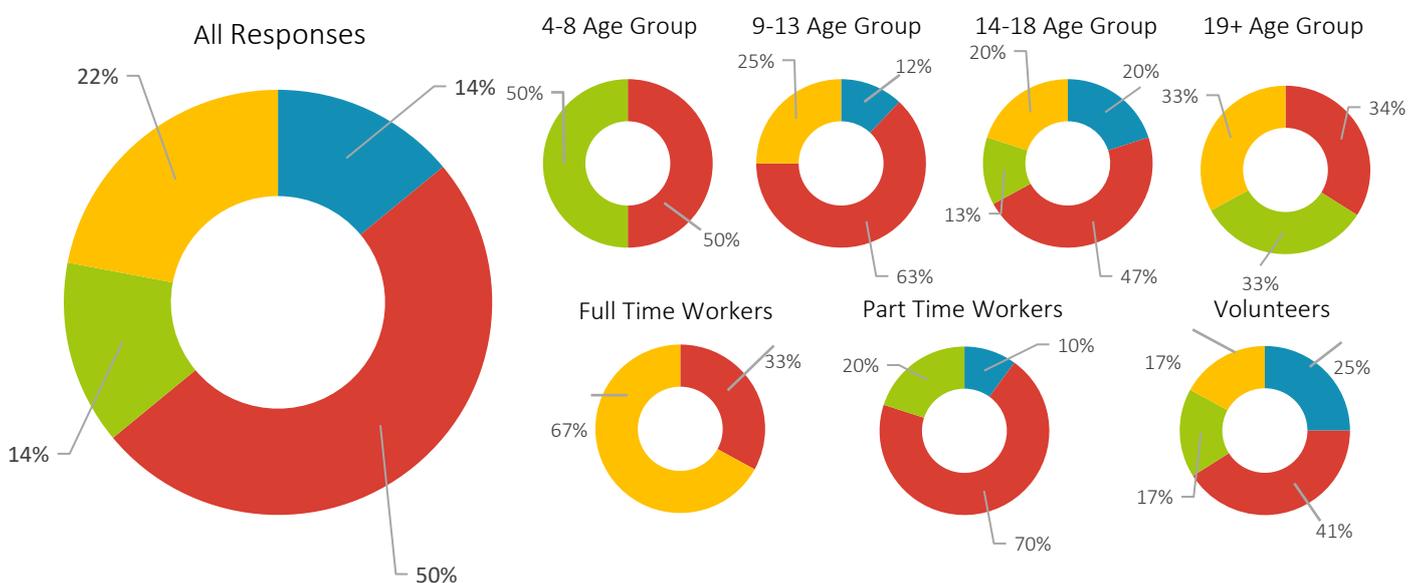
Do you have opportunities to take part in Youth Services in your area?



■ Not at all 
 ■ Often 
 ■ Sometimes 
 ■ Very Often

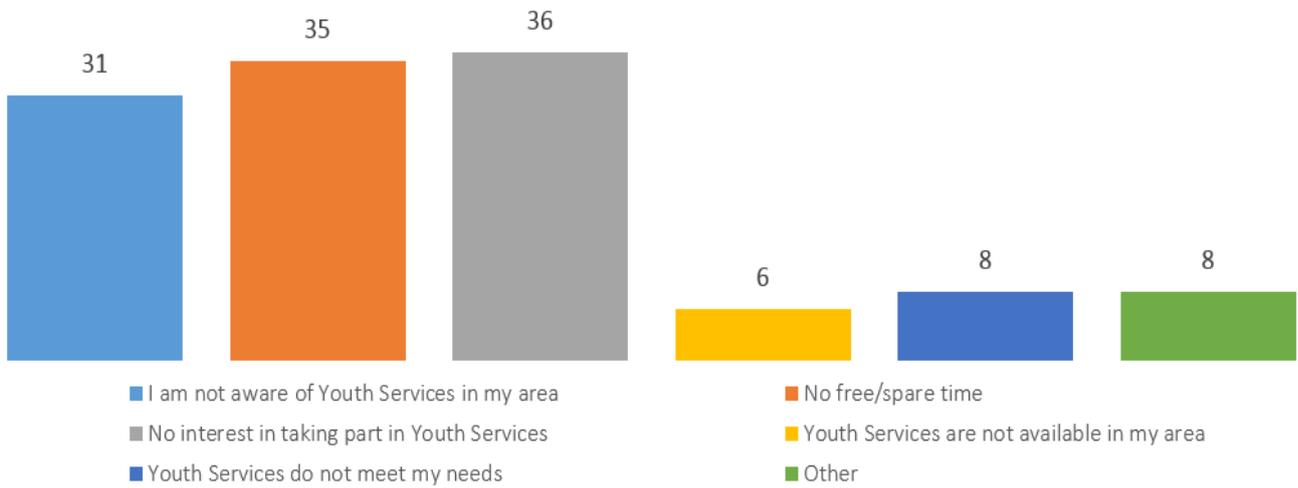
## Youth Workers

Please rate how often young people in your area have opportunities to participate in Youth Services

