

The Consultation and Participation of Young People (13-19+) in Sheffield

City-wide Report – September 2009



This work is being carried out by the Children and Young People's Empowerment Project in partnership with Sheffield Futures and has been commissioned by Sheffield City Council on behalf of the Sheffield 0-19+ Partnership.



Acknowledgements

The Children and Young People's Empowerment Project and Sheffield Futures would like to thank all the practitioners, organisations and especially all the Young People who gave up their time to take part in the activities that have led to the production of this report. Their support and commitment is greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank the young people who have agreed to take part in local participation events where this work will be presented. Thank you to all of those young people who have agreed to showcase their work at these events.

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1. Information on Groups mapped

1. Introduction

This report is one of eight that have been produced for Sheffield, (one for each Community Assembly and one City Wide Report) as part of the 13 to 19+ Participation Strategy Project carried out by The Children and Young People's Empowerment Project in partnership with Sheffield Futures. The project was commissioned by Sheffield City Council's Children and Young People's Department on behalf of the Sheffield 0 to 19+ Partnership Board (Sheffield's Children's Trust) as part of the delivery of Sheffield's 0 to 19+ Consultation and Participation Strategy, and has been overseen by the Multi Agency Participation Group, MAP (a sub-group of the 0 to 19+ Partnership Board).

1.2 Sheffield's Context

Within the context of the Sheffield 0 to 19+ Consultation and Participation Strategy, Consultation is defined as asking children and young people about their views on issues that affect them and acting on them or taking them into account. Participation is defined as the active involvement and inclusion of children and young people in decision making about the services they receive, the areas where they live, the communities of which they are a part of, the political decision making structures and processes that affect their lives.

The 13 to 19+ Participation Strategy Project is part of a series of wider activity under the 0-19+ Partnership's Strategy. The information collated from this work has contributed towards the development of a 13 to 19+ Toolkit which aims to encourage and support youth consultation and participation at any level.

More information on all of this and other work being undertaken to deliver the strategy can be found at: www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation

1.3 Sheffield's 13 to 19+ Participation Strategy Project

The project was established in August 2008 and runs until 31st March 2009. The remit of the project is to establish the current provision for young people across the city and identify the level of participation practice within these. To then disseminate this information across the city and support the development of participation activity. This is being achieved by completion of the following:

- To map the provision of activity for young people aged 13 to 19 (25 for those with additional needs) across the city within each Community Assembly area, and 'City Wide' activity (available to young people from all areas across the city.)
- To audit and assess the level of young people's participation within current providers of youth provisions from both a practitioner and young people's perspective.
- To produce a 13 to 19 Participation Toolkit to provide practical support to practitioners and decision makers to increase young people's participation in decision making
- To compile the findings into reports and present these to service providers and decision makers in each area at Community Assembly Events. Through workshops and discussions, encourage attendees to improve and increase opportunities for young people's participation within each area and across the city.

- To work in two Community Assembly areas from November 2009 to March 2010 to support young people to begin to set up participation activities and structures. This includes piloting a school and community based model and evaluating the effectiveness of these.

2. Methodology

Mapping of provision

Desk top research was undertaken to identify current deliverers of youth provision for young people aged 13-19+ across Sheffield. Groups were identified by utilising existing tools, practitioners, young people's networks and local websites such as 'Help Yourself' and 'Ask Sid'. The mapping exercise identified 300 organisations in Sheffield that provided services for young people.

Practitioners' questionnaires

Questionnaires were sent to the 300 organisations and 78 were returned, (26%) asking them about the levels of participation they thought young people had within their group, the organisation and the wider community.

Young Peoples' focus groups

All the practitioners who returned questionnaires were asked to invite the young people in their delivery groups to take part in a Young People's Focus Group. Of the 78 groups invited 32 focus groups were carried out, (42%), this being 11% of all groups mapped.

Schools

All secondary schools have been included in the mapping exercise and have school councils, however few returned questionnaires, so it was not possible to gather sufficient information about how effective young people's participation is within them to provide specific information. A separate audit is currently being carried out and results from this will be made available to Community Assemblies. Of those that did respond, their comments have been included in the general findings.

All of the practitioners and young people who took part in this project remain anonymous, consequently young people and practitioners cannot be identified. The methodology used for the purpose of this project was appropriate, ethical and efficient in producing the information required. The data collection strategy used in this project was a 'triangulation method' (Kelle and Erzberger, 2004, Flick, 2004). This approach combines multiple data collection strategies.

Four responses were received anonymously so it was not possible to know which area they were based in. It was decided therefore to include these in the city wide report.

3. Analysis of Results

A combination of graphs, charts, comments and quotes have been used to present the findings along with analysis and possible interpretations of data. Comparisons with whole responses gained from all participants have been provided in some cases to allow for meaningful comparisons to be made

Please note: not all the questions asked were answered by all participants. Four responses were received anonymously and have been included in the City Wide report.

3.1 Adults' Questionnaires

24 questionnaires were returned for the City Wide participants.

