



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Directorate: Customer and Communities;
Kent Youth Service

Name of policy, procedure, project or service

Service Transformation, Kent Youth Service

Type

This Service Transformation is a time-limited project intended to radically change the delivery model of Kent Youth Service from one which predominantly involved direct delivery of youth work to one combining a range of commissioned providers. This new delivery model will deliver savings in excess of £1m for Kent County Council over a two year period whilst continuing to demonstrate a robust commitment to the delivery of youth work opportunities for the young people of Kent.

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

Nigel Baker, Head of Kent Youth Service

Date of Initial Screening

20th April 2011

Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group differently from others in Kent? YES/NO	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW/ NONE/UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes, why? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why? c) Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
			Positive	Negative	
Age	For clients: YES	For clients: YES	MEDIUM	UNKNOWN	<p>The service transformation project is intended to create a range of local services which are able to provide high quality positive activities, primarily for those aged 13-19 but also for 11 and 12 year olds and some aged up to 25 who are more vulnerable or have disabilities.</p> <p>This project has the potential to maintain a significant level of universal youth work service across Kent. Failing to commission effective services would have a detrimental effect on the ability of large numbers of young people to engage with positive activities.</p>
	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	NONE	<p>At this stage whilst it is estimated that around 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time posts, the exact posts are not yet known as this will be a matter of consultation. However as these posts will reflect a range of roles and contracts it is highly likely that those staff affected by the service transformation process will reflect a range of ages and no element of the project has yet been identified which places any one group at a disadvantage.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's recently updated equality statement and policies.</p>
Disability	For clients: YES	For clients: YES	MEDIUM	UNKNOWN	<p>Young people with disabilities are currently well represented within Kent Youth Service provision. The continuation of inclusive services which support the attendance of young people with disabilities as well as</p>

				<p>specialist provision will be a core element of both the youth hub delivery and of commissioned services.</p> <p>In addition the Youth Service is working with key partners within KCC to support the commissioning of a range of befriending services which will support young people with disabilities accessing and being included in mainstream services. At this stage the strength and depth of response to commissioning work with disabled young people from a youth service perspective is not accurately predictable but the Aiming High for Disabled Children pathfinder programme has done considerable work to develop capacity in this specialist sector.</p> <p>The service transformation project is recommending the retention of the current Community Youth Tutor posts, two and a half of which are located within special schools for young people with additional needs and will therefore continue high levels of support for these groups.</p> <p>At this stage although commissioned provision is not possible to identify all providers will be required to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of Kent County Council.</p>
	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	<p>UNKNOWN</p> <p>Disability data for staff is given voluntarily and therefore risks not recognising all staff with disabilities. At this stage although an estimated 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time contracts, it is not known exactly which posts will be affected.</p> <p>At this stage therefore it is not possible to suggest whether groups of staff with disabilities will be disproportionately affected, either positively or negatively.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's</p>

					recently updated equality statement and policies.
Gender	For clients: YES	For clients: YES	MEDIUM	NONE	<p>Whilst the statistical picture differs from project to project as a whole Kent Youth Service has traditionally worked with more young men than young women. The change to a model comprising a range of commissioned providers allows the ability to recognise key areas which require an improved engagement with young women and engage providers appropriately to increase participation amongst young women.</p> <p>At this stage although commissioned provision is not possible to identify all providers will be required to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of Kent County Council.</p>
	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	NONE	<p>At this stage whilst it is estimated that around 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time posts, the exact posts are not yet known as this will be a matter of consultation. However as these posts will reflect a range of roles and contracts and no element of the project has yet been identified which places any one group at a disadvantage.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's recently updated equality statement and policies.</p>
Gender identity	For clients: YES	For clients: YES	LOW	UNKNOWN	<p>There is currently limited provision within Kent Youth Service to give specialist support to young people regarding gender identity the ability to provide additional support through commissioned services delivered by local providers offers the ability to give additional support to this group.</p> <p>At this stage although commissioned provision is not possible to identify all providers will be required to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of Kent</p>

					County Council.
	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	UNKNOWN	<p>Gender identity data for staff is given voluntarily and therefore risks not recognising all staff. At this stage although an estimated 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time contracts, it is not known exactly which posts will be affected.</p> <p>At this stage therefore it is not possible to suggest whether groups of staff with gender identity issues will be disproportionately affected, either positively or negatively.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's recently updated equality statement and policies.</p>
Race	For clients: YES	For clients: YES	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	<p>Kent Youth Service currently supports a significant number of young people from a range of ethnic backgrounds either through direct and targeted services or through inclusion into open access services. Although it is unknown yet which projects will be affected by the proposals some which support BME young people will no doubt be affected.</p> <p>The ability of the service to commission and/or deliver appropriate high quality youth work provision for BME young people will be paramount in ensuring a good service for these young people. Further information about specific needs of these groups will need to be collected during consultation.</p> <p>At this stage although commissioned provision is not possible to identify all providers will be required to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of Kent County Council.</p>

	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	UNKNOWN	<p>Ethnicity identity data for staff is given voluntarily and therefore risks not recognising all staff. At this stage although an estimated 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time contracts, it is not known exactly which posts will be affected.</p> <p>Currently therefore it is not possible to suggest whether groups of staff from any particular ethnic group will be disproportionately affected, either positively or negatively.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's recently updated equality statement and policies.</p>
Religion or belief	For clients: NO	For clients: NO	LOW	NONE	<p>Kent Youth Service provides services for all young people regardless of religion or belief and the service transformation project is intended to ensure the continued provision of these services either through direct provision and/or commissioned provision. At this stage although commissioned provision is not possible to identify all providers will be required to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of Kent County Council.</p>
	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	UNKNOWN	<p>Religion and belief data for staff is given voluntarily and therefore risks not recognising all staff. At this stage although an estimated 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time contracts, it is not known exactly which posts will be affected.</p> <p>Currently therefore it is not possible to suggest whether groups of staff from any particular religious or belief group will be disproportionately affected, either positively or negatively.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's recently updated equality statement and policies.</p>

Sexual orientation	For clients: YES	For clients: YES	LOW	LOW	<p>Kent Youth Service currently offers some services specifically tailored for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual young people and for those who are questioning their sexual identity. The ability to continue to either directly provide these services or to commission them from other providers will need to be fully examined during a consultation process.</p> <p>At this stage although commissioned provision is not possible to identify all providers will be required to work alongside the equality and diversity policies of Kent County Council.</p>
	For staff: NO	For staff: NO	NONE	UNKNOWN	<p>Sexual orientation data for staff is given voluntarily and therefore risks not recognising all staff. At this stage although an estimated 60 FTE posts will be made redundant, including a significant number of part-time contracts, it is not known exactly which posts will be affected.</p> <p>Currently therefore it is not possible to suggest whether groups of staff from any particular group will be disproportionately affected, either positively or negatively.</p> <p>Kent County Council's recruitment and selection processes, where required are governed by the Council's recently updated equality statement and policies.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	For staff: NO	For staff: NO			<p>No adverse impact is expected on clients or staff who are pregnant or in a maternity period. Staff who may be on maternity leave will be kept fully informed of the processes involved in the restructure and supported appropriately.</p>

INITIAL SCREENING

Context

During the past two years Kent Youth Service has made savings in excess of £800k, this has been done through the reduction of administrative support to managers, management posts, restructuring the support services to Youth Projects and reducing the level of officer support available to the service.

For the current Medium Term Financial Plan the Youth Service is required to contribute savings of £1.4m in conjunction with Kent Youth Offending Service of which £900k is discrete to the Youth Service transforming from a direct delivery model to one which combines direct delivery and a wider range of commissioned providers.

In order to meet this saving the Youth Service will reduce the resource directed to frontline delivery by approximately £1.7m and then subsequently re-invest more than £830k into an increased budget (totalling £1.2m) for securing services from a range of voluntary and community providers.

This change in delivery method will mean a significant number of Kent Youth Service projects will cease being delivered by Kent County Council staff and could either be delivered by staff from other organisations or a completely different local project could be established.

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council remains committed to the delivery of high quality youth work opportunities for young people. This Service Transformation is intended to secure a 'universal' service for young people, that is, one open to any young person and offering a range of youth work opportunities which develop the confidence and self esteem of young people and therefore contributes to the Preventative Strategy through supporting positive life choices amongst young people.

Beneficiaries

The intended beneficiaries of this transformation project are primarily young people aged 13-19 with some service for those aged 11-12 and also provision for those aged 19-25 with additional needs. These groups of young people will continue to benefit from a broad range of youth work opportunities which offer different methods of engagement and additional support at those points at which the young people are more vulnerable.

Due to the diminishing resources available for the delivery of this work the transformation process from directly delivered youth provision to a combination of commissioned and directly delivered offers the ability to retain this broad service reach in a way that would not be possible under the existing service model.

Significant evidence exists that the provision of high quality youth work supports young people to make positive and healthy life choices and reduces both the amount of anti-social behaviour in local areas and also reduces the pressures upon more targeted provision, as such the successful implementation should be beneficial to the local communities of service users.

Consultation and data

The new model for service delivery will be subject to a 90 day public consultation which will consult on:

- the location of continued direct delivery;
- the job roles within continued direct delivery;
- the implications for projects and premises no longer directly delivered;
- the framework for commissioning outcomes at a county level;
- the framework for commissioning outcomes at a local level.

The new model for service delivery will also be subject to a 90 day staff consultation which will consult on the above and the consequent implications for potentially affected members of staff.

The consultation data will be analysed during the month after close of consultation and used to inform both the final direct delivery structure and also to create the commissioning framework for the tendering of services.

Potential Impact

Adverse Impact: The potential for adverse impact upon client groups is largely dependent on a combination of the framework for commissioning itself and also the management of any transition processes from direct delivery to commissioned services. If a commissioning process fails to recognise the needs of a specific group of clients or fails to procure appropriate service levels the group could be adversely affected. The mitigation for this adverse impact lies in a consultation process to determine the needs of client groups and ensure that they are reflected in the commissioning framework and also to consider the use of larger 'caretaker' organisations for a period of time if local organisations are not successful through the commissioning process.

The adverse impact on staff will be a considerable reduction in the number of Kent Youth Service staff which will result in a number of redundancies. This will impact each of these members of staff significantly as individuals but as of yet no adverse impact upon any protected characteristic group has been identified. The estimated number of redundancies is in the region of 60 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts; however this will be made up of approximately 24 full-time staff and a number of smaller part-time staff contracts to a total of 36 FTE.

Positive Impact: The successful implementation of a new model for service delivery for Kent Youth Service has the ability to continue to provide

INITIAL - Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications
Disability, Gender Identity, Gender, Race, Religion or belief, Sexual Orientation	Significant levels of uncertainty around the overall impact of the project.	Undertake a consultation both with all affected groups and areas but also with some targeted groups of young people on the proposals within the project.	Clear understanding of impact and mitigating measures.	Nigel Baker	August – October 2011	Surveys Meetings Focus Groups Analysis
Disability, Gender Identity, Gender, Race, Religion or belief, Sexual Orientation	Provision for young people will be affected by the change in delivery method.	Ensure the production of a commissioning framework for the provision of youth work through a range of new providers which continues to champion inclusive approaches and also provides specialist support where required.	Continued or improved high quality provision of youth work for young people from the identified characteristic groups.	Nigel Baker	July 2011	N/A
All	Unknown levels of staff impact within protected characteristics	Undertake a consultation with staff on the proposed changes within the project. Ensure proper application of KCC equality and diversity policies and procedures during any recruitment stages of the project.	Clear understanding of affected groups. Equality of opportunity for any posts recruited,	Nigel Baker	August – October 2011 January – March 2011	Surveys Meetings Analysis N/A

FULL ASSESSMENT

Name

Service Transformation, Kent Youth Service

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer:

Nigel Baker, Head of Integrated Youth Services

Date of Full Equality Impact Assessment:

Independent research for this assessment was carried out during September and October 2011. The report for this research and final assessment were carried out in November 2011.