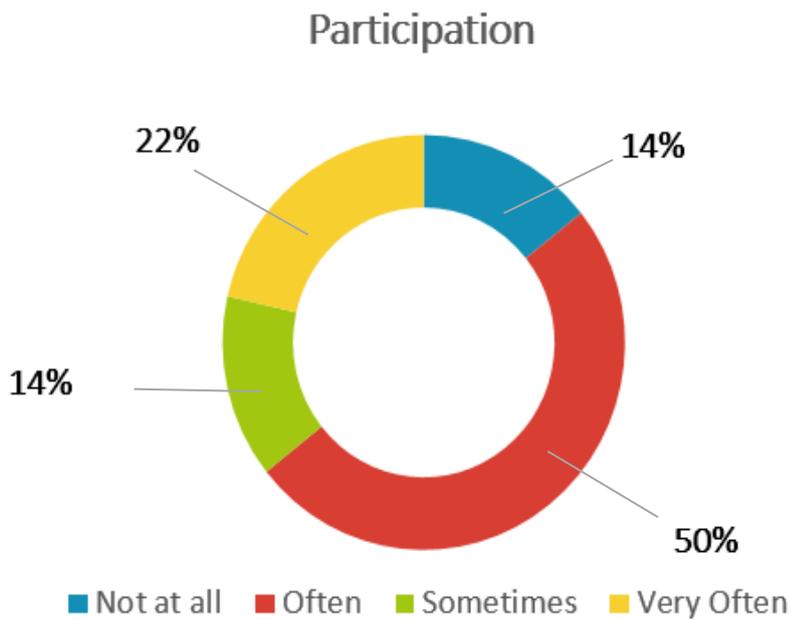


## Young People

Participation - Reason you believe you do not have opportunity to take part in

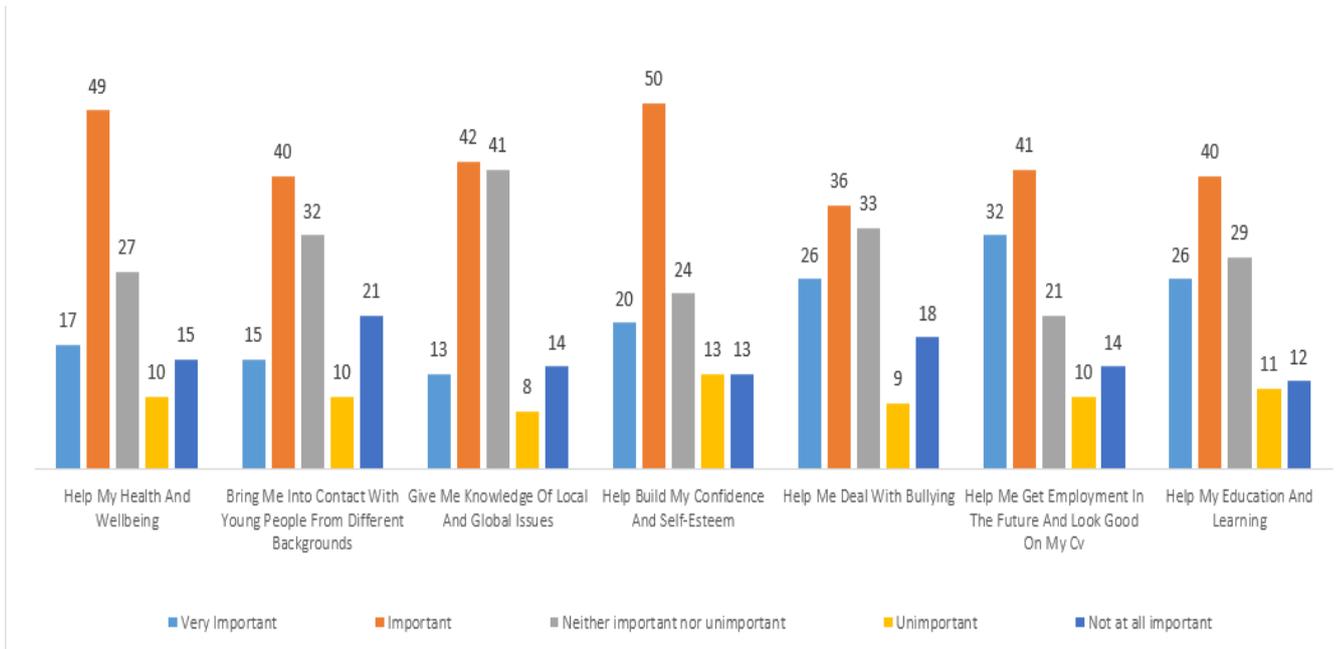


## Youth Workers



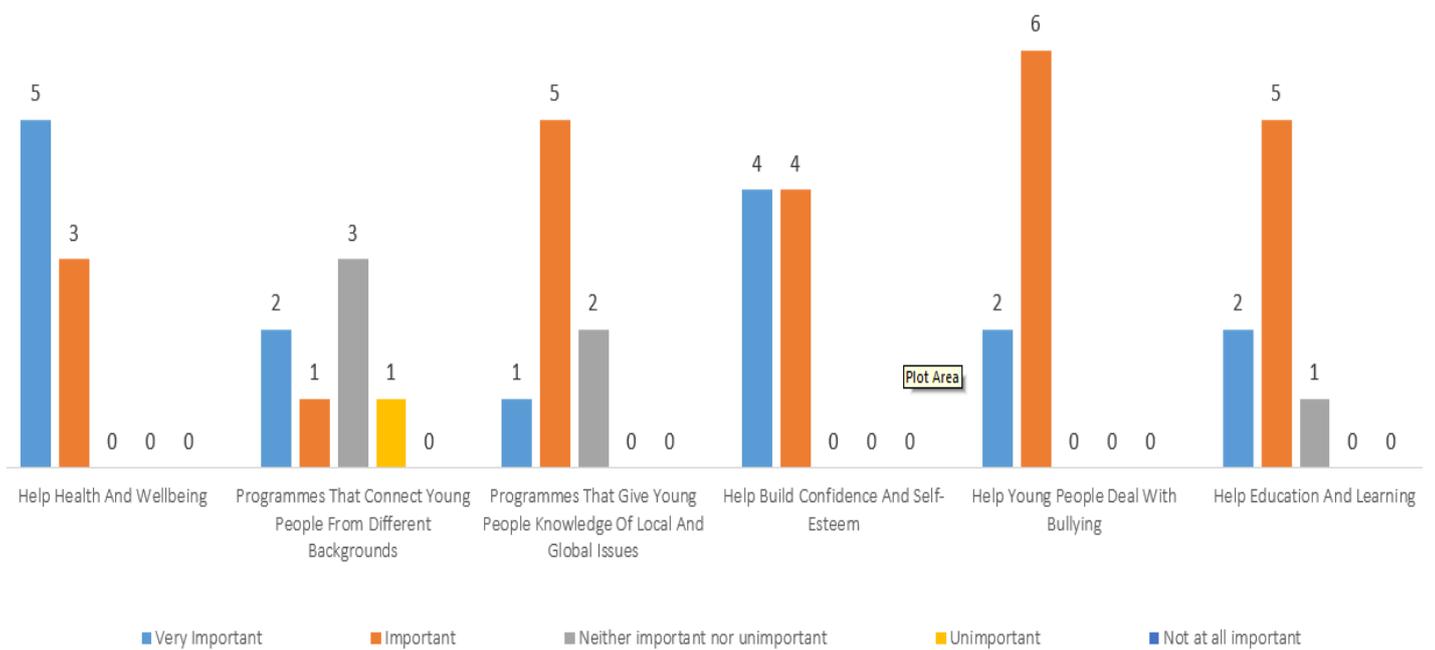
## Young People

Participation - What opportunities would you like Youth Services in your area to provide that would encourage you to become involved?



## Youth Workers

Participation - What opportunities do you think Youth Services in your area should provide that would encourage young people to become involved?



## Public Consultation Summary of Narrative Responses

- There are a range of youth clubs for both children and teenagers in the Ards and North Down area.
- Programmes are needed to prepare young people for independent living, particularly focusing on confidence building to help young people in their search for work/future careers.
- The Youth Service should be supporting young people to have a voice particularly on community issues and within local Borough Council.
- There needs to be an increase in awareness raising of the opportunities available for young people through Youth Services.
- There needs to be a promotion of the value of participation and outcomes associated with youth participation.
- Provide greater opportunities for young people to be involved in civic life and make a difference.

## Local Advisory Group Consultation Summary of Narrative Responses

- Ensuring young people are involved in civic participation is important
- Young people are not aware of the opportunities available to them. This needs to be addressed to ensure that they have access to the wide range of opportunities the youth service can provide
- Youth Services should ensure that young people's voices are heard by Council, taking on their views and opinions.
- There is a need to ensure young people are aware of the value of participation

## Discussion

One of the main barriers to participation can be a lack of financial resources. Not having enough money to participate in activities or programmes that have a cost can prevent young people from getting access to a range of services at a local level.

Of the 46,359 children and young people in Ards and North Down, 9,045 (20%) are currently registered and engaged in youth work. 3,350 young people live in a deprived area and 5,399 are entitled to Free School Meals. Figures relating to Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDAC) shows that 20 SOA's within Ards and North Down exceed the NI average for IDAC. In relation to the Income Domain Rank a number of SOA's within Ards and North Down fall within the top 20% across NI. These include; Scrabo 2, Glen 1, Central, Conlig 3 and Harbour 1.

Having a lack of financial resources can particularly impact young people that live in a rural area with higher costs associated for transport. Within Ards and North Down approximately 8,100 young people live in a rural area. Across SOA's eight have been identified within the top 20% in terms of deprivation due to access to services. These are; Portaferry 1, Kircubbin 1, Portavogie 2, Carrowdore 1, Carrowdore 2, Killinchy 1, Killinchy 2 and Lisbane 1.

42% of respondents from the Youth Service survey identified as being from a rural community.

It would appear from the Youth Service survey that there are good opportunities for young people to participate in Ards and North Down with 81% of young people identifying that they had the opportunity to take part in Youth Services in their area. This means that just under 20% of young people are missing out on Youth Service opportunities with 5% identifying that they did not have the opportunity and 14% indicating

that they did not know if they had the opportunity to participate in Youth Services in their area. Of those respondents that did not have the opportunity or didn't know, support with helping them gain employment and enhancing their CV was the top suggestion for encouraging them to become involved. This was closely followed by 'help with building confidence and self-esteem, help with their health and wellbeing help with education and learning and help with bullying. The top three answers across all the age bands were similar however there was a slight variation for the 19-25 year olds who also suggested opportunities to increase knowledge of local and global issues.

Respondents that were asked as to why they chose not to participate in Youth Services and the top three answers included; having no interest in youth services, having no free time and not being aware of Youth Services in my area.

Overall responses were similar across children and young people from urban and rural areas.

Youth workers were asked as part of the survey how often they felt young people had opportunities to participate in Youth Services in Ards and North Down. 22% felt that young people had opportunities to participate 'very often', 50% 'often' and 14% 'sometimes'. Youth workers identified that 14% of young people do not have opportunities to participate. When asked the most relevant reason for not participating, half (50%) of the youth workers identified that this was because young people were not aware of the Youth Services in their area. A quarter (25%) identified that it was due to young people have no interest and 12.5% was due to services not being available in the area or Youth Services not meeting need.

When youth workers were asked about what they thought Youth Services should deliver to encourage participation the top three answers were; Programmes to help with health and wellbeing, programmes to build confidence and self-esteem and programmes that help young people deal with bullying.

One of the challenges for Youth Services in Ards and North Down is making sure young people most in need have access to services. The difference in the numbers of young people entitled to FSM's and numbers of young people living in areas of deprivation need to be considered when targeting resources, therefore taking account of local knowledge and through using other statistical data.

There is also a need to ensure that there is delivery of both generic and targeted youth work. Young people need to have space to meet with their friends and build relationships in places that are safe and secure. This was particularly highlighted in recent Stakeholder events on 'The Emerging Needs of Children and Young People'. Young people were clearly articulating that they want safe spaces to go to where they can meet with their friends and access a range of opportunities through Youth Services. The Ards and North Down Locality Planning Groups Needs Assessment of 0-18 year olds also identified that there was a lack of activities for older teenagers and that there was a need for older young people to be more engaged in community activities, suitable to their needs to enable children and young people to develop a sense of community respect. There was also a clear recommendation from young people that they needed 'somewhere to hand out or have fun' and to enable them to reach their full potential the top answer was through the provision of weekend and evening programmes including residential experiences.

Pathways to support the development of young people into Peer Education and Leadership roles is key to help with the effective delivery of Peer Led programm

# Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity

# Area of Enquiry 5: Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity

## Key Facts

- Whilst there are no specific numbers for Ards and North Down, the most recent figures reveal that 498 Looked After Children were supported by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Ards and North Down.
- 358 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in Ards and North Down.
- 5,051 children and young people have a Special Educational Need or a Disability.
- According to the Office of National Statistics, 4.2% of young people in the UK aged 16-24 identify as either Lesbian, gay or bisexual. In Ards and North Down Ireland this equates to approximately 650 young people.
- Less than 5 Traveller children and young people attend schools in Ards and North Down.
- Less than 2 Roma children and young people attend schools in Ards and North Down.
- In April-June 2019 there were 20,000 young people (aged 16-24) in Northern Ireland who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This represents 10.2% of all young people aged 16-24.
- According to the Simon Community there are at least 6,000 homeless young people across Northern Ireland. (Homeless can mean living in unsuitable and unstable accommodation).<sup>16</sup>
- According to the last census (2011) there are 8,000 young carers in Northern Ireland.

## Why is this measure important?

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.<sup>17</sup>

Inclusion ensures that all children and young people regardless of their background are able to fully participate and access opportunities in all aspects of their lives. This is about ensuring that children and young people have access to services and resources that are accessible, safe and welcoming to all and that do not exclude anyone.

Diversity is the term used to describe an incredible range of human differences. It includes, but is not limited to, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, disability, religion or belief, national origin, and political beliefs. Diversity is about taking account of differences between people and groups of people and placing a positive value on and celebrating these differences.

Equality is not about treating everybody the same. It is about treating everybody fairly.<sup>18</sup> Equality of opportunity ensures that all children and young people have an equal chance to participate fully in society and to take up opportunities. Equality of opportunity also ensures that children and young people have an equal chance to reach their potential and be the best that they can be.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.simoncommunity.org/homelessness/knowledge-hub/homelessness-in-ni>

<sup>17</sup> Equalities Review (2007) Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review. Norwich: HMSO.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HB-Equalities.pdf>

## **What are the factors that can negatively impact on a young person experiencing prejudice and discrimination?**

There is a strong legislative framework which protects individuals and groups of people from discrimination, however inequalities persist. Whilst the majority of children and young people in Northern Ireland enjoy safe, happy and active lives, there are significant numbers of children and young people who experience discrimination and prejudice or face barriers because of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or even where they live. In some cases, young people may face multiple discrimination.

