

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION ON THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2014-17

### Introduction

In developing the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2014-17 in Lancashire we wanted to ensure that children and young people's opinions were at the heart of what we were developing and that they were helping us to shape our thoughts and plans. Over 2000 children and young people have participated in telling us their thoughts and opinions and this report aims to capture those thoughts and opinions and feed them into the development of the CYPP.

Our desire to hear the voices of children and young people is underpinned by the following beliefs and values:

- Children and young people have equal worth to adults
- All children and young people are experts in their own lives – they know their everyday lives better than anyone
- Children and young people have the right to be involved in all decision making that affects their lives
- Children and young people's participation in decision making is key to improving their well being
- Participation is about making everyday choices as well as seeking to influence wider public decision making and social change
- Everyone who works with children and young people has a responsibility to encourage and support their active involvement in decision making
- A commitment to children's rights is key to achieving improved outcomes for children and young people

Children and Young People engaged in the following ways:

- Consultation activities at events throughout Lancashire, summer 2012. We wanted to capture as many people's ideas as possible and activities like this presented us with opportunities to do so. We asked them to think about: What will make sure that children in Lancashire grow up happy, healthy and safe and have fulfilled lives?
- Questionnaire: including versions that were suitable for Under 11s and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We created a simple web based survey which enabled children and young people to participate. Lancashire County Council's Corporate Research and Intelligence Team supported the development and analysis of the questionnaire.
- Activity packs: designed centrally and distributed so colleagues could facilitate their own focus groups. There were two packs: under 5s and everyone else.

The pack was designed around the concept of a road trip, i.e. the start, what life's like now; the finish, what we would like; and the journey, how we get to the end point.

- Facilitated events: three, one in each locality, facilitated by members of Lancashire Participation Network to coincide with Takeover Month 2013.

The methodology was designed and developed by colleagues from Lancashire Participation Network (LPN). Between September and December 2013 children and young people aged from 18 months to 25 years shared their ideas and opinions about Lancashire in a number of consultations events and also in their own services and settings. We asked them to think about the following things:

- What's Lancashire like for children and young people: what do they like, what do they do, what works for them, what does not work etc?
- What would improve Lancashire for children and young people: how do we ensure children and young people grow up happy, healthy and fulfilled?

We hoped to particularly engage children and young people with SEND and to hear the voices of children under five. We also hoped that children and young people and the services/organisations that they work with would engage in a 'conversation' about the future plan for Lancashire. We are pleased that this was indeed the case:

- Four under fives groups engaged in conversations about Lancashire focusing mainly on healthy eating and teeth.
- A large number of SEND children and young people engaged in completing the questionnaire, in attending events and also in discussions in their settings. Particular thanks should go to Barnardos and POWAR, SEND participation group, and also the National Deaf Children's Society for enabling so many SEND children and young people to get involved.

We are also pleased to see a large number of children and young people completing questionnaires: 339 children under 11 and 1,308 over 11s. For the purposes of this report we will refer to those under 11 as 'children' and those who are over 11 as 'young people'.

It is also important to note that many children and young people participate regularly in groups across Lancashire and have provided us with clear messages about what they think and want so we should included these in our overall messages. Some of the key messages from CYP come from:

- Making Your Mark
- Lancashire Youth Council
- PULSE

'Make Your Mark' is a national campaign and ballot asking what young people should discuss in their takeover of the House of Commons on Friday 15 November.

The ballot was a long list of options which the nation of young people voted to choose their top 5 priorities. 15,625 votes were received from young people aged 13-19 yrs in Lancashire and their top 5 issues were:

- 1) Better work experience (1,693)
- 2) Living wage (1,528)
- 3) 16-19 Bursary fund (1,510)
- 4) Zero tolerance to bullying in schools (1,341)
- 5) Combat youth unemployment (1,237)

33,964 young people participated in the last Lancashire Youth Council elections in 2014. This year the young people have been discussing and working on the following campaign areas:

- Sex and Relationships Education (Teen relationships)
- Personal and public safety
- Emotional Health and Well Being

PULSE, Lancashire's Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing board, who are young people representatives (aged between 12 – 22 years) from different groups across Lancashire (e.g. Youth Council, Health Action Groups, Young Carers, Long Term Health Conditions, CAMHS, Children in Care Council) who have come together to form a new county group to look at young people's health and wellbeing issues.

#### **Current priorities are:**

- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Substance Misuse (including alcohol and tobacco)
- Access to health information

**What's Lancashire like now?** What's Lancashire like for children and young people: what do they like, what do they do, what works for them, what does not work etc?

