

Blackpool Council

25 January 2023

To: Councillors Burdess, Critchley, Cross, B Mitchell, M Mitchell, R Scott, Stansfield and Wright

Co-opted Members: Jo Snape, Mike Coole and Gemma Clayton

The above members are requested to attend the:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 2 February 2023 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool

A G E N D A

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022 (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 8 December 2022 as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

To consider any requests from members of the public to speak at the meeting.

4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolios of the Cabinet Members taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

5 OFSTED INSPECTION UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services on the Ofsted Inspection report due to be received by the Council on 1 February 2023.

6 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (Pages 13 - 22)

To consider the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Services before it is submitted to the Executive.

7 YOUTH JUSTICE TEAM UPDATE (Pages 23 - 32)

The purpose of the report is to provide the committee with an update regarding Blackpool's Youth Justice Service (YJS).

8 FYLDE COAST MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM (Pages 33 - 48)

To provide an update on the work of the support team in schools in Blackpool.

9 YOUTH PROVISION REVIEW UPDATE (Pages 49 - 114)

To provide an update following the review of Youth Provision completed last year and the commitment from the local authority to establish a small Youth Service, to provide co-ordination and support to third sector youth providers as identified through the review.

10 CORPORATE PARENT STRATEGY (Pages 115 - 130)

The purpose of the report is to provide scrutiny committee with an update regarding Blackpool's Corporate Parent Strategy.

11 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN (Pages 131 - 146)

To consider the contents of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee's Workplan for 2022/2023.

12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 22 June 2023, subject to confirmation at Annual Council.

Venue information:

First floor meeting room (lift available), accessible toilets (ground floor), no-smoking building.

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager, Tel: 01253 477213, e-mail Sharon.davis@blackpool.gov.uk

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MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2022

Present:

Councillor Stansfield (in the Chair)

Councillors

Burdess	Hunter	M Mitchell
Critchley	B Mitchell	R Scott

Ms Gemma Clayton, Parent Governor Co-opted Member

In Attendance:

Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools
Councillor Maxine Callow, Chair Scrutiny Leadership Board

Paul Tuner, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education, SEND and Early Years)
Jeremy Mannino Head of School Safeguarding and Exclusion
Kate Aldridge, Head of Delivery, Performance and Commissioning
Annette Algie, NSPCC Better Start Project
Kirsty Fisher, Our Children Engagement Officer, Safeguarding, Quality and Review
Tom and Leanne, Young Inspectors
Pauline Wigglesworth, Programme Lead (HeadStart), Strategy
Rochelle Morris, Evaluation and Research Practitioner (HeadStart), Strategy
Danielle Aoslin, Peer Sessional Worker

Sharon Wadsworth, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

Councillor M Mitchell put forward an amendment to be added to the second paragraph on Item 11, The Impact of the Pandemic on Early Language Acquisition, *"However, the Committee noted from 6.3 of the report that more referrals had been made to the "red" category, the category containing children with most speech and language needs, and that referrals to this category had increased both in absolute and percentage terms."*

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 22 September 2022 be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record as amended to include the addition the above wording as proposed by Councillor Mitchell.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Committee noted that there were no applications to speak by members of the public on this occasion.

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2022**

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan Dec 2022 to March 2023 and noted the list of upcoming decisions.

5 BETTER START UPDATE

Ms Annette Algie, NSPCC Better Start Project, presented the annual update of the Better Start project. Reference was made to the five recommendations, identified following the review of the Better Start Partnership in April 2021, and the progress that had been made in each of the areas.

Ms Algie reported that they would be working with the Better Start partnership on sustainability of the approach and through consideration of which projects had had a positive impact and to identify which projects could be mainstreamed. Funding avenues would be looked at for any areas that required a staffing need. It was reported that some of the community schemes were now self sufficient and being run independently.

It was noted that the governance structure was being reviewed and details on the new structure and proposed Sustainability Board would be forward to Members when available.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the annual report be noted.

6 YOUNG INSPECTORS

Ms Kirsty Fisher, Our Children Engagement Officer, provided Members with an overview of the work that the Young Inspectors had carried out and the challenges that they had faced. The programme had been well received and best practice between homes was being shared. The work being done by the Young Inspectors was helping in preparation and confidence in readiness for the Ofsted inspections commencing next year for semi and unregulated homes.

Members welcomed the scheme and the engagement with young people, ensuring that their voices were heard. The wide range of transferable skills being developed was a positive outcome for the inspectors.

It was raised that one of the challenges was capacity with the team for training and managing the programme.

The Committee agreed:

1. To include an item on the work programme to look at the resource capacity of the Young Inspectors Team.

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7 LITERACY STRATEGY UPDATE

Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education, SEND and Early Years), presented a report on the progress of the literacy strategy since it had been launched. Mr Turner highlighted that historically Blackpool secondary schools underperformed in literacy. This was in part due to the transient nature of the area and that most secondary schools saw on average a 20% turnover of children. A majority of the transient pupils had not been through the primary school system within the Blackpool area.

In response to queries from the Committee Mr Turner assured that the strategy also included adults learners and a programme for suggested reading to engage young people. Training was also available for teachers to assist in teaching phonics at secondary schools.

Members highlight the importance of the role of libraries with the strategy and requested that more information on what libraries were providing be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee agreed:

1. To invite the Head of Library Service to a future meeting to provide a report on the services provided within the community in respect of the Literacy Strategy.

8 SCHOOL RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC UPDATE

Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education, SEND and Early Years) provided an update to the Committee on progress against the recommendations made by the School's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review Panel and confirmed that in his opinion that all the recommendations from the review had been addressed.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the progress made on the recommendations be noted; and
2. That all the recommendations be signed off as complete.

9 PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education, SEND and Early Years) presented the report that detailed the Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) programme that was being delivered in Blackpool schools. It was noted that the response from schools had been very positive with the importance of developing the life skills for safeguarding young people highlighted.

10 RESILIENCE REVOLUTION FINAL REPORT

The Committee agreed for this item to be heard following Item 4, Forward Plan.

Ms Pauline Wigglesworth, Programme Lead (HeadStart) and Ms Rochelle Morris, Evaluation and Research Practitioner (HeadStart), presented the HeadStart Resilience Revolution final report to the Committee. The programme had received National Lottery

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funding for the last six years to research and develop new ways to support young people's mental health. Blackpool had taken an approach to build resilience for the whole community in order to move towards the better prevention of mental health problems.

Key projects were highlighted including support for children through the transition period from primary school to secondary school, anti-bullying campaigns, self harm support projects and the co-production opportunities.

Members asked how Blackpool compared to the other areas involved in the programme. Ms Wigglesworth confirmed that Blackpool was the only area out of the six nationally involved in the programme that undertook a whole town approach but that different approaches were being tested.

The Committee asked about the evaluation data for self harm and if there were any future plans to include independent school settings. It was noted that there were only four years of data on self harm available for evaluation but the project had received encouraging results in helping to reduce the number of revisits to accident and emergency as well as equipping young people with the life skills to manage their emotions. In relation to the Independent School settings it was acknowledged that the number of these settings had increased since the start of the project and that work in conjunction with these settings could be explored in the future.

Ms Danielle Aoslin, Peer Sessional Worker, spoke of her own life experience in becoming involved in the programme and how it enabled young people to have a voice, gain confidence and have a sense of belonging. Danielle was now employed by the Council to support other businesses in co-production.

The future of the HeadStart project was to engage with young people early and to question behaviour changes to identify the issues. The relationships built up through co-production were vital.

Members thanked Danielle for sharing her journey with the Committee.

11 INDEPENDENT CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE REVIEW

Ms Kate Aldridge, Head of Delivery, Performance and Commissioning, presented the detailed report on the outcomes from the Department for Education's (DfE) independent review of Children's Social Care and a summary from the Competition and Market Authority (CMA) and the 2022 Josh MacAlister Children's Review.

The reports highlighted some of the impacts that might be seen should one or more of the recommendations, in their current format, be implemented by the government

The Committee agreed:

1. That the report be noted

12 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Committee considered its work programme for 2022/2023 and noted the additional items added during the meeting.

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In relation to Item 11 on the work programme the Committee requested an update on the Child of the North report.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the report be noted; and
2. A status update on the Item 11 be provided at the next meeting; and
3. The outcome of the Young People Classed as Not In Employment, Education Or Training (NEET) Scrutiny Review Panel report be deferred to the next meeting and the Chair of the panel meeting to be present.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Committee was noted as Thursday 2 February 2023 commencing at 6pm.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.50 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Sharon Wadsworth, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser
Tel: 01253 477292
E-mail: Sharon.wadsworth@blackpool.gov.uk

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2023

EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolios of the Cabinet Members taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to the decisions taken.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that the opportunity is given for all Executive and Cabinet Member decisions to be scrutinised and held to account.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Attached at Appendix 4(a) is a summary of the decisions taken, which have been circulated to Members previously.

6.2 This report is presented to ensure Members are provided with a timely update on the decisions taken by the Executive and Cabinet Members. It provides a process where the Committee can raise questions and a response be provided.

6.3 Members are encouraged to seek updates on decisions and will have the opportunity to raise any issues.

6.4. The following Cabinet Member is responsible for the decisions taken in this report and has been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth, Schools and Transience

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 4(a) Summary of Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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DECISION / OUTCOME	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	DATE	CABINET MEMBER
<p>SEND STRATEGY 2022 – 25</p> <p>To approve the Blackpool SEND Strategy 2022-25, with effect until 31 December 2025.</p>	<p>Ms Charlotte Baron, Head of SEN, presented the report to the Executive. Ms Baron highlighted the linkages between this strategy and the SEND Written Statement of Action approved by Executive on 5 September 2022. Ms Baron also emphasised the extensive consultation that had informed the development of the strategy including extensive input from the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee.</p>	EX47/2022	05/12/22	Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth, Schools and Transience

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF HIGHFURLONG SPECIAL SCHOOL

The Executive resolved as follows:

1. To agree that Appendix 3a to the Executive report, the Financial Considerations is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it includes detailed costings that enable the scheme to be viable. The publication of such information could prejudice continuing and future negotiations.
2. To approve the development, following a procurement process via the Procure NW Framework (£1m to £5m contract for partners).
3. To approve the budget of £4.8 million for phase one of this scheme.

A planning application has been submitted for approval to develop The Meadow on Garstang Road West to accommodate a two-storey extension with associated facilities to ensure sufficient local provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Design and feasibility work to RIBA Stage 4 and costings are being developed to enable a traditional construction scheme to be tendered via the Procure NW Framework (£1m to £5m contract for partners).

Highfurlong Special School reached a cohort of over 110 students in the summer term 2022, which is three times the number five years ago. The growing number of pupils in special schools is in part as a result of changes in legislation introduced in 2014, but also due to children surviving with more complex medical needs than historically was the case. Despite additional building works being undertaken during that time to create extra space at the school, the capacity of the existing building is now over stretched. An independent school capacity report dated March 2022 found that Highfurlong Special School's building has a deficit of space equivalent to four classrooms when compared against current pupil numbers. The school has now saturated its existing footplate and is no longer able to effectively deliver complimentary curriculum activities such as design technology, music and life skills, despite winning the prestigious School of the Year award in 2021.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient suitable places are available for all pupils across the town. The proposed expansion at Highfurlong School would help to ensure that Blackpool Council can meet the needs of children with complex physical and medical disabilities.

EX48/2022

05/12/22

Councillor
Gillian
Campbell,
Cabinet
Member for
Inclusion,
Youth, Schools
and Transience

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services.
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2023

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Services before it is submitted to the Executive.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To review the Strategy offering comment, challenge and support as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Committee has the chance to consider the Strategy prior to its submission to the Executive.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy for Children’s Services

The Strategy is contained in Appendix 6(a) and Vicky Gent, Director of Children’s Services will present the Strategy to the Committee during the meeting.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 6(a): MTFS

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Contained within the appendix.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Updated Oct 2022

Aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

In 2020, Children's Social Care and Resources worked together to develop a medium term financial strategy spanning 5 years. This is the two year check point to review how the strategy is progressing, and update the projections to support effective service planning and budget management. Over the past two years, since the last MTFP we have seen –

- Emerging impacts from the pandemic on demand
- Growing pressure on the market for delivery of accommodation based services, both Fostering and Residential.
- More recently, significant increases in the cost of living which adds pressure to families, and impacts on the costs of services to support children and families.

In the development of the strategy, Children's Social Care asserted that statutory interventions are only effective when they are necessary and timely. Over intervention from statutory services are not only expensive, but they can be harmful to children, young people and families. That is not to say that children and families do not need support, but that it should be provided by the right service, at the right level and at the right time and that if this is done well, far fewer statutory interventions will be required. **This remains the clear view of the service and is a key principle that underlines the strategic approach.**

The medium term financial strategy is underpinned by actions across the service that are designed to ensure that more children and families receive coordinated and effective early help. Last year (2021) saw the launch of a new Early Help strategy across the partnership, focussed on ensuring that services working closely with families can coordinate effective support for them when it is needed, and feel supported in doing so.

The MTFP developed in 2020 set out a number of interventions designed to -

- Support the right families with early, targeted support that make a difference.
- Challenge and support partner agencies to support families and prioritise children and families at risk of intervention so that they receive the help they need from the whole system.
- See fewer children and young people in our care
- See fewer children in residential homes, with a greater percentage of our children living with foster families recruited by the Council.

Underpinning Aims

- **Reduce the total number of children placed in residential provision (rate per 10k) to regional average levels.** The North West average is 9 children per 10,000. Since 2020, the rate in Blackpool increased, but as the calendar year of 2022 comes to a close we are seeing this reduce. By 2025, we expect to have reduced the number of children and young people who are in our care placed in residential settings by at least 25%.
- **Reduce the number of children placed in foster care with independent fostering agencies by 25%.** A priority for our children is to provide stability and support in, wherever possible, a family home environment. Sometimes, the right home will be with a foster carer who is working with an IFA. Our use of IFA's must be driven by a balanced consideration of the

home best placed to meet the child's needs. As the activity which underpins this plan progresses, we will see a reduction in our IFA use. This will be achieved through a combination of an overall reduction in the numbers of children looked after, and a greater proportion of those who are looked after being supported by carers recruited directly by the Local Authority.

- Reduce the total number of children in care (rate per 10k) to the average of similar authorities - a reduction of 12% required.
- Reduce the total number of children with child protection plans (rate per 10k) to the average of similar authorities – a reduction of 44% required.
- Reduce the number of section 47 enquiries undertaken (rate per 10k) to the average for similar authorities - a reduction of 30% required.
- Reduce the number of referrals accepted by children's social care (rate per 10k) to the average for similar authorities - a reduction of 31% required.
- Reduce the total number of children aged 0-17 supported by Children's Social Care (rate per 10k) to the average for similar authorities - a reduction of 25% required.
- Reduce the total size of the workforce in line with the reduced number of children open to children's social care.

The aims are ranked in their order of importance, financially speaking. The greatest pressure on the budget available to support children and families in Blackpool is the disproportionate cost of residential care. The aims highlighted in bold have specific activities or projects to support their achievement. Achievement of the other aims will principally be supported through continued delivery of Blackpool Families Rock and more restorative and holistic ways of working, including more work joint work with adult services to coordinate support for parents facing challenges that impact on parenting capacity.

The following paper details the specific projects being undertaken to address the main cost drivers, the ones highlighted in bold.

The analysis overleaf explains the logic of the savings achieved by the aims. Figures are indicative, but based on actual cost and spend.

Introduction

As we entered the period of the MTFP in 2020 a lot of the building blocks were already in place. This paper mainly provides an update on the additional projects and initiatives that were proposed to tangibly affect and reduce the key cost drivers (numbers of children in residential placements, number of children in IFA placements and the number of children in care). But these proposals were not developed in isolation: they necessarily sit on top of what had already been put in place.

Building Blocks already in place

1. The most important recent change that should affect the MTFS is the implementation of the new approach to social work practice, 'Blackpool Families Rock', which seeks to change the way that local services operate: building relationships with local families and children and adopting a more positive strength-based approach. Local professionals are being trained in this approach and the recording system is being amended to support the new approach to practice. In addition, social work managers are receiving training from Partner in Practice colleagues from Stockport, which is designed to support social workers in working in the new manner.

Update -The support for Blackpool Families Rock, co-produced with our children and families, remains unwavering. Training and support has continued to roll out alongside a growing awareness and understanding about Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on families and their approach to parenting and how a restorative, as opposed to deficit, model of early help and targeted intervention can be used to greatest effect.

2. Tighter oversight of care planning in the Care Planning Senior Officer Panel; and greater senior oversight of children at critical periods in their care planning, especially those on the cusp of entering care (in Public Law Outline pre-proceedings); and those that have just entered care, either on a section 20 agreement, or on an Interim Care Order.

Update – Since the commencement of the MTFP there have been structural changes in the senior leadership team in Childrens Social Care, with a new Director and new Assistant Director. The support and challenge at key decision points; the assurity that learning from audits and case reviews is being implemented and can be seen in direct work with children and families and the analysis and understanding of what the data tells leaders about the progress of work remains visibly high. Demonstrable outcomes can be seen in the sustained reduction of children entering the local authority care. For other critical decision making/Care planning for children there is an increasing level of scrutiny to ensure that children are supported in a way that is commensurate with their level of need, and which is focused upon achieving positive outcomes for them.

3. Closer working relationship with partner agencies, through the overarching Children's Partnership Board; but also through joint training, discussion and working with partners at critical parts of the children's social care system, such as Child Protection Enquiries, Conferences and Reviews; and in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Awaken and other partnership teams.

Update – Since the commencement of the MTFP joint work with partners has continued to evolve, but is not without its challenges. As all public services face significant financial difficulties and potentially, will face further fiscal restrictions in the coming year we know that the resource partners put in to joint and multidisciplinary teams are at risk and clear and evidence based work may not be taken forward. A greater focus on "who pays" for support and services rather than a pragmatic shared approach is becoming evident in partnership work. This will be managed at a senior level within the local authority and the drawback of resource from partners, or impactful behaviour change, where evident, will be challenged.

4. Creation of a Family Group Conferencing Team, working with extended family groups to develop robust family plans for caring for children, chiefly as a tool for preventing entry into care, but also as a means of stepping down children and young people from care.

Update – the understanding of “what works” with families and children on the “edge” of statutory care is growing across services in Blackpool and the teams working at this critical level need to be shaped further to ensure that as this understanding grows, our response becomes more focussed on delivering impactful interventions. Family Group Conferencing is now embedded in the journey of families at risk of entering care. We are also refocusing resources to support those children in our care to ensure that where possible we rehabilitate them back to their parents care, and where this isn’t possible that we ensure that they are in family placements as we achieve more positive outcomes for children placed in a family environment

New initiatives following the MTFP in 2020

Since the main source of cost pressure is from the placements of children in the council’s care, action in the short and medium term needed to be focused on this area. It is both the most volatile area for expenditure and the area where a coherent strategy can have greatest impact in the medium term.

The overall *demand* for placements will be mainly addressed by the long term strategy and processes outlined above. We are already seeing the impact of this work in the data. The *supply* of placements, the *local market* for placements and most importantly our *care planning* for children in care, especially those in residential placements are all more likely to be affected by a different approach.

Broadly speaking, there were five component parts to the medium term strategy – all intended to reduce the numbers entering care, expedite children leaving care; or step down children and young people in care from the more expensive/most expensive types of provision. An update :

1. A comprehensive review and transformation of the fostering service and payments to carers *This is now in place. Recruitment of new carers has been positive, however we have also seen a reduction in the carers working with the Council as new standards have been introduced, and fewer “exceptions” are now granted. As a result, we have not yet seen significant net growth in capacity. However, we have not reached the tipping point where new entrants to the service should exceed retirements, and net growth should be evident in the coming year. Our focus will be to ensure that we have a net increase of a **minimum of 20 foster carer households over the next two years**. Although the overall number of carers and the places available has not yet significantly increased, we have seen positive recruitment and more recently, a greater skill mix within the cohort of foster carers working with the authority and a slower rate of carers exiting from the service.*
2. Development of an Assessment Centre, with outreach support and Specialist Foster Carer Recruitment to support step-down from residential placements. *This service was not as successful as hoped, and though there were some positive outcomes for individual young people the project required two areas of work to be equally productive – the support provided at the assessment centre, and the rapid recruitment of specialist foster carers. A commitment that this could be delivered was not met, and the service was wound down in November 2021. **This model will not be further pursued.***
3. A revised ‘Edge of Care’ Service (recently approved at CLT) *Further development of the “Families Together” model, reflecting learning and feedback from practitioners, families and critical success factors, will contribute to tweaks to the approach in the coming year to ensure that the service is actively reducing the level of risk and harm in families, enabling them to stay, or return to being, together.*

4. Continued application of the Dartington Service Design Lab methodology, building on the work already undertaken by Innovate Project Team, Legal Services and Supporting Our Children teams, seeking to mainstream the work, with support from the Corporate Delivery Unit.
This work continues – to ensure that where there is a possibility of reunification with family this is actively pursued with the child or young person to ensure a safe exit from statutory care.

5. Developing a semi-independent offer building on the Positive Transitions model that is currently working well, but directed at children in care, esp. those in residential placement.
The new “housing clinic” approach is now in place and working well, identifying and reviewing next steps for all young people between 16-18, ensuring that there is a positive and clear pathway for support and accommodation where required. Many young people approaching maturity have been supported in to semi-independent accommodation with a range of providers. Work has been underway to ensure the quality of both accommodation and support for these young people, including the development of Young Inspectors. The introduction of an inspection regime is anticipated in 2023 for Semi Independent living for young people - and there is a concern that this will destabilise a good market and potentially drive up costs.

In addition, there are a number of supporting initiatives currently underway to reshape the local market for placements and Blackpool’s relationship to that market, most importantly:

- Proactive engagement with the local Independent Fostering Agency market through direct work with key local providers; and work with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen and Cumbria on how we can more effectively, jointly contract for more complex, hard to find care through jointly contracting for placements, such as large sibling groups, early adolescents and children with complex needs.

- A focus on increasing placement stability, which has been historically poor for our children. This contributes to a level of disruption in their lives which impacts on the outcomes for individual children and escalations in placement costs. Joint work across Social Care, Commissioning and Quality Assurance has been designed and implemented to identify concerns from providers and/ or professionals at the earliest point, enabling preventative support to be put in place to stabilise a placement and prevent breakdowns and unplanned moves. Where this is not successful, a root cause analysis is undertaken with the provider, the child and the social worker and manager to ensure that any lessons learned can be effectively utilised for the future.

- Shaping the local residential children’s home market, trying to ensure more of the local capacity, of which there is plenty, is available to Blackpool children and young people, rather than children from further away.
 - Blackpool has 70 Ofsted registered ‘children’s home’ beds in the town (24 children’s homes, owned by 7 providers). All 7 providers are being approached to talk about how we can have a relationship of “Blackpool first” for their placements. Any new provisions seeking to open in Blackpool will need to reach an agreement with the local authority about their usage.

MODELLING IMPACT TO INFORM FINANCIAL PLANNING

It is extremely difficult to model the impact of all of the proposed initiatives listed above, as they all are closely linked. To a large extent the conclusions of the modelling reflects the assumed effectiveness of the strategies and/or the ineffectiveness of previous strategies.

However, with these limitations in mind, we have developed three broad scenarios:

1. Modelling through the impact of doing nothing, i.e. assuming that the long term net annual increase in children in care continues and the local authority is no more effective than in the past 5 years in either meeting placement needs from in-house provision, exiting children from care expeditiously, or preventing their entry in the first place.
2. Modelling the likely impact of currently agreed projects/initiatives.
3. Modelling the likely cost-benefit/impact of additional proposed projects/initiatives in addition to those already in place, namely:
 - a. Assessment Centre/Specialist Foster Care Step-Down from residential provision
 - b. Fostering Service Transformation.

Model 1 – Nothing Changes and the next five years follow the same trajectory as the last 5 years.

This is most simply modelled through looking at the average entry into care for the past 5 years (2015 to 2019), the average rate of exit and the increase in the use of higher cost placements (IFAs and residential provision).

Using this methodology (more detail is available in Appendix A), suggests an increase in spend over the next 5 years as below. The analysis also suggests that there would be over 830 children in care by the end of the period.

Total estimated spend for 2020/21 (000s)	£ 47,500					
Additional Pressure from (all 000s)		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Residential provision		£ 1,040	£ 2,080	£ 3,120	£ 4,160	£ 5,200
Independent Fostering Agency Placements		£ 1,248	£ 2,496	£ 3,744	£ 4,992	£ 6,240
Numbers in Care		£ 87	£ 87	£ 87	£ 87	£ 87
Total Pressure		£ 2,375	£ 4,663	£ 6,951	£ 9,239	£ 11,527
Total estimated spend (000s)		£ 49,875	£ 52,163	£ 54,451	£ 56,739	£ 59,027

Alternatively, using the model developed to look at the impact of proposed changes and projects outlined below, the increase in spend is less, but the rise in the number of care is even higher (870+)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Pressure	7,987	9,861	9,739	10,272	12,864
Total Projected Spend	48,487	50,361	50,239	50,772	53,364
				<i>all figures in '000s</i>	

In sum, while the headline figure differs depending on the complexity of the methodology used, both models show a substantial increase on what is already a significantly overspending budget.

Model 2 – Models the impact of currently agreed initiatives and makes assumption about their effectiveness and reach (these assumptions are outlined in more detail in the attached Appendix A)

Using a tougher average baseline for net entry into care based on the past 4 and a half years (2016 to end of May 2020), which gives a net increase of slightly less than 50 children a year, but applying assumptions around the effectiveness of key activities that are either on-going, or are planned and do not require additional investment.

Key activities include:

- Changed approach to practice (Blackpool Rocks),
- Repeated 'Dartington Service Lab' review of cases;
- Revised Targeted Prevention ('Edge of Care') service
- Improved management of the Fostering Service, but no change in rates
- Regional Adoption Agency functioning effectively and widening the number of possible adopters.

This gives a summary trajectory as below, which sees steady projected spend for the first two years, at £47m before falling to £41m by the end of year 5 – still £0.5m above the budgeted spend for 2020/21.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Pressure	£ 6,893	£ 6,189	£ 3,165	£ 849	£ 513
Total Projected Spend	£ 47,393	£ 46,689	£ 43,665	£ 41,349	£ 41,013
				<i>all figures in '000s</i>	

Of course, one can amend the assumptions to be more or less optimistic, the assumptions used are of 50% effectiveness in the key activities. The modelling suggests that the two most important planned initiatives are the Edge of Care Service and the repeated identification and targeted work to achieve exit from care (Dartington). This is because of the reach of the two activities and because they address cost drivers at source (entry into care and exit from care).

The biggest driver for savings is from stemming entry into residential provision through better work preventing entry into care (the revised 'edge of care' offer). If entry into residential provision can be more effectively limited, then the age profile of those currently within the provision will lead to a natural decline in the total number (as has been modelled repeatedly in the past by colleagues in Finance). A further issue worth considering further here is that 10 young people currently in residential provision entered care in the past 12 months. So there is more of a connection between entry into care and residential numbers than one might initially assume. This means that it is crucial to both avoid entry and to have effective alternatives to residential provision for older children who do enter care, which is one of the reasons why the additional investment in the council's fostering service and a change in the relationship with external, private-sector fostering agencies is potentially so important.

The financial modelling only considers the projected spend on children in foster care and residential provision. It does not consider spend on children in care in other types of provision, which is assumed to remain steady throughout the period, nor does it consider any wider changes on staffing numbers.

It is likely that success in the key activities above will have other impacts, such as lower numbers of children in care, a lower number of children in other placements (not fostering or residential); a lower total number of children open to children's services; and hence a lower number of workers required. Looking at recent trends and the pattern of current placement, it is likely that the next five years will also see more children placed in supported accommodation (often as a step-down from residential provision at 16 years old); more children in adoptive placements (and more expenditure on those placements); but fewer older children in care; and children in care for less time and leaving at a younger age.

The overarching message from the modelling is that, on the basis of the current and planned activity, the likely case scenario is that spend will be contained over the period of time at about £0.5m above the 2020/21 budget, but with very significant overspends projected particularly in years 1 and 2. The overall number of children in care would fall markedly (down to 422 at the end of the period).

Model 3 – Models the impact of currently agreed initiatives, as per model 2, and the cost-benefit impact of additional projects (more detail in Appendix A)

The model builds on model 2, but adds in two further projects designed to affect critical cost drivers at source: numbers in of children in residential care; or foster homes purchased by the local authority from Independent Fostering Agencies. As noted earlier, the council has seen growth of the number of children in residential care over the past 5 years (+50%); and rapid growth in the number in IFA placements over the past year (+60%).

The model:

- Apportions net growth of children in care across ‘foster care’ and ‘other’ placements, based on where children are likely to be placed (mainly foster care), as per model 2 above; but
- Changes the apportionment of this net growth between internal and external fostering to reflect the rebalancing over the next 5 years towards internal fostering and away from external fostering.
- For those currently in external fostering placements, it is assumed that movement out of those homes is most likely to occur at placement breakdown, or because a child leaves through age. We will not generally be seeking to move children from settled placements.
- Analysis of IFA placements between March 2019 and March 2020, shows 20% of those in an IFA placement in March 2019, moved to a different fostering or home environment placement during the following year. The model uses this figure (20%) to define the group where there is the possibility of a movement in any one particular year. The age profile of children in IFA placements is also used as a predictor of likely movement out of these placements.
- The model uses the costs outlined in the Fostering Business Case, regarding the investment required in the service and the rates paid to foster carers; and the cost of the Assessment Centre/Specialist Foster Carer two-year project proposal.
- The model assumes 50% effectiveness in the Assessment Centre/Specialist Foster carer proposal; and assumes that the council is able to recruit and retain foster carers.

This model gives a summary trajectory of spend as below:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Pressure	8,173	6,081	(495)	(4,726)	(6,793)
Total Projected Spend	48,673	46,581	40,005	35,774	33,707
				<i>all figures in '000s</i>	

As might be expected, the model shows that the proposals, by addressing critical cost drivers directly, cause projected spend to fall sooner; and, by changing the balance of fostering provision, achieve greater longer-term savings. In short, if successful, they will more than pay for the additional investment required. Moreover, detailed modelling of the Assessment Centre proposal indicates that it only has to be successful with a third of children in the project to be financially self-sustaining. Finally, the overall number of children in care is projected to fall to just over 400 (407).

A Final Note

Delivery of the savings described in the paper is critical to the sustainability of the council and can only be achieved through a cross-council effort. While many aspects of delivery squarely lie with children’s services and social work professionals and managers, experience shows that the degree of change required will need extensive support from other officers with complementary skills, especially colleagues in finance, legal services and the corporate delivery unit. A cross-council project team working cohesively on the major projects listed in the paper and reporting to a senior officer in Children’s Services, will be essential to maintaining momentum and achieving the scale of change required. Given its centrality to the council’s budget planning, there also needs to be regular progress reports to CLT, both overall, but also for the critical individual component projects. This is a significant transformational programme and needs to be managed as such.

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Service
Meeting Date:	2 February 2023

YOUTH JUSTICE TEAM: UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the committee with an update regarding Blackpool's Youth Justice Service (YJS).

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of the service to provide scrutiny, challenge and support to aid service development and ensure positive outcomes for children are achieved.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No other alternative options to be considered.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

6.1 Our approach:

The service provides children with interventions that support their needs and addresses their offending behaviour, maintaining a "Child First" approach and always seeks to work in partnership with children and their families.

The “Child First” principle has been adopted by the Youth Justice Board¹ (YJB) as a strategic priority for the Youth Justice System (YJS) of England and Wales. As the central and guiding principle of youth justice practice, “Child First” underpins the Standards for children in the youth justice system, which in turn directs the policy and practice of the youth justice sector as a whole and the range of services therein.

“Child First” summarises contemporary understanding of what works in youth justice, built on decades of evidence. A “Child First” approach means putting children at the heart of what we do, treating children as children, see the whole child, including any structural barriers they face and focus on better outcomes for children. Evidence tell us this will also create safer communities with fewer victims. Children in the Youth Justice system face multiple, complex challenges and need support to remove barriers and create opportunities for them, to move forward with their lives. T

Blackpool’s YJS was last inspected by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in the Summer of 2021. The Inspectorate worked jointly with partner inspectors from policing, health, social care and education to undertake this inspection. Three broad areas were examined: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court work (such as community sentences) the service was rated ‘Good’ and in three aspects ‘Outstanding’.

The Inspectorate were particularly impressed by the comprehensive overhaul of the arrangements for out-of-court disposal (OoCD) work, led by police colleagues commenting the quality of the service has changed from ‘Inadequate’ across the board, to at least ‘Good’ and in some respects ‘Outstanding’. OoCD work is considered when a child commits an offence and where it may be most appropriate to divert or ‘triage’ them away from the criminal justice system entirely and work with the child, family and victim through more informal ways to address their needs and prevent further offending. There is no one method of working with children to divert them. OoCD disposals can be used for children who have admitted an offence, but it is not in the public interest to prosecute as it is not always appropriate for children that commit a crime to be sent to Court. It may be appropriate for the Police and Youth Offending Teams to consider an OoCD disposal.

Actions to address the HMIP recommendations to advance the service further form part of our Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Plan along with performance and resource data is monitored quarterly via the Blackpool’s Youth Justice Executive Board providing a multidisciplinary strategic focus on the impact of service delivery on children’s outcomes. The Blackpool Youth Justice Executive Management Board is committed to working effectively and collaboratively with all relevant partners and agencies to reduce the numbers of children and young people entering the criminal justice system and to reduce re-offending.

¹ The youth justice system in England and Wales is overseen by the Youth Justice Board (YJB), a non-departmental public body operating at arms-length from ministers. Its primary function is to monitor the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services.

6.2 Update since the last report to scrutiny in September 2022:

Blackpool's Youth Justice Executive Board last met on 23 January 2023 and reviewed performance in the last quarter.

- During this period the service supported 75 children, predominately male (85%), White-British (87%) and average age of 16. 15% of the Children supported were 'Our Children' and looked after by the Local Authority.
- Blackpool has seen an increase in the Children remanded and sentenced to custody in the last quarter.
- In addition the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System in Blackpool remain higher than local and national averages. Further work is being undertaken to explore the issue to better understand the issue and support.

