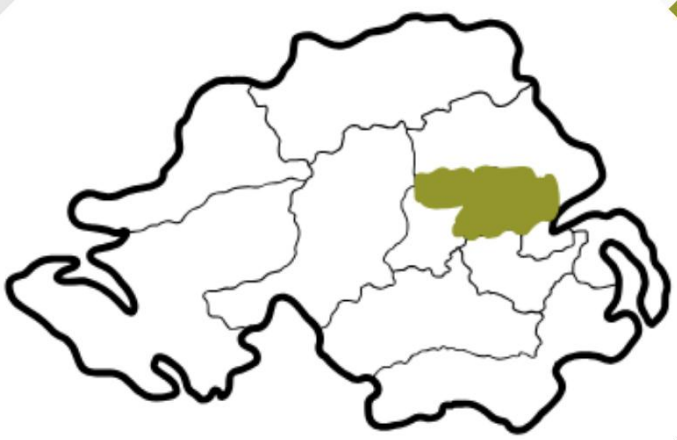
Education Authority

2026 - 2029



ANTRIM & NEWTOWNABBEY

LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF NEED

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Introduction

The Education Authority (EA) Youth Service Local Assessment of Need is a key document outlined in the Department of Education's (DE) Youth Work Policy Priorities for Youth (2013) as it requires the Education Authority to ensure 'Planning, funding and the delivery of youth work will be based on the EA composite (local and regional) assessment of need.'

The wider requirements and purpose of undertaking the assessment of need process is outlined in detail within the Regional Assessment of Need 2026-2029. This regional document provides further detail on the EA's statutory duty, other policy requirements and links to Northern Ireland Government strategies. It also sets the context within which these documents are being completed as well as the key purpose and functions the effective youth provision provides for children and young people. The regional document can be found here.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Regional Assessment of Need. Its key objective is to establish the level of need for Youth Service provision for children and young people aged 4-25 years in Antrim & Newtownabbey. It brings together data, evidence and local insight to help identify the needs and barriers children and young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey face. Listening to, and understanding, the voices and opinions of children and young people is an important part of this process.

When asked about the most important theme of provision was for them, the children and young people, through the survey, ranked the themes by importance to them as follows:

a) Economic and Environmental Stability – 29%
b) Emotional Health and Wellbeing – 18%
c) Access to Play and Leisure – 18%
d) Living in Safety and Stability – 14%
e) Learning and Achieving – 7%
f) Respect for Young People's Rights – 7%
g) Good Relations and Equality – 5%
h) Making a Positive Contribution to Society – 1%

Methodology

Following on from the methodology of the Regional Assessment of Need process, there were six parts to developing the Local Assessment of Need for Antrim & Newtownabbey. The tools used to gather essential information and data for the regional document had the ability to be filtered at a local level and this supplied EA with an excellent resource to listen to and understand the direct voices of children and young people. Details of how this was achieved are laid out in the regional document.

Part One – Children and Young People's Survey

A survey for all children and young people aged 4-25 years was designed and developed by a project team set up within the Education Authority Youth Service based on the eight strategic outcomes of the Children and Young Peoples' Strategy 2020-2030. A total of 5,451 children and young people responded to the survey. From those figures 421 young people from Antrim & Newtownabbey completed the survey.

Part Two – Children and Young People's Focus Groups

The Education Authority Youth Service Participation team, working with young people from the Small Grants panel, designed a resource allowing facilitators to manage and record the focus group sessions. Focus groups with children and young people were facilitated by youth workers. These were based on the policy age group bands and including specific groups of young people, within the Section 75 grouping, or those who may be at greater risk of social exclusion, marginalisation or isolation because they experience a combination of barriers to learning. A total of 138 focus groups, involving 1,630 participants, were facilitated throughout Northern Ireland with 9 focus groups completed in Antrim & Newtownabbey.

Part Three – The Development of Area Profiles

Area Profiles using all available statistical data and information about the needs of children and young people have been produced using a range of data and information from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. These reports focused on demographic information and reflected wider social, economic and environmental determinants which negatively impacted children and young people. The Area profile Report for Antrim & Newtownabbey can be found here.

Part Four – Embedding Findings from Key Research

The Education Authority Youth Service's Information and Planning Team conducted a significant literature review under the key outcome areas used in the survey and focus group materials. They also had access to all research and stakeholder engagement event reports conducted by the Youth Service as well as other research completed by academics and youth organisations relevant to the assessment of need.

Part Five – Parents and Organisation Survey

A survey for parents and other relevant organisations was designed and developed by a project team set up within the EA Youth Service based on the eight strategic outcomes of the Children and Young Peoples' Strategy 2020-2030.

Part Six – Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Consultations with youth workers and representatives of funded youth organisations through the Local Advisory Group were carried out. Local Voice surveys with young people who access youth provisions and wider consultations with young people in each DEA were also used in compiling this Local Assessment of need for Antrim & Newtownabbey. In total 8 youth workers, 3 youth providers and 241 young people were engaged in this process.

Council in Numbers

The population of Antrim and Newtownabbey local government district is 146,148 people.

45,612 children and young people are aged 0-25 years live in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

39,078 children and young people are aged 4-25 years live in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Age bands population

•6,539 aged 0 – 3 years

•9,165 aged 4 – 8 years

•9,962 aged 9 – 13 years

•8,938 aged 14 – 18 years

•11,008 aged 19 – 25 years

In Antrim and Newtownabbey 13,093 children and young people aged 0-25 years (28.7%) live in deprivation.

8,301 children and young people (18.2%) live in a rural community in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

27% of children and young people aged 0-24 years old in Antrim and Newtownabbey come from a lone parent family (census21).

1,111 Newcomers attend schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey (4.2%) - NI Average 5%.

18 Irish Traveller children and young people.

5,454 (33%) pupils in Antrim and Newtownabbey are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

4,671 pupils (18.2%) who attend school in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3 (NI average 19%).

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (incl. equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 73.6% compared to the NI average of 76.1%.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or are unknown in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 6.3% (NI average 4.7%).

5% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 22.6% (NI average 20.4%). This represents 27.7% of girls (NI 24.3%) and 17.9% of boys (NI 16.5%).

The proportion of Primary 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 24% (NI average 26%). This represents 25.5% of girls (NI 26.2%) and 22.6% of boys (NI 25.8%).

Suicide rates in Antrim and Newtownabbey have doubled from 2017 to 2023 with 16 suicides. The suicide rate has risen this past 3 consecutive years from 11 in 2021, 14 in 2022 to 16 currently.

There were 99 incidents with a sectarian motivation in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24.