Q.1) To what level would you say young people are involved in deciding what the group/project does? (Please tick one)

Young people are not involved at all	0
Young people have little involvement	1
Young people have some involvement	9
Young people have a lot of involvement	13
Total responses	23

Examples given were young people involved in:

- Applying for their own funding
- Youth 'Action Team'
- Deciding the structure of meetings
- Setting their own the agenda
- Young Peoples' Management Committee
- Running the meetings
- Decide what pieces of work they get involved in
- Involved in quarterly planning

Q.2) Are the ideas of the young people in your group(s) listened to and are these ideas responded to in a realistic way?

Young people's ideas are not listened to	0
Young people's ideas are listened to a little	0
Young people's ideas are listened to & taken into consideration	11
Young people's ideas are listened to and used extensively	12
Total responses	23

Q.3) To what level are young people able to influence the decision making of the organisation?

Young people are not involved at all	0
Young people have little involvement	7
Young people have some involvement	9
Young people have a lot of involvement	8
Total responses	24

Examples of how young people participate in decision making in organisations included:

- Attending 'Away Days' to plan work of Organisation
- Sitting on recruitment panels
- Giving views on Organisations' Policies

Examples of why practitioners felt that young people had little involvement were:

- No existing structures
- Lack of support
- Unsure how to achieve this
- Structures not 'Young People Friendly'

Q.4) To what level are young people able to influence decision making which affects their lives (e.g. in their communities or services that affect them)?

Young people are not involved at all	2
Young people have little involvement	10
Young people have some involvement	2
Young people have a lot of involvement	7
Total responses	21

Examples given included:

"In wider community LGBT young people often keep their identity secret and so don't always express needs. LGBT community is very adult orientated, making it difficult for young people to make their voice heard".

"Weekly 'Shout out' sessions are offered which young people can plan activities and make changes in their community via partnership working with radio or newspapers".

"Up to date they have been involved in the Social care Pledge & attended a regional conference once the group have more training and are more established then they will have more of an influence on decision making"

Q.5) Do you review and evaluate the activities young people take part in? (Please circle one)

Yes	21
No	1
Not Sure	1
Total responses	23

Q.6) Do the outcomes of these evaluations ever effect any changes within the group?

No effect at all	0
Have little effect	0
Have some effect	8
A lot of effect	14
Total responses	22

Q.7) What do you feel, if any, are the barriers for young people to be involved in decision making in.....

(Please note: not all participants chose to answer this question)

Their group?

- the dynamics of the group means they need more team building/group work skills and size of the group which is small so we are recruiting
- confidence/awareness/ options/choices
- group dynamics, conflict with peers, lifestyle
- knowledge of certain subjects, if things weren't explained properly you can't make informed decisions
- group dynamics and lack of confidence
- having impairments, cultural differences
- sometimes they don't have the resources to do the things they would like to
- personal crises and their other priorities
- being the new recruit to an existing group
- the young people have a range of disabilities - physical and learning, common barriers can be transport, communication and accessibility of publicity materials also a complex range of support needs within the group
- other education i.e. Nacro - they can't attend, if all are in there are no barriers they all review & give opinions
- language and cultural differences
- perhaps peer pressure or cultural perceptions, our services are around reading mentoring & volunteering, which may not be 'cool' or recognised as valuable in certain cultures
- motivation, accessibility to groups, interest (lack of it)
- Confidence in themselves and low self-esteem
- Usually their own preferences and interactions with each other
- motivation to attend sessions
- issues around childcare

The organisation?

- The location of Chilypep office. Young people are waiting for training that will provide them with more skills. Social care services need to find a process that the group can influence
- health and safety / finance/staffing levels
- a lot of events happen in London, sometimes young people who take part in centralised group (e.g. young people's board of trustees) are not representative (e.g. too many from London)
- Lack of notice about events
- they have a little say in the youth side but we are a big organisation that isn't only youth
- cultural differences
- chief executive and Trustees paying lip service
- worker's time

- disorganisation; the sometimes transient nature of YP use of our services
- not enough worker time and having to prioritise other things
- tension between young people wanting something 'to do' every week when we meet and not having time to plan sessions - workers feel need to provide activities - at best we consult
- lack of confidence (organisation)
- Just the ratio of YP to adults
- Personal Inclination (staff)
- Funding
- voluntary organisation funding adds pressure to make decisions quickly - involve young people in management committee meetings for example would require more time
- mobility issues, accessibility of venue, support from parents/carers and workers financial support, understanding around organisation & its location, dates & times its open & the needs of the young people within the group
- The assumption from previous experience with services that nothing will get changed. I have to work with them to change this
- Lack of understanding of organisations

Their communities/areas?

