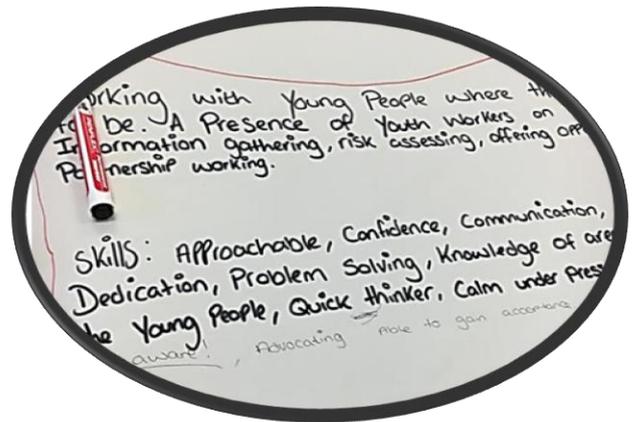




Youth Consultation for Radstock and Westfield



November – December 2017

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Introduction

This report documents the findings from a youth consultation undertaken by Vanessa Rogers, an independent youth work consultant¹, between November and December 2017. The consultation was commissioned by a partnership of agencies and providers of youth work in Radstock and Westfield wards. The partnership consists of:

- Bath and North Somerset (B&NES) Council
- Radstock and Westfield Churches Together
- Radstock Town Council
- Radstock Town Council
- Radstock and Westfield Big Local

There are approximately 1,354 young people aged 11-19 (up to 25 with additional needs) living in the Radstock and Westfield wards. This includes those that live in both towns along with young people living in the surrounding villages. Whilst the objective was to consult with 400 young people the number that actually contributed is 575, largely due to the support of local schools whose staff place huge value on youth work.

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used to capture the voices of young people. Where possible information has been triangulated to provide a balanced and clear snapshot. This was done using information provided by the youth partnership and local data already in the public domain collected by B&NES Council, the Bath and North Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment², Avon & Somerset Police and national statistics from NHS and the Office for National Statistics.

Much of the statistical data has been captured using a questionnaire, devised specifically for the consultation, which was distributed via local schools, youth clubs and uniformed groups. More in-depth information was gathered through focus groups in existing youth projects and schools in the catchment area.

A questionnaire for parents / grandparents / carers was circulated at the same time and the consultant had one-to-one meetings with professionals and volunteers from local authority youth services, uniformed groups and church youth groups. This provided useful information that is largely reflective of what young people say as well as offering an insight into community perceptions of local youth provision.

Objectives of the consultation

The objectives of this youth consultation are to:

- Prioritise local issues affecting young people
- Find out how many currently use existing voluntary and council run youth projects
- Seek feedback on the quantity and quality of this youth provision
- Identify key barriers to engagement and consider ways to overcome some of these
- Define short term or small-scale work that young people services could deliver to meet evidence-based local needs.

All of the information gathered, including completed questionnaires, notes from focus groups and parent / carer feedback, is held by Youth Connect on behalf of the partnership and is available to see on request within the appropriate boundaries of confidentiality.

¹ For more information go to www.vanessarogers.co.uk

² Information available to download from <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics>

Young people will see this report and be invited to a presentation to ensure that they see how participation in the process has contributed to the findings. They will also be kept informed of any changes in how youth provision is delivered and have opportunities to participate in any future development.

Summary of key points

- This report is based on feedback from a total of 575 young people (aged 11-19, up to 25 with additional needs) participating in a youth consultation that live in Radstock and Westfield wards in November - December 2017.
- Whilst the consultation asked young people to say if they live in Radstock, Westfield or elsewhere in the ward, responses demonstrate that young people self-identify in other ways and have an expectation that they will use services across the area rather than being confined to one part of it.
- Parents participating also showed an expectation that their children would move between Westfield and Radstock to access services.
- 55.3% of young people said that there is not enough for young people to do in their area.
- Some young people already participate in a wide range of out of school activities with 'Sport' being the most popular. This includes playing for school teams as well as in the community.
- The fourth most popular way to spend time outside of school is to attend a local youth club. Young people say the positive relationships built with youth workers is one of the main reasons that they attend regularly.
- The most popular reasons given for never going to a youth club is lack of interest in the activities offered, not being sure what happens in a youth club and not knowing where local youth provision is.
- The most popular youth club to attend is Radstock Youth Club. Many club members also go to Peasedown Youth Club, which was the most cited club in the 'Other' category on the questionnaire.
- The most requested time for youth provision to be open is at the weekend, particularly Friday and Saturday night and Saturday afternoon. Sunday afternoon is also considered a good time, particularly by younger participants (Years 7 & 8). The most popular week night for a youth club is Wednesday.
- Pupils in year 7 and 8 are most likely to say they rely on parents for information about local provision as well as practical help like transport and paying for entrance fees. This changes in year 9 and by Year 10-13 young people are most likely to get their information from friends and social media. School also plays an important role in promoting what is on locally for all pupils.
- With this in mind, effective communication with parents and new ways of promoting services should be considered so that young people know what is on in their area and

become familiar with local youth workers. This could be in school or in the community as suggested by young people.

- Older young people (16+) using current provision and year 11 pupils from Norton Hill showed great interest in becoming peer educators and peer mentors. In particular they feel this would be effective in raising awareness about substance misuse, online safety, body image and bullying.
- 72% of young people say they would like more of a say in their community and be given opportunities to shape local services for them.
- 20% say that they would like to take part in fundraising opportunities, with young people in Westfield and Radical Youth Club saying that they want to raise money so their clubs can be open more than one night a week.
- 26% of respondents said they would like to undertake some form of voluntary work to gain experience and learn new skills.
- The top six concerns for young people are bullying 63%, drugs 61%, exam stress 57%, alcohol 56% and body image 45%. Within the focus groups 100% said they had some experience of bullying, be it as a target, perpetrator or bystander.
- 35% of young people identified issues that impact negatively on mental health and emotional wellbeing, in particular exam stress.
- Although 45% of young people identify crime as a local concern, 76% say they feel safe all or most of the time. This suggests that links between fear of crime and actual crimes, reported or otherwise, needs further analysis to better understand the reasons behind the discrepancy.
- Within school focus groups a lack of public transport and/or the money to pay for it were cited as a major obstacle to accessing services for young people. However, this was not evidenced by the questionnaires where 28% identified road safety as a higher concern compared with 24% that ticked transport.
- Similarly, young people discussing this in youth club focus groups said that transport is not an issue because they walk everywhere, often attending more than one club in a week.
- Affordable housing is an issue for young people aged 17+, especially those that attend Radstock and Radical Youth Club. They voiced an opinion that any community development being undertaken is going to benefit those moving to the area rather than young people who have grown up there.

Background information

National data compiled by Unison from 180 local authorities that provide youth services found that budget cuts in 2014/15 and 2015/16 amounted to £123m³. This trend has continued through 2017, with many local authorities now contracting out their provision for young people or dramatically changing the way they provide services with a move away from open access provision to targeted support.

³ <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1158579/youth-services-cut-by-gbp387m-in-six-years>

This consultation, commissioned by the Radstock and Westfield Youth Partnership, demonstrates a local commitment to providing young people in the area with opportunities for personal and social development through high quality youth work.

Current provision

From keeping healthy to keeping safe, team games to employment, relationship advice to volunteering in the community, youth work provision enables young people to build skills for life. Central to this are the positive relationships that young people build with youth workers that enable them to educate, challenge and support in ways that other services for young people do not.

'The youth service is an amazing service for young people. Youth workers are viewed differently than the other adults they come into contact with enabling better relationships, better support networks and a space that feels safer to be themselves - youth services / clubs are needed.' (Parent – Radstock)

Current youth provision in Westfield and Radstock is provided by Youth Connect and partner voluntary sector organisations.