There were 97 incidents with a racist motivation in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24. This is 47% increase from the previous year of 66 racial motivated incidents.

There has been a 10.8% (1,353) rise in incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24 to year 2022/23 (1,221) in Northern Ireland.

There was a total of 1,414 domestic abuse crimes in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24. This is a 32% drop from the previous year. The average rate for domestic abuse crimes in Antrim and Newtownabbey DEAs is 202 (NI average 250).

There was a total of 2,735 anti-social behaviour incidents in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24. This is a 9.6% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for anti-social behaviour incidents in Antrim and Newtownabbey DEAs is 390 (NI average 567).

Key Trends/Highlights

Falling Youth Population: Antrim & Newtownabbey's youth population has declined by 4.6% since the 2011 census compared to a Northern Ireland decrease of 3.1%. This downward trend is projected to continue over the next decade. This is reflective of the declining birthrate in Northern Ireland.

The current population broken down into age bands shows that on census day 2021 around 11,000 young people were aged 19-25, less than 9,000 aged 14-18, just under 10,000 ages 9-13 and just over 9,000 aged 4-8 years old. It is worth noting that we are 4 years on from census day so these age bands need adjusted accordingly.

Antrim and Airport DEAs have the largest youth populations, just over 7,500 each followed by Macedon, Threemilewater and Glengormley Urban with around 6,200 each, Ballyclare and Dunsilly have the lowest youth population, around 5,800 each. The gap between the top two DEAs and the remainder is set to widen.

Economic Disadvantage and Deprivation: 28.7% of young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey live in deprivation. Around 18% of young people live in a rural area. 27% of young people living in lone parent families significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average (25.7%). Higher than average numbers of households who have no car or van availability. This impacts on young people's access to services as they are more reliant on public transport which limits where and when they can travel.

Educational Achievement and Employment Concerns: Across Antrim & Newtownabbey a higher-than-average number of school leavers are moving on to unemployment or an unknown destination. In some areas this is over double the NI average. These young people are particularly vulnerable as their ability to access services and move onto independent living is curtailed. Fewer young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C compared to the NI average. Overall, across the borough the number of pupils with an identified Special Education Need or Disability is like the NI average, however in 4 of the DEAs this is significantly higher than average. This is a significant barrier for young people in attaining their potential

Health Concerns: Obesity levels amongst Year 1 pupils is higher than the NI average; this is a key indicator linked to poor diet and levels of activity. This can have significant effects on long term physical and mental health. The increase in suicide rates is concerning as well as being an indicator of poor mental health there is also the wider impact on family and friends.

Hate Crimes and Domestic Abuse: There has been a significant rise in incidents with a racist motivation (47%), over 4 times higher than the NI average (10.8%) between 2022/23 and 2023/24. These are of concern to the areas within Antrim & Newtownabbey which have much higher than average numbers of young people whose main language is not English. Domestic Violence shows a fall in numbers however in 2 of the DEAs is still far higher than the NI average. The impact on the mental health and physical wellbeing of young people living in households where there is domestic violence is significant.

The Findings

This section combines the results from the Regional Assessment of Need survey conducted with children and young people across Antrim & Newtownabbey Area, NISRA statistical data, feedback from focus groups and engagement from wider key stakeholders.

When asked about the most important theme of provision was for them, the children and young people, through the survey, ranked the themes by importance to them as follows:

1. Economic and Environmental Stability – 29%
2. Emotional Health and Wellbeing – 18%
3. Access to Play and Leisure – 18%
4. Living in Safety and Stability – 14%
5. Learning and Achieving – 7%
6. Respect for Young People's Rights – 7%
7. Good Relations and Equality – 5%
8. Making a Positive Contribution to Society – 1%

Economic and Environmental Stability

Key facts

- In Antrim and Newtownabbey 13,093 children and young people aged 0-25 years (28.7%) live in deprivation.
- 8,301 children and young people (18.2%) live in a rural community in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or are unknown in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 6.3%. (NI average 4.7%).
- 5% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- 5,454 (33%) pupils in Antrim and Newtownabbey are eligible for Free School Meals in 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

Stakeholder input/feedback

Economic well-being relates to the overall standard of living and quality of life of individuals and households. It includes income, wealth, employment opportunities, access to basic goods and services, social support and overall satisfaction with life. There is a direct link between how much parents earn and the educational, health and social outcomes that their children achieve.

The survey told us that three quarters of young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey feel there will be plenty of career opportunities for them and that they are equipped to apply for and get a job in the future. Yet statistics show that much higher than average numbers of school leavers in Antrim & Newtownabbey end up unemployed or unknown status.

Over 70% feel that their family can pay for the things they like to do whilst also believing that poverty is affecting other young people. Statistics shows that a third of pupils in the area are eligible for free school meals, this suggests that many young people aren't aware of the poverty status of their household.

Over two thirds are concerned about climate change and almost three quarters feel that not enough is being done to tackle climate change.

The focus groups tell us that young people are worried about affording clothes, hygiene products, and access to transport and healthcare. They also have concerns about having children, wars, climate change, and pollution affecting their future.

They lack confidence in their abilities to create CVs and apply for jobs, as well as completing an interview. They worry about poverty leading to debt, drug use, alcohol abuse, and joining paramilitaries.

They see Issues like alcohol, relationships, mental health, overthinking, self-doubt, and lack of family support as barriers to fulfilling their potential.

Youth workers and youth providers identified a lack of life skills encompassing money management, cooking, health eating as needs to be addressed. Opportunities to increase accreditation to enhance employability are needs that young people have.

Young people need more understanding of Environmental issues around climate change and pollution. Many of them want to be part of the solution, to actively engage in environmental actions but lack the knowledge and skills to do so.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing economic, environmental, and social stability

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Key facts

- 4,671 pupils (18.2%) who attend school in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3 (NI average 19%).
- Approximately 9,125 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need.
- 2,903 children and young people aged 0-24 years have autism.
- The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 22.6% (NI average 20.4%). This represents 27.7% of girls (NI 24.3%) and 17.9% of boys (NI 16.5%).
- The proportion of Primary 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 24% (NI average 26%). This represents 25.5% of girls (NI 26.2%) and 22.6% of boys (NI 25.8%).
- 20% of children and young people aged 0-24 years have a long-term health condition (NI 19.8%).
- There were 5.7 births per 1,000 births to young mothers aged under 20 years (NI average 5.83%).
- There were 0.37 births per 1,000 births to young mothers aged under 17 years (NI average 0.75%).
- According to the most recent census, 636 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.
- Suicide rates in Antrim and Newtownabbey have decreased by 27% from 2020 with 29 suicides to 21 suicides in 2023. The suicide rate has continued to fall this past 2 years in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- There were 12 drug-related deaths in 2023 in Antrim & Newtownabbey (5th out of 11 Local Government Districts)

Stakeholder input/feedback

Being healthy is not only about physical fitness but also mental and emotional well-being. A healthy lifestyle boosts confidence, fights illness and improves happiness. When children and young people face mental health challenges, it can affect schoolwork, friendships and overall well-being. A balanced diet, regular exercise and enough sleep are essential for maintaining health and emotional resilience.