6.3 As Scrutiny Committee are aware in 2021/22 three quarters of children involved with the Blackpool Youth Justice Service had SEND, Speech, Language or Communication needs. The Youth Justice Executive Board recognise swift access to Speech and Language services are needed however not always available. Following a meeting with the Blackpool Teaching Hospital provider in April 22 it was outlined that there was no provision for Children with a Targeted Need and a 12 Month wait for Children with Specialist Need. This information was fed into a meeting with the review lead from a Better Communication to enable the needs of children involved in the Youth Justice System to be heard.

To support young people Blackpool Youth Justice Service have entered into a service level agreement with Children's Targeted Services, Children's Therapy Team, Blackpool Teaching Hospital to provide the service with specialist Speech and Language support for screening, intervention consultation, for children known to the Youth Justice team.

In Autumn 2022 the majority of Youth Justice Service Practitioners were trained in using a speech and language assessment tool. Youth Justice Service Practitioners are now using the tool as part of their assessment process.

Consultations with a Therapist have also commenced with practitioners reporting that these are useful. One team member shared:

"They certainly help to identify strengths and areas where more support might be needed or where I need to adapt my practice such as not using ambiguous phrases, explain things in more detail, give more prompts/examples or writing things down rather than rely on memory."

The speech and language service have also reviewed the letter templates and questionnaires Blackpool Youth Justice Service use and have provided advice and recommendations for amendments to make them easily understandable to children and young people

6.4 Feedback from courts regarding the Pre-Sentence Reports prepared by the service this quarter includes confirmation reports are focused, sufficient in length, analytical and take into account the needs and views of victims. Feedback has included 'An extremely thorough and comprehensive report', 'A very difficult case for all parties. The reports was well written with lots of detail' and the

child ‘was open and respectful of the work being done with him by the Youth Justice Service. Both the written and verbal reports given were helpful in reaching our sentence’.

6.5 Early Intervention: The Turnaround Programme is a voluntary youth justice early intervention programme, developed and funded by the Ministry of Justice and will be led by the Local Authority. The Programme spans three-years and comes into effect January 2023. Turnaround aims to improve outcomes and prevent offending for children who are on the cusp of the youth justice system and who do not meet the threshold for statutory support.

The overall aims of the Turnaround programme are to:

- achieve positive outcomes for children with the ultimate aim of preventing them going on to offend;
- build on work already done to ensure all children on the cusp of the youth justice system are consistently offered a needs assessment and the opportunity for support;
- improve the socio-emotional, mental health and wellbeing of children; and
- improve the integration and partnership working between YJSs and other statutory services to support children.

Turnaround is based on similar principles to those underlying the Supporting Families programme in England and equivalent programmes in Wales such as the Youth Offending Blueprint, including the view that children on the cusp of offending often have complex needs.

For children and their families to access the Turnaround Programme there is mandated eligibility criteria that children must meet (Appendix 1).

6.6 Further development planned for 2023: In October 2022 the Ministry of Justice informed the Authority a revised set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for YJS will be introduced in England from April 2023. The Ministry of Justice outlined that it is only by working together to consider the holistic needs of children and their families that we can address the root causes which drive offending behaviour. YJSs are designed with this principle at their core, which is why a new set of metrics which capture the range of partnership working on which YJSs rely in order to be effective is being introduced. The Ministry of Justice intend the revised KPIs will ensure that at both a local and the central level there is a clear understanding of how local multi-agency partnerships are operating. The new KPIs focus on Accommodation, Employment, Training and Education, Learning Needs, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. Substance Misuse, Management Board Attendance, OoCD, Serious youth violence, wider service involvement and victims (Appendix 2).

In addition to the 10 new KPIs listed above, the YJS will continue to be required to capture data on the 4 current KPIs (First Time Entrants, reoffending binary rate and frequency rate, and the number of children in custody) as they provide a helpful overview of how the youth justice system as a whole is delivering against our principle statutory aim of preventing (re)offending by children. These system measures should continue to inform discussion at a local level. The Youth Justice Board and the Ministry of Justice will also continue to use the information to perform their oversight function and to understand the performance of the whole partnership.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 7(a): Turnaround Programme eligibility criteria

7.2 Appendix 7(b): New Key Performance Indicators

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The YJS partnership will fund the service in 2022/23 through the budget outlined below:

B5: YJS budget - England

2022-23 BUDGET

Costs and Contributions

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Police	58,336		0	58,336
Probation	24,608		5,000	29,608
Health	39,974		15,442	55,416
Local Authority	345,016		103,807	448,823
YJB	435,178		54,251	489,429
Other				0
Total	903,112	-	178,500	1,081,612

In 2022/23 there has been a £40,000 reduction in the funding the service receive from Police partners however are no current budget pressures at this present time due to a 9.8% uplift across all Local Authorities in the Youth Justice Grant.

The service has received £45,319 for the implementation and delivery of the Turnaround Programme Jan-March 2023.

Terms and Conditions of the Youth Justice Grant will be updated to include the monitoring of the 10 additional KPIs from 1 April 2023 onwards.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 There are no legal implications to consider.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no issues of concern, appropriate governance arrangements are in place.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 The young people supported by the Blackpool youth justice service in 21/22 were mainly White ethnic background (87%), 7% of young people were mixed heritage and the remainder were a very small number of Eastern European and Vietnamese young people (data from Annual Executive Board Summary May 2022). One of the new KPIs will monitor senior partner representation at Youth Justice management boards, and monitoring if partners contribute data from their individual services that

identify areas of racial disproportionality.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Key headlines from the Sustainability Impact tool have been considered and there are no sustainability, climate change or environmental adjustments to be made at this time.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Consultation with Children takes place at every interaction. In addition at the end of each order Team Managers from the Youth Justice Service contact Children and their parents/carers for feedback on the intervention and support they have received. Feedback received for last month includes one parent sharing *'My child has turned a corner because of the support offered, he spends time in the gym or at his girlfriends and has kept out of trouble'*.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None

Appendix 7(a): Turnaround Eligibility Criteria

Children aged 10-17 who fit one or more of the following criteria are eligible for Turnaround:

- who are interviewed under caution following arrest or subject to a criminal investigation attending a voluntary interview;
- those who are subject to No Further Action (NFA) decision (including Outcome 22);
- those who are subject to a Community Resolution (Outcome 8);
- those receiving a first-time youth caution, not including conditional caution;
- released under investigation (RUI) or those subject to pre-charge bail (PCB);
- those discharged by a court;
- those acquitted at court; and/or
- those fined by a court.
- those in receipt of Community Protection Orders (CPO), Civil Orders and/or Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) for anti-social behaviour.

The child should be 17 or under at the point of referral onto the Programme.

Turnaround should build on existing practice and avoid duplication of support for children. Out of court disposals (OoCDs) are included in the eligibility criteria in recognition that there can be gaps in the support that children subject to OoCDs can access. When considering Turnaround interventions for children who have received OoCDs, YJSs should ensure that the programme will offer genuine additionality to the local offer and that existing provision is not duplicated.

Where children subject to an OoCD could potentially benefit from a more in-depth assessment, there must be a clear case that there are additional support needs that are not and cannot be met through existing channels. If the child is already being assessed or receiving support, the YJS should consider whether there is a need and/or opportunity to join up with this work.

In addition, the following criteria apply:

- to ensure Turnaround meets its aim of early intervention, referrals must be made within three months of a child meeting the eligibility criteria.
- once a child has received support through the Turnaround programme, they are not eligible for support funded through the programme again. The YJS may choose to continue to support a child following completion of a Turnaround intervention, however if re-referred, the child cannot be supported twice under Turnaround funding.
- children referred to Turnaround are not eligible if they have an open Early Help plan with a package of co-ordinated multi-agency whole family support (or a Families First plan in Wales).. Children with multiple and/or complex needs may have support from several agencies and be an open case to Early Help (England), Families First (Wales), or another existing multi-agency programme of support.
- YJSs have the discretion to use Turnaround funding to fund interventions for cases that are open as children in need (CIN), though if doing so they should ensure: o Turnaround funding is only used to fund Turnaround support and interventions; mechanisms should be in place to guard against funding being used to fund statutory duties. YJSs should
- ensure that the following principles are followed:
- No admission of guilt is required on the part of the child

- There is a clear unmet need identified through assessment that Turnaround can meet
- A strengths-based approach is taken
- A co-ordinated multi-agency plan is in place with a lead practitioner that considers the needs of the child referred to Turnaround and takes a whole family approach.
- Children open to child protection plans, looked after children and children leaving care are ineligible for Turnaround as the programme is not intended to replace or supplement existing Children's Services funding and arrangements for higher threshold cases.
- Children referred to Turnaround are not eligible if they have previously been on the YJS statutory caseload, regardless of the length of time since the case was open.

Appendix 7(b): The 10 new Key Performance Indicators:

1. Accommodation: % of children in the community and being released from custody with suitable accommodation arrangements
2. Education, training and employment (ETE): % of children in the community and being released from custody attending a suitable ETE arrangement.
3. SEND/Additional Learning Needs: % of children who have an identified SEND need (or Additional Learning Need in Wales), are in suitable ETE and have a formal learning plan in place for the current academic year
4. Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing: % of children in the community and being released from custody with a screened OR identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing; and of that the % of planned/offered interventions; of that % of children attending interventions
5. Substance misuse: % of children with a screened OR identified need for specialist treatment intervention to address substance misuse; and of that the % of children with planned or offered intervention/treatment; and of that the % number of children attending intervention/treatment
6. Out of court disposals (OOCs): % of OOC disposal interventions that are completed/not completed
7. Management Board attendance: monitoring senior partner representation at management boards, and monitoring if partners contribute data from their individual services that identify areas of racial and ethnic disproportionality.
8. Wider Services: % children who are currently on either an Early Help (EH) plan; on a child protection (CP) plan or classified as Child in need (CiN) or a looked after child (Our Children). For Wales only, children who are classified as Children in Need of Care and Support
9. Serious youth violence (SYV): rates of children convicted for SYV on the YJS caseload
10. Victims: number of victims who consent to be contact by the YJS, and of those, the number of victims: engaged with about Restorative Justice opportunities; asked their view prior to OoCD decision-making and planning for statutory court orders; provided information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate services that support victims (when requested)

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Nicola Turner, Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2023

FYLDE COAST MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on the work of the support team in schools in Blackpool.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To consider the update, identifying any additional areas for scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is up to date and is an accurate representation of the Committee's work.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Nicola Turner, Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager will be in attendance to present the requested update on mental health support provided in schools.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 8(a): Presentation

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

Fylde Coast MHST

Blackpool Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee February 2023

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The MHSTs deliver 3 core functions:

- Delivering evidence-based interventions for children and young people with mild-to-moderate mental health problems
- Supporting the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop their whole school/college approach
- Giving timely advice to school and college staff, and liaising with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education

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MHSTs work with....

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Educational Diversity

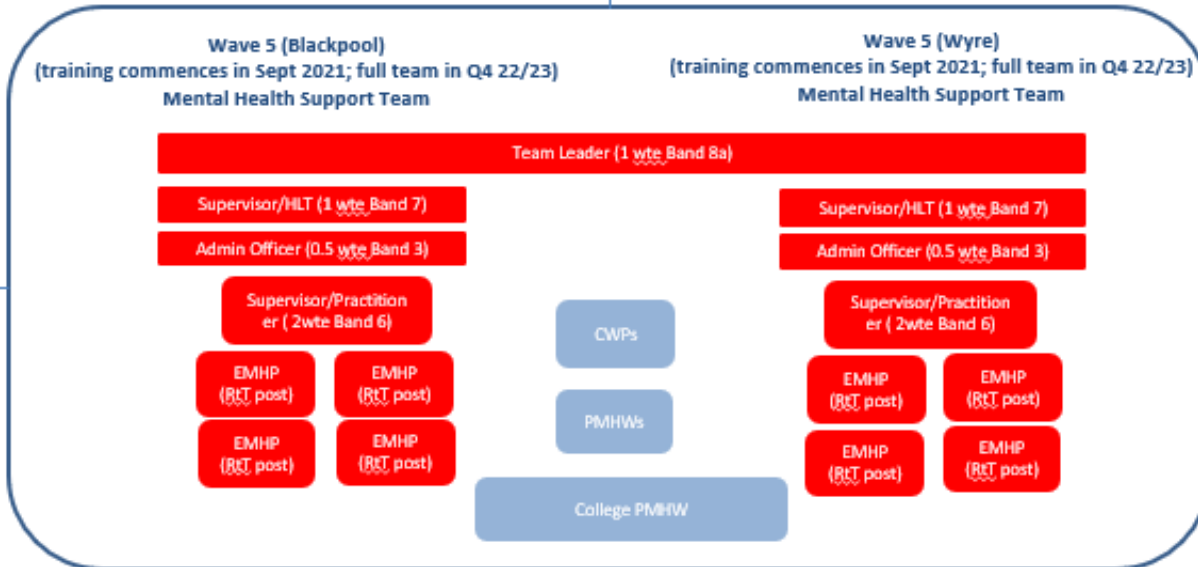
Armfield, Aspire, Highfield,
Montgomery, South Shore, St
Mary's and Unity

Highfurlong, Lotus, Park and
Woodlands

Caring • Safe • Respectful

This
Photo
by

Team structure



Fylde Coast MHST Mainstream Schools Meeting

- termly meetings bringing together each MHST and Designated Senior Leads for Mental Health from schools.
- Meetings will provide updates on the development/delivery of MHSTs and a forum to resolve emerging issues.

Fylde Coast MHST Special Schools Meeting

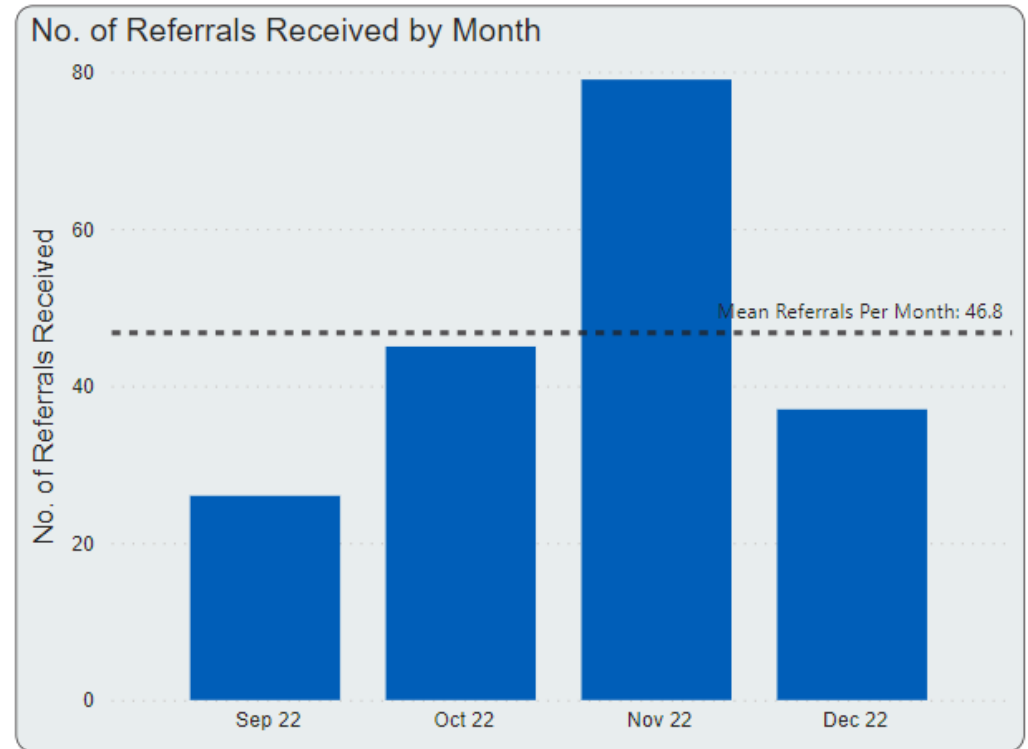
- termly meetings bringing together each MHST and Designated Senior Leads for Mental Health (from schools).
- Meetings will provide updates on the development/delivery of MHSTs and a forum to resolve emerging issues.



Referrals – received/accepted

1st September – 31st December
2022

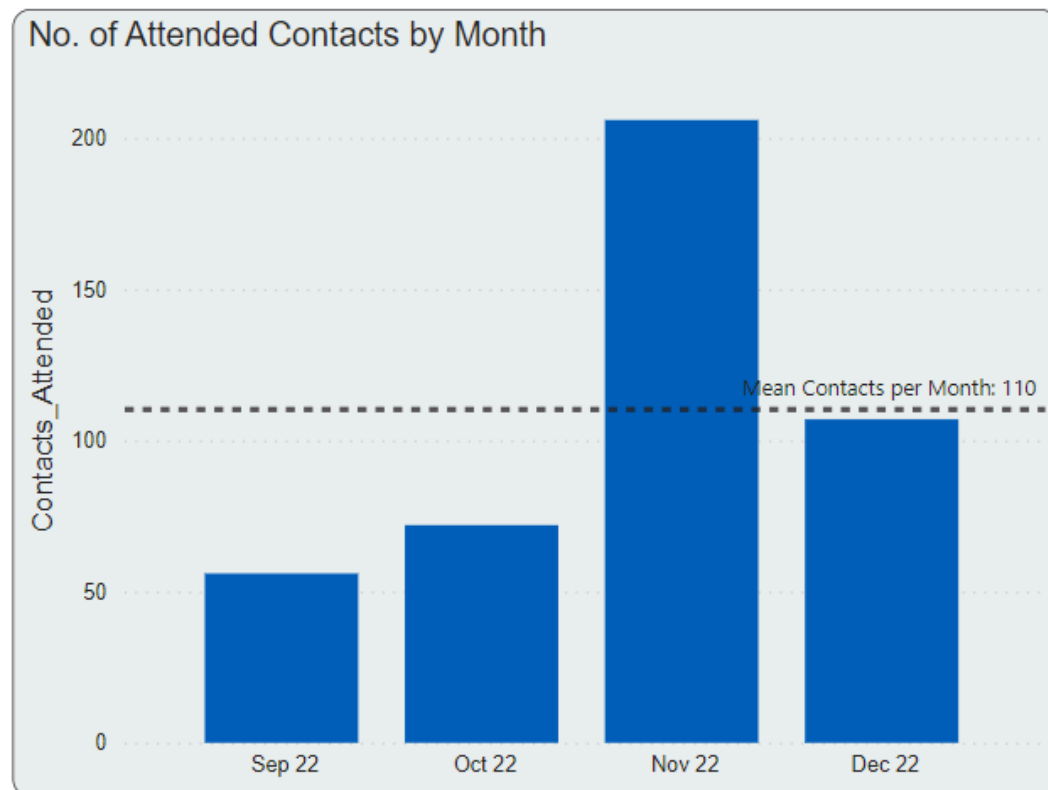
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887 referrals were received,
and accepted, from schools



Attended appointments

1st September – 31st
December 2022

- 1441 attended appointments
- 143 appointments DNA'd or cancelled by the young person



MHST activity

In the Autumn Term, Blackpool MHST:

- completed 85 consultations focusing on young people and staff wellbeing
- delivered workshops on exam stress that were attended by 86 students
- delivered 4 workshops on worry management in schools
- held a Coffee and chat session for parents/carers at Woodlands School
- held a World Mental Health day event attended 85 stakeholders, children and young people who learnt more about Options4CYP services and the support offered.

Feedback from students

It has helped me write down my stress and given ways to help

School is stressful and having someone around to talk to makes it better

It is an amazing workshop with good advice

They are a good service because they don't overload us with information and let us share ideas

Feedback from parents/carers

I'm so happy with the sessions my daughter has received and wanted to let you know how fabulous the practitioner's sessions have improved my daughters general outlook and mental health. This service has been fantastic. Many thanks

My son has just finished his sessions with SHINE. Since he started these sessions, I've noticed a huge improvement as regards to his anxiety. He is more relaxed and seems calmer, and on the day of his sessions, he always came home so much happier and as though a huge weight had been lifted off his shoulders. I cannot thank the EMHP enough for the work and support she has given him and I know that he will miss the sessions very much. Thanks again for offering him this remarkable service and for all the support.

Feedback from schools

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At our school we have two EMHPs and a Mental Health Practitioner and these ladies have had a huge impact on our students they have supported, they have also been a great support to staff who have needed advice and signposting in the right direction. The ladies are always willing to help be that in person or via phone and their work is greatly appreciated in school. It has been very successful for students who previously had long wait times and were not meeting threshold for other services, students have also fed back about the positive experience they've had with the team, SHINE has been a blessing at the school!!! Also a huge thanks to the admin team for all their hard work!!

Future developments

- additional MHST for the Fylde Coast to cover settings that were not picked up by the existing teams. Introductory meetings have begun and the team are being well received. These will continue until the new cohort of staff are part way through their training and ready to start offering consultations, assessments and interventions.

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implementation of a new consultation and referral form. This will ensure that settings are supported to make appropriate referrals and young people and families who need support outside the remit of the service will be able to be signposted more quickly to the correct team.

- Whole School Approach (WSA) - a WSA audit tool has been developed which will assist settings, with support from our EMHPs, to identifying their priorities in relation to emotional wellbeing and mental health. The audit will be repeated each year, usually in the summer term, so that settings can regularly view their progress and develop their mental health strategy for the following year.

Fylde Coast MHST



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Contact details

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Lisa Arnold, Head of Community and Wellbeing Services
Meeting Date:	2 February 2023

YOUTH SERVICE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update following the review of Youth Provision completed last year and the commitment from the local authority to establish a small Youth Service, to provide co-ordination and support to third sector youth providers as identified through the review.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 Support the commitment by the local authority and third sector partners to grow and improve youth provision across Blackpool in line with the recommendations within the report.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 To improve the life chances and outcomes for young people in Blackpool.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 Delivering the outcomes identified in the Youth Review will predominantly contribute to priority two, however there is likely to also be some indirect contribution to priority 1;

- Priority One 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool';
- Priority Two 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

6.0 Report Information

6.01 Background

- 6.02** Effective youth work employed with young people can enhance life chances. It offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity, experience decision-making, increase their confidence, develop interpersonal skills and think through the consequences of their actions. This leads to informed choices, changes in activity and improved outcomes for young people. Quality youth services are important for supporting life outcomes, and they are a part of and contribute to a wider eco-system of services that support and develop young people's capabilities.
- 6.03** The review of Blackpool youth provision was undertaken by the National Youth Association (NYA) to capture current delivery, identify what works for young people and determine areas for development. The review, which included findings from the desktop research, stakeholder engagement and the effective practice literature, was undertaken to inform future youth provision in Blackpool and recommended a coordinated approach to enhance our town wide offer to meet the needs of the children and young people we serve.
- 6.04** Youth work is a statutory service, as stated in the 1997 Education Act (updated in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act) and Blackpool Council has a statutory duty to "secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people" and to make sure young people have a say in the local offer.
- 6.05** This is often referred to as the 'youth services duty'. The cross-cutting benefits of youth work are well documented within the review, demonstrating that universal provision can reduce the demand on more specialist children and young people services.
- 6.06** The Blackpool Youth Provision Review made a number of recommendations (Appendix B), at the core of which is the need for central co-ordination and youth participation. The Youth Review Sub-Group have agreed that whilst challenging, the recommendations are achievable over a longer period of time. The recommendation of providing two JNC qualified youth workers per secondary school establishment is ambitious, however with a coordinated town wide approach to identifying priorities and applying for funding, the sub-group believe this could be achieved.
- 6.07** The sub-group recognises that whilst the work of the third sector youth providers is complimentary in terms of them all wanting to improve the lives of Blackpool young people, there has traditionally been conflict and silo working between providers. Furthermore, following the cessation of the youth service within Blackpool Council in 2012, the third sector providers feel there has been a significant lack of support and recognition from Blackpool Council for the work they do for young people in their areas.
- 6.08** In July 2022 Blackpool Council committed to investing in a core 'youth service' function that will oversee the coordination and consistency of youth provision as the offer across the town grows to meet the recommendation of every young person being within a 15 minute walk of youth provision.
- 6.09** This new service will not undertake any direct youth work delivery with young people, but will focus on ensuring a town wide approach to developing and delivering youth provision,

working collaboratively with the third sector and young people to develop funding bids, allocate funds, monitor delivery against agreed outputs and outcomes and ultimately increase the amount and type of provision delivered by the third sector, ensuring the quality of provision is consistently high across the town.

6.10 The new service includes a Youth Service Manager, Grants and Funding Manager, Training and Quality Manager, Youth Engagement Officer and administration support. A Service Manager was recently appointed and is set to commence their new role at the end of March 2023. Following their commencement, the job descriptions for the remaining posts will be finalized and post advertised, with the expectation that the full team will be in post by the end of Summer 2023.

6.11 The sub group that involves third sector youth providers has continued to meet following the completion of the review to discuss next steps in relation to the recommendations. Strategic Youth Partnership models are being explored to formalize the group and ensure that positive outcomes for young people can be fully maximized by having the right partners around the table with a clear vision and shared objectives.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

7.0 List of Appendices:

Appendix 9(a): Youth Provision Review Report

Appendix 9(b): Youth Provision Review Recommendations

8.0 Financial considerations:

None

9.0 Legal considerations:

None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

None

11.0 Equalities considerations:

None

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

None

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

None

14.0 Background papers:

None



Blackpool Council



Blackpool Youth Provision Review: Final Report

Introduction and Acknowledgements

The National Youth Agency (NYA) conducted a review of youth provision across the Blackpool footprint. The NYA engaged key stakeholders to collect views and data to inform the review in partnership with Youth Focus North West (YFNW) and with the support of the Youth Provision Review Steering Group (YPRSG).

The following report analyses quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (focus groups) engagement and consultation with young people, parents and carers who live in Blackpool, as well as organisations that provide youth provision in the town. Stakeholder consultations, as well as desktop and effective practice research, will be used to inform a development plan outlining the future potential of youth provision in Blackpool.

In this review, youth provision is defined as informal education for children and young people aged seven to twenty-five years.



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Improving the lives of young people

Blackpool Council

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Executive Summary

The 2010 Marmot Review made the case that reducing inequity in social determinants of health amongst children and young people was the single most important factor in reducing health inequalities across the course of life. As a part of this overarching position, it was identified that developing capabilities is one of the essential components to supporting greater equity. Ten years on, the review panel revisited progress on the report between 2010 and 2020, recognising specifically that youth services have a significant role supporting health equity and greater equity throughout life.

The publicly available data that was analysed to profile Blackpool's population does not allow for correlation between disadvantages at the level of an individual. However, it is clear that a large proportion of young people in Blackpool face at least one disadvantage, and many face multiple disadvantages.

Blackpool often has significantly worse measures when compared to those of its nearest neighbours, and in several cases has the worst indicators nationally. Blackpool has the concentrated deprivation of the very poorest parts of major urban areas without the off-setting social mix and growth drivers that exist in Manchester or Liverpool. It could be argued there are very few places in England or Wales with the same intense and complex mix of social issues.

Where the data allowed for ward-level comparison it shows that there are a few wards clustered around the city centre that have comparatively worse measures: Bloomfield, Claremont and Talbot. These three wards alongside Brunswick and Tyldesley have the greatest concentration of reported youth anti-social behaviour (Feb 2021 – Jan 2022) in Blackpool.

Quality youth services are important for supporting life outcomes, and they are a part of and contribute to a wider eco-system of services that support and develop young people's capabilities. Youth work is a statutory service, as stated in the 1997 Education Act (updated in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act), and it is significant for this review that the NYA expects the government's current review of the 508B guidance to clarify local authorities' legal responsibilities.

Engagement, involvement and participation in youth services

Engagement and involvement of young people is a core element of the review, and the findings of the consultation with young people is central to informing the recommendations in the development plan.

To enable a comprehensive consultation, quantitative (mass and targeted questionnaire) and qualitative (targeted focus groups) methodologies were employed. The approach taken has enabled the consultation of those who are already engaged in youth provision and those that are not engaged in youth provision.

Youth involvement, engagement and participation

The importance of engaging and involving young people in design, development, delivery and evaluation of the services that are intended for them should not be underestimated. Participation in these processes facilitates a feeling of ownership that increases the likelihood of an initiative's success.

The review has identified the need to develop a Blackpool-wide coordinated youth participation strategy. It would help to inform programme/activity and support service design and development. The development and implementation of an effective participation strategy underpins the other recommendations identified in this report.

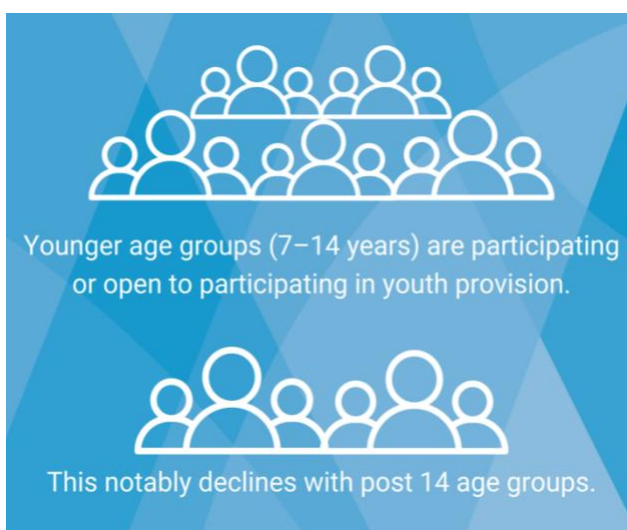
Successful implementation of the participation strategy would increase the probability of young people feeling ownership of the provision and services, improve the coordination between support services, and help increase the profile of youth provision with young people across Blackpool.

Accessible provision

Youth work is impactful because of the voluntary engagement of young people. The focus group discussions found that the voluntary engagement aspect of their participation was valued by the young people attending youth provision. The sense of membership and belonging young people felt towards the provision related to easy accessibility (locality), and the voluntary relationships built with those adults who delivered within the provision. Suggesting relationships and easy access were the important criteria for those attending youth provision. The recommendations reflect the importance of well-resourced local services informed by young people and delivered through a skilled workforce.

Significant numbers of young people are choosing not to participate in youth provision. Although it was found that younger age groups (7–14) were participating or open to participating in youth provision, this notably declines with age groups 14 and older.

Results suggest teenage girls aged 15 to 19 are especially closed off to youth clubs and groups. In general, as age increases, attendance and openness to participate in youth club and group activities decreases. There is a perception from those who do not attend that youth clubs and groups are boring and poorly resourced. If youth clubs and groups aspire to work with older age groups, there requires a change in approach, image, promotion and activities offered.



Segmenting membership by age, and in some cases gender, could support greater engagement and involvement. For example, a well-defined, co-produced, wide-ranging programme of activities for younger age groups would be more effective when engaging and capturing interest in youth provision. Conversely, involvement in the design, development and delivery of targeted activities could help to retain older participants and attract young people who are 14 years and older.

A well-defined, co-produced, wide-ranging programme of activities for younger age groups would be more effective in engaging and capturing interest in youth provision

In general, volunteering and social action is the activity most likely to attract and retain young people as they get older. Improving the range of volunteering and social activities on offer to young people and more effectively promoting the opportunities and benefits of participating in these activities could increase take up.

Awareness of activities and support services

Lack of awareness of where the nearest opportunity for each provision was widely quoted as a reason for not participating in activities and accessing services. The older age groups generally had less awareness by activity. On the surface, this would suggest a need to improve communication channels when promoting activities and support services.

A strong indicator that young people would be open to participating in activities was whether their friends attended or whether it was recommended by someone they trusted. This indicator increased with age, suggesting a campaign, aligned with a renewed offer designed and developed with young people, would be more effective if communicated through friends, teachers, youth workers and volunteers.

Undertaking the desk top research, it was clear there was not one place a young person could go to find services or activities. The difficulty in identifying the services, activities and the organisations that provide them demonstrates the need for better Blackpool-wide coordination. The recommendations outline the need for a centrally coordinated approach to communicating youth provision and more nuanced tactics to increase awareness and referrals.

Other barriers to accessing provision and services

Young people felt unsafe travelling to and from provision. The focus group discussions revealed that a perceived availability and high prevalence of drugs and alcohol increased the unsafe feelings when travelling within the community.

Engaging users and non-users of provision in identifying whether there is an issue locally and whether it inhibits participation in their provision would enable a greater understanding of the issues young people face. Once established, supporting young people to develop protective factors to change behaviours and identifying how the provision can modify arrangements to increase feelings of safety could support greater participation. For example, the provision could focus on the safety of young people during times where it is most important for them, such as when travelling to and from clubs and groups to mitigate risk.

The perspective of parents, carers and young people differed when discussing cost as a barrier. Parents and carers rated cost as one of the most significant barriers for participating in activities, whereas young people felt cost was a minor inhibitor. Analysing the quantitative data from the young people's questionnaire, it would appear cost has little impact on participation. However, when explored in the focus groups, young people felt that if the cost of provision increased, it would quickly become an inhibitor. Travel cost was a barrier to young people below 16 years of age, and this could influence the provision that they decide to participate in.

Related to cost barriers was the perceived inaccessibility to tourist leisure activities available in Blackpool. These unique leisure activities could provide an enhanced opportunity for young people in Blackpool. However, in general, the young people involved in the focus groups saw this as a negative rather than a positive.

Support services

Support services designed for young people require further consultation. Analysis from the data collected for this report infers that young people need clearer information about the support services available, and they are most open to receive this information from people they trust. Parents and carers also rated lack of awareness as a significant inhibitor for young people in their household being able to access support.



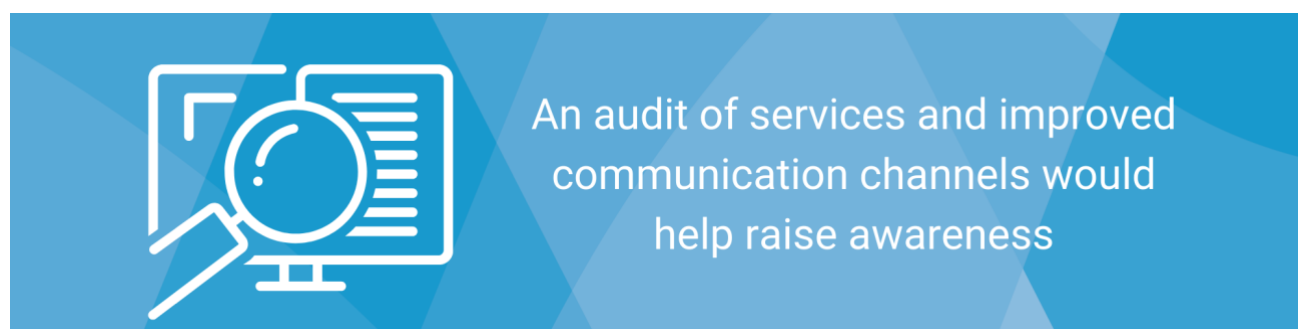
Recommendations outline the need for a centrally coordinated approach to communicating youth provision, as well as more nuanced targeted tactics to increase awareness and referrals.