Name of provision	Location	Time
Radstock Youth Hub	Church Street, Radstock	Monday and Thursday 19.00-21.00
Westfield Youth Club	Westfield Methodist Church	Tuesday 19.00-21.00
Westfield Detached Session	Westfield	Thursday 16.00-18.00
Radical Café	Tea Rooms, Church Street Radstock	Friday 19.00-21.00

Radstock Youth Hub was the club most cited by young people during this process, with many saying that they have been a member for several years and attend regularly. This is an established club whereas Westfield, whose membership is still developing, has been open less than a year. Radical had the highest number of young people saying that they started off as members but now volunteer within the club.

Programmes for all provision are based on a needs analysis undertaken by youth workers and young people are involved in this process by direct consultation, planning meetings and feedback captured via evaluation forms.

Why involve young people in decision making?

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴ states that children have the right to be heard in decisions that affect them. This has been interpreted to include decisions made about services designed specifically for them like youth clubs and youth projects with many organisations now involving young people in everything from recruitment to commissioning. This consultation provided opportunities for a wide range of young people, both current service users and non-users to have their say about local issues, identify the types of support they need to become informed adults and share ideas about the way they would like to see youth services developed in the area. This reflects a national move towards co-produced services that are different to older deficit models that work on the basis that adults know what young people need and want and should therefore make all the decisions.

Methodology

Questionnaires

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

Quantitative evidence was largely obtained using questionnaires, which enabled a large number of young people to share their experience of living in Radstock and Westfield, their opinions on current provision for young people and suggest how they would like to see it developed in the near future. These were completed in five different ways:

- Within school, individually without support
- As part of a focus group, with facilitator support
- Facilitated face to face consultation with targeted groups
- Within a youth group, e.g. Scouts, Westfield Youth Club
- Within the community, e.g. on the Community Playbus or on the street

The original cut-off date for these to be returned was 1 December but this was extended to the 22nd due to the high number of returns from pupils in Years 7 – 13 at two local secondary schools. Questionnaires were completed at school during assembly or form time at the request of a teacher. They were also distributed via local youth groups and all young people were encouraged to be honest and objective. To try and avoid building unrealistic expectations about the process clear parameters were set about what could hope to be achieved through participation. This should reduce frustrations if after taking time to share their opinions and coming up with ideas for positive developments, they cannot see any immediate change.

Part One of the questionnaire **explored the youth clubs and out of school activities** young people **currently use**. This looked both at the types of activities that young people already take part in and enjoy and the reasons why they choose not to use others. In particular young people were asked whether they had experience of a local youth club and if so which ones.

Part Two asked young people if they think there is **currently enough to do in their area**, how they **find out** about the **opportunities open to them** and the **days and times** that they would like to see provision open. It also asked young people to indicate their **personal interests** based on activities and opportunities that could be available to them through youth work.

Part Three asked questions about **the community** and **young people's feelings about where they live**. This identifies how safe, valued and listened to young people feel along with identifying key issues of concern. This section also explored participation in **volunteering and / or youth democracy** now and in the future.

Part Four focused on **improvements** that could be made and encouraged young people to make suggestions about **how youth services could be developed** in response to their perceived needs.

A copy of the questionnaire for young people is available in Appendix 1.

Focus groups

To understand in more detail the experiences of young people it was important to collect qualitative data by facilitating a number of focus groups. These cross-referenced the key issues emerging from the questionnaires and provided opportunities for peer discussion.

In total seven focus groups were held between November 6 and 17th lasting 60-90 minutes, facilitated by the external consultant. The membership of focus groups held in secondary schools was selected by the teacher contact there. Those at Norton Hill were considered representative of pupils living in the ward and included Class Representatives, House

Captains, Sports Captains and members of a youth council, along with those that volunteered.

A focus group was also held in Writhlington School, where 10 young people from Year 7, 8 and 9 volunteered to meet with the consultant. Focus groups were also set up in Youth Connect clubs and the church run youth club, Radical. Here, youth workers invited young people to take part and clearly explained in advance what this would entail. Good youth work practice recognises that young people feel more confident and prepared if they know in advance what is expected of them and these focus groups provided opportunities for youth provision to be reviewed by those that use it.

The questionnaire was used to structure the agenda and open questions were asked to draw out a range of opinions. Discussions focussed on young people's local knowledge and experience and explored the strength of feeling on particular issues and then asked for evidence. Although much of this was anecdotal, it did reflect concerns shared by professionals and parents and correlates with information available to the public on the Bath & North East Somerset website⁵.

One-to-one interviews

Some young people felt unable to take part in a focus group but still wanted to contribute so where possible one-to-one interviews were offered. This includes those who said they could not complete the questionnaire unsupported due to a number of reasons, including literacy difficulties and learning disabilities. To keep the data in line the questionnaire was facilitated as a question and answer style conversation, writing down answers and making notes of other suggestions and comments made.

Parental consultation

In addition to consulting with young people, those with parental responsibility were also provided with opportunities to share concerns and suggest developments. This was done by:

- Mailing a questionnaire to parents of members of Youth Connect projects with a freepost return envelope
- Hosting two parent focus group evenings
- Local press coverage to raise awareness about the consultation and promote the focus groups
- A Twitter feed using a designated hash-tag and information on the Youth Connect Facebook page
- Asking local youth leaders, including the Scouts and Girl's Brigade, to give out questionnaires to parents and provide a collection point for completed forms
- The Community Playbus taking questionnaires out to reach young parents (under 25) using their services.

A copy of the questionnaire for parents, grandparents or other adults with caring responsibilities can be found in Appendix 2.

Professional Feedback

During visits to schools and youth organisations it was possible to gather feedback from professionals including church youth leaders and two deputy head teachers. The key message from both of schools was that youth workers play an important role in supporting young people to achieve and fulfil their potential as well as providing community links to other services available outside of school.

⁵ <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/children-and-young-people>

'Youth workers work in a different way, they can have the conversations that teachers can't in the classroom. Young people see them differently.' (Deputy Head – Norton Hill School)

Scope of the report

This report is a snapshot of young people in the Westfield and Radstock ward between November and December 2017. All consultation was on a voluntary basis with no inducement offered to young people to participate. Conclusions made and suggestions for development are based on observations, interviews and data reviewed during this time, hopefully making it an impartial and non-biased report.

The questionnaire clearly explained that whilst it was anonymous, responses would not be kept confidential as the purpose of collection was to inform the consultation. Every participant had the opportunity to tick a box instructing that their feedback not be used. The result of this is that although 596 questionnaires were completed, only 575 are referenced as 21 refused permission.

Focus groups were designed to draw out more detailed insights and reflections and suggestions for developing current youth provision to meet local needs. At the start of each meeting confidentiality was clearly explained and young people were made aware that direct information volunteered about anything likely to cause harm to them or someone else would not be kept secret. This includes explicit knowledge about substance misuse, crime and safeguarding. Details of local support services and the identity of the youth worker or teacher to talk to about concerns was given at each location to ensure that young people know that support is available.

Information gathered from all sources was reviewed against statistical evidence available from reliable sources including the Bath and North Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and that previously supplied by Youth Connect youth workers and the Youth Partnership. This should mean that key concerns identified by young people can be compared with known facts thereby ensuring that any changes made as a consequence of the consultation are based on a robust needs analysis, not local myths and hearsay.

Limits to the consultation

This report aims to be inclusive and representative, pulling together the views and experiences of as many young people as possible. To this purpose, invitations to participate were made to three secondary schools in the catchment area, voluntary and local authority youth clubs and projects, private youth groups, including a local theatre group, and specialist youth support services.

Two of the three secondary schools invited to take part in the consultation participated fully and this is where the majority of the completed questionnaires come from. Only one school did not engage, which may be the reason why less young people from Westfield took part.

All Youth Connect projects held consultation events which were publicised using their membership contacts list, word of mouth and social media. Uniformed groups are represented by the 1st Radstock Scouts, Mercury Explorer Unit and the Girls Brigade whose adult leaders distributed and collected back in questionnaires. However, there are other youth groups in the area, including dance schools, Air Cadets and St John's Ambulance, that whilst mentioned within the data were not targeted specifically due to time constraints.