The survey told us that over 80% of young people feel in good spirits most of the time and two thirds feel calm and relaxed most of the time. Over 75% felt active and vigorous and have access to the opportunity to do physical activities. However over 60% report that they don't wake up feeling fresh and rested. Three quarters can get help for their emotional need.

Lack of restful sleep is a barrier to learning, particularly in formal education settings and has a negative impact on emotional health.

Feedback from young people focus groups highlighted the following, young people want access to leisure facilities however cost and accessibility is a barrier, particularly in rural areas. Young people are concerned about the impact of food poverty and their overall nutrition. Many do not have the skills or knowledge to access healthy foods or how to prepare them. Poor dietary and exercise impacts on obesity levels with the consequence of poor overall health.

Young people are concerned about the impact on their emotional wellbeing of relationship breakdowns within family, peer groups and the wider community. Anxiety and stress, particularly around school and bullying is a worry.

There is a serious vaping problem among their friendship groups. They recognise the negative impacts on physical health, such as shortness of breath, popcorn lungs, and brain development issues. They want more support to reduce harm and educational programmes about its dangers.

Young people cannot use many outdoor facilities in winter due to the lack of floodlights, which limits their participation in physical activities like football and team games. Young people feel that outdoor spaces should be more accessible in winter.

Young people identified the following as impacting on their emotional wellbeing: Childhood experiences, trauma, PTSD, loss and grief, anxiety and depression, chronic stress, self-esteem and body image, relationships and social support, social isolation, cultural and societal influences, exercise and physical health, sleep, nutrition, substance use, emotional resilience, coping skills, job or academic pressure, financial stress, major life transitions, faith and spirituality, political uncertainty, and media exposure. Statistics show that many are living with a diagnosed mental health need.

Young people are aware of and able to identify healthcare services (GPs, social care trust, pharmacies), fitness facilities (leisure centres, running clubs, private gyms), and mental and emotional support services (MindWise, Samaritans, private therapists, local support groups, EA Youth Service, religious and spiritual support). However, they need support in developing the skills, confidence and knowledge as to how to access these services e.g. addressing transport needs, help with making appointments (skills and advocacy), signposting to the services, and supporting referrals where appropriate.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing anxiety, stress, risk-taking behaviours, physical and mental health, social and community issues, poverty, future concerns, and educational needs to support young people's overall wellbeing.

Access to Play and Leisure

Key facts

Northern Ireland Data

- 97% of teachers agree that outdoor play is critical for a child to reach his/her potential.
- 88% of teachers agree that children are happier after playing outdoors.
- 86% of teachers agree that playing outdoors gives children a better understanding of the environment.
- There were 22,715 pre-school placements in Northern Ireland in 2022/2023.
- 36,556 children aged 0-3 were registered with Sure Start projects in 2023-2024.

Antrim & Newtownabbey Data

- There are more than 34 council registered play parks in Antrim & Newtownabbey.
- There are 6 council-managed leisure and recreational centres in Antrim & Newtownabbey.
- There are 18 public parks in Antrim & Newtownabbey
- There are over 80 sports clubs covering a wide range of sports including, Netball, Football Cheerleading, Ju-Jitsu, Special Olympics, Athletics, Swimming, Gaelic games, Triathlon, Roller Derby, Hockey, Rugby, Karate, Judo, Kickboxing, Wheelchair rugby, Taekwondo, Tomiki Aikido, Trampolining, Bowling and American Football.

Stakeholder input/feedback

Play, leisure and fun are essential for children's growth, helping them develop skills, form social connections and understand the world. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right to rest, play, and engage in activities like sports or spending time with friends. Research shows play is essential for both physical and mental health, strengthening bodies, boosting happiness and developing lifelong skills. Research reveals that 97% of teachers agree outdoor play is essential for development, with 88% saying children are happier afterward and 86% believing it enhances their understanding of the environment.

The survey told us that just over 40% of young people feel there are fun things to do in their area. Urban young people were more likely to feel this way than their rural counterparts. Around three quarters felt there were safe spaces for them to hang out with their friends, however these spaces weren't always available when they needed them.

Feedback from young people focus groups highlighted the following, School workload limits free time. Some youth centres are small so are limited in the physical activities they can provide requiring trips to leisure centres, swimming pools, and other youth centres, which is costly. These costs are a barrier, as well as the availability and cost of transport.

Young people need the opportunity to engage in a wide range of physical and creative activities. Opportunities for these activities varied due to access to provision locally.

Young people said that these opportunities made them feel nice, good, relieved, smart, angry, upset, healthy, and happy. They enjoy being outside and having fun.

Young people said that play and games keep bodies and minds healthy, help in keeping slim, and developing muscles.

Young people told us they need to feel safe, develop new skills, meet new people, be social, reduce stress, exercise, clear their minds, address boredom, have fun, and get out of the house.

Access to safe outdoor spaces and guidance on what can be done in those spaces was identified as a need.

These themes highlight the need for improved facilities within youth centres, better collaboration between Youth Service and other providers, and addressing barriers to ensure young people have access to play and leisure activities.

Living in Safety and Stability

Key facts

- In Antrim and Newtownabbey 13,093 children and young people aged 0-25 years (28.7%) live in deprivation.
- 8,301 children and young people (18.2%) live in a rural community in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- According to the most recent census, 636 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.
- 27% of children and young people aged 0-24 years old in Antrim and Newtownabbey come from a lone parent family.
- There were 99 incidents with a sectarian motivation in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24.
- There were 97 incidents with a racist motivation in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24. This is 47% increase from the previous year of 66 racial motivated incidents.
- There has been a 10.8% (1,353) rise in incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24 to year 2022/23 (1,221) in Northern Ireland.
- There was a total of 1,414 domestic abuse crimes in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24. This is a 32% drop from the previous year. The average rate for domestic abuse crimes in Antrim and Newtownabbey DEAs is 202. (NI average 250).
- There was a total of 2,735 anti-social behaviour incidents in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2023/24. This is a 9.6% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for anti-social behaviour incidents in Antrim and Newtownabbey DEAs is 390. (NI average 567).
- Suicide rates in Antrim and Newtownabbey have decreased by 27% from 2020 with 29 suicides to 21 suicides in 2023. The suicide rate has continued to fall for the past 2 years in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Stakeholder input/feedback

Children and young people learn a great deal from the relationships they have with their parents, guardians, and other trusted adults who care for them. When these relationships are safe, stable, and nurturing, they contribute to the healthy physical and emotional development of children. However, when these relationships are unstable or harmful, they can make a child or young person feel unsafe, which can negatively affect their health and happiness. Studies suggest that children thrive when they have a stable and loving home environment, where routines are in place, and they feel secure in their relationships and surroundings.

