

Belfast (South and West)

Local Assessment of Need

2020 - 2023



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Contents

Introduction & Methodology

Page 5

South & West Belfast in Numbers

Page 9

Survey Headlines

Page 11

Health & Wellbeing

Page 15

Learn & Achieve

Page 23

Good Relations

Page 33

Participation

Page 41

Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity

Page 49

Living in Safety & Stability

Page 57

Establishing Areas for Action

Page 65

Bibliography

Page 72

Areas of Enquiry

Introduction & Methodology

Introduction

The Department of Education (DE) invests £34m in Youth Work to support and encourage children and young people to mature and reach their potential as valued individuals and responsible citizens. DE note that effective Youth Work enables young people to identify their personal and social development needs and involves them in shaping the services designed to meet those needs to 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.*¹

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.*²

The Education Authority (EA) delivers Youth Services directly to young people in a variety of settings including full-time and part-time youth centres, Outdoor Learning centres, Youth Work in schools as well as Outreach and Detached work and specialist programmes, particularly focussed on improving outcomes for young people and enhancing their inclusion and participation. A significant proportion of Youth Work programmes also takes place in voluntary sector organisations, supported by grants from EA.

The structure of EA Youth Service delivery has also changed. The previous model was based on the legacy Education and Library Boards, which had fourteen Youth Officers managing areas from the old District Council areas. Following restructuring, the new model has seen the introduction of a co-terminous delivery model based on the new Local Government Districts. There are now nine Senior Youth Officers managing the new eleven Council areas. Two Officers are based in Belfast, three Officers will service two new council areas and the remaining four will manage a Council area each. This new model ensures that each officer will manage an area with similar numbers of young people.

Belfast City Council is the local authority with responsibility for part of the city of Belfast, the capital and largest city of Northern Ireland. The Council serves an estimated population of 333,871 the largest of any district council in Northern Ireland, while also being the fourth smallest by area. As part of the 2014/2015 reform of local government in Northern Ireland the city council area expanded, and now covers an area that includes 53,000 additional residents in 21,000 households.

Structured formal planning takes place throughout the service in order to effectively allocate staff and resources in response to policy priorities, DE targets and an objective assessment of needs. Area Planning is part of a coherent planning framework established within Youth Services.

The Area Plan for the South and West Belfast area describes the policy and local context for the service and summarises a needs assessment of the area. The Action Plan, the delivery model, will reflect DE policy and targets and will also articulate how the needs of the area will be addressed over the next year.

Two Senior Youth Officers (SYO) manage the strategic development and direction of the Youth Service in the Belfast area. The SYOs will oversee the implementation of the Area Plan, allocate resources based on need, monitor and moderate provision and represent the Education Authority on strategic fora and partnerships.

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

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

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 South and West Belfast is a complex and difficult task. There is a clear variation and level of needs across the area, with some areas facing greater challenges than others. The area as a whole presents 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 South and West Belfast.

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

The initial stages of the Local Assessment of Need involved desktop research. This was 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 South and West Belfast. 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 16,132 young people in Northern Ireland responded to the survey. 1239 of these were from within South and West Belfast. Children and young people from a range of statutory, local and voluntary youth groups involved in DE funded youth work participated. Children and young people not currently involved in Youth Services were also canvassed.

A similar survey based on the same areas of enquiry was designed and distributed to youth workers and volunteers. There were 704 respondents to this survey, 130 within South and West Belfast. Youth workers and volunteers from a range of statutory, local and voluntary youth groups involved in DE funded youth work took part in the survey.

The survey responses were analysed and helped inform the Assessment of Need.

Stakeholder Engagement Events:

EA Youth Service in South and West Belfast organised a series of stakeholder engagement events examining identified themes:

- 20th May 2019 RAG/LAG Event in Saints Youth Centre-Supporting Young People's Learning-
- 3rd December 2019-Local Advisory Group consultation
- 18th December 2019- Local advisory Group Meeting-Further consultation following presentation of youth survey findings.
- 6th January 2020- Public Consultation in Finaghy Youth Resource Centre

In addition to 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.

South & West Belfast in Numbers

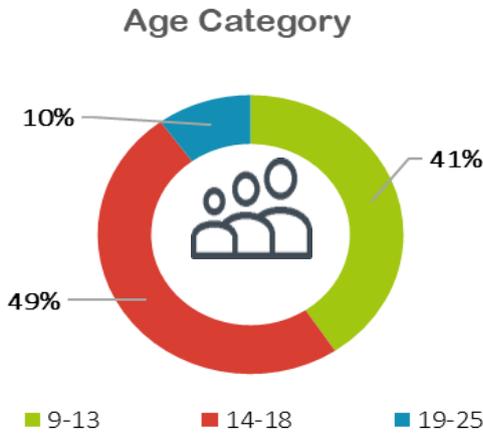
South & West Belfast in Numbers

- 119,231 children and young people live in Belfast. This equates to almost one fifth of the Northern Ireland total.
- 63,192 (53%) live in an area of deprivation which is more than double the 25.2% Northern Ireland average.
- One in five young people have a mental health need.
- 2,423 (2.03%) young people aged 14-25 identify as LGBTQ.
- 24,407 (20.47%) are engaged in youth work. 10,735 are engaged in youth work in South and West Belfast
- 26,084 (39.4%) of all pupils in Belfast are eligible for Free School Meals. Non Grammar schools in South and West Belfast record between 51.7% and 74.7% of pupils as eligible for Free School Meals
- 19,550 (28.7%) of all pupils have a Special Educational Need or a Disability.
- 3,331 (2.79%) Newcomers attend schools in Belfast.
- 154 (0.12%) Traveller children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- 276 Roma children and young people attend schools in Belfast.

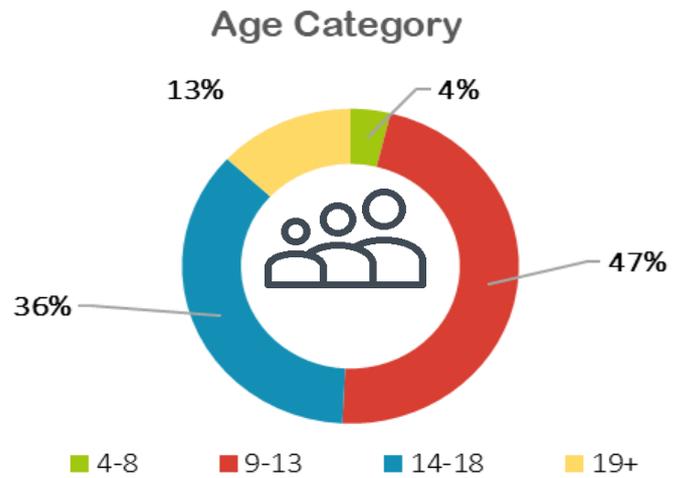
Survey Headlines

Survey of Need - Who Responded

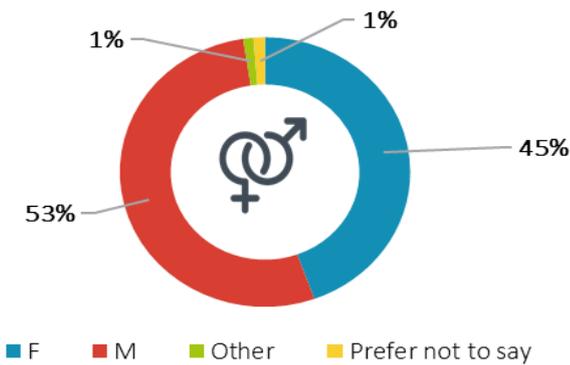
Young People



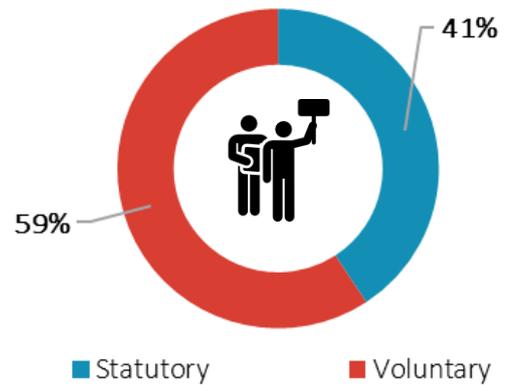
Youth Workers



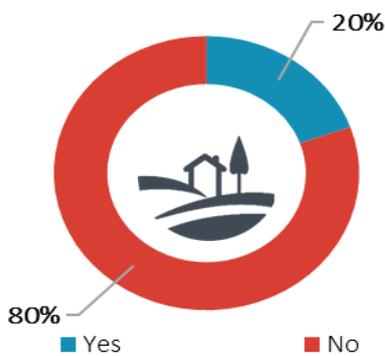
What is your Gender?



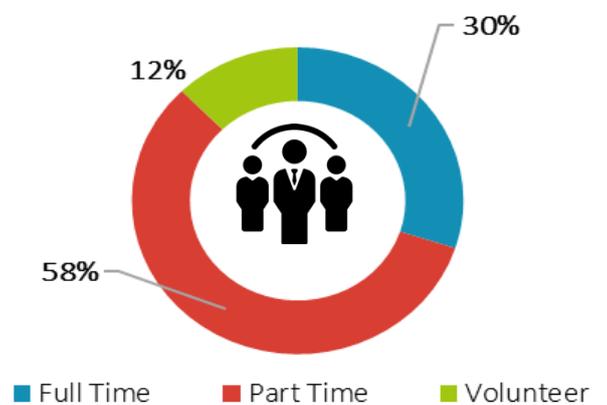
Sector



Do you live in a Rural Area?

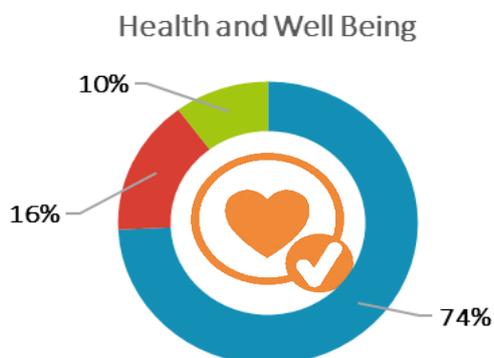


Type of Worker



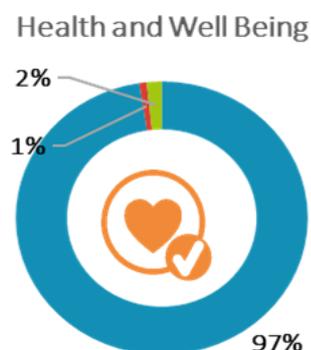
Survey of Need – Headline Findings

Young People



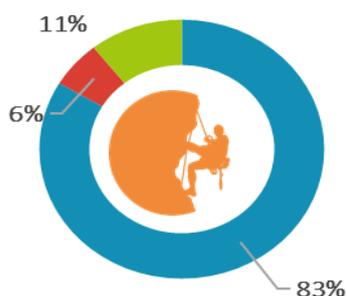
Is your Health and Well Being something you would want Youth Services to help you with?

Youth Workers



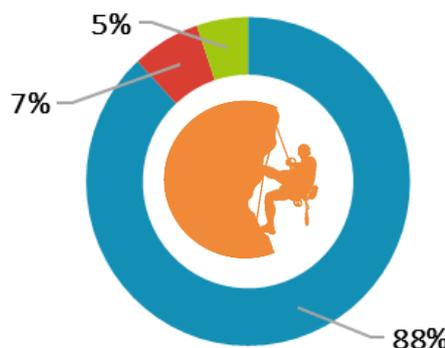
Is promoting positive Health & Wellbeing (mental, emotional or physical) something that Youth Services should offer to help and support young people?

Learn & Achieve



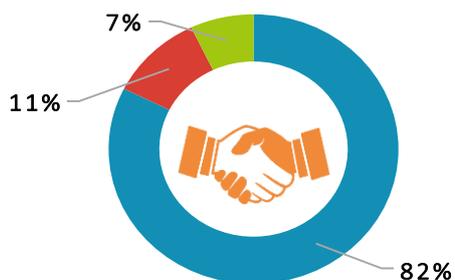
Do Youth Services in your area provide you with opportunities to take part in new experiences?

Learn & Achieve



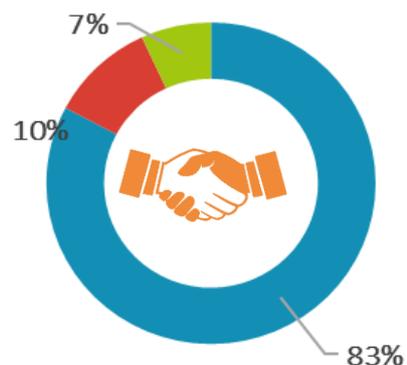
Do Youth Services in your area provide young people with opportunities to learn and take part in new experiences?

Good Relations



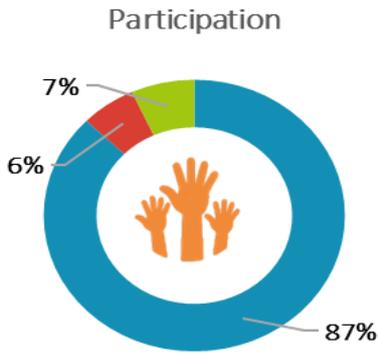
Do you have opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds in your area?

Good Relations

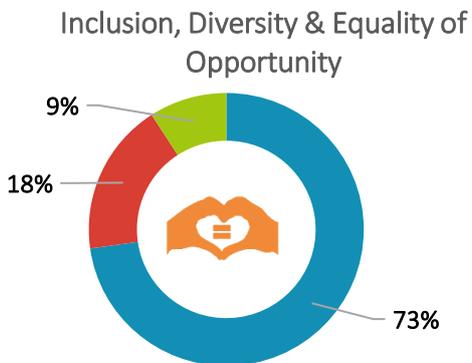


Do young people have opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with people from different backgrounds in your area?

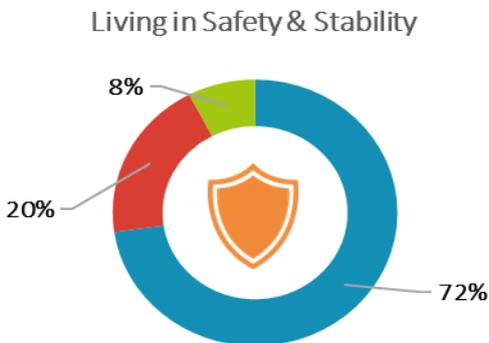
Young People



Do Youth Services in your area provide you with opportunities to take part in new experiences?



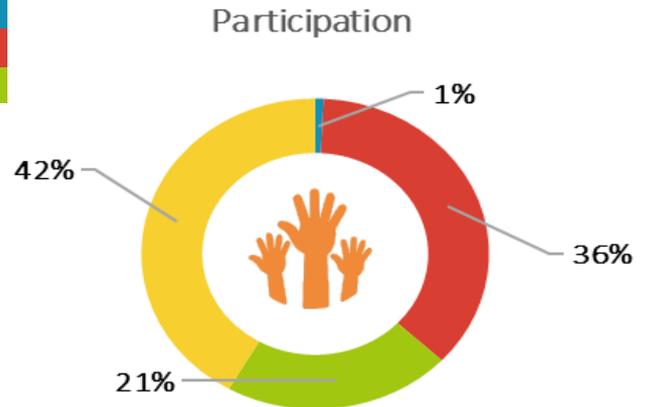
I feel I have the same opportunities in life and am treated the same as other people?



I feel safe in my own community?

Youth Workers

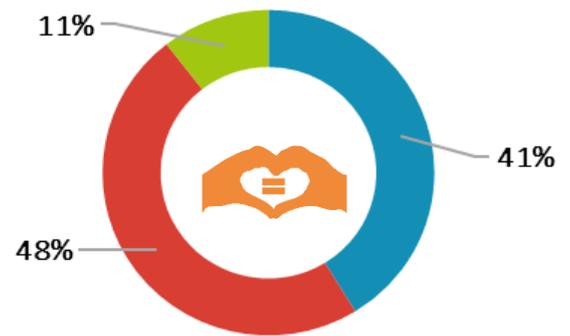
Yes
No
Don't Know



■ Not at all ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Very Often

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?

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 Belfast is 75.8 years. In the most deprived areas it is 71.3 years.
- Female life expectancy in Belfast is 81 years. In the most deprived areas it is 77.6 years.
- The standardised incidence rate for cancer in Belfast is 653 per 100,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 767 per 100,000 population.
- The standardised admission rate for self-harm in Belfast is 191 per 100,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 350 per 100,000 population.
- The crude suicide rate in Northern Ireland is 24.4 per 100,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 41.3 per 100,000 population.
- The standardised admission rate for drug related issues in Belfast is 302 per 100,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 594 per 100,000 population.
- The standardised admission rate for alcohol related issues in Belfast is 1,119 per 100,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 2,156 per 100,000 population.
- The teenage birth rate for Belfast is 16 per 1,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 29.4 per population.
- The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight is 21%. In the most deprived areas it is 23%.
- The proportion of Year 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight is 27%. In the most deprived areas it is 32%.
- The standardised prescription rate for Mood and Anxiety in Belfast is 248 per 1,000 population. In the most deprived areas it is 340 per 1,000 population.
- In 2017, 31.4% of children aged 0-2 years in Belfast were registered with a dentist.
- In 2017, 70.3% of children aged 3-5 years in Belfast were registered with a dentist.

Why is this measure important?

The promotion of health and wellbeing and maintaining a healthy population is the basic goal of any society. According to the World Health Organisation, enjoying better health is central to human happiness and wellbeing. It can also make a significant contribution to economic progress, as healthy populations live longer, are more productive, and enjoy a better standard of living.³

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.⁴

According to the Department for Children, Schools and Families a young person's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social and environmental development and wellbeing.⁵ It has also been suggested that good health and wellbeing is central to a young person's effective learning and preparation for adult life and successful transition to adult life and independent living.

³ <https://www.who.int/hdp/en/>

⁴ <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-benefits-of-exercise.htm>

⁵ http://www.earlyyearsmatters.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/eyfs_unique_child_health1.pdf

Good health cannot be taken for granted. There are certain things which are essential to ensure that good health is achieved and maintained. Health experts have highlighted that a balanced and nutritious diet, along with regular exercise and adequate rest and sleep are the key factors that can contribute to one's good health and mental and emotional wellbeing.

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

In general, health outcomes in Northern Ireland continue to improve thanks to advancements in medical science, improved social and economic conditions and investment in the healthcare system. However, 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.⁶

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 Northern Ireland face in terms 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.⁷

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 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 young people, including Looked After Children, 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.⁸ Within Northern Ireland significant numbers of young people fall into these groups.