To engage with more vulnerable or isolated young people, including young parents and young people with substance misuse issues, local support organisations were contacted. To hear the voice of young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties a local Mencap youth group was approached early on in proceedings but they were unable to contribute.

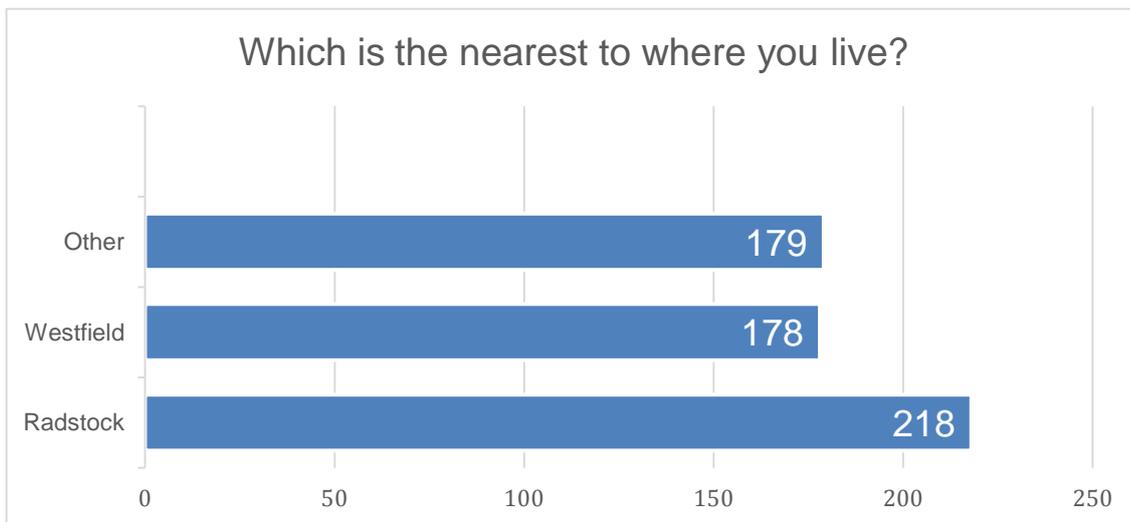
'I have passed this on to the parents and the young people that we work with in the Radstock area but we have not received any feedback from them that we can pass on.' Operations Manager, Keynsham & District Mencap Society

Unfortunately, this information was not received until after the consultation had begun and the tight timescale for the project made it impossible to arrange anything else, meaning that this group is under-represented.

Other sectors of the community not directly targeted were LGBT youth and young people from black and ethnic minority groups. Where possible information and concerns were raised during wider focus groups, but in order to offer provision that directly meets their needs more consultation will be required.

Demographics of young people consulted

Young people were asked to indicate on the questionnaire if they lived in Radstock, Westfield or somewhere else in the ward, 'Other'. This means that although they live in the ward there is no way of saying exactly where.



This could mean that the consultation has been very successful in engaging those living in the more rural parts of the ward or be in part due to the fact that young people are used to travelling every day for education and/ or to socialise so have a more fluid approach to belonging to an area. So, whilst a young person might live in Radstock North and go to Writhlington School, if their friends live in Westfield they will socialise there. This is demonstrated by the distance that some young people are prepared to walk to go to a youth club that they enjoy.

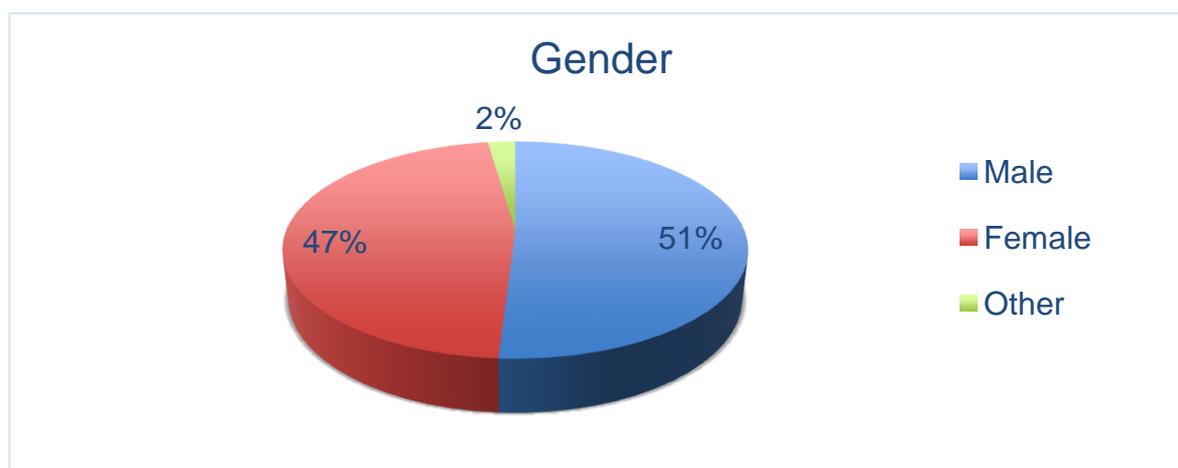
Where territorialism was shown it more likely to be defined by the estate that young people live on or the school they go to rather than the town they come from, although several young people said that it was 'better to come from Westfield than Radstock'.

Invited to participate in the consultation:

Name	Accepted	Declined	No response
Writhlington School	One focus group + questionnaires		
Norton Hill School	Two focus groups + questionnaires		
Somervale School			✓
Radstock Youth Club	Two focus groups, one-to-one		

	interviews + questionnaires		
Westfield Youth Club	One focus group, one-to-one interviews + questionnaires		
Urban Rugby - Bath Rugby Foundation	Group discussion Parent interviews Questionnaires		
Radical Youth Club	One focus group, one-to-one interviews + questionnaires		
Community Playbus Association	Group discussion + questionnaires		
1st Radstock Scout Group and Mercury Explorer Unit	Questionnaires		
Keynsham & District Mencap Society		✓	
Girls Brigade	Questionnaires		
The Oakhill Inn (staff aged 15-18)	One focus group + questionnaires		
Project 28	Questionnaires		
Merrimen Theatre Group			✓

Gender balance was also important to this consultation to ensure that the needs of both young men and women are considered. To support the inclusion of all young people it was agreed to offer three choices rather than the more traditional 'male' or 'female' tick boxes. Instead, young people were asked to self-identify their gender and space was left for further description (if desired) alongside a third box 'other'.



It should be noted that for this consultation no questions were asked about sexuality although local services and support for LGBT youth were discussed during focus groups in relation to sexual health and sex and relationships education (SRE).

How young people currently spend their time

The majority of young people (55.3%) say there is not enough to do in their area outside of school.

'The older generation think that we are exaggerating but there really is nothing to do round here.' (Year 11 pupil – Norton Hill)

'There no places for people of my age to go, only youth club on Tuesday, then nothing for the rest of the week.' (12 year old member of Westfield Youth Club)

'At the weekend, there is nothing to do so we all just meet up and walk around but then you get asked to move on by the police if there are more than three of you. It's not fair, we aren't doing anything wrong.' (Year 9 pupil – Writhlington School)

However, a substantial minority ticked the 'Yes' box so this figure needed additional exploration. This revealed that there is a direct correlation between the number of out of school activities a young person already does and their opinion as to whether there is enough to do, with those voting 'Yes' likely to already do a minimum of two a week with some saying that they do something four nights out of seven.

Example:

Female: Westfield

Do you think there is enough for young people to do in your area? **Yes**

Do you participate in any of the following outside of school?