*'there is grass, a shopping centre and pizza shops', 'ice skating, markets and swimming', 'there is a windmill in Lytham and we are near the sea', 'Fylde rugby' and 'I like living there'*

The feedback from children and young people is that they are largely happy with where they live. Over three-quarters of respondents to the under 11s questionnaire (78%) are happy with their local area. Over half of respondents to the over 11s (55%) are happy with their local area. Almost a quarter (24%) are unhappy.

Words that sum up Lancashire: boring featured quite highly as did words like awesome, cool and 'it's alright' also featured as did crime and violence, hard work, banter, rubbish, historic and 'oldies'. Some of the younger children described where they lived as; perfect, very good and outstanding.

**Positive comments** about Lancashire fell into a number of key topics: Friends, family and home; Education; Positive activities and Local area / environment. The main messages in each topic are outlined below:

### **Friends, family and home**

Children and young people talked about sleep overs with friends, playing and talking with friends, playing and being at home, doing things (going out, going for meals, walking dogs, going cycling, etc) as a family, toys such as Lego and being near most family. There were a lot of conversations about playing on computers and consoles both individually but also with your friends using the internet. Older young people tended to talk more about 'hanging around' with friends. Two younger children talked positively about their experiences of 'kind' foster carers in Lancashire.

### **Education**

Some of the children and young people talked positively about their educational establishment or particular parts of them, e.g. the library and roles they might have like Prefect or library volunteer. Around one in ten respondents to the under 11s questionnaire wouldn't change anything about school.

### **Positive activities**

Children and young people talked about a huge variety of activities which they enjoyed including computer consoles and gaming and also activities ranging from cycling to organisations like Brownies, Cadets and other uniformed organisations. They talked about organised formal sport like football, tennis and rugby and more informal sport such as football on the park. They talked about the arts ranging from singing and dancing to playing instruments and acting. They talked about local leisure centres particularly about swimming facilities and clubs. Youth centres and clubs were also very important, for example the Space bus in Burnley and various YouthZones. Many of the children and young people with SEND talked about the positive experiences they had of accessing projects and clubs that met their specific needs. Youth councils and other participation groups like POWAR also featured in conversations.

### **Local area/ environment**

Children and young people focused largely on local parks but also the countryside and other outdoor attractions such as forests, beaches and hills. They also spoke of shopping centres and other local amenities such as libraries and leisure centres. Young people in Lancaster talked about how much they valued the library spaces like the one in Lancaster library (where we held the north consultation). Other children and young people talked positively about: Preston city centre, Freckleton, Burnley, etc. At the summer events children and young people talked about the

importance of communities in helping children to grow up happy, healthy and to have fulfilled lives. 'In Fleetwood everyone knows one another.'

**Negative comments** about Lancashire fell into a number of key topics: community; disability; bullying; lack of support; parents and parenting; crime; education; lack of things to do; local environment / area; places to go; health; jobs and the economy; and traffic and roads. Each of these topics is explored in more detail below. However, it is worth noting that children and young people often expressed frustration about the ways that we work with them and felt we should be better at working together. Children and young people also felt that we are not good at following through on promises.

## **Community**

Children and young people commented on a lack of cohesion between the young and old meaning children and teenagers as well as children, young people and adults. Younger children particularly talked negatively about teenagers in their local areas. At the primary school children's event they wanted to 'ban' teenagers altogether as they saw them as responsible for vandalism of parks and also for problems in terms of drinking, road accidents, etc. Teenagers also appeared to 'take over' parks and other public spaces which children did not like. Older young people talked more about feeling that 'older people' behaved negatively towards them. Traveller young people talked about the fact the 'gypsies are people too'. Young people at various events talked about older people being 'ignorant' and not taking responsibility for their area or each other. This often led to conversations about people who swear, drop litter and are unkind.

## **Disability**

Children and young people with disabilities and their peers talked clearly about the need for more and better access to buildings and also activities for people with disabilities. There is not enough space for wheelchairs and electric wheelchairs to get around. They also noted that children and young people with disabilities all need more help; they felt that there is not enough support for those with communication difficulties. Deaf children talked about the challenges they had with swimming. Some find swimming difficult and some of the deaf children think that deaf people might be frightened to go swimming. All children agreed that staff at the swimming pool could be better at communicating

*'I'm scared that if I can't swim I can't communicate with the lifeguard to say help me' and one child explained 'I have to take my hearing aids out when I go swimming so I can't hear. If you take your hearing aids out they don't know that you're deaf so they don't know you need communication support, they don't know that we can't hear them. They don't understand why we can't hear them.'*

## **Bullying**

In the Making Your Mark ballot this is the fourth most popular issue and focuses on 'zero tolerance' of bullying in schools. However, it is an issue beyond the schools gates for many and includes online bullying which a number of the young people discussed.