- confidence/attitudes of adults with the decision making power
- lack of knowledge, not being approached by local groups
- age - not being able to vote until aged 18 (so not politically important
- how young people are viewed by elders, adult perception of YP (i.e. involvement in anti-social behaviour
- cultural differences
- the format and adult participants aren't always young people friendly
- access, attitudes, skills, info, resources
- homophobia – heterosexist
- LGBT young people are not always willing to express their needs/views in fear of revealing their sexuality
- publicity of opportunities, venue, transport, financial support
- background (i.e. all backgrounds) is rigidity of ideas picked up through adults and education is the greatest barrier - it takes a long time to draw out young people's language and their real feelings and not just chant things they've heard other people say
- the fact that they move on fairly quickly and so don't always feel an affinity to the area
- language is important to the community's improvement
- Community coming together
- the fact that they move on fairly quickly and so don't always feel an affinity to the area
- Often due to short notice & limited timescales not all YP have the opportunity to participate. Also some training is held during school time & not at times that are appropriate for Young People
- it is a bit of a postcode lottery as to whether their schools take up our services and therefore whether they can get involved with our reading mentoring programmes

Q.8) Do you offer any training for young people to support them to be involved?

Yes	16
No	6
Not sure	1
Total responses	23

Q.9) Would you be interested in attending training around supporting young people's participation and involvement in decision making?

Yes	11
No	3
Maybe	9
Total responses	23

Q.10) If yes/maybe what type of things would you like to cover? (Please tick all you require)

Definition of participation	8
Barriers of participation	10
Methods of participation	13
Sheffield Participation Strategy	10
Total responses	41

Q.11) Would you be interested in receiving some tools/resources to support you with encouraging young people's participation and decision making?

Yes	15
No	1
Maybe	8
Total responses	24

3.2 Young People's Focus Groups

This section explains step by step the process of the young people's focus group as undertaken by a Participation Strategy Member. The results of each of the four activities are clearly detailed and discussed where necessary.

Twelve focus groups took place with City wide groups.

- **Activity 1: My Group**

Using flip-chart paper the participating young people were asked:
"What does your group do?" and "Why do you go to your group?"

- to improve the equality to the LGBT community
- I enjoy getting involved in projects & want to make a difference to LGBT young people
- to give YP a positive role model
- Duke of Edinburgh/qualifications
- Comfort
- so I can contribute towards the group and get people to listen to us
- I joined because of the support and the groups aims
- to make a difference
- to represent others
- because the people here have done a lot of things for me & helped me, especially *worker* and *worker*
- Because its fun and you learn something new.
- Make new friends
- Builds confidence/self esteem
- Have fun!
- to challenge those who have the authority and change the way in which they can't
- To get to know what will happen next?
- Get some confidence
- Lose weight
- Get exercise
- To learn about other young people
- Fun
- To get away from my mother
- Somewhere to come and feel welcome
- To see my friends
- Cos it's boring at home
- I like the drinks
- I enjoy myself here
- Find out whether young people deal with the same issues as me
- Team work (x2)
- Looks good on CV (x2)
- Qualifications (x2)
- To get EMA
- talk about issues
- I enjoy it!
- for the fun times

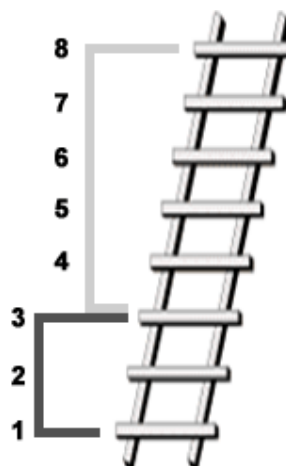
- Meet people and feel happier with myself; fun
- to find out more info
- opportunities
- help make decisions
- Mates, socializing, getting out, meeting other LGBT youths; it's a laugh
- Because it feels like a forum to get my views heard
- interact with friends
- Meet like minded people
- socialize
- To get the chance to meet councillors and MPs
- Get off streets
- discuss what I would like change
- It's social and you get stuff out of it and that
- for the people
- To give YP a better image and to get rid of all the negative image
- To explore areas of care system - what is positive/negative.? How we can change it
- to make a better life for people in care
- I like the people who attend and enjoy the work we do
- to help out
- I want to make a difference in Sheffield
- Cause I enjoy it and I feel like I'm making a difference
- I've kind of gotten used to coming on Wednesdays -Old (vice, vice) chair
- Because we care
- came for the vouchers but they don't give them out any more
- Meet new people and gain more skills
- To take my mind off things
- Getting to know the staff better
- Learning new things
- Because we have to
- Because we get vouchers for coming
- To have a chance to be involved in groups

In response to what your group does Young people wrote their answers on post-it notes and placed them onto flip chart paper to be used in activity 2.

• **Activity 2: Ranking Participation**

Hart's (1992) 'Ladder of Participation'

- Young people & adults share decision making and action
- Young people lead & initiate action
- Adult initiated, shared decisions with young people
- Young people are consulted and informed
- Young people are assigned and informed
- Young people are tokenized
- Young people are decoration
- Young people are manipulated



Young people were issued with a set of adapted statements based around Harts ladder of participation. Young people placed the statements in a ranking order. The lowest ranking position started from the bottom and was identified as poor participation. The highest ranking position was at the top and was identified as very good participation. Very good participation was explained as the ideal way that adults and practitioner's work together with young people.