Uniformed group **Drama club** **Music**

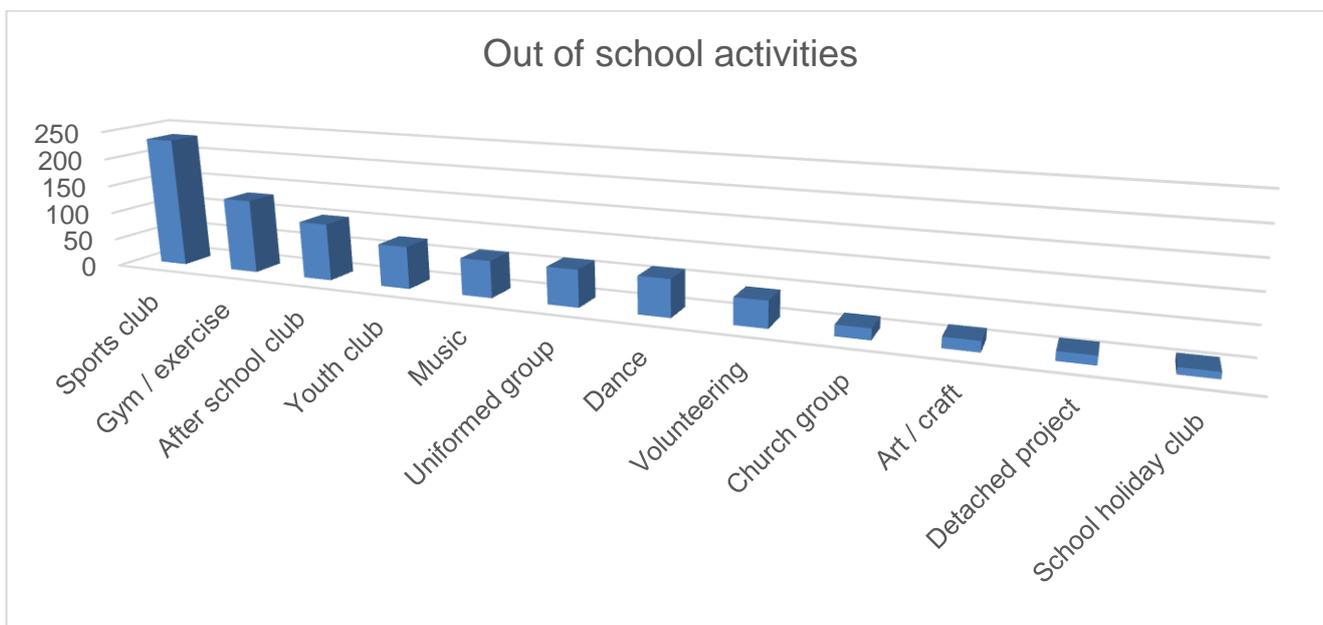
Male: Radstock

Do you think there is enough for young people to do in your area? **No**

Do you participate in any of the following outside of school?

I do not do anything

Q. Do you participate in any of the following outside of school?



The most popular leisure pursuits are related to health and fitness with 41% of young people participating in some form of sport for school teams, local sports clubs or projects linked to Youth Connect, e.g. urban rugby. Young men in particular said that playing football and rugby is their main way of socialising, which they enjoy.

23% of respondents say that they go to a gym or do another form of exercise. For some this happens at a local private membership gym but the majority said they meet with friends to use the school fitness facilities free of charge after school.

'There is a leisure centre and a good gym but it's too expensive – only rich kids can go there.' (Year 11 pupil - Norton Hill)

'You have to have a parent to pay for your membership so it would be good if they offered discount rates to under 16's' (Year 8 pupil - Writhlington School)

It should be noted that after health and fitness related activities and those provided by schools, youth clubs are the fourth most popular way to spend free time. This means that of those participating in this consultation more choose to regularly attend a youth club than a music or dance group or join a uniformed organisation. Despite the majority of young people saying that have never been to a youth club, if the number saying that they have been in the past is combined with those attending on a regular basis, 35% of all respondents have experienced some type of youth work intervention.

'We come for friendship, now that we are older we like talking to the youth workers about work and things. It's a good way to catch up.' (18 year old female member of Radstock Youth Club)

'I come to youth club because I like the art and craft stuff we do. You can learn things and see your friends.' (15 year old male member of Westfield Youth Club)

'I have been coming to youth club since I was about 14. I came because my friend told me about how good it was and I've been coming ever since.' (19 year old female member of Radical Youth Club)

Older young people (17+) report attending youth club for several years with some continuing as volunteers and senior members once they have left school. Three young women participating in a small focus group in Radstock Youth Club said they were representative of most of their friends in that they work full time but still attend club, although in a different way now.

Membership of a uniformed youth organisation, music (lessons and things like playing in a band) and dance lessons all scored 15% of the responses. In particular members of 1st Radstock Scout Group and Mercury Explorer Unit completed questionnaires but there was also a small number of responses from the Girls Brigade, Air Cadets and St John's Ambulance Cadets.

Overall, young men were more likely to report doing nothing at all in their spare time than their female peers and more young women talked about using informal ways to socialise, for example via social media (Facetime, Snapchat and Facebook Messenger) or going to see a friend for the evening at their home. A significant number of young people (80) said that they do activities other than those listed on the questionnaire, with the most popular being horse riding.

Finding out what's on

To better how young people know what's in their area and therefore understand the best way to promote youth provision, young people were asked how they are most likely to find out what's on. The table below shows the results:

Friends	Social media	School	Online	Parents / carers	Local newspaper	Posters
364	328	226	213	188	117	60

Unsurprisingly the way that the majority of young people find out what is happening in their area is via word of mouth and peer recommendations. This was the same for both young men and women. Several young people added to this by explaining that they are more likely to try a new experience if they know someone who has been before or if they have heard positive feedback from a friend.

Pupils in year 7 and 8 are most likely to say that they rely on parents for information about local provision as well as practical help like transport to get there and paying for entrance fees. This changes in year 9 and by Year 10-13 young people are most likely to get their information from friends and social media.

'Most of my friends use Snapchat, which is good because you can see video's and pictures as well as words. Only problem is that you always hear gossip and that can put you off doing something.' (Year 9 male pupil – Writhlington School)

'We use Facebook all of the time to tell each other where we are and what we are doing.' (18 year old female member of Radical)

School also plays an important role in promoting what is on locally for those still in secondary education. Young people in both schools said that they are influenced by people coming into school to give presentations / talks about what's on offer and appreciate the opportunity to check this out online before committing to attend.

However, despite the popularity of social media and online facilities there is clearly still an interest in receiving information in more traditional ways like posters or via features and adverts in local newspapers. What is unclear is if the young people see this themselves or if this is linked with either in-school promotions or if adults at home see it and then pass the information on with an endorsement or permission to try it out.

Barriers to engagement

As well as finding out what young people do in their free time, this consultation sought to find out what prevents them from accessing current youth provision provided through youth services. This includes B&NES council projects and those run by the voluntary sector.

Lack of knowledge

Although both adults and young people shared some negative impressions of existing youth clubs the questionnaire feedback indicates that it is a lack of interest in what's on offer followed by a lack of information that actually stops young people attending. In short, young people firstly said they were not interested in attending but later admitted that they don't really know anything about what's available.

'I am not sure what happens at a youth club or where my nearest one is.' (Questionnaire feedback, female – Westfield)

'I'd like more awareness. I live in Radstock but I didn't know we had a youth club.' (Year 10 pupil – Norton Hill)

The fact that a total of 34% said they are not aware of what's on in their area and have no idea of what to expect from a youth club indicates that wider communication and better promotion is required to raise engagement figures. Ideas suggested by young people include using social media (on the most popular platforms) and using peer advocates or Young Ambassadors to challenge negative perceptions and share positive information. Alongside this a popular suggestion was for youth workers to go into schools to advertise what's on and provide opportunities to get to know them to reduce any anxieties about going somewhere new and mixing with new peers.

Peer groups

In the same way that young people said that they are more likely to go somewhere with peer recommendation the converse is true too. Many young people said that the wide age range that youth clubs attract puts them off and this attitude has filtered down, despite this being traditional in rural areas.