Mental health was a prominent support need identified by parents, carers and young people. Additionally, guardians identified that others in their household with poor mental health had a detrimental impact on the young people. One in three houses also stated that issues related to fitness, physical health or lack of finances affected at least one adult in the household and that this had a negative impact on young people within the household.

Mental health, fitness/physical health, education/school work, financial advice, career/employment-related advice, and help with being bullied or feeling lonely were common themes young people identified as support needs.

Seventy-five percent of the organisations who participated in the consultation stated they provided some form of support service for young people. Alongside the statutory support services available for



young people, an audit of services and an improvement in communication channels would support greater awareness.

The way this information is communicated should be co-designed with stakeholders. Young people, in addition to providers, would be obvious stakeholders in this process, and because young people are more likely to access services as a result of a recommendation from a trusted person, parents, teachers and youth workers should also be involved.

Methodology

Demographic profile

The review was focused within the demographic and socio-economic context of Blackpool Council. A profile of Blackpool and the demographics of the population, focusing specifically on young people, was undertaken. The findings from this profile also summarise known data on youth provision.

Additionally, Blackpool's social indicators are contextualised relative to other upper-tier local authorities across England, especially those that are Blackpool's nearest statistical neighbours.¹

Young people - engagement and consultation

Young people were asked to complete a short questionnaire focusing on common out of school activities and support. They were asked to select activities and support they currently benefit from and identify activities and support they do not currently utilise but would like the opportunity to access. The questionnaire also explored obstacles to their engagement and involvement.

¹ We use CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Models. See: <https://www.cipfa.org/services/cipfastats/nearest-neighbour-model>

The questionnaire was aimed at young people aged between seven and 25 living in Blackpool. It was open between October 7th and November 5th 2021² and was promoted through schools, local infrastructure bodies, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, the youth advisory group, and the contacts and networks of the YPRSG. The questionnaire responses were anonymous.

The questionnaire findings were used to identify themes that were explored further with young people in sessions designed to capture qualitative responses. Eleven focus groups were selected to reflect the diverse nature of young people from across Blackpool. Both service users and non-service users of local provision between the ages of seven and 25 years were targeted. Each focus group was delivered by two youth workers who facilitated each session using semi-structured, open-ended questions.

Parents and carers questionnaire

The questionnaire was informed by the data collected from the young people's consultation to support a comparison of perceptions and views. The questionnaire was open from November 11th 2021 until 8th December 2021 and distributed through schools, council services and via YPRSG to encourage parents to feed into the review.

The questions were designed to distinguish the activities and services that the young people they are responsible for access, as well as identify what the barriers were to provision, which they would like to access. The responses to the questionnaire were anonymous.

Organisations providing youth provision

Organisations providing youth provision were defined as those that deliver activities contributing to the personal and social development of young people aged between seven and 25, or where informal education takes place as a part of the activities or services offered.

No existing data or overview of youth provision in Blackpool was identified. An extensive manual review of public and private datasets was undertaken to identify organisations that were more likely than not to match the scope for delivering youth provision.

To identify any organisations not captured through the desk top research, a self-registration webpage was launched on 10th November. Engagement of youth providers were targeted through the YPRSG, Blackpool Council, YFNW networks and via the NYA network newsletter. The desk top research and the self-registration portal captured basic information for a total of 230 organisations.

A questionnaire informed by the data collected from the young people's consultation was created to enable comparison between demand and supply. From the 230 organisations identified, 150 organisations had enough up-to-date information to be directly contacted. The questionnaire was open between November 23rd and December 24th 2021.

Effective practice

The University of Cumbria (HASKE) has undertaken desk top research identifying effective practice. The effective practice summarised in the report is aligned with the findings of the stakeholder engagement and demographic profile of Blackpool.

² The questionnaire for young people aged 18 and over was re-opened to boost response rates from November 20th to 7th December.

Impact recommendations

The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the review will inform HASKE's recommendations on future data capture. A report will be compiled to summarise current frameworks and to support future decisions on measuring the impact of youth provision within Blackpool.

Effective Practice Review

Defining youth work

Despite a common narrative within the profession of youth work being hard to define, and being misunderstood by policy makers and some professionals, there is a clear definition used to describe those professionals trained as youth workers, those who are eligible to be paid on the youth work scale, and the descriptions of the aims of youth work. These are as follows:

Youth work is defined "as a distinct educational process adapted across a variety of settings to support young people's personal and social development – their values, beliefs, ideas and skills" (APPG, 2019). It is informal education that young people (usually defined as between the ages of 11 and 19, or up to 25 for those with special education needs and/or disabilities) voluntarily engage in (Marshall et al., 2021). This may take place with structured activities in a specific building (centre-based) or in places that young people choose to gather (detached). Some youth work aims to provide these opportunities to young people of specific demographics (targeted), and other youth work aims to work with all young people (universal). Youth work is not any activity that takes place with young people.

A professional/qualified youth worker is someone who has undertaken a degree or postgraduate level study in youth work or youth and community work that has been approved by the NYA. A youth support worker will have trained at level 2 or 3 and would be expected to provide services alongside a professional youth worker; a similar comparison could be made with a teacher and a teaching assistant.

Youth work is underpinned by a set of principles, including that it involves "trusted relationships and voluntary engagement of young people" (NYA, 2021).

While these working definitions are useful, there remains a challenge of finding reports from local authorities on specific youth work activity, where roles and services may be blended into other children's services, may be carried out by people with different job titles, or may be commissioned and carried out by other organisations.

The uniformed associations, such as the Scouts, sit within a grey area, with little recent research being found in this field. These organisations are based on volunteer delivery, and as such, the workforce tends to not have degree-level youth work qualification requirements. For example, recent paid job roles within the Scouts did not mention any formal educational training or qualification requirements for a lead instructor (website accessed 1st Jan 2022). However, much of their aims and principles are aligned with youth work, and they tend to have specific training programmes that their volunteers are required to complete.

As a profession that was predominantly reliant on government funding, and the statutory nature of youth work provision, the government decision to stop auditing the provision as part of Ofsted in 2014, and to give local authorities full responsibility for ensuring "access to recreational activities," has had a significant effect on youth work.

Youth work within the UK has a long history within the voluntary sector and uniformed associations, local authority youth services, and the charitable sector. Much has been written about the history of youth work (Bright & Pugh, 2019; [Bright, 2015](#); [Verschelden et al., 2010](#)) and the influence of national governments since the Abermarle report in 1960 (Abermarle, 1960), a helpful history of English services by Davies (Davies, 2018; [Davies, 2019](#)), and a response in relation to the different trajectories of the profession in Scotland ([Cohburn & Gormally, 2019](#)).

Workforce

Within the United Kingdom youth work is a devolved responsibility, and as such, each home nation has a slightly different structure in place for policy, governance and training, whilst sharing an overarching National Occupation Standards framework (NOS). Wales and Northern Ireland see youth workers as part of the educational workforce, which provides sustainable employment opportunities, and Scotland has seen financial investment from the government, which enables charitable organisations and local authorities to work collaboratively, again providing longer-term funds for sustainable roles.

The workforce is crucial to delivering the aims of youth work, which is described as a relational process whereby “transformative relationships” (Hart, 2015) provide a containing environment “in the space between school, family, training or work” (Nolas, 2013. P.35). Effective youth work enables young people to navigate peer-to-peer relationships, explore boundaries, traverse around risk, and enable opportunities for self-development, group cohesion (Ritchie & Ord, 2016) and a sense of belonging (Dickens & Lonie, 2013).

The workforce varies, depending on the setting, funding and aims of the organisation. It is clear that young people in the UK would have even more limited opportunities to access youth-focused opportunities without the voluntary, non-qualified workforce ([Marshall et al., 2021](#)). The history of youth work has its roots in both voluntary opportunities for young people to become youth leaders and with volunteer and uniformed associations.

This literature review considers the broad workforce as made up of a range of professionals who may manage youth provision services, those that deliver youth work, research youth work or educate future youth workers. It is recognised that managers of services may not be trained in youth work but could have training or experience in professions such as social work, housing, youth justice, mental health, sport and leisure. Some of these may have similar underlying theories and aims when working with young people but may also at times have different expectations of evaluating delivery.

There is an ethical framework that youth workers are expected to practice in ([Institute for Youth Work](#)), and a recently outlined curriculum for youth work ([NYA, 2020](#)) that provides guidance for youth workers when they review their own training needs. An APPG report for Youth Affairs in Youth Work recommended in 2019 that a register was needed, and a professional voluntary register will be implemented by the NYA by the end of 2022.

Terminology youth work roles

Within the area of people that are “doing” youth work, sometimes referred to as the “grassroots workforce,” the NYA defines a JNC-recognised “professional youth worker” as someone who has completed a degree or postgraduate degree (level 6 or 7) or who meets the criteria for historical JNC recognition ([NYA](#)). A youth support worker is defined as someone who has completed a level 2 or 3 via apprenticeship or formal study of youth work practice. The term non-qualified is used to define someone who may be working in a similar role who has not taken a youth work specific course.

The terms JNC-paid, full-time, part-time and volunteer are used to describe the way in which the workforce is contracted, as some volunteers will be qualified at level 7, and some paid roles are taken up by non-qualified people. JNC-recognised youth workers are entitled to be paid on the nationally negotiated pay scale when employed by local government authorities, similar to other professionals such as teachers.

Training and CPD

Currently, all training in England as a youth worker or youth support worker is self-funded; however, the government has provided funds for bursaries for level 2 and 3 courses since 2019.

A youth support worker is someone who has achieved a level 2 or 3 qualification or a diploma in youth work practice. These are qualifications for people who work with young people using youth work principles and practice. Level 2 is for the 16+ age group, and level 3 is aimed at the 18+ age group. To gain the status of qualified youth worker, practitioners must achieve a level 6 or 7 qualification provided through universities, recognised by JNC and validated by the NYA.

After qualifying there is no regulation body that monitors ongoing training or competencies of youth workers, and youth work is not a protected title or activity. Continuing professional development (CPD) is therefore not essential for employers to fund or support, and post-qualifying training needs are mostly funded by practitioners themselves.

There is a membership body that youth workers can voluntarily join, the Institute for Youth Work, which aims to support youth workers after qualifying. Additionally, in 2019, the NYA launched the [NYA Academy](#), providing a platform of quality-assured, cost-effective CPD. The Academy is designed for anyone who works with young people to learn, explore, thrive, engage and develop.

Supervision and reflective practice

Reflective clinical supervision within youth work is seen to be something that could enhance youth work (Harris, 2020), with the opportunity to continually consider what aspects of the self are enhancing or limiting the youth workers' relationships with young people. This may happen informally, within managerial relationships, or be provided formally in different settings. However, in professions where relationships are key to the outcomes of the activity (for example, within counselling and psychotherapy), having regular supervision as an expectation can improve practice, can provide additional levels of safeguarding and ethical practice, and can also reduce burn out.

Harris suggests that a psychoanalytic frame can be useful in understanding the professionals own "stuff" that may influence how they experience different clients and settings and bring it to consciousness. Other models of supervision that use trauma-informed intersectional theories, alongside strengths-based approaches, may also be useful.

Use of supervision can also help "uncover the secret" of what works in relational aspects of youth work and could help the profession be more confident in articulating what works and why from the grassroots perspective.

Quality marks and workforce standards

Harding (2019) of the Centre for Youth Impact (CYI) compiled a [report](#) with an overview of the current policy and practice of youth work in England. This report also details current quality marks available for organisations and proposes that the CYI quality mark will be useful across England and home nations, as it fills a gap identified and linked to improving the quality of youth work practice. As [Wales](#) and Northern Ireland have inspections linked to quality audits for statutory services, this may only be taken on by the charity sector in those nations.

	Country/ Organisation	Link to document
Evaluation and Impact Frameworks	Scotland	Youth Work Outcomes Youth Work Framework
	Northern Ireland	Process for Self Evaluation
	England	Outcomes Framework YIF Learning and Insight Paper TNL Comm Fund Paper
Quality Marks	Welsh Government	Quality Mark for Youth Work
	CYI (England)	Centre for Youth Impact Quality Mark
	NYA	NYA Quality Mark
	Foyer	Foyer Accreditation
	UK Youth	UKYouth Quality Mark
Curriculum	NYA	NYA Curriculum for Youth Work
Inspection/Audit Frameworks	Northern Ireland	Quality Assurance Framework
Workforce Standards		
National Occupation Standards	JET (4 nations) NOS	National Occupational Standards
Ethical Frameworks	Institute for Youth Work	Institute for Youth Work Code of Ethics
Membership Organisations in England		
	Professional association of lecturers in youth and community work	Professional association of lecturers in youth and community work
	Institute for Youth Work	Institute for Youth Work

Individual Memberships	British Educational Research Association Special Interest Group: Youth Studies and Informal Education	British Educational Research Association
Organisational Memberships	UK Youth	UK Youth
	Network of Regional Youth Work Units (England)	Network of Regional Youth Work Units (England)

However, having a number of separate quality and impact/outcomes has the potential to continue to overwhelm and confuse the sector, particularly when these frameworks don't identify which part of the workforce is expected to lead on particular aspects. In other words, there is a need to think beyond frameworks to consider the dynamics of youth work impact in practice.

Relationships

Key feedback from young people and youth workers included in the research was how the opportunities within youth work enables positive “transformative relationships” (Hart, 2015; Laredo & Hill, 2019), either between the young person and the youth work staff directly, or within the peer-to-peer group/dynamics that were enabled by the staff (Jaynes, 2019; Ritchie & Ord, 2016).

Providing a space for fun informal interactions with peers and adults gives young people opportunities to explore their identities, understand more about how they want to interact with others, and learn from their mistakes without the types of consequences that may be in place in school or in non-adult supervised environments (Ritchie & Ord, 2016).

The ability to provide an adult-supervised space, within which “complex group dynamics exist” where young people can develop interpersonally, and where relationships with adults are less power led, and optional, requires a high level of confidence within the staff (Ritchie & Ord, 2016).

They need to have the skills to understand when to intervene, when to allow the young people to self-manage (Hart, 2017), when to use humour, when to encourage play and when to increase authority to keep young people safe (Jaynes, 2019). This understanding of responsibility and need for reflexivity is likely to be explored and encouraged within degree training programmes, but it is important for all staff working with young people.

Young people valued the opportunities to have relationships with adults that unconditionally accepted and respected them. They appreciated youth workers that encouraged them to be aspirational in their lives and who established overarching boundaries and rules within the settings that helped everyone feel respected and included.

These were particularly noticeable in research within the Brighton music studio-based youth work (Dickens & Lonie, 2013), where the atmosphere facilitated by the youth worker enabled topics to be led by the young people, leading to collaborative equal power relationships with the staff. This led to increased autonomy, mutual respect, a sense of mastery and a sense of belonging within the young people.

Similarly, Dickens (2017) describes the use of a participatory, creative approach to exploring geographical imagination with young people in London, using film and radical youth work principles. The young people describe the experience of being a participatory researcher as offering an opportunity to develop “critical capacities,” which they did not have before. In this sense, there is a transformative aspect to creating evidence frameworks, which may be overlooked by more formal or “top-down” framework approaches.

Participatory research facilitated by youth workers with young people had outcomes that aligned with the principles of youth work (Factor & Ackerly, 2019; Wareing et al., 2019; Dickens, 2017). This supports the theory that the relationship within youth work is primary, and the activities are secondary.

Belonging

Young people report feeling a sense of belonging to youth work-led initiatives (Ritchie & Ord, 2016; Dickens & Lonie, 2013; Stanton, 2012). This may be through opportunities to meet others similar to them, for example via theme-based, faith-based, or targeted interventions ([GirlGuiding, 2020](#)), or by meeting people in open access, universal settings, where young people of all ages and school catchment areas have opportunities to socialise.

Having a sense of belonging is crucial to good mental health and wellbeing, and with indicators nationally about feelings of loneliness and low mood prevalent within the current young population, both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic ([Nice et al., 2021](#)), this is an area of strength for youth work that could be investigated further.

There is no evidence to suggest one type of youth work enables more young people to experience this sense of belonging than another; however, literature has shown the potential long-term impacts of positive mental health after involvement in youth groups, such as Scouts or Guides ([Dibben et al., 2017](#)).

Having a voice and giving back

Youth participation can benefit young people’s skill development and self-perceptions, as well as youth work policies, service design and implementation. It provides participants with the opportunity to connect with peers by building social capital, whilst achieving objectives beyond those possible by a mere individual ([OECD, 2017](#)). Furthermore, participation increases the ownership of initiatives, which is an important factor for their success ([OECD, 2011](#); [Dunne et al., 2014](#)).

Body and Hogg (2019) carried out a retrospective evaluation with young people who had been involved in a youth project ten years prior. Themes that emerged from their research were the longer-term effects that emanated from a feeling of belonging and the encouragement of youth voice within the community, resulting in the majority of young people continuing involvement within their local community and giving back via volunteering. Evidence from the New Economics Foundation suggests that there is a link between doing things for others and improved wellbeing ([Aked et al., 2008](#)).

Gender

One criticism of youth work prior to the significant cuts was that activities often focused on young men ([Nava, 1992](#)) and were more likely to be sports-based; uptake of services was higher in these groups, and there was a push for more interventions to encourage female participation.

We have seen an increasing population of young men ending their life by suicide (Samaritans, 2021), which can be linked to feelings of hopelessness and isolation alongside impulsive decision-making. In addition, male representation within the youth justice system continues to be consistently higher than

female representation. (Crown, 2021). The current intervention methodology or lack thereof needs revising. It would suggest health prevention models could benefit from youth work with a gender-informed focus ([Batsleer, 2015](#)).

Of course, many young men, women and non-binary people are interested in sports and creative activities less encouraged for their gender, but the reality of socialisation is that young men often feel pressure to be more involved in masculine activities. By reducing the availability of these services, whereby young men could have supportive relationships with trusted adults, the loss of youth clubs may have disproportionately impacted young men's mental health ([Batsleer, 2015](#)).

This, then, provides an important reminder that participatory research requires a good understanding of inclusive practice. For example, Harris (2020) describes a positive case study of a black male youth worker using their life experiences to be able to access and support marginalised young black men, but it also raises the need for supervision and training around gender to be available to youth workers, with the understanding that men with lived experience of violence can be great youth workers but may also need additional support in these roles ([Harris, 2018](#)).

Gender within the professional identity of youth workers was explored by Hatton & Monroe (2019) with an exploration of how LGB women identify and self-disclose within their youth work roles. Sexual relationships within LGBT youth and sex and relationship education (SRE) were also researched by Farmby & Donovan (2020), with strong support from young people to receive this education from youth workers. They identified a training need to ensure SRE is truly inclusive of LGBT youth and of different cultural perspectives within the UK.

Multi-Disciplinary working

Another trend that appears to be growing is youth work being embedded within health settings (Wilkinson et al., 2018; Hagell & Lamb, 2016; De Marco et al., 2016; Wortley & Hagell, 2020; Nash et al., 2012), and, in particular, multi-disciplinary teams organised via NHS Trusts, integrated care systems and integrated care communities. This approach is of interest when thinking about referral routes from youth workers to health professionals and vice versa, where young people may have complex needs but experience barriers to accessing statutory services, or where health settings identify that a young person may benefit from a youth worker-led intervention.

A good example of youth workers being used to ease the access for young people into health services is detailed by Hagell and Lamb (2016), where joint funding from an NHS innovation award, a local authority and a charitable trust enabled the trial of youth workers in a primary care GP setting. [The Well Centre](#) was co-designed by youth workers and clinicians and after the initial pilot ongoing funding was provided by the local Clinical Commissioning Group.

In this model, youth workers deliver health promotion, harm reduction interventions, and were the front face of the service, with the ability to then refer into GP, nurse and counselling services in the same building. This model enabled attendance by young people less likely to be registered with a GP and was used by many young people with mental health difficulties.

The service is still active, and the website is unusual compared with other primary care services, as it is tailored to young people and promotes local youth clubs and youth initiatives, alongside health focused services; it also promotes referrals to community youth activities. In 2022, their website showed that the service uses the description of "health and wellbeing advisors" led by a qualified youth worker and five other professionals with psychology backgrounds.

Another example of youth workers embedded within health systems is that of the London partnership between Guy's and St Thomas Hospital and OASIS Youth Services. This partnership was initiated with

an aim to intervene with young people who presented to A&E with violence-related injuries by offering them a referral to a youth worker. The success of this programme resulted in the partnership expanding its focus to support young people with diabetes.

Both interventions have shown positive benefits for young people ([Ilan-Clarke et al., 2016](#); De Marco et al., 2016). They demonstrated improvements in psychological and lifestyle risk factors for those referred via A&E, and for young people with diabetes, more adherence to self-managing their condition, with a 30% reduction in unplanned hospital admissions ([YES, 2022](#)).

Conversely, alongside reflections on the role of impact research within and about youth work, the literature review suggested aligned areas of potential development. In particular, this involved the training of professionals already using skills that align with youth work but haven't undertaken formal training (Crisp, 2020). For example, sports coaches often work with young people and may be offering opportunities within competitive sports or social sports.

Spaaij et al. (2013) describe an intervention that uses sports as an incentive for participation in a programme to reduce youth unemployment. This model included youth workers who delivered the practical elements of the programme to develop work-related skills, but the coaches delivering the sports activities were likely to be as influential in encouraging aspirations and a sense of achievement and belonging, which provide a foundation for wanting to develop other skills. This is supported by Crisp's paper (2020) that suggests training sports coaches in youth work principles would further develop the practice of the coaches and provide new opportunities for the workforce.

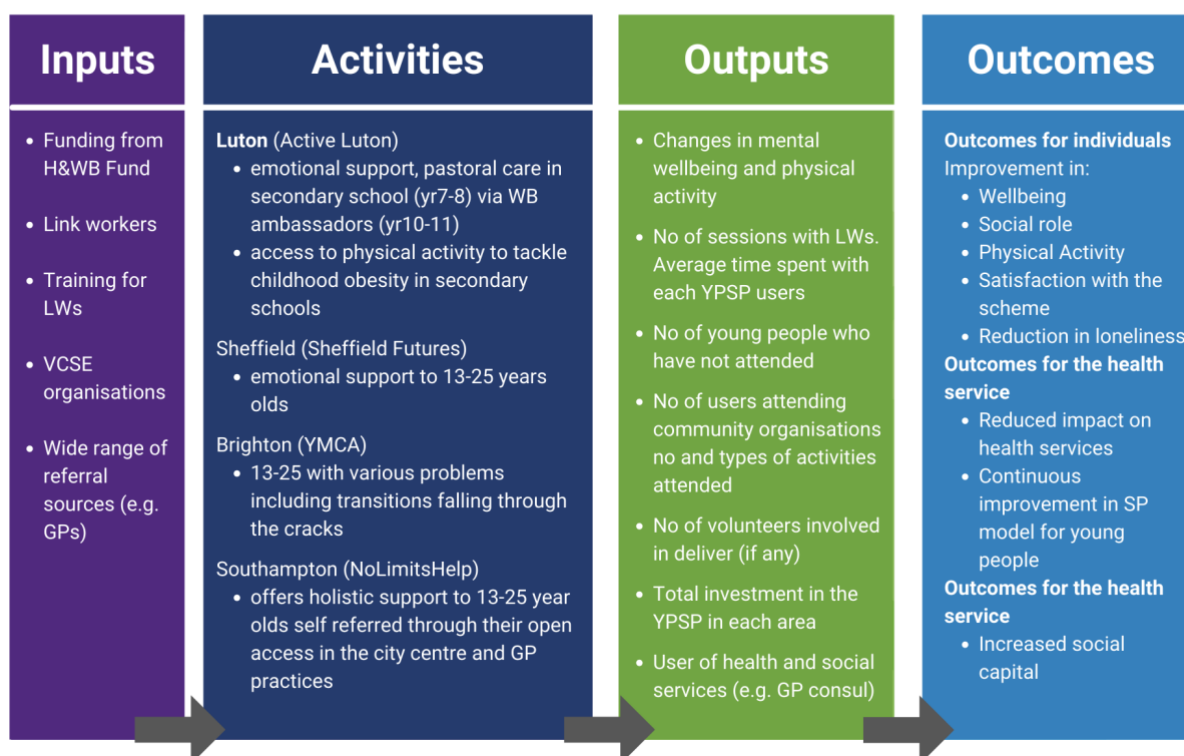
Participatory arts, including music, radio and film often have funding to work with young people (Howard, 2020). However, many artists will not have undertaken formal youth work training and may be working instinctively rather than within youth work principles. Offering youth work principles training to these disciplines could enhance the evidence-base of the impact these spaces have and offer additional benefits and outlets to support youth work outcomes.

In particular, [social prescribing](#) is presented as a key area where this may take effect. In some areas of England, the charity [StreetGames](#) is providing social prescribing (Brighton, Southampton, Luton, and Sheffield) and is also coordinating the youth social prescribing network and training and supporting youth link workers.

Early evaluations suggest that this approach is proving successful in improving wellbeing, reducing loneliness and reducing the need for NHS interventions. It provides a targeted approach that then enables signposting to universal services for young people to access ([Bertotti et al., 2020](#)). It also showed a social economic benefit of £5.04 for every £1 invested in the service.

However, the link workers needed more training, as the role was more complex than that of adult social prescribers, and young people were sometimes unclear about the boundaries of the role and the length of time that they could access the 1:1 support. The initial logic model (shown below) for the evaluation of the pilot is helpful in demonstrating a mixed methods approach to a longitudinal place-based intervention that could be used within youth work ([Bertotti, 2019](#)).

Programme Theory: Relationship between young person and link worker based on coaching, motivation, and listening creates behavioural change and promotes access to further support which enables the young people to consider an alternative set of actions and set out to change or more effectively manage their own health and well-being.



Youth partnership foundation

Models such as Youth Partnership Foundations (YPFs) are increasingly being used as vehicles to facilitate partner organisations and agencies working towards common objectives. The YPF Trust is a network of YPFs that coordinate place-based partnerships and investment in services for young people. They also collaborate to demonstrate impact of these services. YPFs recognise the critical role that universal, accessible youth services provide in the development, aspiration and potential of children and young people. Youth voice is central to understanding the needs and designing the services that the partners in the YPF provide for young people.

Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) is a cross-sector partnership connecting youth charities, young people, businesses, Westminster City Council and other partners, such as universities, the Met Police and the NHS.

Together, the YWF community shares a vision for all young people in Westminster to grow up healthy, safe and happy with the best opportunities for brighter futures. YWF's 100+ members range from large youth clubs to smaller grass roots organisations, all driven by their passion to provide the best services, opportunities and support for local young people. The Foundation believes that youth voice should be at the centre of decision-making. Their goal is to identify and address the challenges faced by young people today, all the while ensuring that they are truly at the heart of the conversation.

Impact of youth work

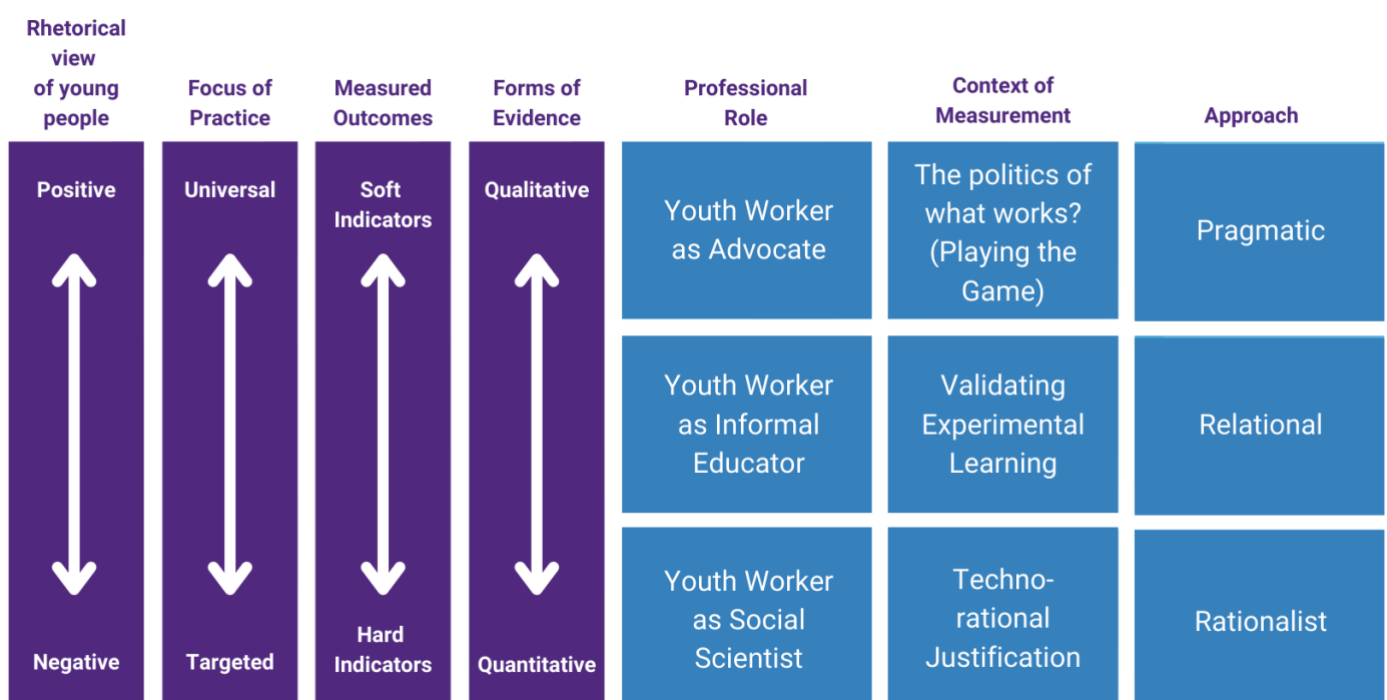
Marshall et al. (2021) highlight the potential of transformative evaluation as a methodology that is in harmony with the principles of youth work, with the scope to identify impacts of youth work and mechanisms by which this change occurred. It is not surprising that key literature within the Marshall report overlaps with findings of this literature review and also that of Dickson (2013), Dunne et. al (2014) and McGregor (2015), who believe that the inclusion of young people and grassroots youth workers in participatory evaluation/research is an area where youth work could focus.

There is a mismatch between the expectations for youth workers to train at degree level and to carry out evidence-based, reflective practice and the lack of investment in the sector. The sector has experienced job losses and limited funds has resulted in organisations to recruit less well-trained professionals into roles at lower pay. This subsequently means that people on the ground are even less equipped to balance effective evaluation and working with young people. This coincides with a UK-wide issue relating to stretches on other services, increasing the numbers of young people with more complex mental health difficulties without specialist help. This has meant that many young people are asking for help from trusted professionals within teaching and voluntary sector organisations.

As youth work was encouraged to move from a universal to a targeted provision model via the funding bodies, they are increasingly working within marginalised communities, which already have health inequalities from structural issues and are therefore even more likely to have complex needs relating to housing, finances, safeguarding and mental health. Some of these tensions relate to a lack of clarity over responsibility for different aspects of quality provision, evaluation, and demonstrating outcomes and impact.

In 2014, an extensive report on youth work in the EU was carried out by [Dunne et al.](#) (sponsored by the European Commission); it includes some references to youth work literature and impact. Overall, they found that “where youth work is well designed, informed by an understanding of young people’s situation and development process, and supported by competent youth workers, it can result in a range of positive results” (p. 180). They summarise these as both positively impacting young people’s personal skills and social capital and contributing to enhanced opportunities for enriching shared activities within and between generations.

In 2015, [McGregor](#), commissioned by YouthLink Scotland, carried out a literature review specifically scoping the impact of universal youth work. They used a less broad search strategy than Dickson (2013) and focused on literature that met the definition of youth work by YouthLink Scotland. The table below provides a helpful visualisation of the evidence they found, the links to the role of a youth worker, and the possibilities of measurement/evidence.



Key themes identified in the evidence to build on the literature review by Dickson (2013) were a focus on academic inquiry relating to a) difference and inequality, b) professionalisation and c) theories of learning and pedagogy. They found that the research within Europe (Dunne et al., 2014) and primary research suggest youth work can bring positive outcomes in relation to educational attainment, employability, and health and wellbeing. They suggest that success factors that enable positive outcomes from youth work identified in the literature were: “Prolonged and stable engagement over time; Voluntary engagement in processes that begin with lived experience yet provide structured opportunities to problematise and reflect on that lived experience; Adults and young people building authentic relationships and working as genuine partners in the learning process; Starting where young people are ‘at’ by taking their forms of cultural expression seriously” (p. 9).

Results

Demographic Profile

Blackpool is an upper-tier local authority district (LAD) sitting on the Fylde Coast in the North West region of England. Blackpool has a resident population of c. 139,400, a population density of 40.7 persons per hectare, the third highest in the North West behind the major cities of Manchester and Liverpool, and the seventh most densely populated borough in England and Wales outside Greater London.³

The LAD covers an area of just under 14 square miles and is divided into 21 wards that are all classified as urban. Aside from any accessible coastal and beach areas, there is limited open space – particularly within and around the centre.

Population

The population of Blackpool fell from an estimated 142,000 to 139,400 from 2012 to 2019, a combination of both outward migration and natural changes due to death and birth rates. During this time the North West population grew by c. 3.6%, while the rest of the U.K grew by c. 4.8%.⁴ The population of Blackpool is projected to fall by a further 500 persons by 2028 whilst other areas rise.⁵

Whilst there is little available data to understand movement within the local authority (and thus housing stability), the latest Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) for Blackpool recognises that “transience has been an identified issue in Blackpool for a long time”.