The survey told us that three quarters of young people feel safe in their area and a third are concerned about crime in their area. There is an overlap between those that feel safe but are worried about crime; they don't see themselves as potential victims but recognise that others are.

Just over two thirds are concerned about the safety of young women. Many young people live within a household that is experiencing domestic violence. The 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' report found that 19% of 16-year-olds had experienced online violence, while 18% reported psychological violence. The locations where these violent acts occurred most frequently were online (42%), at school (35%), and in public outdoor spaces (26%). These alarming statistics emphasise the importance of safe, secure environments where young people can grow and learn without fear of harm. These statistics highlight the importance of a safe and supportive environment both at home and in the community, where young people can learn, grow and thrive without fear of violence or abuse.

Just over a quarter feel pressured into getting involved in activities that might be dangerous.

A third of young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey feel that social media has a negative impact on them.

The focus groups findings tell us what young people perceive as risks to their safety, these include fights, paramilitaries, sectarianism, antisocial behaviour, riots, and vandalism amongst the younger age group. The older age group identified abuse, drugs, alcohol, homelessness, poverty, crime, unemployment, bullying, discrimination, environmental hazards, and police harassment as the risks to their safety.

Youth workers and youth providers highlighted social media use and online safety awareness, including child sexual exploitation as risk to young people's safety along with bullying, paramilitaries, alcohol and drug use.

Community divisions and the perceptions of those who are different are seen as risks to the safety of young people. This is of particular concern for young people who fall within a minority grouping such as LGBTQIA+, Ethnic Minorities, Newcomers, and those with a disability.

These themes highlight the importance of creating safe environments, addressing risks, and providing supportive measures to ensure young people feel safe and secure.

Learning and Achieving

Key facts

- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (incl. equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 73.6% compared to the NI average of 76.1%.
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or are unknown in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 is 6.3% (NI average 4.7%).
- 5% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- 1,111 Newcomers attend schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey (4.2%) - NI Average 5%.
- 18 Irish Traveller children and young people.
- 5,454 (33%) pupils in Antrim and Newtownabbey are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).
- 4,671 pupils (18.2%) who attend school in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3 (NI average 19%).
- 382 children and young people were suspended from school in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- The attendance rate for post-primary schools was 93.4%. (NI average 96%).
- According to the most recent census, 636 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder input/feedback

Education is a fundamental right for all children, as outlined in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It helps children and young people learn, develop life skills and understand right from wrong, preparing them to be active members of society. Education fosters success, job opportunities and personal achievement while also promoting important life skills like communication, problem-solving and emotional understanding.

However, many children face challenges that hinder their educational success. Vulnerable groups, such as those with special educational needs or disabilities, children who are looked after, newcomers, young carers, or those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often struggle to fit in, make friends, or keep up with learning, leading to feelings of isolation.

The survey told us that three quarters of young people learn a lot through their youth programmes. They are also able to gain qualifications through those programmes which helps address the below average attainment at GCSE level. Around a third of young people have barriers that hold them back from succeeding. Just over 60% feel they had the support to cope with changes like moving schools.

Feedback from young people's focus groups told us that they need opportunities for making new friends and learning about diverse communities, fostering a deeper understanding of different cultures and backgrounds.

Young people said they need help in school to communicate with teachers and prepare for difficult feedback from teachers. This would include self-confidence to articulate their opinions. Young people fell they need more practical skill that will help them become independent in the real world.

Young people reported that they need support to develop communication skills and the confidence to use those skills, support to overcome blocks to learning such as procrastination and develop skills to maintain focus. They want help in setting achievable goals to stay motivated and organised.

The negative impact on learning because of bullying on physical and mental health was raised by the young people focus groups

More support in educational transitions, particularly leaving school and moving onto employment or further and higher education is needed, the challenge of living independently is something young people feel unprepared for. Fears around money management, including budgeting are key needs along with lack of knowledge of practical skills around cooking, basic DIY and accessing relevant help.

Stakeholders (youth workers and youth organisations) emphasised the additional needs of SEND and ethnic minority/newcomer young people. They also saw the lack of value in education that many young people have and the consequences on their future. Violence against young women is a barrier to learning for them, both through the fear of violence and the impact of being a victim of violence.

These findings highlight the need for comprehensive support in education, emotional and physical wellbeing, inclusivity, personal development, and addressing specific issues to help young people achieve their full potential.

Respect for Young People's Rights

Key facts

- According to the most recent census, 636 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.
- Approximately 9,125 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need.
- In Antrim and Newtownabbey 13,093 children and young people aged 0-25 years (28.7%) live in deprivation.
- 8,301 children and young people (18.2%) live in a rural community in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- 1,111 Newcomers attend schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey (4.2%) - NI Average 5%.
- 18 Irish Traveller children and young people.
- 5,454 (33%) pupils in Antrim and Newtownabbey are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).
- 4,671 pupils (18.2%) who attend school in Antrim and Newtownabbey

Stakeholder input/feedback

Children and young people have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring protection and respect regardless of religion, race, gender, or disability. However, the survey told us that less than half of young people believe that they are listened to, valued and respected.

Almost three quarters say they know what their rights are and over 80% feel that their rights are respected in youth work programmes. Almost three quarters feel confident in fighting for their rights.

The focus group findings show that young people need to be more informed on young people's concerns and issues affecting them, including LGBTQIA+ inclusivity and current policies. Some are concerned about being judged if they stand up for their rights and feel they need the support of their peers to do so. They feel the need for advocacy and confidence building.

Youth workers and youth providers identified the need for better education on rights particularly around minority groupings such as LGBTQIA+, ethnic minorities and newcomers.

Some children and young people face barriers to enjoying their rights, particularly those with mental health needs, those that live in rurally isolated areas and newcomers. Additionally, in Antrim & Newtownabbey 5454 (33%) pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, reflecting the economic challenges they face. Stakeholders highlighted the need to address these disparities for equal opportunities.