Scope of the Assessment

The assessment sought to investigate the impact of the proposed changes to youth work delivery in Kent. The initial screening process highlighted that it was difficult to fully understand what the potential impact of any changes might be on groups of young people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act. The initial screening also identifies the lack of certainty about which posts could be affected and therefore the difficulty in assessing impact. As such the action plan arising from this assessment will need to set out ways of protecting groups of young people from unequal adverse impact and also protecting groups of staff from unequal adverse impact due to the proposed changes.

Information and Data

The Kent Youth Service Transformation project is partially based on the need to develop a commissioning framework for the delivery of youth work activities throughout Kent. In order for this to be done an outcomes framework and needs analysis has been completed at a county and district level. This needs analysis draws heavily upon the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for Kent as well as national demographic information from the Office for National Statistics (an example of this needs analysis for a district is included at Appendix A). This information was provided for comment and challenge during a 90 public consultation.

More than 700 responses to the public consultation were received and these have been considered in completing this assessment. In addition to the open consultation, independent research through focus groups was commissioned from the University of Glasgow in order to ensure that young people from potentially affected protected characteristic groups had a clear opportunity to take part in the process and share their views.

Additional information regarding the current users of the Youth Service has been taken from the Kent Youth Service User Survey published in March 2011. This survey documents the response of almost 1200 young people who attend Kent Youth Service provision as well as taking a snapshot record of the levels of young people from protected characteristic groups who were attending provision.

Involvement and Engagement

The consultation process included a wide range of staff and public meetings: three meetings open to full-time staff; two further meetings reserved for part-time staff. Four meetings designed to brief young people on the proposals so that they could complete questionnaires and twelve district-based Youth Advisory Group meetings involving local Members, partners and young people.

The process also included the proposals being presented at each of the 12 Local Children's Trust Boards, each of the 12 emerging Locality Boards (or their current equivalent) and the Kent Chief Officers Group and the Kent Forum (the meeting of Leaders of Kent's Councils).

The independent research carried out by the University of Glasgow was undertaken through the use of focus groups and included 11 separate groups with 66 participants giving their views on the consultation and its potential impact on their engagement with services. The scope of this research was taken directly from the initial screening carried out at the commencement of this process, the researchers were asked to examine the potential impacts of the proposals amongst the groups identified within the initial screening where it was identified that the impacts on these groups was unknown and required further investigation. The report from the University of Glasgow

A needs analysis for youth work in Kent was developed for consultation which included possible outcomes as well as key demographic information on a district/borough level in order to inform responses on priorities for youth work delivery at a local level. This needs analysis is included as Appendix A to this report with an example set of district information.

The general findings from the consultation can be grouped into several key themes, of these the most relevant to the equality impact assessment is respondent's views on the outcomes for young people and corresponding needs analysis. These key themes are as follows:

Youth Hubs: One of the most debated points of the consultation was the concept and location of the proposed Youth Hubs. Perhaps the most common misconception with regard to the proposals was the assumption that a district Youth Hub would be the only form of youth work provision in an area, with the concern that young people would have to travel large distances in order to access services. Invariably young people, residents and other respondents indicated a preference for their own local centre to remain as a core part of the proposed model.

The responses to the consultation were strong in their support of the ability for the proposed delivery model to offer a more extensive and co-ordinated model of delivery for supporting young people by being able to draw other key partners/services together within a youth work environment and therefore increase the range of services young people are able to access easily.

Commissioning: Community groups and partner organisations welcomed the opportunity to engage in the commissioning process, but many stated that they would need to gain a better understanding of specific outcomes frameworks and budget allocations.

A significant number of respondents highlighted the need for any commissioning process to ensure a sufficiently robust quality assurance framework was in place to protect a good level of service delivery for young people.

Responses to the consultation insisted that any commissioning process be designed in such a way so that small providers, new social enterprises and local groups who have a presence within communities were able to engage on an equal footing with larger or more established organisations.

Outcomes: The consultation sought views on an outcomes framework which encompassed a range of 14 general priorities for young people to engage in challenging and fun activities to help them develop a wide range of skills and support their well-being and development. These general outcomes were supported by a range of needs analysis information at a District/Borough level.

Consultation findings that relate to youth work outcomes support the overall objectives and welcome the continuation of a wide range of universal and targeted service outcomes. Where concerns were raised, these related to specific borough/ district outcomes, these are addressed in Section 5.

Any final outcomes framework will need to take careful account of the proposed Outcomes Framework for Youth Work being developed by the 'Catalyst' consortium (a group of four national youth organisations acting as the Department for Education's strategic partner for young people). The Education Select Committee (October 2011) is recommending that government actively endorse this framework and expect youth services to use it unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

Buildings: Responses to consultation in relation to specific buildings were often very emotive and current users of buildings, naturally, demonstrated clear support for their own premises. The responses highlighted the importance of ensuring that any issues relating to property are dealt with sympathetically to the needs of local communities and continuity of service delivery.

A number of questions during the consultation focused on the process by which organisations or potential social enterprises would be able to make use of existing KCC properties which are no longer required for direct delivery. KCC's current building stock for youth service delivery has been through an extensive programme of DDA improvements over previous years and therefore should not present any difficulties for commissioned providers taking on KCC buildings to provide services for young people.

General Comments: Through consultation, respondents also aired views that did not lead directly from the consultation questions. These were primarily comments suggesting that KCC should not look to reduce the funding to youth services at all, although a minority also questioned the need for the provision of any youth work.

Responses from the focus groups give a more detailed and specific view of the potential issues for young people from specific groups. The full report from the University of Glasgow is included as Appendix B to this report.

Disability Focus Groups: these young people felt safe and happy in their specialist groups whereas they had experienced bullying in mixed settings. They loved their youth group and found it hard to discuss alternatives. Their youth group was both socially and emotionally important to them.

Female Focus Group: girls who took part in the research enjoyed the opportunity to meet together and with their youth workers whom they had found very supportive particularly as they provided a source of non-judgmental advice.

LGBTQ Focus Groups: the young people felt that their group offered a place for them to socialize together and 'be themselves' but also spoke of their particular need for peer and youth worker support which the club provided.

Black and Minority Ethnic Focus Groups: according to the research report these young people said that youth clubs for them where English people were also welcome, improved mutual understanding. The English attendees agreed with them. The BME young people felt safe and valued in their own groups whereas they reported bad experiences in other youth groups. There was evidence that some ethnic groups were at best mistrustful and at worse hostile, though not necessarily openly, to each other. Youth workers provided important services including help with language and literacy.

Faith Focus Groups: in these groups, run by church organisations, the young people did not see themselves affected by the Service Transformation plans. The opportunity to socialize elsewhere than home, school or the streets was more important to them than the faith aspect of the club. One of the groups also provided the opportunity to read and discuss spiritual and moral issues.

Travellers Focus Group: In order to work with the young people the youth worker engaged with the whole community. As well as the usual youth club activities, the worker helped with literacy and numeracy and encouraged the young people to go to school and college.

Every young person interviewed who was a Kent Youth Service user had positive experiences to relate, with many of those experiences referred to as life-changing in some way and additional comments were as follows:

- Young people valued highly their youth groups and workers.

- There were varying levels of understanding of the Service Transformation plans.
- The young people in general were against the proposals as they viewed them as 'cuts' in youth club provision.
- The proposal of a hub in their area was perceived as being inaccessible to many young people due to lack of transport and/or cost of travel.
- Young people expressed a feeling of attachment to their club which could not easily, they felt, be transferred to another club or space.
- They expressed a sense of 'ownership' of not only the 'club' but also 'their own space'.
- Detached projects were seen as potentially attractive but only if they were held in existing buildings [community spaces], rather than being mobile e.g. in vans.
- The idea of their local communities having a greater role in running youth services was interesting to some though only one group, where the village were planning to take on the youth club themselves, had an idea of how this could work.

Non-users Focus Group: Mostly living in rural areas, they were emphatic in their wish for youth clubs within reach of where they lived because they knew other young people through their school who were close enough to attend a youth club and who enjoyed it very much.

Judgement

At this stage it is not possible to discern either a direct negative or positive impact of the proposals, there are, however, clear actions which need to be taken in order to ensure the appropriate levels of service are maintained (or improved upon) for young people from each of the relevant groups identified within the initial action plan.

There are also currently no recognised disproportionately negative impacts of the proposal for staff groups and again this will have to be carefully managed and monitored through the action plan as detailed below.

Action Plan

The action plan below on page 17 sets out how the process of Service Transformation will be managed in order to ensure the ongoing levels of service to young people from the groups described within the EIA.

Although there is currently no recognised impact for staff members the final shape of the transformation model is yet to be determined and therefore this action plan will need to be monitored and updated as appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

Prior to undertaking the Service Transformation process a number of benchmarks will be created to reflect the Service's current performance with groups of young people. As a whole these currently indicate good performance across Kent although, on a district level, they vary from area to area. As the commissioning will be based on district level tenders this variation in local performance will be used to set relevant performance targets for both commissioned and directly delivered elements of service delivery.

Provision of future services will be subject to inspection and audit both internally by professionally qualified staff and externally by trained young inspectors. Each element of these audit and inspections includes a specific focus on equality of opportunity both in terms of the young people who attends services and in terms of extent to which the curriculum offer challenges prejudice.

Sign Off

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact(s) that have been identified.

Senior Officer

Signed:



Date: 30.4.12

Name: **Nigel Baker**

Job Title: **Head of Integrated Youth Services**

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Timescale
Disability	<p>Young people highly valued the service delivered and outcomes of clubs which offered specialist support.</p> <p>Young people sometimes expressed concern about attending mainstream provision.</p>	<p>Ensure commissioning frameworks include provision for clubs for disabled young people where locally required and for all provision to demonstrate it's inclusivity for disabled young people.</p> <p>Engage disabled young people as part of the evaluation & evaluation process for commissioning.</p> <p>Align youth service frameworks with the 'Befriending' specifications of Disabled Children's Services to support and aid disabled young people being able to access mainstream provision.</p> <p>Develop inclusive provision for disabled young people at each Youth Hub whilst also ensure the Hub supports the development of effective local curriculum interventions which promote equality of opportunity for disabled young people & challenge prejudice.</p> <p>Delivery of training to support staff & commissioned providers in the support and development of disabled young people.</p>	<p>Young people with physical and or learning disabilities will continue to receive access to both specialist and open access services and be further supported by developing befriending services.</p>	
Gender	<p>Young women value the time to meet together away from young men & take part in activities.</p> <p>Young women value the support and non-judgemental advice they receive from youth workers.</p>	<p>Ensure commissioning frameworks include provision which allows specific space and time for the development of youth work for young women.</p> <p>Engage young women throughout the evaluation & evaluation process for commissioning.</p> <p>Ensure the Youth Hub supports the development of effective local curriculum interventions which promote equality of opportunity for young women & challenge sexist attitudes.</p> <p>Delivery of training to support staff & commissioned providers in the support and development of young women.</p>	<p>Maintain a 60:40 split for gender representation (good performance for services of this nature) as a bench mark for minimum performance of the overall commissioned and delivered services.</p>	

