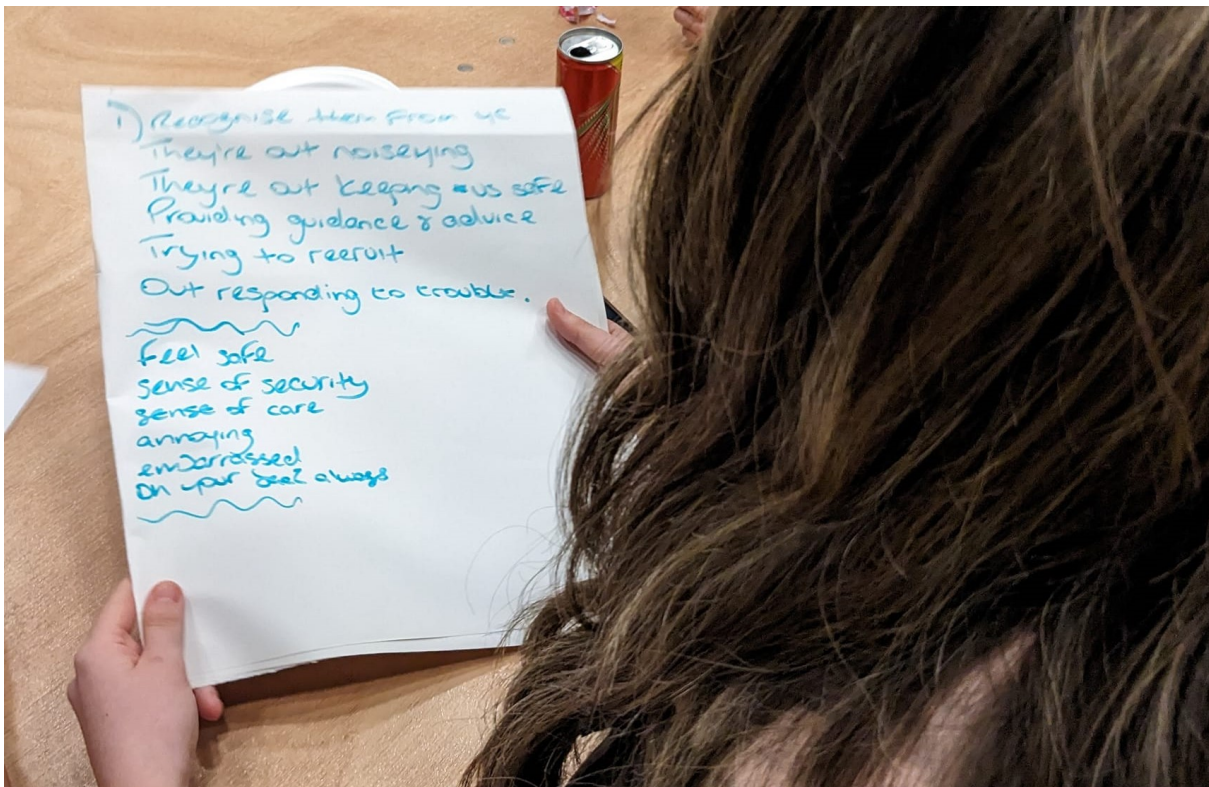


North Belfast Youth Together



A report on North Belfast Interface Pilot Project

by Ardoyne Youth Enterprise

The project

In September 22, a meeting of community and statutory partners was held to discuss ASB and interface tensions in North Belfast, primarily Girdwood/Cliftonpark Avenue where recent events occurred. The meeting highlighted the need for more effective coordination and communication between those groups working in the area alongside youth workers from further out where young people are travelling from.

As a result, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise was asked to set up a pilot project focusing on the coordination of youth services. The project aimed to better understand the needs and capacity of youth organisations and the needs of young people within the area, including why the area is the site of continuing ASB and Interface violence. The project had three primary functions:

1. Coordination and communication of key youth providers
2. Develop opportunities for cross community events to promote Girdwood as a shared space
3. Report on completion of project on learning and best practice, with recommendations on how to proactively address similar issues at this and other locations

The following youth groups were invited to join the project, due to their involvement in youth outreach delivery in the Girdwood surrounding area:

- Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (including Let Youth Lead and North Talks Too)
- New Lodge Youth Centre
- Star Neighbourhood Centre
- RCity
- Ardoyne Youth Enterprise
- Ardoyne Youth Club
- John Paul II Youth Club

It was intended that other stakeholders, such as PCSP or the Education Authority, would be brought into conversations where appropriate.