⁶ https://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/

⁷ www.ucl.ac.uk/marmotreview

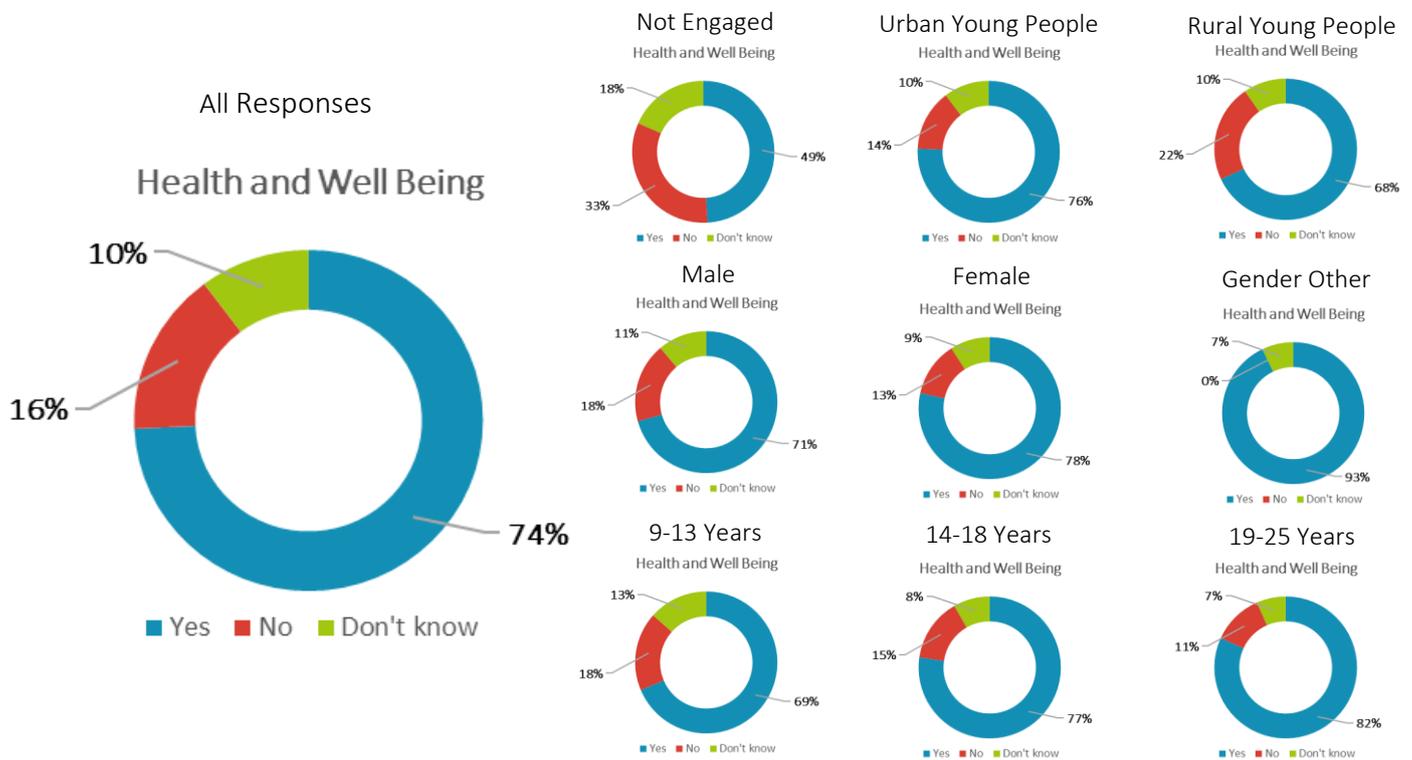
⁸ The Association of Young People's Health, 2019, Key Data on Young People 2019, AYPH, London.

Survey Findings – Health and Well Being

Yes No Don't Know

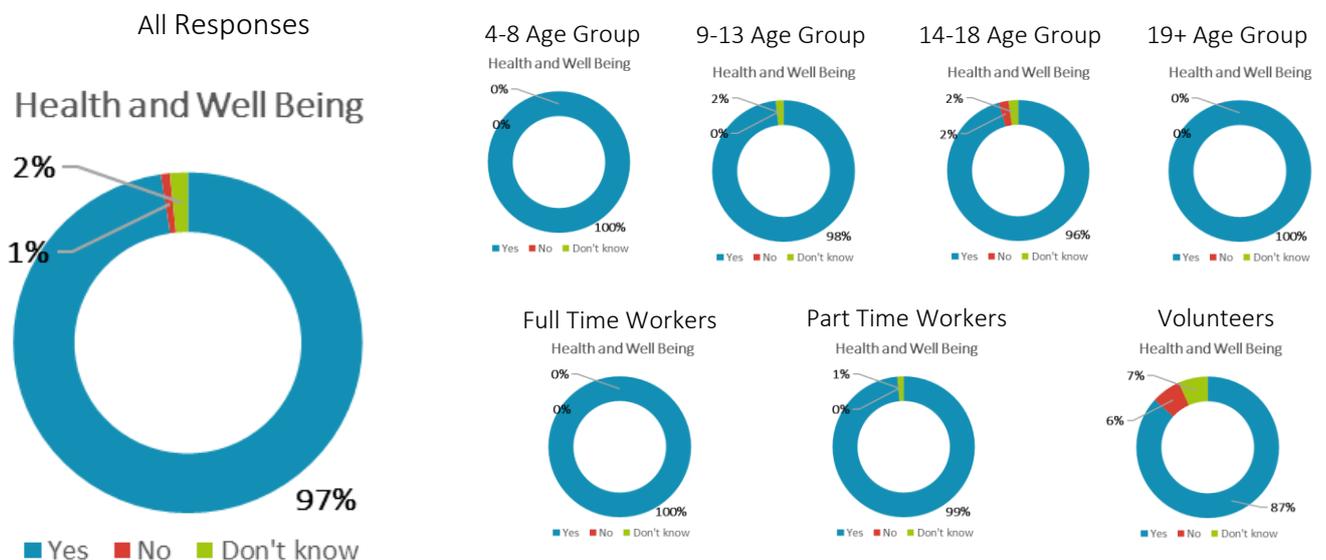
Young People

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

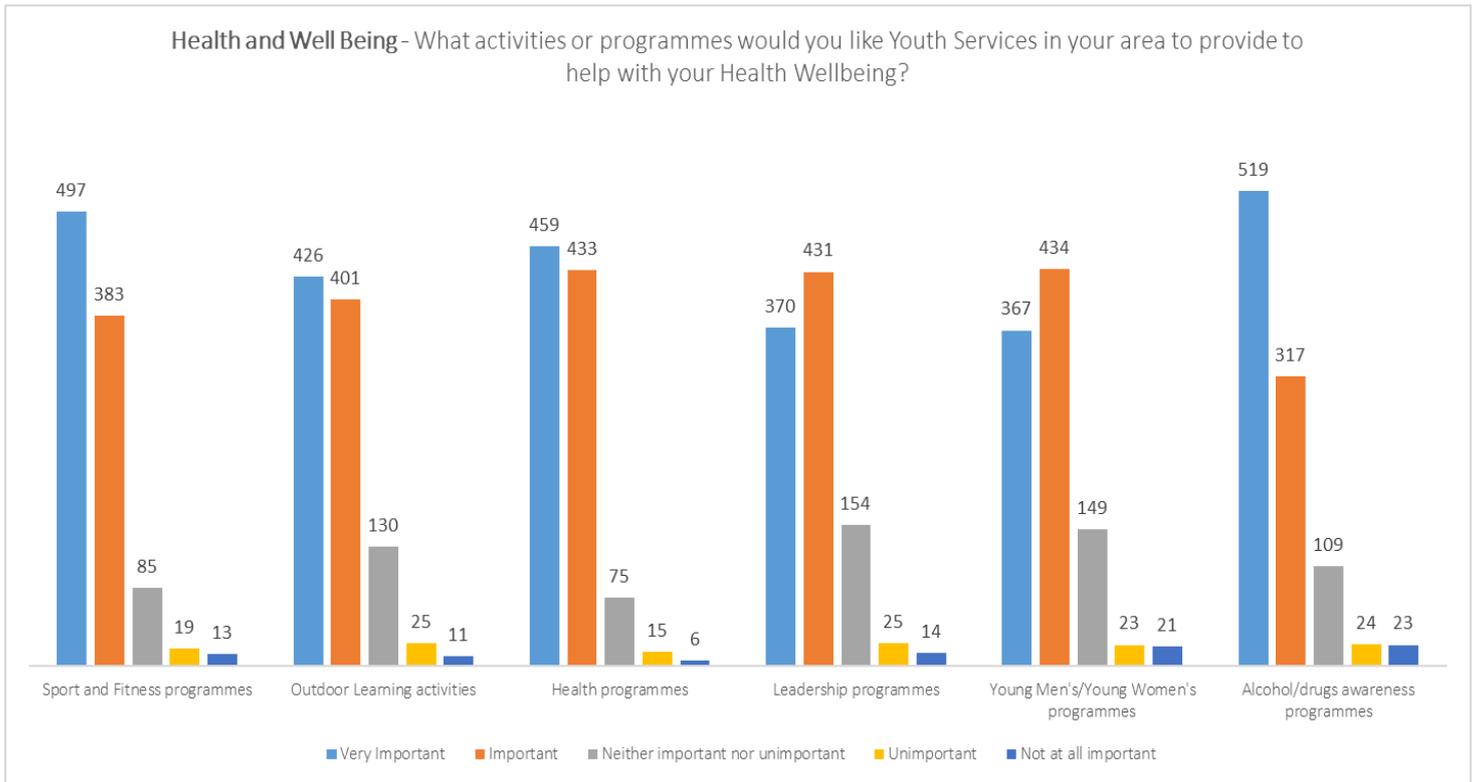


Youth Workers

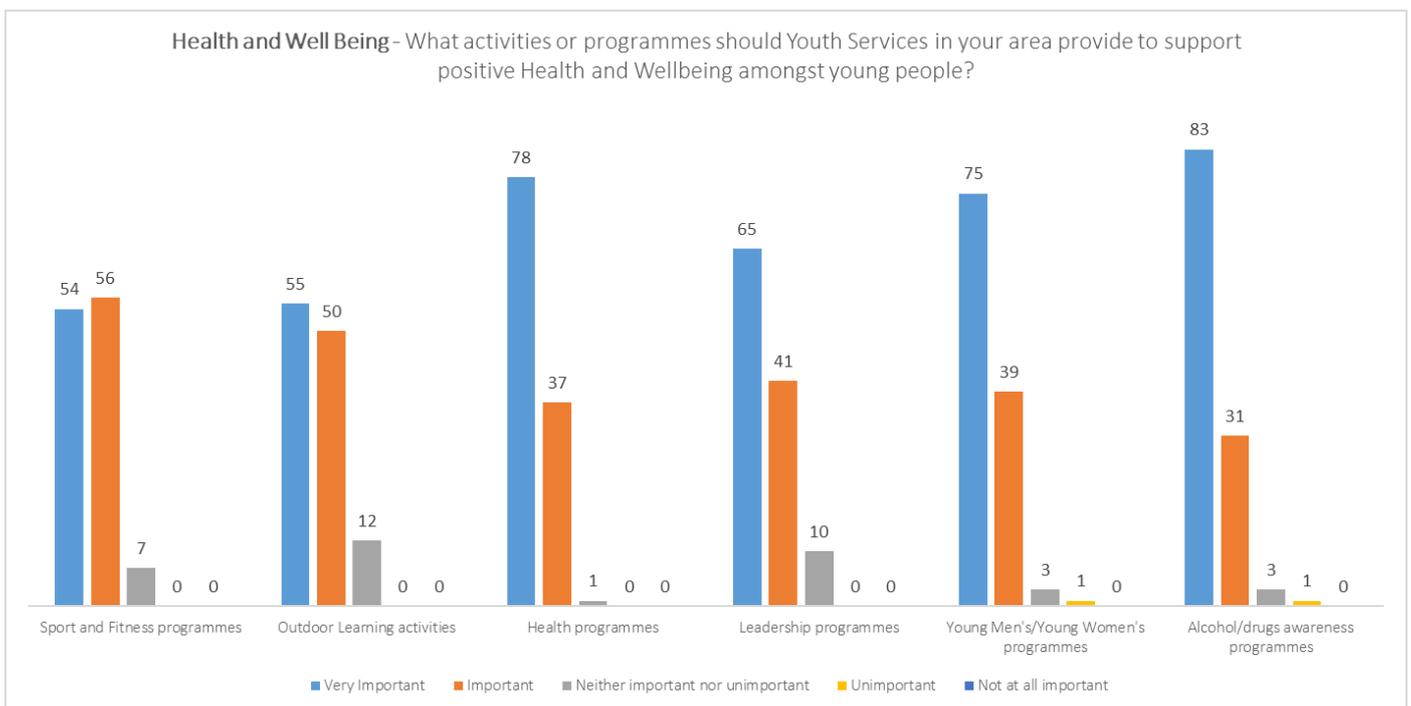
Is promoting positive Health & Wellbeing (mental, emotional or physical) something that Youth Services should offer to help and support young people?



Young People



Youth Workers



Young People:

- Young people cited mental health as the most concerning and increasing health issue for young people. They were able to identify many reasons for this including addictions, bullying, cyber-bullying, peer pressure and family pressures.
- Sexual Health and relationships were also identified as current issues affecting Health and Wellbeing.
- An increase in youth centre opening hours and opportunities for more activity based programmes were recognised as being of value to young people.
- Creative Arts, including dance, drama and art have been cited as programme areas that youth service staff should facilitate.
- Young people indicated opportunities for training including OCN's, training for trades and lifeskills programmes as potential options for support.
- Peer Support and Group mentoring were recognised as valuable methods in helping young people develop a clear support structure.

Youth Workers:

- Youth workers and volunteers were keen for the statutory youth sector to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sectors in designing and delivering appropriate health based programmes.
- Children and young people's mental and emotional health were key concerns identified by youth workers and volunteers and they wanted to develop programmes of support that were accessible and relevant.
- Social media, resilience, sexual health and relationships were also highlighted as ongoing issues for young people.
- It was also suggested that generic youth work and early intervention was an important part of addressing these issues.
- Sexual health and health and fitness projects should be encouraged ensuring children and young people were less dependent on their mobile phones and internet.

Discussion

Increasingly the health and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people need to be considered in its broadest sense, emphasising mental and social health, as well as physical aspects of health.

The NI Multiple Deprivation Measures identifies high levels of health deprivation in West Belfast. Only 2 of the SOA's in West Belfast fall outside of the top 50% in Northern Ireland. Most notable is Whiterock 2, Colin Glen 1, Falls 2 and Whiterock 3 which are all ranked in the top 1% SOA's experiencing health deprivation with Whiterock 2 being identified as the most deprived in Northern Ireland.

In South Belfast Shaftsbury 1,2 and 3, Botanic 4 & 5, Upper Malone 2, Blackstaff 1 & 2 and Minnowburn are all ranked in the top 25% most deprived in the health domain.

The high number of wards within South and West Belfast that experience high levels of health deprivation provides useful information on the extent of health challenges facing young people throughout the division and the need for youth service intervention in providing appropriate support to young people in helping them address their health needs.

Children and young people participating at a series of stakeholder engagement events hosted by EA Youth Service recognised that the issues affecting their health and wellbeing were complex and multi-faceted. It is not surprising therefore that 74% of young people from South and West Belfast who responded to the survey stated that they would want Youth Services to help them with their health and wellbeing. 16% did not want the youth service to help with this aspect of their lives and 10% didn't know if the youth service could help with this. This means 26% of young people are not aware of the impact that the youth service can make on their health & wellbeing.

The highest response was 82% from 19-25 year olds and across all 3 age groups, request for support with their health and wellbeing was highest from females.

97 % of all youth workers and volunteers suggested that Youth Services should be promoting positive health and wellbeing to support young people.

Physical activity is a normal part of growing up for children and young people and plays a key part in their physical, social and emotional development. A physically active lifestyle also has direct and indirect health benefits, especially for children and young people, by preventing obesity, reducing the risk of disease, promoting good mental health and resilience and establishing healthy lifestyles that may be continued into adulthood. Government guidelines recommend that young people should engage in at least one hour of physical activity every day. Outdoor learning activities and sport and fitness programmes were highlighted as being very important or important to help with health and wellbeing for all young people in the 9-13 and 14-18 age groups illustrating that children and young people understand the importance of an active lifestyle to their overall general health and wellbeing.

An affordable healthy diet is also essential for good health, however high levels of deprivation in communities in South and West Belfast mean that many families struggle to buy and eat enough fruit, vegetables or other healthy foods to meet official nutrition guidelines. Findings from a recent public consultation indicated that young people recognised poverty as being a factor impacting on their health and wellbeing. A recent poverty report found that the poorest families are unable to meet the government's healthy food requirements.⁹ A report by the Children's Society noted that children and young people living in poverty are 5.5 times more likely to go hungry than their peers.¹⁰ This can lead to poor health and education outcomes as well as exposing vulnerable children and young people to bullying which can negatively impact on their emotional and mental health. At the same time, childhood obesity levels in Northern Ireland continue to rise, and this trend is most prevalent in deprived communities. This can also have a negative impact on a young person's general health and wellbeing, now and in the future.

Children and young people who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop diabetes or heart disease in later life and be obese in adulthood. However, their physical health is not the only concern, overweight children and young people are more likely to encounter bullying, embarrassment when participating in games or sport and experience difficulty in being active. This in turn can be a contributory factor to low self-esteem and poor mental health. Young people reported that they were keen to participate in healthy cooking programmes and opportunities for personal training and training in positive mental health.

⁹ Scott, C., Sutherland, J. & Taylor, A. (2018), Affordability of the UK's Eatwell Guide, The Food Foundation, London.

¹⁰ <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/press-release/report-echoes-hunger-brutal-reality-families-children>

Mental illness is the single largest cause of ill health and disability in Northern Ireland. One in five children and young people will have a mental health need at any one time and the symptoms of a mental illness are distinct from those of adults.¹¹ According to the World Health Organisation, poor mental health manifests itself in many ways among young people, including, anxiety, self-harm, bipolar disorders, body image and suicidal thoughts.

Research from the recent 'Protect Life 2 – A Strategy for Preventing Suicide and Self Harm in Northern Ireland 2019-2024' reports that suicide is affecting more young people. It notes that rates in the under 18s are disproportionately higher in Northern Ireland in comparison to the rest of the UK. It highlights stressors which might contribute are linked to academic performance, body image, peer pressure, and social media to name but a few, factors which have also been highlighted during a recent consultation in South and West Belfast. Furthermore, a national enquiry revealed a significantly higher percentage of young people who died by suicide from Northern Ireland had a history of alcohol / drug misuse when compared to England, Scotland or Wales.

Among the determinants of poor mental health include socio-economic pressures, gender discrimination, social isolation, an unhealthy lifestyle, bullying and the risk of violence.¹² It is interesting to note that access to health programmes was the most important support that young people wanted Youth Services to provide. It should also be recognised that the older age groups (14-18 and 19-25) placed greater emphasis on accessing Drug and Alcohol programmes which are clearly linked to mental health issues. Youth workers and volunteers indicated that the most beneficial programmes for young people in terms of their health and wellbeing were single gender programmes, health programmes and drug and alcohol programmes.

The most common mental health problem affecting children and young people is severe and persistent behavioural problems.¹³ Children and young people from low-income families are four times more likely to experience mental health issues than those from higher income families.¹⁴ Young people from the LGBTQ community are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and are three times more likely to have made a suicide attempt at some point.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

¹¹ Betts, J. & Thompson, J. (2017), Mental Health in Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Assembly, Belfast.

¹² <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

¹³ Green, H. et al. (2005) The mental health of children and young people in Great Britain 2004, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Statham, H., Jaclva, V. & Daly, I. (2012), The School Report: The experiences of gay young people in Britain's schools in 2012, London, Stonewall.

¹⁶ 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, 87.5% of year 12 pupils from Belfast achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent. (NI Average 86%).
- In 2017/2018, 74.5% of year 12 pupils from Belfast achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent including English and Maths. (NI Average 71.8%).
- 19,550 pupils (28.7%) in Belfast have a Special Educational Need. (NI Average 23%).
- 26,084 pupils (39.4%) in Belfast are eligible for Free School Meals. (NI Average 29.2%).
- 0 (0%) pupils attend schools in the Belfast area that have been designated as rural. (NI Average 25.5%).
- 3,331 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in the Belfast area.
- 766 Looked After Children were supported by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Belfast.