<p>Race</p>	<p>Young people expressed the need for safe spaces to meet.</p> <p>Young people identified that integration was more successful through their own clubs.</p> <p>Young people identified the support offered through Youth Workers engaging with their wider communities.</p>	<p>Ensure commissioning frameworks include provision for clubs for specific BME groups where locally required and for all provision to demonstrate it's inclusivity for disabled young people.</p> <p>Engage BME young people as part of the evaluation & evaluation process for commissioning.</p> <p>Develop inclusive provision for BME young people at each Youth Hub whilst also ensuring the Hub supports the development of effective local curriculum interventions which promote equality of opportunity for BME young people & challenge racist attitudes.</p> <p>Delivery of training to support staff & commissioned providers in the support and development of BME young people and in engaging with the wider community.</p>	<p>Young people from BME communities will continue to receive access to both targeted and open access services and continue to be well represented against ONS local statistics.</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Young people expressed the need for safe spaces to meet.</p> <p>Young people identified the importance of supportive peer and professional networks to their well-being.</p>	<p>Ensure commissioning frameworks include provision for clubs for specific LGBT groups where locally required and for all provision to demonstrate it's inclusivity for disabled young people.</p> <p>Engage LGBT young people as part of the evaluation & evaluation process for commissioning.</p> <p>Develop inclusive provision for LGBT young people at each Youth Hub whilst also ensuring the Hub supports the development of effective local curriculum interventions which promote equality of opportunity for LGBT young people & challenge homophobia.</p> <p>Delivery of training to support staff & commissioned providers in the support and development of BME young people. and in engaging with the wider community.</p>	<p>LGBT Young people from will continue to receive access to both targeted and open access services and continue to be well represented against national statistics.</p>	
<p>Staff – All groups</p>	<p>Staff member posts will be put at risk during the transformation meaning that staff will be required to take part in recruitment and selection processes.</p>	<p>During the transformation process staff will have access to advice and support from line managers, senior managers, HR business support and offered assistance through supportline.</p> <p>A number of posts will be created during the transformation process and these will be recruited to using KCC's existing equality and diversity in employment policies.</p>	<p>Staff will not be subject to disproportionate negative outcomes as a result of their personal</p>	

		<p>Newly created posts will primarily be ring fenced to those staff within the youth service whose posts are proposed as being deleted.</p> <p>Where interested staff will continue to be supported in accessing training and support to aid in the development of new social enterprises.</p> <p>When at risk of redundancy staff will be placed on priority connect and supported in looking for other roles within KCC, staff can also access a range of training and support during their at risk period.</p>	<p>circumstance.</p>	
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APPENDIX A:

INTEGRATED YOUTH SERVICE:

NEEDS ANALYSIS AND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK FOR THE COMMISSIONING OF YOUTH WORK PROVISION IN KENT

DOVER

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The publication 'Bold Steps for Kent' outlines the medium term plan for Kent County Council for the next four years; one of its three aims is to 'put the citizen in control':

“power and influence must be in the hands of local people and local communities so they are more able to take responsibility for their own community and service needs, such as creating new social enterprise”.

In line with this aim, Kent Youth Service is seeking to commission a range of providers to deliver youth work within local communities. This document lays out the intended outcomes for young people and the communities in which they live as a result of this commissioning process.

2. Service Context

- 2.1** The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 6) places a duty on local authorities to provide for young people aged 13-19 (and up to 24 for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) sufficient recreational and educational leisure time activities and facilities for the improvement of young people's well-being and their personal and social development.
- 2.2** The focus on the ages 13-19 reflects the fact that these ages are commonly understood to represent a transition period for young people during which the engagement in positive leisure time activities as described in the Education and Inspection Act 2006 can offer significant benefits to young people. The statutory guidance for this duty states that local authorities should be clear that they are able to secure access to positive activities in order to accommodate individuals with early or delayed transitions.
- 2.3** The statutory duty also requires the local authority to involve young people in the planning and decision making around the delivery of positive activities. The guidance is clear that the local authority and its

partners should take into account the needs of groups of young people most at risk of negative outcomes and whose access to and engagement in positive activities is often limited.

- 2.4** The guidance also states that local authorities should consider the benefits of securing access to activities resulting in recorded and accredited outcomes, which young people can use to demonstrate competencies and access further opportunities.
- 2.5** Kent County Council covers an area including 12 districts/borough which have a combined 13-19 population of 131,030 young people (based on mid-2009 population estimates) located across a large number of urban population centres, with a significant number also living in more isolated rural communities.
- 2.6** Kent Youth Service has traditionally delivered positive activities to these young people through a network of Youth Centres, schools based youth work and a variety of street-based projects, all supplemented by a Partnership Awards process which supported youth work delivered through annual grants to the voluntary and community sector.
- 2.7** A geographical area the size of Kent naturally covers a wide range of socio-economic situations of local citizens and, whilst there are some relatively affluent areas of Kent, there are also areas with very high proportions of people with very low socio-economic status.
- 2.8** Whilst the mapping of areas of concentrated deprivation and therefore service need is important, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children in Kent identifies that young people and their families who live in relative deprivation in the most prosperous parts of Kent risk being isolated and have a strong likelihood of social exclusion.

3. Needs Analysis

- 3.1** Kent Youth Service is committed to the delivery of a high quality range of youth work opportunities which develop the confidence and self esteem and is accessible to all young people, but which also offers specific support and guidance to young people during more vulnerable periods in their lives and therefore contribute to the Preventative Strategy through supporting positive life choices amongst young people.
- 3.2** In order to ensure the intended outcomes meet the appropriate needs of the wide range of young people throughout Kent, this document draws on a range of existing data sets and needs assessments such as the mid 2009 Population Estimate; the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children in Kent; The Kent Children's Trust Strategic Planning Framework to Support Positive Outcomes for Children and Young People; The Pattern of Deprivation in Kent; The Equality and Diversity Profile for Kent; District and Borough Youth Strategies and

the Local Children's Trust Board Children and Young People's Plans as well as local and national research into young people's development and engagement in activities.

3.3 The Strategic Planning Framework to Support Positive Outcomes for Children and Young People indicates seven key areas of need for all young people, of which three are particularly pertinent to outcomes for young people achieved through youth work. Each of the outcomes described in Section 4 below will in some way contribute to these three areas of need:

- Adolescent Engagement: Young people will be emotionally healthy with positive aspirations, equipped and informed in order to make healthy life choices, including developing healthy relationships, not misusing alcohol or drugs and not offending.
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health: Children and young people are equipped with emotional skills to build on success and deal with life's challenges.
- Safeguarding: Children and young people are nurtured and protected in their families and are safe at school and in their communities.

3.4 Responses from young people in the 'Kent Youth Service, A Study of Engagement' demonstrates the value placed on existing provision. The outcomes achieved by young people through their attendance highlight the importance of safe places to socialise with friends and the ability to meet new people and take part in new and challenging activities.

3.5 The importance of appropriate spaces for young people to socialise and take part in positive activities is recognised at a local and national level: research with teenagers and parents suggests that the lack of local, non-commercial spaces where teenagers can spend time together off the streets, contributed to reported levels of boredom and subsequent trouble among teenagers. (NACRO 2000).

3.6 The provision of universally accessed positive activities in a range of settings has proven to be effective in reducing the level of anti-social behaviour amongst young people and provides a positive pro-social environment which promotes the active personal and social development of the young person. (Tired of Hanging Around – Audit Commission 2009)

3.7 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children in Kent (after Cassen et al 2009) defines resilience as positive adaptation in the face of adversity and highlights the importance of promoting resilience in young people in order to increase the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes despite being at high risk for poor outcomes from a range of factors.

- 3.8** The provision of challenging positive activities and positive social environments can provide all young people with ways of developing some of the protective factors identified by Best and Witton (2001), most notably in developing the kind of self-esteem and pro-social relationships which are recognised by young people in the Kent Youth Service Study of Engagement - where 82.9% of young people (from a sample of 1176) indicated they have increased in personal confidence by taking part in youth work and 64% indicated they had made new friends.
- 3.9** Whilst the need to invest in the personal and social development of all young people is recognised by Kent Youth Service and reflected in the outcomes below, the need to give additional support and therefore targeted services for some is recognised where young people may be temporarily experiencing increased risks of negative outcomes (such as periods of familial breakdown, leaving education or employment or transition periods) or who are subject to ongoing and multiple risk factors (such as parental substance misuse, domestic violence, low socio-economic status).
- 3.10** The number of young people who live in Kent and are from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds is lower than the average across the UK; however, there are concentrations of particular communities in various locations throughout the county. Allied to this, the population estimates are based on 2001 estimates and therefore may not reflect recent migration patterns both into and out of Kent due to changes in public policy and economic conditions, particularly in the last few years.
- 3.11** The Children and Young People of Kent Survey 2009 (NFER 2010) identified that 8% of young people feel sad and depressed on most days. Whilst this is a reduction from the 2008 survey, it still represents a significant minority of young people who may need support with mental wellbeing (as per the young person's own perception as there is no empirical link drawn here to diagnosed mental health conditions).
- 3.12** The incidence of poor self-perception of mental health increases significantly amongst more vulnerable young people. For example young people who are eligible for free school meals have a higher incidence of feeling sad or depressed most days and Looked After Children respond twice as highly as the average (16% rather than 8%). The need to support all young people to achieve the emotional skills to deal with life's challenges is recognised in the Strategic Planning Framework. These groups may therefore justify additional resources to support them.
- 3.13** The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment recognises that problematic risk-taking behaviours amongst young people are more strongly associated with social deprivation; for example, a strong class gradient exists between teenagers in the lowest income groups who are the heaviest smokers and those from families with professional backgrounds who are the lightest smokers.

- 3.14** Not only does education play a critical link between childhood disadvantage and adult disadvantage but also young people who are not engaged in education, employment and/or training are more likely to become involved in problematic risk taking behaviours as described above.
- 3.15** The same correlation between social deprivation and drug and alcohol misuse is more complex as there is no strong association between the use of cannabis and amphetamines and social deprivation, whilst highly problematic drug and alcohol use remains strongly linked to social deprivation. Therefore the use of positive activities to inform and influence all young people's choices around alcohol and drug use is important additional resource, and justified in supporting those from lower socio-economic backgrounds in their choices.
- 3.16** The prevalence of outcomes such as teenage pregnancy, early school leavers, poor employment prospects and becoming a lone parent all have strong links to young people who begin having sexual intercourse at an early age, as well of course as a increased likelihood of contracting STI's. As such, the use of positive activities to inform and influence young people's healthy life choices is paramount.
- 3.17** 'Kent Youth Service, A Study of Engagement' demonstrated relatively high levels of participation amongst young people who identified themselves as disabled, from a Black and Minority Ethnic background or Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. As each of these groups is recognised as including young people who are potentially more vulnerable to negative outcomes, they justify continued allocation of resource to ensure an ongoing high level of participation and access to personal and social development opportunities.
- 3.18** When a young person enters the youth justice system it is clear that the risk of negative outcomes later in life significantly increases; furthermore, the higher the number of engagements the higher the likelihood of negative outcomes. Therefore, the need to engage with young people to prevent entry and minimise involvement in the Youth Justice System is of considerable importance. In 2010, 68% of First Time Entrants were young men, an increase from 63% in 2009.
- 3.19** The needs identified above will directly influence the desired outcomes for the young people of Kent through engaging in youth provision. These outcomes are described in detail in section 4 below. Each district or borough has an appendix where specific identified needs relevant for more targeted approaches or groups of young people have been identified.
- 4. Outcomes**
- 4.1** Kent Youth Service is committed to the provision of high quality youth work activities for the young people of Kent and in order to do this has identified a set of outcomes which young people should be able to

achieve through their engagement with services. The following outcomes are generic which should be provided regardless of location. Each district or borough has an appendix which identifies any outcomes which may be linked to geographical or local strategic issues.