New groups were invited to join in consultation activities as their involvement in outreach work in wider North Belfast provided invaluable expertise. These included:

- Streetbeat Youth Project
- North Belfast Alternatives
- BlueHouses
- Deanby Youth Centre
- Tar Isteach (Girdwood Shared Youth Programme)
- Youth Matters - Forthspring Intercommunity Group

From September to March, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise coordinated a series of discussions, networking events and consultations, maximising the DPCSP funding by utilising funding from North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme to finance joint study visits aimed at strengthening ties between partner groups and inform our practice.

This report sets out the group's activities and findings, and makes a series of recommendations (see page 3).

Recommendations

A number of recommendations stem from youth workers' conversations, consultations and best practice visits. There is a clear need to:

1. develop an action plan and vision, beyond the pilot project, to create a sustainable model of collective working to benefit young people and our communities,
2. build on the North Belfast working group and extend the invite to other groups within the North Belfast area,
3. take a better strategic approach to funding, looking at a 3 to 5-year funding plan that would allow for more longevity,
4. consult with local communities to better inform strategic approach set out by DPCSP,
5. build and develop trust with the statutory organisations to allow for better communication and sharing of responsibilities
6. hold bi-monthly meetings of local community and youth organisations that would look at stronger networking and develop enhanced communication,
7. hold quarterly meetings with voluntary and community sector and statutory bodies, allowing for additional urgent meetings
8. communicate effectively in times of need and heightened tension (the North Belfast working group have all key contacts of each representative within the group),
9. DPCSP to continue to engage with youth organisations and residents around areas of heightened tension,
10. Increase youth centres' weekend opening hours, with a focus on targeted youth provision.

In addition, the group identified the need to progress specific pieces of work:

1. Ardoyne Youth Enterprise to publish its Handbook to Detached Youth Work by June 23, tapping on the knowledge and skills of this group,
2. jointly hold a youth conference in Girdwood by October 23,
3. plan future activities in Girdwood and other contested spaces,
4. establish a youth committee across North Belfast,
5. share our research: document the work of the North Belfast Working Group as a model of good practice in working to decrease interface tensions between young people and flashpoints for ASB.



Project activities

Coordinating and networking events

Coordinating meetings

The group held bi-monthly meetings throughout the project, with ongoing communication between meetings through Whatsapp groups and informal conversations.

Getting to know each other's projects better

One of the issues identified by partners early in the process was the need to better understand each other's projects and practice.

A 'Get to Know Each Other Better' event was held at Corr's Corner Hotel in December, where each group was invited to present its ethos, target groups, group work, planned intervention and drop-in activities, outreach and detached work. Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, Ardoyne Youth Club, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum / Let Youth Lead / North Talks Too, RCity and New Lodge Youth Centre joined in this session.

Areas of similarities and differences were noted, as well ongoing partnership work between groups. A conversation on ways forward was used to inform subsequent events.

Visit to Lord Mayor's Parlour

In March 23, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise organised an evening at the Lord Mayor's Parlour. The event had three main goals:

- a networking opportunity for North Belfast youth groups
- an opportunity to raise councillors' awareness of the issues currently faced in the community youth sector
- an exchange of ideas on dealing with the funding crisis

Representatives from Holy Family Youth Centre, New Lodge Youth Centre, Deanby Youth Centre, RCity, Mountcollyer Youth Club and Ardoyne Youth Enterprise attended the event.



Youth workers consultation and planning event



Following a series of meetings to strengthen the links between the initial Girdwood/Cliftonville interface partners and clarify our methodologies, the group opened up to a wider range of youth organisations from across North Belfast and Lower Shankill.

Together, we held a youth workers team building, consultation and planning event followed by a cross-community youth consultation.

The event gathered together Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, North Talks Too, Tar Isteach, Forthspring Youth Matters, Streetbeat, New Lodge Youth Centre, Ardoyne Youth Club, RCity and a DPCSP representative. Other youth organisations were unable to attend but expressed an interest in joining in future events.

The day aimed at piecing our work together, sharing common concerns, identifying gaps and planning longer term strategies. It took the form of a round table, focusing on four main themes:

1. Defining outreach and detached youth work. What is good detached youth work? positives and negatives, dos and don'ts, barriers
2. Avoiding competition and duplication and improving networking
3. Addressing gaps in provision
4. Better ways of communicating, sharing good practice and support

See Appendix 1 for a summary of the day's conversations. These conversations were central in shaping the recommendations of this report (page 10).

Youth consultation

In March 23, we held a cross-community consultation event for young people.

Online survey

In preparation, we carried out a short online survey of young people engaged with North Belfast youth projects. The aim was to check-in with the young people identify their main concerns and what they need from youth work. Altogether, 125 young people answered, with ages ranging from 12 to 18.