Why is this measure important?

Education is not just about being able to read, write and count. Education is key to one's personal and professional success and provides various types of knowledge and skills. Education is also a basic human right and is a significant factor in the development of young people, communities and nations. According to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) education is the clearest indicator of life outcomes such as employment, income and social status and is a strong predictor of attitudes and wellbeing.¹⁷

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.

Recent research from Australia noted that education is important for children and young people as it helps achieve academic growth, increases access to opportunities, develops positive attitudes about themselves and their learning and heightens aspirations and interests to support their career pathways. The report suggested that a combination of these factors support young people to make positive decisions about their future and allow them to reach their potential.¹⁸

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 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, being a Looked After young person, being a Newcomer, being a Carer, coming from the Travelling Community or another minority group

¹⁷ Economic and Social Research Council, 2014, The Wellbeing Effect of Education, <https://esrc.ukri.org/files/news-events-and-publications/evidence-briefings/the-wellbeing-effect-of-education/>

¹⁸ <https://www.teachforaustralia.org/2017/04/02/the-cycle-of-disadvantage/>

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.

The attainment gap has persisted despite a series of intervention programmes and additional investment. A recent report from England noted that these inequalities manifest themselves in later life outcomes. Vulnerable children and young people are less likely to continue into post-compulsory education, have lower average earnings, poorer general and mental health outcomes and greater chance of becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour than their peers. The report argued that allowing a significant number of children and young people to fail to reach their educational and economic potential is a waste of human capital.¹⁹

Within Northern Ireland, the vast majority of young people achieve and succeed at school. However, there are groups of vulnerable young people who are at risk of failing to fulfil their potential either as a result of their social context, an educational need or their experiences and attitudes towards the formal education system. In many cases, these vulnerable young people face a variety of difficulties and challenges adapting to the formal curriculum and require an education that can meet their particular needs. Educational disadvantage has become a reality faced by many children and young people living in Northern Ireland.

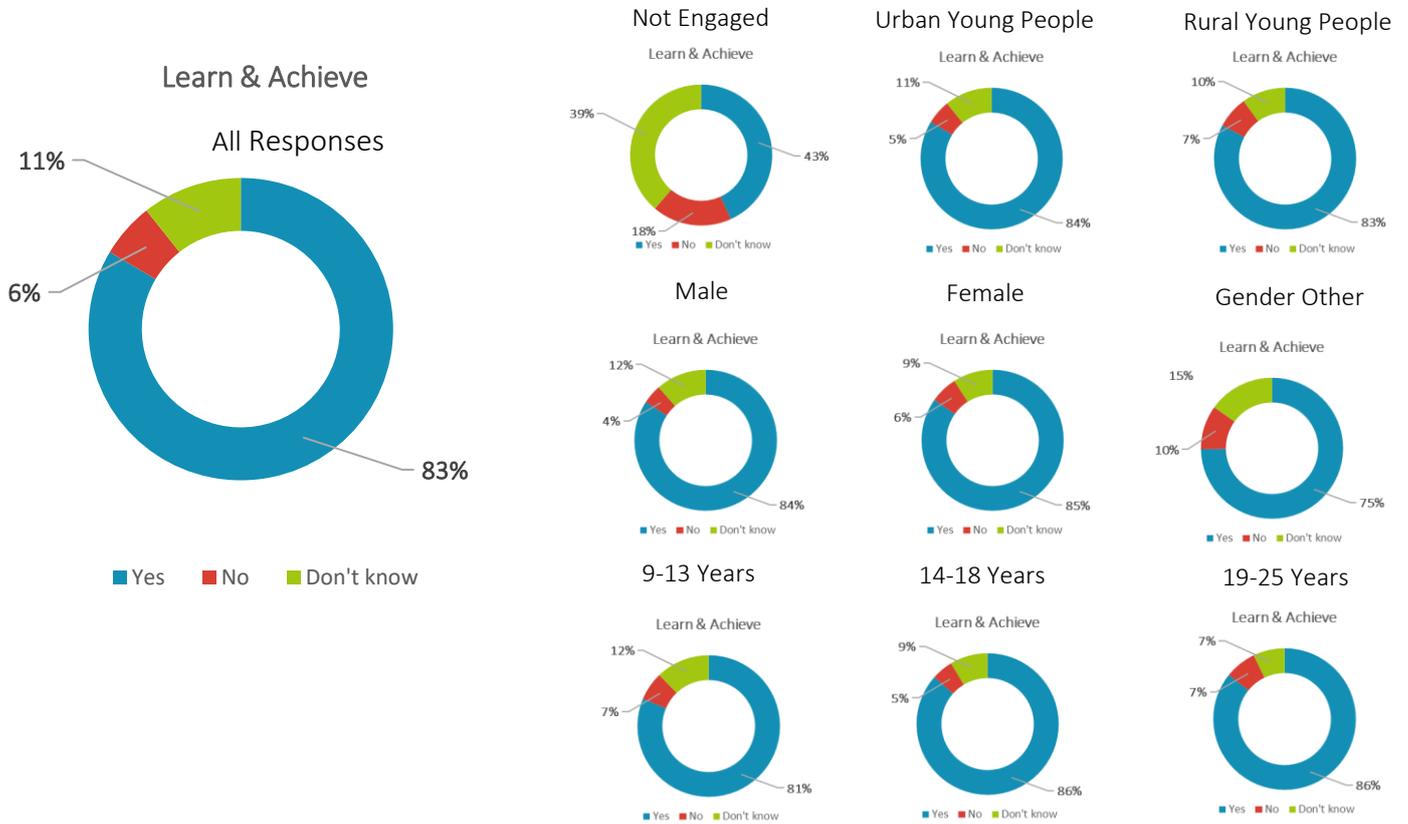
¹⁹ Andrews, J., Robinson, D. & Hutchinson, J., (2017), Closing the Gap – Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, Education Policy Institute, London.

Survey Findings – Learn & Achieve

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Don't Know

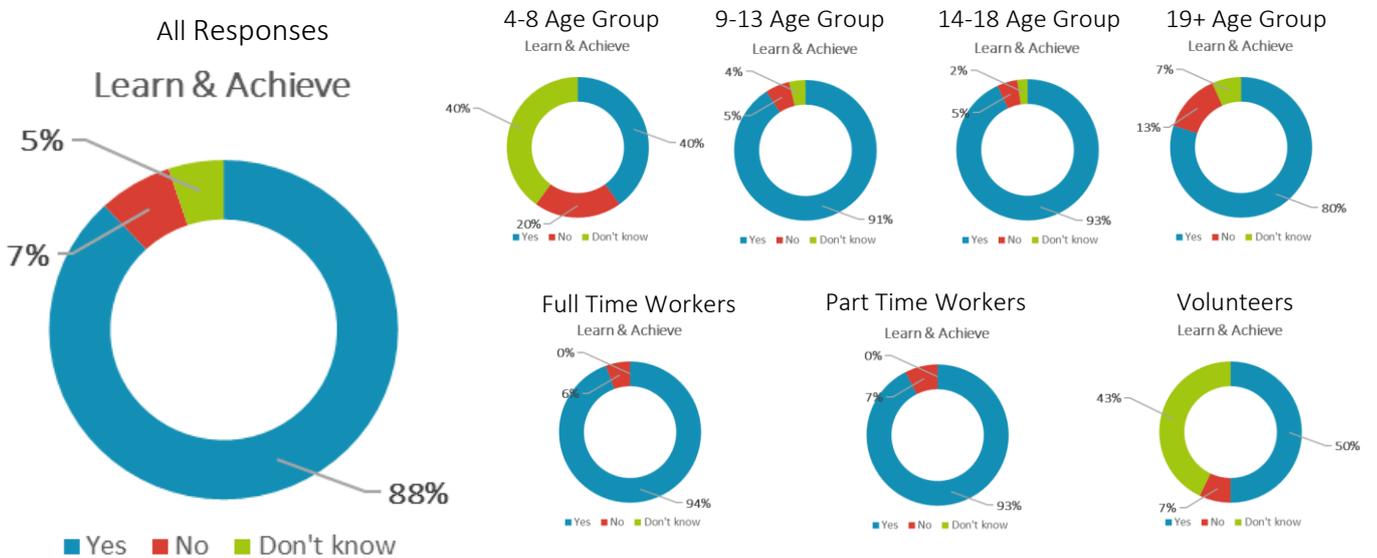
Young People

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

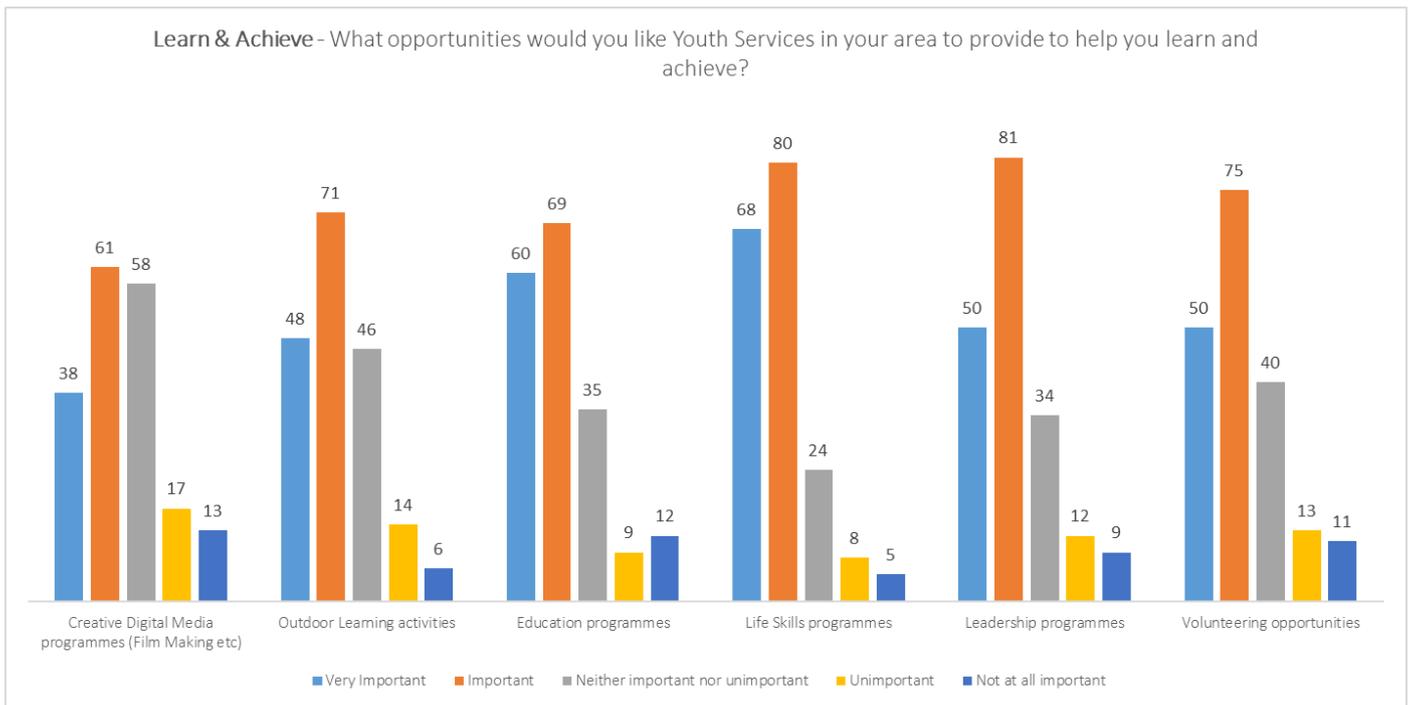


Youth Workers

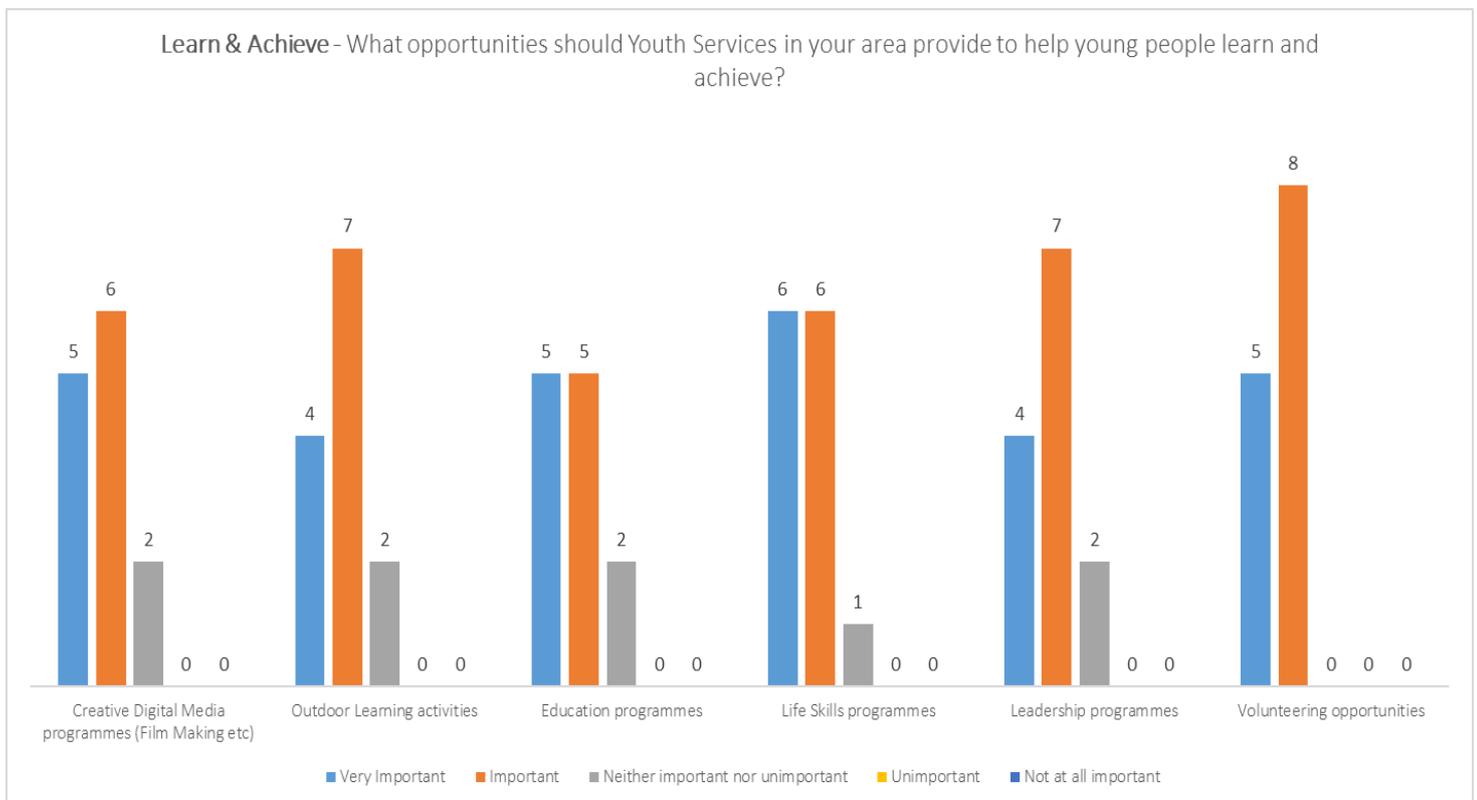
Do Youth Services in your area provide young people with opportunities to learn and take part in new experiences?



Young People

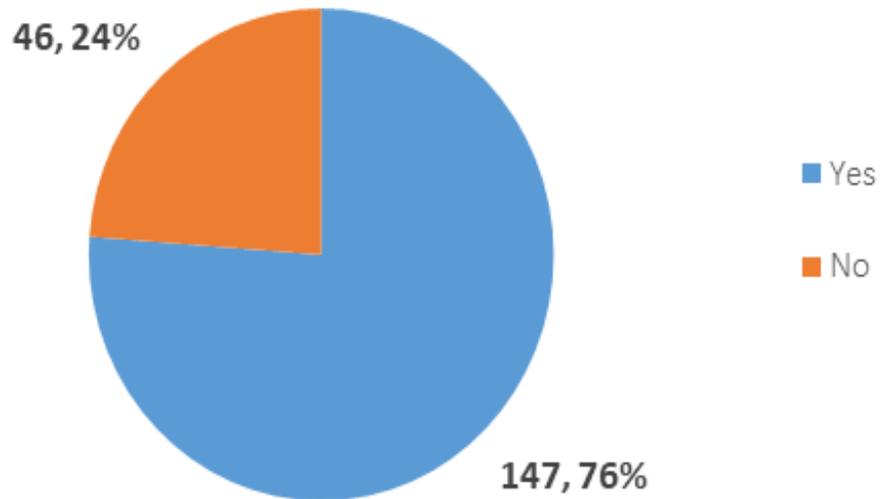


Youth Workers



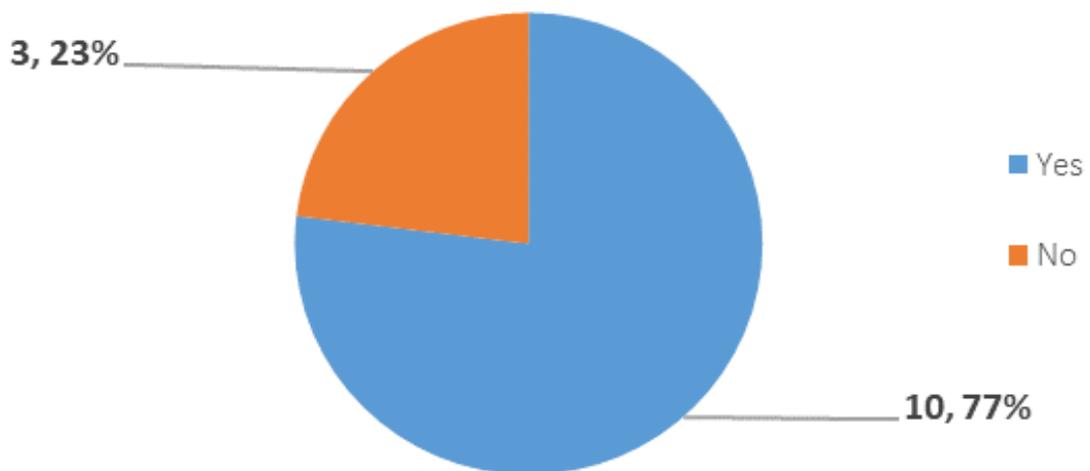
Young People

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



Youth Workers

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



Young People

- Being from an area of deprivation means that there are a lot of disadvantages as young people may not achieve their full potential, so having accredited programmes means young people can have the opportunity to better their future and progress to further or higher education and employment
- Informal learning opportunities to be accessible each night in every area where there is Irish Medium youth centre provision currently
- Young people recorded many vocational issues as an option to access through youth Service including drama and photography courses, sports training and lifeskills and Leadership training.
- Additional opening of youth centres to include afterschool and weekends was frequently recorded as a support to helping young people learn and achieve.

Youth Workers

- Children and young people should be provided with opportunities that prepare them for the world of work. Youth workers suggested greater access to employability and vocational programmes and more opportunities to volunteer and take on leadership roles.
- Early intervention, building relationships with young people and youth club availability were key to supporting children and young people in the long term.
- Availability to social action, active learning, outdoor learning and citizenship opportunities were important issues highlighted by youth workers and volunteers.
- They also saw the importance of developing programmes around climate issues, the environment and recycling.