- 4.2** Young people should have access to dedicated spaces over which they are able to exercise a degree of ownership. These spaces should be suitable for a range of educational and recreational leisure activities as described in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. These spaces should primarily be available for positive activities during the hours of 6pm and 10pm weekday evenings and during the weekend. These dedicated spaces could be supplemented by the delivery of positive activities in a range of locations suitable to the local community context of the young people.
- 4.3** Provision of educational and recreational leisure activities should be delivered in an inclusive manner which allows young people from a variety of socio-economic and demographic backgrounds and varied ability to engage.
- 4.4** Provision of these activities should be gender, age, culture, ability and sexual identity specific as required by the local context but overall providing an equal offer for male & female, all ages, black and minority ethnic groups, disabled young people and lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.
- 4.5** Educational and recreational leisure time activities delivered should be both fun and challenging, enabling young people the opportunity to develop positive relationships with each other (including other young people they would otherwise not meet) and with appropriately skilled adults leading to an increased level of personal, social and emotional skill.
- 4.6** Young people should have access to a range of challenging outdoor education and residential activities both in the UK and overseas in order to provide key life milestones and increased opportunities for developing confidence, new skills and interpersonal relationships.
- 4.7** Educational and recreational leisure time activities should be delivered across a broad youth work curriculum activities including, but not exclusively, information and advice about sexual health, smoking cessation, drug and alcohol misuse and activities which challenge prejudice. In addition, more vulnerable young people should be able to access clear pathways to more intensive health interventions as and when they require it.
- 4.8** The emotional well-being and mental health of young people is paramount to their ability to cope with transition periods in adolescence, and educational and recreational leisure time activities should have a strong focus on developing young people's resilience and emotional well-being. In addition, more vulnerable young people

should be able to access clear pathways to more intensive support as and when they require it.

- 4.9** Young people will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills in a variety of performing arts and sports with the opportunity to celebrate these skills at local and regional young people's events in order to both increase confidence and self-esteem and promote a positive image of young people.
- 4.10** Young people should have the opportunity to take part in educational and recreational activities which offer routes to skills development in both locally and nationally recognised accreditation frameworks and support their continued engagement in wider education or employment.
- 4.11** Young people will have a range of opportunities provided to them to engage in volunteering to support both their own development and also to enable them to take an active part in their local communities.
- 4.12** Young people should be fully involved in a decision making process about the design, delivery and evaluation of any educational and recreational leisure activities in order to ensure it directly meets their needs and allows the development of personal and social skills.
- 4.13** Young people should be supported to take part in local and regional participation activities in order to support their political understanding and development as citizens.
- 4.14** Educational and recreational activities should work to prevent or minimise the levels of engagement of young people at vulnerable periods in their lives with the Youth Justice System.

5. Commissioning Resources

- 5.1** Following a reduction in direct delivery, Kent Youth Service will redirect resources to the commissioning of youth work activities across Kent. The amount allocated for commissioning is expected to be £1.7 million. It is proposed to allocate this amount between organisations which directly deliver youth work and organisations which provide infrastructure services, i.e. the support for small direct delivery organisation through sector development, affiliation and CRB processing.
- 5.2** It is proposed that the commissioning budget will be distributed according to a resource allocation model which can take into account the local population, local levels of deprivation and the previous levels of attainment of an area, recognising that these combined factors are indicative of the likelihood of young people achieving positive outcomes.

5.3 Whilst commissioning allocations may be proposed on a district/borough basis this is not intended to prevent the development of work across boundaries where relevant.

5.4 The amount of £1.7m for the commissioning of youth work activities is intended to be a basic amount which is spent on these activities. This should be understood as only the starting point as it is intended that by working more closely with partners both countywide and at a local level other resources which are intended to meet similar outcomes for young people could support integrated responses to the provision of activities for young people. In this way, there will be greater opportunities for high quality, local service delivery and administrative efficiencies.

6. Local Context

6.1 In addition to the Service context in Section 2 and the general needs analysis in Section 3, Appendix 1 below give more detailed information from a range of sources on each of the districts and boroughs.

6.2 Appendix 1 includes a Children's Wellbeing Index (CWI) Score, this is a figure provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2009). Like the Indices of Multiple Deprivation score, the CWI scores provide a relative ranking of areas across England according to their level of deprivation but with reference to children specifically; higher scores indicate higher levels of deprivation.

6.3 Whilst some local demographic information is available, figures for the number of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) young people within the population are not available in any data set. Stonewall, the lesbian gay and bisexual charity, currently states that the government's estimate of 5-7% of the population is reasonable. This estimate can reasonably be assumed to apply across the districts/boroughs.

6.4 Appendix 2 gives a break down of information given by young people in response to a survey of users of Kent Youth Service (KYS) provision which gives a representative level of breakdown of current service users prior to the consultation.

Appendix 1 : Dover Data

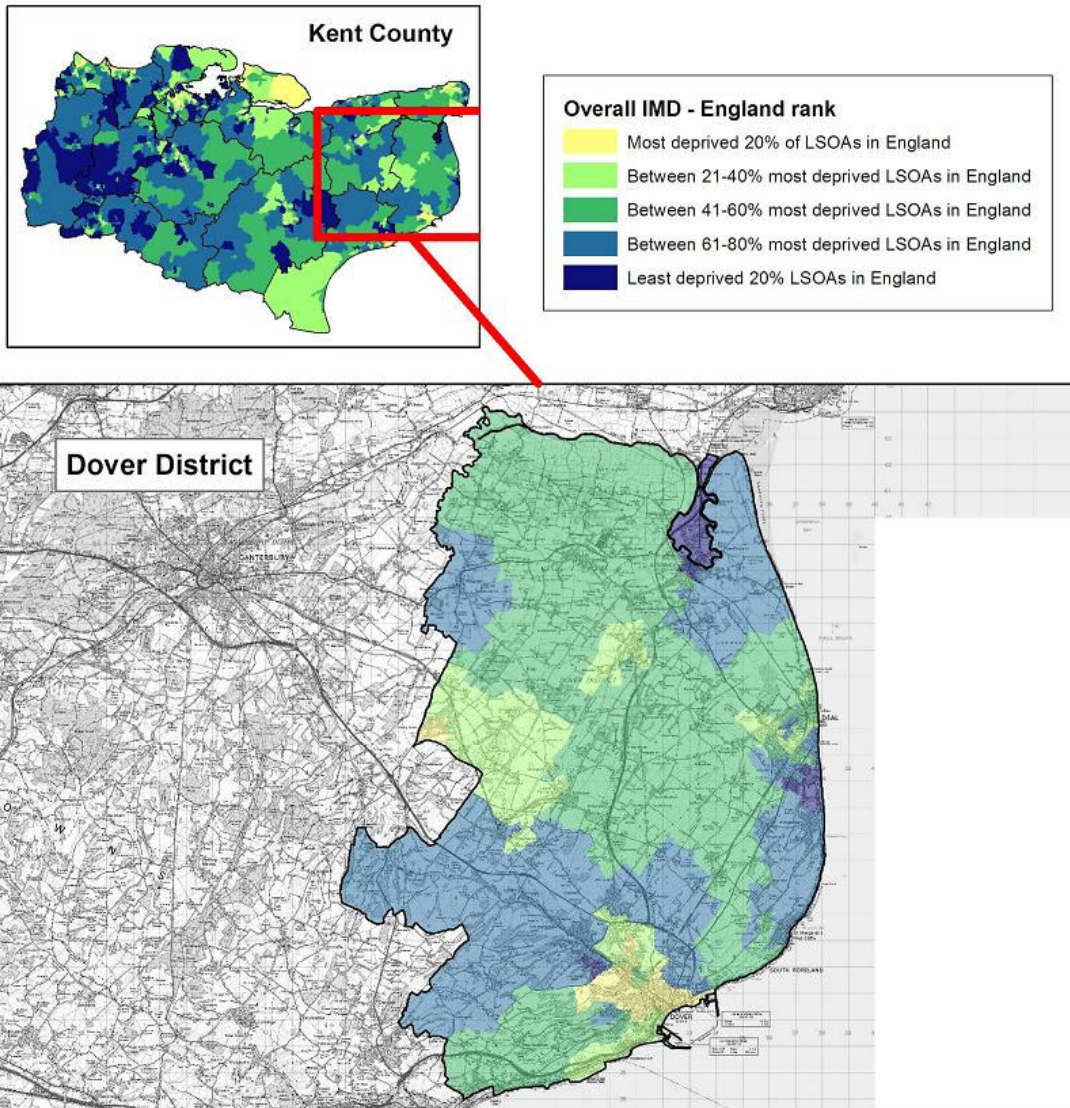
Local level of need:

The District of Dover has a 13-19 population of 10,100 young people placing it joint seventh in the county for this age group, the area has a further 8,800 young people between the ages of 11-25. The population density of the 13-19 population is demonstrated on the map below.

- The overall Children's Wellbeing Index (CWI) Score for Dover is 137.7 which places it 8th in Kent.
- On the national Indices of Deprivation Dover has moved from being ranked 142 in 2007 to 127 in 2010, and has moved from being the 5th most deprived area of KCC to the 4th which indicates that it has become relatively more deprived than some other areas in Kent and England. Ward level deprivation is demonstrated on the map below.
- 3.6% of all residents are from BME communities (Kent average 6.3%, England Average 11.8%). BME children & young people aged 0-15 comprise 5% of the local population.
- 4% of young people aged 0-24 in Dover claim disability living allowance; 1.7% of secondary school children have a statement whilst a further 22% have additional needs but no statement. From this it is possible to estimate that between 2100 and 2300 young people could benefit from additional support through youth provision.
- There are 164 Looked After Children across Dover over 70 of which are other LA children placed in Kent.
- 138 young people were First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System in 2010, down from 203 in 2009.
- The under 18 Conception rate for 2007/09 was 36.4 per 1000; the target rate for 2009/11 is 23.6.
- In February 2011 4.89% of 16-18 year olds were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) whilst a further 1.88% were 'Not Known' i.e. it is not possible to identify whether they are currently in employment or some kind of education environment.

The local Youth Strategy for Dover District 2008 – 2012 identifies 55 separate aims under the Every Child Matters themes along with a specific focus on Disabled Young People.

National rank of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Dover based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010



Dover is ranked 127th out of 326 authorities in England. A rank of 1 is the most deprived. This places Dover in England's most deprived half of authorities.

St.Radigunds has the highest level of deprivation in Dover, followed by Buckland and Tower Hamlets.