On issues that they and their peers face in the community, their main concerns were drugs and alcohol, sectarianism and anti-social behaviour. Asked what kind of support they feel is important from youth workers, their largest priority by far was mental health support, followed by role models and programmes. See Appendix 2 for details of the survey responses.

Consultation event

55 young people attended the event, from AYE's Emerge group, Ardoyne Youth Club, North Belfast Alternatives, CCRF's Let Youth Lead and Girdwood Shared Space projects, RCity and New Lodge Youth Centre.

The young people were aged 13 to 18, some only recently engaged in youth work (such as AYE's Emerge group, brought together through engagement with outreach detached youth workers), others having gone through substantial youth work progression routes (such as RCity youth), and representing Ardoyne, Woodvale, Shankill, Cliftonville, New Lodge, Ballysillan and neighbouring areas.

To 'give back' to the young people for their work in helping us with the consultation, we invited two information stalls which proved very popular: impact of smoking by Cancer Focus; sexual health by the Public Health Agency's HYPE team.

Below are the questions put to the young people:

1. First thoughts when you see youth workers on the streets?
2. Do you know young people who don't get involved in youth work? Do you know why?
3. Why do you see drugs and alcohol as big issues and what help do you feel is needed?
4. What's your understanding of mental health and how can we support it?
5. What do you mean by anti-social behaviour and how does it impact you and your friends?
6. What is your experience of sectarianism and how does it impact you and your friends?

The responses (set out in Appendix 3) provide valuable insights. Of particular interest to this report is how they view interface tensions, sectarianism, anti-social behaviour and other

risk-taking behaviour, how it affects them and their own vision on means to address the issues.

Sectarianism, bullying, ASB, risk-taking behaviour and addiction affect young people greatly, more often as victims than as perpetrators, and this is shown in their responses. Their responses also point to a strong awareness of the links with mental health and community issues passed on through generations.



They are not naïve about what can be achieved through youth work alone ('youth workers can't solve it by themselves – more awareness needed higher up) and some note the importance of dealing with issues at wider level (family, community) and the need to make more efforts towards integration.

They are aware that some young people may be disadvantaged in youth provision. They note social anxiety as a barrier to involvement. Also noted is that young LGBT people are particularly vulnerable to bullying. And although no young people from ethnic minorities were represented (an important gap in the consultation event), one group noted that a reason why some young people do not engage is that they are 'not local', another area worth exploring for youth centres.

Some of the solutions proposed may be hard to implement short term but are worth exploring when planning future strategies: a youth rehab centre, some settings where youth workers can engage with young people who are intoxicated, increasing access to and awareness of 'safe' youth services where young people can go to in areas where they may otherwise feel unsafe due to issues such as sectarianism.

Altogether, the responses clearly show that they young people place a high value on the role of youth centres as an important source of mental health support, and on youth workers as mentors, educators and listening ears.

In a climate of funding cuts to the youth sector, they say that dealing with ASB, sectarianism and risk-taking behaviour requires:

- more weekend youth services,
- more outreach,
- more diversionary activities,
- more cross community youth work.

Best practice study visits

An important complement to the work of this pilot project has been learning from best practice, both from each other and from further afield.

Ardoyne Youth Enterprise brought some representatives of the group on two study visits funded through North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme.

Visit to Nil by Mouth in Glasgow

This visit focused on alternative approaches to challenging sectarianism and violence reduction. It included a walk and talk on Glasgow's history of sectarianism and a discussion on youth work as a tool to challenge sectarianism and promote good relations, facilitated by Dave Scott from [Nil by Mouth](#).



This was followed by a presentation by Will Linden of Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit, on a public health approach to violence reduction.

The visit was also an opportunity to shape our future strategies. See Appendix 4 for a summary of the day's discussions.

Visit with Brighton Safe Streets Project

This focused on best practice in detached youth work.

It involved conversations with the Trust for Developing Communities about their [Brighton Safer Streets Project](#). The visit gave us an insight into the outreach and detached methods used across Brighton along with the challenges and some positive pieces of practice.

It was an inspiring two-way conversation, a great opportunity to share practice and learning that will benefit the young people of North Belfast.



We brought back some useful information, including Wallsall Youth Service Charter that helped inform our Detached Youth Work Handbook, a guide to best practice model for detached youth work in North Belfast.

Best practice model for detached youth work

Ardoyne Youth Enterprise has been developing a best practice model for detached youth work, in consultation with youth organisations across North Belfast. This work in progress, run over the last year, has greatly benefited from the collective knowledge of this group.