## **Lack of support**

A lack of help for people who needed it was discussed in every group but these conversations seemed to largely focus on a lack of help and support for young people.

## **Parents and parenting**

Parenting featured highly in conversations with children and young people at the various events. Parents who were described as over protective, particularly by children and also parents who needed more help and support to be good parents.

## **Education**

A number of the young people at events talked negatively about school and education however fewer primary aged children speak negatively about school. Children and young people who attend special schools talk of how they often live a long way from their friends and that that they often do not experience the same curriculum as mainstream school missing out on things they would like to do. 42% of the over 11s we surveyed worry about education. In the Making Your Mark campaign the issue of bursaries for 16-19 year olds was one of the most popular issues. Some children talked about school class sizes being too big and a lack of primary school places.

## **Crime**

At the events, the children and young people who lived in cities such as Preston or Burnley appeared to be more concerned about crime, gangs, drugs etc although discussions about gangs in school and in local areas featured highly in all the groups. Many of the children and young people talked about not feeling safe at night. There was also a fear of people drinking and taking drugs. Children and young people also talked about robberies and crime against them. Relationships between children, young people and the police also featured in many conversations; generally they wanted more police who have better relationships with children and young people but some young people felt the police were watching young people all the time and some even felt that the police were racist.

## **Lack of things to do**

Boring was one of the most common comments from children and young people when we asked them about their area. Young people particularly feel that there is

not anything to do. Over three-fifths of respondents to the over 11s questionnaire disagree that there are lots of activities to do where they live and over a third strongly disagree. Skate parks or lack thereof were a big issue for children and young people. Leisure facilities were criticised for being too expensive or just not accessible. The analysis of the under 11s questionnaire tells us that girls are more likely to feel stopped from doing activities than boys. In particular, female respondents feel stopped from doing activities by the activity not being available when they want, having no one to go with and not being able to get there. Male respondents are more likely to feel stopped from doing activities by their parents/carers worrying about them.

### **Local area / environment**

These conversations focused on areas geographically close to where children and young people live and are rarely comments about Lancashire as a whole. The issues focused on litter and vandalism, lack of or poor facilities but particularly focused on parks and transport. In terms of litter and vandalism children talked about broken glass, rubbish and dog poo (something that children often talked about). They talked about people, largely they described them as teenagers, vandalising their spaces, e.g. parks, playing areas, etc. A number of children and young people talked about a fear of dogs, some of which are strays, and of owners who couldn't control their dogs. In terms of parks and outdoor space children and young people commented on a lack of places to play and also, where there were parks and outdoor spaces, they talked about the lack of lighting and also other fears/ dangers including young people, criminals, etc which meant that parents worried or stopped them from playing outside. They talked about a lack of facilities, particularly good playing equipment and skate parks. They talked about being bored. A lack of transport that is regular and affordable was discussed by many of the groups with some young people noting that public transport didn't feel very safe. Children and young people commented on the fact that local shops and facilities were closing and that things were expensive.

### **Places to go**

This point links directly to the previous two but is distinct as young people talked about not having places to go. Children did not talk about this as much as young people who clearly feel that there are not places that they are either welcome or that there are no clubs, facilities, etc that are 'theirs'. The fact that they 'hang around' on the streets which do not often feel safe to them, and that there is a lack of lighting are also related to this point. This leads to them being on the streets and the associated problems this causes for communities but maybe most of all children, as outlined above.

## **Health**

Issues were varied but a large number of children and young people focused on healthy eating. PULSE have chosen to focus on Emotional Health and Wellbeing, substance misuse (including alcohol and tobacco) and access to health information all of which they think are issues for children and young people. Meanwhile Lancashire Youth Council have been campaigning on Sex and Relationships education for a number of years and are passionate about improving this for children and young people as they feel that children and young people are inadequately informed about positive relationships and sex which impacts on teenage pregnancy, the transmission of STIs and also of instances of abuse between teenagers. Binge drinking and smoking were discussed at length by all the groups. Children particularly raised an issue about the fact that when people stand outside and smoke then they have to walk through all their smoke. There were comments about: NHS not treating patients properly, they need more staff and support, there are not very good medical or NHS hospitals, there is not enough specialist equipment in hospitals and too much waiting time in A&E. Younger children, under fives, focused their discussions on brushing teeth and healthy eating. The children brushed their teeth regularly, some remembered going to the dentist and knew who the dentist was.