The following table denotes the adapted statements in correlation with Hart's 'Ladder of Participation'. The statements have a corresponding number which represents the level of young people's participation, the higher the number equates to high levels of participation:

Harts Ladder	Statement number	Statement
8	6	Young people have an idea. Adults join them in making it happen.
7	5	Young people have an idea and make it happen. Adults are there to help but aren't really involved.
6	4	Adults have an idea. Young people join them in making it happen.
5	3	Adults have an idea and make it happen. Young people have a full understanding and give their views. Adults respect & consider young people's views.
4	2	Adults have an idea and make it happen. Young people have some understanding & give their views. Adults respect but don't consider the young people's views.
3, 2, 1	1	Adults have an idea and make it happen. Young people have no understanding. Adults don't respect or consider young people's views.

Focus group responses

11 groups took part in this exercise

Young people undertook the task of ranking statements about Participation. The following results suggest that although only one group ranked all of the statements in the correct order, most of the participating groups have a very good understanding of participation. Interestingly some of the focus groups did not always believe that activities which were initiated by young people should be ranked high.

Statement	Order young people put statement on ladder (results reading vertically)										
	Groups										
	Gro up A	Gro up B	Gro up C	Gro up D	Gro up E	Gro up F	Gro up G	Gro up H	Gro up I	Gro up J	Gro up K
Young people have an idea. Adults join them in making it happen.	6	1	6	1	6	5	3	6	5	5	6
Young people have an idea and make it happen. Adults are there to help but aren't really involved.	3	3	5	6	5	6	1	5	4	6	4
Adults have an idea. Young people join them in making it happen.	4	4	3	3	4	4	6	3	3	3	3
Adults have an idea and make it happen. Young people have a full understanding and give their views. Adults respect & consider young people's views.	5	2	4	4	3	3	2	4	6	4	5
Adults have an idea and make it happen. Young people have some understanding & give their views. Adults respect but don't consider the young people's views.	2	6	2	5	2	2	5	2	2	2	2
Adults have an idea and make it happen. Young people have no understanding. Adults don't respect or consider young people's views.	1	5	1	2	1	1	4	1	1	1	1

Young people placed the activities identified in activity 1 against the statements. The following table identifies young people's activities and the statement numbers the young people felt they related to:

	Statement Number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations • Drama • Theatre • Football 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre Parcs • Design cups • Snooker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential/Weasling • Drama about bullying • Baking • Children's Rights conference • Gay pride • Meeting council members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play games • Political speed dating • Duke of Edinburgh • Design hoodies • Orienteering • Residential • London trip • On YP Board of Trustees • Interviewed candidates for NSPCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yell YOF • Meet new friends • Ice breakers • Discussions • Fun activities • Games • Residential in Filey • Committee meeting • Being on football team • Fundraising • Designing jumpers • Karen new year event • Rocket cars • Drama workshop • Pizza Express • Trip to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions • Confidence building • Plan activities • SHINE health bus • Peer research • Fashion show • Abseiling • Archery • Raft building • Bouldering • Mental health conference • Making CD-ROM about YP views on confidentiality • Play

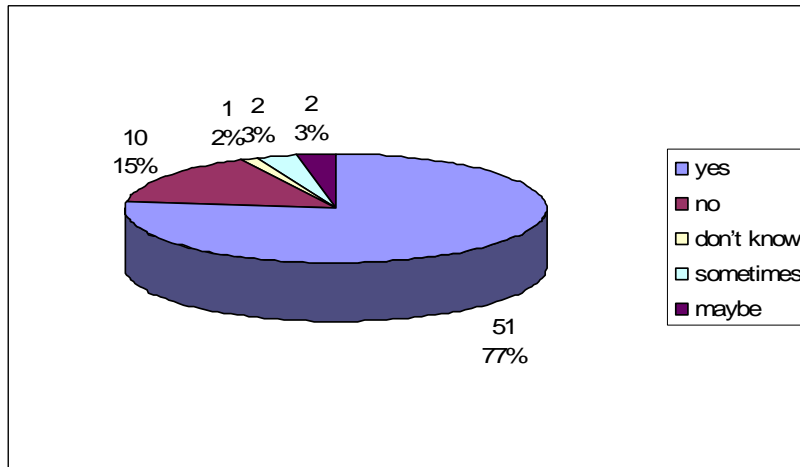
					London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election s • Training • Set up action groups • Play • Setting up SYC • Training
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• **Activity 3: Making a Difference (Vote on your feet)**

This activity was an opportunity for young people to ‘vote on your feet’ to a series of questions asked by the facilitators. Young people responded by standing in front of the card that had the answer on that they agreed with. The following outlines the facilitators question and the young people’s response.

1.