The model is currently being circulated among group members for comments, with the intention to publish as a Handbook for Detached Youth Work.

The aims of the handbook are:

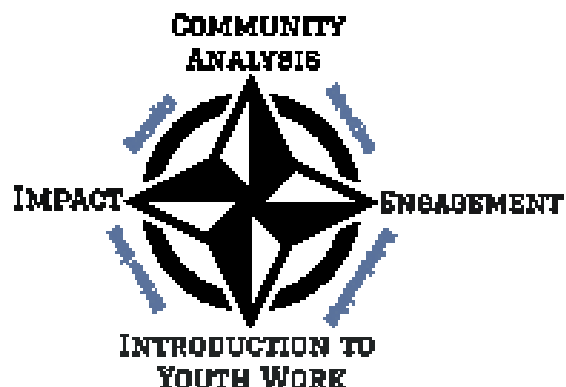
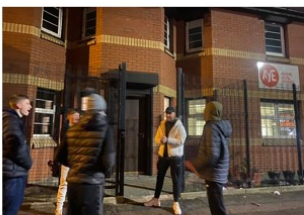
- a better prepared response to issues
- firmly placing detached youth work within a youth work model that benefits young people
- clear understanding of different models: outreach versus detached etc
- good relations element: working together on a joint model
- an adaptable model, beyond North Belfast: good relations, working with transient young people etc.

The model involves a cycle of interaction between community analysis of needs, engagement with young people on the streets, introducing disengaged young people to youth work and measuring the impact of detached youth work.



Developing a model for Detached Youth Work in North Belfast

A report by Ardoyne Youth Enterprise
on behalf of North Belfast Working Group on Detached Youth Work
Version 4 - March 2023



Issues encountered

The North Belfast Interface Pilot project has been very successful in strengthening ties between youth teams, and youth workers are keen to continue their coordinated approach as they have seen too many short term projects and temporary fixes. This is what they see as the strength of this initiative:

- different models represented (EA funded and DFC funded)
- all interface areas represented
- good relationships already developed over the years, strengthened by this group
- a strong will to keep developing a long-term coordinated approach to interface youth work, informed by best practice

The project encountered a number of issues, which the youth workers are acutely aware of:

- funding crisis: youth centres are facing cuts in provision, likely to lead to more young people disengaged and on the streets
- uncertainty of funding, almost month to month at the moment, makes it very difficult to plan a coordinated approach
- the need to examine the role of youth work in schools as a tool in reaching out to disengaged young people
- the importance of defining our own youth work priorities based on need and best practice, regardless of funding uncertainties : detached / centre-based / school work / wraparound
- succession planning in a climate of job insecurity for youth workers
- involvement with other partners: statutory, community – positives and negatives. Importance of achieving clear understanding between youth workers on issues before going back to statutory and community groups, to avoid misunderstandings. Bi-monthly meetings and ongoing communication are key to this.

In addition, we encountered limitations in managing the practicalities of making Girdwood a space where young people feel ownership.

Girdwood was not available for a large youth event before the end of the project, we had to locate the event in Spectrum Centre instead. More conversations are needed with Girdwood about making themselves more accessible to local groups. Local groups would need make a concerted effort to plan calendar of events in advance so they can utilise Girdwood better, However, the current funding climate - with youth centres currently funded until the end of June – makes this an elusive goal.

Also, due to lack of youth work time, our youth consultation was with young people already engaged in groups, most of whom are not involved in ASB. It may be useful to develop a survey for young people engaged through detached youth work.

Appendix 1 – youth workers' consultation

1. Defining outreach and detached youth work. What is good detached youth work? positives and negatives, dos and don'ts / barriers

Issues:

- Reactive – flashpoints, requests from residents
- Feet on streets is not a great term – it's youth work. Mobile responsive youth work goes against all that youth work specialists recommended
- Confusing for young people – they understand youth work in centres, but feel policed in detached work
- Easier to see successes of youth clubs and projects, harder to measure success of detached work
- Lack of long term planning
- Assumption that problems can be solved once and for all, when it has to be started again with each new generation of young people
- Lack of respect / understanding for detached work in the youth work sector – need to talk positively about detached work – just as good as centre work, just in a different setting, although different skills and training needed
- Funder driven youth work: looking for numbers of young people rather than meaningful engagements with young people not involved with centres
- Also, funding for detached youth work is often about treating young people as a problem
- Funding needs = divide and conquer, makes it harder to develop long-term meaningful relationships
- Often feel isolated: no applicable model from academic, statutory or grassroots sources locally
- Groups only come together when issues happen
- Too easy for youth workers to fall into policing mode when responding to calls from residents – stop treating young people on the streets as a negative
- Covid has made this worse, as well as dramatic media coverage of last years: youth workers too often called on to shift young people away
- We need to not be reactive by EA or PCSP funding requirements – stop taking funding just because it's there. Is your work centre-based or detached? Seek funding accordingly.
- More coordination between groups needed
- Another problem is that too many detached projects are pilots
- If you bring disengaged young people into youth centres, where will you fit them? Especially as opening times and numbers are being cut