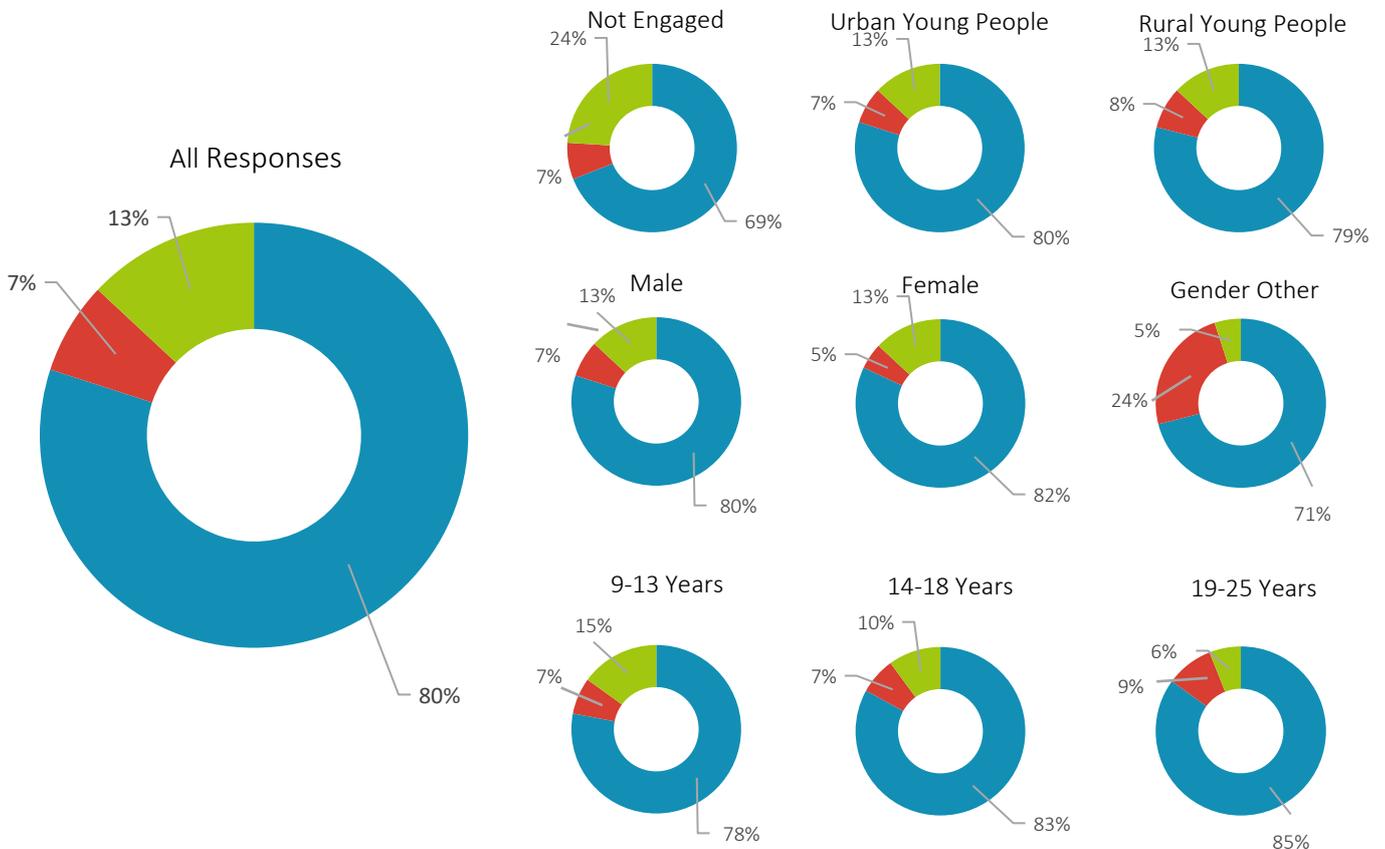
Children and young people experiencing prejudice and discrimination are less likely to feel part of a group and participate, withdraw from school and society, suffer poor mental health which can have a negative impact on their academic and social outcomes. Those most likely to encounter discrimination will include some of the following groups: Children and Young People Looked After, those with a Special Educational Need or a Disability, newcomers or those from a minority ethnic group, young carers, young people identifying as LGBTQ, young people excluded from school or at risk of exclusion, young people registered as NEET, victims or witnesses of domestic abuse, those at risk of offending, living in a deprived or rural area, homeless children and young people and school age mothers.

# Survey Findings – Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity

■ Yes   
 ■ No   
 ■ Don't Know

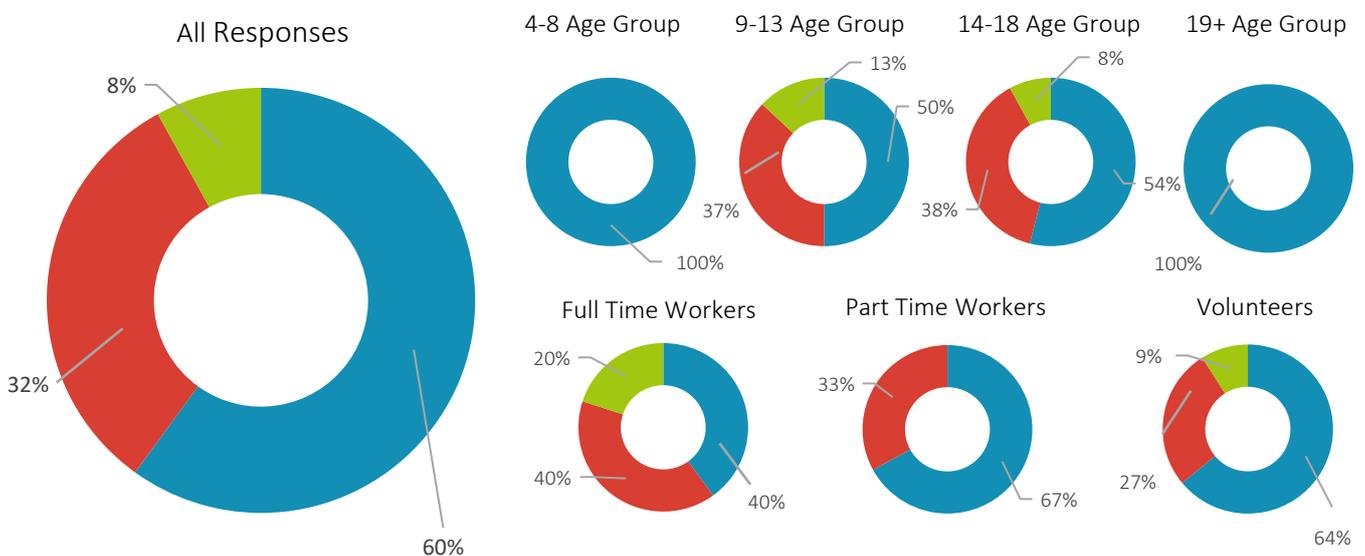
## Young People

Young people in your area have the same opportunities in life and are treated the same as other young people?



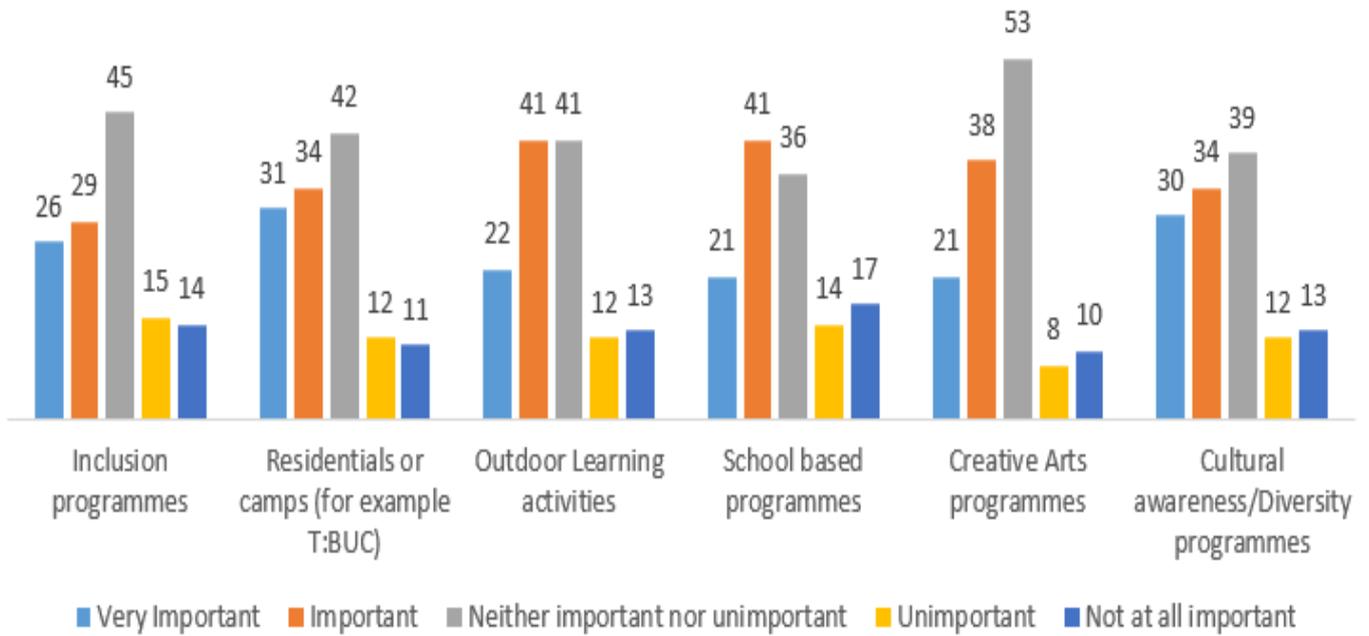
## Youth Workers

Young people in your area have the same opportunities in life and are treated the same as other young people?