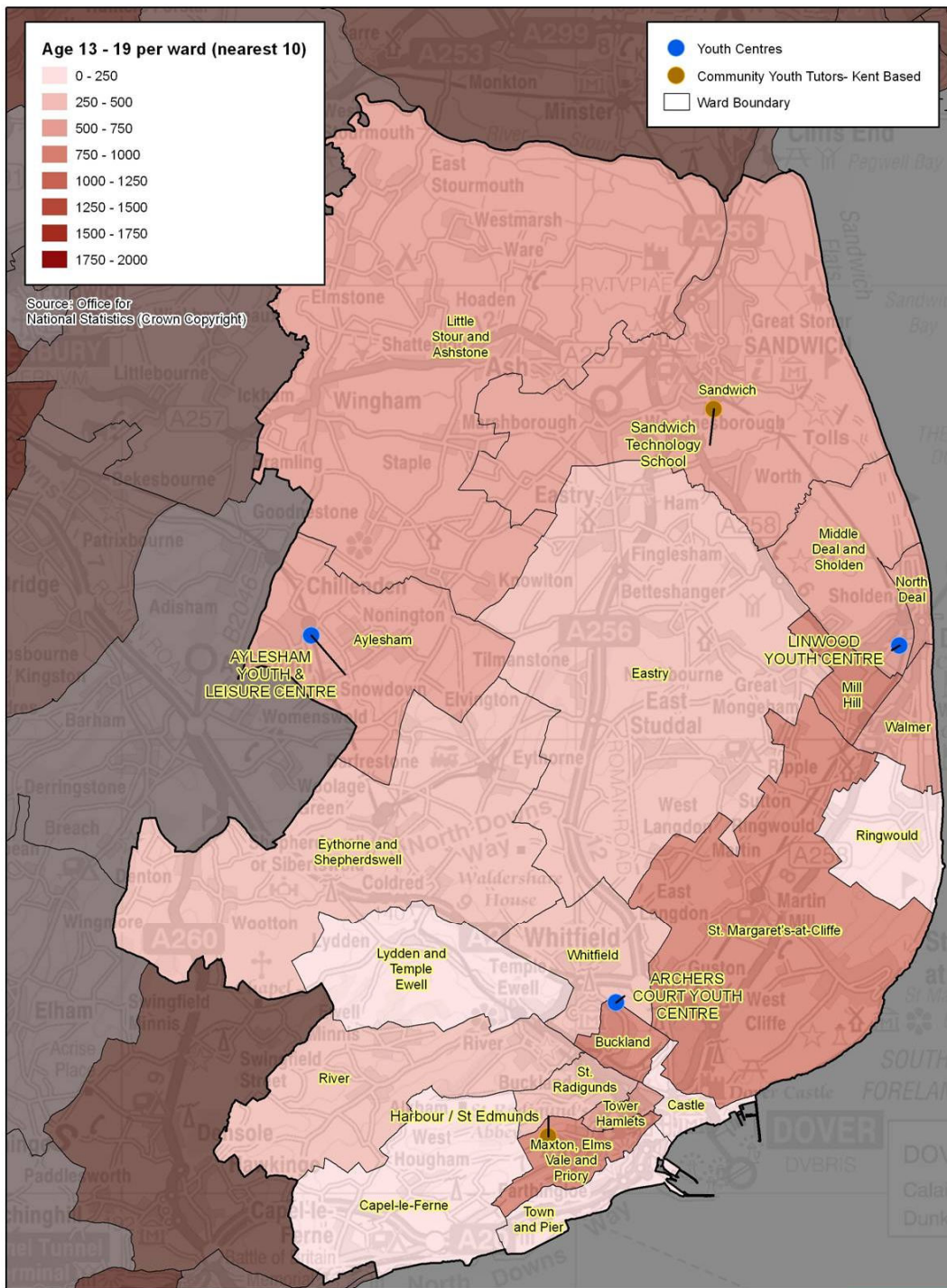
Dover LSOAs	Number	%
Within England's top 20% most deprived	11	16.4%
Within South East's top 20% most deprived	21	31.3%
Within Kent's top 20% most deprived	15	22.4%

Out of a total of 67 LSOAs

Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, Communities and Local Government (CLG)
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13-19 Population Density, Dover (with existing provision)



Produced by the KCC GIS Team

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Ref: ma1810_F0925351_Dover



Appendix 2: KYS User Survey 2011 – Dover

The following information is drawn from responses to surveys completed within the Dover district. The sample size for this district was 177 young people with the following characteristics:

<p style="text-align: center;">Distribution of Age of Respondents</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Distribution of Age of Respondents</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>Dover (%)</th> <th>All (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Under 13</td> <td>5.0</td> <td>8.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>11.0</td> <td>13.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>13.0</td> <td>17.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>35.0</td> <td>23.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>20.0</td> <td>15.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>8.0</td> <td>11.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>4.0</td> <td>6.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19-25</td> <td>2.0</td> <td>6.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	Dover (%)	All (%)	Under 13	5.0	8.0	13	11.0	13.0	14	13.0	17.0	15	35.0	23.0	16	20.0	15.0	17	8.0	11.0	18	4.0	6.0	19-25	2.0	6.0	<p>Dover's distribution has a strong peak at 15 which recognises the work carried out in partnership with schools. Whilst the distribution corresponds well with the target age the low percentage (& low numbers) suggests less work with older young people with additional needs.</p>
Age	Dover (%)	All (%)																										
Under 13	5.0	8.0																										
13	11.0	13.0																										
14	13.0	17.0																										
15	35.0	23.0																										
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<p style="text-align: center;">Distribution of Gender of Respondents (Dover)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Distribution of Gender of Respondents (Dover)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage (%)	Male	57%	Female	43%	<p>Dover's representation of young men and young women is skewed towards young men but corresponds well with the average attendance of the Service as a whole.</p>																					
Gender	Percentage (%)																											
Male	57%																											
Female	43%																											
<p style="text-align: center;">Percentage of Dover respondents who identify themselves as:</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Percentage of Dover respondents who identify themselves as:</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Having a disability</td> <td>77%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Being from Minority Ethnic Group</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LGBT</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage (%)	Having a disability	77%	Being from Minority Ethnic Group	10%	LGBT	4%	No response	9%	<p>According to the ONS Mid 2007 estimates Dover has the lowest proportion of BME residents for the county at 3.6%. The area is reaching these young people well. Dover has a high proportion of 0 -15 yr olds who qualify for DLA at 4.9%. The 4% who identify themselves as LGBT is below expected national estimates.</p>																	
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<p style="text-align: center;">Young People's Outcomes</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Young People's Outcomes</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Outcome</th> <th>All (%)</th> <th>Dover (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gained a qualification?</td> <td>38.0</td> <td>50.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gained a new skill?</td> <td>75.0</td> <td>78.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Got involved in a new activity?</td> <td>80.0</td> <td>82.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gained confidence?</td> <td>80.0</td> <td>85.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Met different types of people?</td> <td>72.0</td> <td>85.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Outcome	All (%)	Dover (%)	Gained a qualification?	38.0	50.0	Gained a new skill?	75.0	78.0	Got involved in a new activity?	80.0	82.0	Gained confidence?	80.0	85.0	Met different types of people?	72.0	85.0	<p>The Dover area is performing above the average on every outcome which young people have identified for themselves. The area has the highest percentage and by far the number of young people (90) who identify that they have been able to gain some kind of accreditation through their participation with the Service.</p>									
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APPENDIX B

Equality Impact Assessment

Consultation on Kent Youth Service Transformation Proposals

FINAL Report on Focus Groups with Young People

Purpose of study

The purpose of the study is to help assess the potential impact of proposed changes in youth services upon young people from particular groups as identified in the EIA initial screening. Those groups of young people reflect the following characteristics: Disability, Female gender, Gender identity, Sexual orientation, Race and Religion or belief. The report was needed in order that any final decisions made can take the needs of these young people into account. The study is over and above information meetings held to allow young people to gain a deeper understanding of the proposals before completing a questionnaire available in youth clubs and on-line through the KYS website.

Summary of findings specific to each youth group provision:

- **Disability:** these young people felt safe and happy in their specialist groups whereas they had experienced bullying in mixed settings. They loved their youth group and found it hard to discuss alternatives. Their youth group was both socially and emotionally important to them
- **Female:** girls enjoyed the opportunity to meet together and with their youth workers whom they had found very supportive particularly as they provided a source of non-judgmental advice
- **LGBTQ:** the young people felt that their group offered a place for them to socialize together and 'be themselves' but also spoke of their particular need for peer and youth worker support which the club provided
- **Black and Minority Ethnic:** these young people said that youth clubs for them where English people were also welcome, improved mutual understanding. The English attenders agreed with them. The BME young people felt safe and valued in their own groups whereas they reported bad experiences in other youth groups. There was evidence that some ethnic groups were at best mistrustful and at worse hostile, though not necessarily openly, to each other. Their youth workers provided important services including help with language and literacy
- **Faith:** in these groups, run by church organisations, the young people did not see themselves affected by the Service Transformation plans despite overcrowding with newcomers as a result of KYS clubs that had already been closed. The opportunity to socialize elsewhere than home, school or the streets was more important to them than the faith aspect of the club. One of the groups also provided the opportunity to read and discuss spiritual and moral issues using a text from the Bible as their starting point.
- **Travellers:** In order to work with the young people the youth worker engaged with the whole community. As well as the usual youth club activities, the worker helped with literacy and numeracy and encouraged the young people to go to school and college.

Summary of general findings across the EIA and non-user groups

- Every young person interviewed who is a Kent Youth Service user had **positive experiences** to relate, with many of those experiences referred to as life-changing in some way
- Young people **valued highly their youth groups and workers.**
- There were **varying levels of understanding** of the Service Transformation plans
- The young people in general were against the proposals and described them as '**cuts**' in youth

club provision

- The proposal of a **hub** in their area was perceived as being inaccessible to many young people due to lack of transport and/or cost of travel
- Young people expressed a feeling of **attachment to their club** which could not easily, they felt, be transferred to another club or space
- They expressed a sense of **'ownership'** of not only the 'club' but also 'their own space'
- **Detached projects** were seen as potentially attractive but only if they were held in existing buildings, rather than being mobile eg in vans
- The idea of their **local communities** having a greater role in running youth services was interesting to some though only one group, where the village were planning to take on the youth club themselves, had an idea of how this could work
- Faith-based groups may be subsidising KCC directly funded provision in some areas, creating a **vacuum** for those young people unwilling to participate in them.
- **Non-users group:** Mostly living in **rural areas**, they were emphatic in their wish for youth clubs within reach of where they lived because they knew other young people through their school who were close enough to attend a youth club and who enjoyed it very much
- The non-users were the biggest **source of ideas** for transformation. They said:
 - **Publicity** of services needs to be improved – eg website addresses in school
 - Activities to **bring young and old together**
 - **Recruit older people to volunteer** to help with youth activities
 - These three suggestions would need to be **KCC initiated**
 - Existing buildings eg community halls should be utilised for **'detached youth clubs'** round the villages and in the towns too

Recommendations

-
- Keep separate locations for the **BME, LGBT and Disabled** groups.
- Support integration by encouraging open access to the **BME groups** by English young people where those groups wish it, subject to monitoring by youth workers for bullying.
- Keep separate opportunities to meet for **girls-only groups** to ensure their needs are not overpowered by the boys'.
- Maintain the worker for the **Travellers'** community to give children the choice of living within, or outside, that community
- The Bridge Youth Centre offers a fine example of excellence in **disabled provision** which needs to be maintained across the County
- **Continue with publicity** of the proposals, and then afterwards the decisions, particularly aimed at and involving, young people
- **Encourage active participation** of all ages across the County, at local level, in the voluntary provision of youth services
- Assess and correct deficiencies in **rural and small town youth service provision** which currently are resulting in unequal access to the opportunities offered by youth clubs to young people
- Ensure that the youth clubs each have their own **permanent, multi-faced space** which is not shared with other community groups and which allows for a range of different activities to go on simultaneously
- **Continue** with the current provision of activities and quality of youth work which young people recognise and appreciate as being both enjoyable and very important for their growth into responsible adults
- More detailed research needed to assess the impact of youth club provision on the **prevention of anti-social/criminal activity** of 13-19 year olds in Kent and the relative costs

Scope of study

The study is built on the results of Initial Screening for the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) produced

on 20th April 2011. The views were sought of young people in Kent aged 13-19 who fell within the categories identified by the Kent Youth Service Initial Screening for the Equality Impact Assessment produced on 20th April 2011 as requiring consultation additional to the questionnaire available in youth clubs and, for both users and non-users, on-line. Those categories of young people reflect the following characteristics: Disability, Female gender, Gender identity, Sexual orientation, Race and Religion or belief. Using criterion sampling, which involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001, p. 238), the young people were all members of youth clubs catering for these particular characteristics, except for one group of non-users identified randomly through a Kent school. This type of sampling is purposeful so the research results probably, though not necessarily, are representative of the views of the young people in the particular clubs selected, and the particular school. However, the results should be treated with caution in respect of their representativeness of all young people in Kent attending specialist youth clubs, or of all non-users of youth clubs in Kent.