Good detached youth work:

- Consistency/guidelines

- Meeting young people where they're at
- Make them aware that it's their community / develop respect
- Introduce young people to youth work – not necessarily towards our programmes
- Progression / mentoring
- Not about box ticking. Detached youth work = meaningful conversations, stay and speak
- CCRF street survey: when youth workers are around, young people feel safe. When police arrive, they feel unsafe and confrontational
- Young people on the street, directed towards a centre or programme is success but there are other measures. Youth work should always be about what's best for the young person: meet their needs, not necessarily bring them into your centre. Can be about signposting to other centres, activities, sports, counselling etc
- Develop programmes for street work, not just push young people into centres
- Tailor our progression approach to what is appropriate for each individual or group

2. Avoiding competition and duplication and a role for networking

- Consistency for young people and organisations
- Increase networking
- Share our rotas weekly - maps and timetables
- Map out: how many detached teams in one area? Who does what? When? Where?
- Coordinate geographically
- Our actions as organisations can shape funding – united approach needed
- New EA specs could have led to groups undercutting each other but centres (NLYC, AYC, JP2) got together to share out the load. Good practice that could be repeated elsewhere
- An issue: no funds for Shankill community youth workers to do detached work. Covered by EA teams but they are very stretched. We need to approach EA with a united North Belfast approach that includes Shankill (Streetbeat etc)

3. Addressing gaps in provision

- Some of the gaps: geographical / weekends / skills / uncertainty of funding / focus on some hot spots, not others...
- More regular staff training. Many of our staff are part-time but it's our responsibility to train them well. Develop simple, clear guidelines
- Don't expect youth workers to have all the skills: detached skills different from centre skills
- Ask for reps from this group to attend PCSP meetings etc, to help shape their approach
- Encourage funders and sector to keep same 'buy-in' even when there are no issues, not wait until problems build up
- Feet on Streets model needs to be challenged

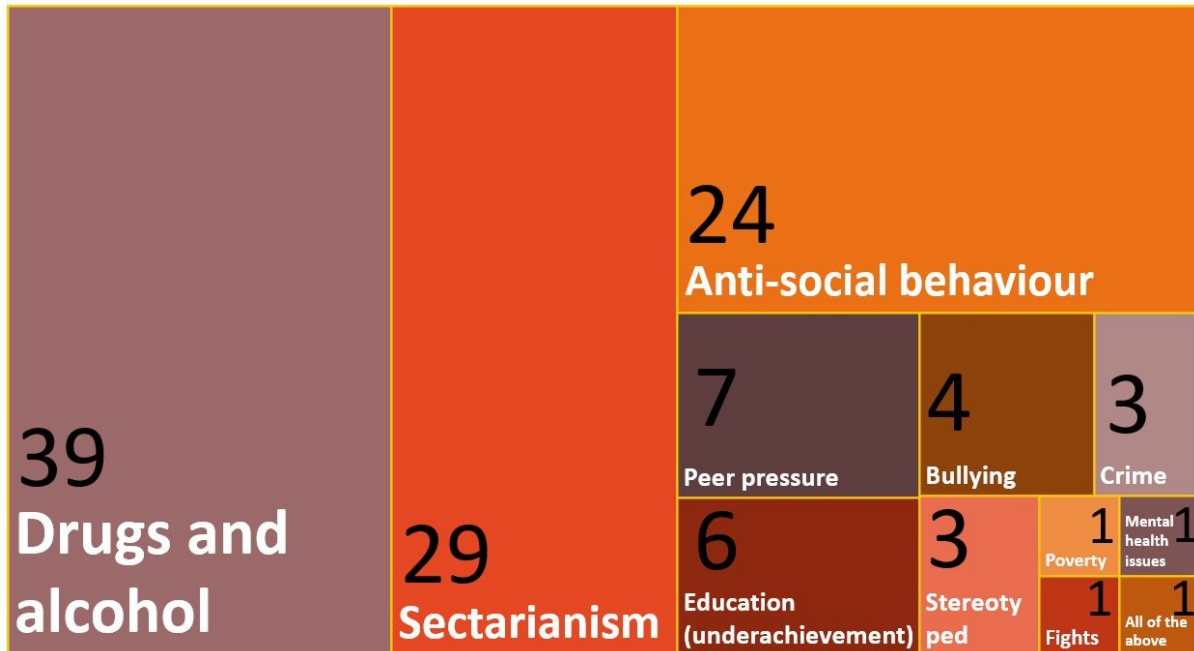
4. Better ways of communicating, sharing practice and support