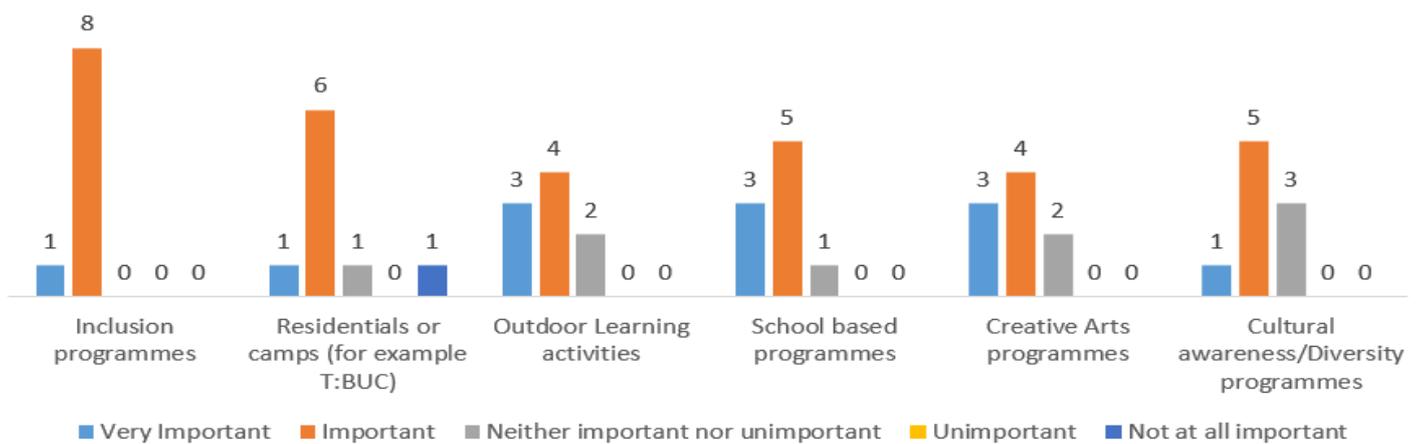
## Young People

**Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity** - What opportunities should Youth Services in your area provide so young people can feel more included?



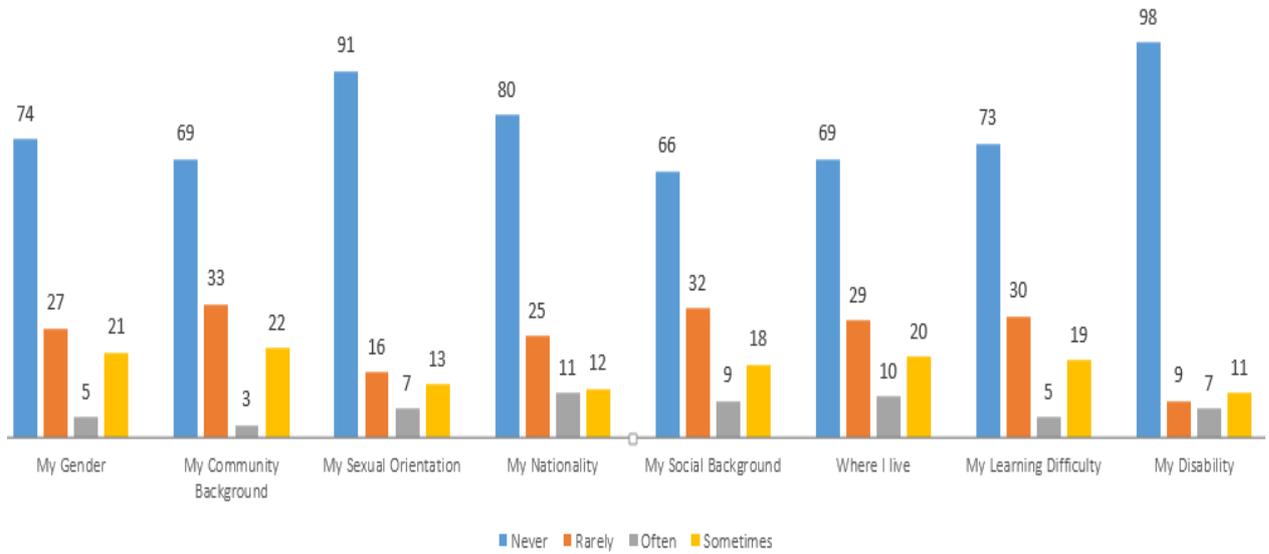
## Youth Workers

**Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity** - What opportunities should Youth Services in your area provide so young people can feel more included?



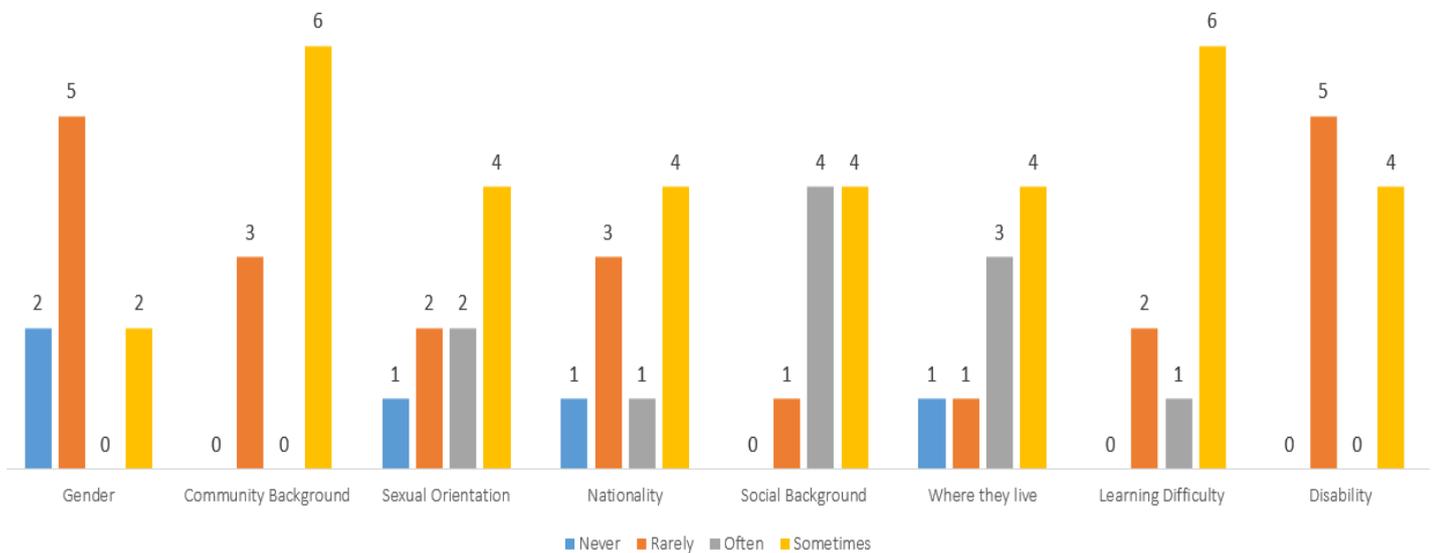
## Young People

Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity - I feel I am treated differently because



## Youth Workers

Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity - I feel Young people are treated differently because



## Public Consultation Summary of Narrative Responses

- There needs to be increased opportunities for young people from different communities to come together for camp programmes and Youth Services are best placed to do this.
- More opportunities also are required to enable young people to meet young people from different backgrounds on a more regular basis.
- Better collaboration with other organisations/ agencies on issues and what funding is available.
- Shared education opportunities are limited within schools – for a specific group of young people.
- Greater awareness is needed regarding language across different programme including when engaging with LGBTQ young people.

## Local Advisory Group Consultation Summary of Narrative Responses

- Youth Services should be promoting diversity and raising awareness of different programmes being delivered especially in relation to LGBTQ young people
- Youth Services are clearly addressing this issue and need to keep addressing the issues relation to inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity.

## Discussion

The Youth Service survey identified that overall 80% of young people surveyed in Ards and North Down felt that they had the same opportunities in life and are treated the same as other people. The responses were quite similar for both males and females with 80% of males and 82% of females reporting accordingly. This is quite a positive statistic and reassuring that the majority of young people feel included in Ards and North Down.

Of those respondents that felt that they did not have the same opportunities or were treated differently they cited a number of reasons. The top reason given was because of where they lived, followed by because of their social background and then because of their gender. The responses across the age bands varied with the 9-13's identifying it was because of their social background, community background and gender, 14-18's because of where they lived, nationality and gender and the 19-25's because of their learning difficulty, where they lived or their community background.

The responses therefore highlight that children young people can experience a range of reasons to feel they do not have the same opportunities as other or that they are treated differently from others.

Across urban and rural responses the top three answers were similar and both included; because of where they lived and because of their gender. The only difference within the top three answers was that young people from urban areas also identified that it was because of their learning difficulty and rural young people because of their social background.

Whilst the overall responses from young people were quite positive it is important to recognise that some young people do experience being treated differently.

Being treated differently because of where you live can be experienced by some young people, particularly those that come from disadvantaged communities or from particular housing estates. Conflict between communities can impact young people and the associations/friendships they have with peers.

Targeted work continues to be needed to reach marginalised groups of vulnerable children and young people in our society who experience discrimination and do not have the same levels of opportunity to access

education or the curriculum, Youth Services or other activities because of their particular situation, such as race, gender, religion, disability or where they live.