'I don't go to youth club anymore because of the older age group that won't mix with my age group.' (Ex-member of Radstock Youth Club)

Some young people said that groups they avoid at school and elsewhere in the community go to youth club, resulting in them dismissing the idea of going without any real information about what the provision offers. This was also reflected in a perception that youth clubs are only for those that are 'in trouble' and not for everyone.

'If you are good you get pushed aside It's not fair, the naughty kids get everything.' (Year 11 pupil – Norton Hill)

Arguably this reflects youth services across the UK which, due to budget cuts, have had to make sometimes difficult choices about where to focus their remaining money between engaging vulnerable and hard to reach young people, which Youth Connect has been extremely successful in doing, and providing open access services for all young people. In many areas, this has resulted in youth providers looking to outside sources to raise funds to meet local needs as there is no local authority statutory duty to provide them. In both Radstock and Westfield young people have shown a willingness to help raise money to open youth clubs more often and provide facilities that are free to all.

Transport and road safety

Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) of children in B&NES live in poverty (after housing costs are taken into account)⁶ and affordability was certainly raised amongst young people participating in this consultation both in terms of accessing services and also paying to get into them. In this survey, more young people from Radstock identified public transport as an issue than in any other area.

Many young people said they rely on parents or older siblings with cars to get anywhere. Those that don't have this get 'left behind' (young person's description) or have to walk.

'I ticked no improvements because I like youth club but I can't go anymore because I can't get there.' (ex-member of Radstock youth club)

'I live out of town and my mum won't drive me to youth club.' (Year 8 pupil – Writhlington School)

⁶ <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/children-and-young-people>

Road safety was first identified as an issue by the youth partnership, then by parents and young people themselves via the questionnaire. In particular there are concerns about unlit stretches of the road where there is no pavement and where young people regularly have to walk if they are to access youth provision.

'I don't feel very safe. There is lighting on the main road but not on the estate, there are areas I won't go through at night.' (15 year old male – Radstock)

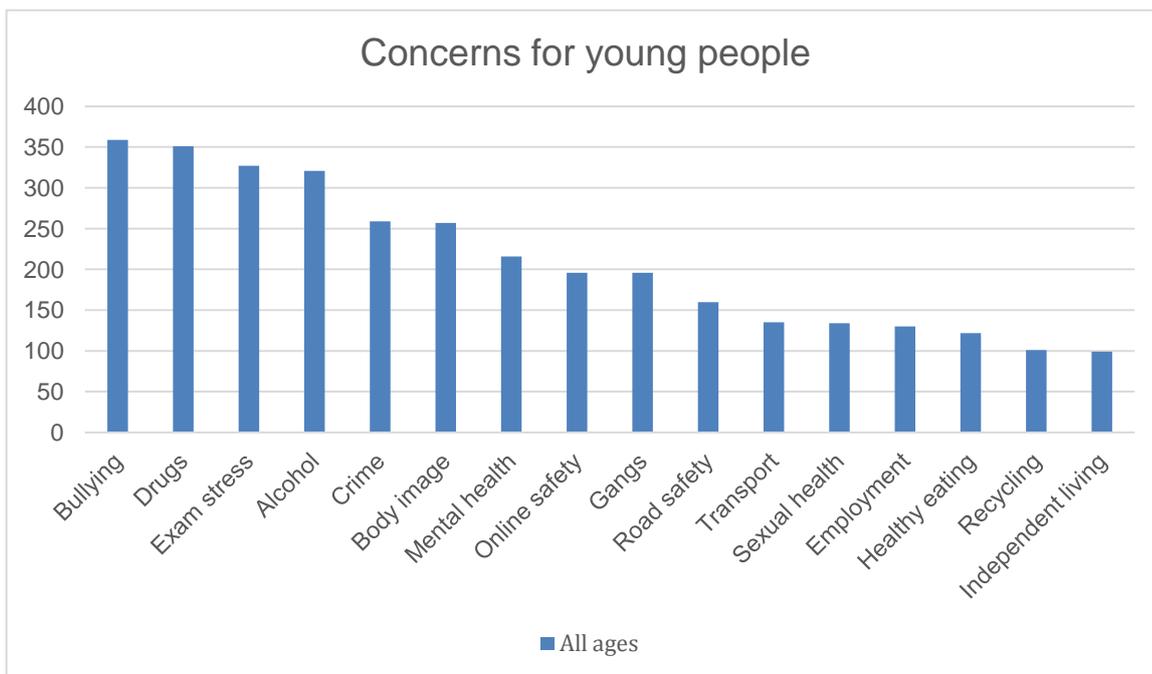
In addition to this mothers' in Radstock shared their worries about their daughters' travelling between Westfield and Radstock and walking through parks or open spaces alone to get home. This includes the journey home from school in autumn and winter and is linked to a perception of increased vulnerability to crime, compared to their sons that do the same thing. Amongst young people this is reversed with girls more likely to say they feel safe than their male peers.

Funding

Voluntary sector youth leaders identified the need for funding to provide additional services for young people as the most important barrier to increasing engagement. In particular employment, sexual health, substance misuse and housing support for young people in the 16+ age group not going to university or further education who report feeling marginalised, leading to frustrations and a distrust of professional services.

Key areas of concerns for young people

Bullying was identified as the top concern for young people for young people in Radstock and Westfield wards, followed by drugs and exam stress.



It was not just the risk of being bullied that young people raised but also some frustration about how they believe professionals in formal and informal education environments deal with it.

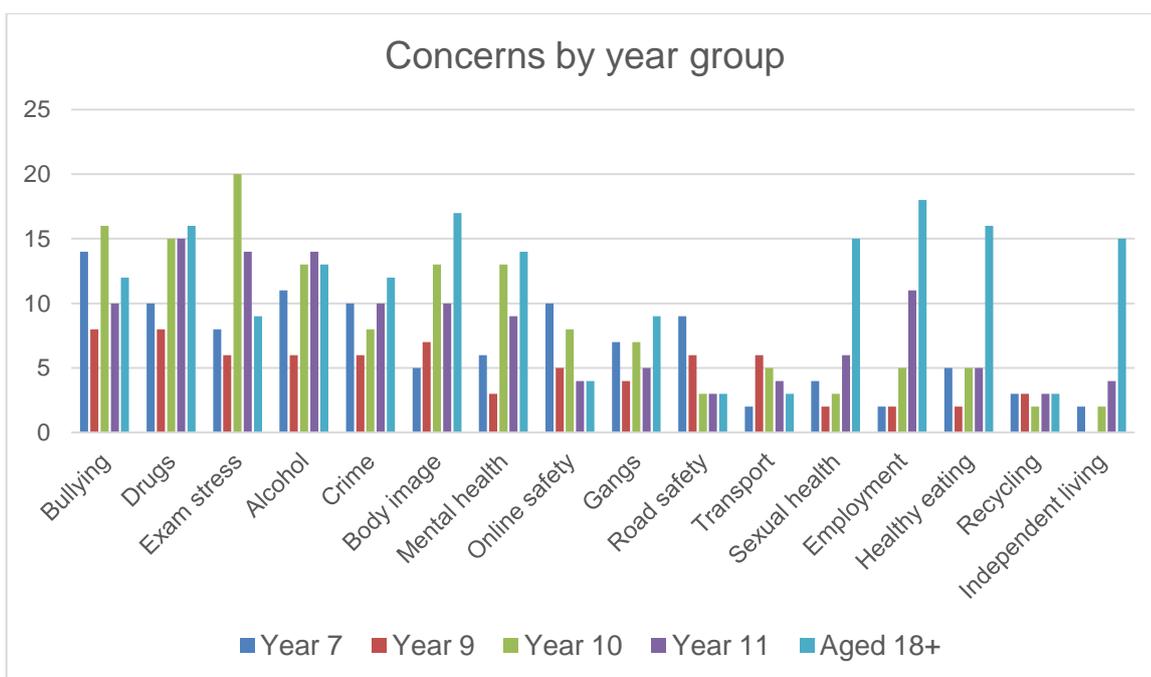
'My local school doesn't recognise bullying very much causing me to get bullied.'