'The children said that they brush their teeth and their parents put the toothpaste on the brush, the young boy said he has blue toothpaste and the girl said she uses pink toothpaste. Both of the children agreed that they brush their teeth in the kitchen and bathroom and that they do it in the morning and before bed. One of the children said that she looks in the mirror when she brushes her teeth'.

## **Jobs and the economy**

The most common thing respondents to the over 11s questionnaire often worry about is money (44%). Three of the five Making Your Mark campaign areas are about jobs and the economy. Lack of employment and apprenticeships was something young people talked about a lot. Many of the children and young people talked about the economy in terms of the high and growing costs of activities, transport and goods. As mentioned above they also talked about the effects of shops closing on their local high streets.

## **Traffic and roads**

Many of the children talked about people driving too fast and using their phones. The state of the roads was also discussed by a few young people as was gritting the roads sufficiently in bad weather.

In the analysis of the over 11s questionnaire we found that for most issues,, female respondents are more likely to say they often worry about them than male respondents. In particular, female respondents are more likely to often worry about education (58%), money (50%) and the way they look (43%). Male respondents (34%) are more likely to say that nothing worries them.

## **What would make Lancashire better?**

*'Good education, good intervention, good opportunities, good ambition and good support'*

There was a focus in a lot of the discussions about 'getting young people off the streets' creating opportunities particularly for children living in poverty. Food is a very important source of improvements and comes up time and again in discussions. Children and young people talked about people working better together and challenged services and organisations to do better.

The most common five things respondents to the over 11s questionnaire think would make life better for children and young people in Lancashire are more jobs available (51%), more places to spend time with friends (40%), more help to plan for their future (40%) more organised activities and things to do (39%) and letting them know who they can talk to if they need to (39%). Respondents were asked whether they had anything else they would like to tell us to make life better or to improve their local area. The most common responses were for there to be more local activities and for there to be more jobs.

The children and young people's opinions have been grouped into areas: community; friends and family; support for children, young people and families; education; disability; crime; positive activities; local area and environment; health; jobs and the economy; road safety. The main priorities within each of these areas are outlined below;

### **Community**

There was a focus by children on teenagers and getting them to behave well or differently. There was also a focus on community cohesion and more activities bringing communities together.

### **Friends and family**

The importance of good friends, parents, family and home came up routinely in conversations with children and young people. The importance of spending time with families was emphasised time and again. Over a third of under 11 respondents (36%) wouldn't like to change anything about their friends and family. The most common things respondents would change would be to have better relationships with them and to spend more time with them. 12% of respondents wanted to spend more time with friends and family when not at school.

### **Support for children, young people and families**

The comments were largely about stopping bullying and supporting people who got bullied. This includes stopping cyber bullying and safer web browsing. However, a number of children and young people in all the activities talked about the importance of adults and facilities that could support them whether that was youth workers, other people you could turn to for advice and children's and/ or family centres. Young

people talked about the importance of supporting them to build confidence and have decision making opportunities. Reducing homelessness was also something that came up in group discussions.

## **Education**

Some children and young people express a desire to improve school / the education system. However, the focus for children was largely on improving facilities such as sports halls, climbing frames, etc. The most common things respondents to the under 11s questionnaire would change about school would be improved facilities (13%) and more equipment for playtime (11%). Some comments focused on changing the curriculum by introducing citizenship lessons and life skills. The Lancashire Youth Council campaign is also relevant here as sex and relationships education is something they have campaigned for to be taught to all pupils and in a more effective manner. Healthy eating, the promoting of, as well as the providing of healthy food and drinks like milk, is also important for many pupils as is improving school dinners. The provision of before and after school activities is also important with a focus on fitness and physical activities.

## **Disability**

There should be more channels with interpreters on 24hrs a day for those who are hard of hearing/deaf. More equipment for blind and deaf people with modern/trendier designs. More treatment and support to help disabled people achieve their goals and wider doorways for wheelchair access, more transport available that disabled young people can use. Young people would like more disabled awareness for sports clubs they are involved with; one young person liked to attend a basketball club but said that *'the teacher didn't communicate well with me'*. All children would like more places for young disabled people to meet up, but also better access to mainstream, universal activities.

## **Crime**

Children and young people agreed that they would like to see more police working to keep crime low. They would also like there to be less vandalism of amenities.