Discussion

Education is a gateway for social mobility and breaking the cycle of poverty. Yet for many children and young people from deprived communities and other vulnerable groups, our education system fails to meet their needs. The Centre for Social Justice noted that in order to tackle educational failure, our best schools should be in our poorest communities.²⁰

However, at a recent stakeholder event children and young people stated that the formal education system does not always meet or is responsive to their needs and learning styles. They also identified a number of barriers to their learning and achieving, including the school environment, exam stress, and a lack of support from teachers. Children and young people also reflected that programmes delivered by Youth Services encouraged learning and these were interactive, engaging and interesting. It is clear from the survey and ongoing internal research that certain groups of young people learn and achieve better outcomes in a youth work setting, where they feel more supported and youth workers understand them and how they learn best.

Despite pro-active interventions in recent years from a range of bodies, including Government departments, inequalities in the Northern Ireland education system persist and have failed significant numbers of children and young people who are most in need of support and guidance. These vulnerable children and young people are unlikely to fulfil their potential, either as a result of their educational, home or community environment or, in many cases a failure to adapt to the prescribed formal curriculum which fails to motivate or support them.

Failure to provide appropriate opportunities for these children and young people will limit their career opportunities and lead to future social and economic isolation. Over three quarters of survey respondents

²⁰ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/policy/breakthrough-britain/education-failure>

(83%) reported that they wanted Youth Services to provide them with opportunities to learn and take part in new experiences. However, for those not engaged in Youth Services this figure was significantly lower at 48%. The majority of youth workers and volunteers noted that Youth Services should provide new opportunities for children and young people to learn and take part in new experiences.

There is a clear social dimension to educational underachievement. Statistics from DE reveal that young people in receipt of Free School Meals are more than twice as likely to leave school without any substantive qualifications. This is of particular significance when the majority of post primary schools in South and West Belfast report that between 51% and 74% of pupils attending are entitled to Free School Meals.

There is also a significant attainment gap between children and young people with a Special Educational Need or a disability and their peers with most Post Primary Schools in North & East Belfast reporting a population of pupils between 23-84% with additional needs. Other children and young people from Section 75 groups such as young carers, children and young people Looked After, newcomers, young people from Traveller and Roma communities or other minority ethnic groups experience similar educational disadvantage.

In effect, a significant number of young people are being left behind. Consequently, it is interesting to note that more than three quarters of respondents (76%) were keen to participate in programmes delivered by Youth Services which enabled them to gain an accreditation. This was significantly higher at 89% for females aged 19-25.

This was supported during a recent public consultation corresponds with 100% of young people wanted Youth Services to provide qualifications that were accessible, meaningful and would meet their career and life opportunities. Youth workers and volunteers also agreed (77%) that programmes with accreditation offered greater value and were more practical for young people in the long term.

The consequences of leaving school with limited qualifications can have a detrimental impact on a young person's immediate and long term life chances. Many of these vulnerable young people will be unable to begin apprenticeships, start technical or vocational courses or enter the workplace as they cannot meet the basic entry requirements. In many cases, they are unable to complete basic application forms. Young people leaving school without qualifications will be categorised as NEET. The numbers of NEET young people has increased significantly in the last number of years.

Therefore, it is interesting to report that children and young people from all age groups stated that life skills programmes were the most important in terms of them successfully transitioning into adulthood and the world of work. Understandably, those aged 19-25 placed greater emphasis on the importance of life skills programmes. Outdoor Learning Activities, Volunteering Opportunities and Leadership programmes also ranked highly among all young people. Life-skills programmes, Education programmes and Outdoor Learning Activities were the most common programmes put forward by youth workers and volunteers to help children and young people learn and achieve and make the transition into the world of work.

Educational underachievement can have a negative impact on a child or young person's life chances and opportunities. They are less likely to enter and progress in the workplace which will reduce their opportunities for future social and economic participation in wider society. A New Zealand report noted other negative outcomes such as involvement in juvenile crime, drug and alcohol misuse leading to other risk taking activity and a dependency on welfare.²¹

²¹ Fergusson, D. M., Swain-Campbell, N. R. & Horwood, L. J., (2002), Outcomes of leaving school without formal educational qualifications. New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, Christchurch.

Youth Services are ideally placed to contribute to the reduction of barriers for children and young people learning and achieving and can potentially increase educational attainment among the most vulnerable children and young people and particularly those from minority groups. Not all children and young people learn the same way and informal learning methodologies appeal to those who are failing in the formal education environment.

It should be noted that although creative, digital and media programmes were the least popular choice for young people, these new, innovative programmes have the potential to provide valuable pathways for young people in the future

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.
 - Disability incidences 97
 - Faith/Religion incidences 46
 - Transphobic incidences 40
- In Belfast
 - Racist incidences 468, almost half of which took place in South & West Belfast.
 - Homophobic incidences 129, 66 recorded in either South or West Belfast
 - Sectarian incidences 280, one third of these in South and West Belfast.
- 3,331 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- 19,550 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 Belfast this equates to approximately 2,000 young people.
- 154 Traveller children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- 276 Roma children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- In 2018/19 4,175 young people participated in 123 T:BUC camps programmes.
- There are three START programmes in North & East Belfast supporting young people in 2019/2020.

Why is this measure important?

Good relations is said to exist where there is a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding and an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility or harassment.²² 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 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.

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.

²² Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

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 normal, peaceful society. Despite this, there are still a number of factors which ensure that community tensions, polarisation and segregation still exist. 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 that still encounter legacy issues and experience sectarianism. A recent report noted that sectarianism is more widespread in working class areas.²³ 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 young people from other backgrounds. These areas have 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 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 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 people identifying as LGBTQ, especially young people and other marginalised or Section 75 groups who are subject to bullying, racism and intolerance.

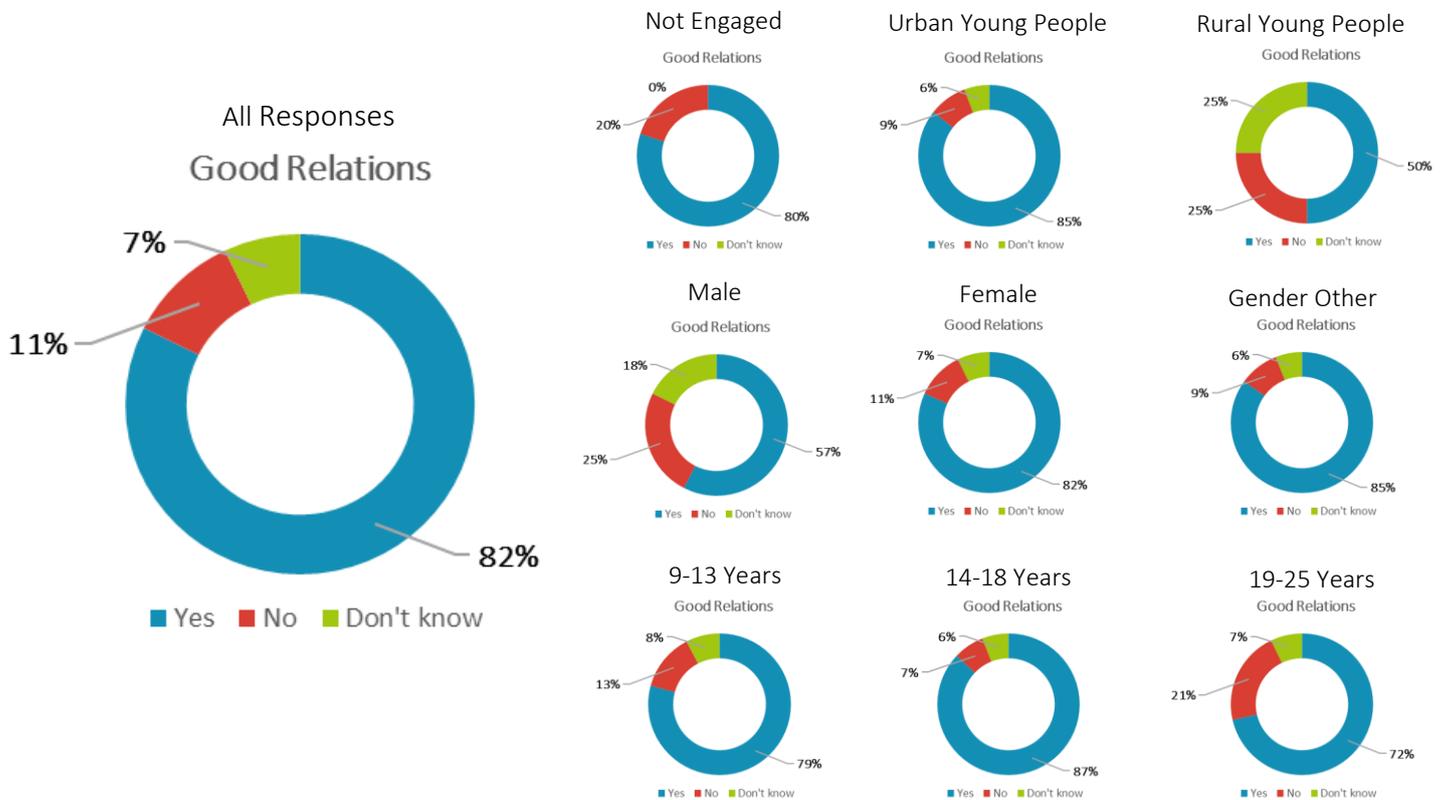
²³ Sectarianism in Northern Ireland – a Review. https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/410227/A-Review-Addressing-Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland_FINAL.pdf

