

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

East Community Assembly 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.*

## **Contents Page**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.2 Sheffield Context	4
1.3 Sheffield 13 to 19+ Participation Strategy Project	4
<b>2. Methodology</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Analysis of Results</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Practitioner’s Questionnaires	6
3.2 Young People’s Focus Groups	10
<b>4. Summary of Key findings and ‘next steps’</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. References</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6. Contacts</b>	<b>19</b>

### **Appendices**

#### **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](http://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

Nine questionnaires were returned for the East Community Assembly.

- 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	0
Young people have some involvement	2
Young people have a lot of involvement	7
Total responses	9

#### Examples given included:

*"I operate the 'Eco Schools project' which involved the Students Council and the English Club - the students completely decide what we are doing".*

*"Young people are consulted on what sort of activities they would like. Other wishes are consulted on 'Have your Say Day'. These are then fed back to relevant agencies".*

- 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	5
Young people's ideas are listened to and used extensively	4
Total responses	9

#### Examples given included:

*"Young people get involved in decision making and been in control of their decisions we make. Staff then listen to young people's views and opinions and act on them"*

**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	1
Young people have some involvement	3
Young people have a lot of involvement	5
Total responses	9

**Examples given included:**

*"Young people get involved in decision making and been in control of their decisions we make. Staff then listen to young people's views and opinions and act on them"*

**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	0
Young people have little involvement	2
Young people have some involvement	5
Young people have a lot of involvement	2
Total responses	9

**Examples given were:**

*"Young people were involved in peer research for young people in their local estate asking about what young people in their area need. The information from the research was fed into the Youth Strategy Report for Heeley/Arbourthorne/Manor and Darnall, highlighting what young people felt they needed in their area i.e. more facilities for young people and safer neighborhoods"*

*"Young people have just been involved in Youth Parliament where young people were elected to become members of Youth Parliament to have a voice for other young people and their communities"*

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

Yes	8
No	1
Not Sure	0
Total responses	9

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

Do not effect at all	0
Have little effect	2
Have some effect	1
Have a lot of effect	6
Total responses	9

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

**Their group?**

- Shyness or lack of confidence, feeling that their ideas may not be good ones, not believing their ideas will be actioned.
- Their peers.
- No barriers. This group is based on their idea, view, hopes and life.
- Confidence and not knowing what their opinions are.
- None.
- Peer pressure influences decisions.
- This club is an open access club for young people to socialise and make new friends.
- Being seen as geeky/nerdy by their peers.

**The organisation?**

- A lack of enjoyment in the process, not seeing any relevance to their lives.
- Lack of time.
- Involvement is specific to youth project and informal. There are currently No structures in place to involve them.
- Other commitments/time in meetings.
- Time and confidence.
- There are policies and procedures which hinder some involvement.

**Their communities/areas?**

- Language and cultural barriers. Meetings where decisions are made e.g. area panel meetings and these may not be in a format which attracts YP. Not being asked.
- Not enough organisations willing to give young people a voice or their time and mainly lack funding.
- Agencies aren't willing to act upon feedback, meetings aren't young people friendly.
- Timing of events.
- Apathy and time.
- Other age groups don't respect or are scared of young people therefore they react negatively to them.
- Finding ways to articulate their needs.

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

Yes	4
No	4
Not Sure	1
Total responses	9

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

Yes	5
No	1
Maybe	3
Total responses	9

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

Definition of participation	0
Barriers of participation	1
Methods of participation	6
Sheffield Participation Strategy	4

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

Yes	5
No	1
Maybe	2

### 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.

Three focus groups took place in the East Community Assembly area.