## **Positive activities**

The focus of these comments were on: having things to do, having places to go especially at night, arts and creative opportunities, on sports activities largely formal and on events. Skate parks featured quite highly in group discussions be it improving current skate parks or creating indoor skate spaces. Much of this focused on more activities for them to do such as arts and crafts, drama, youth clubs/groups, sports clubs etc. There were also lots of discussions around improving local facilities such as swimming pools which featured highly in discussions. Generally children and young people agreed they would like more funding for activities especially for disabled people. The most common things respondents to the under 11s

questionnaire would change about how they spend their time when they are not at school would be more time doing a wide variety of activities (18%).

### **Local area/environment**

'Claim the streets and parks'

Parks, events, areas to play and cycling all featured as the most popular improvements in this area. The most common thing under 11 respondents to the questionnaire said they would change about their local area would be cleaner streets and cheaper transport. The importance of community events was also suggested by a number of the groups.

### **Places to go**

Youth clubs and centres were very important to young people meaning they would have somewhere to go particularly at night. Children and young people also talked about high street cafes and restaurants, which they would like more of.

### **Health**

Improving hospital care, healthy eating and fitness were the most common comments. The campaign areas for PULSE and LYC are also key to improving health for CYP.

### **Jobs and the economy**

More jobs which pay better, reducing the cost of living, more money and combating poverty were common themes.

### **Road safety**

Safe crossing were important to many group but particularly children. There included pelican/zebra crossings/lollipop ladies especially outside school. The desire for there to be less traffic and safer roads was also common.

### **The priorities from the JSNA**

Children and young people in groups discussed the JSNA priorities and which would be particularly important to them and this information was analysed: road safety emerged as one of the most important issues followed by education, emotional health and wellbeing and young offenders. However, all the priorities were clearly things that children and young people agreed with. Children and young people did not think obesity, healthy eating and tooth decay were as important as other issues. Children did not discuss sex and relationships education and traveller young women did not consider this topic either as discussing this is not permitted in their culture. This therefore meant that this issue was a priority to all those young people who discussed it.

*In consultations with under 5's they talked about healthy eating and brushing their teeth.*

### **How can we get there?**

The children and young people who used the activity packs and attended the events were asked to choose vehicles that could help them get to the end point, i.e. a better Lancashire as described above and explained why they had chosen that vehicle. The most popular reasons are outlined below and represent key messages about how we should go about achieving our goals;

- We need to be quick(er) and as get there as directly as possible
- We need to be prepared to go back and get the people we need to help us or those who need help/support
- We need to get lots of people on board who can all work together
- We need everyone to work together which might be slower but we will all get there together in the end
- The child or young person should be in the driving seat or providing the power (pedal or otherwise) but everyone needs to be around them and with them

'All young people agreed that the 'Bus' was the preferred 'transport' (as it meant) having more people to help and taking their time to get the jobs done properly'.

'Most of the children and young people chose that the best method of getting there was by hot air balloon the reason for this being that they are nice and slow and you would see from a bird's eye view of the progress being made'.

The people who needed to be involved usually started off with the individual child or young person, their family members but also included services and agencies, workers and volunteers.

'This vehicle (scooter) you have to push it yourself so you have to change yourself'.

### **What will hinder?**

Government – both local and national

Money – the lack thereof. Children and young people talked about the effects of poverty

Not prioritising – we cannot change everything so we need to prioritise

Obstacles getting in the way of change/progress e.g. too much paperwork, people not doing what they have said/promised

Communication – lack of communication was seen as a real problem

People doubting us (CYP)

People not working together

Behaviour of people – other citizens

Help – if we don't help ourselves

Keeping promises- following through on what has been agreed

Lack of opportunities- no positive activities or things to do

Listening to us

Some questions and final comments for decision makers...

- we don't understand thresholds and the allocation of resources to help people;
- timings of meetings to be young people friendly;
- how this money is spent and where it is spent;
- don't know what social workers do;
- people are trying to work together – doesn't work on the ground;
- police – don't do actions;
- some people get treated differently:
  - disabled people;
  - looks and personality;
  - people stare – when sister has seizure;
- why don't adults listen more and act on what they hear – and come back and say what has changed?
- disabled sports- why aren't there enough of them?
- social workers – don't keep promises – why don't they care?
- why they don't work together councillors and have conferences with each other why isn't there more girls' football?
- why do people not give you enough information?
- why do they make leaving care more complicated?
- What makes baddies bad?