This includes work with young people with disabilities. Within Ards and North Down there are over 5,000 children and young people with a disability which is approximately 11% of the youth population. The Ards and North Down Locality Planning Group identified that almost a quarter of referrals to the Family Support Hub in 2017/18 were for children and young people with a disability. Support for young people to access services is key whether that is through mainstream provision or targeted programmes aimed at young people with additional needs.

Whilst the number of newcomer children and young people attending schools in Ards and North Down is relatively small (358) the Youth Service still needs to provide support to these young people to integrate into communities and provide spaces for all young people to learn about other cultures and faiths to prevent discrimination and prejudice and to promote inclusion and diversity.

Support to young people from the LGBTQ community is also important within the Ards and North Down area. Whilst there are no area specific statistics available, national statistics indicate that 4.2% of 16-24 year olds identify as LGBTQ. That equates to approx. 650 young people and this does not take into account LGBTQ young people under the age of 16.

Whilst support services for LGBTQ young people are mainly located in Belfast which is approx. 10-20 miles from those living in the Ards and North Down area, consideration should be given as to how LGBTQ young people can be supported at a local level through existing or targeted services.

The Youth Service survey also asked children and young people what they would like Youth Services to provide so they could feel more included the overall top three answers were; residential or camps, cultural identity/diversity programmes and creative arts programmes. There was however a slight variation across the age bands. All three groups of young people recommended cultural identity/diversity programmes within their top three answers but only the 9-13's and 14-18's identified residential or camps within their top three answers. The 9-13's also favoured outdoor learning activities whilst the 14-18's favoured creative arts programmes. Interestingly the 19-25 age group identified that school based programmes should also be used to help young people feel more included.

When respondents' feedback was analysed across urban and rural responses there were some differences identified. Urban young people chose cultural awareness/diversity programmes and inclusion programmes which were joint first choices with residential or camps, second and school based programmes as the third top answer. Rural young people chose residential or camps and outdoor learning as joint first choice with school based programmes and cultural awareness/diversity programmes joint second choice and third choice being creative arts programmes.

Youth workers however felt that that the Youth Service should provide school based programmes to ensure that young people feel more included and in joint second place youth workers chose creative arts programmes, outdoor learning activities and inclusion programmes. Their third preferred choice was cultural awareness/diversity programmes.

# Living in Safety & Stability

# Area of Enquiry 6: Living in Safety and Stability

## Key Facts

- Approximately 3,350 (7.2%) young people live in the most deprived areas of Ards and North Down.
- Approximately 8,100 (17.4%) young people in Ards and North Down live in a rural community.
- Whilst there are no specific numbers for Ards and North Down, the most recent figures reveal that 498 Looked after Children were supported by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Ards and North Down.
- The most recent figures reveal that there were 2,227 domestic abuse incidences in Ards and North Down.
- The total number of movements within the Juvenile Justice Centre for Ards and North Down in 2017/18 was 62.
- In 2017/18 a total of 7,715 days of custody was provided by the Juvenile Justice Centre in Northern Ireland.
- The total number of individual young people in custody in 2017/18 was 167 for Northern Ireland.)
- In April - June 2019 there were 20,000 young people (aged 16-24) in Northern Ireland who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This represents 10.2% of all young people aged 16-24.
- According to the Simon Community there are at least 6,000 homeless young people across Northern Ireland. (Homeless can mean living in unsuitable and unstable accommodation).
- According to the last census (2011) there are 8,000 young carers in Northern Ireland.

## Why is this measure important?

Children and young people experience their formative years through the relationships they form with their parents or guardians and other adult role models who support them. If these relationships provide safe, stable and nurturing environments then children and young people are more likely to develop both physically and emotionally. However, if these relationships are unstable or abusive then this can have a negative impact on a young person's physical and emotional health and development.

## What are the factors that can negatively impact on a young person living safely and securely?

Adverse childhood experiences can have a detrimental effect on a child or young person's personal and social development. As well as having negative consequences for the individual it can also impact on other children and young people in local communities. A recent study noted that a negative home environment can lead to a series of problems, including among others, poor language development, deficit in school readiness, later behavioural problems and mental health issues.<sup>19</sup>

There are a number of risk factors such as socio-economic, demographic, environmental and cultural influences which can directly impact on a child or young person. These range from instability in terms of parenting, their home environment, lack of a male role model, education and employment and can include negative transitions which they may experience, such as family relationships, including divorce or remarriage, moving home and school, neglect and witnessing or being the victims of domestic abuse.

<sup>19</sup>[http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/sites/all/files/databooks/TUCI\\_Data\\_Book\\_VII\\_2012.05\\_family.pdf](http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/sites/all/files/databooks/TUCI_Data_Book_VII_2012.05_family.pdf)

These negative influences on children or young people can have serious consequences for their future life chances. Vulnerable children and young people are more inclined to have behavioural problems, poor educational attainment and limited career prospects and poorer general and mental health. They are also likely to have limited personal resilience and engage in risk taking activity including alcohol and drug misuse, anti-social behaviour, inappropriate use of social media leading to child sexual exploitation, crime, gang involvement and are more susceptible to be influenced or threatened by paramilitaries.

Other consequences include, isolation, being bullied, homelessness, stigmatisation and social exclusion.

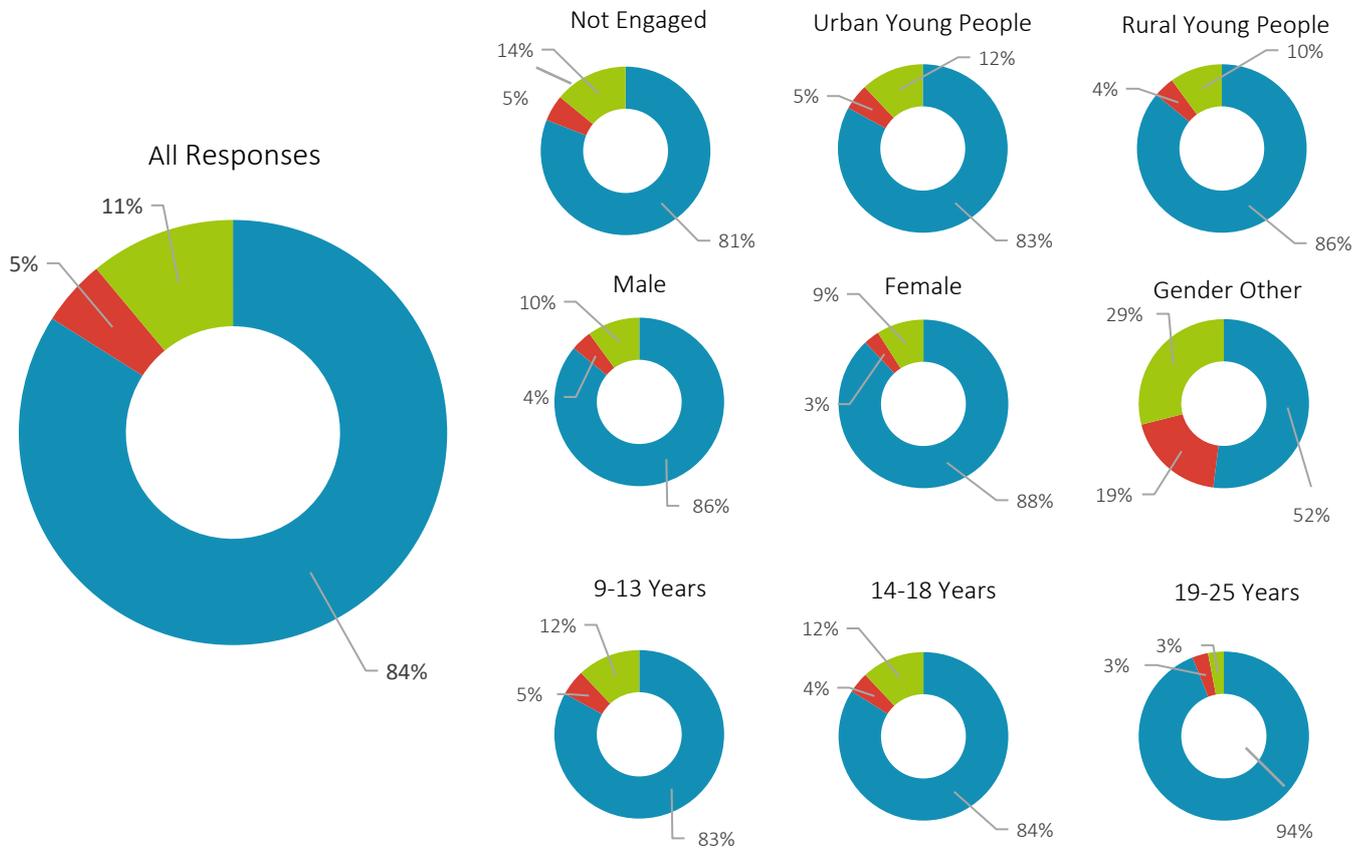
Children and young people from Section 75 groups are those most at risk of not living safely and securely.