The JSNA identifies through “analysis of GP Register data” that “a small number of people move more than 3 times a year (less than 2%), and that the age group most likely to move at least once is young people aged 20-29”.⁶

Age

Blackpool has a higher proportion of people aged over 45 than England and a much lower proportion younger than 45. The age group from 20 to 44 has a considerably lower proportion than England.⁷

³ Nomis: QS102EW

⁴ ONS Mid-year population estimates

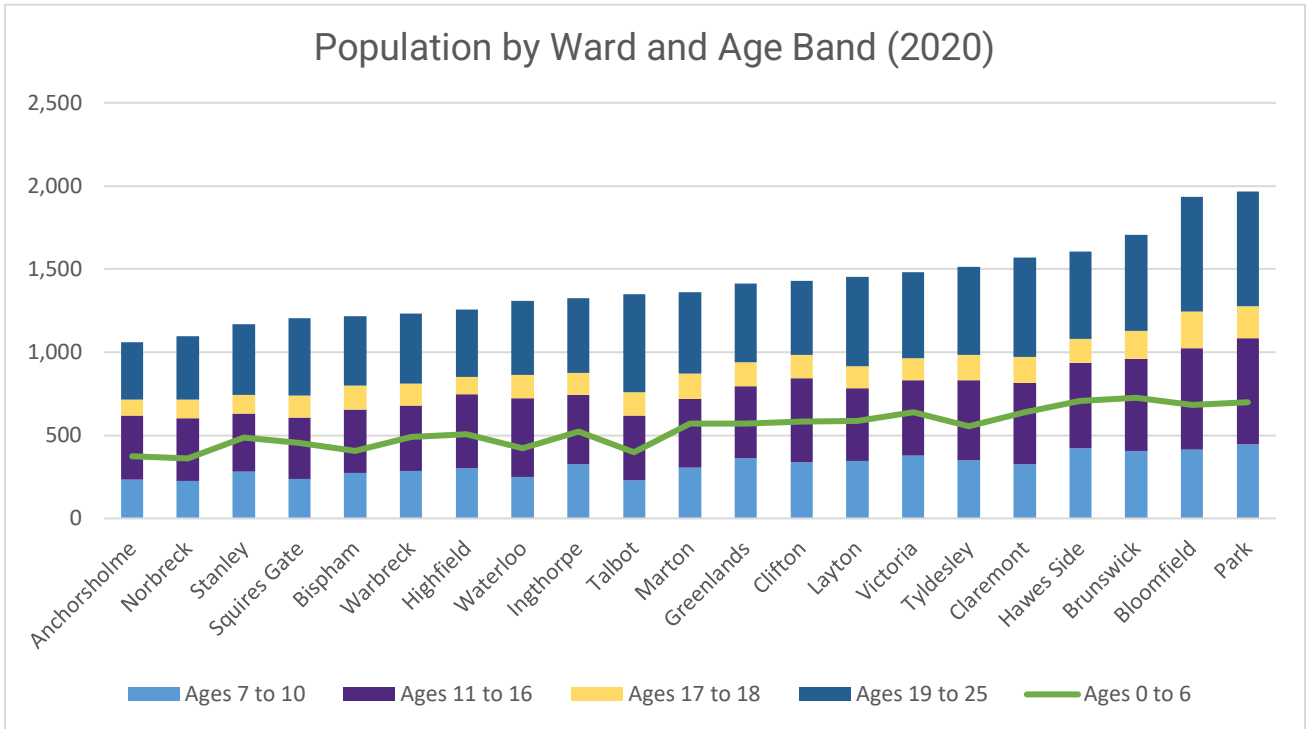
⁵ ONS Population projections

⁶ Blackpool JSNA

⁷ ONS Mid-year population estimates

Over the next decade it is projected that there will be proportionally fewer persons in Blackpool from 16 to 55 years old but more from 55 years old to 80 years old.⁸

Population projection estimates by single year of age are not available at ward level; however, current estimates of banded age groups show a varied distribution, with Park having nearly twice as many young people within the range of seven to 25 years old as Anchorsholme.



Source: ONS Mid-year Estimates

Gender

Blackpool's population is slightly more female (50.3%) than male (49.7%). There is no significant difference in the gender distribution in Blackpool compared to other areas, either overall or by age group.

Ethnicity

The only reliable data on ethnicity is from the 2011 Census, which shows that Blackpool is one of the least diverse local authorities.⁹ It had a black and minority ethnic population of 4,726 people, or 3.3% of the total population. This is lower than the averages for the North West region (9.8%) and England (14.6%) as a whole.

The 2011 Census provided a breakdown of ethnicity by age bands at LSOA. Combining these to ward level and selecting only those aged eight to 24 showed that the younger age groups are proportionally more diverse, with 4.4% of young people being from a non-white ethnicity. Brunswick had the most diverse age group, with 7.6% of the population aged eight to 24 in 2011 being non-white.

⁸ ONS Population projections

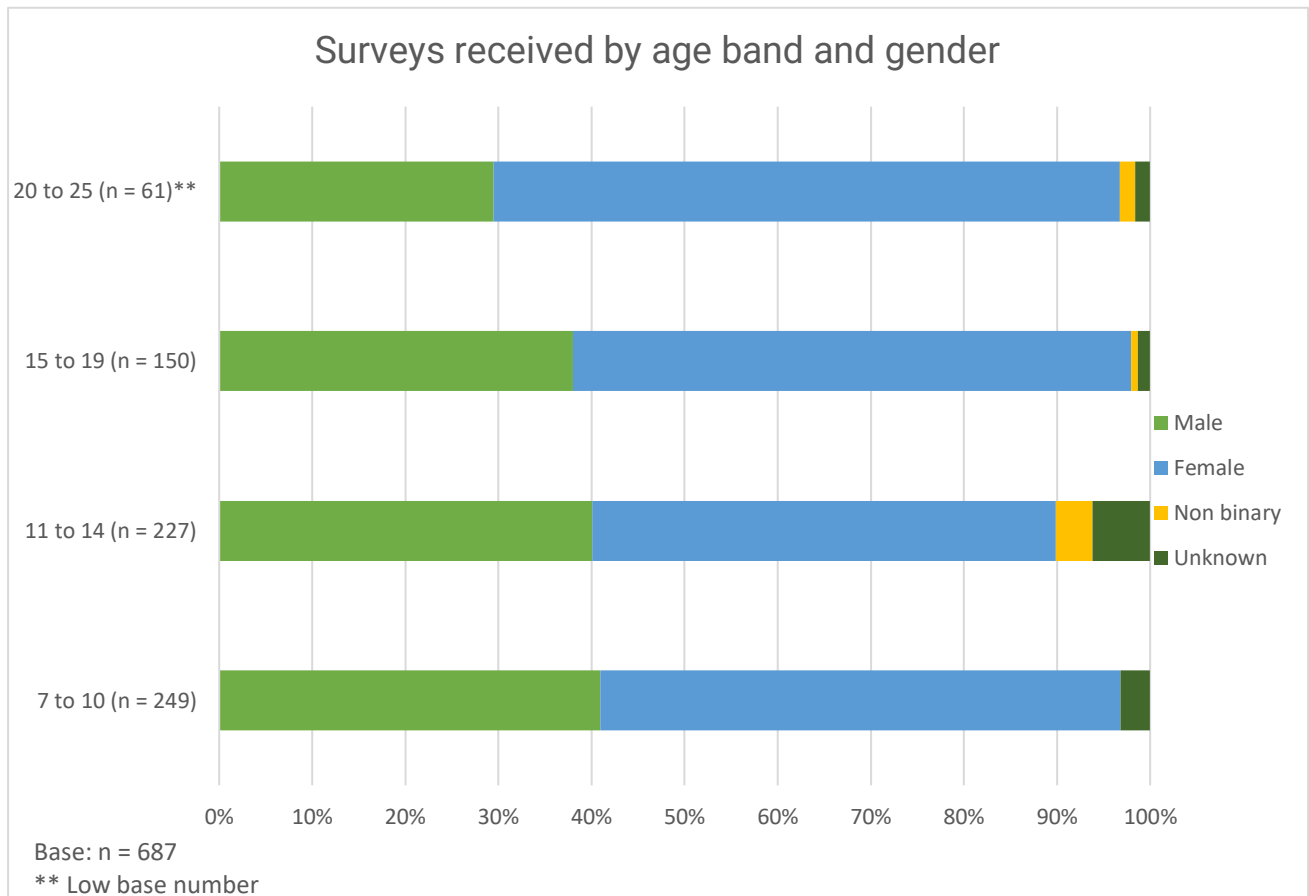
⁹ All data taken from NOMIS.

Young People Engagement and Consultation

There is a standalone detailed report with analysis of each question available for the quantitative consultations with young people.

Summary of questionnaire responses

In total 742 responses were received, 43 were out of scope, and a further 19 had insufficient data, leaving 680 responses that were usable. There was a disproportionately low response rate from young males, decreasing as the respondents got older. The response rate was highest amongst those aged between seven and 14.



Limitations

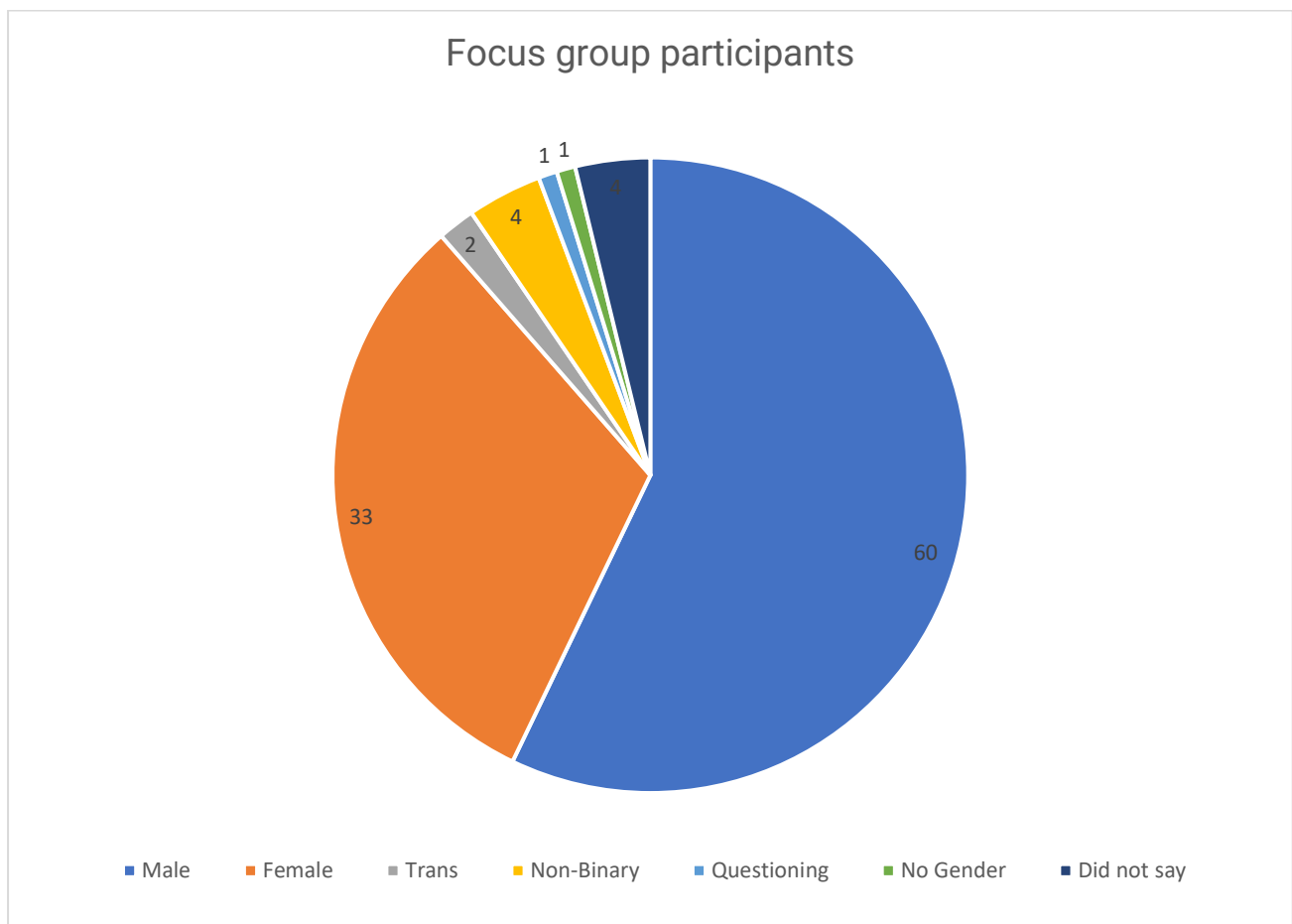
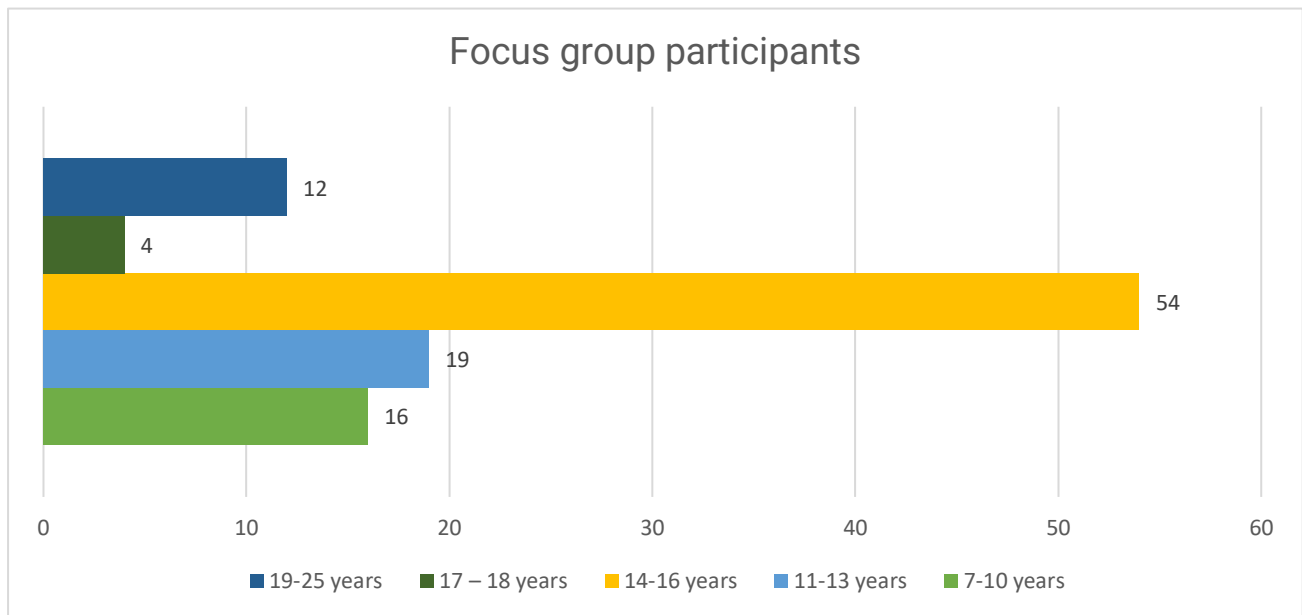
There were 11 responses from those who identify in a non-binary way; therefore, these were not able to be analysed in isolation.

Those aged 20 to 25 have only been reached through more exclusive channels and have fewer responses. Therefore, there may be some selection bias, and the low base number means this age group are excluded from some differential analyses (e.g. by gender).

As the data collected was from a single point in time, there is no way to understand potential cohort effects or changes over time.

Summary of focus group participation

The host services of the focus groups were selected to reflect the diverse nature of young people from across Blackpool. YFNW facilitated 11 focus groups, working with 105 young people, aged between seven and 25, 60% of whom identified as male.



Participating in youth provision activities

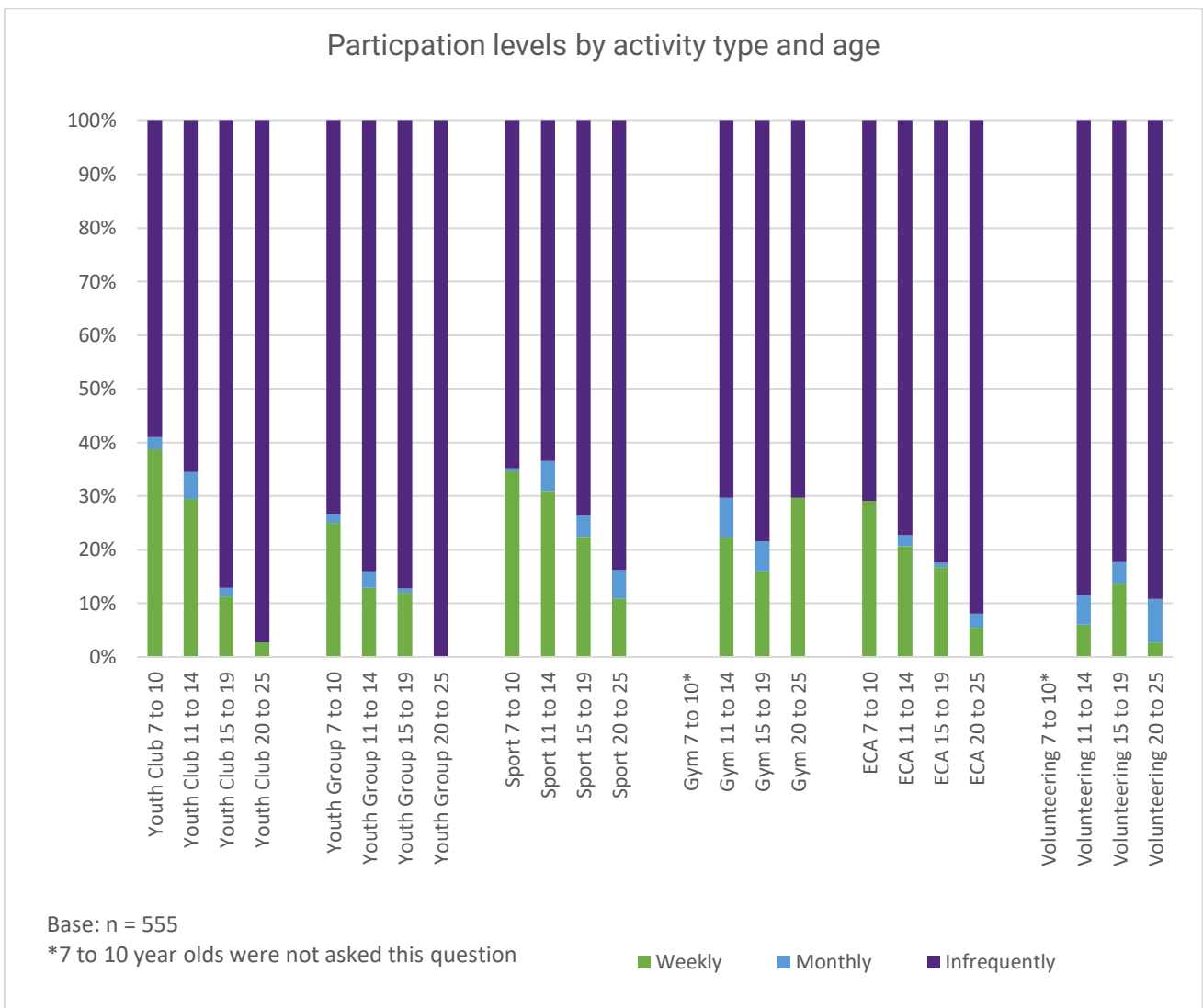
Respondents were asked how often they participated in any activity. Overall, the responses show that regular participation rates decline with age for each activity (Figure 4). The exceptions to this are:

- Volunteering, which showed higher participation rates amongst 15- to 19-year-olds
- Gym, which showed higher participation rates amongst 20- to 25-year-olds

The responses show that in general, a young person is either regularly engaged with an activity or does not attend regularly. There are very few who have occasional attendance (monthly), although this is a little more prevalent in the 11 to 14 age group.

Participation is highest at youth clubs and sports for young people aged seven to 10. These activities continue to prove popular at ages 11 to 14, but with a small shift towards occasional attendance. However, from ages 15 onwards youth club and youth group engagement decline significantly, becoming the least popular activities.

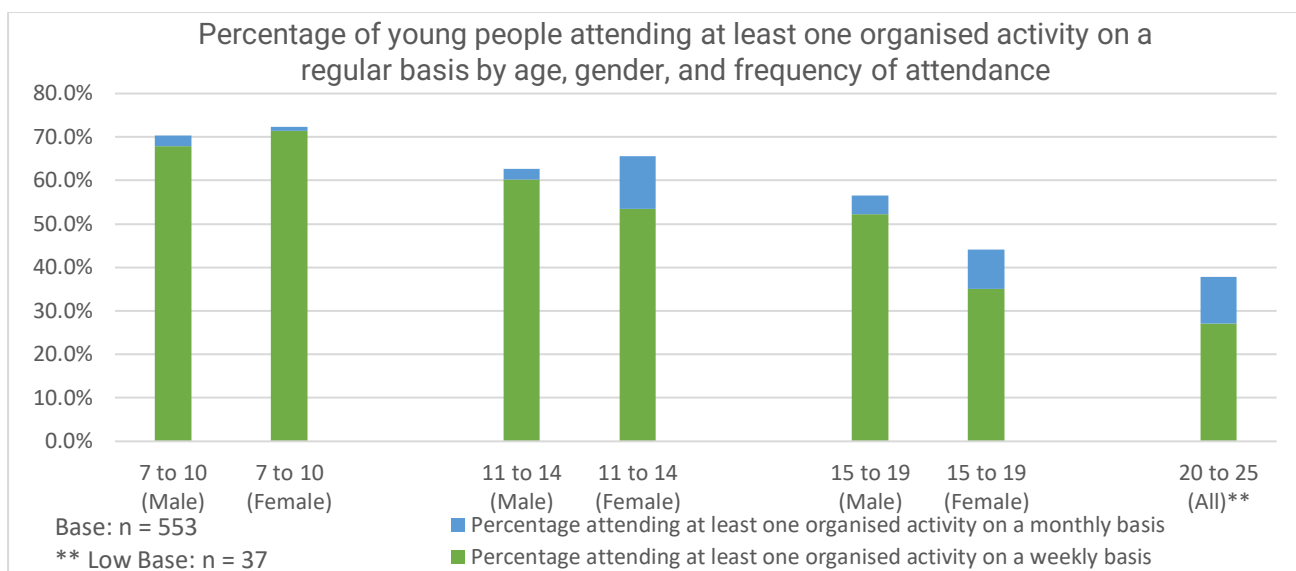
Youth provision attendance was explored with focus group participants. The sense of membership and belonging to the provision that young people attend was found to be of high importance to those young people regularly participating. When examined further, the sense of membership and belonging was particularly influenced by easy access to local provision and the relations that the young people had with workers.



Differentiating responses by gender suggests two general themes:¹⁰

- Those identifying as male are more likely to participate in sports, gym and youth group activities across all age groups.
- Those identifying as female are significantly more likely to participate in dance, music or arts (ECAs).

Taken in aggregate, the proportion of young people who attend at least one organised activity on either a weekly or monthly basis decreases with age. Differentiating by gender, the proportion of females with regular attendance at any organised activity decreases more with age.

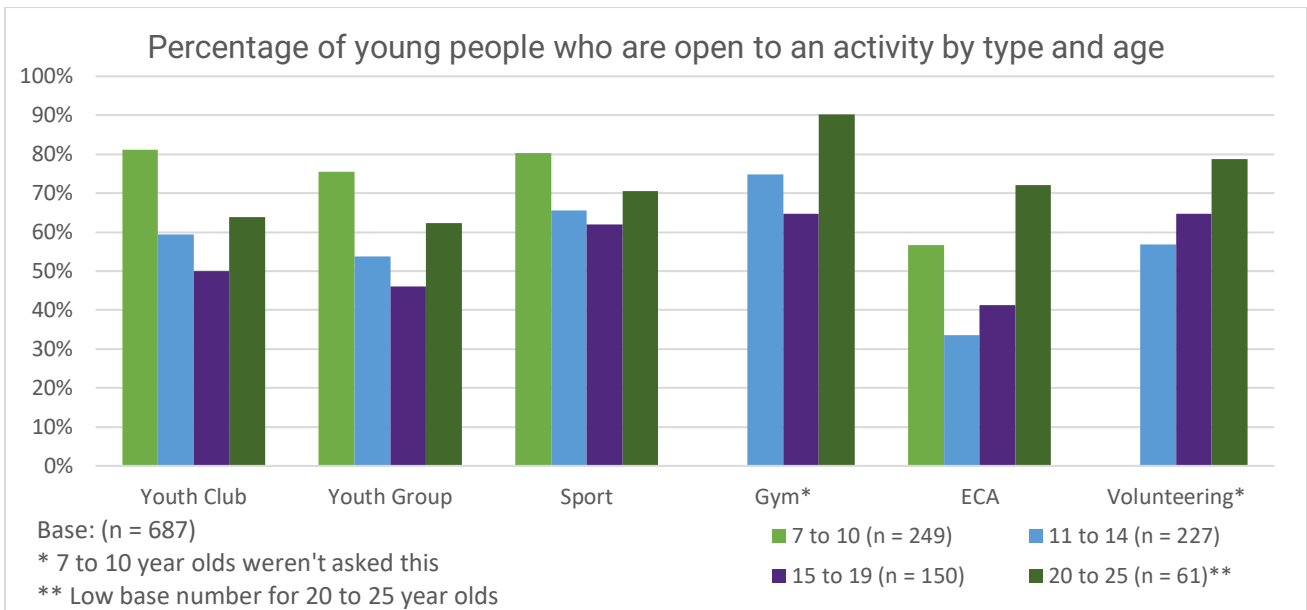


Openness to youth provision activities

Young people were asked whether they “didn’t want to” do any of following activities (figure 7). Those who didn’t choose this response are considered “open” to an activity. The responses show that:

- Generally, openness to activities lessens with age throughout teenage years but picks up again from 20 to 25
 - low responses for 20- to 25-year-olds mean this latter statement should be treated with caution
 - volunteering shows a different trajectory with openness to participating in volunteering increasing with age
- Those aged seven to 10 are most open to partaking in any activity
- Sports, exercise in a gym, or other organised physical activity is the activity that young people were most open to across all ages
- Any one of arts, music, or dance (ECAs) are activities that young people are least open to

¹⁰ Given the low number of responses from those who identified as non-binary, we have not included this as a category in gendered analysis.



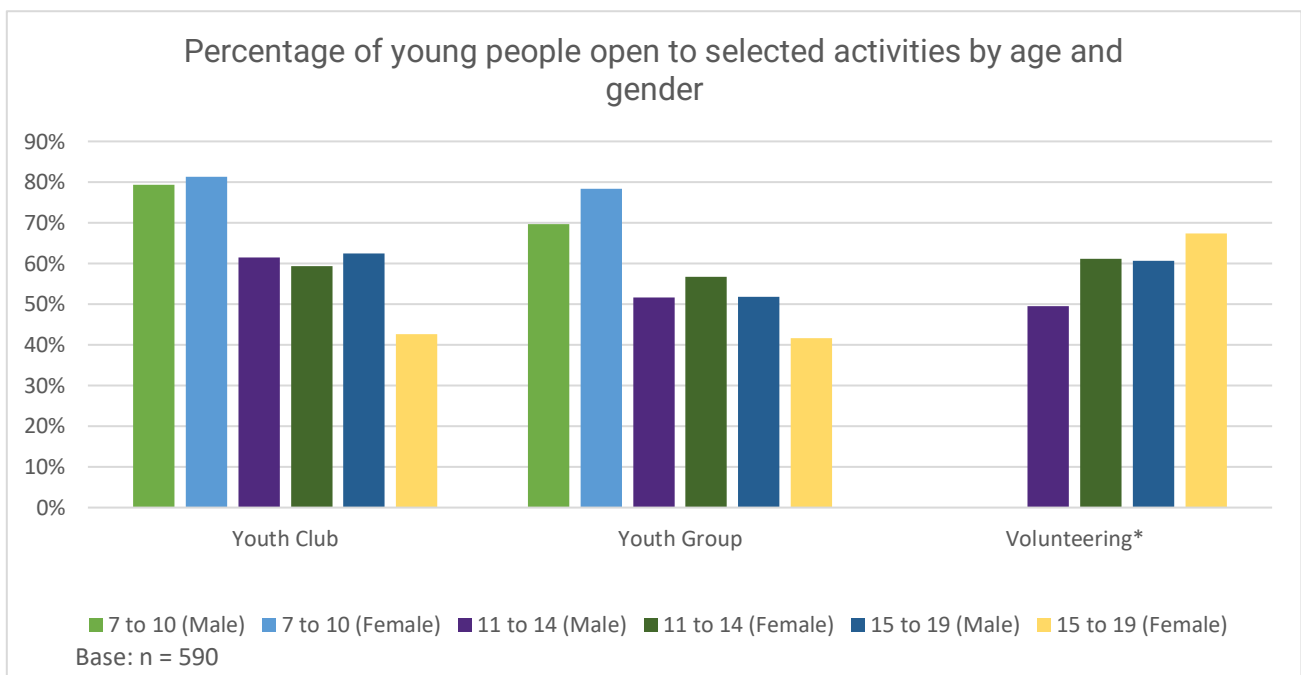
When differentiating by age and gender there are some distinct patterns:

- At ages seven to 10, young girls are more open to all activities
- Girls are more likely to be open to arts, music, and dance across all age groups
- By ages 15 to 19, young boys are significantly more open to youth clubs, youth groups, sports, and gym
- Interest in volunteering grows consistently across the age range, regardless of gender

Openness to accessing youth services

The older the responder, the more likely there is a shift away from being interested in traditional “youth service”. This is especially marked for those identifying as female (figure 8).

When reasons for not attending youth centres were explored in the focus groups, there was a perception that they were ‘boring’, and the resources and facilities that were available within them were unappealing. This was a prominent view with the participants who were 16 and over.

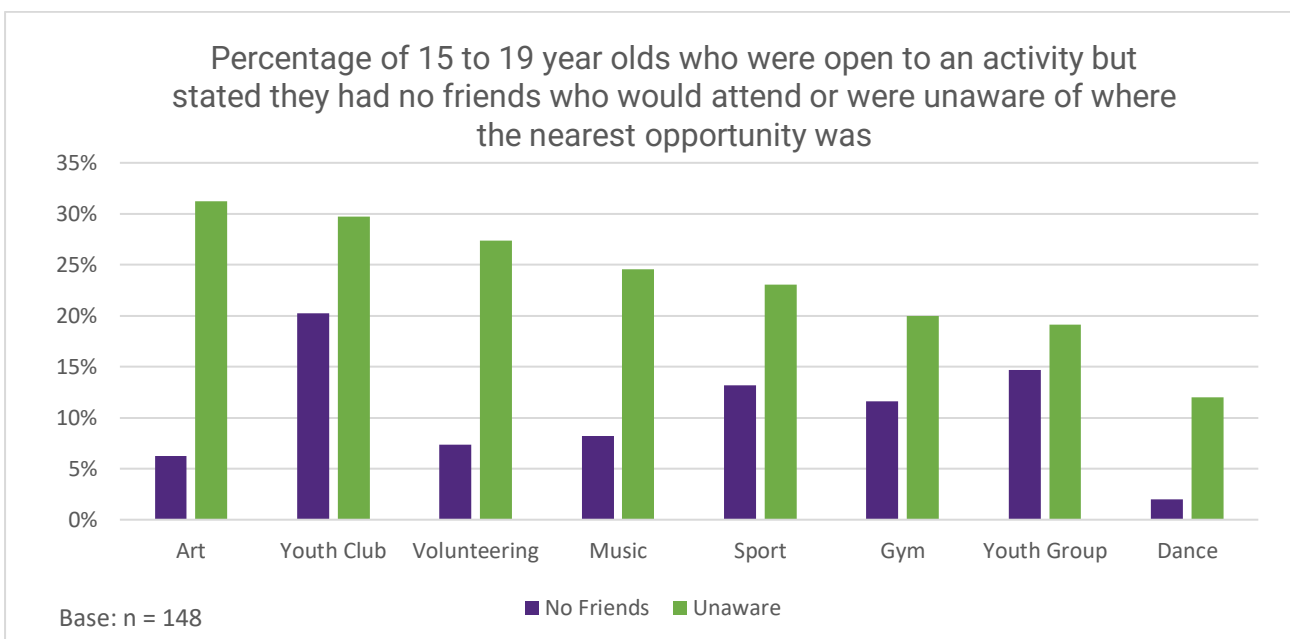


Impediments to activities

Young people were asked to select any common obstacles which might affect their ability to partake in activities.

There was variance by activity type but with the common following trends:

- Most commonly, young people of all ages and across all activities stated that there were no obstacles preventing their engagement.
- The most common impediment across all age groups was a lack of awareness of where the nearest opportunity for each activity was. Older age groups generally had less awareness by activity.
- The second most common impediment suggested that many young people might be open to an activity but had no friends who would partake in that activity with them.
- By age 15, almost no young people faced difficulties in travelling to opportunities.

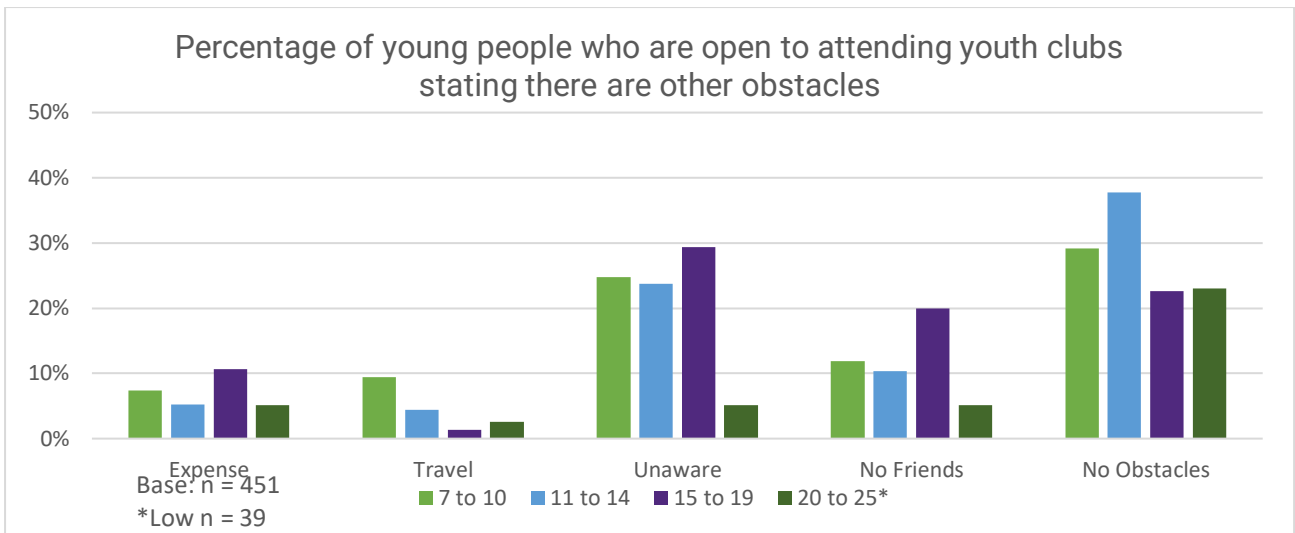


Barriers to accessing youth service activities

Around 26% of young people who are open to attending youth clubs are unaware of where the nearest opportunities to them were, peaking at 30% amongst 15 to 19 year olds. This age group also was more likely to identify other impediments, with one in five stating they had no friends who would partake in youth clubs.