Stakeholders highlight the need to address these disparities for equal opportunities to ensure young people's views are heard and taken seriously.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing privacy concerns, ensuring young people's voices are heard, providing comprehensive education on rights, and fostering representation and engagement within the community.

Young people identified having better relationships with community representatives and emergency services would help them exercise their rights. Young people expressed a fear of repercussions, from these bodies, if they publicly stood up for their rights.

When young people’s rights are upheld, it not only strengthens their confidence and self-worth but also encourages them to actively participate in their communities and society at large. Respecting these rights ensures that they have equal access to opportunities, education, and services, and are treated with fairness and justice, which are key factors in helping them reach their full potential. It also helps to protect them from exploitation and discrimination, contributing to a more inclusive society for all.

Good Relations and Equality

Key facts

- There is 1 interface areas in Antrim and Newtownabbey. This interface cluster covers the borders between Whitewell/Longlands and White City and between Longlands and Rathcoole (Church Road).
- 8,301 children and young people (18.2%) live in a rural community in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- 1,111 Newcomers attend schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey (4.2%) - NI Average 5%.
- 18 Irish Traveller children and young people.
- 5,454 (33%) pupils in Antrim and Newtownabbey are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).
- 4,671 pupils (18.2%) who attend school in Antrim and Newtownabbey in 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3 (NI average 19%).
- In Antrim and Newtownabbey 13,093 children and young people aged 0-25 years (28.7%) live in deprivation.
- According to the most recent census, 636 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder input/feedback

An equal society embraces diversity and people's different needs regardless of their background or identity. Good relations are built on kindness, respect and understanding, creating a space where everyone feels welcome. The United Nations highlights that all children should be treated equally, regardless of culture, language, or abilities, ensuring they have equal opportunities to succeed. In Northern Ireland, "Good Relations" aims to promote understanding and cooperation between people from different backgrounds, addressing issues such as racism, bullying, and disrespect. While progress has been made, stakeholders, including children and young people, note that challenges persist, particularly in areas where divisions remain within Antrim & Newtownabbey.

The survey tells us that only half of young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey feel that young people in their area are treated equally, that everyone is included, and no one feels left out. Almost 60% believe young people in their area do not respect others who are different.

Youth work programmes are regarded as accessible by 80% of young people and 86% of them feel that youth work programmes support young people from other backgrounds. Almost three quarters of young people get the chance to spend time with people who are different to them. Young people do not fully understand the variety of different cultures within Antrim & Newtownabbey and identified a need to learn more.

The findings from the focus groups that there is the need for welcoming spaces where everyone feels included. Programmes need to go beyond the traditional Catholic and Protestant divides and include ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ and newcomer young people. Youth provision needs to accessible for disabled young people.

Many young people within Antrim & Newtownabbey have a first language that is not English.

There are extra challenges for young people in rural areas as access to transport limits their abilities to engage with those who are different to them. Rural communities tend to be from the single identity backgrounds and lack diversity.

Youth workers and youth providers identified the need for better relationships between generations, language barriers, lack of equal opportunities based on gender and disability. Lack of understanding of other cultures and the impact or rural isolation are barriers to young people.

These findings highlight the importance of promoting better relationships between different communities, creating welcoming and inclusive environments, and addressing challenges faced by young people in rural areas

Making a Positive Contribution to Society

Key facts

- The attendance rate for post-primary schools was 93.4%. (NI average 96%).
- 1,111 Newcomers attend schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey (4.2%) - NI Average 5%.
- 18 Irish Traveller children and young people.
- 382 children and young people were suspended from school in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- In Antrim and Newtownabbey 13,093 children and young people aged 0-25 years (28.7%) live in deprivation.
- 8,301 children and young people (18.2%) live in a rural community in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- According to the most recent census, 636 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder input/feedback

Children and young people who are socially active and participate in activities beyond school develop a positive outlook in life, this allows them to grow as a person and to become more confident, independent and resilient.

Children and young people need to feel that they belong. They need to believe that their contribution is listened to, valued and respected and that they can freely express their views in school, at a youth centre at home and within the wider community.

When given to opportunity to be an active citizenship, children and young people feel more able to engage in discussions about issues that affect them, to participate in activities in school, youth centres or within the community, making a positive contribution to their communities.

The survey told us that 60% of young people feel they can make a difference in their school or community.

Almost three quarters of young people feel they can make a difference by expressing their views, although over 40% of the young people feel they are not taken seriously when it comes to making a positive contribution.

Almost 80% believe that young people can change things for the better.

Lower than average post-primary attendance in Antrim & Newtownabbey reduces the opportunity for young people to be active participants.

The focus group consultations back up the survey's finding emphasising the need for more opportunities for young people to contribute meaningfully and be taken seriously in their efforts to make a positive impact.

Youth workers and youth providers see the need for opportunities for volunteering and social action; they identify the need for active participation and opportunities to increase citizenship including addressing racism and improving understanding of others.

These findings highlight the importance of providing diverse opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution, fostering understanding and inclusivity, and developing essential skills for their future.

Summary Conclusion of Needs across Strategic Themes

Economic and Environmental Stability

Young people are concerned about their ability to live independently, both from a financial and life skills perspective. Many young people are currently affected by poverty and many more are concerned about the impact that poverty will have on their adult life if they are unable to secure a suitable job.

Environmental issues around pollution and recycling were mentioned by some along with skills to better use outdoor spaces for growing vegetables.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Young people and stakeholders have identified the link between physical and emotional health and the benefits of physical identity on feelings of wellbeing. Young people are asking for more support in addressing their emotions and recognise the impact this has on their wider life including education and relationships with others.

The factors that impact on wellbeing, such as diet, sleep, stress, environmental pollution, habits and addictions are all identified as issues that Youth Service can help with. Other factors such as identity, sexuality, rural isolation, bullying and concerns about their future also have significant negative impacts.

Young people are asking for support with helping identify services that provide therapeutic support for these issues and see Youth Service as a help in signposting and referring to these services.

Access to Play and Leisure

Young people and stakeholders are aware of a wide range of opportunities for play and leisure. However, there are barriers such as location, expense, safety concerns and community division which restrict access. Rural young people have difficulty in accessing leisure facilities, local parks are often seen as a place of danger particularly for young women; young people also expressed their concerns about accessing parks after dark.

Living in Safety and Stability

Young people identified the need to have safe spaces to socialise within; parks and outdoor areas are seen as holding dangers especially for young women. Community pressures including paramilitarism is still seen as a threat to safety. Young Women also highlighted the need for young men to be educated on respect and healthy relationships.