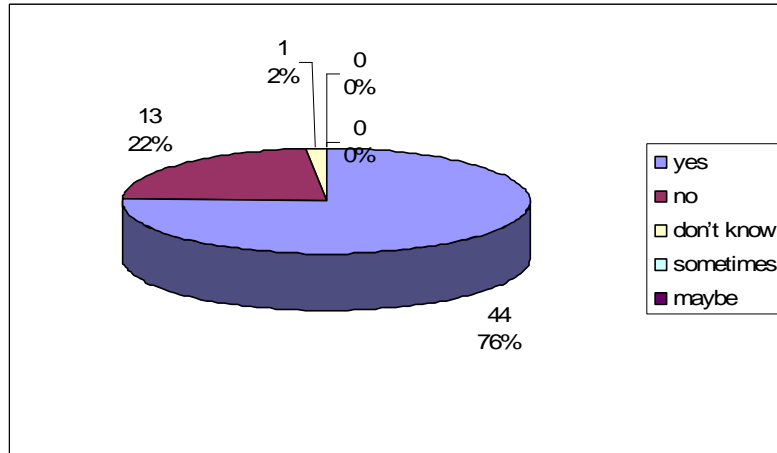
A) Have you ever done any training within your group?



Examples:

- Peer research
- Training the trainer
- Trained every week e.g. abseiling
- Gun and knife crime
- Media training
- Drugs training
- Sexual health training
- Interview training

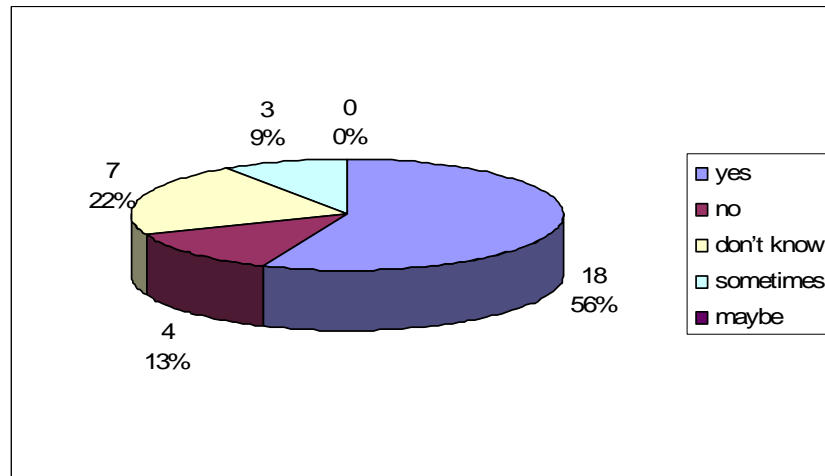
B) (For those saying yes) Have you used any of the skills you learnt from training?



How/What for?

- Developing a questionnaire
- General speaking – more confidence
- Used skills with friends
- Team work
- Confidence
- Team building
- Interview panel
- YOF training
- Decorated life skill

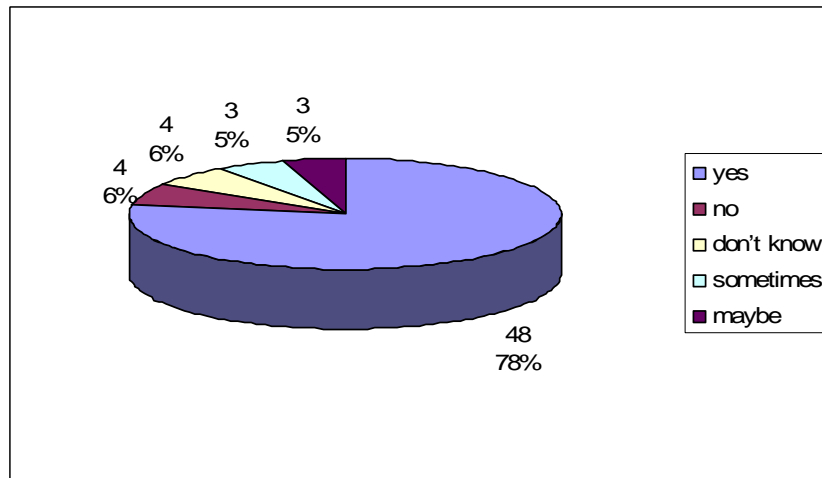
C) (For those saying no) have you done other things that have developed your skills and confidence?



Examples:

- Presentation at BME event
- Youth Council for NE England
- Went on residential in London
- Play – built up my confidence

D) Would you like the opportunity to do some training, learn new skills and develop your confidence? Can you think of anything you'd like to do?