- **Activity 1: My Group**

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

In response to why they come to their group the following answers were given:

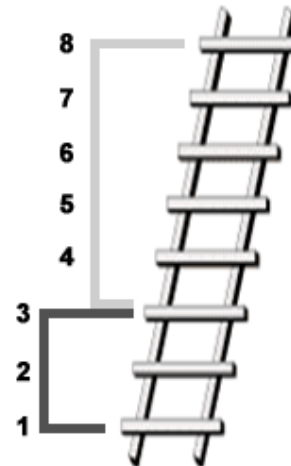
- To Meet Friends and Enjoy your self increase more friends
- Its Fun
- Because I get bored at home
- To know what other people think and feel
- To Meet our friends and Make more friends and have fun
- To See Friends
- Fun things to do
- I attend youth club because I enjoy talking and meeting my friends and enjoying activities
- Friends come here
- to enjoy our selves with the activities and STAY out of Trouble
- Meet new people
- Because It is better than sitting on our Arse
- To Look Forward to more activities
- Because I am bored
- To make a difference
- To Take part in fun activities out of school time
- To have more of a say about what goes on in school
- To find things out
- Unsure
- To have my say in what we do
- I come to school council to try and get better things in school and find out about new changes
- I want to make a difference
- So you can have your say
- To get information about the school
- It's good!
- Time to think
- Stop being bored (x2)
- Fun (x2)
- Get out of house (x2)
- See your friends
- Enjoy yourself
- Have a laugh
- Volunteer
- Because K (*group member*) makes me happy
- To see C (*group member*)
- To see L (*group member*)
- Spinning around

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



Adapted from Hart (1992)

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

Young people undertook the task of ranking statements about Participation. The results below show that the young firmly agreed on the level 4 ranking of the statement 'Adults have an idea. Young people join them in making it happen'. Overall the young people appeared to have a clear view of very good participation levels.

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

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:

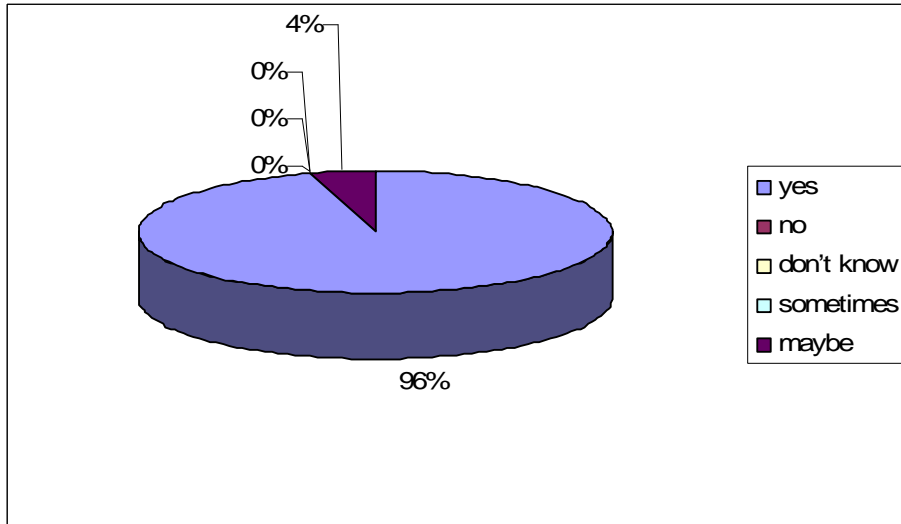
	Statement Number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easter Egg hunt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trip to Germany</li> <li>Chilypep visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ridgeway</li> <li>3 months with FAB</li> <li>Carol singing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Princes Trust application</li> <li>Mayor's visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bowling</li> <li>Pantomime visit</li> </ul>