Study Method

Focus group interviews were carried out with young people. Following the required remit, an explanation of the research and its purpose were sent out to youth group leaders across Kent for them to invite their members to take part in the focus group interviews. Young people in the first youth groups to respond were interviewed

The researchers met with young people in focus group interviews with 3 – 8 interviewees from the following youth group provision (numbers in brackets are individuals interviewed – 66 in total)

- Disabled – 2 youth groups, 2 interviews (10)
- Female – 1 youth group – 1 interview (5)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transvestite and Questioning (LGBTQ) – 1 youth group, 1 interview (3)
- Black and Minority Ethnic - 3 youth groups, 6 interviews (21)
- Faith – 2 youth groups, 2 interviews (11)
- Travellers - 1 youth group - 3 interviews (8)
- Non-users group - 1 group - (8)

The Report is organised as follows:

1. Findings from the specialist groups

- **Disabled**
- **Female**
- **Travellers**
- **Faith**
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transvestite and Questioning (LGBTQ)**
- **Black and Minority Ethnic**
- **Non-users**

2. General findings

- **Activities**
- **Socialising**
- **Personal and social development**
- **Employment prospects**
- **Discouraging young people from engaging in anti-social activities**

3. The Proposals

- **Hubs**
 - Too many people**
 - Not safe**
 - Travelling**
 - Local need**
- **Detached projects**
 - No permanence**

No good for sport
No good if the weather is bad
More freedom
A youth club near us
Use existing facilities

- Commissioned projects
4. Improvements to plans
 - Clubs at different places
 - Detached youth club
 - Under-utilised buildings
 - Other suggested venues
 - Community events
 - Bringing young and old together
 - Older people could volunteer more to help with young people
 - Volunteering had to be led by KCC
 5. More, not less
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 - Do not know about or fully understand
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 - Attachment
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 - Position of knowledge and involvement:
 - Safe and protected
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 - Anger
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 - Fear
 - Resentment
 10. Importance of space: size, type and 'ownership'
 11. Unequal opportunities
 12. No one listens to or likes young people
 13. Nowhere to go
 14. Conclusions

Findings from the specialist groups

Disabled

The youth clubs for disabled young people offer more specialised activities. One example is a residential course at an outdoor education centre. For many of them it was their first time away from home and a very positive experience:

I was quite nervous before I went because I had never been away from my Mum only for a weekend and when I come back I was really happy that I went and I did have a few seizures on that but I was helped out and in the end it was a brilliant weekend, there was loads to do. I thought that was really fun and it made me feel like I was away from home and it was more independent..... It was a bit of a new experience

The regular youth club activities have also had significant effects on these young people's ability to integrate into society, as they explain:

I became more sociablesince I've been coming here. It really helped me in this club to have more friends and become more part of society. I have been going to other clubs outside of school

I used to be scared to walk out of my door but since I started coming here and knowing that it is not all terrible there are good things. I am happy.

....where I was coming here so much I just felt more confident every time I came here; I was more confident in myself. (I'm now on a performing arts course at college

A lot of the young people in the disabled groups had experienced bullying in mixed clubs which they had found very upsetting:

.....every other youth club I have gone to I have been bullied terribly, this is the one youth club that I can go to where I don't get bullied or harassed or my flaws pointed out. It is like a second home to me.

Female

For the girls' youth club it was important to have time away from the boys to enjoy their own activities:

When the boys are here I get really shy and I don't be myself but here I'm fine being myself cos I know it's just us and everyone out there we all get along and all go out with each other and stuff

...this week, we're having a 'stay awake', and basically there is a girls one and a boys one and we are picking 12 activities....we are getting sponsored to stay awake for the whole night and we're using the money towards our youth centre and getting better facilities and stuff like that.

....we've had cheer leaders come in and done some cheer leading and we got on really well with (the visitors) who done that. What else we done, we done street dancing, I didn't get on with that so I didn't do that. Every Monday is our cooking session and we make cakes, we make pancakes, we make omelettes, we do the lot.....

Travellers

The Travellers' group works on a different basis to the other examples of youth clubs in this report. The community worker covers four Travellers' sites and has had to connect with whole families in order to gain and retain Traveller trust and good will. This approach means that activities are organised for children and young people from primary through to post-compulsory school age but also substantial support is given in basic literacy and numeracy to compensate for the children's poor school

attendance. The support is extended to assist young adults to acquire job-related skills, such as preparing for the driving test theory. The community worker also helps their parents with literacy-related tasks such as form-filling. The focal point for the activities is a large van, which the worker uses on a detached project basis between the four sites. The children and young people interviewed for the report were aged between 8 and 23. They were unanimous in their appreciation of, and affection for, the community worker and clearly saw her as both a good friend and a resource. This eight year old explained:

My brother doesn't come (to the van). (The community worker) comes up the caravan and she learns him the theory for his ...driving test.

The activities provided for the children and young people include age-appropriate crafts such as mask-making, games, circus skills, barbecues, dressing up, designing clothes, quizzes, word searches, computer games. They also took part in a large inter-site art, design and gardening project.

In addition, the young people have helped their community worker complete the application forms for extra funding for shields, trophies and medals, barbeque equipment to run their own inter-site football tournament.

This is the experience of one of the young Traveller girls, now aged 16, talking about the community worker:

She has done a lot for (me)I've known her since I was about 8 or 9..... She has been coming (to this site) for about 2 or 3 years now I think just do a lot like every time she comes here I am always the first on it because I 'm always boredso she gives me a better thing to do than the littluns. It could be something not writing but easy and drawing and brings knitting down and I do that.

And when it is cold, one of the children explained:

(We all) put a coat on and shut the door here and we just stay in (the van) and do some stuff and then we have some soup. We've had a roast dinner too.

Faith

The Faith clubs differed in the emphasis they placed on spiritual and moral guidance. They were all keen to point out that their clubs provided the same type of activities as non-Faith clubs. Nonetheless, in one they have:

a reflection period where we read an extract from the bible and reflect on that and then do something personal to each of us.....we all get something personal from (the club) and it's not just fun and games. It has got a message behind it as well....

They said they have '*discussions and debates about what we think about different issues and things*'. An example related to how brothers and sisters get on together in a family:

like we have always based it on a Bible passage like for example last week we were doing about Joseph and sibling rivalry, so we all talked about our siblings and a lot of us have siblings and rivalry, and it was really good we wrote about what we should do to be better towards our siblings

Such activities were not forced on the young people. They enjoyed it as one part of their evening at the club.

At the same time they were acutely aware that though all young people in the area were welcome some may not wish to participate in the club because of its connection to the church. The members felt that meant some young people were missing out:

Of course there are people who wouldn't want to go because they think it is just Bible bashers..... There are definitely people who don't go.....I think it has got a stigma attached to it

If people who didn't go (took) into consideration that it's not all about sitting down and contemplating the Bible really solidly they might consider going..... it is not that. It is more relaxed.

In the other Faith group, there were far too many young people attending for the space available. This is because a KCC club has recently closed in anticipation of a new community centre opening. Some young people felt they were being forced into a situation where they had to attend a Faith-based group when they did not want this - they wanted their own non-faith based group:

Yes we want our own, the Faith group have got their own - why can't we have our own?

LGBTQ

Although wanting to emphasise that this club was like any of the others, the young people spoke less about the activities and more about the support they derived from it:

...you can meet and talk about your problems and meet people who are going through the same problems as you.... I think that people who come here don't feel awkward about coming because everyone might have different views, I don't think anyone feels threatened or awkward about coming into the group.

The members thought that the funding and support for the group was important also because it showed that although some of the local people might not agree with it *'the people that sanctioned it do and they want to give it a chance and give LGBTQ people an opportunity'*.

The opportunity to socialise was valued. It also meant that they did not feel isolated. : *'we always chat really friendly and all know each other, if we see each other in the town we are all like, how are you, how are you doing all that stuff'*.

The members of the club spoke about the bullying that LGBTQ youngsters can suffer and that without support this can become so intolerable that they commit suicide: *'(for) some people this group it is a matter of life and death'*.

They also appreciated the opportunity to discuss other important issues. Recently, for example, they had watched a DVD on sexual orientation stereotypes from the LGBTQ charity Stonewall, *'about tackling stereotypes in school'*. This led on to talking about racism.

Black and Minority Ethnic

In addition to the activities enjoyed by other youth clubs there are events, which cater for young people from particular communities. For example:

A couple of months ago there was the Nepalese basketball tournament so people from the Nepalese community come here and have a big old tournament and there was a big old stake prize at the end of it and they did a volleyball tournament as well the week before that just for the girls

I would never go to a Bollywood Show in London I didn't know about that one and the youth club provide us with a chance to go and see other cultures and stuff. Indian cultures, Punjabi.

What the young people also enjoy is a chance to come together both with people from their own and from other ethnic backgrounds:

...(we) come here and make friends basically with each other so if that weren't here I reckon it wouldn't be like that, we wouldn't know each other, I reckon it would be like we would stay with our own if you know what I mean'

Their experiences at other predominantly English clubs have not been pleasant and they have experienced bullying through racism whereas anyone can come to their clubs and be made welcome:

See (for example) Polish and Russian they can come (here) and say if we went to other people youth club they would say there is racism and all that stuff so that's why we don't go to other places but we ain't scared but see if they come to our club none of them will tell them off and see if we go to other clubs their child bosses are there and they say what are you doing here and we say (whether) you can come in.

Whilst they do not like to attend these clubs they particularly welcome English people to theirs because it helps them feel safer and more integrated outside as well as inside the clubs:

...there are a few English people coming to our club too and that builds up friendship so there is less racism so for me those English people around the town or something they have other nights and they wont be nasty to us and say racist things because we know that they will stick up for us.

The English people who come enjoy the BME clubs and it helps them become less racist in their attitudes:

Not every English person is racist and I have met some people and persuade (some of) them to go to the youth club and then they like it and persuade the other English friends so there are more people and they are getting to know each other so they are not as racist.

English young people at one of the clubs reinforced this:

...we have people from different ethnic backgrounds come here and make friends basically with each other so if that weren't here I reckon it wouldn't be like that, we wouldn't know each other, I reckon it would be like we would stay with our own if you know what I mean

English is the common language in the clubs so that the young people can communicate between the different groups and with their youth workers:

Our group leader is (non-English) so he cannot understand Polish so we speak English and he takes some people from other groups and usually when we go somewhere like France because the other group are coming we have to communicate somehow.

It is clear that in addition to racism from English people outside of the BME groups, there are also some issues within the youth clubs between different ethnicities. In particular, some had experienced hostility from the Traveller young people:

From my point of view yes, we can get along with pretty much everyone well sometimes we get racism from the English people because we are not from here but the other thing is just Travellers and they bother us, they treat everyone like their enemies.

2. General findings

Activities

Every young person interviewed who is a Kent Youth Service user has positive experiences to relate. They talk enthusiastically about the activities they enjoy at their youth clubs. The availability of activities varies from club to club but includes table tennis, football, badminton, basketball, tennis, skateboarding, table football, air hockey, pool, karaoke, making and listening to music, dancing, creative and craft activities, cooking, animal care, gardening, eating together and games. The clubs also provide

opportunities to take part in trips, for example to the cinema, paintballing, ice skating, bowling, rock-climbing, the zoo and fun fairs. Visiting speakers are also popular:

Plus we had a man come down from London the other day (to give us a talk) about starting up in music...

There are also group activities organised at some of the clubs. Examples include:

We make costumes and take part in local carnivals....We have group activities in the hall...We put on a pantomime

Some have sports tournaments for table tennis, basketball or football. In others, the members are applying for funds to organise additional group activities:

We are (planning) to hold an event for 30-40 people or however many people turn up and it will be like a music workshop, creating your own songs, DJing.

Socialising

Although the young people said the activities were very important to them they wanted to make it clear that it was the ability to socialise together, inside, that was important. They enjoyed being able to spend time in a nice environment and to be with old friends, make new ones and sometimes just 'muck about':

And also if the weather is bad to be honest you can come down here and meet new people.....there is music playing and like a busy area and loads of people that come here so that's what makes it good.....

Personal and social development

Youth club members talked about the significant contribution that attending the youth club has made to their personal and social development. For example, they talked about learning to become confident individuals socially, improving their behaviour, becoming more considerate, mature and responsible:

Because of my anger and stuff they have helped me with that and all sorts of things like that.

the other thing about youth groups is that the actual group itself may take place one night a week but it does have a big effect on people's lives in how it just affects them as a person.....they may take part in planning or other activities that might give them other ideas about places to go...