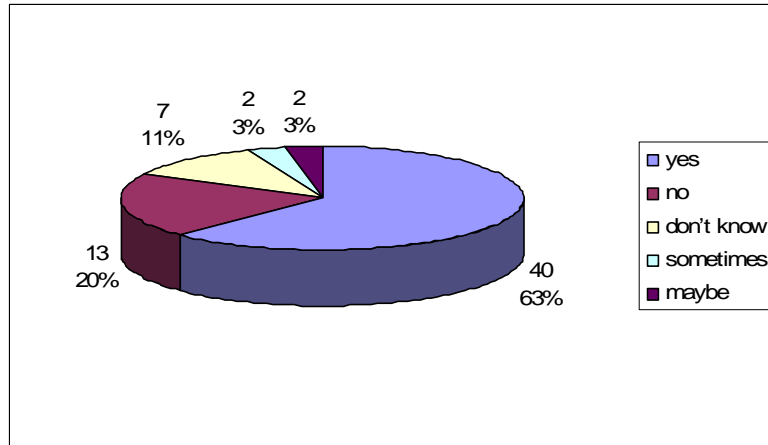


Examples:

- More confidence/ team work activities.
- Join in with different groups & see what they do. See how we can communicate with a different group (e.g. boys/other diverse groups)
- More peer research
- Continual training (progression from young person to worker
- Sports leaders
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Anything to help build self esteem and confidence
- Want to learn more things
- Tackling bullying
- Future career options
- Football coaching
- Survival skills
- Drama
- More workshops
- Meetings with head staff
- Travel to see other examples of councils
- Speaking and communication
- Leadership
- First Aid

2.

E) Have you ever been able to represent your peers to decision makers within the community?



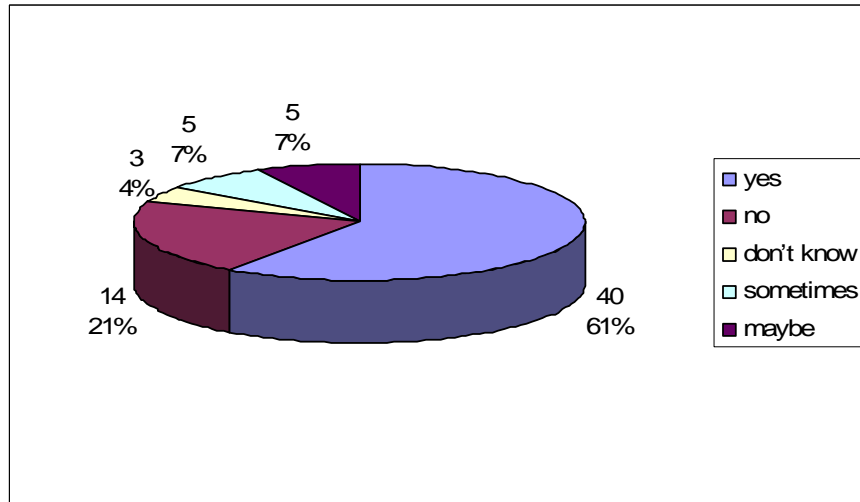
If yes - when & who to?

- BME presentation
- Chair of Longley college council
- Involved in leading other groups
- Area wide youth council
- Meeting local Councilors and MPs
- Youth Council in Lincolnshire
- Trip to London to speak to CEO of NSPCC and present CD-ROM that we made
- Hillsborough SYC
- Cleared snow from old people's flats.
- We write in local magazine
- Chat to police/PCSOs

If no – would you like to do this?

- Too young to do this
- Not enough English spoken
- Joint meetings with adults in the community not accessible.

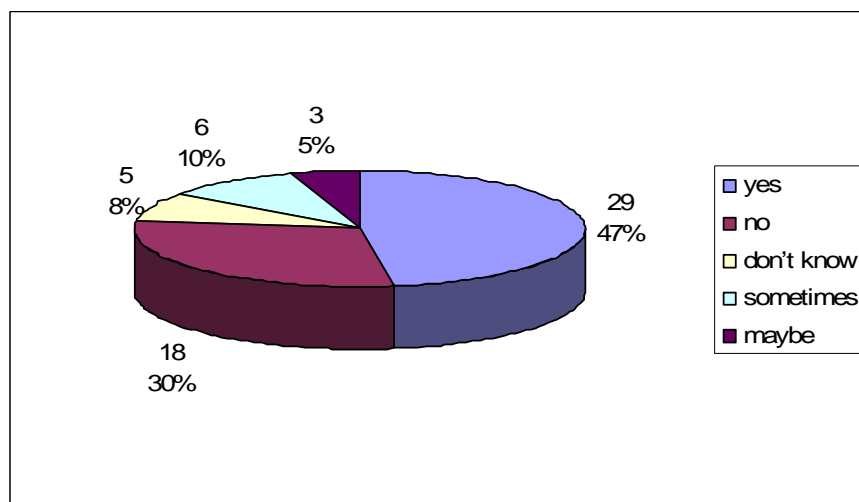
F) Do you ever get the opportunity to come together with adults in your community and discuss the things that affect you



Examples:

- One young person knocks on doors to raise awareness as she is trying to get a petition signed to stop local housing being knocked down. People ask her about her age as they think she looks young but she tells them it's irrelevant.
- Through our parents /within the Karen community
- At CAST
- Represent young board of trustees to board of trustees. Coming here.
- Met Paul Scriven