'I have been to a youth club but don't go now because everyone was mean to me there.'

'Lots of people get bullied but they don't report it as they don't think it will do any good and it could make things worse.'

35% of young people identified body image, exam stress and bullying as a key issue, all of which impact on mental health and emotional wellbeing. This suggests that additional support is required to enable young people to better manage stress and build resilience, self-esteem and body confidence.

To consider how concerns change as young people grow towards adulthood a sample of questionnaire respondents, all living in Radstock or Westfield, were randomly selected from those collected from schools and youth groups. Each sample contained 20 students, to represent each of the year groups 7, 9, 10 and 11. An additional group of 20 young people aged between 18 and 25 was used to represent the older age range for provision. Whilst the school samples were gender balanced, more young women than young men responded to the questionnaire in the 18+ age bracket and the random selection process reflects this with 12 identifying as female and 8 as male.



What is apparent from the sample group is that whilst national and global concerns such as environmental issues only vary by one vote across the entire age span, others develop and recede dependent on life stage. Some of these results are not unexpected, for example in Year 10 when most pupils will sit their GCSE's, exam stress is identified as the most important issue whilst those aged 18+ are more concerned about becoming independent so employment and leaving home score higher. It also seems that concerns about body image and healthy eating increase by age but bullying, drugs and alcohol and exam stress are the top concerns for all.

Community issues

Through focus groups' it emerged that young people think that some parts of Radstock have a 'bad reputation', which they believe leads to unfair stereotyping by older residents, which impacts negatively on their self-image. They talked of perceived lower expectations if you come from certain parts of Radstock and a willingness to believe that you will break the law or become a criminal, which they think affects their ability to get a job or 'get on in life'.

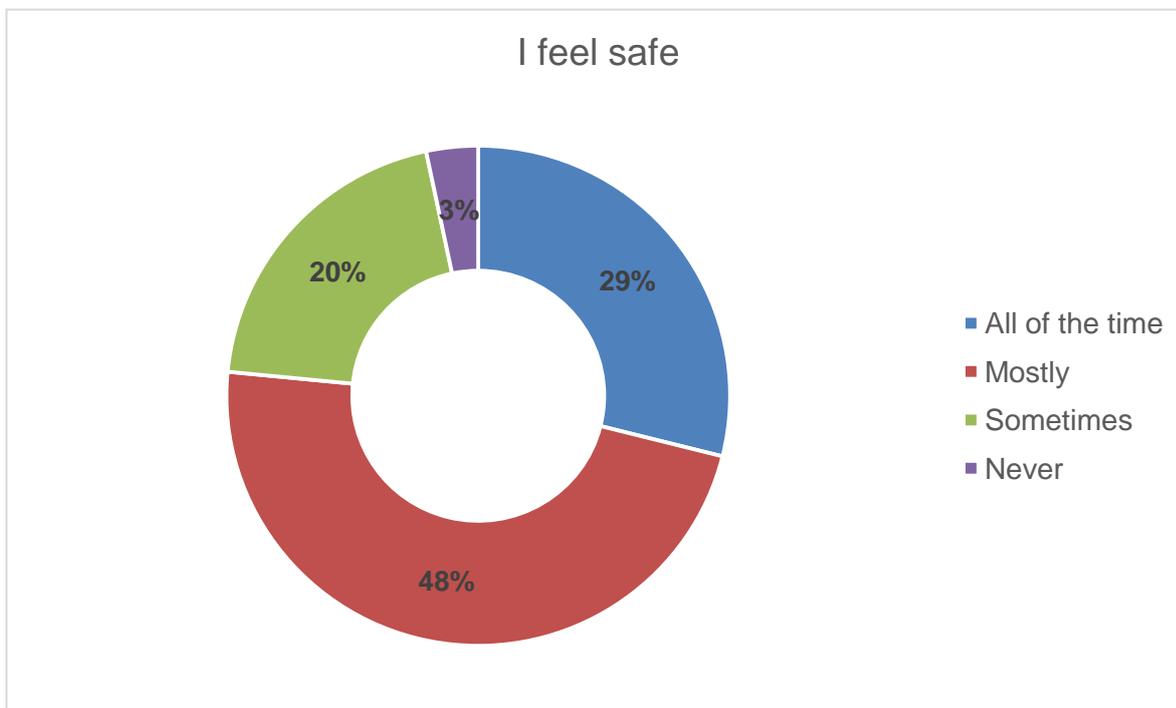
'People won't give you a chance once they know where you come from.' (Year 11 pupil – Norton Hill)

Youth projects challenge this, for example via the Youth Connect Bath Rugby Project where young people see positive adult role models, learn new skills, and develop pride in belonging.

Older young people (18+) report that when the youth club is not open they spend time meeting up with other young drivers in local car parks in Westfield and Radstock where they listen to music and socialise as they cannot afford to 'go to pubs' and that there is nothing else for under-25's to do in the area. This was mentioned as a perceived 'problem' by other members of the community, including parents that contributed to this, again saying that they had intelligence that drug deals were done there. Whilst not accepting this is true, young people did say that things sometimes got 'out of hand' and claimed to understand why some members of the public might find their presence intimidating or unnerving.

Crime and fear of crime

Although young people identified 'crime' as a youth issue and it was identified as a barrier for accessing some youth provision, 78% of young people reported feeling safe all or most of the time in the area they live and socialise in.



'I love where I live (Radstock), I feel really safe and I know it like the back of my hand.' (14 year old female - Westfield Youth Club)

Interestingly, young women are more likely to report feeling safe all of the time and less likely to talk about the threat from gangs or express concerns about youth crime, despite parents believing them to be more at risk.

In terms of statistics although the recorded crime rates for Radstock and Westfield are very different, perceptions about the type of crimes being committed are similar amongst young people from both towns. This means that statistically Westfield is a safer place to be in terms of the number of recorded crimes than Radstock but young people don't think so.

Area	Recorded crime rates (per 1,000) ⁷
B&NES	67.87
Radstock	68.58
Westfield	19.1

Concerns about drug and alcohol misuse were raised both in terms of the questionnaire and in focus groups. It should be noted that these were most likely to be linked to perceptions of misuse by other's, with alcohol, cannabis, cocaine and pills believed to be the most popular and crimes most mentioned possession and dealing.

Some community sports facilities that young people say they would like to use have become associated with this fear of crime, including intimidation by older groups and substance misuse. In particular the skate parks at Midsomer Norton and Peasedown were mentioned in three separate focus groups as 'no go' areas. Whilst not in Radstock or Westfield, young people from both towns say that this is the nearest place they can skate.

'It's really busy at Norton, lots of people go there but if you don't belong they can be really nasty. If you are not good at skating you get hated and if you are good but get cocky you get smacked.' (Year 8 pupil – Writhlington School)

'The older ones go there to deal and smoke weed. The police go there but they see them coming and run away.' (14 year old member of Radstock Youth Club)

'The skate park is great, we were really pleased and everyone wanted their kids to go – then it got taken over and I wouldn't want my children going there now, there is no supervision.' (Parent – Community Playbus, Radstock)

Linked to this are concerns about a gang culture in the area, with 34% of young people identifying this as a key issue.

'There is a gang culture but not like organised gangs it's more people who live on the same estate hanging about and doing stuff together. It's defined by where you live and it's not just teenagers, some are adults.' (18 year old male – Radical Youth Club)

Moving on

Young people participating in school focus groups were asked if they intend to stay living in the Radstock and Westfield area as adults. Out of 56 pupils from Norton Hill School, only two said they plan to remain, with the vast majority seeing education or employment as a 'way out'. A small group of young workers from a local pub talked further on this subject, explaining how they are working hard to learn a trade that they can be good at so they have a skill to use elsewhere.