- **Activity 3: Making a Difference (Vote on your feet)**

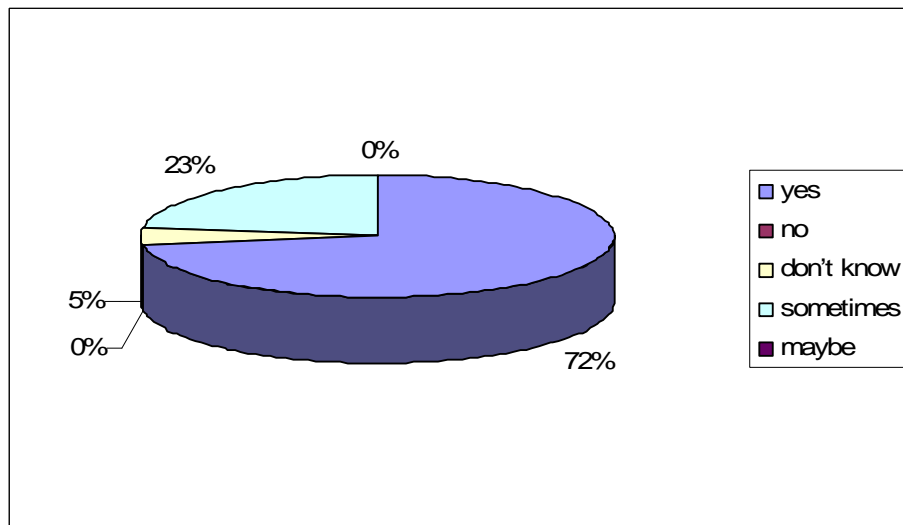
This activity was an opportunity for young people to 'vote on your feet' to a series of questions asked by the facilitators. Young people responded by standing in front of the card that had the answer on that they agreed with. The following outlines the facilitators question and the young people's response.

**1.**

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



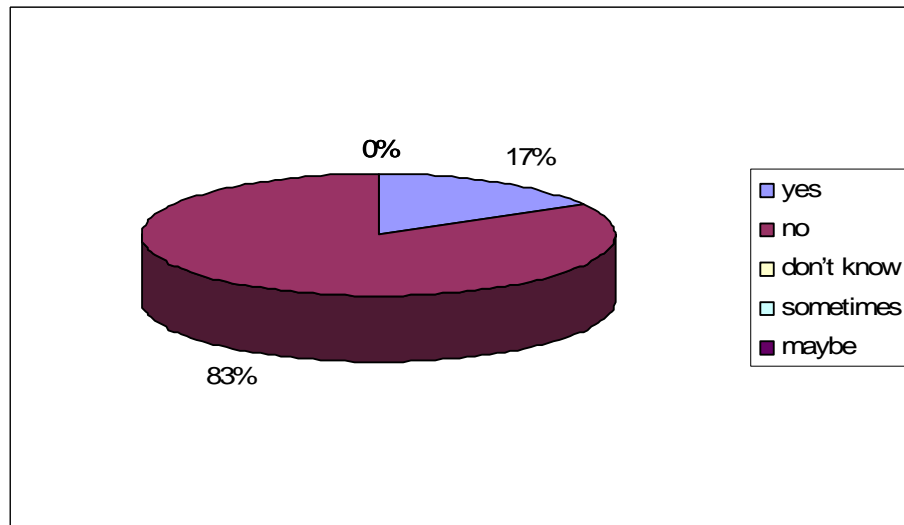
B) (For those saying yes) Have you used any of the skills you learnt from training? How/What for?



**Examples:**

- Safety Training
- Fire safety
- Personal safety
- Photography

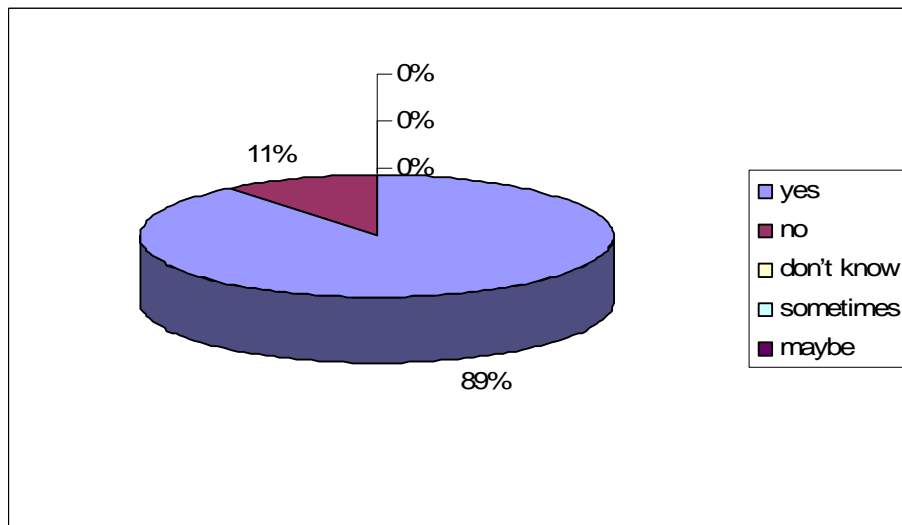
C) (For those saying no) have you done other things that have developed your skills and confidence?



**Examples:**

- Socialization
- Art project
- Confidence
- Making friends

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?

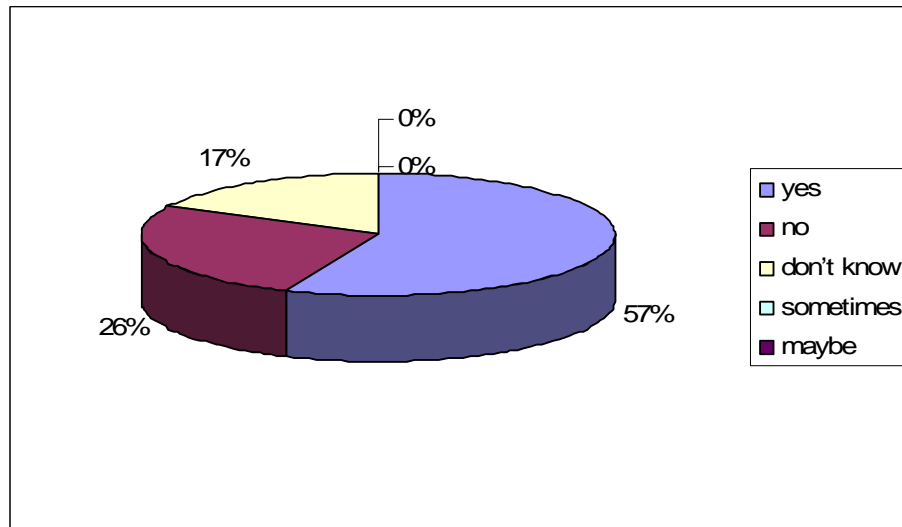


What young people said they'd like to do:

- Drama
- Sports
- Acting
- ICT
- Social Awareness
- Singing
- Break dancing
- Confidence building
- Self-esteem
- Adventure stuff
- Go to college
- Cooking skills
- More holidays

2.

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



**If yes - when & who to?**

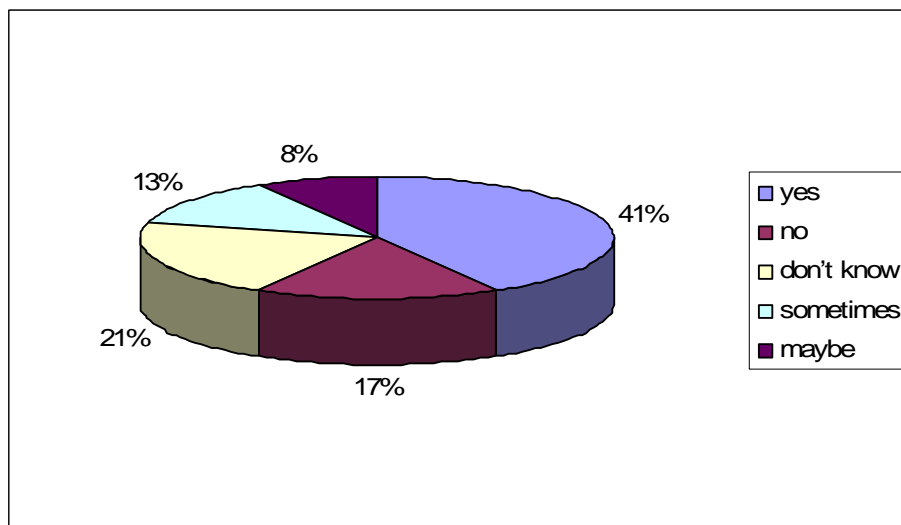
**Yes**

- Youth parliament meetings
- Photography project and displaying photos
- School photos