Survey Findings – Good Relations

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Don't Know

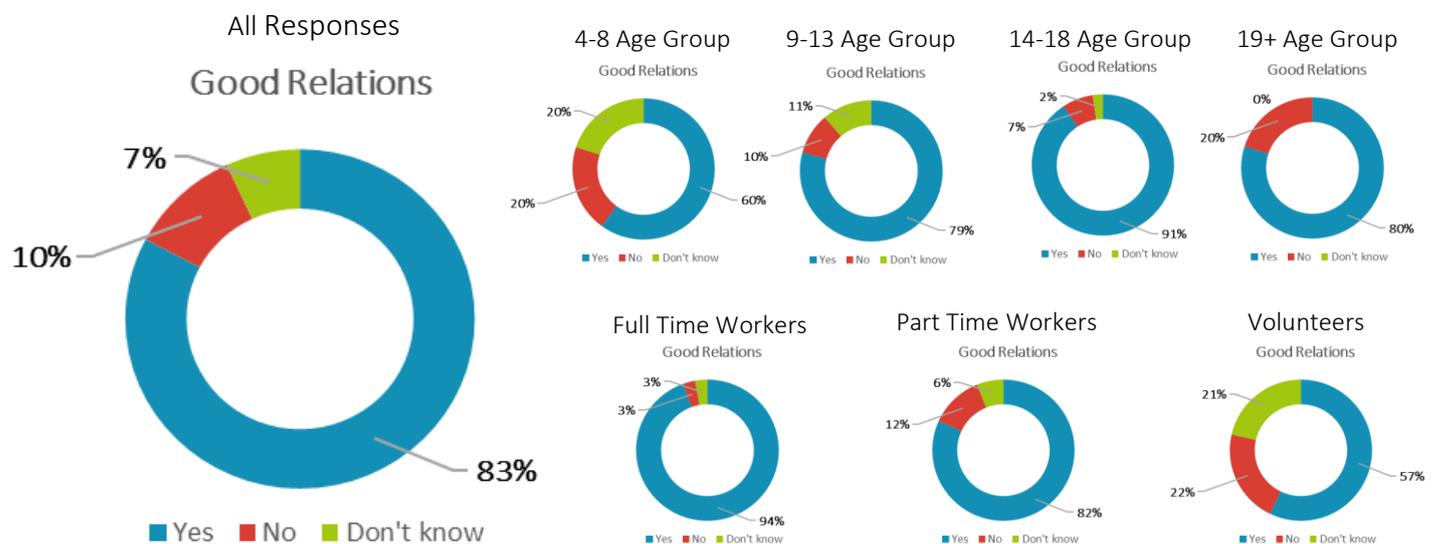
Young People

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



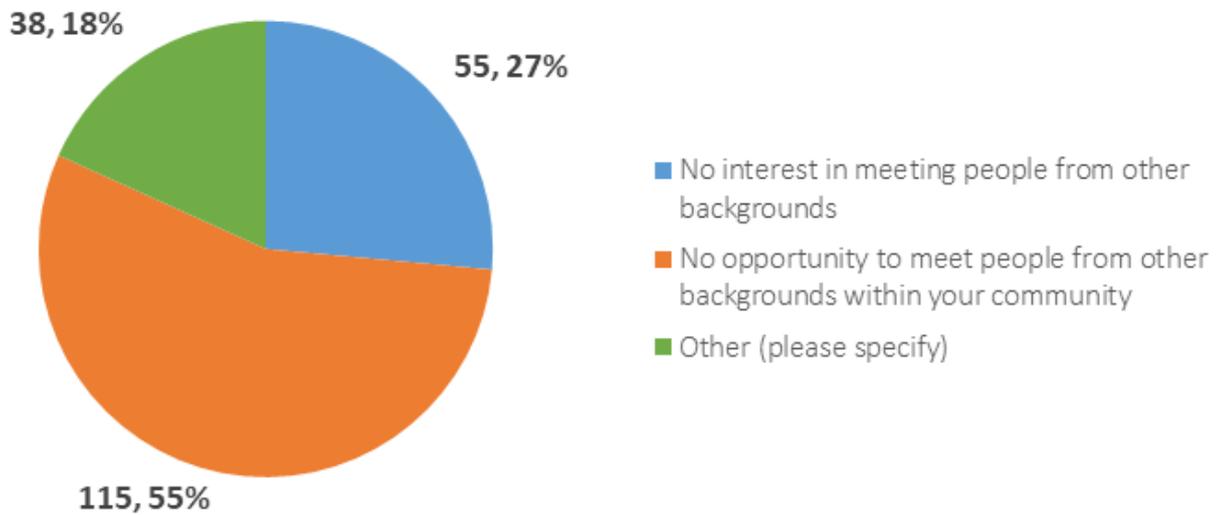
Youth Workers

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



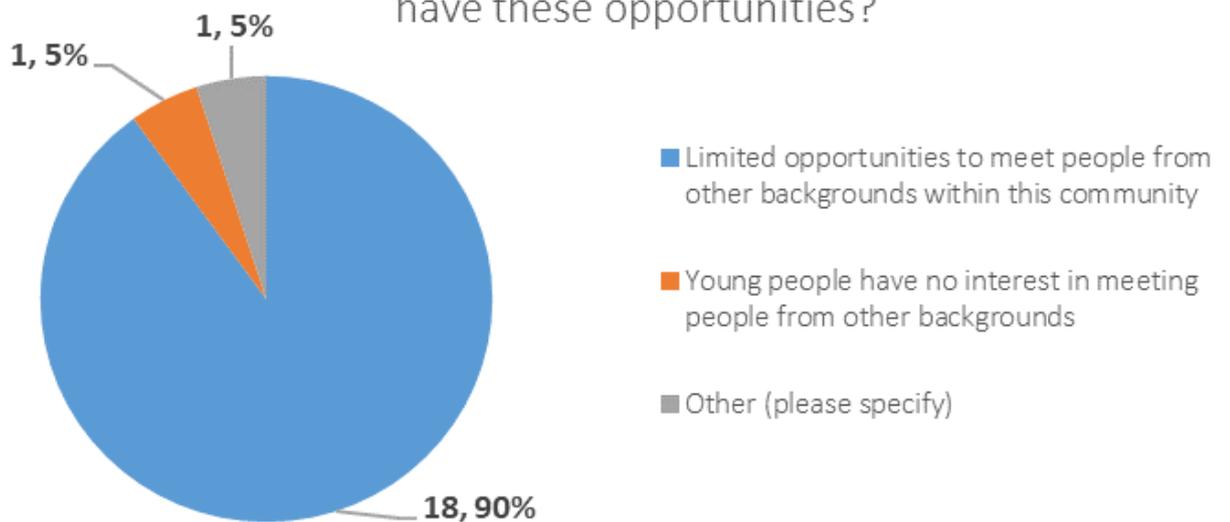
Young People

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

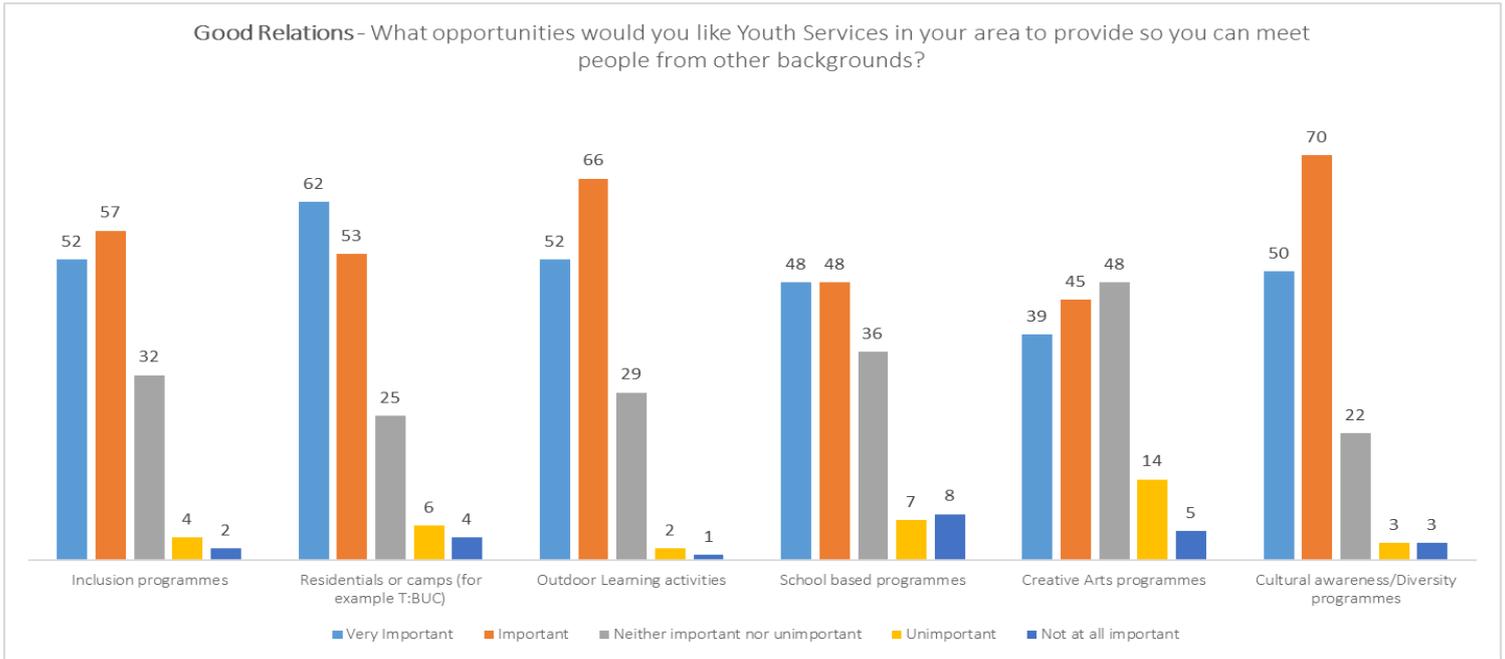


Youth Workers

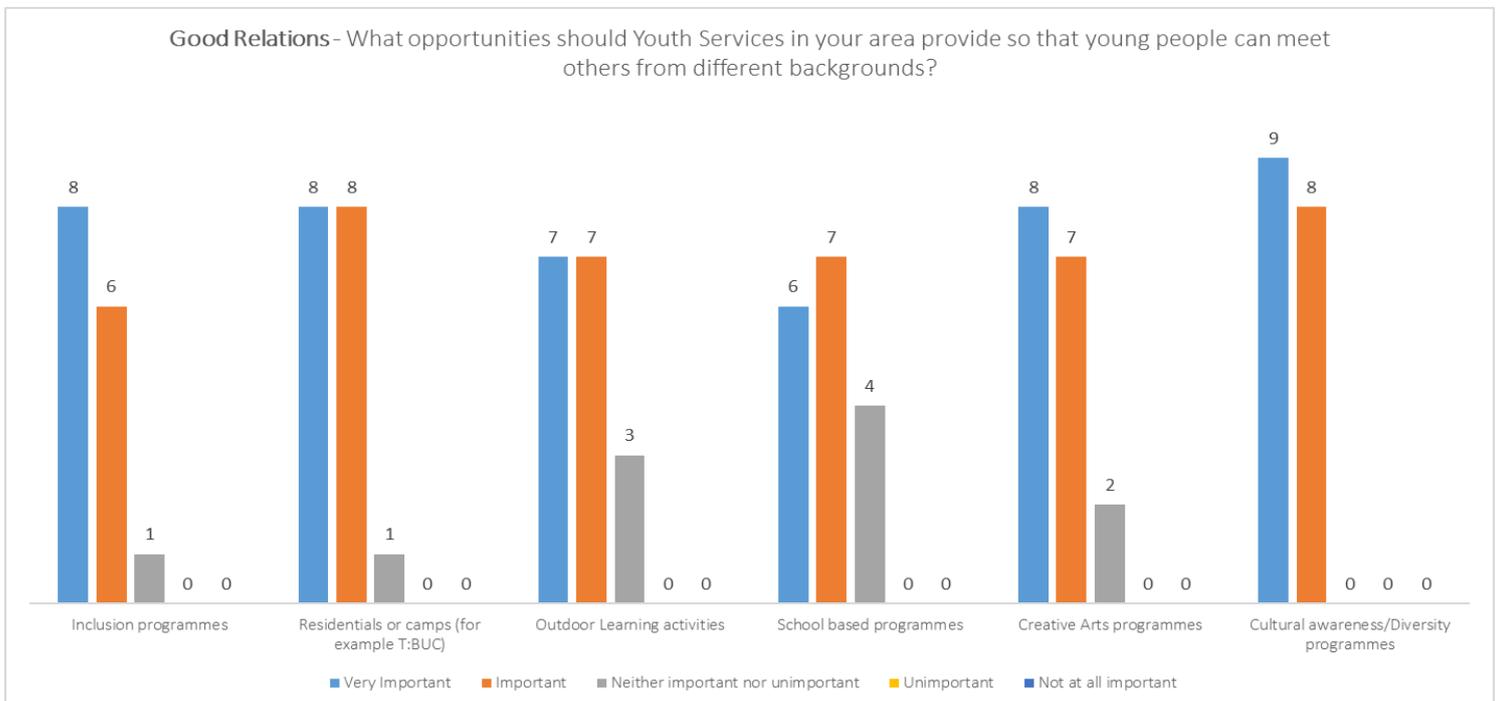
Good Relations - Reason you believe why Young People do not have these opportunities?



Young People



Youth Workers



Young People

- Young people indicated generic programmes during interclub visits would enable them to mix with young people from other communities.
- It was recorded that young people felt they weren't offered community relations programmes.
- Cultural nights and inclusion programmes were proposed to encourage inclusivity.
- T:BUC, 3C's and GSL programmes were recognised as good opportunities for young people to mix with others.
- Training for staff on a regional basis e.g YSWQ Scheme, increased networking opportunities for staff, enabling them to identify partner groups for programmes.

Youth Workers

- Youth workers and volunteers suggested partnership working with schools or shared education initiatives to deliver inclusion and diversity programmes.
- International, residential and thematic based programmes were other suggestions they proposed to support good relations among young people.
- More work focussing on Special Educational Needs and disability and discrimination in these areas was proposed.

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.*²⁴

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.

The majority of respondents to the Youth Service survey, 82%, noted that they had opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with children and young people from different backgrounds in their own area. However, for those not engaged with Youth Services the figure was only 57%. The vast majority of youth workers and volunteers (87%) supported the view that young people had opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with others from different backgrounds in their area. This is interesting given that the majority of children and young people live and are educated separately, however in the last number of years many young people have benefitted from participation in T:BUC camps.

Despite the Good Relations policy, Northern Ireland remains a divided community. The education system is segregated with the majority of children and young people attending schools based on their religion. Public

²⁴ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2008, Promoting Good Relations, ECNI, Belfast.

and social housing is overwhelmingly segregated between the two communities with 7 clear interface areas identified in South and West Belfast. This can lead to inter-community tensions, involving children and young people especially at contentious times of the year and particularly at interface areas. This can also lead to children and young people coming under the influence of paramilitaries.

Of those children and young people responding to why they did not interact with others from different backgrounds, over one-third had no interest in meeting people from other backgrounds whilst half had no opportunity to meet people from other backgrounds within their community, reflecting the segregated nature of Northern Irish society.

Northern Ireland has become a much more culturally diverse place in recent years. However, in the last number of years racist hate crimes have exceeded sectarian hate crimes. A recent Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey highlighted increasing levels of intolerance among people in Northern Ireland and the 18-24 year old age group were the most intolerant.²⁵ At a recent engagement event young people supported the view that Youth Services could provide safe spaces for children and young people and promote inclusion and embrace and celebrate difference.

Given the numbers of newcomer pupils particularly in south Belfast which is home to 38% of all newcomer children in Belfast, there is clearly a need for work around cultural awareness and diversity.

Developing initiatives with young people around community relations, equality and diversity allows them to develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and engage positively with it.

The most favoured programmes identified by children and young people to improving Good Relations were, cultural awareness and diversity programmes, residential or camps and, outdoor learning activities, highlighting existing provision. At a stakeholder event young people also wanted more access to international programmes to meet need in this area. Youth workers and volunteers reported that outdoor learning activities, inclusion programmes and cultural awareness and diversity programmes were the best ways to improve Good Relations among children and young people.

Other marginal groups also experience intolerance and prejudice. For example, the LGBTQ community reported that they have been subjected to political and social intolerance, where their rights have been denied and not respected. For many within this community, discrimination and prejudice begins in school and many young people noted ongoing bullying and harassment. The vast majority of young people identifying as gender other reported that they would like to see cultural awareness or diversity programmes delivered by Youth Services to meet their needs or raise awareness of their particular issues.

²⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/belfast-and-beyond/northern-irelands-increasing-problem-racism>

Participation

Area of Enquiry 4: Participation

Key Facts

- The overall attendance figures for schools in Belfast in 2017/18 was 93%.
- 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 63,200 children and young people from Belfast live in a deprived area.
- According to the last census (2011) there are 8,000 young carers in Northern Ireland.
- 3,331 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in the Belfast.
- The most recent figures reveal that 547 Looked After Children were supported by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Belfast.
- 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 Belfast Ireland this equates to approximately 2,000 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.
- 154 Traveller children and young people attending schools in Northern Ireland.
- 276 Roma children and young people attending schools in Northern Ireland

Why is this measure important?

Article 12 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.²⁶ Children and young people's participation in decision making in issues that affect them has increasingly been recognised and valued as a right. It has also been reported that successfully engaging young people in the institutions, communities and contexts in which they live and building their capacity as social actors can be a critical factor in their positive development as individuals, enhance their career prospects and life chances and support their positive contribution to these same contexts and institutions.²⁷

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 and provides practical experiences and teaches them how to behave responsibly.²⁸ Participation can stimulate an awareness of wider societal issues that can negatively affect their local communities. As well as giving 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.

The benefits of participation for children and young people are many and include some of the following: As well as empowering young people to be active citizens and engage with wider society, participation develops their leadership skills, increases their sense of ownership and belonging, improves their communication, negotiation and collaboration skills, enhances their self-confidence and self-esteem, allows them to gain a

²⁶ https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_summary-1.pdf?_ga=2.10450293.1730959173.1571222212-2071504256.1570712098

²⁷ Chaskin, R.J., McGregor, C. & Brady, B. (2018), *Engaging Urban Youth: Community, Citizenship and Democracy*, NUI, Galway.

²⁸ <https://www.niccy.org/media/1330/niccy-advice-benefits-of-engagement-with-children-and-young-people-dec-14.pdf>

better understanding of democratic processes and improves their career prospects. Participation also allows young people to express their needs and ideas.

Participation comes in many forms from involvement in social activities and clubs, playing sport, music or cultural activities as well as youth leadership, volunteering and peer mentoring.

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.²⁹ 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. Young people may be disaffected from schools and fail to engage in education and will therefore lack the necessary skills to engage.

In some instances young people may disengage due to social, economic, or 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 Looked After child or young person or having a disability or Special Educational Need.

Participative activities may be inaccessible due to location, lack of transport, cost implications or limited digital connectivity. Many young people living in rural areas face these challenges.

Opportunities to participate may conflict with school or other commitments. It is also possible that children and young people may feel they are not well enough supported or lack motivation and confidence to participate.

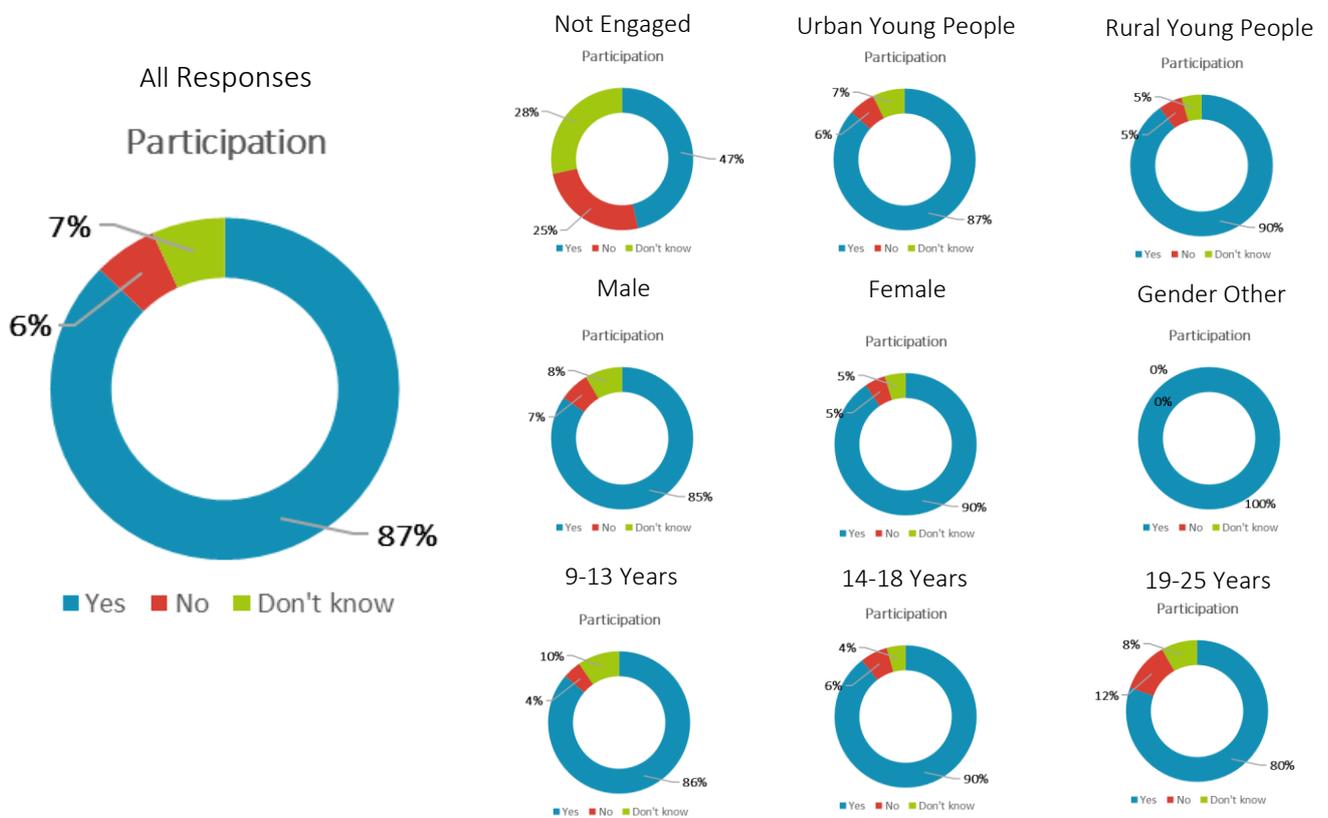
²⁹Holdsworth, R. Stokes, H. Blanchard, M. & Mohamed, M. 2006, Civic Engagement and Young people in the city of Melbourne, Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne.

Survey Findings – Participation

Yes No Don't Know

Young People

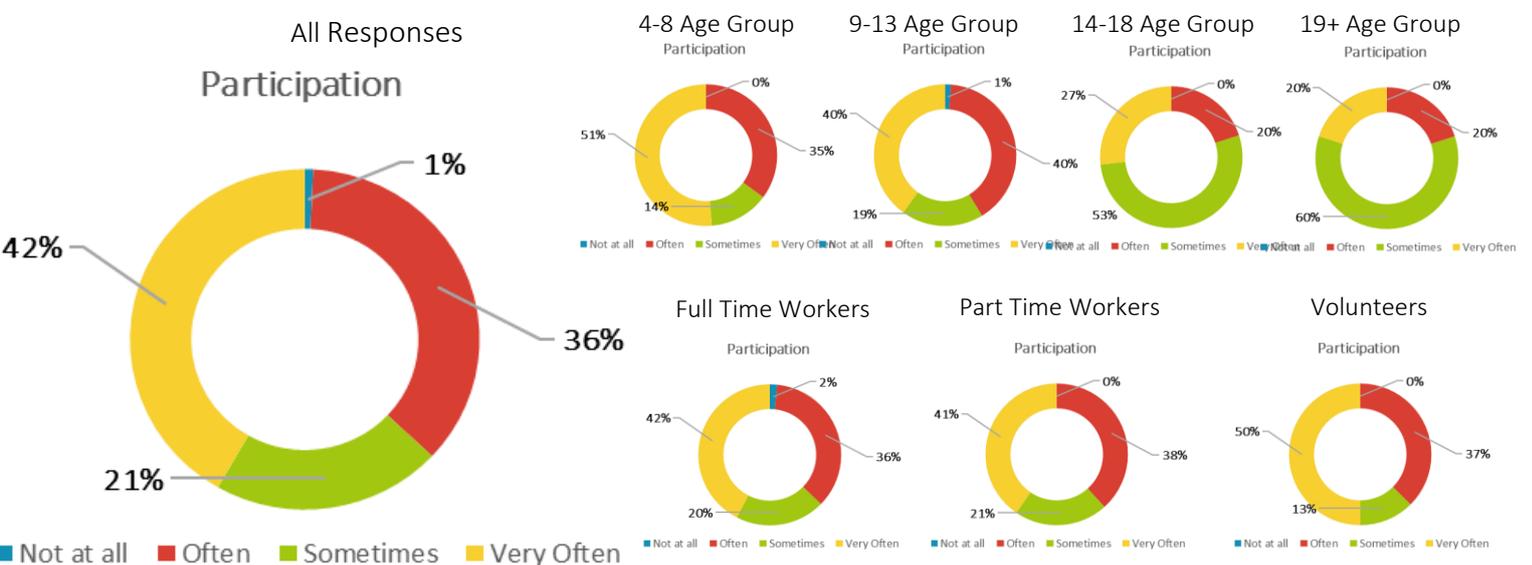
Do you have opportunities to take part in Youth Services in your area?



Not at all Often Sometimes Very Often

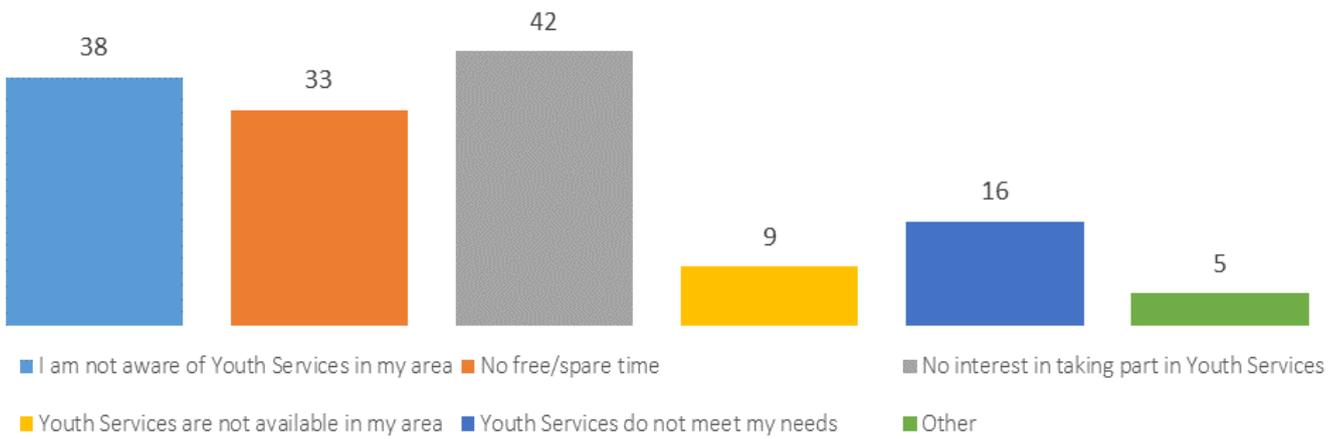
Youth Workers

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



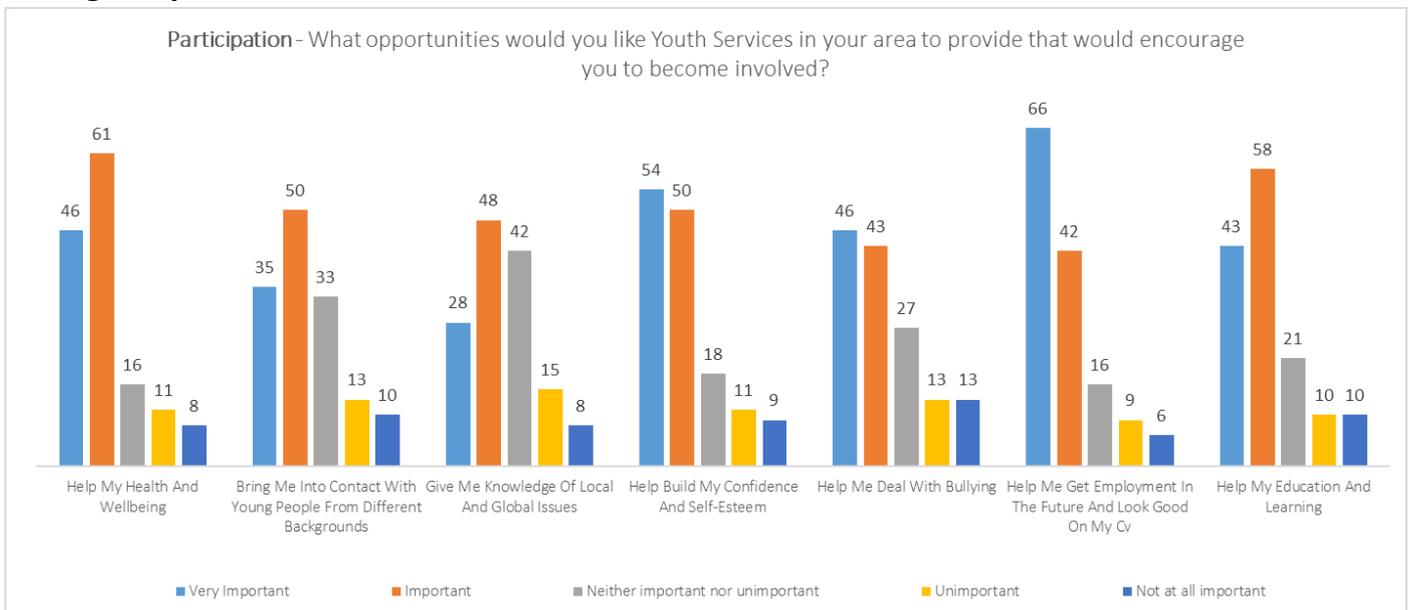
Young People

Participation - Reason you believe you do not have opportunity to take part in Youth Services in your area?