Drugs and alcohol misuse have an impact on safety both for those using and those in the vicinity of the users. Violence amongst young men was highlighted as an issue needing support by stakeholders and young people.

Learning and Achieving

Young people are looking for learning opportunities beyond formal education, including life skills, personal development especially in self-confidence and communication, and preparation for work such as CV and Interview skills. The opportunity to learn how to develop healthy friendships and relationships and be aware of unhealthy relationships is a key need, particularly for Young Women.

Within formal education young people have needs arising from bullying, transitioning through the education system, relationships with teachers, handling exam stress and coping with special educational needs and disabilities. Improved resilience, self-confidence and communication skills are identified as needs that would help address this.

Young people want to learn about other cultures and identities as well as practical skills such as cycling, driving and money matters.

Respect for Young People's Rights

Young people feel that Youth Service does respect their rights; they want more information and support on gaining knowledge around their rights and how to exercise those rights.

Young people are concerned about their privacy and opportunities to have their concerns heard. Young people want to build relationships with community representatives and emergency services to support their rights.

Good Relations and Equality

Young people need more opportunities to improve good relations particularly cross-community programmes beyond traditional communities e.g. migrant newcomers and generational groups.

Young people feel that those from Traveller, Disabled and LGBTQIA+ communities feel less comfortable accessing Youth Services. A more proactively welcoming and accessible spaces need to be created.

Young people identified a lack of understanding of many cultures and traditions especially important dates or festivals relating to those cultures.

Making a Positive Contribution to Society

Young people need more opportunities for volunteering and social action; they identified participative structures where they have a voice as being important to their development as citizens. Leadership skills and opportunities to use those skills e.g. through peer mentoring, were seen as key needs.

The opportunities to link in with other communities particularly the BAME communities was seen as a key need, along with intergenerational opportunities.

The findings – Identification of priorities/DEA profiles

Airport

Key facts

- There is 7,514 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Airport DEA.
- 3,043 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 4.7% of young people aged 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 5.1% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 83.8% (NI average 76.1%).
- 29 newcomer pupils in Airport DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- 55.2 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have a learning difficulty (NI average 53.2)
- 58.5 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have autism (NI average 49.0)
- There were 9 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 50% increase from the previous year of 6 racial motivated incidents.

Airport Stakeholder input/feedback

The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that 38% of young people are concerned about their future; rural isolation exacerbates this and many other issues as it impacts their access to services. Airport is Antrim & Newtownabbey's second highest DEA in terms of youth population (over 7,500 young people aged 0-25, almost half of them in the key Youth Service priority age bands). Due to its rural nature young people are spread over a wide area.

Educational attainment in terms of GCSE result is well above the NI average however the numbers of young people leaving school and ending up in unemployment or unknown is higher than the NI average. This suggests that many young people are not benefitting from their formal education attainment or that those who are underachieving at GCSE level have fewer opportunities when leaving school. Broadening these young people's horizons beyond their immediate locality to increase their skills enabling them to access employment and training opportunities elsewhere could be beneficial.

Airport has higher levels of young people with a learning difficulty and autism compared to the NI average. These young people raised concerns about safety, particularly in accessing local parks and other outdoor areas. Young people would like support in using outdoor spaces. This was a particular issue for Young Women. 65% are worried about the safety of young women. Costs of accessing local leisure services is prohibitive for many young people.

67% of young people are worried about the impact of Climate Change, including on their potential livelihood.

Local consultation with young people though local voice, youth committees and schools also showed Issues around vaping and other substance misuse, this was confirmed by other stakeholders including youth workers and youth providers.

Opportunity to meet others from different cultures or communities is limited, rural areas tend to be made up of people from similar cultural demographics. Young people expressed an interest in meeting and linking with other communities/cultures. Participative structures are seen as one way of addressing this.

Transport links, internet connectivity are key issues impacting young people's ability to independently access provision. This needs to be considered when developing programmes.

Young people are impacted by pressure from peers, parents and school; these present as bullying, poor self-image, unhealthy relationships and unrealistic academic expectations.

Over two thirds of post-primary young people in Airport DEA attend school outside of the Antrim & Newtownabbey council area, this results in limited contact with peers living in their area and long journey times to and from school impacting on their availability to engage in services. This also impacts on their feeling of waking up refreshed as they have less time to sleep.

Airport Summary

Young people in Airport have specific needs linked to the rurality of the DEA which impacts on their access to services and opportunities to engage with other communities. Employment opportunities for

school leavers are limited, particularly those with lower levels of academic qualifications. Young people are concerned about the short- and long-term effects of using alcohol, drugs, and vapes. Safe spaces for physical and leisure activities are needed where young people are protected from violence, and bullying.

Antrim

Key facts

- There is 7,626 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Antrim DEA.
- 3,012 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 5.2% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 9.6% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 68.1% (NI average 76.1%).
- 483 newcomer pupils in Antrim DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- 31% of 0–24-year-olds live in lone parent families (NI average 25.7%)
- 15.9% of 0–24-year-olds live in households with no car or van (NI average 12%)
- 57.2 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have a learning difficulty (NI average 53.2)
- 63.6 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have autism (NI average 49.0)
- 20.2% of 0–24-year-olds has one or more long term health conditions (NI average 19.8%)
- There was an average of 351 domestic abuse crimes per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 260 per annum)
- There were 33 Youth Justice referrals in 2022/23 (NI average 17)
- There was an average of 935 Anti-Social Behaviour incidents per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 708 per annum)
- 6.2% of 0–24-year-olds have a main language other than English (NI average 4.1%)
- There were 18 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 21.7% decrease from the previous year of 23 racial motivated incidents.

Antrim Stakeholder input/feedback

Antrim has the highest youth population in Antrim & Newtownabbey. The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that Health and Wellbeing, Living in Safety and Stability along with Your Future are joint top priorities for young people (all ranked at 21%). 62% of young people feel that there aren't fun things to do in their area and almost half are concerned about crime in their area. Almost half feel that they don't get treated equally as young people. Referral levels to Youth Justice Agency are almost double the NI average.

Many young people are concerned about violence towards young women and addressing issues with young men's attitudes towards use of violence.

Concerns around death and future opportunities were raised by stakeholders along with sleep deprivation mainly linked to screen use (social media and gaming), stress and bullying. This has an impact on formal education, emotional wellbeing, friendships and normal daily activities.

The impact of poverty is substantial in a DEA which has the highest Youth Population across Antrim & Newtownabbey borough. Well above average numbers of young people have a first language other than English, their engagement with Youth Services is more limited. Large numbers of young people live in lone parent families and experience economic disadvantages due to this. Almost 16% of young people live is households which have no access to private transport (NI average is 12%)

Young people want to use outdoors spaces safely but many feel that local parks and outdoor spaces are deemed to be unsafe after dark, broken equipment is also a concern.