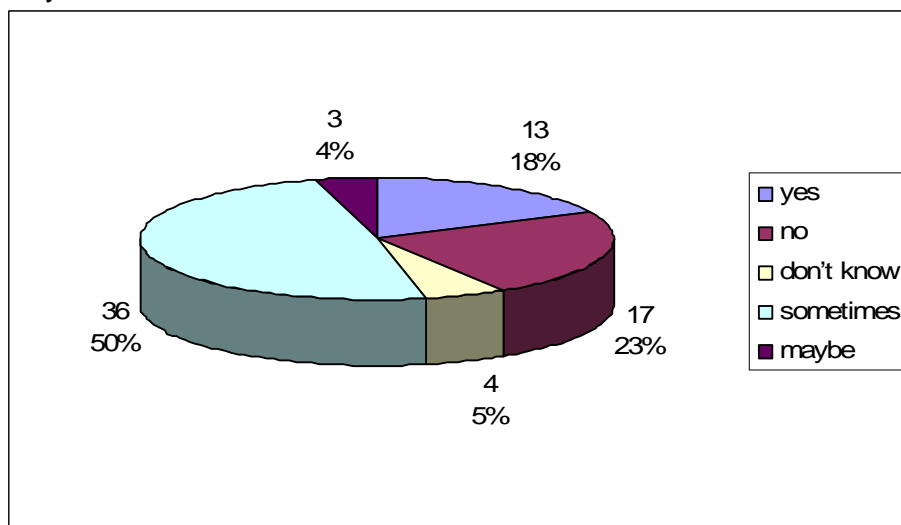
G) Has anything changed, been set up or improved in your area because of what you've done?



Give examples:

- This group! Involving other young people too
- Fed into mobility strategy & physical activities strategy
- One person talked with adults but ended up in an argument
- One person spoke to Council about park & it was changed
- At school (council). Would like to be able to change drug addicts in area
- Looking at NSPCC adverts to adjust it as young people don't like it
- Internet policy for NSPCC
- Media training
- In school I can say things about my local park
- When I came out my friends stopped bullying me
- Bullying action group - channel for young people's perceptions
- Lots of things have changed - we can do activities we want & we have got more confidence (we spoke in front of 100 people)

H) Do you feel listened to by the people in your community/the area where you live?



If Yes or No – why?

Yes

- At college I feel listened to
- Don't know what's out there, all talk - neighbours and people listen
- Sonia Sharp/Paul Scriven
- You have to earn respect like with the old people over the road

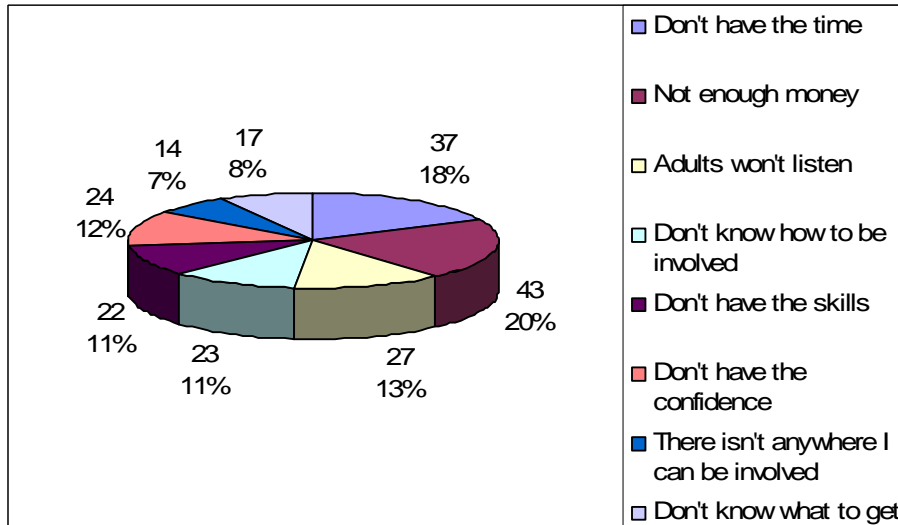
No

- When I came out I got hassle at school
- Some people won't even tell you when they don't do what young people want. NSPCC in this agency will at least explain why things that young people have suggested aren't happening – they won't just ignore their responsibility

- **Activity 4: Barriers to participation**

Young people are often faced with barriers when attempting to get involved with participation and expressing themselves to decision makers and their wider community.

From a selection of possible barriers young people selected 3 barriers that they agreed and related to the most. Young people were also provided with an opportunity to reflect upon additional barriers that they felt were an issue to them.



Anything Else?