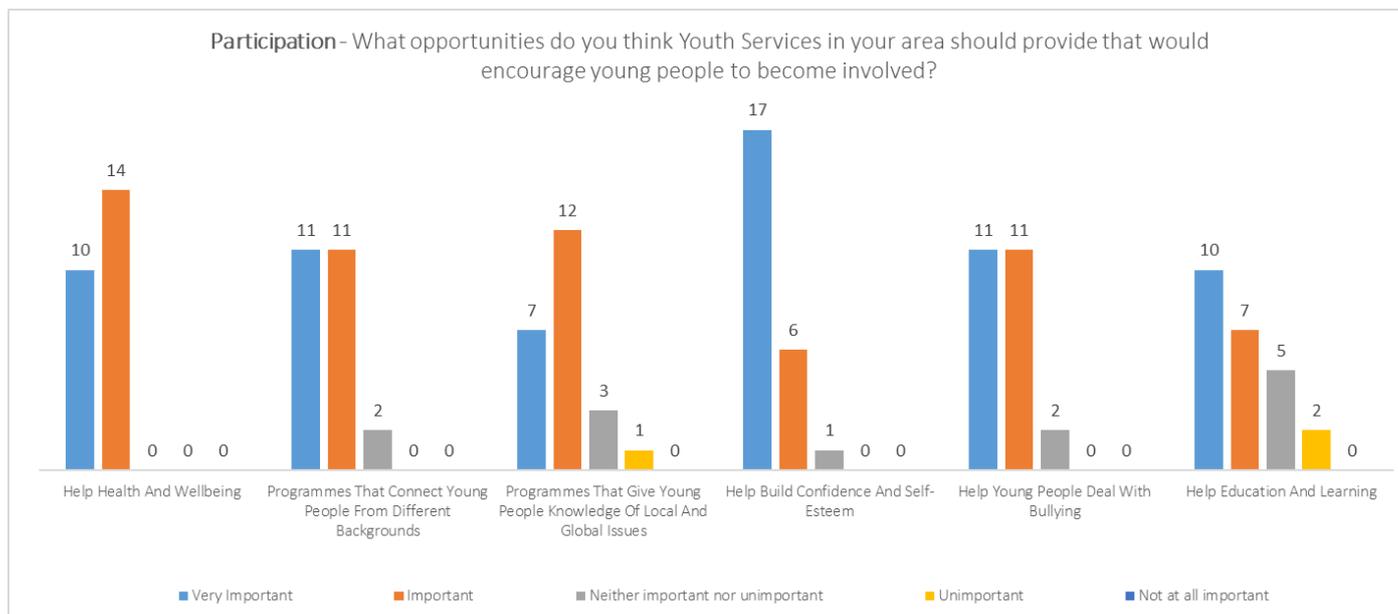


Young People

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



Youth Workers



Young People

- Some young people noted that they felt too old to attend youth service provision.
- Opening times of youth centres were seen as a barrier to participation.
- Lack of PR and advertising prevents some young people from participating as they are unsure what services are available.
- It was felt that better communication in schools would promote the service and encourage greater participation.
- Access to wifi and study clubs would enable young people to attend and get support with homework, either from youth workers or peers.
- An increase in outreach work would raise awareness of youth service and what different centres offered.

Youth Workers

- Youth workers and volunteers noted that Youth Services did not always meet the physical and learning needs of some young people, which was a barrier to participation.
- Family and social circumstances and being from a vulnerable or minority group were also put forward as barriers to participation in Youth Services and society as a whole.
- Children and young people in urban areas had difficulty accessing services because they did not live in an area of high social need, despite having particular needs themselves.
- Children and young people were not always consulted about provision in their area and this put some off participating.

Discussion

Most children and young people in Northern Ireland have access to some form of social, cultural or sporting outlet. Participation in school, Youth Services and wider society helps children and young people become more confident and independent. It can also provide opportunities to socialise and make friends with people from different backgrounds.

The overall majority of survey respondents (86%) stated that they had an opportunity to take part in Youth Services in South and West Belfast. There was no discernible difference in terms of age or gender, however, only 24% of those not engaged in Youth Services reported that they did not have opportunities to take part in Youth Services. Nearly all youth workers and volunteers (95%) stated that young people in their area had opportunities to participate in Youth Services.

Of those young people not accessing Youth Services, 2% reported that Youth Services did not meet their needs, 4% noted that Youth Services were not available in their area and 11% claimed they were not aware of Youth Services in their area.

Young people who have been engaged in social, leisure and cultural activities are well-placed to apply for a university place or jobs and training opportunities because they have developed meaningful skills and experiences. As well as participating in an activity they enjoy, young people have often developed important life skills like communicating with others, teamwork, problem-solving and also gained a higher level of emotional maturity.

The survey results highlighted that children and young people would like to see Youth Services provide support through programmes that will help with their confidence and self-esteem, programmes that helped them obtain employment in the future, and also programmes that supported their education and health and wellbeing. Youth workers and volunteers suggested that programmes to develop their confidence and self-esteem, health and wellbeing programmes and education and learning programmes were most likely to encourage children and young people to become involved in Youth Services.

However, there are significant numbers of children and young people in Northern Ireland for whom participating in wider society is not an option. Many of these children and young people will face barriers and challenges that their peers take for granted. Some such as newcomers may face language and cultural barriers, young carers may not be able to participate due to other commitments, disabled young people may have accessibility problems, homeless young people and young people from deprived areas may face financial barriers.

Interestingly, through further consultation many children and young people stated that Youth Services were available to them through Detached Youth Work. They felt this approach to youth work assisted them in developing relationships with others, promoted safe use of space and often lead to opportunities which benefited them as an individual or group.

There are also groups of young people who fail to attend school or access Youth Services. They may be carers, children and young people Looked After, disabled young people or have simply become disaffected with the formal curriculum. Failing to participate in school, Youth Services or wider society can have a detrimental effect and lead to negative outcomes for children and young people including, social exclusion, low confidence and self-esteem and poor mental health and resilience. A recent report from the Child Poverty Action Group found that increasing numbers of children and young people from low income families were

going hungry. As a consequence, children and young people experience feelings of shame and stigmatisation, feel cut off from their learning and social opportunities due to a lack of money and food.³⁰

The majority of young people at a local engagement event noted that Youth Services catered for all learning styles, however some children and young people were reluctant to participate in learning opportunities either at school or with Youth Services due to low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, anxiety or a fear of failure. The survey revealed that a high proportion of children and young people would like to participate in programmes that would improve their confidence and self-esteem. This again highlights the value of youth work and the impact it can have on a young person's life and future outcomes.

Through consultations with children and young people it has become evident that young people want to participate in wider society. It was recognised that Youth Services are ideally placed to provide children and young people with a platform to have their voices heard and responded to through Local Advisory Groups, Youth Councils and other civic events and fora. Many suggested that this form of participation should be continued and expanded upon. It was also reported that participation in wider society would improve their overall life chances, career opportunities and general health and wellbeing

³⁰ <https://cpag.org.uk/news-blogs/news-listings/why-food-not-answer-hunger-uk>

Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity

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

Key Facts

- The most recent figures reveal that 547 Looked After Children were supported by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Belfast.
- 3,331 Newcomer children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- 19,550 (28.7%) of all pupils have a special Education Need or disability in Belfast. Non Grammar Post Primary Schools in South and West Belfast have between 23% and 84% of pupils attending with additional needs.
- 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 Belfast this equates to approximately 2,423 young people.
- 154 Traveller children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- 276 Roma children and young people attend schools in Belfast.
- 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).³¹
- 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.³²

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 leave anyone behind.

Diversity is the term used to describe the 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 and celebrating these differences.

Equality isn't about treating everybody the same. It's about treating everybody fairly.³³ Equality of opportunity, therefore, 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 young people have an equal chance to reach their potential and be the best that they can be.

³¹ <https://www.simoncommunity.org/homelessness/knowledge-hub/homelessness-in-ni>

³² Equalities Review (2007) Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review. Norwich: HMSO.

³³ <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 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.

Inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity are the basis of a fair and equitable society. However if they are not acknowledged or respected it can lead to a number of negative consequences. Inequalities can arise from discrimination and prejudice people may face based on an aspect of their identity.³⁴ A recent report from Barnsley Council noted that inequality and discrimination hold us all back.³⁵

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, although this list is not exhaustive: looked after children and young people, 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 Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), victims or witnesses of domestic abuse, those at risk of offending, living in a deprived or rural area, homeless young people and school age mothers.

³⁴ <http://www.seemescotland.org/>

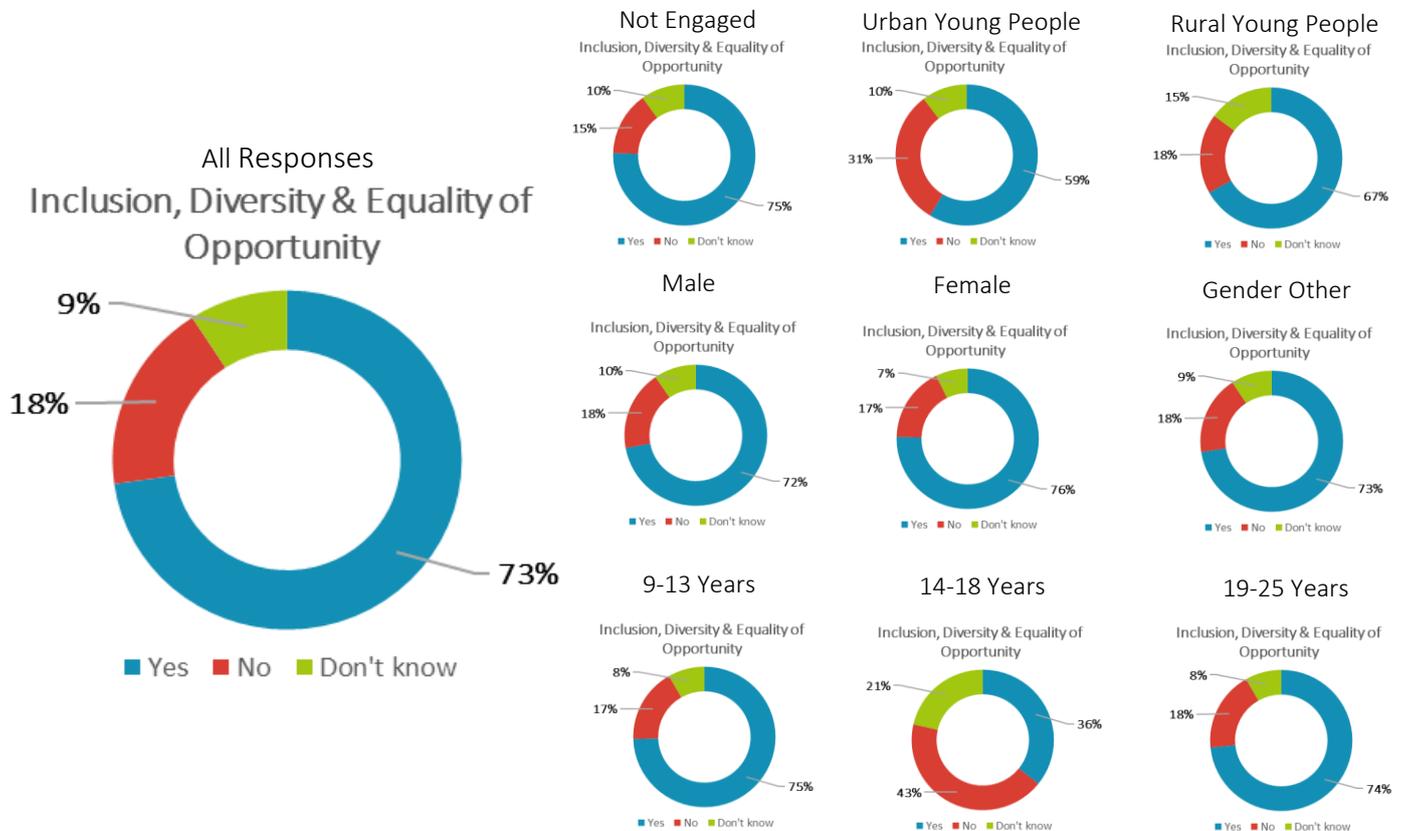
³⁵ <https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36773/Appendix%201.pdf>

Survey Findings – Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity

■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Don't Know

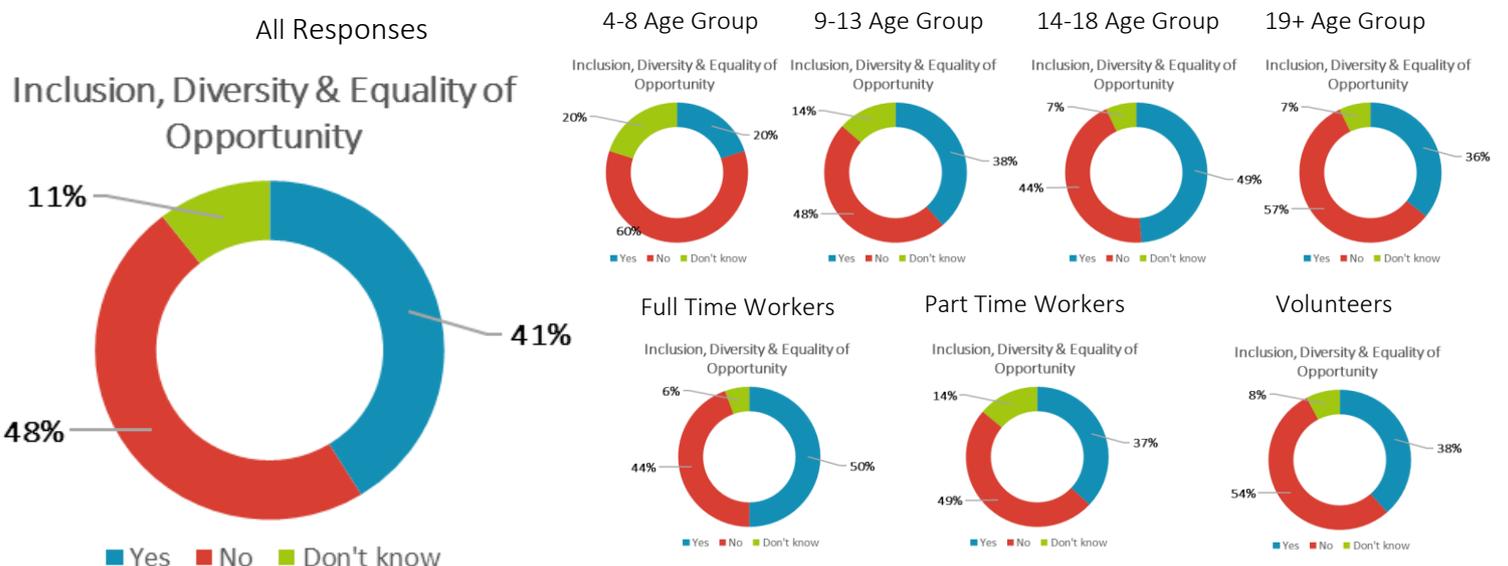
Young People

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



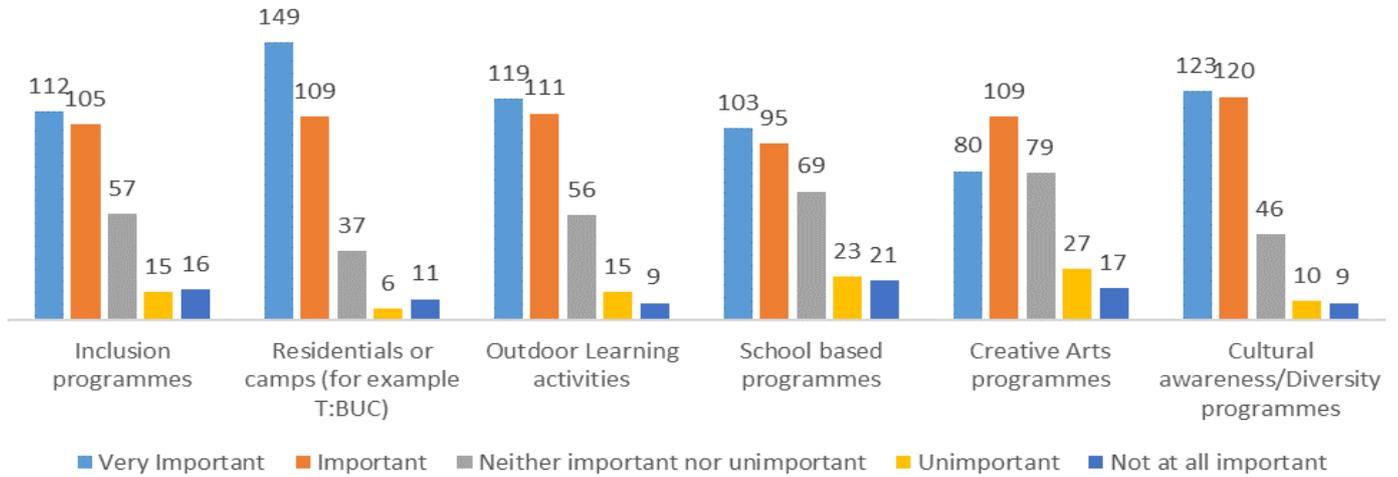
Youth Workers

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



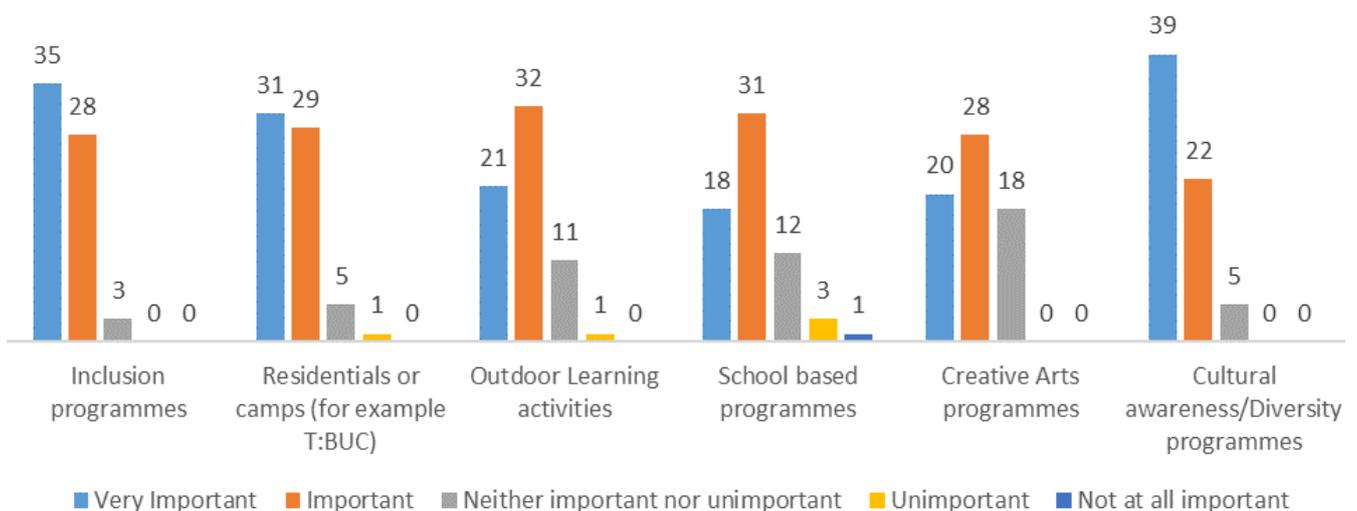
Young People

Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity - What opportunities would you like Youth Services in your area to provide so you can feel more included?