- Evaluation: tracking impact on young people / recording what doesn't work as well as what works
- Three-year cycles would work better. Yearly evaluations before funding make it difficult to learn from mistakes
- Increase understanding of how others deliver detached in practice – coordinated meetings help
- Measure impact according to young people's needs and progression, rather than funder-led
- Recording progression: our partnerships allow us to track young people's journeys
- Record impact of detached work since the group started: how many young people engaged? How many mentored in centres? How many in training?
- Needs coordinated admin: collate and centralise data?
- Record the small wins: not highlighted enough
- Feedback from PCSP rep: funders want to hear your successes, not all about numbers, story-telling about meaningful engagement too. Don't undersell yourselves
- Bi-monthly meetings could have a section looking at other issues – a space for building partnerships
For example, good work on drugs and addiction in Shankill at the moment – share out
- 'Selling' detached youth work - Better communication with residents: social media etc. Need to be seen to do consistent preventative work. Also better 'marketing' of detached youth work to potential recruits
- Long term coordination, beyond the lifetime of this pilot
- If possible, plan long in advance: best time to plan for summer is probably in September, evaluate the work and achievements, plan for the following year. But uncertainty of funding makes this difficult.

Appendix 2 – online youth survey

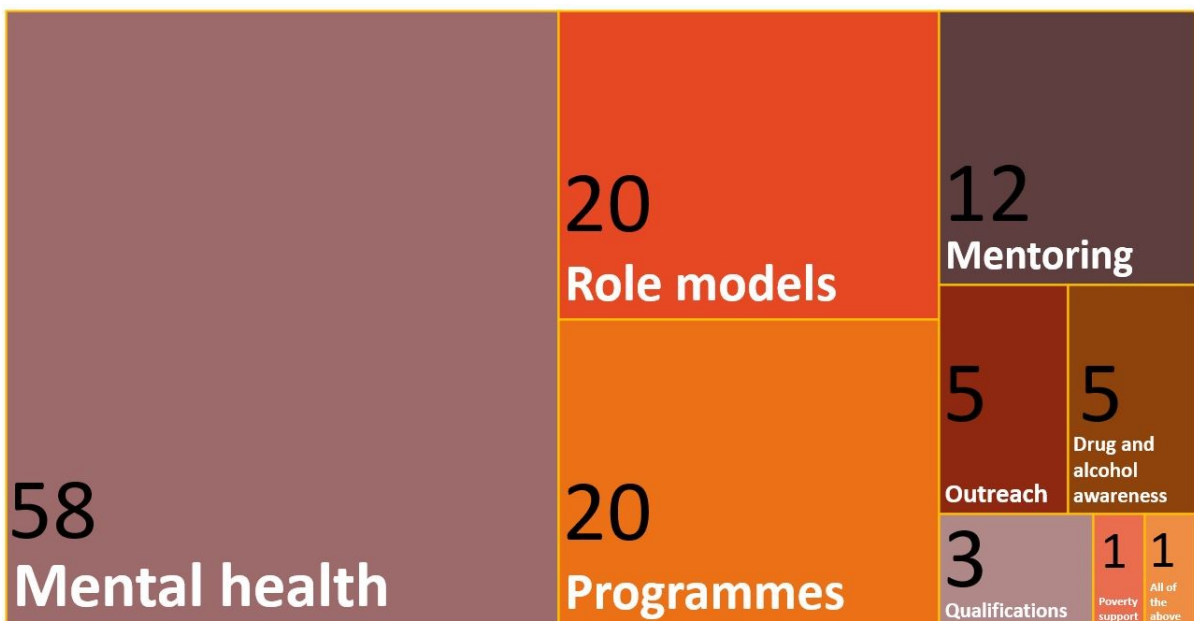
Question 1 – What issues do you and your peers face in the community?

122 answers



Question 2 – What kind of support do you feel is important from youth workers?