- Don't know where to go to be heard. Who do we address issues to?
- Meeting other groups and people
- When places and things are not accessible to wheelchair users
- Bad things I've done in the past may stop me doing things
- The roads - they are horrible
- Transport
- Can't monitor what effect/influence it's making
- Don't have anything I want to be involved in
- Not old enough
- Health issues - if I get too stressed out
- Having to travel a long way - places are too far away
- Not really sure what I'm getting involved with

- **Activity 5: Getting Over them!**

Of the barriers that were identified by the young people we asked them to come up with suggestions about how they could try and get over them. They suggested:

- Ask around in neighbourhood; student advice; research; going to other groups
- Research; finding out what you're able/not able to do
- Apply for funding/ fundraising
- Provide transport
- Make sure places are wheelchair access
- Repeat opportunities at different times
- Free transport-free lunch, taking this to government
- More jobs for people with disability
- Get right skills for jobs
- Advise from youth clubs - get help
- Get experience
- Confidence building
- Get more training
- Do sponsored events/Fundraising/Apply for funding e.g. YOF
- Cut out 'time consumers' (e.g. TV)/ Get more volunteers to support and divide up tasks
- Try not to stay in house - get out a bit
- Get someone you know and trust to go with you to events
- Pass on ideas to others
- Practice
- Ensure money for YOF bids is spent, get a job to be more involved with other things
- Plan better and do some time management
- More training e.g. intro to youth work
- How to budget effectively
- Effective recruitment and approaching people
- Active citizenships
- Peer support/ mentoring/ buddies
- Put opinions over in a different way
- Training on how to talk to adults
- Don't go to parents first, speak to friends
- Do more activities - practical things. Build on foundations,
- Keep meeting up with people/ groups from other cultures
- Get up earlier! Make time, Prioritise
- Volunteer; get training; get involved; go to Endeavour
- Get qualifications and get a job/ do things for money
- Budget
- Get another adult to inform the other person
- Risk taking clubs - have more activities
- Adults should explain to us what's happening
- Communicate e.g. school; go places to find out; spread the word
- Make sure you get progress reports (like they do at NSPCC); record everything said and record follow up action points
- Adults should respect children and young people and treat them as equals – accountability

- Apply for funding, get a job; better paid; somewhere where jobs for 16 year olds can be advertised
- More activities in school time
- Prioritising
- Tell adults - proper channels for communication and more activities to link age groups
- Ask for more info (internet, workers)
- Be realistic about what you can do
- Makes things cheaper when expenses are paid for
- Bank volunteering time to get rewards
- EMA for all

4. Summary of Key Findings

The aim of this report was to evidence the level of young people's participation within their groups, organisations who work with them and in the wider community. The findings from the practitioner's questionnaire and young people's focus groups have shown that young people are participating in activities at varying levels, predominantly at a high level within their groups. Many of the groups, who were apart of the focus groups, were facilitated by specialist youth participation workers who have undertaken training to implement participation within their work. This could underpin the reasoning behind young people's high levels of participation.

Most Young people are motivated by the chance to have fun, meet and make friends, have positive relationships with practitioners, develop their confidence and self esteem, learn new skills and gain recognition, rewards and incentives as well as make a difference, voice their opinions and bring about positive change for young people.

This suggests that young people who attend city-wide provision have a clear understanding of what good participation is within youth provision. Young people have had many exciting experiences of participation work. Young people appear to work in partnership with adults to achieve their goals and fulfil their ideas. Young people have engaged in many community discussions with adults and professionals in senior positions and feel that they are in a position to implement improvements within their area and for their city. Young people who attend city-wide provision want to be involved in participation activities, have excellent ideas and want to shape the provision that they are offered and improve their communities.

However young people feel that they are not completely listened to within their communities and within decision making structures and that they face many barriers when trying to get involved with participation and when attempting to express themselves to decision makers and their wider community. Young people attending city-wide provision feel that often they have little time to contribute further due to the many constraints and pressures of their lives.

Practitioners feel that young people have a high level of participation within their groups but that within organisations and wider decision making structures this is harder to achieve. They identified similar barriers to those identified by young people, but also recognised that dynamics and relationships between young people in groups can also affect their level of successful participation. Practitioners also identified that meeting young peoples' needs for social and recreational activity sometimes conflicts with the expectations of organisations who want to engage with young people. Lack of time, resources and funding were also a barrier. Practitioners would like more training and resources regarding participation to support young people further.

Next Steps

This report will be launched alongside seven Community Assembly reports at events across Sheffield in October 2009 to present the findings to key decision makers and organisation within the communities of Sheffield.

The events will consist of young people presenting some of the findings and hopefully groups of young people who will carry out short presentations about their groups and what they have achieved. There will then be a discussion workshop for workers and organisations to talk about the results and look at ways they can improve the involvement of young people in their decision making processes. We will be asking people to agree an Action 4 Involvement and hope they will commit to an organisational change within their workplace or organisation.

We are also launching a toolkit to support the further involvement and participation of children and young people within organisations, these will be available at the area event and, if required there will be training to support the use of the toolkit.

5. References

Flick, U. et al (eds) (2004) *Companion to Qualitative Research* London: Sage

Hart, R. (1992) *Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship* Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre

6. Contacts

If you would like this report in a different format, language, more copies or further information about its and the findings please contact:

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See www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation website for any of these documents.

For more information about specific Community Assemblies please see the seven separate reports mentioned in the Introduction, available at www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation