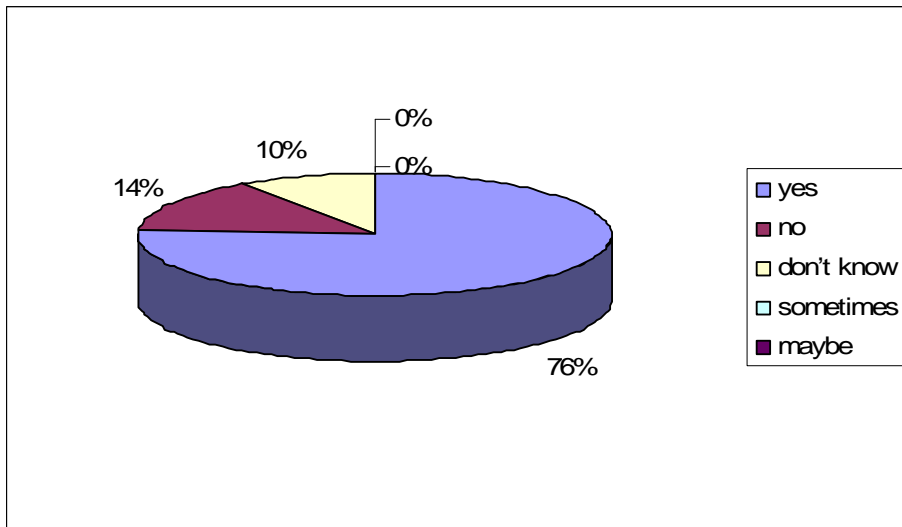
**No**

- Young people chose not to comment

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



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

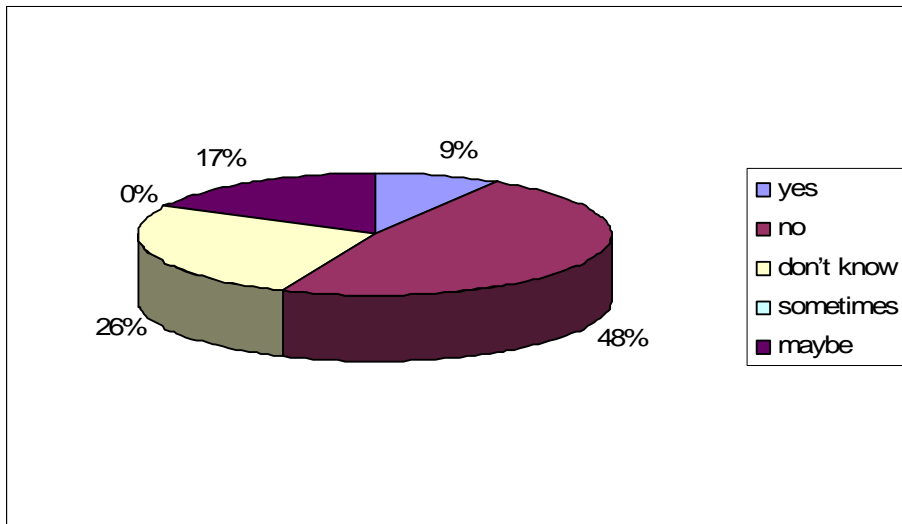


**Examples:**

**Yes**

- Kashmir Garden Parks
- New school uniform/logos

H) Do you feel listened to by the people in your community/the area where you live? If yes or no – why?