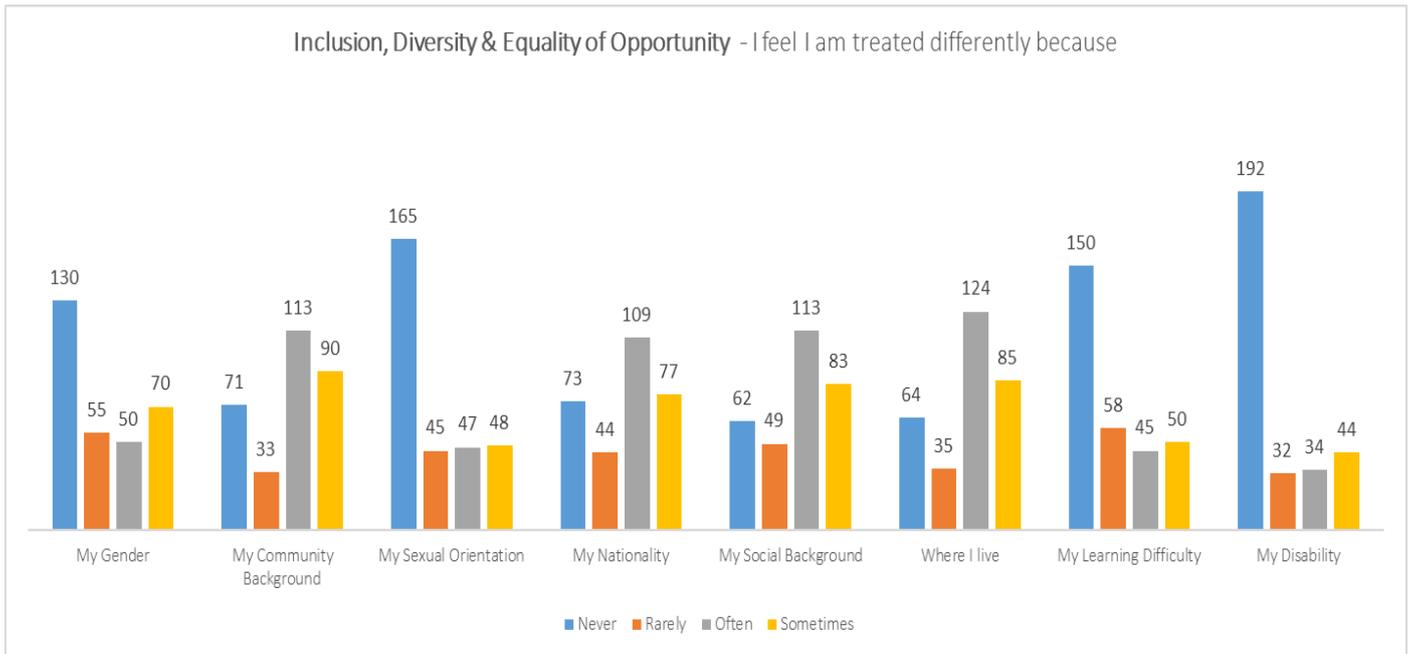


Youth Workers

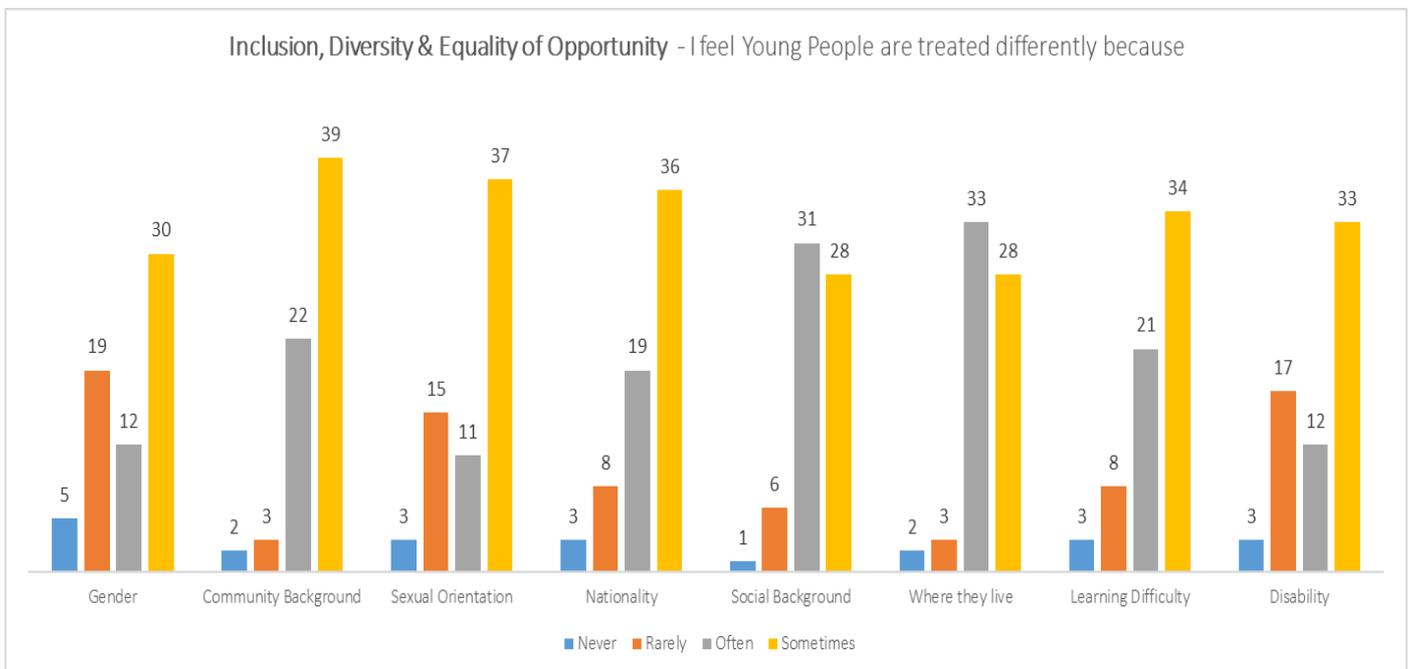
Inclusion, Diversity & Equality of Opportunity - What opportunities should Youth Services in your area provide so young people can feel more included?



Young People



Youth Workers



Young People

- Some young people felt that they were treated differently because of their appearance including height, dress sense, hair colour.
- A number of young people from an Irish Medium background felt that they were excluded by peers because of their language but also because of a lack of Irish Medium provision which prevented them becoming involved.
- Poor mental health was seen as a reason to be treated differently and lead to feelings of exclusion.
- It was recorded that Inclusion groups, sports programmes and youth club visits would help young people feel more included.
- Lack of staff awareness and a need for additional training in Inclusion excluded some young people, particularly those with additional needs.
- More provision through the medium of Irish

Youth Workers

- Youth workers and volunteers suggested developing more advanced inclusion and diversity programmes to challenge the increasing issues that young people were experiencing.
- There was a perception among some youth workers and volunteers that the most vulnerable in society continue to be marginalised.
- It was proposed that social action and civic engagement programmes and also programmes targeting the most vulnerable be introduced to support all children and young people in this area.

Discussion

The EA is committed to preventing discrimination, eliminating prejudice, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity. As an organisation, EA encourage staff and the children and young people they work with to have respect for themselves and others. The EA delivers services that recognise and build upon the strengths of the children and young people in our care from all cultures, religions, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and backgrounds, in ways that meet their needs and help them to achieve their full potential.

However, there are 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.

At a recent stakeholder engagement event, participants noted that among the specific groups that are currently excluded were homeless young people, young carers, young parents, LGBTQ young people and members of the Travelling Community. It was also suggested that a lack of Irish Medium provision was a barrier for some children and young people feeling included.

Stakeholders also noted that some of the barriers children and young people faced in terms of being able to participate, included, transport, lack of facilities, access to centres, language and communication, caring responsibilities and a lack of money.

Three quarters of all respondents to the survey (73%) noted that they had the same opportunities in life as others and were treated the same. However, for those not engaged with Youth Services the figure was 67% and for those identifying as gender other the figure was 36%. This highlights that some vulnerable groups believe they do not feel included or have the same opportunities as others. It is interesting to note that only

41% of youth workers and volunteers believed that children and young people in their area had the same opportunities in life and were treated the same as others.

For those children and young people who believed they were not treated the same as others the reasons given were because of where they lived or their social and community backgrounds. Interestingly, youth workers and volunteers identified the same reasons as the young people. This appears to indicate that many feel discriminated against because of where they live and the disadvantages they face in their daily lives and within their communities.

All children and young people have the right to be heard. Negative attitudes, behaviours and stereotypes towards children and young people should be addressed. Specific individuals and groups may encounter systematic, attitudinal and physical barriers to equality because of their personal circumstances or characteristics. This exclusion may result in these vulnerable groups of children and young people feeling isolated and marginalised. Discrimination, prejudiced based bullying and social isolation can impact a young person's educational outcomes and also affect their overall health and wellbeing, loss of self-esteem, lack of motivation and depression and anxiety, leading them to withdraw from mainstream society.

Children and young people reported that in order to address some of their concerns around Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity that they would most like to engage in residential or camps, cultural awareness and diversity programmes, inclusion programmes and outdoor learning activities. Youth workers and volunteers stated that cultural awareness and diversity programmes, inclusion programmes, and outdoor learning activities were the best services to provide so that young people felt included.

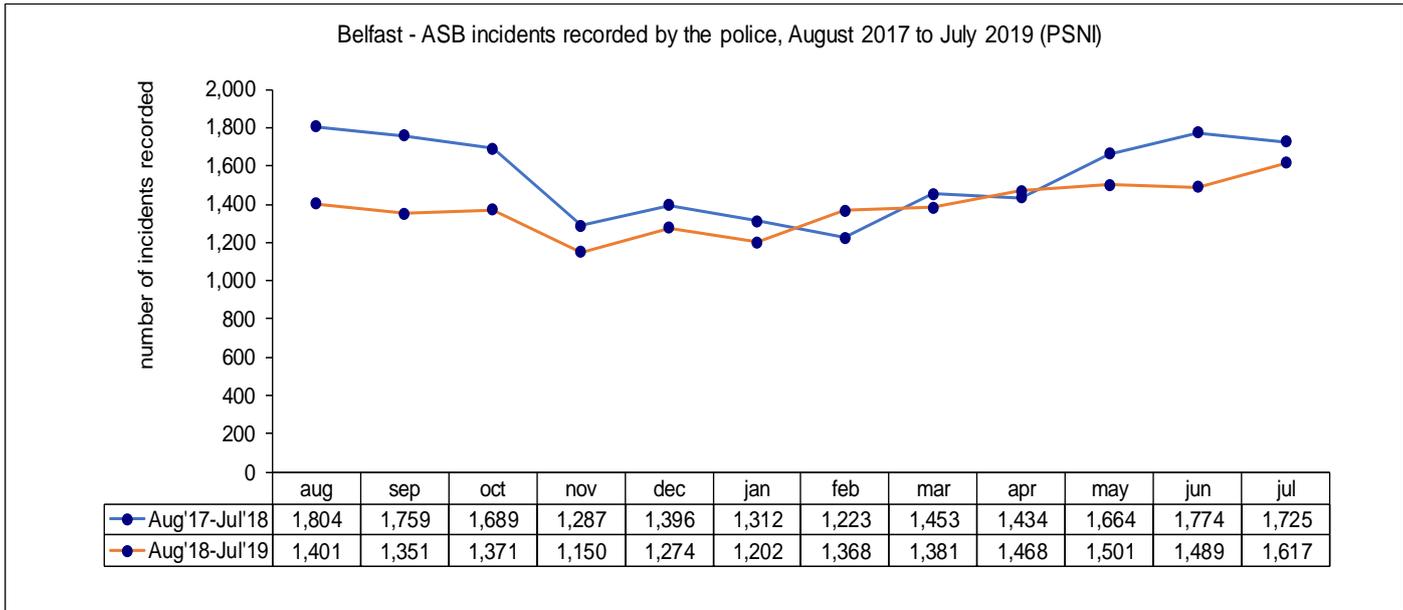
Both children and young people and youth workers noted that it was important to work with young people in the design of programmes to meet their needs in this area. It was also noted that children and young people felt safe to explore these issues in a youth work setting.

Living in Safety & Stability

Area of Enquiry 6: Living in Safety and Stability

Key Facts

- Approximately 63,200 (53%) young people live in the most deprived areas of Belfast.
- 3/4 of all young people in North Belfast live in an Area of 50% most Deprived with just under 1/2 in East Belfast.
- 0 (0%) young people in Belfast live in a rural community.
- There are 10 interface areas in North & East Belfast.
- The most recent figures reveal that 547 Looked After Children were supported by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Many of these children and young people live and attend schools in the Belfast.
- The most recent figures reveal that there were 8,389 domestic abuse incidences in Belfast.
- The total number of movements within the Juvenile Justice Centre for Belfast in 2017/18 was 159.
- 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. (139 in 2016/17)
- 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.
- 2019 demonstrates a year on decrease in the number of ASB incidents recorded by the PSNI in Belfast and highlights the seasonal variations (See Graph Below)



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.

A young person's early life experiences shape who they are and can potentially inform their life-long learning and health. A recent study noted that children thrive in stable and nurturing homes and environments where they know what to expect and feel that their relationships, health and safety are secure.³⁶ To develop to their full potential, children and young people require safe and secure housing, a balanced diet, access to medical care, secure relationships with parents and guardians, including nurturing and responsive parenting and high-quality learning opportunities at home and in school.³⁷

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 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.³⁸

There are a number of risk factors such as socio-economic, demographic, environmental and cultural influences which can directly impact on a 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.

These negative influences on children or young people can have serious consequences for their future life chances. These vulnerable 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, crime, gang involvement and are more susceptible to be influenced by paramilitaries. Other consequences include being vulnerable to sexual exploitation, homelessness, stigmatisation and social exclusion.

Children and young people from Section 75 groups are those at most risk of not living safely and securely. There are large numbers of these children and young people throughout Northern Ireland.

³⁶ <https://ifstudies.org/blog/how-instability-affects-kids>

³⁷ Sanderson, H., & Huerta, S. (2013), The Negative Effects of Instability on Child Development: A Research Synthesis, The Urban Initiative, Washington.

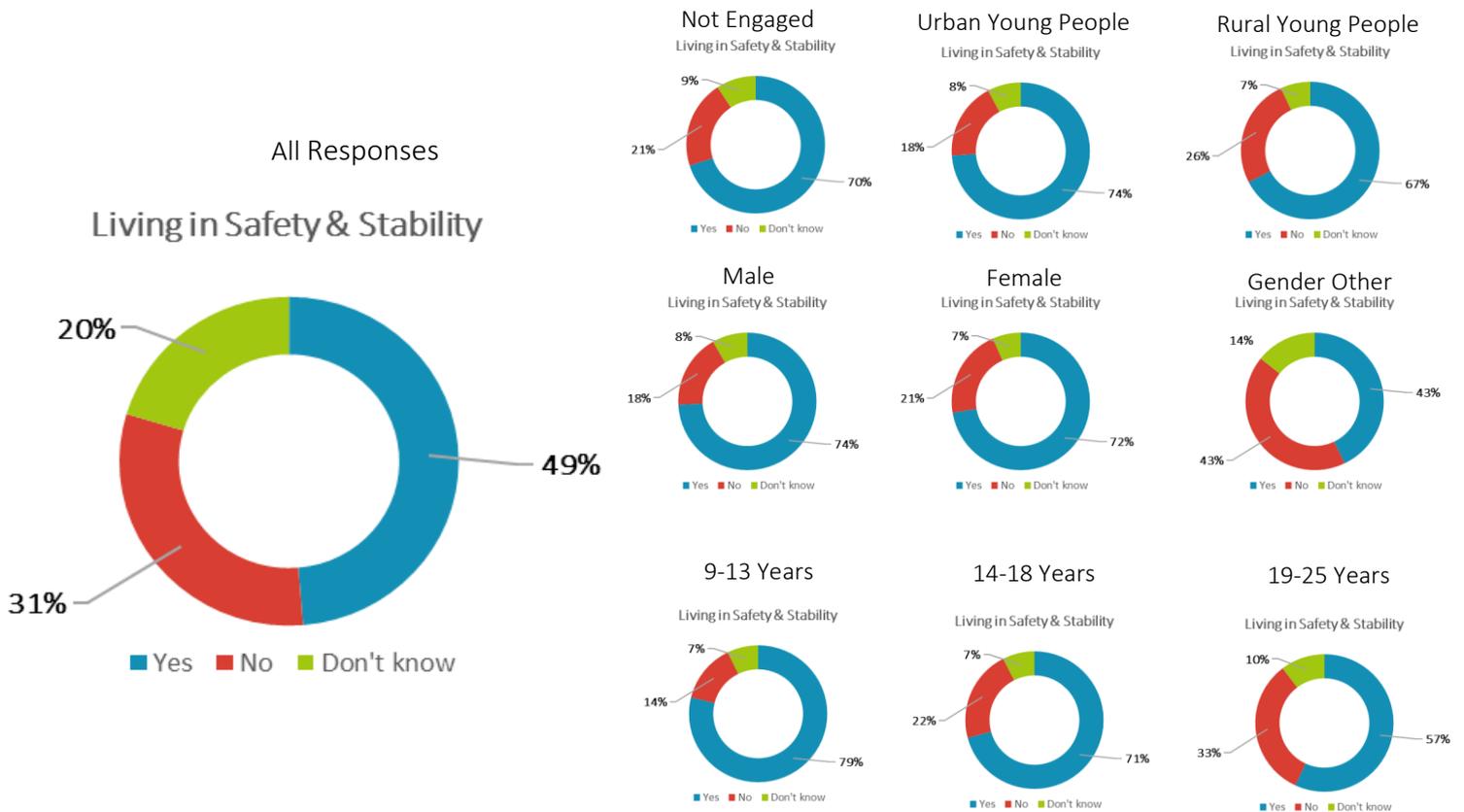
³⁸ http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/sites/all/files/databooks/TUCI_Data_Book_VII_2012.05_family.pdf