Recent instances of racism in Ballycraigy are a concern young people have raised, they feel fearful towards challenging racist views and of being targeted. Young people are keen to get involved in working and engaging with those from different communities including intergenerational work. The proportion of young people who have a first language other than English is 50% higher than the NI average.

Local consultations with young people through local voice groups, school and community groups identified the impact of school workload leading to burnout within school. Bullying and social anxiety were concerns. Young people felt they had no clue around life skills.

Health and wellbeing was the chief concern amongst these local consultations in a DEA where above average numbers of young people have a learning difficulty. Autism levels are 25% higher in Antrim compared to the NI average and higher than average numbers of young people are living with one or more long term health conditions. Young people raised their concerns over drug, alcohol and vaping misuse; they lack knowledge on the long-term consequences of vaping and expressed concerns about this due to high level of use amongst their peers. Stakeholders, particularly schools agreed as the disruption to learning caused by young people needing access to their vapes is concerning.

Domestic abuse crimes are almost 50% higher in Antrim across the past 4 years, young people from households experiencing domestic abuse have much poorer education, health and social outcomes than their peers from less violent backgrounds.

Antrim Summary

Antrim DEA has a wide range of needs linked to poverty, educational attainment, criminality and language barriers. Safety is a major worry as many have experienced violence within their household and amongst peers, violence against women is a particular concern. The impact of vaping on health and educational attainment is a struggle for many young people leading to high levels of concerns around their future. Access to services for young people who don't have English as their main language leads to division and isolation with the accompanying impact on physical and mental health.

Ballyclare

Key facts

- There is 5,878 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Ballyclare DEA.
- 2,470 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 5% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 7.3% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 77.6% (NI average 76.1%).
- 27 newcomer pupils in Ballyclare DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- 79.9 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have autism (NI average 49.0)
- 20.1 of 0–24-year-olds has one or more long term health conditions (NI average 19.8%)
- There were 3 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 25% decrease from the previous year of 4 racial motivations.

Ballyclare Stakeholder input/feedback

The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that Health and Wellbeing and Your Future were the two most important priorities for young people in Ballyclare. Much higher levels of Autism compared to the Northern Ireland average is an important factor to consider for youth provision as this can be a major barrier to learning and engaging in social activities.

Almost half of young people feel they don't wake up refreshed indicating a high level of sleep deprivation, screen time is seen as a major contributor to this (social media and gaming). Almost half of young people feel that social media is having a negative impact on them.

Only 40% of young people in Ballyclare feel that young people respect others who are different, although of those surveyed around two thirds did not get the opportunity to spend time with young people who are different from them. Accessibility for disabled young people was noted in consultations along with language barriers. Rights and lack of privacy was highlighted along with a deficit of LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

There is a desire to get involved in social action and community-based programmes. Safety, especially of young women was identified by 75% of young people and raised by stakeholders as a major issue. Young men's emotional wellbeing and mental health were also issues of concern. Contributing factors of vaping, alcohol and drug use were noted.

Local consultations with local voice groups, school and in the community identified loneliness as a key issue along with health and wellbeing and self-image.

The Grange Neighbourhood Renewal Area falls within Ballyclare DEA, young people from NRAs tend to have lower educational outcomes compared to young people in other areas. NRAs are areas of severe multiple deprivation and the impact of these levels of deprivation result in poorer outcomes for young people.

Ballyclare Summary

The very high levels of Autism in Ballyclare is a worry as this can impact on young people's ability to engage in services and with peers. Other potential barriers to services and integration within society are accessibility for young people with disabilities and those identifying as LGBTQIA+. The impact of screen time on sleep and the subsequent effect on being able to engage fully in daily activities, particularly education, is a concern. Vaping is a major worry for young people, especially the long-term effects. Deprivation within the neighbourhood renewal area is a concern.

Dunsilly

Key facts

- There is 5,821 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Dunsilly DEA.
- 2,471 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 2.9% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 1.9% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 86.2% (NI average 76.1%).
- 47 newcomer pupils in Dunsilly DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- There were 2 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 60% decrease from the previous year of 5 racial motivated incidents.

Dunsilly Stakeholder input/feedback

Dunsilly is a largely rural area and there can be feelings of isolation amongst the villages that make up most of the population.

The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that Health and Wellbeing was the priority for young people of Dunsilly. Very few young people, 1 in 15, reported waking up feeling fresh and rested more than half the time. Less than half felt they had a safe space to hang out with friends. Two thirds worry about the safety of young women.

Over half of young people in Dunsilly are worried about Climate change and almost three quarters fell not enough is being done about it.

Two thirds feel they can tell others what they think and only 40% feel they are listened to and taken seriously. Only a third feel that young people are treated equally and less than 30% feel that everyone is included and that young people in their area respect difference.

Stakeholders identify a lack of provision for young people and a low sense of community; there is a prominent religious divide in Randalstown which reduces access to cultural and sporting opportunities.

Access to alcohol is seen as a major factor in young people's safety and is a contributing factor to unhealthy relationships.

Consultations with young people in local voice, school and community groups identified unemployment and sexual health education as being needs. Self-Image was the highest issue along with the impact of poor health and wellbeing.

Dunsilly Summary

Young people have expressed a need for more opportunities to meet with those from other backgrounds, there is still major perceived divisions between those from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. Young people need to feel to be part of their community. Health and wellbeing concerns around violence towards women, alcohol use and vaping are prevalent.

Glengormley Urban

Key facts

- There is 6,210 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Glengormley Urban DEA
- 2,660 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 3.6% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 5.9% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 84.1% (NI average 76.1%).
- 316 newcomer pupils in Glengormley Urban DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- 26% of 0–24-year-olds live in lone parent families (NI average 25.7%)
- 20.7% of 0–24-year-olds has one or more long term health conditions (NI average 19.8%)
- There was an average of 236 domestic abuse crimes per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 260 per annum)
- There were 17 Youth Justice referrals in 2022/23 (NI average 17)
- There were 24 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 243% increase from the previous year of 7 racial motivated incidents.

Glengormley Urban Stakeholder input/feedback

Glengormley Urban has frequent public transport services with Belfast and many young people avail of these opportunities to travel to and from the area. This has led to heightened tensions amongst locals and a regular concern around organised fights in the area. There is still a level of sectarian tension in the area. Youth Justice referrals are similar to the NI average.