Exploring barriers within the focus groups identified apprehension amongst some young people in attending youth provision that was aimed at high attendance, citing large groups increased anxiety levels. This was particularly pertinent for young people who identify as having a special education need/disability.

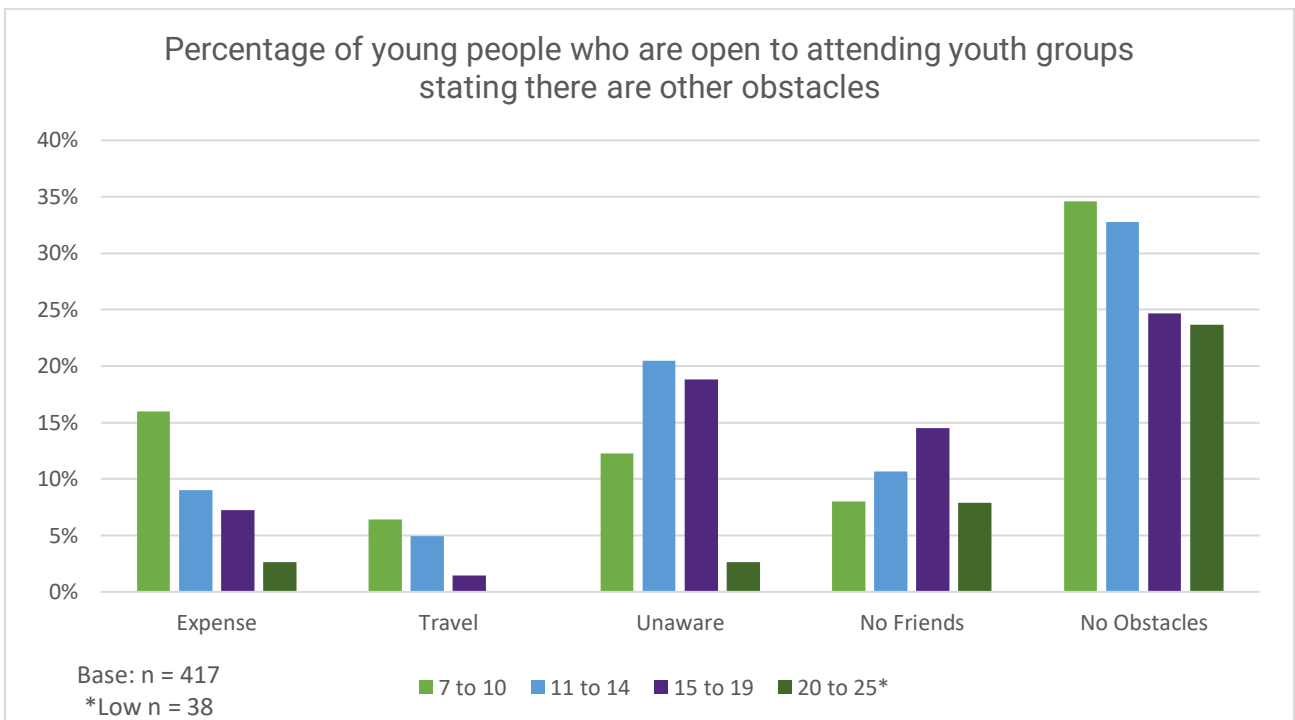
Furthermore, personal safety was raised as a barrier within the focus group discussions; common themes included travelling to and from provision and general life in Blackpool. There was also a perception that drink and drugs are readily available, and this increases their feelings of not being safe.



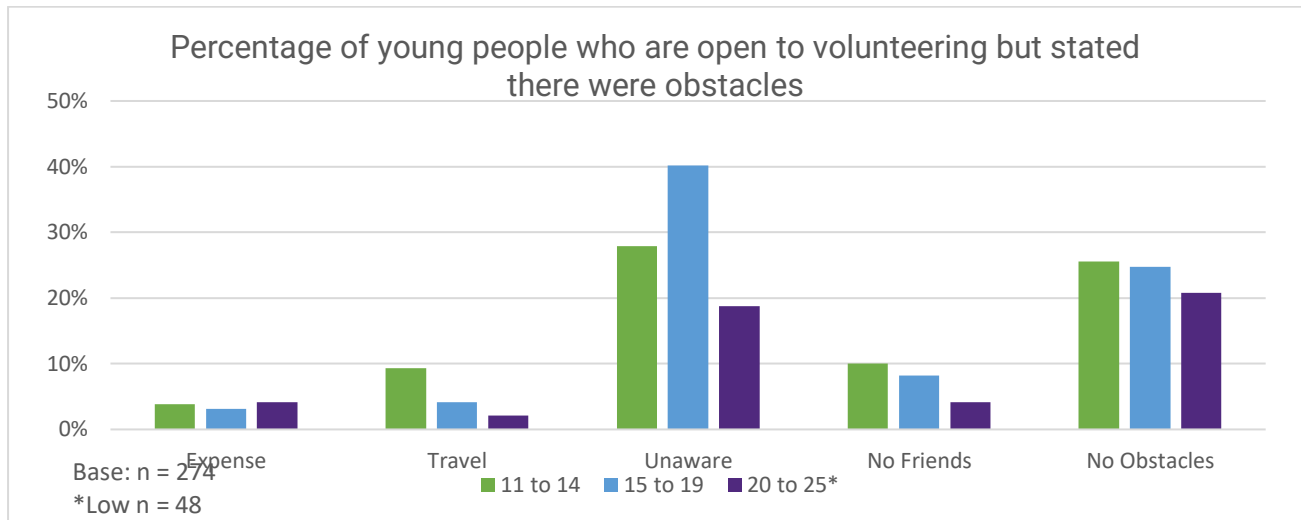
There were around one in six (16%) seven to 10 year olds who considered that the cost of attending youth groups was an obstacle.

When explored within the focus groups, young people accessing youth groups or clubs stated cost of provision was not considered a barrier. However, concerns were raised that if cost increased it could inhibit future attendance due to financial constraints at home.

Public transport prices were considered an inhibitor to accessing provision for young people aged seven–16. Whereas those 16 and over felt that public transport costs were not a barrier to travelling to provision.

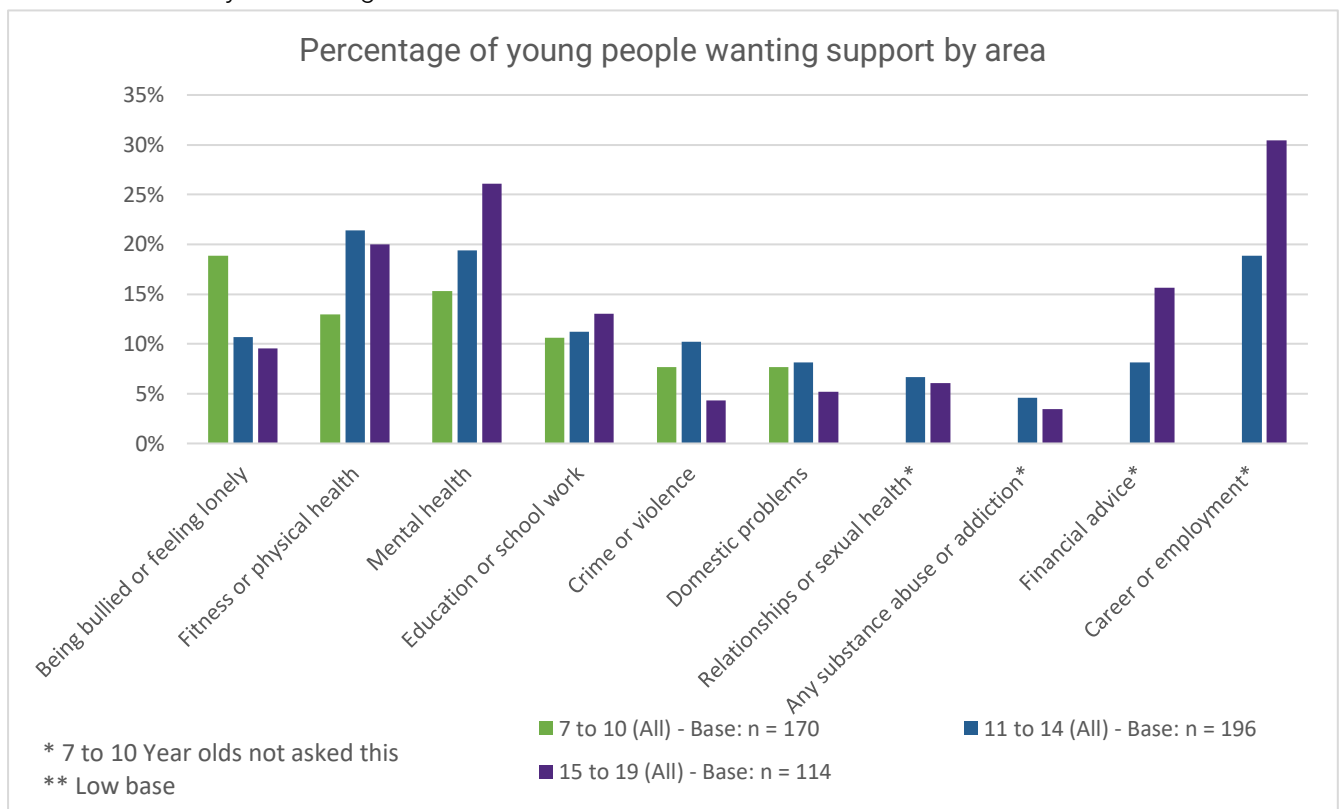


A high proportion of young people were unaware of where the nearest opportunities were to partake in volunteering or social action. This was the highest level of unawareness for all activities and age groups. Conversely, there were relatively few who identified other obstacles.



Support services

The questionnaire asked young people to state if they wanted or would benefit from support in several different areas. Fitness/physical health, mental health, education/school work, financial advice, career/employment related advice and help with being bullied or feeling lonely were the six prominent themes that respondents identified as areas of support they could benefit from that they were not currently accessing.¹¹



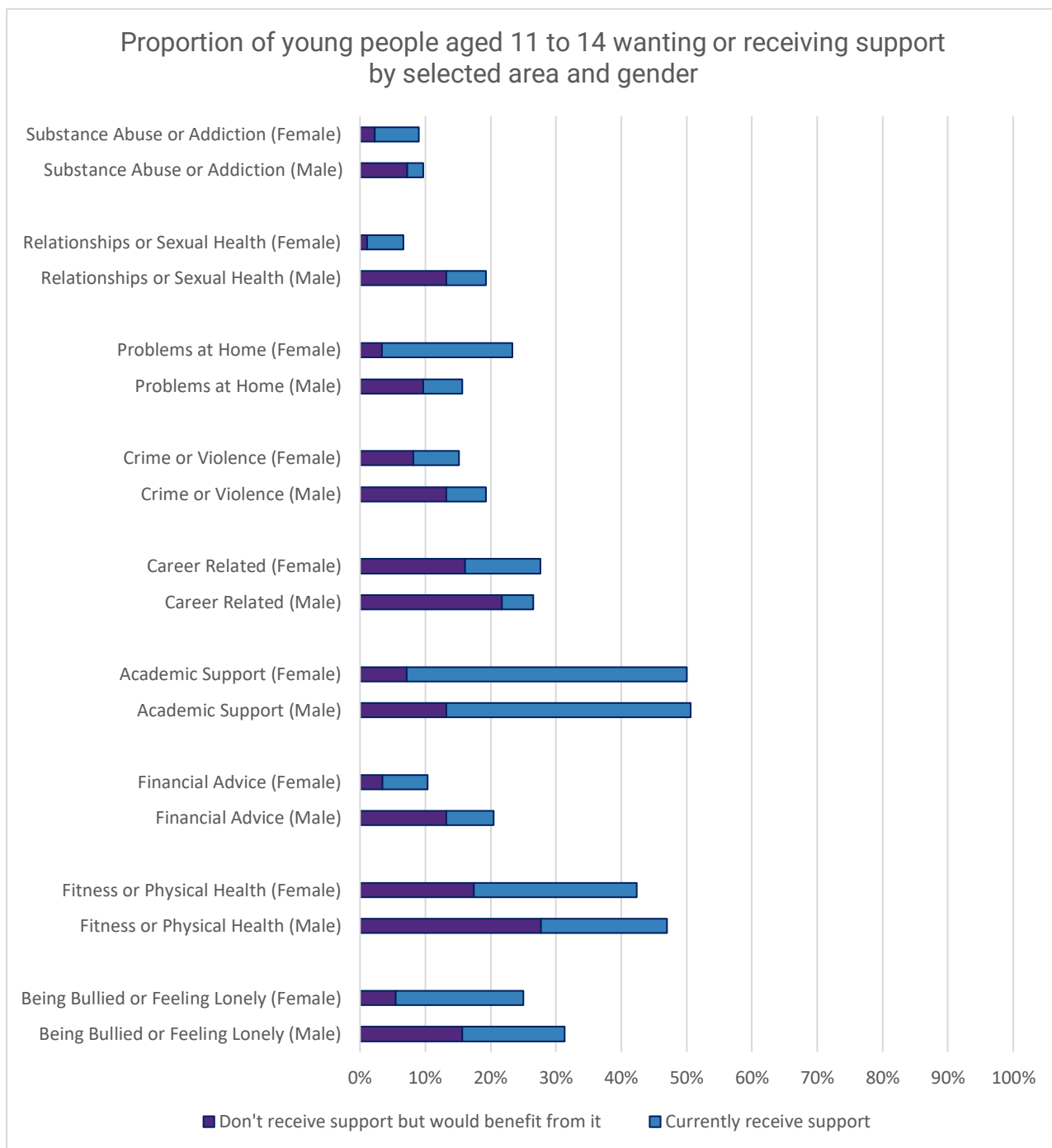
¹¹ Results for those aged 20 to 25 have been excluded given a small base number and likely bias in the respondents due to the channels through which the questionnaire was distributed to them.

With exception to advice and help with being bullied or feeling lonely, the other prominent support areas increased with age. These areas were also amongst the most selected, suggesting early intervention is either not being received, not successful or that the desire for support rises by age group.

There were 16 “other” responses of which 10 stated support was desired for LGBTQ related issues.

Support by topic, differentiated by age and gender

There was little difference in the proportion of males or females wanting support when differentiated by each area amongst the age groups for seven to 10 year olds and 15 to 19 year olds. However, amongst 11 to 14 year olds, there was a distinctly greater desire for support across nearly all areas for young males.

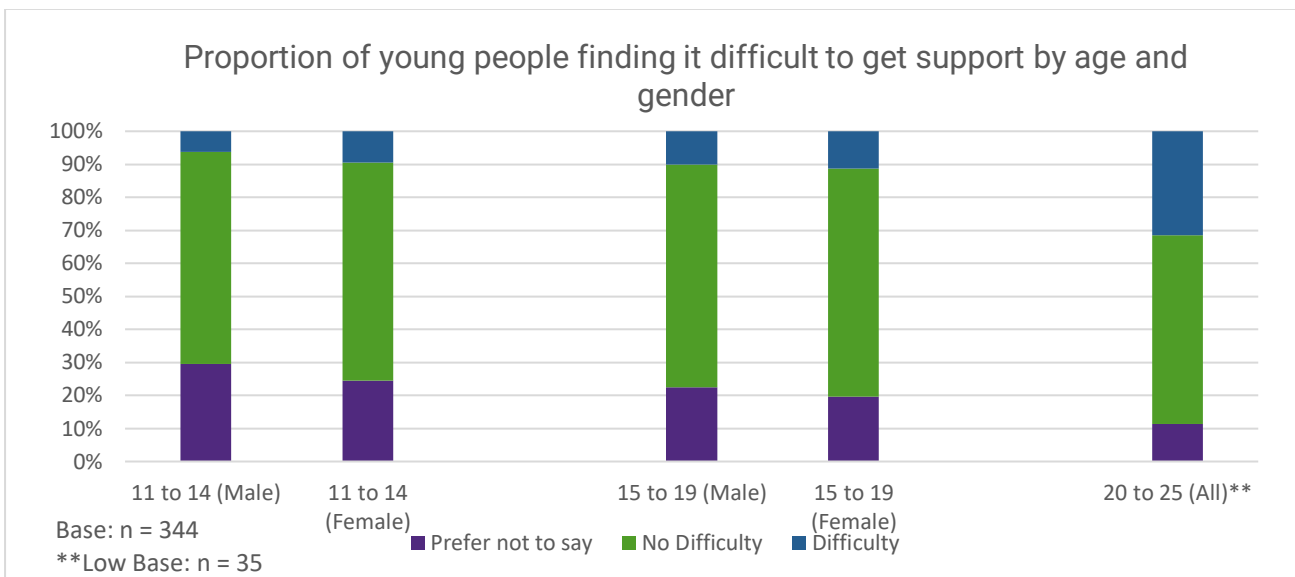


Difficulty in accessing support

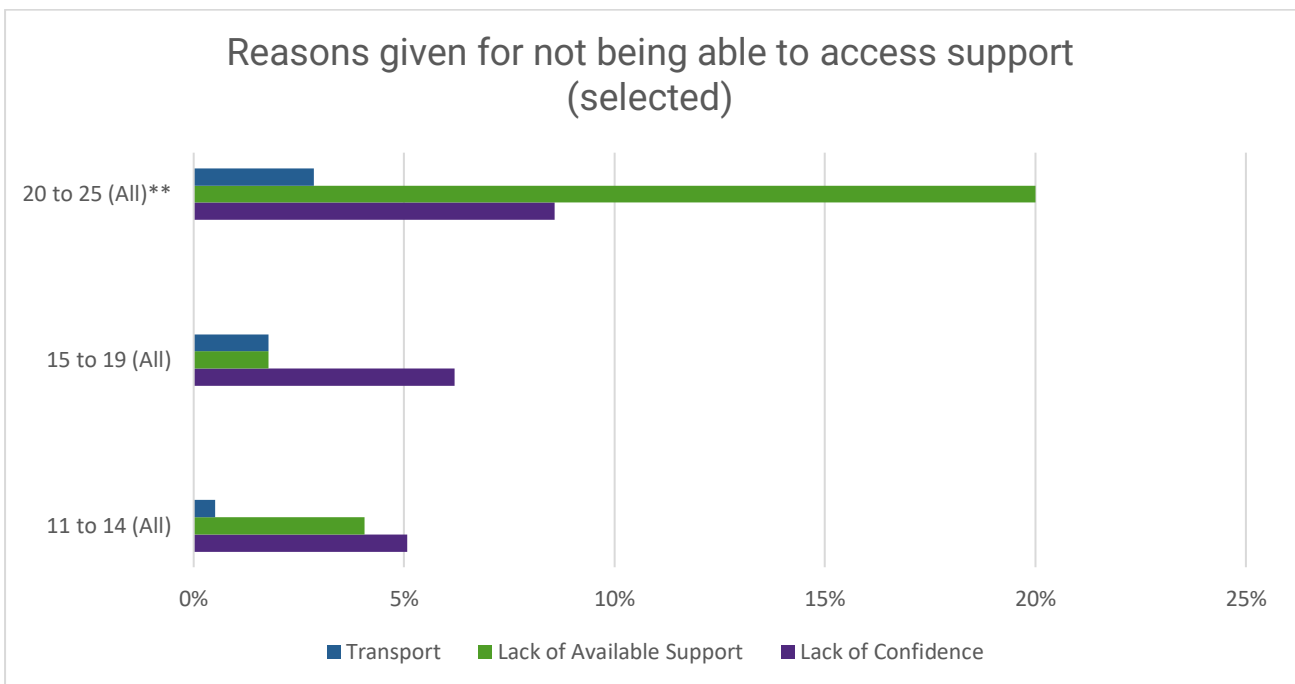
Fourteen percent of respondents, who were 11 or older, said that there were barriers to accessing support, with nearly a quarter of respondents choosing not to answer the question. Young men aged 11 to 14 were least likely to say that they found it difficult to get support (6%).

There was little difference in the proportions when differentiated by subsets of those who attended any activity on at least a weekly basis and those who did not.

Whilst 31% of those aged 20 to 25 said they found it difficult to get support, this figure must be treated with caution because a small number of responses were received, which are likely affected by bias in the respondents due to the channels through which the questionnaire was distributed to this age group.



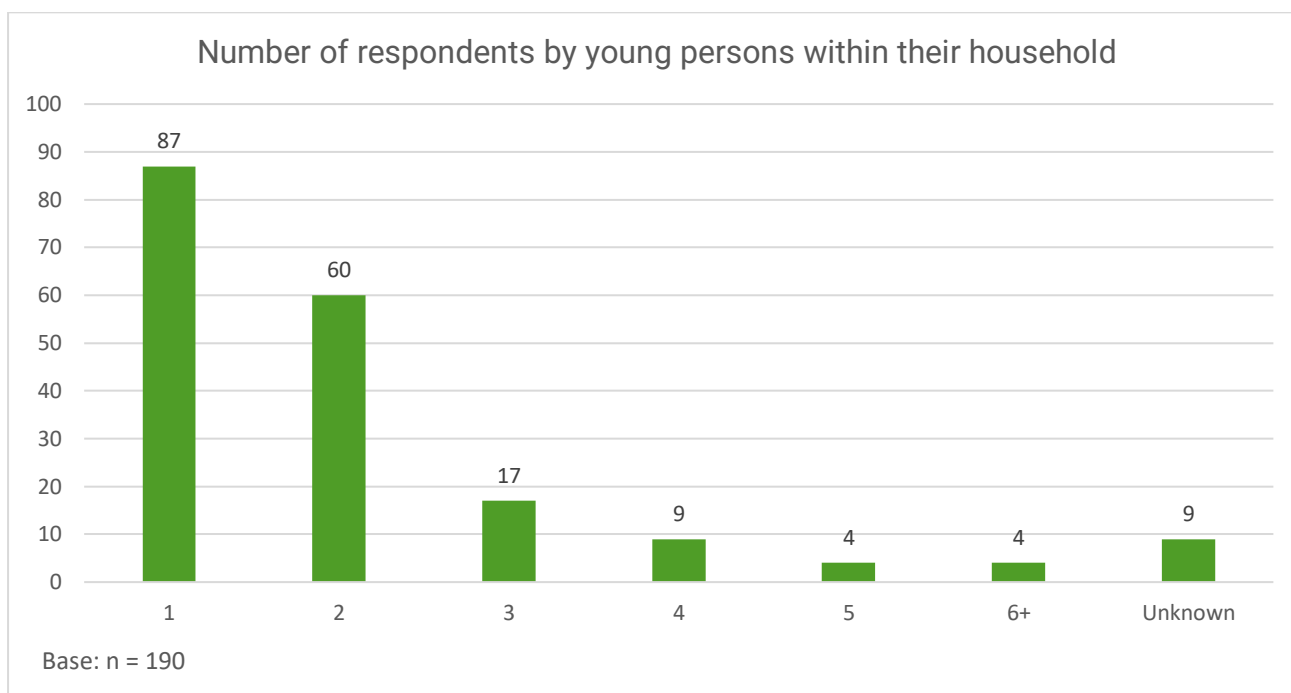
Respondents were asked to explain what might be causing the difficulty to access support. Three areas received more than one response.



Confidence or anxiety and issues related to a lack of available support were the most prevalent reasons for difficulty in accessing support. Again, figures for those aged 20 to 25 must be treated with caution because we received a small number of responses, which are likely affected by bias in the respondents due to the channels through which the questionnaire was distributed to this age group.

Summary of Results from Parents and Carers Questionnaire

In total 193 responses were received, of which three were unusable, leaving 190 responses which were usable, primarily from those with one or two young people (aged seven to 17) living within their household.



Limitations of responses and assumptions

Questionnaires were promoted through schools and a working group of local youth providers to different populations of parents and carers, and therefore the responses will likely suffer from bias in that respondents are predominantly adults whose children are already involved in youth provision.

Respondents were not asked about household composition (e.g. number of adults/parents/families within a household) or household socio-economic status.

It has been assumed that all young persons within a household are dependent.

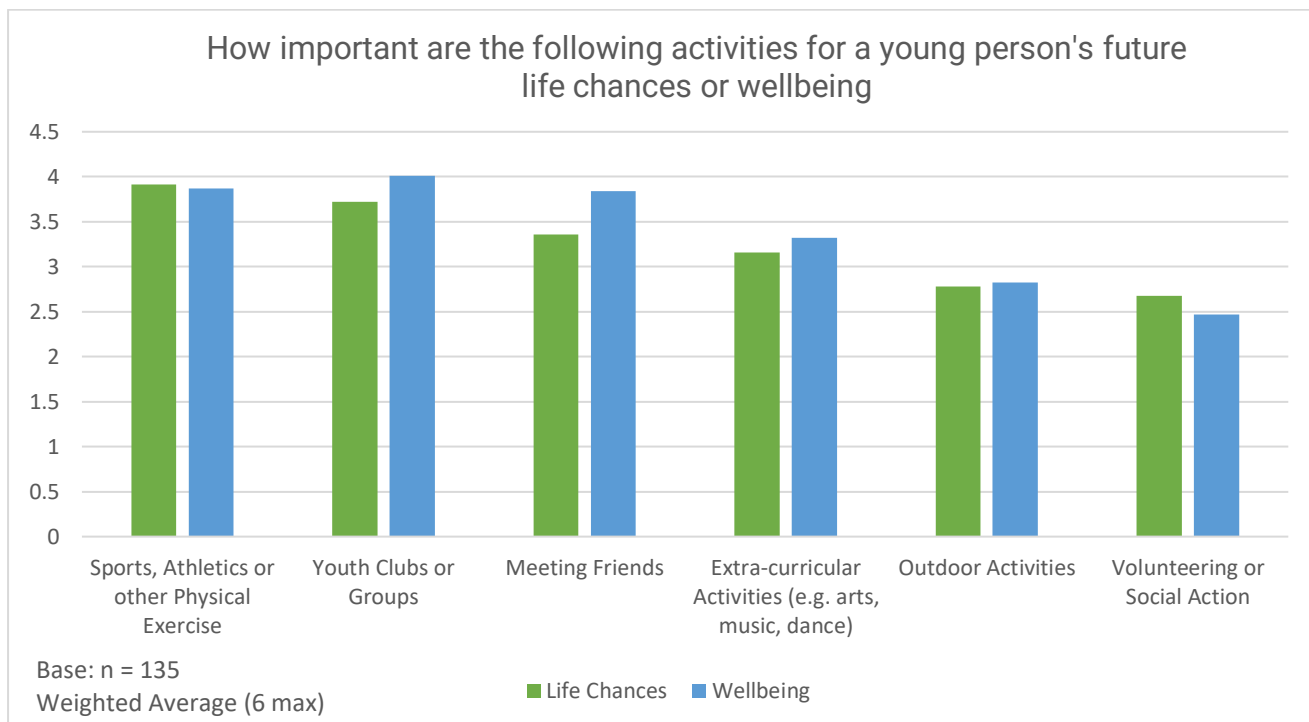
Importance of activities for social outcomes

Respondents were given a list of common activities for young people and asked to rank them by how important they felt they were for a young person's:

- Future life chances after education
- Current wellbeing and happiness

The chosen activities were derived from the results of the children and young person's questionnaire, with some grouped by type to avoid overfitting. Weighted averages were given to each "rank" with a high score meaning the activity was considered more important.

The responses suggest that parents and carers viewed sporting and traditional youth provision as most important overall for young people, whilst volunteering or social action (including political campaigning) was considered least important.



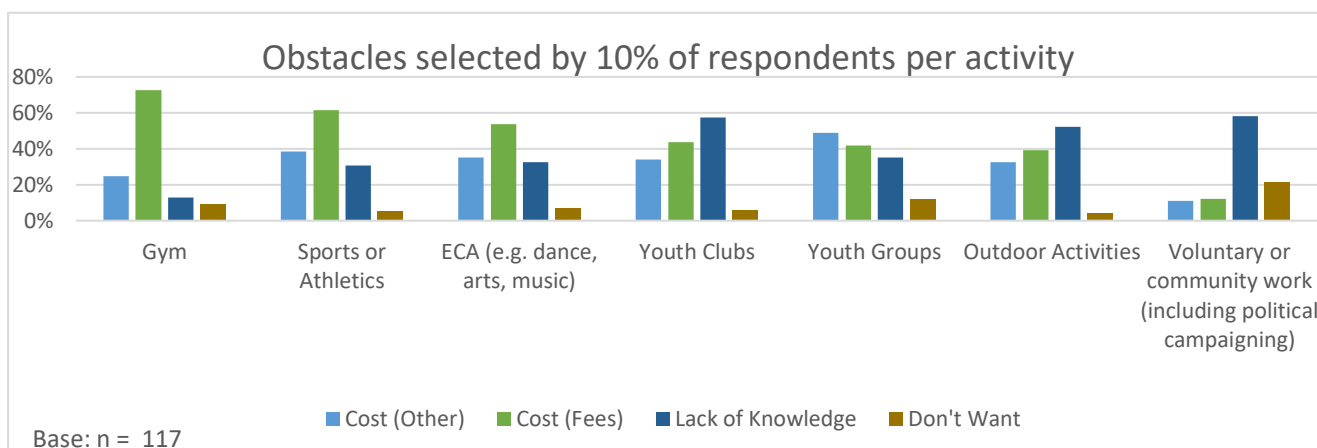
In households that stated they had three or more children (n = 34), the relative importance of youth clubs or groups on wellbeing increased to be ranked highest across both measures with an average of 3.74 points for “life chances” and 4.6 points for “wellbeing”.

Obstacles to activities

Respondents were asked about each activity and whether there were obstacles that prevented young people within the household participating in activities. At least 10% of respondents selected the following obstacles for each activity:

- Cost (fees) – fees for participation or subscriptions for joining
- Cost (other) – purchasing of equipment or uniform necessary for engagement
- Lack of knowledge – not knowing where the nearest opportunities were

21% of respondents also stated that they did not want any young persons in their household to partake in “voluntary or community work” (including political campaigning).



When differentiating by whether a household had one or multiple young persons in the household, there was little difference in the proportion who found costs prohibitive, suggesting that overall, household finances were a greater indicator of an obstacle than the costs per child.

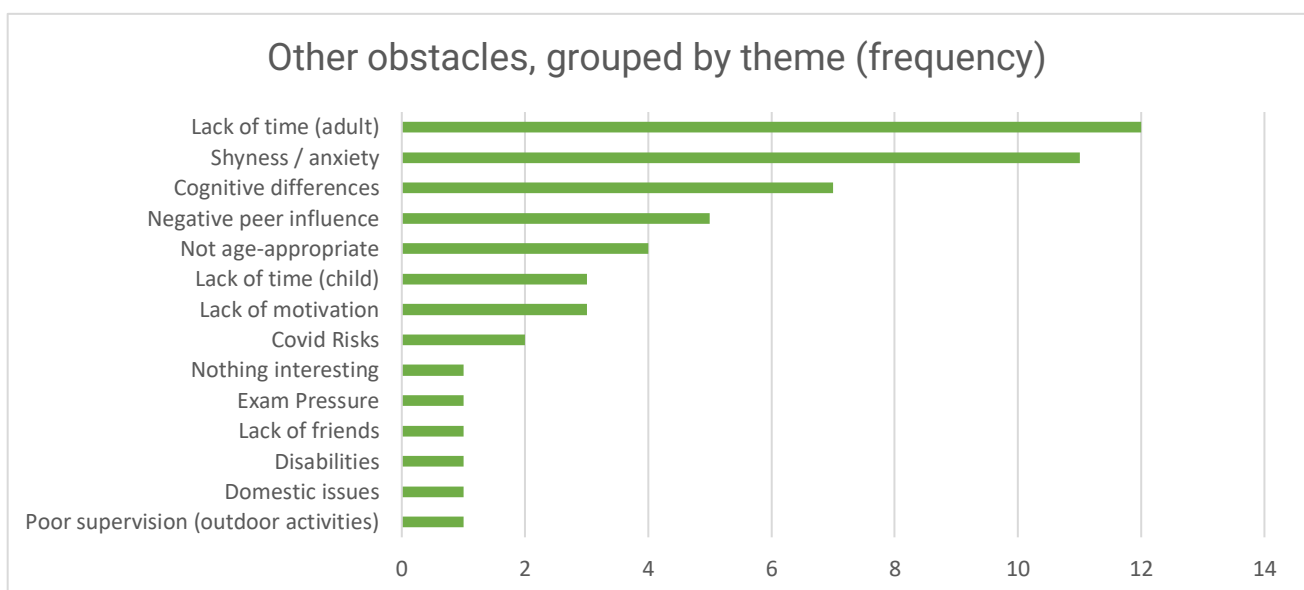
Other obstacles

Respondents were invited to provide a free-text response to describe any other obstacles. Any responses that were already answered have been removed. Other non-informative responses have been removed. For example, if a respondent stated that “activities are too expensive”, this was checked against that respondent’s answer to determine whether cost was a prohibitive factor towards activities. In general, obstacles can be conceptualised in three main ways:

1. Those which are on the demand side, i.e. are related to the circumstances of the individual household or young person.
2. Those which are on the supply side, i.e. are related to the offer from providers of activities being not suitably tailored to the young people within their household.
3. Those which are related to other externalities, i.e. are related to circumstances outside of the above (such as exam pressure or Covid-related risks to shielding households)

The lack of detail in many responses means we have not sought to differentiate responses in this way and have instead grouped them into broad thematic areas. But this basic framework is useful to consider alongside the results. Respondents told us that the most common obstacles are:

- A lack of time within the household. This is largely due to the adult(s) not being able to facilitate engagement or participation, but it was also often due to young persons already participating in multiple activities or having other competing interests.
- Behavioural or cognitive differences of young people. These responses lacked detail but varied across a spectrum wherein respondents would state that young people ranged from being shy to those who had behavioural or learning difficulties. It was not clear if that was preventing engagement, or if there was a lack of activities suitable to engage in.
- A few households stated that the age groups for many activities were too broad, meaning those at the younger or older ends of thresholds had little in common.
- A few households stated that other peers and activities would be negative influences on the children and young people within their household.