125 answers



Appendix 3 – youth consultation event

1. First thoughts when you see youth workers on the streets?

- Out nosying
- Keeping us safe, providing guidance and advice
- Acting on behalf of young people
- Responding to trouble
- Peacemaking
- Recognise them from centre
- Make us feel safe, cared for
- Annoying – on your back always
- Embarrassing / uncomfortable / guilty
- Walk away, feel a bit scundered
- Assume there is trouble about
- Have a wee conversation and walk on
- Interested in what they are going to say
- Buzzing, familiar, know they're doing good work, opportunity for support
- intrigued

How you want them to approach you

- We want them to approach us with respect and not to tell us to move away from the area
- Approach informally, 'what's happening?', show ID
- Informal approach feels more comfortable, friendly, less intimidating
- Encourage conversation, not just with those they know

2. Do you know young people who don't get involved in youth work? Do you know why?

- Uncomfortable coming into new environment
- Can feel left out as regular users have already developed relationships
- Some see youth clubs as a place for kids
- Not promoted enough
- Focus on formal education
- Lack of social skills
- Not confident
- Social anxiety
- Not enough time, other hobbies, school, exams, jobs
- Want to make own living as cost of living and don't want to put pressure on parents
- They have no one to go with, embarrassed making new friends
- Family/financial problems
- Newcomers / not local to the area
- Some youth workers are rude

- Don't know much about youth work
- Prefer to socialise outside of a youth club (drinks, drugs, partying)
- Youth services close by aren't as good, or there are none beside where they live
- Some have found there's favouritism in youth clubs
- Prejudice around being involved and being judged as may be seen as embarrassing
- Scared to take a step out of comfort zone
- May not like groups
- They did not grow up with them
- Prefer to sit in the house
- Prejudice: 'I'm not going there, they're all...'
- Not able to take drink and drugs in centre or group

3. Why do you see drugs and alcohol as big issues and what help do you feel is needed?

Reasons:

- Easy to access
- Trend
- Trying to fit in, be popular
- Watching family and community and think it's acceptable
- Parent may accept due to fear of a worse drug (for example grass so they don't take coke or something worse)
- Rebel
- Coping mechanisms
- Influenced by friends or family – peer pressure
- False sense of confidence
- Younger kids taking them
- Entertaining – drink is enjoyable
- People with family turning into addicts

Impact:

- Drive young people away from positive opportunities
- Negative impact on friends and family
- Ruins mental health
- Waste of money
- Becomes an addiction
- Some people can't handle it
- Dangerous – get left by friends, disassociate
- Worried for friends' health – go too far
- Only source of happiness – weekend to weekend
- Needles lying around the streets
- Can affect our health and because of this we stop attending dance classes, football, youth club... places where we can get support
- Addiction at a young age

- Worried about getting caught

What's needed:

- Self help groups for young people
- Support from youth clubs
- Look at reasons why
- More mental health organisations
- Programmes that deliver results and continue support
- Rehab centre needed / Safe place to go if you can't go home while intoxicated
- Youth workers able to work with young people who are intoxicated

4. What's your understanding of mental health and how can we support it?

- Everyone has it but everyone is different, good or bad
- Mental health is to do with your mind, cognitive thinking
- Influenced by your life and your experiences
- How you feel inside
- Everyone has problems with mental health at some point
- Not all mental health is bad (stigma)
- Family issue
- Caused by trauma
- Could be more common in men
- People fear speaking

Impact:

- Friendships, mood changes
- Direct anger at wrong people
- Can lead to drugs and alcohol use
- Suicide
- Self-harm
- People will say you're attention seeking. Feels even worse when it comes from your mates
- Worried that you'll show vulnerability
- Isolate yourself can affect physical health
- Mask
- Lose out on education, unhealthy coping mechanisms
- Losing friends to suicide
- Feel a burden
- Feel you have no voice
- Overthink friendships
- Doubting trust and reactions
- Fear of no understanding
- Family and fear around family facing it

- Not being taken seriously

What's needed from youth work:

- Mentoring support
- Develop relationships with young people so you're able to notice when young people need support
- Moral support mental health workshops and groups
- Support us to open up and make us feel we always have someone to talk to
- Mental health sessions that are practical (TAMHI)
- Listen and provide a safe space
- Check-in at every session and one to one if needed
- Suicide is a problem that needs properly addressed
- Physical activities like sports with friends
- Remove the stigma (not just for girls, can affect boys too, not just adults- does not discriminate)
- More one to one, more mentoring
- Distraction
- More understanding
- Encourage motivation and healthy habits
- Community togetherness

5. What do you mean by anti-social behaviour and how does it impact you and your friends?

- Anything from riots to vandalising, graffiti, drinking and smoking on streets, parks, public spaces
- Destroying your own community
- Disrespect
- Shouting in streets, purposely upsetting people in their homes Risky behaviour
- Often blamed on young men
- Can be because no youth clubs on Saturdays to keep young people away from ASB
- Boys are 3 times more likely to be affected by ASB
- Sometimes seen as the norm
- Adults setting a bad example
- People taking part in ASB aren't properly thinking