# Survey Findings – Living in Safety and Stability

Yes No Don't Know

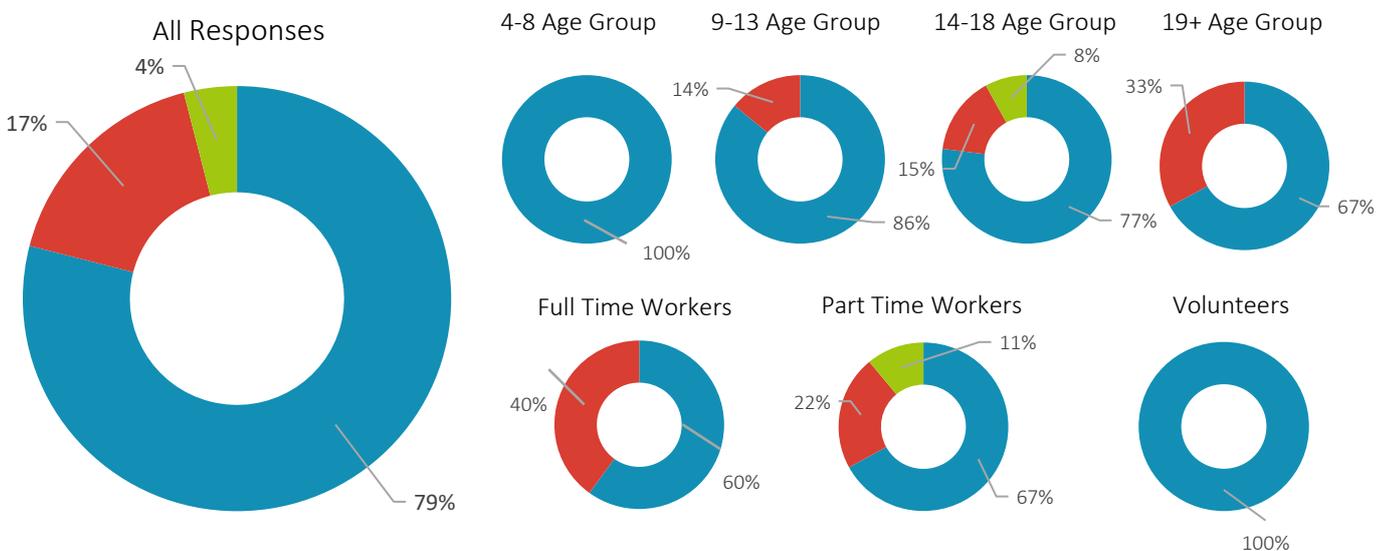
## Young People

I feel safe in their own community?



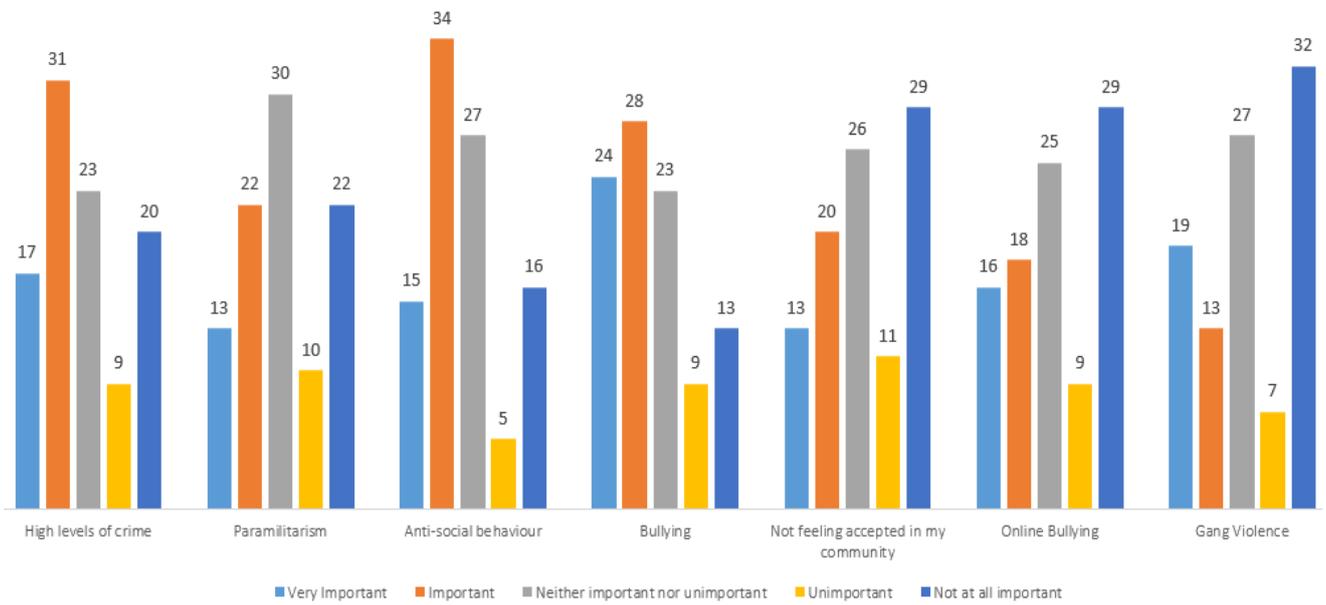
## Youth Workers

Young People that you work with feel safe in their own community?



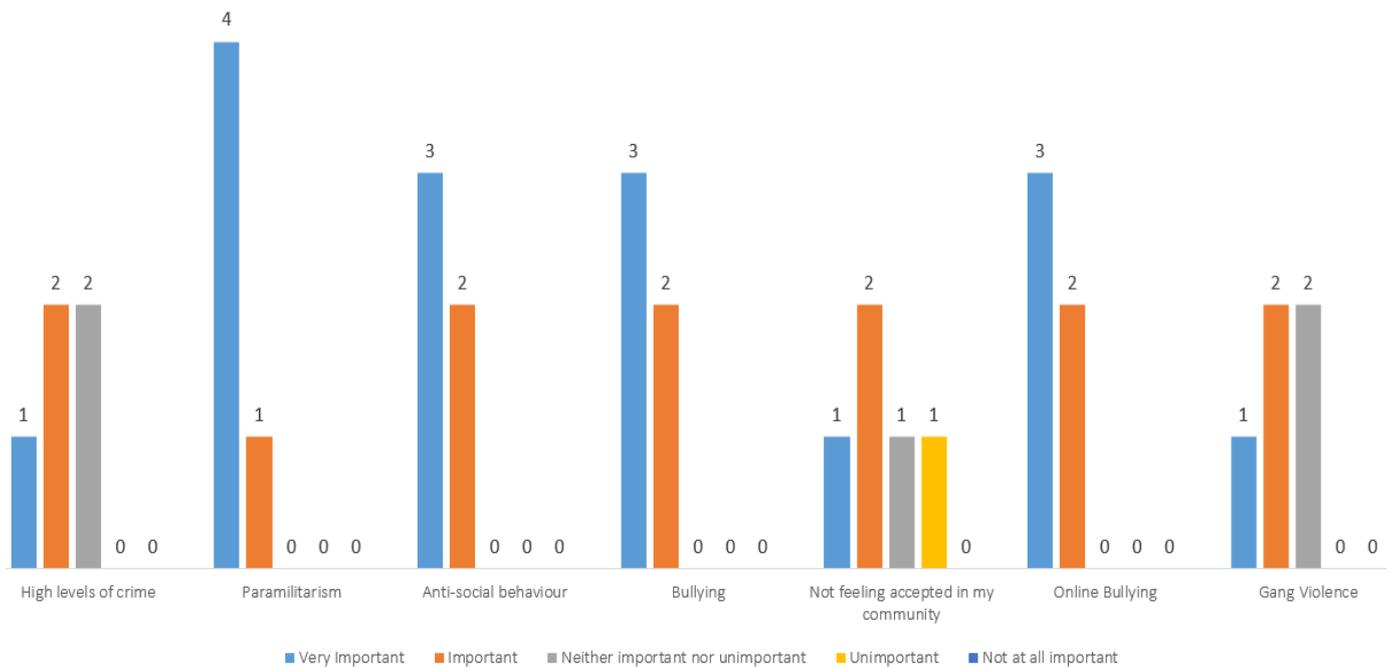
## Young People

Living in Safety & Stability - Reasons for not feeling safe and secure in your community



## Youth Workers

Living in Safety & Stability - Reasons you believe Youh People do not feel safe and secure in



## Public Consultation Summary of Narrative Responses

- Positive statistics of young people reporting that they feel safe in Ards and North Down.
- The Youth Service should however examine more closely why some young people are not feeling safe and provide 'safe spaces' for young people to talk to someone within Youth Services.
- Whilst the statistics are good paramilitarism remains a high risk for young people.

## Local Advisory Group Consultation Summary of Narrative Responses

- Youth Services should examine why young people are not feeling safe in communities and address this by providing 'safe' spaces
- Good result regarding young people saying they feel safe in their own community but needs to be further examined to determine if young people feel safe moving about to other areas within Ards and North Down.

## Discussion

Where someone lives has a direct bearing on one's life chances and outcomes. Children and young people growing up in a stable, secure home and environment are more likely to achieve academically, have better health outcomes, more opportunities to participate in wider society and have better career opportunities.

A safe, secure and loving home environment as well as a school, Youth Service and community which is consistent and nurturing, makes a big difference for the most vulnerable children and young people in our society. However, there are many children and young people experiencing significant adversity in their home lives and within their communities which can have a negative impact on their education, health and social outcomes.

For these children and young people insecurity and transitions create stress which can threaten a child or young person's sense of belonging and security. A recent local consultation event with young people reported that Youth Services have a key role in providing safe and supportive environments in helping children and young people achieve their potential and to promote the positive role that young people can contribute to their local communities.

Within Ards and North Down 84% of respondents overall reported that they felt safe in their own community. Of the remaining 16%, 5% reported not feeling safe and 11% did not know. Across the three age bands the 19-25 age group reported feeling most safe (94%).

The overall statistic of 84% is encouraging. This positive statistic is also replicated in an Ards and North Down Borough Council Residents Survey (2018) which recorded that 93% of residents in Ards and North Down were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Youth workers also reported that they felt that 79% of young people they work with feel safe in their own community.

This is slightly lower than what young people were reporting and youth workers felt that 17% of the young people they are working with were not safe in their own community and 4% did not know if they were safe or not. The differences in responses may be due to the support provided to young people they are engaging with that would be deemed 'at risk'.