The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that Play, Hobbies and Interests was their main priority. Over half reported feeling that they wake up fresh and rested less than half or none of the time.

Almost 90% believe that poverty is affecting young people with over a third feeling personally affected. Higher than average numbers of young people come from a lone parent family, commonly this translates into a lower income household resulting in higher levels of deprivation. Around half feel climate change is a worry. Pollution and littering are major environmental concerns.

Mental health issues were identified and access to support services almost impossible.

Drugs and alcohol misuse are seen as having major impacts on young people particularly around relationships with peers including violence amongst young men and towards young women. Vaping is a health concern raised by many young people and stakeholders.

Less than half of young people are confident that there will be career options for them.

Under half feel that young people are treated equally and included, LGBTQIA+, ethnic minorities and travellers are specifically identified. Increases in racially motivated incidents are a worrying trend.

Higher levels of school leavers moving onto unemployment/unknown is a concern. Higher than average numbers of young people are living with a long-term health condition.

Local consultations with young people through local voice groups, school and community groups added that peer pressures, school/parental pressures and healthy relationships were their main concerns along with anti-social behaviour, personal safety and negative stereotyping.

Glengormley Urban Summary

The figures highlight the challenges face around sectarian and other community tensions particularly racism. Young people getting involved in criminality is a worry. Health concerns, especially around vaping and misuse of other substances, needs addressing. Inclusion of minority groupings, such as LGBTQIA+ and ethnic minorities is a priority. Young people's concerns about their future and careers are concerns.

Macedon

Key facts

- There is 6,291 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Macedon DEA.
- 2,578 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 7.7% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 8.8% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 66.3% (NI average 76.1%).
- 160 newcomer pupils in Macedon DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- 40% of 0–24-year-olds live in lone parent families (NI average 25.7%).
- 19% of 0–24-year-olds live in households with no car or van (NI average 12%).
- 70.8 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have a learning difficulty (NI average 53.2).
- 48.7 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have autism (NI average 49.0).
- 23.5% of 0–24-year-olds has one or more long term health conditions (NI average 19.8%)
- There was an average of 356 domestic abuse crimes per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 260 per annum).
- There were 11 Youth Justice referrals in 2022/23 (NI average 17).
- There was an average of 705 Anti-Social Behaviour incidents per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 708 per annum).
- There were 30 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 76.5% increase from the previous year of 17 racial motivated incidents.

Macedon Stakeholder input/feedback

The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that over a third of young people rank their future as their biggest priority. Young people educational outcomes are below the NI average and those who manage to gain employment are more likely to be in low paid work. Over a third as many young people have a learning disability compared to the NI average.

The Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area falls within Macedon DEA, young people from NRAs tend to have lower educational outcomes compared to young people in other areas. NRAs are areas of severe multiple deprivation and the impact of these levels of deprivation result in poorer outcomes for young people.

40% of young people are worried about crime in their area, and over a third feel pressured into dangerous activities. 77% are worried about the safety of young women. Domestic abuse is over a third higher than the NI average. Fear of paramilitaries is a notable concern amongst young people.

Crimes with a racial motivation have risen significantly and sectarian tensions between young people have become more evident along the interface on Church Road. The Church Road interface falls within the Antrim & Newtownabbey Interface cluster identified in the Belfast Interface Project.

High numbers of young people live in lone parent households and over 80% feel that poverty is affecting young people. Children and young people from lone parent families are economically disadvantaged because they often face lower household incomes and reduced access to resources due to the absence of a second earning parent.

Over three quarters are worried about climate change, and most feel not enough is being done about this.

Consultations with health care professionals identified Rathcoole has a significant number of young mothers who feel unable to access support services. These young mothers feel stigmatised accessing services where the other mothers are much older.

Vaping, alcohol and drug misuse are significant issues for young people, with many reporting on low self-esteem, lack of confidence and concerns around addiction.

Local consultations with young people through local voice groups, school and community groups identified food poverty, fights at the interface on Church Road between Rathcoole and Longlands and Health and wellbeing as their top concerns.

Macedon Summary

The high levels of learning needs are of concern, particularly in the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Area which has significant levels of multiple deprivation. The impact of poverty on young people's opportunities, health and education are notable. Community relations, along the interface as well as within communities is an ongoing worry, the influence of paramilitaries is significant across the DEA. Health issues around vaping, drugs, alcohol and young motherhood need addressed. Violence against women and between young men is a concern.

Threemilewater

Key facts

- There is 6,275 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Three Mile Water DEA.
- 2,667 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.
- 5.9% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).
- The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 5.5% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.
- The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 79.1% (NI average 76.1%).
- 49 newcomer pupils in Three Mile Water DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
- 51.3 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have a learning difficulty (NI average 53.2)
- 32.9 per 1000 of 0–24-year-olds have autism (NI average 49.0)
- 20.9% of 0–24-year-olds has one or more long term health conditions (NI average 19.8%)
- There was an average of 251 domestic abuse crimes per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 260 per annum)
- There were 14 Youth Justice referrals in 2022/23 (NI average 17)
- There was an average of 403 Anti-Social Behaviour incidents per year between 2020 and 2024 (NI average 708 per annum)
- There were 11 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 175% increase from the previous year of 4 racial motivated incidents.

Threemilewater Stakeholder input/feedback

The Regional Assessment of Needs survey, young people focus groups and stakeholder consultations identified that their Future is their highest priority. Higher than average numbers of young people are without a qualification or employment; likewise, school leavers who are unemployed or unknown is above average.

Health and wellbeing along with self-image are concerns that young people identified as needing support. Young people report a wide range of health issues including PTSD, Anxiety, Chronic Stress, Sleep Deprivation, Substance use and poor nutrition. These can manifest into self-harm. Physical health and the unknown impact of vaping was highlighted. There are higher than average numbers of young people living with a long-term health condition

Young people are concerned about their ability to live independently, a lack of life skills and money management being their main worries. They also recognise economic factors as restricting their chance of independent living. Young people identified employability skills around CVs and interviewing as key needs.

Alcohol, drugs and their links with paramilitaries are a safety concern. Violence amongst young men and directed towards young women are also identified as key concerns.

Local consultations with young people through local voice groups, school and community groups identified sleep, school, bullying and self-harm as concerns. Health and wellbeing along with self-image were also seen as the biggest issues facing young people in the area.

The rise of racially motivated incidents is a worrying trend.

Threemilewater Summary

There are several areas of concern affecting young people including violence again young women, between young men and racially motivated incidents. Paramilitaries are seen as a safety concern along with vaping, drugs and alcohol use. Young people's concerns around their physical and mental health; along with the causes for this is a worry.