'We are all working hard to find our ticket out of here. I've worked in pubs since I was 15 and I walk one hour to work and another hour back but it doesn't matter, I've got my plan, I know what I want to do.' (18 year old chef from Radstock currently working in Oak Hill)

By looking at the data for different year groups the rise in concerns about leaving home and affordable housing can be seen, starting low in Year 7 and rising to a peak once they are

⁷Recorded crime rates per 1,000 of the population for the Somer Valley Area at ward level for January 2014 to December 2014 <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/somer-valley-area-forum>

18+. This was further evidenced in the focus groups by both young men and women. At Radical Youth Club two young women angrily explained that even though they work full time they are resigned to never being able to afford to leave home and expect to 'have to' stay there long into adulthood. In Radstock Youth Club young women said that 'a man and a baby' are the only way they expect to have a home of their own. This stereotypical view was surprising considering that one girl is at college and the other two have jobs but they said that a lack of affordable housing makes it impossible for them to gain financial independence.

In addition to this is a community perception that people moving to the area will get housing and / or buy up properties, depriving young people of housing opportunities.

'People buy a place here but they don't actually contribute to the community – they are never here!' (Parent – Urban Rugby, Radstock)

'New houses are being built but they are not for us, they are too expensive.' (19 year old young woman – Radical Youth Club)

This all reflects a wider belief amongst young people and adults that the area is not developing for the community but for 'richer people' that will move in to reap the benefits of being close to Bath and Bristol.

Developing youth provision

One thing that became apparent very early on in this process is that young people see their community as more than the place they live and more a combination of the school they go to and where they and their friends socialise. As such they expect to use community facilities (including youth services) in both Radstock or Westfield, especially those that live in less populated parts of the ward. There is also clear evidence that existing youth club members already do this. Parents participating also showed an expectation that their children would need to move between Westfield and Radstock to access services.

This consultation identifies that young people want different types of youth provision at different ages. Within schools, pupils in Year 7 and 8 (12-14 years old) say they prefer a structured activity and would like a youth club that has a 'proper programme where you can learn', whereas from Year 9 onwards young people describe their ideal youth provision as being a kind of drop-in that is open over much of the weekend that they can socialise in and have access to youth workers for help and support. Discussions about how this should look include enthusiasm for a high street shop style youth drop-in that offers a wide range of facilities from cheap food and drink to an opportunity to learn life skills like how to budget and cook the food. Year 11 pupils at Norton Hill are keen that this should be an open access facility for all young people and that it should be a place where other professionals can come including those from health services (C-Card), drug workers, housing advice and help with CV's and finding employment. They also talked about wanting more opportunities to do longer courses that lead to accreditation or that can increase employability. If anything like this is developed they would very much like to be involved in the planning and running of it.

Older members (16+) of the youth clubs visited say that they come to meet friends in a safe, warm space where they feel respected and supported by the youth workers.

'We need more for over 18's to do locally that doesn't cost loads of money.'

Across all of the ages consulted, young people say they want more involvement in decisions made about the services that are designed for them, with only 10% saying that they currently feel listened to by decision makers.

I feel listened to:

All of the time	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
10%	22%	31%	37%

'We have what adults think we want, not what we actually want. Just give us the optional activities and keep the youth clubs open all weekend so young people have a warm place to go and do them.' (Year 10 pupil – Norton Hill School)

In addition to this they would like more opportunities to get involved both in what the clubs offer, e.g. through a youth council, and increased volunteering opportunities both in youth clubs and in the wider community at things like resident meetings and other council consultations to represent the interests of young people.

'I would really like a youth centre that is just somewhere to meet friends but not have to do planned activities that we haven't chosen.' (17 year old member of Radical)

Opening times

The most requested time for youth provision to be open is at the weekend, particularly Friday and Saturday night and Saturday afternoon. Sunday afternoon is also considered a good time particularly by younger participants.

'I would like youth club on Saturday and Sunday in the day so I can get there myself.' (Year 8 pupil – Writhlington School)

'An evening youth café might draw my eldest out. Him and his friends don't like sports so there is literally nothing for them to do.' (Parent, Community Playbus user – Westfield)

'We need more places to socialise at weekends.' (Female member of Radstock Youth Club)

The most popular week night is Wednesday. Currently several young people attend more than one club each week and there was no indication that this would stop if there were more opportunities provided to socialise.

'We need more things to do. At the moment, we hang about in town because there is nothing else to do.'

Seasonal outreach and detached projects could potentially enable young people in the more isolated areas to access services. This could include specific targeted work with those groups identified as most at risk. As there have been so many concerns raised about substance misuse and related criminal activity it may be that this would be best delivered by a partnership to include drug workers, who can make referrals to support services if necessary and the community police. Whatever happens as there were so many conflicting statements made more research is required to look specifically at this issue.

Publicity and marketing

'More people need to be told about youth club - I didn't even know they exist in my town.' (Female – Radstock)

'Needs to be better advertised with open evenings for new young people to go along and see if they like the youth club.' (Parent – Radstock)

In order to increase membership, the idea that youth clubs are only for 'naughty kids' and that they 'attract troublemakers' needs to be challenged to ensure that both potential new members and their adult guardians feel reassured that it will be safe and enjoyable.

'I would like a youth club that is more specific to my age group rather than a large age range.'

'Just make it look a lot more friendly, because most people, including me, go to Radstock every day but don't go to youth club.'

Work with young women

One issue raised amongst young women in the school focus groups is a lack of provision that focusses solely on their needs. In youth clubs, young women said that they really enjoy opportunities to participate in all female discussions, particularly around things like sexual health, body image and the impact of things like celebrity culture and pornography on relationship expectations and things like peer pressure. They said that whilst these workshops were not specifically aimed at an all-female audience they like it if none of the young men want to participate as it encourages them to be honest about the things that really matter to them and ask questions that they might not in mixed groups.

'I think girls need to develop confidence and self-love to help them feel better and understand you don't need a boyfriend to feel worthy.' (Year 11 pupil – Norton Hill)

'When you're talking about sex and things you don't always want boys there.' (18 year old female member of Radical Youth Club)

'Westfield is a small town and there's not much to do so there is lots of peer pressure to look a certain way or behave in a certain way. Not just from boys but from other girls too.' (15 year old member of Westfield Youth Club))

Comments made by young women in Radstock Youth Club about relationships and babies being seen as a route to independence suggests that aspirations are low and additional work is needed to challenge this. Personal development programmes that look at building confidence and setting achievable goals could enable them to see the limitations of early parenthood as well as the benefits to help them make positive choices.

Youth Council

A clear theme emerging from this consultation is that young people want more influence in the services that are provided for them and to have a say in local issues in a way that will be listened to.

37% believe that decision makers never listen to them

15% said they would like more of a say in provision for young people

13% said they would like to sit on a youth council

In addition to having a say in decisions made about their local youth hub or project, young people said they would like their views considered when it comes to wider local issues that affect them. Developing a youth council for each provision that feeds into representation at ward level could be looked into in the near future to ensure the youth voice is heard.

Volunteering

Some young people say they are already involved with volunteering, e.g. working after school in a local charity shop, on a youth council or within their youth club. Again, volunteering tends to be done in the town nearest to where young people go to school rather

than where they live so they can get there independently. Additionally, 26% say that they would like to undertake some form of voluntary work in the near future.

'The things I'd like to be involved in are volunteering, fundraising and being listened to by decision makers. Could we do more of that in a youth club?'

In addition, young people aged 16+ using current provision and year 11 pupils from Norton Hill showed great interest in developing a peer education and peer mentoring programme for younger peers. This includes providing training and support so that they can tackle some of the big issues for young people identified through this consultation. In particular they feel this would be effective in raising awareness about substance misuse, online safety, body image and bullying. The year 11 and 12 pupils aiming to go to university also said that they would commit to schemes like this as it would support their applications and give them experience of working alongside adult professionals which is not available anywhere else.