Much work is being done at a local level through Ards and North Down Borough Council Community Planning and 'The Big Plan'. One of the overarching outcomes is to ensure that 'all people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure'

Specific initiatives to address this issue are also addressed through the Ards and North Down PCSP. Statutory, voluntary and community partners work towards achieving the PCSP key strategic priority – to improve community safety by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

The overall top three answers given by young people as to why they do not feel safe were; bullying, anti-social behaviour and high levels of crime however it is important to also consider the other answers to fully begin to understand the issues for young people. The other reasons why young people do not feel safe also included; paramilitarism, online bullying, not feeling accepted by their community and gang violence.

Bullying and anti-social behaviour was noted in the top three answers across the 9-13 and 14-18 age bands however the 9-13's also included high levels of crime and 14-18's online bullying. Equivalent weighting was given across all responses for the 19-25 age group.

The top response from youth workers was paramilitarism. The second most important reason was joint with online bullying and bullying and anti-social behaviour being weighted the same.

Responses analysed across both urban and rural young people identified that young people in rural areas (86%) feel slightly safer than their urban peers (83%). Both groups of young people identified bullying and anti-social behaviour within the top three answers however the rural young people also identified paramilitarism within their top three responses and urban young people, high levels of crime.

PSNI statistics for Ards and North Down indicate that anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents are reducing. From November 2017 – October 2018 there were 4,382 ASB incidents and between November 2018 and October 2019 there were 4,023 ASB incidents demonstrating a reduction of 8.2%. Whilst this is an overall positive trend issues in relation to young people and ASB in particular this area continues to be a problem across the Borough. The issues being presented are; large groups of young people congregating in key hotspot areas, young people engaging risk taking behaviours often associated with alcohol or drug use, vandalism and causing a nuisance in relation to noise pollution, littering etc.

Young people at a recent engagement event suggested that some of the reasons why anti-social behaviour and crime occurred was due to easy access to alcohol and drugs, lack of a police presence, poor lighting and limited CCTV and youth centres not being open at weekends or when they were needed most. Young people discussed the possibility of a multi-agency approach, including the voice of young people, to tackle these issues and the importance of accountability from all stakeholders and partners was stressed. It is also important to note that children and young people reported that youth centres were places where they felt safe.

Across NI there are 498 Children Looked After. Within the Ards and North Down area there are five homes that support children looked after and young people living in these homes are part of the Ards and North Down community, accessing services, attending schools and being supported by the community. Youth services are also needed for children looked after as they can often be a particularly vulnerable group of young people in the Ards and North Down area.

Greater work is needed across Ards and North Down to support young people to be recognised as a valuable part of the local community. The voices of young people need to be heard at a local level as well as a Council

wide level. Young people should be contributing to and be part of local community structures and work with the community to address local issues.

# Establishing Areas for Action

# Establishing Areas for Action

## Youth Work Priorities

Priorities for Youth outlines five key areas for the planning and delivery of Youth Services:

- Raising Standards for All.
- Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access & Equality.
- Developing the Non-Formal Education Workforce.
- Improving the Non-Formal Learning Environment.
- Transforming Governance and Management of Non-formal Education.

Based on this assessment of need, Local Planning for Youth Services should consider the following areas for actions within this policy context to develop and deliver effective Youth Services for children and young people.

## Raising Standards for All

### Area of Action: Delivering on Assessed Need

Youth Services should establish outputs that ensure all services are delivered to meet the assessed needs of children and young people and ensure that resources are allocated based on need.

### Area of Action: Proportionate Reporting on Youth Service Outcomes

In line with Priorities for Youth, Youth Services should develop clear outputs that will provide evidence of the impact of Youth Work on the lives of children and young people, measure success, and provide a proportionate reporting framework reflective of funding and service delivery.

### Area of Action: Stakeholder Engagement and Research

Youth Services should ensure the voice of children and young people remains present in shaping and planning services to meet the needs of all children and young people. This assessment of need has also identified the need for more in-depth research within each area of enquiry with a particular focus of identifying how Youth Services can effectively address the need in delivery.

This area of action should also safeguard and ensure that decisions are evidence based and critically reflect on the planning and delivery of services.

### Area of Action: Quality Assurance

The EA should ensure quality services are delivered to meet the needs of children and young people.

### Area of Action: Promotion of Service and Opportunities

The survey with children and young people has demonstrated a lack of awareness of Youth Services available to children and young people. More specifically, children and young people not engaged in Youth Services do not fully understand the opportunities available to them. This area of action is key to ensure children and young people are aware of the service opportunities open to them, to increase the participation of children and young people and to promote the outcomes and benefits of Youth Services.

## Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equality

To ensure a greater focus on service delivery this assessment of need recommends that under this priority there are six areas of action informed by the areas of enquiry. Youth Services should therefore develop outputs to meet the needs of children and young people under the following areas of action

### Health and Wellbeing

Greater focus is required on addressing issues regarding childhood obesity.

With almost a quarter of Year 8's in Ards and North Down with a BMI that falls within the overweight or obese range more emphasis is needed in terms of supporting young people to be physically active along with raising awareness of nutrition and exercise. Links and partnerships with other agencies need to be established to effectively address this issue and have maximum impact.

Youth Services need to focus on supporting young people in the area of mental health and suicide awareness. This may be through the delivery of health and wellbeing programmes and initiatives that provide an early intervention approach and equip young people with the necessary skills to keep healthy. Programmes need to address the impact of social media on the health and wellbeing of young people.

Youth services need to provide more spaces for young people to meet and participate in generic youth services whilst having access to targeted services as and when required. Providing safe spaces has been an important recommendation from young people and other key stakeholders and these must be available at key times for young people particularly in the evenings and at weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday).

Interventions and resources addressing issues relating health and wellbeing need to be targeted at young people experiencing deprivation. This is not only for young people living in deprivation but for those affected by different types of deprivation e.g. access to services, health deprivation, income deprivation. Consideration must be given to young people living in poverty but not in MDM areas.

Specific programmes and initiatives are required to support young people in the area of health and wellbeing and young people want particular support with alcohol and drugs, health programmes and sport and fitness. There needs to be a greater focus on the 14-18 age range as they were the largest group that identified they wanted support in this area.

The 14-18 year olds also recommended that the Youth Service deliver gender based programmes. The 19-25 year olds would like support on their health and wellbeing through leadership programmes and outdoor learning.

Priority Targets:

- Physical fitness and health education programmes are required across all age groups and across all areas
- All youth service programmes should include, where possible, a physical activity element
- New partnerships should be established with Council Leisure Centres/facilities where possible to increase access for young people to fitness/leisure facilities
- Targeted work tackling childhood obesity is required with young people age 10-13 particularly in the SOA's of Central, Conlig 3, Glen 1, Harbour 1 and Scrabo 2, Ballywalter 1, Donaghadee South 1 and Portaferry 2.
- Positive mental health programmes are needed for young people age 14-18 with a particular focus on building resilience and the use of social media

- Development of a youth work HUB in the Ards Area that will provide generic youth services and link young people to targeted services. This needs to be available at key times – late evenings and at weekends
- Delivery of targeted drug and alcohol programmes through partnership working for the 9-13 and 14-18 age ranges with a particular focus on Ards town centre and Bangor town centre
- Delivery of gender based health and wellbeing programmes for young people age 14-18
- Engage young people age 19-25 on issues relating to health and wellbeing through outdoor learning initiatives
- Delivery of Peer Education and Leadership programmes on health and wellbeing issues

## Learning and Achieving

Youth Services in Ards and North Down need to consider how best they can support young people in the area of learning and achieving. There is a clear need for the delivery of more educational and accredited programmes for young people which provide pathways for young people to enhance their education and skills and ultimately prepare them for the further education, training or the world of work.

Initiatives that provide education or training opportunities need to be targeted at specific groups of young people or communities. For example the fourteen SOA's that been identified as being within the top 20% ranking where young people are not achieving at least 5 GCSE's along with the seven highest SOA's where 16/17 and 18 year olds are leaving school and not entering education, training or employment. There are also seventeen SOA's within the top 20% for school absenteeism in NI. These areas should also be a focus, to engage young people into the non-formal education system where a range of opportunities can be offered tailored to specific need. Recommended methodologies for this include through the use of creative arts and outdoor learning.

There also needs to be a specific focus on supporting young protestant males across Ards and North Down to address barriers to learning and provide opportunities for them to learn and achieve through the non-formal sector.

The Youth Service should also consider offering relevant vocational qualifications that may enhance the job prospects of young people and carry currency into the world of work.

Volunteering opportunities and volunteer training programmes are needed for young people age 14-25 to enable them to gain experience as volunteers and develop key skills for work.

In addition to education and life skills programmes, outdoor learning programmes that help young people develop new skills should be delivered to the 9-13 age range. These type of programmes are also required to be delivered to young people from rural communities along with opportunities to gain accredited programmes through the outdoors.

Priority Targets:

- Delivery of accredited programmes across Ards and North Down with a particular focus on the SOA's of Donaghadee North1, Ballywalter 2, Bryansburn 1, Loughview 1 & 2, Whitespots 1&2, Donaghadee North 2, Scrabo 2, Carrowdore 2, Ballymagee 2, Comber North 2, Ballycrochan 3, Portaferry 1, Crawfordsburn, Millisle 2, Glen 2, Portavogie 1, Groomsport, and Comber West 2.
- Delivery of life skills and education training programmes across Ards and North Down through the medium of creative arts and outdoor learning activities

- Targeted programmes that address barriers to learning for young men in Kilcooley and Westwinds.
- Increase opportunities for young people to volunteer with youth services with a particular focus on the 14-18 and 19-25 age ranges.

## Good Relations

There continues to be a need to create opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to meet in a safe and welcoming environment. Young people need spaces in which to build relationships with 'others'.

Specific programmes or interventions focusing on cultural awareness and diversity are required to break down barriers and to learn about local history, religion, politics and culture.