Comments (note - some young people chose not to comment)

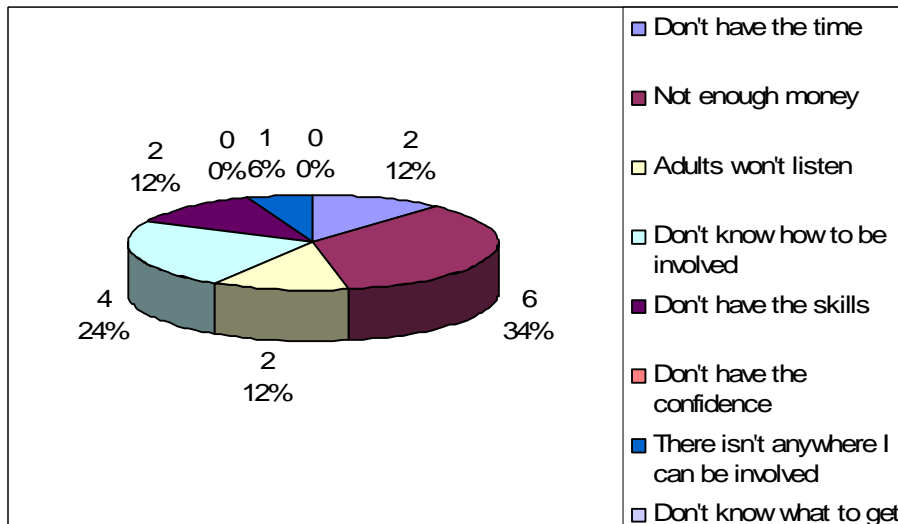
**No**

- They think we are just kids

- **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?**

- Not Enough Fun Activities
- Equipment
- Literature Not Available

- **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:

- 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/Get more training.
- Change activities. E.g. Basketball, Football, Badminton.
- Purchase some better equipment.
- Find the right people to talk to.
- Hold regular meetings every 2 weeks (Youth and Staff).

## **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 practitioners' questionnaire and young people's focus groups have provided confirmation that young people feel that they are participating in activities at varying levels.

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.

Some of the focus groups within the East Community Assembly were undertaken with young people who had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The activities were relatively complex and did not altogether suite the learning styles of the young people and feedback from the young people commented that the focus group activities were not helpful in enabling their participation. As a result of this, the Participation Strategy Group members created a simplified version of the activities.

Young people identified many barriers to attending participation activities, namely money, skills and their belief that adult generally aren't listening to them. Practitioners identified similar barriers, but also recognised organisational, institutional and structural barriers, within their organisations and the wider community. The negative attitude of adults was highlighted by young people and practitioners.

The young people had attended a wide range of training sessions, but had not specifically undertaken participation training. The young people felt that they would like further training and want to have opportunities to express themselves to others. Some of the programmes that they identified were generally straightforward courses, of which youth related practitioners could deliver.

### **Next Steps**

A participation event will be held at Centre in the Park on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October from 4pm until 7pm to present the findings from the activities and this report to key decision makers and organisation within the community.

The events will consist of a group of young people presenting some of the findings and hopefully groups of young people who will carry out short presentations about their group 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.

## 6. 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:

13-19+ Participation Strategy Team  
The Children and Young People's Empowerment Project (CHILYPEP)  
Remington Youth & Community Centre  
200 Remington Road  
Parson Cross  
Sheffield  
S5 9AG  
T: 0114 2403447  
E: [info@chilypep.org.uk](mailto:info@chilypep.org.uk)  
W: [www.chilypep.org.uk](http://www.chilypep.org.uk)

For more information about the Strategy for the Participation & Consultation of Children & Young People in Sheffield and its supporting documents please contact:

Joe Green  
0-19+ Participation Manager  
Integrated Youth Support Service  
Floor 3, Howden House  
1 Union Street,  
Sheffield  
S1 2SH  
T: 0114 27 35582  
M: 07814 872353  
E: [joe.green@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:joe.green@sheffield.gov.uk)  
W: [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)

See [www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation](http://www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation) website for any of these documents.

For more information about specific Community Assemblies and City Wide findings please see the separate reports mentioned in the Introduction, available at [www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation](http://www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/participation) .

For more information about your Community Assembly Area contact:

Judith Coyle (j/s)  
East Community Assembly Manager  
0114 273 6734  
07764 290497  
[judith.coyle@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:judith.coyle@sheffield.gov.uk)

Lisa Lyon (j/s)  
East Community Assembly Manager  
0114 273 6734  
07769 952339  
[lisa.lyon@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.lyon@sheffield.gov.uk)