I didn't help my Mum before I didn't help her at all but now (the youth worker) has told me I like doing it and didn't know it would so much fun to help my Mum doing things

The youth clubs also address issues around sexual health and attitudes to sex and relationships and invite in staff from local clinics to speak to the young people. The effect of these visits and the level of discussion the clubs made possible was highly appreciated, as this girl suggests when reflecting on how she might have fared without the club:

I would probably be pregnant by now and having a kid, I can tell you that. I probably would

Older youth club members can become 'Seniors'. This special status and position of responsibility within the clubs is a recognition of experience:

I've been ...coming since May 2008 when it first started. and since then I've come a long way....I've become a senior member in this group and I also go to another club with some of the members around this table which I have been going to for a year and I have come out of my shell haven't I.

Employment prospects

The socialisation that takes place in a youth club is mentioned by several young people as an essential part of job preparation. Without it:

you would be sat inside (at home) and thenit would be harder for you to get a job because you're not socialising. It would just be ridiculous.

Becoming a Senior Member brings with it an expectation of responsibility for the younger members. It is also valued by youngsters as something they can add to their CVs. They can also use it as part of the Duke of Edinburgh award. Some of the clubs also offer the opportunity to work for other awards in arts or community sport leadership, all of which are useful when writing job applications.

Discouraging young people from engaging in anti-social activities

The role of youth clubs in reducing anti-social behaviour and crime was high on the lists of topics raised by the young people. There was not complete unanimity that the clubs had any effect. Some were able to speak from personal experience, as these extracts reveal:

I used to get into loads of trouble with the police (and get chased by (them) like every week) cos I find it quite funny cos that was the only thing keeping me occupied....

I am going to tell the truth now, when I never knew this youth centre was around, probably say from year 7 I didn't know it was about and I used to drink.... as I found out it was here it ...all stopped, all stopped..... but now I am like (names friend) I won't drink because I know it's here and they support me.

Others spoke to the contrary though more from hearsay:

Basically mate if you are the sort of person who goes out and causes trouble you are not then going to want to come to a youth club are you, you are going to want to be out with your mates doing whatever you want to do..... what is one night a week going to make a difference to them getting into trouble? Honestly!

Non-users

The activities enjoyed by the non-users were varied but, apart from the scouts, guides and cadets groups they belonged to, and the local authority leisure centre they were also costly. They included horse-riding, drama, singing and dancing classes, a private leisure centre for tennis, karate and swimming, music lessons,

The young people tend to go to these on their own or with a friend or sibling and get to know a few others whilst there but generally they travel to and from the activities, which are often far from where they live, by car with parents. There is little time for socialising during most of these activities.

Most of those in the non-users focus group live in small villages. One or two meet friends and 'do a massive trek to (a country park) and just sit in the kids' park which isn't very fun'.

The guide groups are generally small in the villages and this was considered limiting:

The guides is for my age but the one I go to it is such a small unit I think there are 10 of us and like we have got 2 leaders and you don't normally do stuff there because if we are going to do something then it would be better if we had more people there.

Those who lived in the town did not use the Kent provision. This was for two reasons: either they simply did not know of any clubs or activities or they knew of some but felt they were for those much younger or much older than them. They felt they were the 'middle age group', which had been forgotten:

And I think that happens because they think the little kids need lots of stuff and the older kids need to get off the streets so they kind of forget that there is a gap in between..... they don't want us off the streets because we are not causing lots of trouble.

Generally they thought there was too little to do without travelling and even in the nearest town:

I don't like it there because it's really run down and there are quite a few strange people.

The other issue they raised was publicity and they wondered whether there were perhaps clubs and activities on but they just never got to hear about them.

We were saying that is more about that you don't actually know what is happening in the area because nothing ever gets publicised properly like I get the (the local paper) because we are in a little village and you would expect to seedifferent things for young people, that's in (my village) like clubs that are on but all it is is adverts for things and you never actually get told about what is on so you can hardly say well I do that because you don't know what you can do.

In short, the non-users would like to have access to a youth club, especially to socialise. They knew people who did attend one and who spoke well of their experiences but for those in the villages: *'There's nothing that you can do to see the people from other schools'.*

3. The proposals

Hubs

Young people in general do not support this proposal whether or not they live in a town where the hub for their district will be situated. They have a variety of reasons for this.

Living in the town

Too many people

Those in the towns felt the hub would be too big with too many people attending from too many different places so that those nearest may not get in.

The whole of (names nearest large town)? There is going to be just one main youth centre? Well, that is a lot of people just for one youth centre. That is a lot of people.

...that is probably going to be quickly over subscribed...lots of the little clubs are over subscribed anyway ... so then loads of people cant go to that one and so they try other ones which are further away from them which they don't like getting to so then they are stopping someone who lives closer going.

Those who had made big inroads socially in a small, specialist youth club were worried that a big club would set them back again:

'there would be more single groups of people who would not want you in their social groups and stuff like that and they will not want to be friends with you. Even with the people who have got the same disability as you there is still certain groups of people who don't want you as their friends and so on and that is hard to cope with'.

Not safe

The LGBTQ group in particular were worried that the venue would not be safe for them because of the multiple uses:

I come to like support my friends and if it was advertised where it is then I personally wouldn't feel quite as safe and confident to openly talk about things in fear of people coming in.

Some in the group thought that staff would be on hand to sort out any problems but another member was not to be placated:

I know but I am trying to simply point out that there is always the issue of there are going to be clashes with something.

Living outside the town

Those young people who lived away from the location of their nearest hub had different objections.

Travelling

Distance was a problem for most of the young people in the focus groups. They said it would be expensive to make the journey, it would take a long time, they would be going a long way from home, they did not want to be out late or walking home in the dark and they did not want to involve their parents, even where that was possible, in either the expense or in ferrying them back and forth and waiting around:

It is quite far away for me and I guess my friends as well. Yes I would find it quite difficult to get to there and I think because there would stop coming to the youth club.

You go there at 6 on the train and say it finishes at 9 or half 9 you are not going to get back until like half 10 and we've got school the next morning and well our Mums are not going to want us to get the train not knowing who is getting on the train and not knowing where we are.....Especially at that time of night.....No actually it will be a train journey then a bus journey and how much is that going to cost our parents?

Local need

For those living in the outlying areas there is concern that all the attention seems to be focussed on the towns and that they have been forgotten.

(this) is quite a small town but it doesn't mean we don't need anything we need some stuff from KCC. We need them to contribute, we need them to give us a new place to go (now our club has been shut down)....we cant believe that we are going to be left with nothing really and there isn't really a lot we can do about it, they are saying you can put in a bid for whatever you want but they don't really seem that bothered, they seem more bothered about (the bigger places)

Detached projects

Young people had some mixed views on detached projects though most did not look favourably on the idea.

No permanence

Detached projects on one night a week or less in place of their current building-based clubs were not popular:

You would be like it is once a week and I would say they wouldn't go everywhere and you wouldn't want to come like once a month or something.

No good for sport

Those who played sport could not see how they would be able to practise, particularly in bad weather, without a sports hall, as in their youth club at present:

They are going to bring detached youth projects but what about the people who want to go into the sports hall and do basketball and football, 5 a side football cos here we do a load of tournaments for it... and that can't happen in the back of a van, and it needs to be proper sports hall with the right equipment in there, it cant just be in the back of a van or on a field with two cones as a goal, here we have proper goals....

They also did not like the idea of detached projects, which might focus on only one particular sport:

...here we do a variety of things on the same day so that everyone who wants to do an activity gets to do it. What if basketball is down there and we go can we play football, no sorry this is a basketball specialised centre, oh where can we go football, oh it's the other side of (names a town). You have got to try and trek all the way down here just to come and do that.

No good if the weather is bad

A big concern was that detached projects would be inadequate when the weather was bad, both in terms of the activities they could provide and the number of people they could accommodate:

if we were just to do (detached projects) we wouldn't have this place and if the weather was bad or say you wanted to do something in here you wouldn't be able to do nothing.....they are thinking about closing all these youth clubs and making mobile ones they are not going to be able to make it big enough you need to have the size of a bendy bus before you even start looking at anything else, it won't be big enough.

Others could see some benefits, particularly where they had some personal experience of a detached project in the past:

More freedom

Detached projects were less confined and also more personalised than a youth club in a building, one of the young people had found:

when I used to go to detached it felt more one on one that I could go and speak to peopleI felt more comfortable going to detached ones because you weren't in a particular place and you didn't have to get on with people like in a closed space you had more freedom and a bit more personal focus.

The weather was not of concern to everyone and being outside allowed you to let off more energy:

we want to go outside and we want to have the freedom and we have the energy to go outside as well. it's just weather and if people actually come down.....

A youth club near us

Some of the young people thought that a detached project where they lived would be a good idea because 'the need is there':

I have a lot of friends that hang around by shops and stuff and they have always said that they wanted a youth club and we have never ever had one like a proper one at (this) estate, the nearest place is (names a town) and I know that loads of my friends won't go there because of security they don't feel safewe really want a youth club near us.

Use existing facilities

Detached projects, which used existing buildings, such as village halls, were thought to be a good idea because then a number of the usual youth club activities were still possible, as one young person explained about an existing project in another area:

(the youth worker) does stuff like we do here like they have got a hall they do football, table tennis, they do like the first aid award, sexual health so that they learn stuff.

Commissioned projects

The young people were not able to comment on this proposal as they either did not understand it or were not clear how it would work in relation to their particular area and provision. There were two exceptions to this: one where a club had been closed in anticipation of a new community centre opening. The young people were, reluctantly and in the absence of anything else, attending the only other group left which was a Faith group and had tried to find out as much as possible about the new youth service proposals:

T hey are saying you can put in a bid for whatever you want but they don't really seem that bothered, they seem more bothered about (names a town) and bigger places like that, they are focussing on that.

The other was where the local community were working towards taking over the youth club themselves and the members were also looking to see how they could contribute to those efforts:

we are finding that we are raising money we so want this (club) to stay open

4. Improvements to plans

Some of the young people had their own ideas, which they thought would improve or add to the proposals. These came particularly, though not exclusively, from the non-users and those living in rural areas.

One suggestion was that '*they could do **clubs at different places** not just in the middle of (names a town)*' because they are normally at night and so are difficult to get to without a lift.

Instead of a detached project, the idea was put forward of a **detached youth club** which could move around the villages:

.... rather than having one club in one place they could have the same club but do it at different nights in different places so one night in (village 1), one night in (village 2) and somewhere else so they are not getting over-subscribed so that the people from (village 3) and (village 4) can go to one of them and people from (village 5) and stuff can go to another one of them so that it is spread out.

The young people were able to identify a large number of **under-utilised buildings**, which could be used for the detached youth club and other activities for young people:

... it would be more cost effective to put youth clubs in places that aren't used much so putting a youth club in the scout hut or in a village hall because they are going to have to do a lot of refurbishment to the main central hub or build it even to make it accessible to supposedly lots of people where there are facilities that can be used. I just don't think that they have thought about that.

Other suggested venues were schools, which they thought should be used in the evenings for youth clubs, especially the new, well-equipped Academies.

Another idea was that there should be more village **community events** as these were good because you saw so many people and everyone could get on together. But they were rare:

.....once a year there is a jazz picnic where you see people from all the villages come

The value of **bringing young and old together** was emphasised, in particular to help counter the bad relations that can exist between them. One person talked about a village event where:

we make scarecrows and thingsolder and young people do it and so you have to vote for the best one and that is really good because everyone gets involved ... and I know quite a lot of people because of that and I don't know anyone who thinks I am bad or anything in my village kind of thing and that is good so I think we should do more things like that.

What I was going to say was that maybe the elderly people and the looks you get that maybe we could do something that also involves them because I do a paper round and I deliver all the papers to the old people and I get a wave every morning and I am making friends.