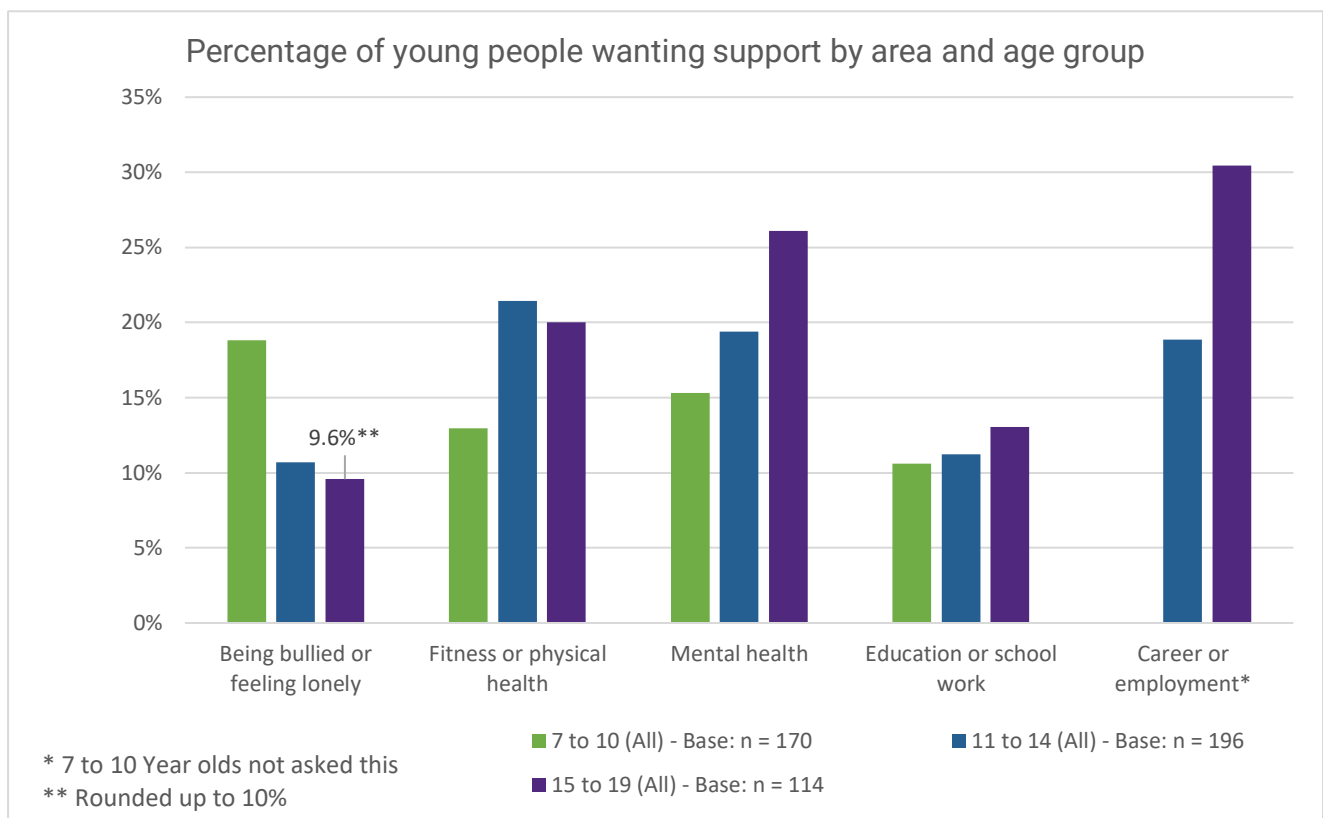


Areas of support for young people

The children and young people questionnaire asked respondents to tell us about any areas in which they wanted support and whether they were receiving any or not.

At least 10% of respondents for each age group told us that they wanted support but were not currently receiving it in the following areas:

- Mental Health or Wellbeing
- Fitness or Physical Health
- Education or School Work
- Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely (especially for those aged seven to 10)
- Career and Employment Advice (especially for those 15 onwards)



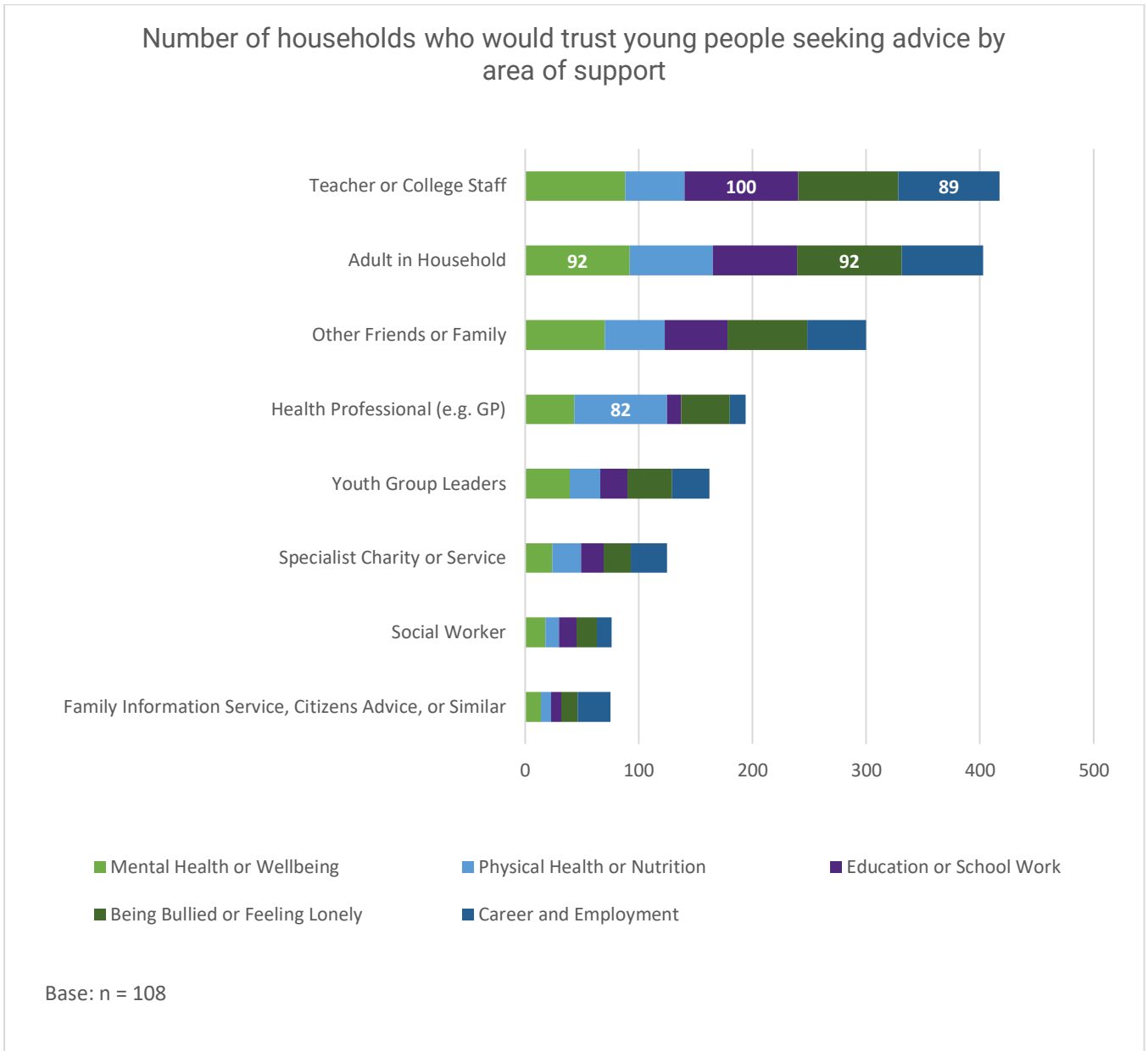
These results are from the Children and Young People’s Questionnaire

Using these topics as a base, parents and carers were asked to select persons who they would trust to provide good advice to young people in each topic.

Trusted sources of advice and support

For advice and support regarding “fitness or physical health”, respondents were most likely to trust advice from a health professional. For advice and support towards “education or school work”, respondents were most likely to trust advice from a teacher or college staff.

These could be considered as “specialists” within each topic. In all other areas, respondents were between three to four times more likely to trust advice from an adult in the household or a teacher/college member of staff than they were to trust advice from a “specialist charity or service”.



Teacher or College Staff

Aside from support or advice regarding “fitness or physical health”, at least four in five households would trust teachers or college staff to provide good advice in any of the listed areas of support.

Respondents were most likely to trust advice from teaching or college staff above any other sources of support for topics related to “education or school work” and “career and employment”.

Base: n = 108

Area of Support	Percentage of respondents who would trust advice in this area from a teacher or college staff member
Mental Health or Wellbeing	81%
Fitness or Physical Health	48%
Education or School Work	93%
Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely	81%
Career and Employment	82%

Adults in the Household

Over two-thirds of households would trust an adult within the household to provide good advice or support in any area. Up to 85% would trust adults within the household to give advice and support regarding mental health or wellbeing or for young people being bullied or feeling lonely.

Area of Support	Percentage of respondents who would trust advice in this area from an adult in their household
Mental Health or Wellbeing	85%
Fitness or Physical Health	68%
Education or School Work	69%
Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely	85%
Career and Employment	67%

Base: n = 108

Respondents were most likely to trust advice from an adult in their household above any other sources of support for topics related to “mental health or wellbeing” and “being bullied or feeling lonely”.

Other Friends of Family

In general, around 50% of respondents would trust other family or friends to provide advice or support in any area, rising to nearly two in three for topics related to “mental health or wellbeing” and “being bullied or feeling lonely”.

Area of Support	Percentage of respondents who would trust advice in this area from other friends or family
Mental Health or Wellbeing	65%
Physical Health or Nutrition	49%
Education or School Work	51%
Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely	65%
Career and Employment	48%

Base: n = 108

Health Professionals

Respondents were not likely to trust advice from health professionals in areas unrelated to emotional, mental or physical health. Three in four respondents would trust support or advice from health professionals above any other sources of support for topics related to “physical health or nutrition”.

Area of Support	Percentage of respondents who would trust advice in this area from a health professional
Mental Health or Wellbeing	40%
Physical Health or Nutrition	76%
Education or School Work	11%
Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely	40%
Career and Employment	13%

Base: n = 108

Voluntary and Community Sector: Youth Group Leaders and Specialist Charities and Services

Across all areas, respondents were less likely to say they would trust youth group leaders or specialist charities and services to give good advice to young people than “a teacher or college staff member,” “an adult in the household” or “other friends or family”.

Area of Support	Percentage of respondents who would trust advice in this area from	
	Youth Group Leaders	Specialist Charity or Service
Mental Health or Wellbeing	36%	22%
Physical Health or Nutrition	25%	23%
Education or School Work	22%	19%
Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely	36%	22%
Career and Employment	31%	30%

Base: n = 108

Formal Support Services: Social Workers and Family Information Service, Citizens Advice, or Similar

Across nearly all areas, respondents were less likely to say they would trust “family information services, citizen advice, or similar” than any other source of support. Respondents were less likely to say they would trust “social workers” than any other source of support to give good advice on topics related to career and employment.

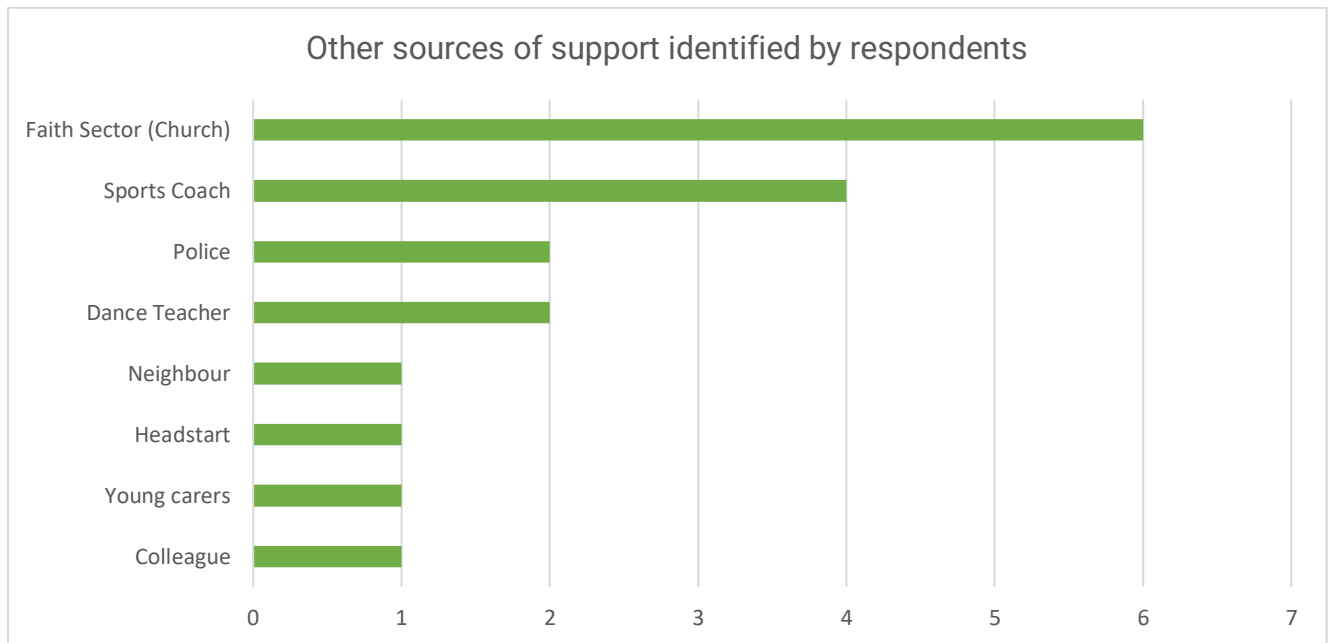
Area of Support	Percentage of respondents who would trust advice in this area from	
	Social Workers	Family Information Service, Citizens Advice, or Similar
Mental Health or Wellbeing	17%	13%
Physical Health or Nutrition	11%	8%
Education or School Work	14%	8%
Being Bullied or Feeling Lonely	17%	13%
Career and Employment	12%	27%

Base: n = 108

Other Sources of Support

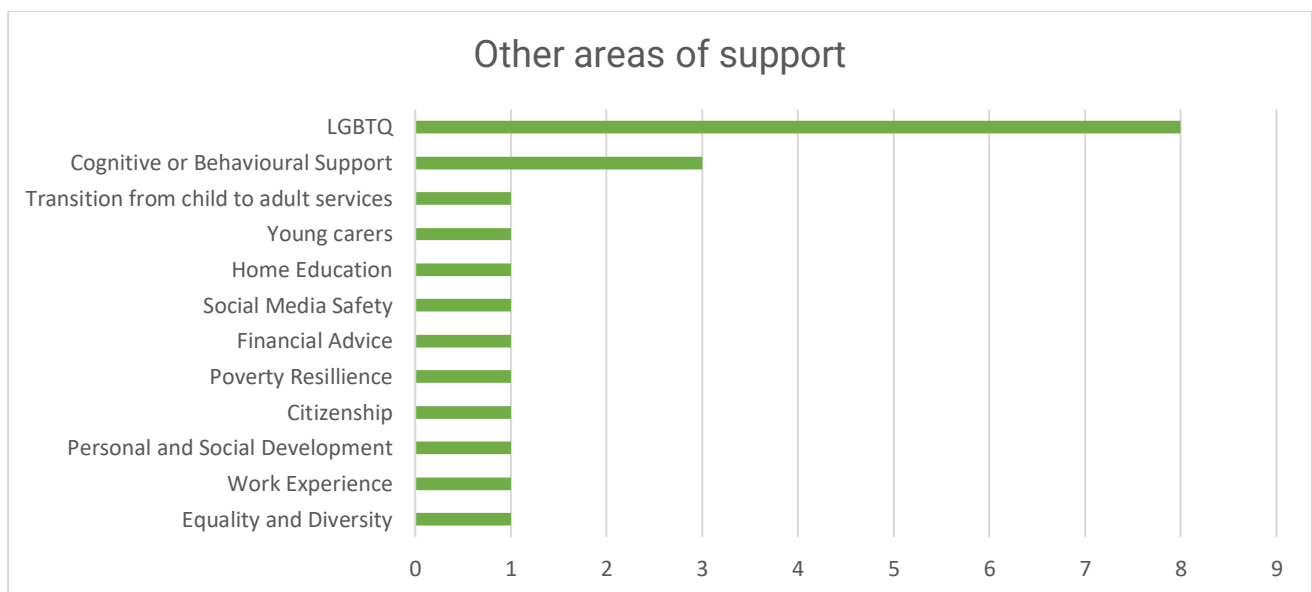
Respondents were invited to provide open-text responses to list any other sources of support or advice which they would trust to give good advice if approached by young people within their household.

The results suggest there are a few households who had faith-based associations or trusted relationships with providers of specific activities, such as sports or dance.



Other areas of support (by topic)

Respondents were also asked to indicate other areas in which they felt a young person in their household might benefit from support. Seventeen respondents provided at least one response, with 8 of those stating that provision of support related to LGBTQ topics would be beneficial.

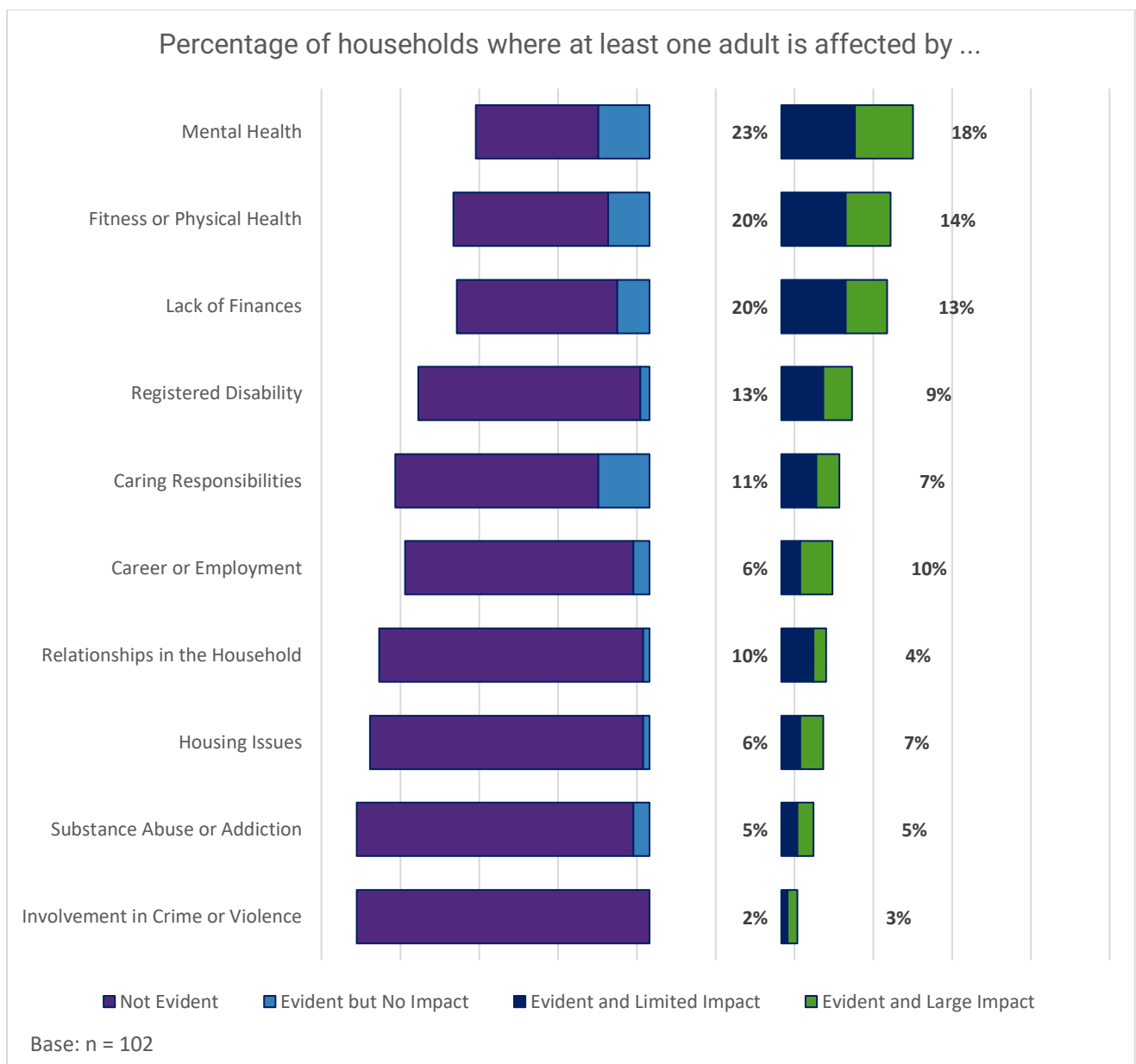


Areas of support for the household

Given that around 22% of young people told us they currently received or would like to receive support related to “issues at home”, we asked respondents to this questionnaire about common issues which might affect any adults within the household and whether these had a negative impact on young people in the same household.

The most selected area was “mental health” with 41% of respondents reporting that this had a negative impact on young people within the household. One in 3 houses also stated that issues related to “fitness or physical health” and “lack of finances” affected at least one adult in the household and had a negative impact on any young people within the household.

The full breakdown of responses is shown in the graphic below.



Organisations Providing Youth Provision

Local authority youth provision

There is no universal youth work provision offered directly by the local authority. All youth provision provided by the council is targeted intervention and with delivery in the main one to one in outreach settings.

The Adolescent Service comprises of four teams and provides support to vulnerable young people:

- The Youth Justice Team provides a multi-agency partnership whose aim is to prevent children from offending and to help them restore the damage caused to their victims. The services work in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent criminal justice acts. The service supervises and supports children aged between 10 and 18 years who have committed offences and have received a Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or an order from the Court.
- The Family Worker Team provides targeted support for young people, as part of a statutory duty, to promote the effective participation in education, training or employment. The team also provides holistic support for children aged 16 to 17 who are homeless following a joint assessment of need via Children's Services & Housing.
- The Family Practitioner Team provides psychosocial, non-clinical support for young people at risk of poor sexual health outcomes and young people misusing substances. The team facilitate access to clinical support including social prescribing, community and residential detox and rehabilitation.
- The Leaving Care Team provides corporate parenting support for care-experienced young people from age 16 to 25 years old, providing a statutory duty to enable "our children and young people" to achieve their potential and to prepare for independence.

Leisure services offer a broad range of activities and programmes across the town to encourage young people to lead an active lifestyle. This includes free and heavily subsidised access to leisure facilities including gyms, exercise classes, swimming, team sports and activities.

The Active Lives Service delivers a range of community-based programmes aimed at engaging with young people in their local community. Whilst the primary aim of the service is to encourage people to be active, many engagement activities take a different focus with a more holistic approach to support young people to improve their social, mental and physical wellbeing.

Local authority spending on youth services

The data shows that overall, spending through the Local Authority in Blackpool on services for young people has dropped from c. £150 per head to £12 per head. The spending returns indicate that these cuts were initially exclusively from universal services, which were cut from £70.60 per head in 2011/12 to £7.40 per head in 2012/13, with a reallocation of resources shifted to targeted services, which saw a per head rise from £82.68 to £134.28 over the same period.¹²

Whilst universal provision was almost entirely cut in that single year, the spending on targeted provision has steadily declined since. The past two years have seen services cut to the extent that when measured against England and its nearest CIPFA statistical neighbours, the spending in Blackpool is lower than the relative averages against all metrics in the past two financial years.¹²

¹² Section 251 data

Non-local authority delivery

The review identified 230 different organisations (or sub-units of an organisation) that were likely to match the criteria for types of activity delivered. A postcode was determined for 225 organisations enabling each to be categorised by the ward in which they were based and therefore likely to operate from. Each organisation was given a basic “type” based on available information to create a basic taxonomy of the sector.

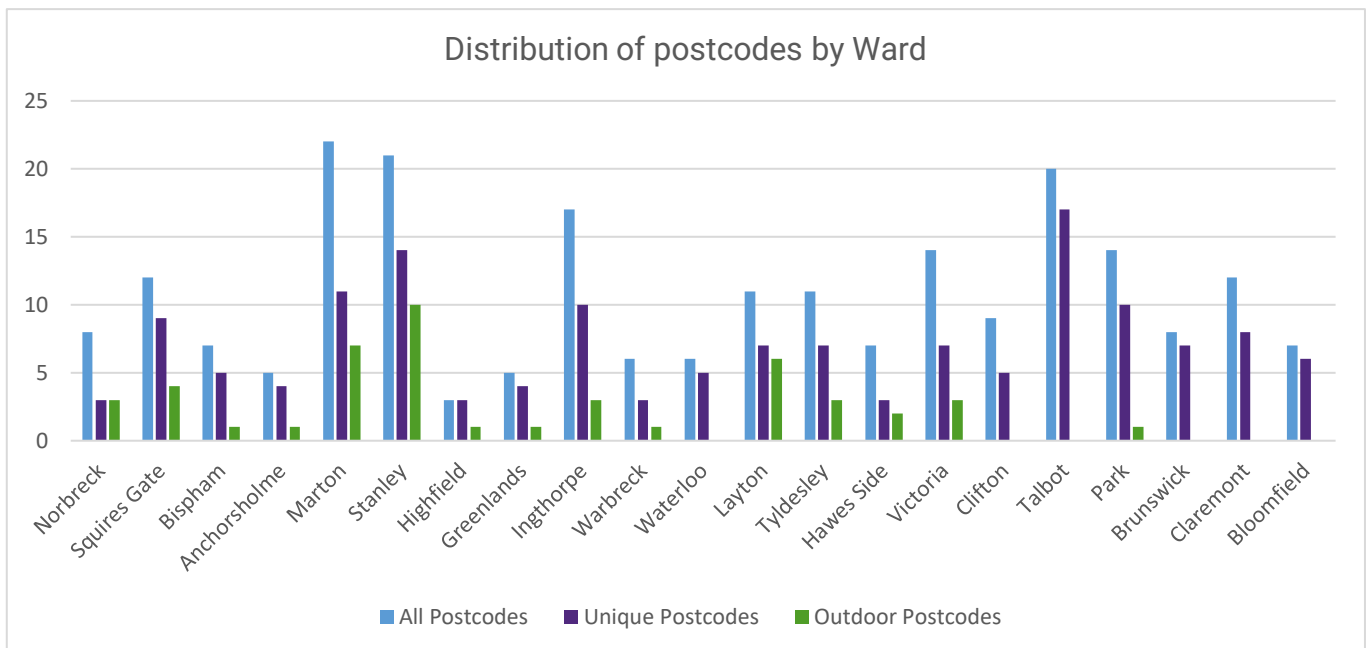
Types	Count	Type	Count
Social Housing Provider	1	Community Centre	7
Other	1	Family Hub	8
Information or Advice	1	“Friends Of” Groups	13
Legal Support	1	Universal	30
Children’s Centre	1	Targeted	35
Faith Group	2	Uniformed	60
Performing Arts	3	Sporting Club	59
Infrastructure	3		

Organisations by location

In assessing the spatial distribution of organisations, the analysis of the following took place:

1. How many organisations were located within a ward
2. How many sites organisations operate from per ward (i.e. not counting instances where multiple organisations operate from a single postcode)
3. How many ‘outdoor’ sites operate per ward

Assuming all organisations identified were in scope, 184 unique postcodes were found. The distribution shows that in all wards some organisations operate from the same premises. These were mainly Scouts and Guide groups and a few sport clubs. Forty-seven sites (mostly sports clubs and “friends of” outdoor spaces) were more likely than not to provide activities outdoors.

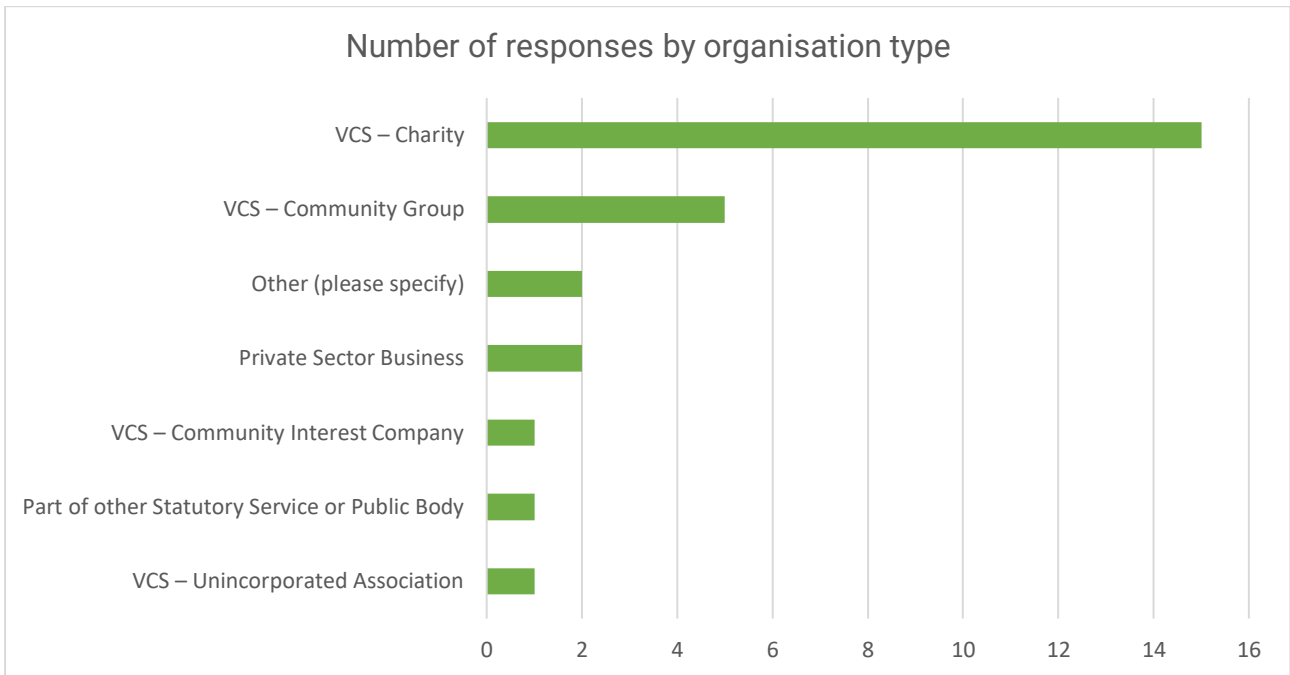


Results from organisation questionnaire

In total there were 24 complete responses provided, with 10 partial responses and 12 screen outs (i.e. those who responded but did not qualify or did not wish to participate). Three of the partial responses supplied enough data to inform this analysis, providing a final working sample of 27 respondents. The respondents make up 12% of all identified organisations providing youth provision within Blackpool, and 18% of those had details that allowed for them to be directly contacted.

Makeup of responding organisations

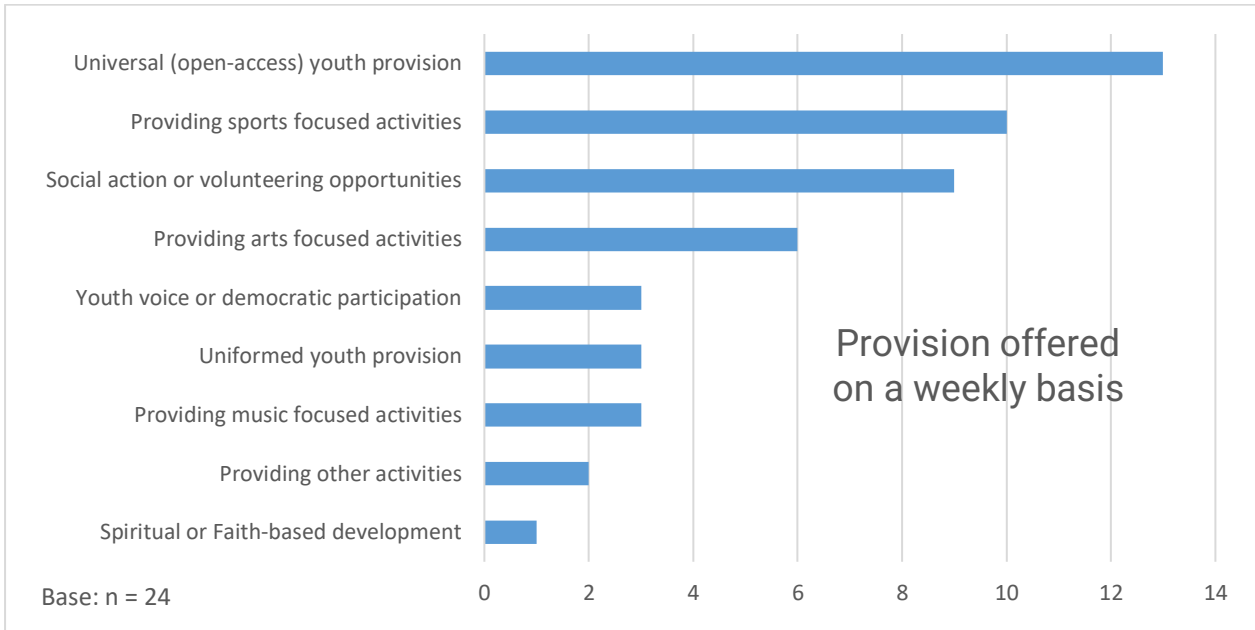
Twenty-two out of 27 respondents (81%) were organisations operating in the VCS, with registered charities (n = 15) being most numerous.



The majority of organisations operated at a local level (17%) or within more than one ward within Blackpool (61%). Twenty-three (85%) organisations directly delivered youth provision, 4 (15%) organisations provided infrastructural support for other organisations, and 6 (22%) organisations contracted or commissioned other organisations to deliver youth provision.