Impact

- Not only young people are anti-social, but always blamed on young people
- Getting involved in dangerous activities that are harmful to you or others
- Can get you a bad reputation in your community, can get fined and a criminal record
- Affects young people's health
- Avoid places where it usually happens
- Afraid for friends and family, especially LGBT friends who are always a target
- Intimidated

- Can give your community a bad reputation
- Unsafe community / runs it down (parks filled with bottles etc)
- Influencing another generation
- Gets young people labelled – reported more than positive work

What's needed from youth work:

- Diversionary activities when ASB is more likely to happen like summer, cultural events, weekends
- Keep youth centres doors open
- Show the damage it can do
- More outreach/detached – engage young people on the streets who are involved in ASB
- More involved in brightening the community (graff projects etc)
- More resources for youth clubs
- Give young people something better to do
- Go into more schools so young people know what is available for them
- More weekend youth services
- Educate young people on the risks and consequences
- Youth workers can't solve it by themselves – more awareness at government level

6. What is your experience of sectarianism and how does it impact you and your friends?

- Riots at interfaces
- Sectarian comments on social media
- People shouting things when walking through different areas
- Being scared of what you're wearing in certain areas
- Being treated differently because of your religion or what you believe in
- Parents encourage us to stay away from some areas
- Physically hit / attacked – hit in the park – hit with bricks – yelled at on St Patrick's day for wearing green / beat in the face with a glass bottle
- Bullying
- Prejudice
- Can escalate into violence at different times of year
- Came from past generation

Impact

- Can't make friends, fear of being judged
- Affects social life
- Encourages young people to move abroad
- Feeling uncomfortable in other areas
- Fear walking through different areas
- Not able to walk through areas not of your particular religion
- Afraid to go to youth groups in certain areas

- Lack of integrated schools
- Afraid to join youth groups
- Not wanting to go outside
- Getting a bad name through rioting in interfaces
- In trouble with police and paramilitaries
- Rioting is dangerous – you can get chased and hurt

What needs to be done

- More cross-community groups (like Ardoyne and Ballysillan group) and events (like Lark in the Park)
- Longer TBUC programmes
- More networking, youth club visits, events etc
- Outreach/detached on streets
- Speak to youth workers from other communities
- Youth workers honesty about own experiences
- Learning from other communities and cultures
- Challenge sectarianism and celebrate all religions
- Set a good example
- Too much focus on sectarianism, causes more problems in our areas
- Outreach in both communities
- Integrating both areas
- Any fixes would only be temporary
- Open youth centres in different communities where you know you can go to if you feel unsafe

Appendix 4 – Glasgow planning session

Discussion points

- Good relations work in certain parts of Belfast is either non-existent or about 25 years behind.
- Ardoyne – approx 90% of young people are from single identity houses and schools. They may take part in Good Relations youth events or trips but then they return back to their single identity areas. No consistent interventions.
- Integrated Services – the hope is that new partnerships will bring young people together, continued communication and ability to challenge one another will ensure the initiatives are stronger. Best practice will inform future plans. Need for progressive youth works – not tokenistic.
- Review: The 'Together: Building a United Community' (T:BUC) Strategy, which was created to reflect the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

Next steps: future planning

- Group would like to have preventative measures in place rather than being reactive to particular incidents. Prepared rather than responsive.
- Interface areas – safe shared spaces required which will allow young people to move in and out of each other's communities.
- Community Restorative Justice (CRJ) – share the VDU model.
- Find and task someone with the reporting process. Start to get everything doing down on paper to enable a report to be produced. Think of best methods to record progress.
- Finding/designing an Outreach Model that the whole group can agree on.
- Currently responding to incidents separately – plan how group can bridge the gap and be more connected.
- Policy / practice – decide the focus.
- Discuss wrap-around work: Outreach/Centres/Schools – which of these are important for this particular group.
- Further consultation with young people. Explore getting Universities Involved with this to give substance to the work being done and to evidence results.
- Accountability was discussed. Take ownership of decisions the group are making.
- Inviting others onto the group – agreed to wait until group more established before broadening group to include statutory and other partners where needed.
- A brand/logo/social media presence for the group. Agreed that the focus should be on building a positive ethos and to keep what goes on the social media – upbeat! Bring hope to the young people involved.



A report to DPCSP by Ardoyne Youth Enterprise

On behalf of North Belfast Interface Working Group

April 2023

Contact us

Address: Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, 11a Flax Street, Belfast BT14 7EJ

Phone: 028 9074 1479

Web: www.ardoyne.org