Young people recognise that they need more cultural awareness (it was within the top three answers provided) and this needs to be across both Protestant and Catholic communities but with a particular emphasis on Protestant communities. Programmes need to be delivered in partnership with other key agencies such as Ards and North Down Borough Council linking into the areas Good Relations Strategy. A specific programme of work is needed around supporting young people during the marching season and associated 12<sup>th</sup> celebrations when intra community tension poses a risk to young people at this time in terms of their personal safety and wellbeing. There is a need to work in partnership with other agencies in the delivery of this work.

Programmes to engage young people in the area of good relations needs to be age appropriate and tailored to how young people would like them delivered. For example the 19-25 year olds particularly identified engagement of this area would be more likely if through the medium of outdoor learning or residential/camps.

Diversity and awareness raising programmes also need to look at difference in a much broader sense terms of race, ethnicity and gender to help address prejudice and discrimination.

Youth Services need to ensure that they are open and welcoming to all young people. Proactive steps are needed to engage vulnerable or marginalised groups of young people including newcomers.

Priority Targets:

- Increase opportunities for young people to meet with 'other' young people on a more regular basis through outdoor learning programmes, cultural awareness programmes and through creative arts initiatives. This should be across all age bands but there should be a focus also on the 19-25 year old age group.
- Delivery of good relations programmes that include cultural awareness are needed across the Borough but with a particular focus on increasing opportunities for young people in rural areas (Ards Peninsula)
- Delivery of a partnership July/Bonfire project is needed to support young people in Kilcooley, Westwinds and Weavers Court areas.
- Delivery of diversity programmes and awareness raising programmes are needed to raise awareness of race, ethnicity and gender issues

## Participation

There is a need for generic youth provision spaces within Ards and North Down that are widely accessible to young people and provide a safe space for young people to meet with friends in the evenings and at weekends.

Specific initiatives and programmes to encourage greater participation are needed. Young people are recommending that these are based around life skills, supporting young people to gain employment and enhance their CV, building confidence and self-esteem along with health and wellbeing programmes, education and learning initiatives and programmes that address bullying. Key areas need to be targeted based on deprivation across a range of domains.

Greater promotion of Youth Services is needed across the Ards and North Down area. Young people have identified that their preferred method of communication is via social media however greater promotion across schools is also vital to reach young people currently not engaged.

Young people should have opportunities to contribute to civic life and should be supported and encouraged to have a voice at all levels of society.

Peer Education Programmes should be developed to support young people across a range of programme areas and create pathways into leadership roles for young people.

#### Priority Targets:

- Increase levels of generic provision for young people at weekends in Newtownards town centre and Bangor town centre
- Delivery of targeted programmes that will help enhance young people's CV, develop confidence and self-esteem, health and wellbeing, education and bullying in key areas identified through deprivation measures and local knowledge
- Increased residential programme opportunities to encourage participation
- Delivery of targeted programmes to increase participation areas that are deprived in terms of lack of access to services including Portaferry 1, Kircubbin 1, Portavogie 2, Carrowdore 1 & 2, Killinchy 1 & 2 and Lisbane 1.
- Specific programmes increasing awareness of local and global issues are required for the 19-25 year old age group
- Development of a communication plan to promote youth services is required in Ards and North Down
- Social action programmes are required to increase the voice of young people
- Development of a coherent leadership pathway is needed including peer education programmes

### **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity**

It is recognised that there is a need for young people from diverse backgrounds to come together and meet on a more regular basis. New initiatives or programmes outside of TBUC need to be considered to enable this to happen. This includes bringing young people together from across communities or areas within Ards and North Down.

Awareness raising programmes are needed to explore diversity in relation to gender and disability.

The causes of young people feeling that they do not have the same opportunities need to be explored with young people. Issues relating to communities, stereotypes associated with particular areas and social background need to be explored with young people and a strength based approach taken when working with young people who are experiencing being treated differently.

Targeted work is needed to engage vulnerable groups of young people including LGBTQ young people, young people with disabilities, children and young people looked after, newcomers to ensure they have access to services and barriers to engagement removed or addressed. The mechanisms to engage these groups of young people should be through residential/camps, cultural identity/diversity programmes and through the medium of creative arts. Links with schools is also recommended.

#### Priority Targets:

- Increased opportunities to bring young people together for social purposes and to build relationships with a range of 'other' young people
- Awareness raising programmes focusing on gender and disability
- Targeted programmes are required for young people with additional needs
- Youth Services to embed further a strength based approach to the delivery of services to young people
- Targeted programmes using the medium of residential, creative arts and identity and diversity programmes are needed reach vulnerable groups of young people including Children Looked After, LGBTQ young people, young people with disabilities and newcomers

### Living in Safety & Stability

Partnership and multi-agency work is need to address the key issues young people are identifying that are making them feel unsafe in communities. These include; bullying, anti-social behaviour and levels of crime along with paramilitarism, the feelings of not feeling accepted by the community and gang violence. This includes engaging with those young people on the periphery of criminal and anti-social behaviours or those vulnerable of being involved in paramilitary groups.

Specific initiatives are needed to help young people to stay safe online including how to deal with online bullying. This is particularly needed (although not exclusively for the 14-18 age range.)

There is a need for the Youth Service to work with key partners in relation to addressing the issues relating to drug and alcohol use, the normalisation of its use amongst young people and the availability of alcohol and drugs. This includes the delivery of specific drug and alcohol programmes for young people.

There is a need to have detached youth work teams to support vulnerable young people on the streets at key times. This is particularly needed in the evenings and at weekends. Detached youth workers need to have the flexibility to move location based on the transient nature of young people and respond to need and work in partnership with other key agencies within the Borough including; PSNI, PCSP, ANDBC and Street Pastors.

There needs to be increased safe spaces for young people to meet that provide activities attractive to teenagers and available in the evening and at weekends.

Specific programmes are required to engage with children looked after to increase their access to mainstream Youth Services and gain support at a local level.

The development of localised social action projects will enable young people to have a greater involvement in community life and engage with different sections of the community.

Priority Targets:

- Delivery of targeted programmes that address bullying
- Delivery of targeted partnership programmes for young people on the periphery of criminal behaviour, anti-social behaviour and for those at risk of being involved in paramilitary groups
- Programmes to education young people on how to stay safe online along with managing the online world with a particular focus on the 14-18 age range
- Work in partnership with key agencies in the delivery of drug and alcohol programmes and initiatives
- Delivery of a flexible, detached/outreach youth work initiative that provides a youth work response in the evening and at weekends with a particular focus on Ards town centre (including Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre) and Bangor town centre.
- The creation of attractive spaces for teenagers to meet as alternative safe spaces at weekends
- Targeted programme for Children Looked After
- Social action initiatives to ensure young people are actively involved in local issues and have a voice

## Developing the Non-Formal Education Workforce

### Area of Action: Workforce Development

Youth Services should ensure all staff are trained to best respond to the current needs of children and people. Succession planning will also be key to ensuring Youth Services are always resourced to continually meet this need.

The contribution of staff should be recognised and celebrated.

### Area of Action: Practice Development and Support

Youth Services should establish outputs that ensure support is in place for staff to deliver quality youth work practice and provide support systems and processes for staff. This area should also develop outputs that will ensure staff are supported to evaluate youth work effectively, measure and evidence learning outcomes and demonstrate the positive impacts of their practice.

### Area of Action: Volunteer Development

Volunteers remain key to the successful delivery of youth work provision for young people. It is important that the Youth Service develops outputs to ensure volunteers are effectively supported, encouraged to volunteer in Youth Services and are recognised for their contribution both locally and regionally across the sector.

## Improving the Non-Formal Learning Environment

### Area of Action: Participative Structures

The voice of young people in the design and delivery of services is a key feature of youth work. This is embedded within the Priorities for Youth policy. This area of action should develop outputs that ensure the meaningful role and voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services and the decision making process with the goal of providing a modern, high quality provision that effectively meets the needs of children and young people.

### **Area of Action: Development & Maintenance of EA Youth Estate**

The EA should continue to modernise its estate within the statutory capital allocation to provide a safe and welcoming environment that will effectively enable the service to meet and address the needs of children and young people.

Consideration should also be given to outputs under this action that ensure the environment reflects the principles outlined in the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy (CRED) to ensure youth work environments promote a culture and ethos of inclusion.

### **Area of Action: Digital Transformation of Youth Service**

As outlined in Priorities for Youth, Youth Services should continue to develop its ICT infrastructure to enable the digitalisation of services to reduce administration and bureaucracy and improve reporting and decision making. Youth Services should consider all systems and processes that can be provided online using a digital first focus not digital only.

## **Transforming Governance and the Management of Non-Formal Education**

### **Area of Action: Funding Scheme for Voluntary Youth Organisations**

As outlined in Priorities for Youth, Youth Services should fully implement the new Funding Scheme arrangements for Regional and Local Voluntary Youth Organisations and ensure it effectively meets the needs of children and young people.

# Summary of Recommend Areas of Action 2020-2023

<b>Youth Work Priority: Raising Standards for All</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Delivering on Assessed Need</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Proportionate Reporting on Youth Service Outcomes</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Stakeholder Engagement &amp; Research</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Quality Assurance</b>
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Promotion of Service Opportunities</b>

<b>Youth Work Priority: Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equality</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Learn and Achieve</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Good Relations</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Participation</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Inclusion, Diversity &amp; Equality of Opportunity</b>
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Living in Safety and Stability</b>

<b>Youth Work Priority: Developing the Non-Formal Education Workforce</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Workforce Development</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Practice Development &amp; Support</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Volunteer Development</b>

<b>Youth Work Priority: Transforming the Non-Formal Learning Environment</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Participative Structures</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Development &amp; Maintenance of EA Youth Estate</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Digital Transformation of Youth Service</b>

<b>Youth Work Priority: Transforming Governance and the Management of Education</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Funding Scheme for Voluntary Youth Organisation</b>

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