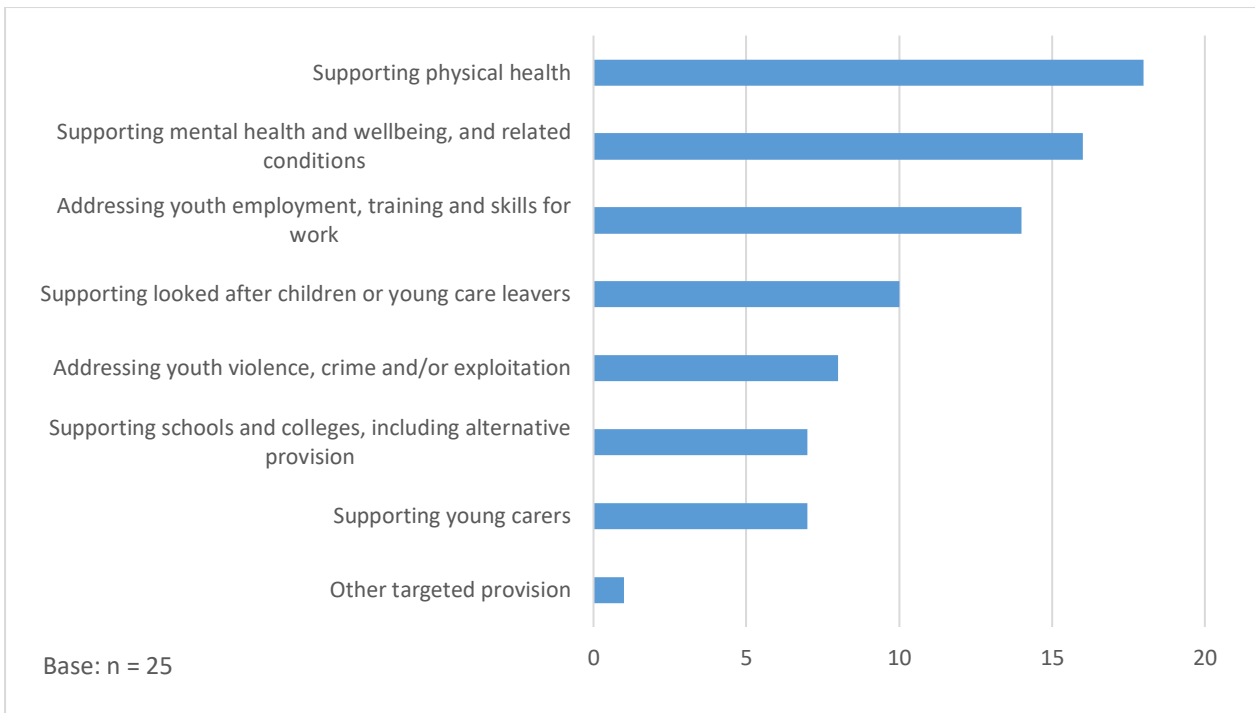
Type of regular activities or services

Respondents were asked to select any services or activities which they offered on a weekly basis to determine what their regular offer was. Over half (54%) of respondents provided universal or open-access services as a part of their core weekly core offer, and 25% offered at least one of the arts-focused activities, social action or volunteering opportunities, or sports-focused activities.

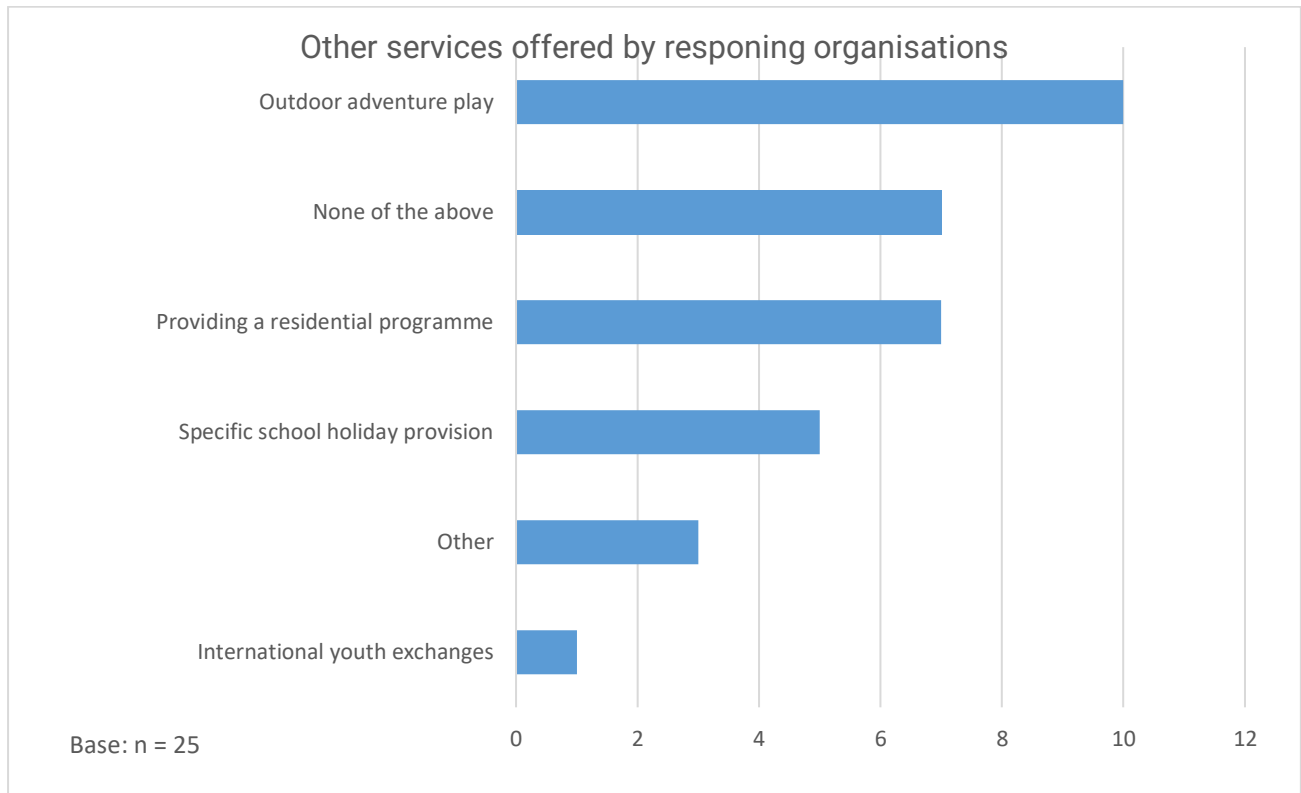


Most (25) of the responding organisations provide a programme of support for young people. Supporting physical health (72%) and mental health (64%) were the most frequently selected responses, closely followed by programmes that address youth employment (56%).

Number of respondents providing dedicated support in the following targeted areas:

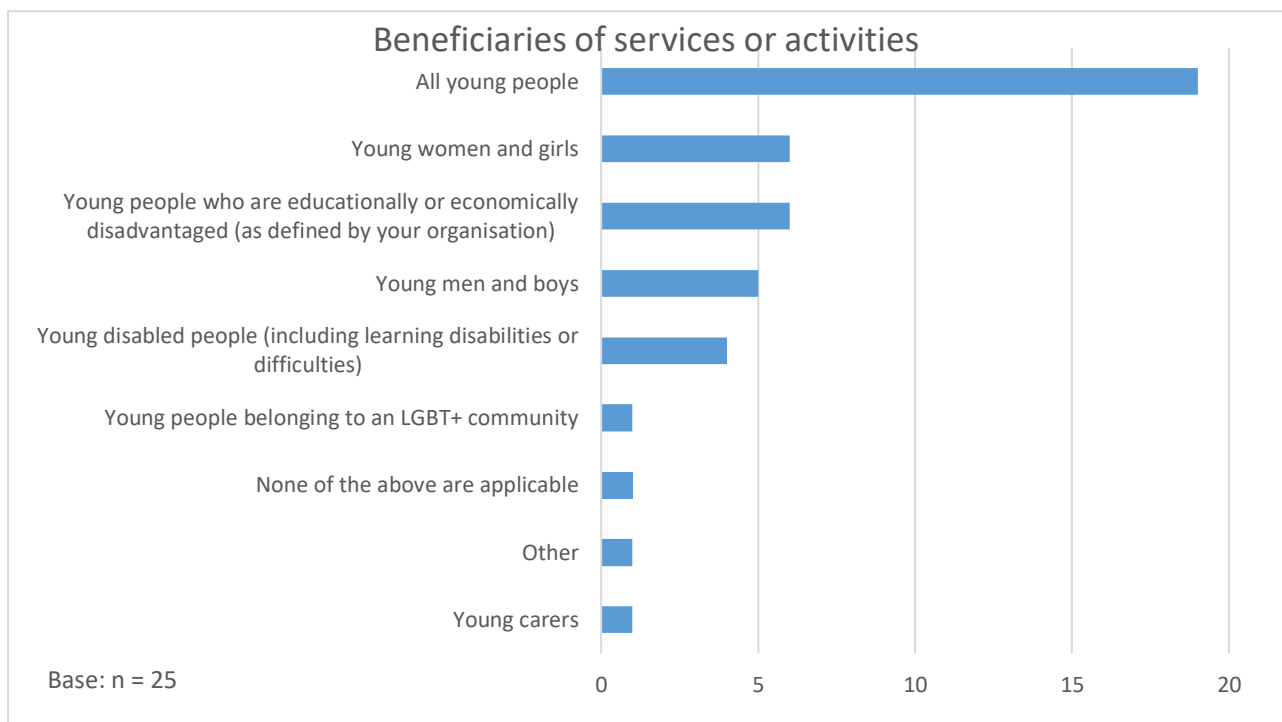


Respondents were asked to select any other services or activities they offered from a select list, of which 16 organisations indicated that their organisation provided at least one of these. Seven out of 25 (28%) did not provide any of the available options.



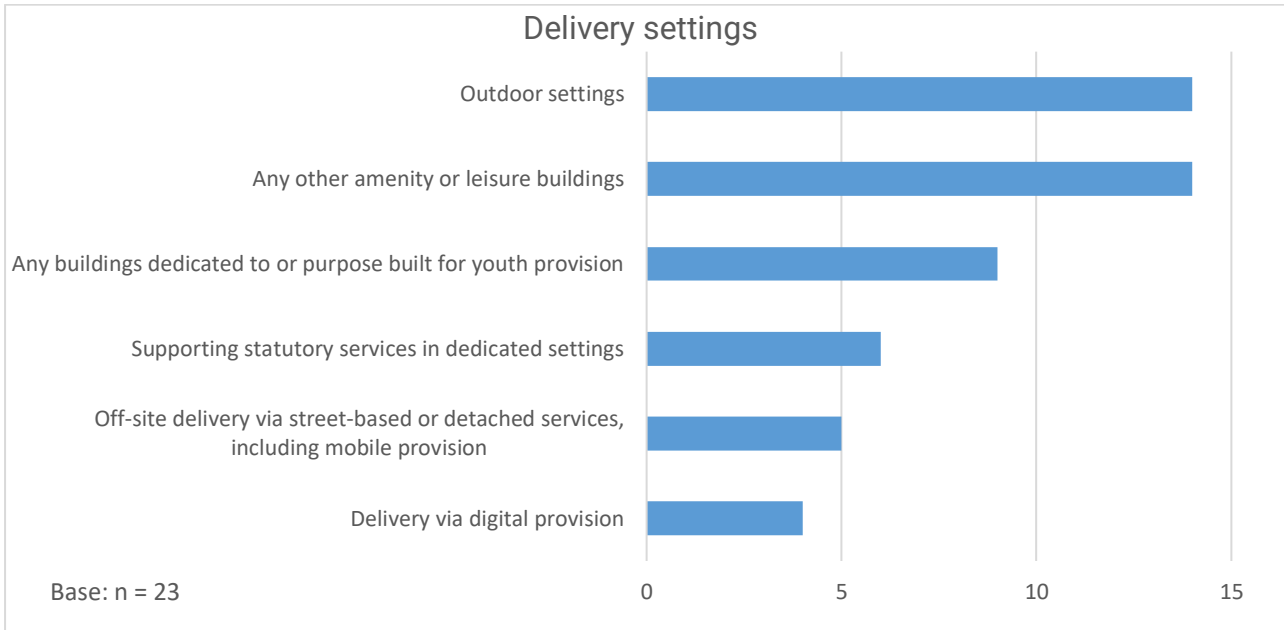
Audiences served

Respondents were asked to select any beneficiaries who made up 75% or more of their audience or were otherwise targeted by a dedicated service or activity. Nineteen of 25 (76%) organisations had “all young people” as one of their main beneficiaries.



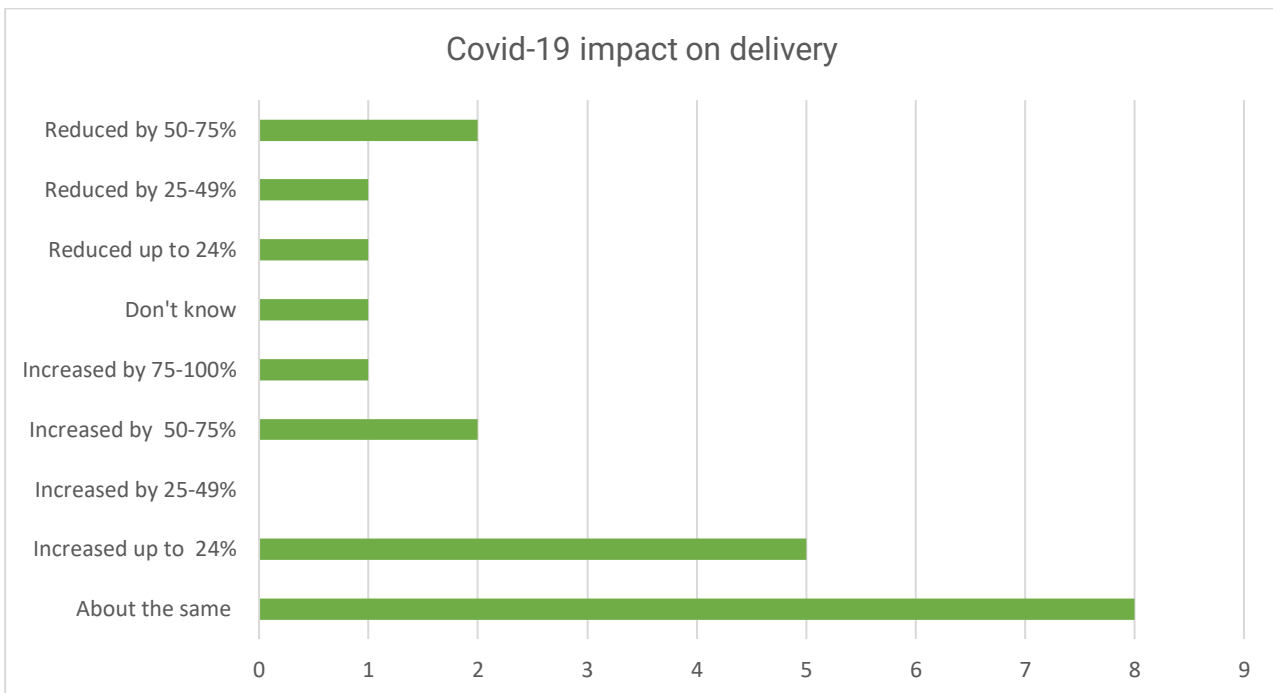
Settings used for delivery

Respondents were asked about the settings that they used for delivering youth provision from. The most selected options were delivery from “outdoor settings” and/or from “amenity or leisure buildings”, with these options selected by 14 out of 23 (61%) organisations. Nine organisations stated they delivered from buildings dedicated to youth provision.



Impact of Covid-19 on provision

Respondents were asked to identify whether their levels of provision had changed from before Covid-19. Four out of 21 (15%) stated that their offer had reduced. Twice as many, 8 out of 21 (30%) stated that their offer had increased or had remained about the same.



Workforce

Eighteen respondents provided some information about their workforce, with paid employee numbers ranging from 0 to 60.

The number of respondents is too low to identify any trends in workforce numbers, but the responses indicate that seven organisations had at least one staff member with a JNC Youth Work Degree, and 10 organisations had at least one member of staff with a level 2 award related to working with young people. Four organisations also had at least one volunteer with a JNC Youth Work Degree.

Twenty-one organisations out of the 23 that responded stated they either had a dedicated Designated Safeguard Lead within the organisation or had access to a DSL.

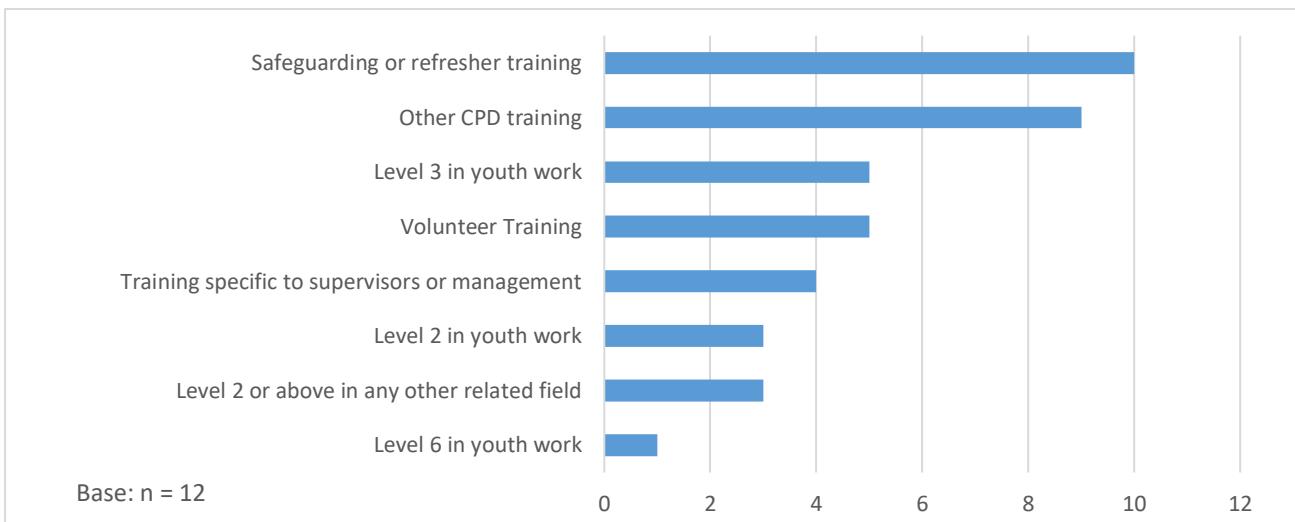


Training

However, when asked about training in the past 12 months, only 10 out of 21 stated safeguarding training had been provided, with nine organisations identifying safeguarding as a future training need.

Twelve organisations stated that they had provided some form of training in the previous year. All responders (23) stated there were future training requirements for their workforce in the coming 12 months, 21 of which specified thematic areas they would like to provide. Over half, 12 out of 23, wanted training towards supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing.

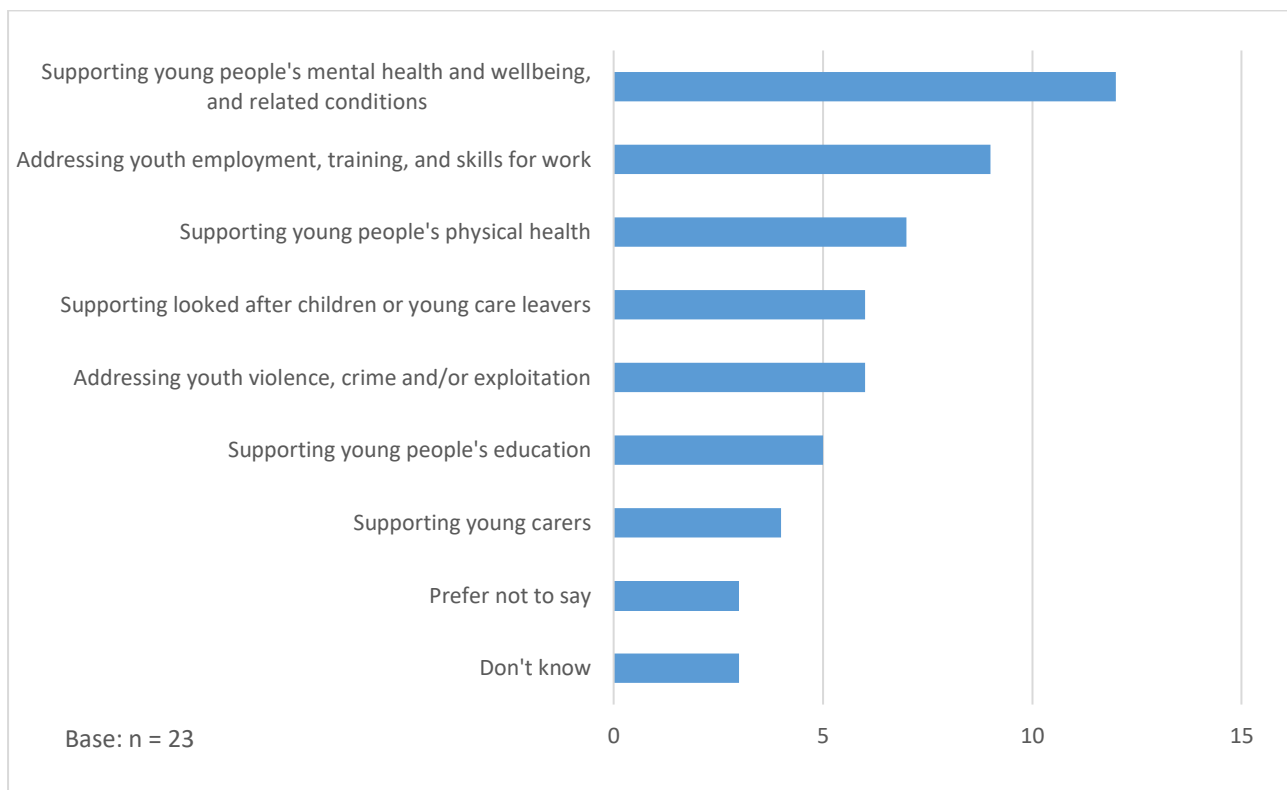
Training provided over the last 12 months:



Training needs over the next 12 months:



Thematic training needs over the next 12 months:



Conclusions and Recommendations

Effective youth work employed with young people can enhance life chances. It offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity, experience decision-making, increase their confidence, develop interpersonal skills and think through the consequences of their actions. This leads to informed choices, changes in activity and improved outcomes for young people.

The review of Blackpool youth provision was undertaken to capture current delivery, identify what works for young people and determine areas for development. The review has been designed to advise a development plan that will inform future youth provision in Blackpool. The findings from the desk top research, stakeholder engagement and the effective practice literature have informed the following conclusions. The critical themes are discussed with recommendations for consideration by the YPRSG.

Youth involvement, engagement and participation

The importance of engaging and involving young people in design, development, delivery and evaluation of the services that are intended for them should not be underestimated. Participation facilitates a feeling of ownership that increases the likelihood of an initiative's success.

Additionally, youth participation fosters transferable competencies, promoting personal development and enhancement of practical skills. It also supports individuals to connect with peers, to build social capital and to enable them to achieve objectives together beyond what is possible by an individual alone. Young people who feel that their views and needs are being included and respected develop a positive sense of self-awareness and identity, which can increase resilience and wellbeing.

Developing a Blackpool-wide coordinated youth participation strategy to inform programme/activity and support service design and development underpins the recommendations identified in this report. It would increase the probability of young people feeling ownership of the provision and services, improve the coordination between support services and help increase the profile of youth provision with young people across Blackpool.



The [NYA's Hear by Right](#) tool would provide a useful framework for the youth participation strategy development, implementation, and for monitoring progress. Hear by Right has evolved over 10 years and has been developed with and for young people. Built on a framework of seven standards with 20 indicators, it describes best practice, supporting organisations to plan, develop and evaluate their participation practices and provision.

Recommendations to consider:

- Co-produce a youth participation strategy to support young people's involvement in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of youth provision.
- Adopt a framework to support Blackpool-wide young person participation.
- Coordinate a young person group to oversee the implementation of the development plan that will support the evolution of youth provision in Blackpool.

Coordination of youth provision

Most of the youth provision in Blackpool is provided by the voluntary community sector (VCS). Blackpool Council, in collaboration with the VCS, provides targeted provision and support services for young people. However, the lack of awareness of how young people can access provision and services demonstrates the need for improved communication, which should be coordinated by one agency.

The report's findings indicate the need for centralised coordination to support infrastructure, youth voice, research, insight and funding. The prominent VCS youth provision, Blackpool Council's commitment to reviewing youth provision (in addition to their statutory duty to secure an offer of youth provision) and Blackpool's unique leisure-oriented businesses all suggest that a coordinated collaboration could support improved outcomes for young people living in Blackpool.

In addition to youth voice and participation, the development of a cohesive coordinating body is critical for the successful implementation of the development plan and the evolution of youth provision in Blackpool. The first step in advancing the development plan will be to identify and commit to the most appropriate model for supporting central coordination of youth provision across Blackpool.

Recommendation to consider:

- Explore a model to support central coordination for youth provision across Blackpool.

Accessible provision

Youth work is impactful because of the voluntary engagement of young people. The focus group participants felt their voluntary engagement in youth provision was fundamental to their participation, which facilitated a feeling of belonging and membership. This was reflected in the views of the young people interviewed as part of youth work-led initiatives, summarised in the effective practice literature review, where a sense of belonging underpinned all the successful schemes.



The sense of “membership and belonging” the focus group participants felt towards their provision was related to ease of accessibility (locality) and the voluntary relationships built with those adults who delivered within the provision. Suggesting relationships and easy access were the important criteria for those active in youth provision.



Having a sense of belonging is crucial to good mental health and wellbeing. The strength in developing this sense of belonging found in quality youth work provision should be investigated further. This could contribute to counteracting the feelings of loneliness and low mood that have been found to be growing within the current young population, both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic ([Nice et al., 2021](#)).

Reviewing the results of the questionnaires, both young people and their guardians identified support for mental health and wellbeing as their greatest need. With effective youth-led initiatives providing this essential element of belonging, it would be useful to understand why and how youth work supports belonging and its positive impact on mental health. Any impact framework that is considered should include measuring belonging and wellbeing as a fundamental outcome.

Recommendations to consider:

- Coordinate the delivery of high-quality provision by a youth work trained workforce in each of the 21 wards. All young people should have the right to youth provision that is within a 15-minute walk of their homes.
- Ensure that the measurement framework monitors the impact of youth work on feelings of belonging.

Youth sector workforce

The review has not captured all youth workers operating in Blackpool. However, analysis of the provider data suggests that full-time equivalent (FTE) qualified youth workers and youth support workers are under-resourced. An audit would identify gaps and enable targeting to address this imbalance. This workforce should be strengthened and supported to work with other disciplines providing services with young people in Blackpool.



The effective practice literature review offers examples of how providers operating in health, sport and arts have upskilled professionals from these disciplines or how these providers have worked alongside youth workers to support positive outcomes. Blackpool should aim for youth work skills and traits to be utilised in all young people services. For example, the active delivery team could be offered level 2 and 3 youth work training to facilitate the holistic approach to improve the social, mental and physical wellbeing of the young people they work with.

The evidence appraised as part of the literature review demonstrates the importance of the transformative relationships that were enabled by youth workers. The expertise to facilitate an environment where complex group dynamics exist, where young people can develop and where relationships with adults are less power led should not be underestimated. The skills and traits required to manage this dynamic are complex, with a need for reflexivity that should be an element of training for all staff working with young people.

Reflective clinical supervision is recognised as a practice that enhances youth work (Harris, 2020). The quantitative research did not provide enough data to inform understanding in how embedded this practice is within Blackpool youth provision. However, there is qualitative evidence that reflective practice is used to support youth workers' learning and development. For example, the service review observations demonstrated reflective practice being used by the participating organisations. In addition, Blackpool's Children's Services' Reflective Supervision Model includes reflective supervision for colleagues working with children, young people and families. The model includes personal reflective supervision for practitioners and observed practice.

The information collected in the review was insufficient to make specific recommendations for a workforce training programme. However, the analysis of the quantitative data suggests that training is under-resourced and therefore, a wide-ranging development programme would benefit the workforce. The development plan could be informed by a wide-ranging audit to capture youth provision's recruitment, training and CPD needs.

Recommendations to consider:

- Coordinate a workforce recruitment and training needs assessment that includes both paid and unpaid workers.
- Include colleagues who provide broader young people services in the recruitment and training needs assessment.
- Develop a support programme based on the recruitment and training needs assessment findings.¹³
 - Reflective practice should be promoted and supported, and peer observations could be coordinated.
- Implement the NYA's recommendation to provide two FTE JNC professional youth workers per secondary education establishment, as outlined in the sector's [Ten Year Vision for Youth Work](#), to ensure sufficient community-based youth provision for Blackpool's young people.
- Adopt and adapt an evidence framework aligned with youth work principles to measure the transformative power of youth work.

Youth work supporting wider social outcomes

As discussed in the effective practice review, quality youth work can enable the development of critical capabilities, including autonomy, mutual respect and a sense of mastery, in an environment

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- ¹³ This could include access to level 2 and 3 youth work training and support to increase the numbers of youth work qualified staff within Blackpool.

that is designed to facilitate a sense of belonging. These critical capabilities, developed in a supportive environment, could help young people to build the resilience to develop protective factors and identify what they need to do to realise their personal aspirations.

Ensuring that the voluntary nature of the relationship between the youth worker and young person is safeguarded, youth work would be an asset in contributing to better outcomes for the young people of Blackpool. For example, [the Blackpool Rock Families, policy, procedures & practice guidance](#) states the importance of families building “a wider eco support system”, which enables them to make the changes they need to thrive and succeed. The guidance also emphasises the importance of staff working across teams to provide a “jigsaw of support”. The relationship-based approach the Blackpool Rock Families model promotes would align well with youth work principles.

An understanding of where youth provision currently supports wider outcomes and how this can be expanded into other disciplines would support broader positive outcomes for the young people of Blackpool. Once gaps are identified, expanding the training programme to other disciplines and exploring how youth work can support wider outcomes should be investigated.

Recommendation to consider:

- Explore opportunities where youth work can contribute to the wider community outcomes.

Attracting and retaining young people to access youth provision

Nineteen of 25 (76%) organisations had “all young people” as one of their main beneficiaries. This combined with 52% stating that their provision is open access/universal could create the potential for delivery being too wide in terms of age profile and activities. This could be mitigated by organisations involving young people in design and development of provision, as observed in the organisations that took part in the practice review exercise.

Organisations who provide all age, universal services will be minded to segment their programme to target groups within their universal offer. For example, a universal multiple activity programme is fine with the seven – 11 age group, but as participants get older, their preferences get more refined, e.g., volunteer or social action programmes.

Segmenting participants by age, and in some cases gender, could support greater engagement and involvement. Evidence from consultation suggests a well-defined, co-produced, wide-ranging programme of activities for younger age groups would be effective at engaging and capturing interest in youth provision. Conversely, involvement in the design, development and delivery of targeted activities could help to retain older participants and attract young people who are 14 years and older.

In general, volunteering and social action is the activity most likely to attract and retain young people as they get older. Improving the range of volunteering and social action activities on offer to young people, as well as improving the promotion of opportunities and highlighting the benefits of participating in these activities, could increase uptake.



volunteering and social action is the activity most likely to attract and retain young people as they grow older

Volunteering and social action was the lowest priority for parents and carers, with 21% stating they did not want their children to participate in these activities. As volunteering and social action are motivators for young people to participate in youth provision as they get older, it is important that parents and carers are supported in understanding the benefits of these initiatives.

A gender-informed focus was highlighted in the effective practice review. This was recognised both in terms of the activities used to engage young people and support service need. In the context of Blackpool having the ninth-highest rate of suicide of any upper-tier local authority in England during the period of 2015–2017, an example to highlight was the increasing national suicide rates for young men. In line with the national picture, males in Blackpool are consistently more at risk over all age groups (JSNA Blackpool).

There were also gender preferences identified through the consultation. These could be explored with young people as part of the participation process at both a strategic level and within individual organisations.

Recommendations to consider:

- Conduct an in-depth audit to gather additional information on providers of art, music and dance activities in Blackpool.
- Develop and coordinate a Blackpool-wide programme of volunteering and social action opportunities aimed at young people aged 14 years and above.
- Help providers modify their programmes and activities to support the engagement of 14-year-olds and above.
 - This should provide progression from universal multi-activity at seven – 13 years to focused activities such as the gym, the arts, music sessions, volunteering or job clubs at 14 years and above.
- Adopt a framework to help organisations improve participation practices, specifically in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of activities and services. It should be:
 - designed to help organisations segment participants to target activities and services that are most likely to interest them
 - aligned with and informed by the Blackpool-wide youth participation strategy
 - achieving the appropriate [NYA Quality Mark](#) standards for youth work provision
- Assist other stakeholders in understanding the benefits of children and young people engaging in youth provision. For example, parents and carers did not appear to recognise the benefits of volunteering and social action.
- Collaborate with stakeholders and young people to identify areas where gender-focused provision may be beneficial.

Awareness of activities and support services

Lack of awareness of where to access activities or support services was widely quoted as a reason for not participating in provision. The older age groups generally had less awareness by activity and service. On the surface this would suggest a need to improve communication channels when promoting activities and support services.

Volunteering and social action as an example provides an interesting case. Young people, as they get older, are more likely to engage with or are open to participate in this activity. However, this activity had the poorest return when it comes to awareness of available opportunities. This demonstrates there is at least some mismatch in communication between supply and demand when you consider 33% percent of the surveyed organisations stated they offered social action or volunteering as part of their weekly programme.

Undertaking the desk top research, it was clear there was a lack of up-to-date information for young people to find services or activities. The difficulty in identifying the services, activities and the organisations that provide them demonstrates the need for better Blackpool-wide coordination. This observation was confirmed through the stakeholder consultations, with a lack of awareness of activities and support available being stated to be a significant barrier for all cohorts.

A strong indicator that young people would be open to participating in activities was if their friends attended or if it was recommended by someone they trusted. This indicator increased with age, suggesting that a campaign aligned with a renewed offer and designed and developed with young people could be more effective if communicated through friends, teachers, youth workers and volunteers.

Recommendations to consider:

- Develop a marketing and communication plan to promote and communicate available activities and services to and with young people. It should be:
 - coordinated by an agency with a remit to promote the statutory offer throughout Blackpool
 - developed with young people, and serious consideration should be given to segmenting the offer by age
 - promoted, with information segmented for different audiences to facilitate referrals from trusted people known to the young person

Safety

Young people felt unsafe travelling to and from provision. The focus group discussions revealed that a perceived availability and high prevalence of drugs and alcohol increased the unsafe feelings when travelling within the community.

