

# Children & Young People's Consultation Summary Report

## **Introduction:**

The need to conduct a large-scale consultation with children and young people in Poole was highlighted in the formation of Poole's Integrated Youth Support & Development Service and the review of the Children & Young People's Plan (2006 – 2009).

## **Consultation with 5 – 12 year olds:**

'Action for Children' are currently contracted to ensure children under 13's in Poole have a variety of opportunities to participate in service development. As part of the contract they facilitated the consultation with the 5 – 12 age range focusing on exploring the following priorities from the Children & Young People's Plan:

1 - Ensure children and young people feel safe in their homes, schools and public areas: - by reducing harm from bullying, domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol

2 - Increase confident, employable young people who feel valued in our town by: - encouraging and valuing the positive contribution young people make and increasing school attendance, ambition, achievement and enjoyable activities.

In order to consult with this age group sessions were arranged that utilised participatory techniques that were age appropriate and fun.

A total number of 158 children aged 5 – 13 were consulted as part of this process during October and November 2008.

## **Consultation with 13 –19 year olds:**

Due to the success of the large-scale consultation led by the Youth Service in 2005 it was agreed a similar approach be followed. Children and Young People's Integrated Services led the development of a questionnaire for 13 – 19 year olds in Poole through consultation with the Participation Strategy's Steering and Project group and with support from the Borough of Poole's 'Corporate Research Team'.

With the aim of reaching 10% of this age group agreement was reached in the secondary schools across Poole for one class from each year group to participate in the consultation. Questionnaires were also distributed to a range of youth projects via the Participation Strategy Project Group.

A total number of 994 questionnaires were completed as part of this process during the first fortnight of November 2008. The 'Corporate Research Team' then processed these and a report of findings produced.

It was recognised that not all young people would be able to complete a questionnaire and therefore workshops were offered to ensure the views of the harder to reach young people were collected in the same fortnight. As with the younger age range participatory techniques were used to be age appropriate and fun. A total of 38 young people participated in workshops.

## **Key Findings:**

Overall 1190 Children and young people aged 5 – 20 have shared their opinions on services in Poole as part of this consultation.

### **Consultation with 5 – 12's:**

- a) Just over half the children consulted with, said they had experienced bullying at some point in their life. For the majority of these children, the situation had improved or stopped however there are still 20 children suffering from bullying.
- b) Strategies for dealing with this included, telling the teacher, parent or sticking up for themselves. The majority felt that bullying occurs most often in playgrounds, but does also occur in play areas, classrooms and after school clubs. It is least likely to occur at home and in adult supervised areas like classrooms and after school clubs.
- c) The overwhelming majority claimed to feel safest when at home and in the classroom and the least safe in the playground and in play areas.
- d) The majority of children felt that they are able to achieve something and feel confident. They also feel they get on well with people who are different to them.
- e) Most children and young people in Poole between the ages of 5 and 13 either don't feel they are able to have a say about things that affect them or don't know. The minority that responded positively were councillors within their schools and felt that this process enabled them to have their say and be listened to.
- f) Children feel the school council forum provides an opportunity for them to have their voice heard. However this needs to be more representative to include those with additional needs.
- g) Within the age range of 5 - 13, the most popular activities for children and young people are visiting local attractions, parks, playgrounds and open spaces, doing sports activities and attending after school clubs. The least attended were youth forums and school breakfast clubs. Most children were keen to try music lessons.
- h) Children feel there is a good range of activities in Poole for them to get involved in; although may find accessing some of the activities available to them difficult and so consequently do not although they would like to. This can be attributed to the cost of activities and accessibility for children with disabilities or additional needs.
- i) In response to improving the lives of children, several themes were identified including issues around school, transport, personal safety, having a say, parks and open spaces and activities.

**See Part 1 for the full report of 5 – 12's views.**

### **Consultation with 13 – 19's:**

a) Improved activities are the 'one change' that young people would make in the Borough, given the choice. Although 91% of the young people surveyed have participated in at least one leisure activity in the past month, 83% would like to get more involved in activities than they currently are. However, a lack of information, time, and local availability are felt to be key barriers to participation, followed by affordability and 'not having anyone to go with'.

b) 37% of the respondents feel valued as a young person. Those who didn't felt that young people were stereotyped, and that their opinions were not respected by adults. However, young people were almost twice as likely than adults to feel that they could influence the local decision making process.

c) The young respondents generally have a positive perception of advice and support services in Poole. Although their overall preference is to seek advice about their problems from their parents or friends, around a fifth of young people would be happy to approach their teachers and youth workers for assistance. In terms of future information provision, statutory sources also rank well. The young people would particularly like information about advice and support services communicated to them 'via school', 'via the internet', and 'via youth centres'.

d) 90% of the respondents travel by bus – 55% of whom do so at least once a week. However, further use is discouraged by limited local routes and the cost of bus fares - in particular the need to pay an adult fare when still under 18 or in full time education.

e) 42% of the respondents did not know if they had a Healthy Schools Programme in their school. 61% of the young respondents eat less than 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables each day, although 52% stated that their consumption has increased over the past year, and 57% have increased the amount of exercise they do each week.

f) 79% of the respondents are currently non-smokers. However, drinking is more prevalent, with 74% having tried alcohol more than once, and 44% having been drunk on more than one occasion. The respondents reported that most often their initial introduction to alcohol had been through their parents / carers.

g) Less than a fifth of respondents had tried illegal drugs, and only 12% had done so more than once. For a significant majority of these respondents, cannabis was the tried substance.

h) Young people generally feel safe in Poole. However, like adults, their feelings of safety when out and about are notably lower during the evening. Their fears arise particularly as areas tend to be less well lit at night and they feel that they can rely less on the police being easily available. Concern was also expressed about drunken behaviour and about fighting between groups of young people; over a quarter of respondents feel that young people from different backgrounds are unable to get on.

i) 14% of the young people who had responded to the survey stated that they had a long term illness, health problem or disability that limited their daily activities. A third of these young people felt that they did not receive enough support.

Over two thirds of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of bullying over the past 12 months – most often in the form of social stigmatisation or segregation. Experiences of being bullied were notably higher amongst respondents with a disability or ill health.

**See Part 2 for the full report into the analysis of the questionnaire.**

**Consultation with harder to reach groups (aged 13 – 19):**

- a) Many young people in the workshops were already doing a range of activities although for many participants these were activities within their own home (watching DVDs, playing computer games)
- b) The majority of participants wanted to participate in more activities out of their home
- c) Cost of activities, lack of money, and transport (often being reliant on parents) were the main factors preventing these young people from getting involved
- d) Similar to the questionnaire respondent's parents and friends featured amongst those who would be chosen to speak to if they had a problem. The police, teachers and youth workers were also mentioned.
- e) There seemed a relatively good level of understanding about what they needed to do to be healthy but admitted sometimes the healthiest choice was not always the one they would choose.
- f) The majority of those who participated in workshops felt safe in Poole
- g) The main improvement to make the lives better of those with disabilities or learning difficulties was to have a 'buddy' assigned to do everyday teenage activities with (preferably another teenager who was a similar age to them and of the same gender).