In the same vein, the suggestion was that **older people could volunteer more to help with young people** on the basis that: '*...if old people don't want you on the street maybe they would help to get you off the streets.*' Some thought the answer lay in volunteering in general:

People at churches volunteer to do things within the church so why shouldn't people in the local community volunteer to help out, I think they would, most people in the community would volunteer to try and help the community.

But key to this suggestion was that the **volunteering had to be led by KCC**. It would not happen on its own:

because if the council did something to influence the local council or village council then they would ask people....no one is aware that they could be volunteering (and) helping their community and if they are more aware of the facts like if we were just given simply a calendar sheet which had some facts on it and said when people would help then more people would be aware of it and we couldn't be saying well we aren't aware we can just say well were not bothered.

5. More, not less

Asking for young people's opinions on the proposals invariably led to them insisting they need more youth club opportunities, not less or to them suggesting ways to increase the number of youth club nights and improve the facilities.

There are a couple of youth clubs that I know of, one of them is in the next village along but I think it is quite over subscribed like they cant really have any one else joining it then there are a few religious ones but you have to go to the church to go to them.

someone I know their youth club has got a recording studio... with loads of instruments and everything in it they get loads of money put into it and I don't know where from

(We need) more parks and stuff. There is one park but there is nothing there, basically just a field with a bit of tarmac in but they could make more skate parks and other parks and football fields and rugby fields.

6. Perceptions of plans

Most of the young people either **do not know about or fully understand** the proposals. This comment is an example of how this was expressed: *'I have no idea - I don't even know what is going on - I don't even know why it is shutting down'*.

Nonetheless, the proposals were described by the young people as **'cuts in service'** and it was hard for them to see the proposals in a positive light.

It is like government ain't got enough money to run the youth centres and there are so many in Kent that most of them are getting shut down, I don't think they should all get shut down.

I know the government is in on it but KCC I reckon it is down to them because like as (names place) is a hub they don't have to give out no more money

They wanted to argue against the proposals as **ill-advised** and they put forward their views strongly:

...I think that the government needs to relook at how they are going about things they want to shut it down I think they have just rushed into it and it is going to upset a lot of people.

The reduction in the number of youth clubs was also seen as **inconsistent** with concerns about the behaviour of young people:

What are we going to be left with? Nothing! And then they are going to moan that things are going to happen on the streets, well what do you expect us to do? And it is not right but that is the way it is going to go and it will because you have got people who are just like that and I can guarantee you the streets will get worse.

(the clubs) are useful and they do help people to have fun and it keeps you from being naughty and stay off the streets, and being anti social.

7. For the clubs

There was a strong sense of **attachment** expressed for the clubs: *'It actually does feel like home'*.

... 'what we have got here they haven't got at other youth centres. We can make sure that I come in every week, the pets are here, it is like home too'.

.....it's like everyone like I've known them lot for ages so we kind of a family so if you have problems like back at home we come down and we talk to each other and stuff.

There were also several **'threats'** made like this one by young people who were very upset that their club might close and they would no longer be able to spend leisure time with their friends and the staff, particularly from those in the specialist groups where people came together from a number of different areas and so did not have easy access to each other in between the meetings.

Those most vociferous in their opposition tended to speak from a **position of knowledge and involvement**:

If they did close this down I would strap myself to the railings outside. I have said that at lots of meetings if they do close this down I will protest.

Frequently mentioned was how **safe and protected** the young people felt in their specialist groups: *'It's a nice environment, I feel safe here' whereas: 'No one would feel safe, you wouldn't feel safe if you were out on the street'*. It took them time to feel this way and they were worried that they would lose the confidence they have gained: *'(when) I came here and I was a little bit shy but now I have got used to being around this youth centre'*.

Having a specialist group also **prevents the bullying** they had experienced in other mixed clubs. This applied particularly to those in the LGBTQ, BME and disabled groups.

I heard they wanted to send us all to the (new hub in a local town). It is going to drive people away, the more sensitive ones might come across someone who bullies them at school and then they are just not going to want to go any more

I didn't used to do anything outside of school because I was really badly bullied at my last school

For some, the group had had a **life-changing** impact:

I say for myself this group has changed my life for the better it certainly has had an extremely positive effect on me, if I didn't have this group, I don't know where I would be actually, it

has actually helped me... for some people it is a matter of life and death, it is there to provide for people with a way out to help them to get through (crises).

8. KCC Staff

There was unstinting praise from the youth clubs members for the staff. They were good fun, great listeners, their advice was sought and valued on matters such as behaviour, emotions and sexual health and they were also a source of security. Young people were fully aware that this was down to KCC and wanted to put their case for keeping what they had:

It's just so nice to be here because people are here and listen to you and I don't know how else to explain it

It calms me down a lot and I talk to (names youth worker) about the stuff and she has give me a talk through it and stuff like that and she is such a help

I would speak to whoever was there and to stop being bullied.

I don't think it is actually KCC as a company I think it is the workers that make it what it is, it is the workers that put in the work and that sounds really stupid but without (names youth workers) we would have nothing and they are thinking of taking it away. They are taking away the best part of KCC really that is what they are doing they are halving the best part of it so

Youth club members became very attached to their youth workers and this made them more able to participate in their club's activities

(we) have got used tothe leaders and (we) feel more confidence to talk to (our) leaders and be more interactive.....I enjoy seeing them all and all the staff that I like that are here as well.

She's family

9. Feelings

Strong feelings were expressed about losing their youth clubs. Reactions to the proposals in general included:

- **Anger** – with central government, which they saw as responsible for what they perceived as a reduction in service and with KCC for failing to protect their clubs
- **Worry** – that they would have nothing to do; they would have to 'hang around the streets' which was 'boring', older people reacted badly to them and in the winter it was cold
- **Sadness** – that they will miss meeting their friends in a 'fun' environment and will miss the support of their youth workers. Young people in several of the interviews used the word 'family' to describe their feelings towards the people at their club
- **Perplexity** – that whilst there was a general recognition, after the riots, that young people needed to be 'kept off the streets', youth club provision was being reduced and this would cause more 'trouble' (though not by them)
- **Fear** - young people in the LGBTQ, minority ethnic and disability groups had experienced bullying in the non-specialist groups which frightened and upset them
- **Resentment** - particularly in rural and small town areas when young people felt that had insufficient provision compared to the larger towns

10. Importance of space: size, type and 'ownership'

A recurring theme for the young people was that of space - the amount of it and the type. Where the space for the club was small, opportunities to play indoor sport were very limited and if there were also no outside facilities, football was made impossible. Young people of both sexes found this restricting:

..... we'd like to play basketball, table tennis that is my love but it is a small place.

The variety of activities available at the youth clubs was a source of frequent praise but depended on not only the size but also the type of space:

There is always something to do so everyone is enjoying time at the club.

.....if the boys want to play football then you have to sit down and not get hit by the ball and like you can have different spaces, people are going to want to play football they come to a youth centre to do what they want and so if each room has different stuff in it then you can choose what you want to do

...it is really fun hereif there isn't enough stuff in one room you can go to another one, there is loads of space, there are disagreements always in the youth club because of not liking that person but you can go into the other room with all your mates and leave some behind but if everyone is in one room... You need quite a big space for loads of people to do stuff because if they are put in one confined room then it won't go.....Crowded if it's in one room too.

The young people had a very strong sense of ownership towards their club. They emphasised they wanted their own space and did not want to share it with other community groups which is what was going to happen to this groups whose club had recently closed:

(we would like) a secure room or a secure place, the community centre will be once a night whenever we decide to book it or whatever you have to do, We want to put posters everywhere and make it our own but other people are going to be using that so it won't be ours and we need somewhere we can call our own which is like we had before, That is what we want, we were perfectly happy with our Eden Bridge youth club, we had our own stuff, our activities planned out and it just went.

11. Unequal opportunities

Provision, even within the small sample for this study, varied greatly and the young people were keenly aware of the resulting differences in opportunities:

..... someone I know their youth club has got a recording studio in it or something like that, they get loads of money put into it and I don't know where from with loads of instruments and everything.

They perceived unequal transport opportunities, which affected their ability to get to the clubs:

It is just like quite hard, like in Bromley I know they give them like a free bus pass and they can get on all buses in that area....but all of us (here) have to pay £100 to get on buses and then to school whereas some people don't have to pay any money to get to school just because they live in a different area.

12. No one listens to or likes young people

Young people expressed a sense of feeling alienated from, and uncared for by, older people who did not want to hear their views and thought KCC should help them with this:

they don't talk to the young people, they don't think of us and they don't think what would you do if this youth centre closes, it is just down to the money.

None of them like teenagers, that's my conclusion..... I think the council need to help teenagers to get a better reputation

..... people don't want to do things for teenagers because they are scared they are going to vandalise it or whatever because I don't ever experience it but you always see it on the news that it is always teenagers blamed for things.

....you get older people, I don't know how old they are but really old people like elderly and they give you really filthy looks like why are you walking around and everything and we are sitting in a field and there are people walking past saying get off the streets and everything and I am just like we are sitting in a field

.....most teenagers don't want to cause trouble and they don't go around stabbing people(and).... graffiti-ing everywhere and just basically being a nuisance, they go round living normal lives but yet most people, if you go into Bluewater and it is really cold outside and you forgot to take your hood down, the looks you get from people.

I'd just like to thank you for listening to us. Most people don't bother.

13. Nowhere to go

Apart from the activities available, young people value the clubs as simply a 'place to go' and worried about what would happen if their club closed down. Some had already experienced this:

we have nowhere else to go this (a Faith group) is our only option...if its raining we either sit outside in the rain or go in our house this is the only other place we can come so we need somewhere as before when we have our own little youth group as it was and we want it back to normal.

When it's closed and stuff people just sit there smoking and stuff and when its raining they sit there smoking more and more and its like interfering with their lives more.

I don't know what I'd do without this club, seriously I would be going mad, where would we be - hanging about?you've got the old school and the library, by the library there are like shelters and we sit under there when its windy, cold, raining, snowing because we want to be out with our friends we don't want to be sat at home.

14. Conclusions

- The **BME groups** enjoyed having English young people coming to their clubs and found it helped integration whereas attending clubs where they were the minority led to racist bullying
- **Disabled groups** enjoyed the security of the specialised provision they had and were worried and upset at the possibility of losing it especially if it meant they could only

attend clubs where they were the minority and where they had experienced discrimination and bullying

- The **LBGTQ group** expressed concern that if they could not meet where they felt safe this would lead to more isolation of individuals trying to cope on their own
- The **girls-only** group enjoyed joint activities with the boys but they also wanted the opportunity to develop their self-confidence without being dominated by them
- Young people in rural areas were unable to enjoy KCC youth service provision because of there was little provided locally
- The **Faith groups**, run by the churches, provided similar activities to non-Faith groups but were not popular with young people who did not want to associate themselves with religion. In rural areas they said this meant there was nothing for them
- The **Travellers'** community worker provides a link between that community and the world outside ensuring that the children and young people are not cut off
- The confidence building, personal development and improvement in employment skills experienced by the young people in the youth clubs are considerable
- The young people are prepared to engage in constructive alternatives but will need to be persuaded of KCC's good intentions
- Although the KYS users interviewed generally were aware that there were changes to youth services being planned, they had to be informed of the details and found it difficult to assess what for them the precise impact would be.
- Those KYS users who had informed themselves from the website and attending meetings were of the firm view that the proposals represented for them a cut in services
- KYS users were reluctant to engage constructively with the Service Transformation plans partly because they felt that would make changes which they didn't want more likely, partly because they found it difficult to envisage alternatives and partly because most, but not all, found it difficult to understand the commissioning aspect of the changes
- Although young people enjoy and appreciate the youth services and link it directly to preventing anti-social behaviour, they also have the general impression that the public at large does not like them, does not want to know them, does not care about them and makes no distinction between the good and bad among them

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