Engaging users and non-users of provision in identifying if there is an issue locally and if it inhibits participation in their provision would enable a greater understanding of the issues young people face. Once established, supporting young people to develop protective factors to adapt behaviours and/or routines, and identifying how the provision can modify arrangements to increase feelings of safety, could support greater participation. For example, focusing on the safety of young people during the times where it is most critical for them such as when travelling to and from clubs and groups.

Recommendations to consider:

- Adopt a framework to help organisations improve participation practice and support co-production.
- Develop a co-produced tool kit to support youth workers in engaging young people in identifying real and perceived safety issues (local) and developing action-based protective factors to mitigate real and perceived risks.
- Develop a safer route to youth provision plan in collaboration with the local Police to reassure young people.

Cost

The young person quantitative data suggests cost has little impact on participation. However, when explored in the focus groups, young people felt that if the cost of provision increased it would quickly become an inhibitor. Travel cost was a barrier to young people below 16 years of age and this could influence the provision in which they decide to participate.

Parents and carers cited cost of fees and equipment for engagement, alongside lack of awareness of opportunities as the biggest barriers to youth provision participation. This demonstrates a disparity in perception when it comes to inhibitors to participation between young people and their parents and carers.



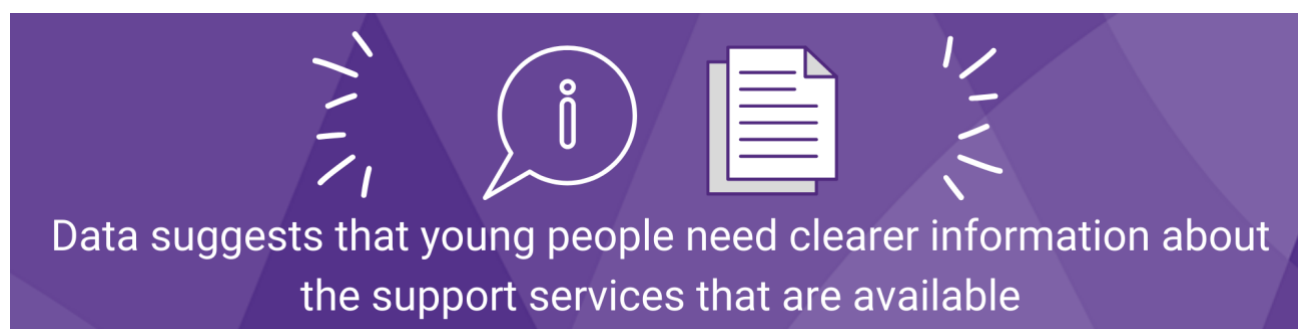
Another aspect related to cost barriers was the perceived inaccessibility to tourist leisure activities available in Blackpool. These unique leisure activities could provide an enhanced opportunity to access leisure time provision. However, in general, the young people involved in the focus groups saw this as a negative rather than a positive.

Recommendations to consider:

- Increase awareness and potentially enable more young people to access services that they currently cannot afford.
 - Leisure services offer a wide range of heavily subsidised provision for young people in Blackpool. Align this offer with the coordination of a marketing and communication plan to promote services and activities.
- Engage tourist leisure businesses to improve the services they offer to local young people and raise awareness of the current offerings.
- Make youth provision free of charge and provide resources to local youth providers by generating a council-coordinated funding stream.
- Undertake targeted work with youth clubs and youth groups to help their members to access funding to enable them to participate in provision (i.e. equipment). This could be a centrally funded grant system led and coordinated by young people

Support services

Support services designed for young people require further consultation. Analysis from the data collected for this report infers that young people need clearer information about the support services available, and they are most open to receive this information from people they trust.



Most of the provision that participated in the questionnaire provided support services. A centrally coordinated audit would clarify what organisations in Blackpool are offering in terms of support services and to what level. This combined with the support offered by statutory bodies could provide a directory of services that are available for young people. The opportunity to improve awareness through a coordinated communication approach could then be created.

Young people would be one stakeholder in this process, but as young people are more likely to access services as a result of a recommendation from a trusted person, parents, teachers and youth workers should also be engaged.

Mental health was a prominent support need identified by parents, carers and young people. Additionally, guardians identified that people within their household affected by poor mental health detrimentally impacted the young people in the household. One in three households also stated that issues related to “fitness”, “physical health” or “lack of finances” affected at least one adult in the household, and this had a negative impact on young people.

It appears from the data that support need increases with age and that the support most frequently selected across the age groups continues to increase. This suggests several hypotheses; early intervention is not being received, is unsuccessful, or support need increases with age. However, barriers could also contribute to support not being received. This could be a result of a lack of confidence, anxiety and/or issues related to a lack of available support.

Recommendations to consider:

- Develop a marketing and communication plan to promote and communicate young people's activities and provision.
 - Promotion and information should be segmented for different audiences to facilitate referrals from trusted people known to the young person.
- Adopt and adapt a multi-discipline evaluation framework to monitor the impact and effectiveness of support services partnerships.
- Investigate where provision could benefit from a gender focus in collaboration with stakeholders and young people.

Next steps

The review of Blackpool youth provision was undertaken to document current delivery, identify what works for young people and identify areas for development. The review is designed to advise a development plan that will inform future youth provision in Blackpool.

The development plan will underpin the evolution of youth provision in Blackpool. It will be published in early summer of 2022 and regular progress updates will be shared with stakeholders.

NYA

National Youth Agency

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Blackpool Youth Provision Review Report Recommendations		
Area	Recommendation	Additional Information
Youth Sector Workforce	Coordinate a workforce recruitment and training needs assessment that includes both paid and unpaid workers.	Reflective practice should be promoted and supported, and peer observations could be coordinated.
	Include colleagues who provide broader young people services in the recruitment and training needs assessment.	
	Develop a support programme based on the recruitment and training needs assessment findings. ³	
	Implement the NYA's recommendation to provide two FTE JNC professional youth workers per secondary education establishment, as outlined in the sector's Ten Year Vision for Youth Work, to ensure sufficient community-based youth provision for Blackpool's young people.	
Accessible Provision	Adopt and adapt an evidence framework aligned with youth work principles to measure the transformative power of youth work.	
	Coordinate the delivery of high-quality provision by a youth work trained workforce in each of the 21 wards. All young people should have the right to youth provision that is within a 15-minute walk of their homes.	
Coordination of Youth Provision	Ensure that the measurement framework monitors the impact of youth work on feelings of belonging.	
Co-ordination of Youth Provision	Explore a model to support central coordination of youth provision across Blackpool.	
Youth Involvement, Engagement and Participation	Co-produce a youth participation strategy to support young people's involvement in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of activities and services. It should be:	
	Adopt a framework to support Blackpool-wide young person participation.	
Youth Work Supporting Wider Social Outcomes	Coordinate a young person group to oversee the implementation of the development plan that will support the evolution of youth provision in Blackpool.	
	Explore opportunities where youth work can contribute to the wider community outcomes.	
Attracting and Retaining Young People to Access Youth Provision	Conduct an in-depth audit to gather additional information on providers of art, music and dance activities in Blackpool.	This should provide progression from universal multi-activity at 7–13 years to focused activities such as the gym, the arts, music sessions, volunteering or job clubs at 14 years and above. designed to help organisations segment participants to target activities and services that are most likely to interest them aligned with and informed by the Blackpool-wide youth participation strategy achieving the appropriate NYA Quality Mark standards for youth work provision
	Develop and coordinate a Blackpool-wide programme of volunteering and social action opportunities aimed at young people aged 14 years and above.	
	Help providers modify their programmes and activities to support the engagement of 14-year-olds and above.	
	Adopt a framework to help organisations improve participation practices, specifically in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of activities and services. It should be:	
Awareness of Activities and Support Services	Assist other stakeholders in understanding the benefits of children and young people engaging in youth provision. For example, parents and carers did not appear to recognise the benefits of volunteering and social action.	coordinated by an agency with a remit to promote the statutory offer throughout Blackpool developed with young people, and serious consideration should be given to segmenting the offer by age promoted, with information segmented for different audiences to facilitate referrals from trusted people known to the young person
	Collaborate with stakeholders and young people to identify areas where gender-focused provision may be beneficial.	
	Develop a marketing and communication plan to promote and communicate available activities and services to and with young people. It should be:	
Safety	Develop a marketing and communication plan to promote and communicate young people's activities and provision.	
	Adopt a framework to help organisations improve participation practice and support co-production.	
	Develop a co-produced tool kit to support youth workers in engaging young people in identifying real and perceived safety issues (local) and developing action-based protective factors to mitigate real and perceived risks.	
Cost	Develop a safer route to youth provision plan in collaboration with the local Police to reassure young people.	Leisure services offer a wide range of heavily subsidised provision for young people in Blackpool. Align this offer with the coordination of a marketing and communication plan to promote services and activities.
	Increase awareness and potentially enable more young people to access services that they currently cannot afford.	
	Engage tourist leisure businesses to improve the services they offer to local young people and raise awareness of the current offerings.	
	Make youth provision free of charge and provide resources to local youth providers by generating a council-coordinated funding stream.	
Support Services	Undertake targeted work with youth clubs and youth groups to help their members to access funding to enable them to participate in provision (i.e. equipment). This could be a centrally funded grant system led and coordinated by young people.	Promotion and information should be segmented for different audiences to facilitate referrals from trusted people known to the young person.
	Develop a marketing and communication plan to promote and communicate young people's activities and provision.	
	Adopt and adapt a multi-discipline evaluation framework to monitor the impact and effectiveness of support services partnerships.	
	Investigate where provision could benefit from a gender focus in collaboration with stakeholders and young people.	

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officers:	Chris Coyle, Assistant Director of Children's Services and Sara McCartan, Head of Service – Adolescent Services
Meeting Date:	2 February 2023

CORPORATE PARENT STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide scrutiny committee with an update regarding Blackpool's Corporate Parent Strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of the strategy to provide scrutiny and support.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No other alternative options to be considered.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

6.1 The term corporate parent describes the collective responsibility of the whole council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children and young people who are or who have been one of 'Our Children'.

6.2 Blackpool's Corporate Parenting Strategy is designed to support the authority to be a good corporate parent and fulfils its duties corporately, in partnership with other statutory agencies, towards Our Children and Our Young People as described in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

6.3 To ensure that the new strategy focusses on what Our Children and Our Young People identified as what matters to them we have worked alongside them to develop five promises (Appendix X(b)).

- 1) Care & Respect
- 2) Your Relationships
- 3) Your Health
- 4) Your Education
- 5) Your Future

These five promises, launched in October 2022, are now our strategic priorities in this strategy and further demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the voice of our children and young people continue to drive the agenda and priorities.

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 10(a): Corporate Parent Strategy
Appendix 10(b): The 5 Promises

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Any financial considerations in delivering the strategy will follow the relevant approval channels.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 There are no legal implications to consider. The Corporate Parenting Panel oversees the Corporate Parenting Strategy ensuring the authority fulfils its duties for Our Children and Our Young People as described in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no issues of concern, appropriate governance arrangements are in place via the

Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Panel is the lead governance arrangement for the ownership and accountability of our Corporate Parenting strategy. The purpose of the Corporate Parent Panel is to ensure that the local authority delivers its 5 Promises and commitment to improve outcomes for children, young people and families through the ethos of Blackpool Families Rock.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Key headlines from the Sustainability Impact Assessment tool have been considered and there are no sustainability, climate change or environmental adjustments to be made at this time.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 To ensure that the strategy focusses on what Our Children and Our Young People identified as what matters to them we have worked alongside them to develop five promises which are now our strategic priorities.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None

Blackpool's Corporate Parenting Strategy

2022 - 2024



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Foreword

As our Corporate Parents you have the privilege of making sure that we have a safe and happy childhood that will allow us to grow into independent adults. We think that it is important that we have been part of the writing of the new Five Promises and we are pleased that you are committed to keeping them. It shows that our corporate parents and everyone involved have the commitment to ensure children and young people influence and shape the services working alongside them.

You have been my Corporate Parent for almost 20 years I am pleased to say that I have seen massive improvements in the services that support me and other children and young people with similar experiences during that time.

Tom, Justuz Extra

Blackpool's ambition is to provide the very best care and support to all children, young people and families when facing challenges in their life. We know that children looked after and care leavers are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society. It is therefore crucial that we as Corporate Parents work together to improve the lives and outcomes for children in our care and those children who have left care thus ensuring that we meet the aims and aspirations for these, as for all other children, ensuring that they reach their full potential. Throughout this document we shall refer to children and young people who are looked after or leaving care as "our children and young people".

Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services

Introduction:

Welcome to Blackpool's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 24. To ensure that the strategy focuses on what our children and young people identified as what matters to them we have worked alongside our children and young people to develop five promises. These five promises are now our strategic priorities in this strategy and further demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the voice of our children and young people continue to drive the agenda and priorities.

What is Corporate Parenting?

The term corporate parent describes the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are or who have been one of Our Children or Young People:

'Corporate parenting principlesshould shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers.'

Applying Corporate Parenting Principles 2018

Governance Arrangements:

The Corporate Parenting Panel will be the lead governance arrangement for the ownership and accountability of this Corporate Parenting strategy. It will hold officers and partners to account for their delivery of the 5 Promises and the outcomes achieved. It is intended that each Corporate Parenting Board meeting will be themed around the 5 Promises in the strategy to ensure focus, robust monitoring and to maintain momentum.

The panel is made up of elected members, key service leaders, council officers, and service providers, representatives from wider partners and our children in care and care leavers. The Panel provides strong leadership ensuring that the needs of our children and young people are addressed whilst continuing to build on our strengths and achieve great outcomes. The ambitions and aspirations set out in this strategy are supported by a series of live plans that relevant Heads of Service are responsible for. These plans will drive the Five Promises and progress will be reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel on quarterly basis. Once a year there will be a 'Take Over' Panel where our children and young people will chair the Panel, set the agenda and hold the panel to account on areas they are passionate about.

Our Partners

For this Effective Corporate Parenting strategy to be successfully achieved it requires everyone involved including Blackpool council and its partners, such as health services, Police, schools, housing, elected members, officers, teachers, GP's etc to recognise their role as corporate parents and understand what they can contribute to enable us to be the best corporate parents we can be to all our children and young people. In Blackpool we have a wide range of partners who support our children and young people as their Corporate Parents. This Corporate Parenting Strategy is also underpinned by our Partnership commitment to ensuring that the needs of our children and young people are met in the best way possible by partners prioritising access to resources, but when providing a service we should always continue to challenge ourselves by asking 'would this be good enough for my child'.

Priority 1

PROMISE 1 – CARE AND RESPECT

We promise to care about you, so you feel safe and loved and we will always treat you with respect.

What Our Children and Young People say is important:

- Listen to Our Children and Young People
- Keep Our Children and Young People safe
- Be honest and open
- Involve Our Children and Young People in the decision made about their life
- Talk to Our Children and Young People and write about them with care and respect and in a way that they can understand
- Visit when we say we will and be on time
- Return calls and messages and be there when Our Children need us
- Do the things that we say we will
- Celebrate Our Childrens successes
- Spend time with Our Children and Young People so we get to know them really well
- Never give up on Our Children and Young People

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Undertake good quality, meaningful life story work to support Our Children and Young People in understanding their journey
- Ensure Our Children and young people have the opportunity to create their own memory boxes where they can keep all the things that are important to them.
- Ensure Our Children and Young People are always be fully included in discussions and decisions made about their life and their future. Including ensuring Our Children are creatively engage in taking part and leading their In Our Care Reviews
- Foster trusted relationships by limiting the changes in those working with Our Children and young people. Where a child or young person has a change in the professionals supporting them, we will strive to ensure that there are meaningful 'hellos' and 'goodbyes'

Priority 2

PROMISE 2 – YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

We promise to build a trusting relationship with you and make sure you see and spend time with the people who are important to you

What Our Children and Young People say is important:-

- Make sure Our Children and Young People live with people they like and who really care about them.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People keep in touch and see the people who are important to them as long as it is safe.
- Continue to work together with Our Children and Young People family to look at ways that they could return home safely in the future.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People spend time with their brothers and sisters if they can't live with them and keep working to bring them back together wherever possible.
- Work really hard to make sure Our Children and Young People don't have lots of changes of people who support them.
- Support Our Children and Young People to build a good network of people around you who you like and trust.
- Spend quality time with Our Children and Young People so we get to know Our really well.
- Say goodbye to Our Children and Young People if we have to leave.

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Ensure all workers will have a good understanding of Life Long links and Our children and young people will be engaged with the programme.
- Increase in the proportion of Our Children with long term home stability
- Decrease in the proportion of Our Children experiencing home instability

Priority 3

PROMISE 3 – YOUR HEALTH

We promise to support you to be happy and healthy

What Our Children and Young People say is important:-

- Make sure Our Children and Young People have the right support to meet any health needs they have.
- Make sure we arrange your health check with Our Children and Young People.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People understand the reasons why they are in our care.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People know their family's history in a way that they can understand.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People get the right support around your mental health.
- Help Our Children and Young People to make and keep friendships.
- Give Our Children and Young People opportunities to learn new skills to keep fit and healthy within your local community.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People have a passport to leisure.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People know their health history when you turn 18.

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Implement the outcome findings from the School Nurse delivery review
- Increase the proportion of Our Children who have had their annual health assessments completed on time and that they report that this was a positive experience and they had choice as to where this took place.
- Increase proportion of Our Children and Young People will have and use their Passport to Leisure card.
- Increase proportion of Our Children and Young People will be registered with the dentist and will experience good oral health outcomes.
- Increase proportion of Our Children and Young People will be permanently registered with a GP.
- Our Children and Young People will tell us in their annual survey that they are happy with the support they receive around their health and feel that they experience positive health outcomes.

Priority 4

PROMISE 4 – YOUR EDUCATION

We Promise to care about your education and give you every opportunity to learn and achieve.

What Our Children and Young People say is important:

- Ensure Our Children and Young People attend a Nursery/School/ College where they are happy and able to achieve.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People get the right support around their learning if and when they need it.
- Give Our Children and Young People lots of opportunities to learn new things and take part in after school activities.
- Try our best not to move Our Children and Young People school unless it really isn't working for them.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People don't get taken out of their lessons just because we need to see them.
- Provide opportunities for Our Children and Young People to come and work with the council if it is right for them.
- Support Our Children and Young People to achieve their goals and career path whatever they choose to do.
- Support Our Children and Young People opportunities to have meaningful work experience.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People have the right equipment to support their learning.

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Improve the quality of each child's Personal Education Plan (PEP), as this underpins and supports their education by providing a collective memory about a child's education; improving the educational experience of the child by helping everyone gain a clear understanding of the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet each child's educational needs.
- To further support our children we have recruited Academic Tuition Mentors (ATM) who work across the 13 schools that our children attend. This ensures that they have access to high quality tuition where it is needed. We know that access to consistent education is a key factor in ensuring stability for our children. We therefore have a central focus on supporting the child's home arrangements and advocate at every opportunity to promote educational stability. Where a school move is unavoidable we support timely moved to reduce missed education.

- Work with schools to encourage them to engage in training that helps them to understand the experience of our children and how this may impact on their educational journey. This includes expanding our Trauma Informed Training offer to schools;
- Enhance our focus on extra-curricular engagement of Our Children and support them to develop interests and activities outside of school;
- Continue to strongly support access to higher education, recognising that the path may not be easy and providing extra support over and beyond to ensure each young person's success.

Priority 5

PROMISE 5 – YOUR FUTURE

We Promise to help prepare you for the future and support you to fulfil your hopes and dreams

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Work with Our Children and Young People to create the right plan for your future
- Support Our Children and Young People to learn life skills so that they can be independent in the future
- Be ambitious for Our Children and Young People and encourage them to dream big
- Make sure Our Young People know how much money they are entitled to and have support on how to manage it
- Make sure Our Children and Young People know and understand their rights as a child/young adult who has experienced care
- Support you to stay with the people you live with at 18 with if it's what you both want
- Help Our Children and Young People to find a good home when it is time for you to live independently
- Support Our Children and Young People into education, training or work so they can achieve their goals
- Continue to work with the Care Leavers Covenant to enhance Our Offer to Our Young People
- Listen to Our Children and Young People so they have a voice in how services continue to develop
- Keep the door open for Our Children and Young People so they can come back if they need us

What we will do as part of this strategy:

Ensure continuous professional development of all the professionals who support Our Children and Young people including:

- Support for our young people to sustain their homes by being proactive in the support that we provide;
- Support for our young people who would like to have therapeutic support to access their records;
- Support for our young people to raise awareness of their rights and entitlements as care experienced young people;
- Support to our practitioners to ensure our young people consistently lead their pathway plans.

We will also:

- Further develop our Staying Put Scheme so that more young people are able to stay at home for longer.
- Continue to work co-productively to ensure that our children and young people shape services working with them are right for them;
- Ensure our children and young people know that our support is always available whenever they need it including developing our offer to those who are over the age of 25 who would benefit from advice and support;
- Increase the Leaving Care Grant in line with the increase to the cost of living
- Continue to develop our post 18 offer from Health Services
- Further develop the Jobs in the Family Firm approach maximising on the refreshed and improved Care Leavers' Covenant.



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The 5 PROMISES

Blackpool's Pledge to Our Children and Young People

As your corporate parents we want you to know that we will keep you safe, treat you with care and respect, support you to have meaningful relationships, have a good education and make sure you are happy, healthy and ready to make your way in the world; so you can go on to achieve all your hopes and dreams. We promise to...

1. Care & Respect

WE PROMISE to CARE about you, so you feel safe and loved and we will always treat you with RESPECT.

- Listen to you
- Keep you safe
- Be honest and open
- Involve you in the decision made about your life
- Talk to you and write about you with care and respect and in a way that you can understand
- Come and see you when we say we will and be on time
- Return your calls and messages and be there when you need us
- Do the things that we say we will
- Celebrate your Successes
- Spend time with you so we get to know you really well
- Never give up on you



2. Your Relationships

WE PROMISE to build a trusting RELATIONSHIP with you and makes sure you see and spend time with the people who are important to you.

- Make sure you live with people you like and who really care about you
- Make sure you keep in touch and see the people who are important to you as long as it is safe
- Continue to work together with your family to look at ways that you could return home safely in the future
- Make sure you spend time with your brothers and sisters if you can't live with them and keep working to bring you back together wherever possible
- Work really hard to make sure you don't have lots of changes of people who support you
- Support you to build a good network of people around you who you like and trust
- Spend quality time with you so we get to know you really well
- Come and say goodbye if we have to leave



3. Your Health

WE PROMISE to make sure you are HAPPY & HEALTHY

- Make sure you have the right support to meet any health needs you have
- Make sure we arrange your health check with you
- Make sure you understand the reasons why you are in our care
- Make sure you know your family's history in a way that you can understand
- Make sure you get the right support around your mental health
- Help you to make and keep friendships
- Give you opportunities to learn new skills to keep fit and healthy within your local community
- Make sure you have your passport to leisure
- Make sure you know your health history when you turn 18



4. Your Education

WE PROMISE to care about your EDUCATION and give you every opportunity to learn and achieve.

- Make sure you attend a Nursery/School/ College where you are happy and able to achieve
- Make sure you get the right support around your learning if and when you need it
- Give you lots of opportunities to learn new things and take part in after school activities
- Try our best not to move your school unless it really isn't working for you
- Make sure you don't get taken out of your lessons just because we need to see you
- Provide opportunities for you to come and work with the council if it is right for you
- Support you to achieve your goals and career path whatever you choose to do
- Give you opportunities to have meaningful work experience
- Make sure you have the right equipment to support your learning



5. Your Future

WE PROMISE to help prepare you for the FUTURE and support you to fulfil your hopes and dreams

- Support you to learn life skills so that you can be independent in the future
- Be ambitious for you and encourage you to dream big
- Make sure you know how much money you are entitled to and learn how to manage it
- Make sure you know and understand your rights as a child/young adult who has experienced care
- Help you to find a good home when it is time for you to live independently
- Support you to stay with the people you live with at 18 with if it's what you both want
- Work with you to create the right plan for your future
- Support you into education, training or work so you can achieve your goals
- Continue to work with the Care Leavers Covenant
- Listen to you and your experience so you have a voice in how are services continue to develop
- Keep the door open for you so you can come back if you need us



Neil Jack
Chief Executive

Clr Lynn Williams
Leader Blackpool Council

Victoria Gent
Director of Children's Services

Clr Jim Hobson
Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools

Witnessed by **JUSTUS** Children in Care Council members

Timothy
Hargrave
Quinn West
Pentaton
Gareth
Furbur
John
Gunter



Blackpool Council

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2023

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the contents of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee's Workplan for 2022/2023.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To approve the Committee Workplan, taking into account any suggestions for amendment or addition.

2.2 To monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations/actions.

2.3 To note the outcomes of the Mental Health of Young Men Scrutiny Review.

2.4 To note the outcome of the Young People classed as Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET) Scrutiny Review Panel meeting held on 26 September 2022.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is up to date and is an accurate representation of the Committee's work.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Scrutiny Workplan

A Scrutiny Workplanning Workshop was held on Tuesday 7 June 2022 to consider items for inclusion on the Committee's workplan for the 2022/2023 municipal year. The workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that will be undertaken by the Committee over the course of the year, both through scrutiny review and Committee meetings.

Attached at Appendix 11(a) is a draft of the proposed Workplan for 2022/2023, which will be used a starting point for further consideration at the Workplanning Workshop to be held in June 2023.

Committee Members are invited to suggest topics at any time that might be suitable for scrutiny review through completion of the Scrutiny Review Checklist. The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny.

6.2 Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

The table attached at Appendix 11(b) has been developed to assist the Committee in effectively ensuring that the recommendations made by the Committee are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Committee meeting.

Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and ask follow-up questions as appropriate to ensure that all recommendations are implemented.

6.3 Scrutiny Review Checklist

The Scrutiny Review Checklist is attached at Appendix 11(c). The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny.

The Committee is recommended to place an emphasis on the priorities and performance of the Council when considering requests for scrutiny reviews.

6.4 Mental Health of Young Men Scrutiny Review

The joint review of Mental Health Services for Young Men between the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee and Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee has now concluded. The final recommendations in the report fall within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health and Wellbeing and therefore the report will be submitted to the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee for approval and to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of that review should they be approved by the Executive.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 11(a) - Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee 2022/2023 Workplan.
- Appendix 11(b) - Implementation of Recommendations/Actions.
- Appendix 11(c)- Scrutiny Selection Checklist
- Appendix 11(d) – NEET Scrutiny Report

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2022/2023	
2 February 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children’s Social Care Update – To receive the findings of the Department for Education Care Review launched in January 2021. 2. Youth Justice Update – To receive an update on the work of the Youth Justice Team. 3. Children’s Social Care Medium Term Financial Strategy – To review the proposed MTFS. 4. Mental Health in Schools Update – To receive an update on the work of the model introduced into schools in September 2022. 5. Youth Provision Review Update – To receive an update on the implementation plan from the review of Youth Provision in Blackpool.
June 2023 TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literacy Strategy Update – To receive an update on the implementation of the Literacy Strategy. 2. Early Help Work with Families – To receive a report outlining the work being undertaken by Early Help to support families in Blackpool.

Scrutiny Review Work	
Post-September 2022	<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools</p> <p>To review the provisions within schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. Potential link to SEND target of: <i>'Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health.'</i></p>
TBC	<p>SEND Review Recommendations</p> <p>To consider the response to the recommendations from the SEND Review undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. It was noted that the Council had received one recommendation and the NHS four.</p>
TBC	<p>Looked After Children in Blackpool – Children's Homes</p> <p>Consideration of the viability of Council-run children's homes.</p>

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
1	09.01.20	To receive the findings of the National Association of Children's Services examining the costs of residential placements for children and the impact on Local Authorities.	June 2022	Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services	This work was never completed by DfE due to Covid-19 and will now be built into a care review launched by DfE in January 2021, with an expected 12 month timescale. Outcomes of care review anticipated by June 2022. To be provided to November 2022 meeting.	
2	09.01.20	To receive the findings of the Department for Education impact study on out of area placements.	June 2022	Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services	This work was never completed by DfE due to Covid-19 and will now be built into a care review launched by DfE in January 2021, with an expected 12 month timescale. Outcomes of care review anticipated by June 2022. To be provided to November 2022 meeting.	
3	24.06.21	To receive regular updates on the work of the Young Inspectors with an update to be considered by the Committee at its meeting in June 2022.	June 2022	Kirsty Fisher, Engagement Officer	Report provided at the Committee meeting in November 2022.	Completed
4	09.12.21	That Better Start's draft Communications Strategy be shared with the Committee once completed.	November 2022	Clare Law, Director of Centre for Early Child Development	Report received in November 2022.	Completed
5	09.12.21	That a further update on the work of Better Start be provided in twelve months' time.	November 2022	Clare Law, Director of Centre for Early Child Development	Report received in November 2022.	Completed
6	09.12.21	That further details of the Personal, Social and Health	November 2022	Paul Turner, Assistant Director	Report received in November 2022.	Completed

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
		Education programme offered in schools be provided at a future meeting, with particular emphasis on raising awareness of coercive relationships.		of Children's Services (Education, SEND and Early Years)		
7	09.12.21	That further consideration be given by the Committee to the findings of the 'Child of the North' report and the potential impact on Blackpool.	TBC			TBC
8	24.03.22	That an update on the work of the Thrive model, introduced into schools from September 2022, be provided.	January 2023	Ms Elaine Walker Integrated Emotional Health and Wellbeing Manager, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Ms Nicola Turner will be in attendance in January 2023 to provide an update on the work in schools on mental health.	Completed
9	22.09.2022	That the availability data on the number of Semi-Independent Homes in Blackpool be provided following the meeting.	17 November 2022	Kara Haskayne, Head of Children's Social Care	A report has been scheduled for the 17 November 2022 Committee meeting	
10	08.12.2022	To include an item on the work programme to look at the resource capacity of the Young Inspectors Team.	TBC		To be added to workplan during consideration of Municipal Year 2023/24.	
11	08.12.2022	To invite the Head of Library Service to a future meeting to	TBC		To be added to workplan during consideration of Municipal Year 2023/24.	

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
		provide a report on the services provided within the community in respect of the Literacy Strategy.				

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SCRUTINY SELECTION CHECKLIST**Title of proposed Scrutiny:**

The list is intended to assist the relevant scrutiny committee in deciding whether or not to approve a topic that has been suggested for scrutiny.

Whilst no minimum or maximum number of 'yes' answers are formally required, the relevant scrutiny committee is recommended to place higher priority on topics related to the performance and priorities of the Council.

	Yes/No
The review will add value to the Council and/or its partners overall performance:	
The review is in relation to one or more of the Council's priorities:	
The Council or its partners are not performing well in this area:	
It is an area where a number of complaints (or bad press) have been received:	
The issue is strategic and significant:	
There is evidence of public interest in the topic:	
The issue has potential impact for one or more sections of the community:	
Service or policy changes are planned and scrutiny could have a positive input:	
Adequate resources (both members and officers) are available to carry out the scrutiny:	

Please give any further details on the proposed review:

Completed by:

Date:

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	26 January 2023

YOUNG PEOPLE CLASSED AS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET) SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To note the outcome of the Young People classed as Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET) Scrutiny Review Panel meeting held on 26 September 2022.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the outcome of the scrutiny review panel meeting be noted; and

2.2 That details of the impact of work taking place be reported back to the Committee in September 2023.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To allow an overview of the review work being undertaken by the Committee and ensure outcomes are recorded.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? Yes/No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes/No

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 At its 7 June 2022 work-planning meeting members of the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the issues effecting Young People Classed As Not In Employment, Education Or Training (NEET).
- 6.2 The meeting was held on 26 September 2022 and was attended by
Councillor Rick Scott;
Ms Jo Snape, Co-opted Member; and
Ms Gemma Clayton, Co-opted Member
- 6.3 The meeting was also attended by the following Council officers;
Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children’s Services
Ms Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Services
Mr Peter Legg, Head of Economic and Cultural Services
- 6.4 Members considered the training opportunities available to young people and how services are promoted to them. Issues facing work with young people were outlined at the meeting and included:
- 6.5 Low educational attainment – This was reported as the largest factor in young people becoming NEET. Attendance rates at secondary schools in Blackpool are below the national average and many young leave education with low or no qualifications.
- 6.6 Transience – Some young people arrive late in their education journey, having experienced a stalled education up to that point and no obligation to continue in traditional education once they had reached 18 years of age.
- 6.7 Reduction in Work Experience Opportunities – This factor had made it more difficult for those young people not suited to traditional education streams to find and gain experience in other areas.
- 6.8 Unstable domestic situation – Many young people in Blackpool live in families where they have to act as a carer to a parent or sibling, where they prioritise this role ahead of their own education. It was also highlighted that the care leavers were disproportionately regarded as NEET.
- 6.9 Employer willingness to employ NEET young people – A lack of understanding among employers regarding young people classed as NEET and especially those who are also care leavers means that many are not willing to offer opportunities to those in need.
- 6.10 Children’s Services was seeking to address these issues through the wrapping around of support for young people in schools, looking to promote better attendance and improve the educational offer. The offer of greater vocational opportunities was also being promoted

such as in the hospitality sector and construction. Adolescent services had also sought to target support to the most vulnerable groups of young people. The available data

- 6.11 The Council had sought this approach to operate vocational training commissioned jointly with partners in addition to the offer in schools. This had been the adopted approach to prevent adding pressure to schools' limited resources and ability to deliver the existing curriculum.
- 6.12 The rate of young people who were NEET was in part tracked by monitoring those between 18 and 24 who had claimed unemployment benefits. Although this number had fallen since the end of the Covid pandemic, Blackpool's average remained approximately double the national average. The Council had therefore sought to work with employers to generate work placements working with the Job Centre. This had generated 184 paid job placements, of which 80 were within Blackpool.
- 6.13 A youth hub, The Platform, had also been established through funding from the Community Renewal Fund. The Platform, located in Bickerstaffe House, receives referral of young people from the Job Centre as well as walk-ins from young people looking for training and employment opportunities. Originally it had been hoped that up to 300 young people could be engaged by the Platform, however over 370 had been signed up, with 84 subsequently finding employment and 85 entering training. Although this had been regarded as a success work was still need to evaluate what had been done and identify areas for further learning going forward.
- 6.14 It had been recognised in the long term that for the Platform to be a success, engagement needed to be maintained with young people and ensure that they could be helped into employment.
- 6.15 The Review Panel welcomed the information that it had received and asked that an update on the impact of all the work that had been outlined at the meeting be brought to a meeting in twelve months' time.
- 6.16 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.