Survey Findings – Living in Safety and Stability

Yes No Don't Know

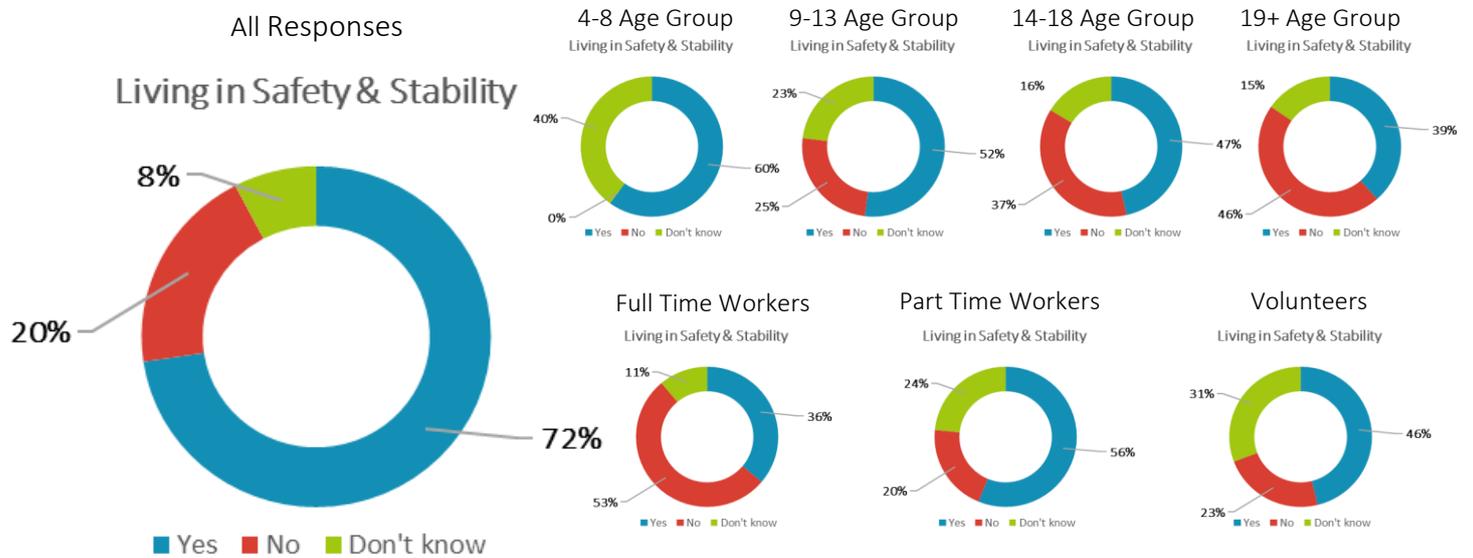
Young People

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

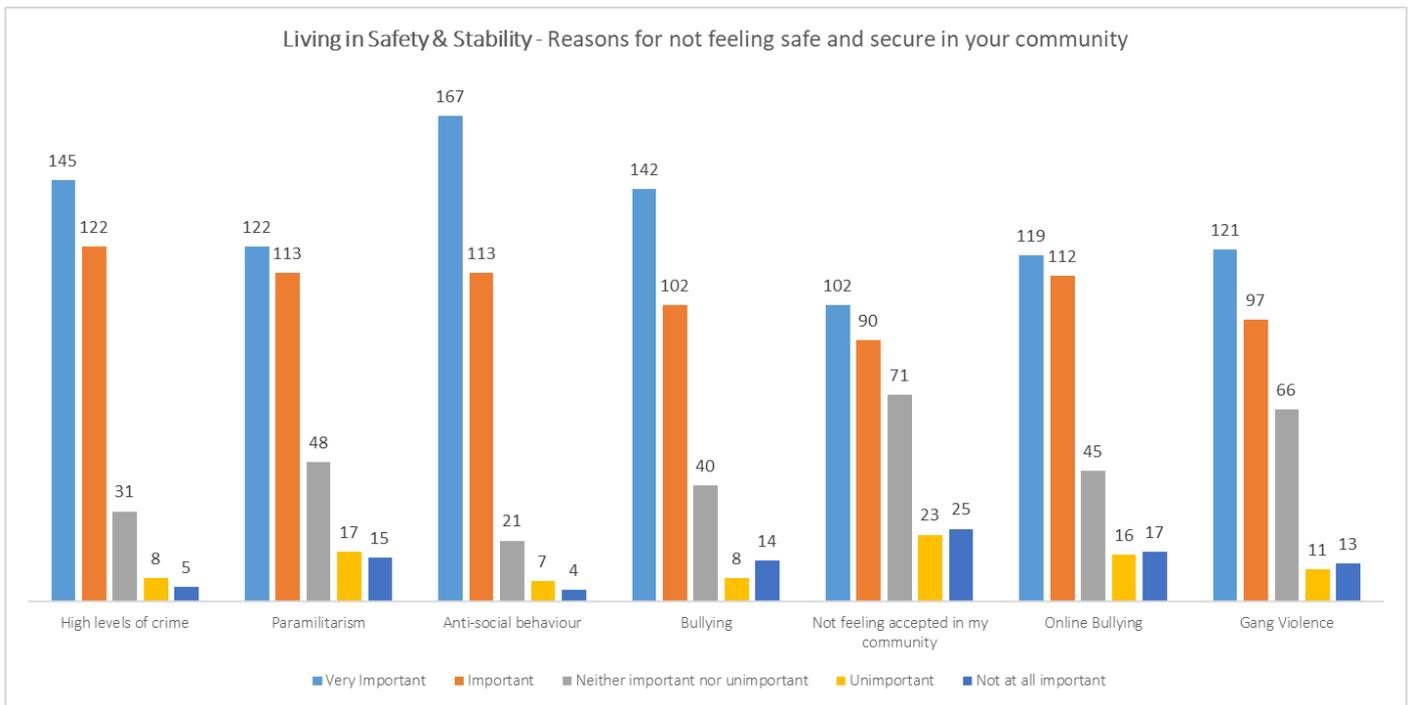


Youth Workers

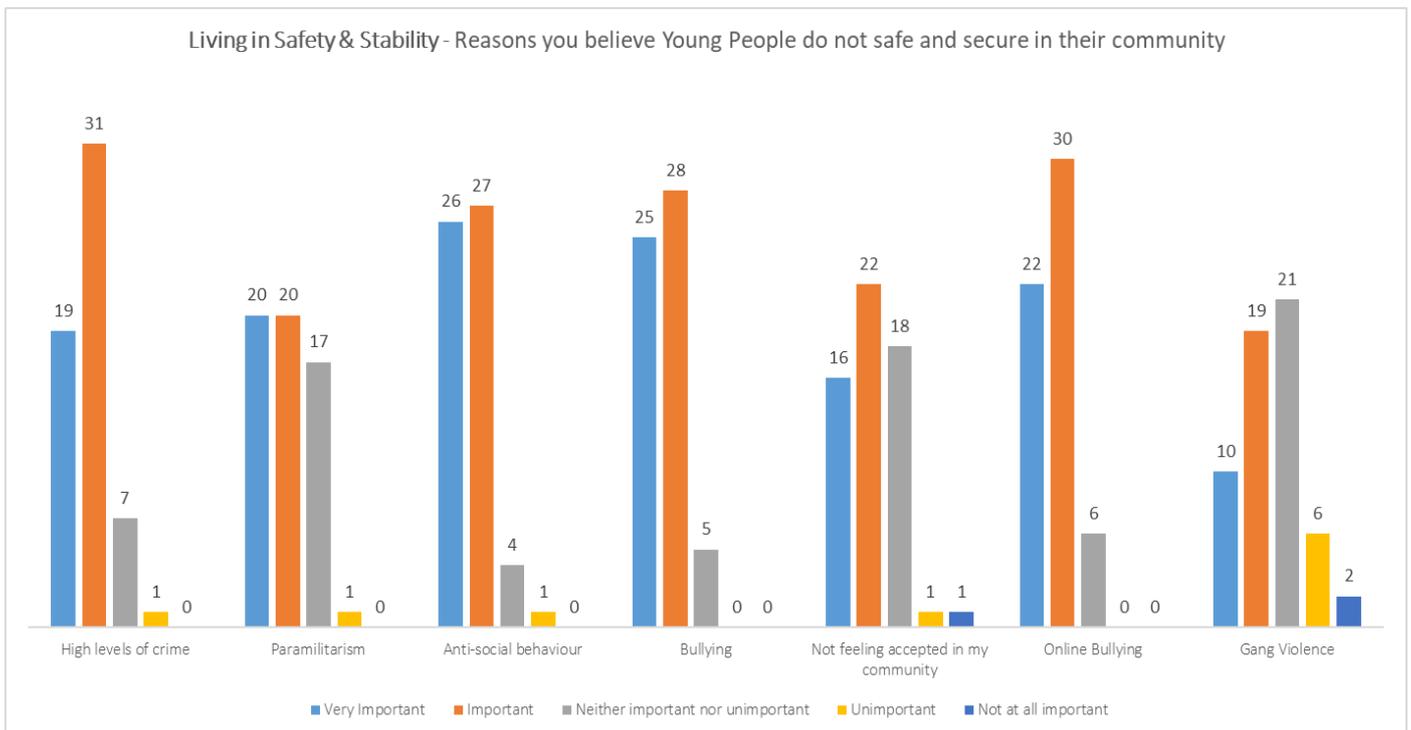
Do Young People that you work with feel safe in their own community?



Young People



Youth Workers



Young People

- Knife crime and fights was a concern for young people who felt that an increase in these had an impact on their feelings of safety within their communities.
- An increase in drug use and fear of drug dealers were cited as reasons for not feeling safe.
- Young people felt that police did not do enough and those committing crimes were seen to get away with it.
- Partnership programmes between Police and Youth Service were recognised as having a positive impact on young peoples confidence in policing.
- Many of the responses suggested an increase in access times to youth centres would help them feel safer.
- An increase in suicides has increased fear in young people

Youth Workers

- Youth workers and volunteers also identified drug usage and its availability as an issue in some communities, especially among vulnerable children and young people.
- Rioting, organised fights and interface tensions were all growing areas for concern.
- Police behaviours in certain areas were also reported as issues which need to be addressed.
- Children and young people also feel threatened because they are different and there was a feeling that Youth Services could be providing more programmes to support these vulnerable young people.
- Community tensions and segregation continue to be issues both in rural and urban areas.

Discussion

Where one 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.

Of those young people who responded to the survey the majority, (79%), reported that they felt safe in their own community. This decreased to 57% for those young people in the 19-25 age group. Another concerning difference is noted by young people who identified as gender other with only 43% feeling safe in their own community and also not feeling accepted in their community. Just under half (49%) of responses from youth workers noted that the young people that they worked with felt safe in their own community.

The principle reasons given by young people for not feeling safe were anti-social behaviour, bullying, paramilitarism and high levels of crime. Youth workers and volunteers also noted that these were the most common reasons given for young people not feeling safe in their own community. Children and young people

who experience bullying are more likely to miss school or attend a youth centre, feel safe, happy or achieve, be healthy and are less likely to make a positive contribution to their community.

Young people at an engagement event suggested that some of the reasons why anti-social behaviour and crime occurred was due to easy access to alcohol and drugs, arranged fights from social media, conflict at interfaces 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.

Research has shown that as children and young people are spending more time on social media they are more vulnerable to being victims of child sexual exploitation.³⁹ Engaging in sexting or the sharing of inappropriate sexual images between adults or their peers can lead to bullying or blackmail and can have a detrimental effect on a child or young person's mental health and resilience. Young people at an engagement event recognised the growing concerns young people had around child sexual exploitation and supported the development of new digital resources and programmes to help children and young people develop virtual resilience, including good digital and social media habits and a better understanding of their online presence.

Internal EA research revealed that children and young people were increasingly concerned about gang violence and arranged fights. These are being organised through social media and reportedly by gangs along sectarian or territorial lines. The Police Service of Northern Ireland have confirmed that this is growing concern.

Young people reported that they would welcome the opportunity to discourage others from engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming involved in organised fights by employing outreach or detached teams of youth workers to provide support and guidance. Another worrying development was the anecdotal reported increase in the number of young people carrying and using knives.

Paramilitarism is a reality for many in Northern Ireland and also a growing threat to children and young people, particularly those from the most deprived communities where paramilitaries exert the greatest control. A recent report noted that without a functioning Executive and the uncertainty regarding Brexit ending paramilitarism is now more difficult.⁴⁰ Paramilitary activity is also linked to criminality and organised crime and children and young people from deprived communities are more susceptible to be influenced and become involved. At a recent engagement event young people recognised the threat posed by paramilitary organisations in their areas. They were able to articulate how children and young people could become involved. It was also noted that the police were not always welcomed or trusted in some communities. Young people supported the idea of community partnerships, based on trust and respect, involving all key stakeholders to provide children and young people with alternative, positive opportunities.

Another report noted that children and young people who have been exposed to paramilitaries, either as victims or witnesses, have mental health issues, endure feelings of anger and fear, have suicidal thoughts and use alcohol and drugs as coping mechanisms.⁴¹ Young people recognised and supported the work of

³⁹ <https://www.knowsleyp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/7-Minute-Briefing-CSE-and-Social-Media.pdf>

⁴⁰ Independent Reporting Commission, 2019, Second Report, HMSO, London.

⁴¹ <https://theconversation.com/paramilitaries-still-cast-shadows-over-lives-of-young-people-in-northern-ireland-106205>

Youth Services in delivering lawfulness programmes to support these vulnerable young people at challenging times in their lives.

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, regional 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. In South and West Belfast, young people and other key stakeholders have been involved in informing the plan and the delivery of youth services.

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 that both statutory and voluntary funded youth work are delivering quality services that meet the needs of children and young people. The Youth Service has robust quality assurance and evaluation framework, to ensure continuous improvement of delivery and youth work provision.

Youth Workers use a variety of tools to monitor and evaluate units/programmes, gathering information regarding quantitative data (outputs) and qualitative data (outcomes and evaluations). The primary emphasis of evaluation is to measure the impact of the programme on young people.

Evidence of programmes and progression towards outcomes is maintained by Youth Work staff in the form of files, which are assessed on an ongoing basis.

Quality assurance is carried out by Senior Youth Officers and Senior Youth Worker/Team Leaders via staff supervision, moderation of youth work delivery, practice support, collation of statistical returns and the completion of an electronic target monitor.

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 only six areas of action informed by the areas of enquiry. Therefore, Youth Services should develop outputs to meet the needs of children and young people under the following areas of action:

Health and Wellbeing

The NI Multiple Deprivation Measures identifies a significant number of wards in South and West Belfast that experience higher levels of health deprivation than the Northern Ireland average. In total, 40 out of the 85 SOA's in South and West Belfast are ranked in the top 20% most deprived in the health domain. In West Belfast, 19 of the 43 wards are ranked in the most deprived 5% SOA's. Most notable are Whiterock 2 and Colin Glen 2 which are ranked 1 and 2 respectively.

The Regional and Local Assessment of Needs of Young People identified a number of key health issues facing young people including:

Mental Health: Poor mental health has been consistently identified as a concern among the wider youth population. Research evidence reveals that mental well-being is not a singular construct and can be linked to a range of diverse issues including, body image, confidence, bullying. Concerns in relation to young people's mental health have increased over the past year across Belfast with increasing numbers of young people dying by suicide. This has led to increased calls from young people and communities for interventions from statutory services including Youth Services. Youth service staff have been instrumental in supporting young people in the aftermath of sudden death within their community/ friendship group and will continue to offer this support. During a recent consultation, young people cited drug and alcohol misuse, including threats from drug dealers, gambling addiction, poor relationships as being the underlying reasons for the mental health of young people.

Physical Health: Obesity as a result of poor diet and lack of exercise has become a major public health concern for Northern Ireland. Girls and young women aged 14 and over are less likely to engage in sport or physical activity resulting in this group being more at risk of obesity and a range of health problems.

Youth service staff will continue to address these issues and raise awareness of the impact on health and wellbeing by facilitating targeted programmes to young people.

Learning and Achieving

It is very clear from a range of evidence that young people living in areas of disadvantage are disproportionately underachieving at school compared to young people from more affluent areas. While Belfast as a city records educational attainment at 76.5% which is higher than the Northern Ireland average at 70.3%, in South and West Belfast, young people attending non grammar schools, the majority of which are located in areas of high deprivation, achieving 5+ GCSE's including Maths and English are recording an achievement percentage of between 20.7% and 56%.

In South and West Belfast an average of 38.7% of pupils attending non grammar post primary schools are identified as having Special Educational Needs. This indicates a clear need to develop programmes to assist the formal Education sector with supporting these young people and to also provide educational opportunities outside of the formal environment.

At a recent stakeholder engagement event, young people recorded that they felt the formal education system was not tailored to their learning needs and was therefore a barrier to learning. They recognised the value of youth work as an opportunity to increase their educational attainment in a delivery method more suited to their style of learning.

Youth workers in South and West Belfast will continue to offer a diverse range of programmes which are valued by young people as they both complement and enhance the learning provided through formal schooling.

Good Relations

Developing initiatives with young people around community relations, equality and diversity allows them to develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and engage positively with it.

The youth service will deliver programmes to provide young people from different religious and cultural backgrounds the opportunity to be involved in meaningful contact, to test their values and beliefs and to work towards to acceptance and understanding of others.

Further work will be supported through the T:BUC funding which will provide opportunities from the catholic and protestant communities to work together in developmental youth work programmes.

Participation

The survey results highlighted that children and young people would like to see Youth Services provide support through programmes that will help with their confidence and self-esteem, programmes that helped them obtain employment in the future, and also programmes that supported their education and health and wellbeing. Youth workers and volunteers suggested that programmes to develop their confidence and self-esteem, health and wellbeing programmes and education and learning programmes were most likely to encourage children and young people to become involved in Youth Services.

Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity

Given the numbers of newcomer pupils particularly in South Belfast which is home to 38% of all newcomer children in Belfast, there is clearly a need for work around cultural awareness and diversity.

Developing initiatives with young people around inclusion, equality and diversity allows them to develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and engage positively with it.

Youth Services in South and West Belfast will target resources at groups of young people who are marginalised within their communities, paying due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between those groups detailed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Living in Safety & Stability

Instances of crime, not just to property but including violence and public order, are significant in South and West Belfast with almost half of the SOA's being ranked in the top 20% most deprived in the crime domain deprivation statistics. Particularly notable is Botanic 2 and 3 ranked as 11 and 4 respectively in the deprivation measures. However, it is also important to acknowledge that much of this ward is populated by students attending the local universities and that the crime statistics are not necessarily relating to young people.

Staff in South and West Belfast will endeavour to continue to seek intervention funding in order to decrease tension and ASB in targeted areas during the summer months. This funding has been instrumental in previous years in enabling youth work staff to offer diversionary and interface programmes which have been very successful in helping reduce tensions during traditional periods of unrest.

Evidence from desktop research and the online survey places a particular emphasis on the need to provide quality generic provision for children and young people. Providing a high quality universal service will assist in limiting the need for early intervention or targeted services for young people as they progress into adulthood.

Respondents to the survey also highlighted the need to recognise children and young people's contribution to participating in Youth Work programmes, projects or generic provision. Youth Services should consider a range of locally and nationally recognised certifications or accreditations to meet the needs of children and young people.

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 young people. Succession planning will also be key to ensuring Youth Services are always resourced to continually meet this need.

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

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

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

Youth Work Priority: Developing the Non-Formal Education Workforce	
3.1	Workforce Development
3.2	Practice Development & Support
3.3	Volunteer Development

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

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

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