Recommendations

1. Review the days and times that current provision is open to see how this matches with
 - a. what young people say they want.
2. Develop a strategy to better promote what's on offer using the communication methods that young people say they use most.
3. Consider how youth clubs can be made more welcoming to young and new members. This could include more partnership work with schools to get their endorsement and direct marketing to parents to reduce misconceptions.
4. Consider splitting provision so that projects can be developed to meet the identified different needs of 11-14, 15-18 and 18+ year olds.
5. Look at providing workshops or projects within youth clubs that meet the different needs identified through the consultation so young people know what they are signing up for and expectations can be met.
6. Look at different ways of providing services to include mobile and detached work for targeted work and to reach those in more rural areas. Consider if this needs to be all year-round provision or whether it is better to develop termly projects based on interests to attract different groups rather than having the same young people all the time.
7. Develop partnership work with schools and other local services to develop an effective anti-bullying strategy and provide support both for the targets and perpetrators. This was the top concern for young people and it would be good to find out more about how this differs for different types of bullying, for example by gender and / or sexual orientation.
8. Raise awareness with schools about the high numbers of young people citing exam stress as an issue and develop workshops that raise awareness about the importance of good mental health and emotional wellbeing. Consider developing peer mentoring support and / or peer education programmes.
9. Look at opportunities for youth workers to deliver PSHE support in schools on a commissioned basis. Young people said they would prefer to learn about sensitive issues like sex and relationship from a professional that comes into school rather than an existing member of staff and youth workers are skilled in this.
10. Research the need for a network of youth councils that represent the voice of young people at local and ward level.
11. Develop volunteering opportunities for older youth club members so that they have a progression path, along with opportunities to accredit work done.

12. Talk more with young people about their ideas for peer education and peer mentoring to assess how these can be developed to help build more positive relationships with younger groups and also raise awareness about key issues to reduce risks.

APPENDIX 1: Youth Consultation Questionnaire

A local partnership is looking at youth work within the Westfield and Radstock areas and how it might be developed in the future. Completing this questionnaire will help the partnership review what is currently offered and understand more about what young people want.

Which is the nearest to where you live? **Radstock** **Westfield** **Neither of these**

PART ONE: ABOUT YOU

Do you identify as **Male** **Female** **Other**

Have you ever been to your **local youth club**? Yes, I go regularly Yes, in the past No

If **yes**, which one?

Radstock Youth Club Westfield Outreach in the Park Westfield Methodist Church
 Radical Tearooms Friday Night Midsomer Norton Town Hall Other

If you **do not** go to a youth club, please tick below all of the reasons that affect your decision:

I don't know where it is It's not open at a time that suits me
 I can't get there I've heard negative things
 I'm not sure what happens there Something else (please explain)
 It's not welcoming
 I'm not interested in the activities

Do you **participate** in any of the following **outside of school**?

Sports club (e.g. football, hockey) Uniformed groups (e.g. Scouts) Detached Project After school club
 School Holiday Club Drama Club Dance lessons (e.g. street dance, ballet) Gym / Exercise
 Music Art / Craft Volunteering (e.g. Youth Council) Church Group

Something else **I do not do anything**

PART TWO: YOUR OPINION

Do you think there is enough for young people to do in your area?
 Yes No

How would you be most likely to find out what's on? (circle all that apply)

Social media Friends Local newspaper Posters School Parents / carers Online

Which day is best for a youth club or activity?

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

What time?

Morning Afternoon Evening

What projects or activities interest you most? (circle all that apply)

- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Sports | Fitness | A place to meet friends | Art activities | Graffiti project | Cookery | Drama |
| Environmental projects | Sexual health drop in | Employment skills | IT / technology | Gaming | Volunteering | Heritage projects |
| Life skills | Gig venue | Camping | Detached projects | Team games | Youth Council | Photography / Film club |
| Trips to other places | Climbing | Music | Table tennis | Exam support | Counselling | Hair & Beauty |

Other (please state)

.....

PART THREE: COMMUNITY

	All of the time	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
I feel safe in my local area				
I feel like a valued member of the community				
I know how to get my voice heard				
I feel listened to by decision makers				

Which of the following do you think are **concerns for young people** in your area? (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime | <input type="checkbox"/> health services | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> Gangs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exam stress | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy eating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recycling / environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Body image |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent living / leaving home | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Road safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Online safety | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual | | |

To have more of a say in your community would you be interested in any of the following?

- Youth Councils Peer mentoring Volunteering Fundraising Youth projects Local campaigns

PART FOUR: IMPROVEMENTS

What improvements to youth services would you like to see?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Wider choice of activities <input type="checkbox"/> | Easier access to existing services <input type="checkbox"/> | Better advertising & promotion <input type="checkbox"/> |
| More say in what's on <input type="checkbox"/> | Improved facilities / buildings <input type="checkbox"/> | Nothing, no improvements are <input type="checkbox"/> |

necessary.

APPENDIX 2: Parent / Carer Questionnaire

A local partnership is looking at youth work within the Westfield and Radstock areas and how it might be developed in the future. Please complete this questionnaire to help review what is currently offered and give your opinion.

Which is nearest to where you live? **Radstock** **Westfield** **Neither of these**

PART ONE: ABOUT YOU

Which best describes you? **Parent** **Carer** **Grandparent** **Other** (please state)

Have your child(ren) ever been to a **local youth club**? Yes Not sure No

If yes, which one?

Radstock Youth Club Westfield Outreach in the Park Westfield Methodist Church
 Radical Tearooms Friday Night Midsomer Norton Town Hall Other

If no, please tick anything that contributes to this:

I didn't know there was one They are too busy with school work
 They can't get there They do something else
 I don't allow them to go What do they do?
 They don't want to go

PART TWO: YOUR OPINION

Do you think there is enough for young people to do in your area? Yes No

How would you be **most likely** to find out what's on for young people in your area? (please tick)

My child	Social media	Newspaper	Posters	School	Word of mouth	Online	Church	Newsletter	Doctors
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Do you think any of the following are concerns for **young people** in **your area**? (tick any that apply)

_____ Crime _____ Transport _____ Drugs
 _____ Unemployment _____ Gangs _____ Social media
 _____ Education _____ Bullying _____ Online safety
 _____ Housing _____ Mental health _____ Alcohol

PART THREE: IMPROVEMENTS

How could we improve youth services in your area?

Wider choice of activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easier access to existing services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better advertising & promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>
More say in what's on	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved facilities / buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nothing, no improvements are necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX 3: Table of those invited to take part in the consultation

Name	Accepted	Declined	No response
Writhlington School Knobsbury Lane Radstock BA3 2NQ	One focus group + questionnaires		
Norton Hill School Charlton Road Midsomer Norton BA3 4AD	Two focus groups + questionnaires		
Somervale School Redfield Road Midsomer Norton BA3 2JD			✓
Radstock Youth Club Church Street Radstock BA3 3QQ	Two focus groups, one-to- one interviews + questionnaires		
Westfield Youth Club Westfield Methodist Church Hall 27 Wesley Road Radstock BA3 3XA	One focus group, one-to-one interviews + questionnaires		
Urban Rugby - Bath Rugby Foundation Westhill Sports Field Westhill Sports and Social Club Westhill Road Radstock BA3 3TE	Group discussion Parent interviews Questionnaires		
Radical Youth Club St. Nicholas Church Tea Rooms Church Street Radstock BA3 3QQ	One focus group, one-to-one interviews + questionnaires		
Community Playbus Association Westhill Car Park Radstock BA3 3TE	Group discussion + questionnaires		

1st Radstock Scout Group and Mercury Explorer Unit Wells Road Radstock BA3 3RP	Questionnaires		
Keynsham & District Mencap Society 44 Bath Hill Keynsham BS31 1HG		✓	
Girls Brigade Methodist Church Hall Radstock BA3 3PL	Questionnaires		
The Oakhill Inn (young staff) Fosse Road Oakhill Radstock BA3 5HU	One focus group + questionnaires		
Project 28 28 Southgate Street Bath BA1 1TP	Questionnaires		
Merrimen Theatre Group Somervale School Redfield Road Midsomer Norton BA3 2JD			✓