

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN LARNE HAVE THEIR SAY ON LOCAL SERVICES



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1.0 Executive Summary

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) is the steering group for the strategic direction of services for children in need, vulnerable children and their families.

Larne Children's and Young People Locality Partnership primary purpose is to raise the educational, health and social development of local children. A key aim of the CYPSP is for all children and young people to be involved in the design, delivery and development of all services that are available to them.

The Larne Locality Partnership identified the issue of young people aged 14 plus disengaging in services and the limited amount of services available to them. To target this issue a Diversionary Activities subgroup was set up to address the issue.

An engagement workshop was held on Tuesday 20th September 2011 in Larne Leisure Centre. Approximately sixty young people aged 14 to 18 years who live the Larne area participated in the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to obtain the young people's views and opinions. The workshop had an interactive theme where the young people were asked six questions and were freely given the opportunity to express their views.

Feedback from young people concluded that:

- Young people feel more services should be available for young people aged 14 plus to 18 years.
- Young people want somewhere where they can go (during the week and at weekends) and be with their friends.
- Transport for young people is very limited and not accessible in all areas. In the evenings when young people need transport most it is not available.
- Young people living in rural areas are particularly isolated with limited access to services and transport.
- Young people expressed a desire to have a particular kind of staff to be working with them. They wanted someone who was friendly, someone they could talk to, someone who does not get easily offended and someone that doesn't judge you.
- The majority of the young people commented that they did not see themselves living in Larne in the future and that they would like to see more social activities and other services being available in the Larne area. Young people reported that there were far more

opportunities outside of Larne such as better shops, jobs, better food outlets etc.

- The main things that worried young people in the Larne area included: Drugs; Alcohol, Violence, PSNI, No jobs, Bullies, and their future.
- All young people felt that young people should be included and involved in decisions affect them. Young people commented that they should be represented at a community level and that a youth forum would be good to enable young people to discuss local issues that affect them.

Next Steps

Short term goals

- To research within the local areas in Larne if there would be any potential for young people to be able to avail of the community centres already available.
- To provide all young people involved in the engagement an information leaflet on what is happening with their feedback and how they will be involved in future planning of services.
- To start communications with other services providers such as Translink.

Long term goals

- To provide young people aged 14 years plus with a safe place where they can go and mix with their peers.
- To provide a method where young people can provide a voice and influence service planning.
- To identify methods to improve transport facilities to enable young people to be better able to access services. Improved transport facilities in particular to young people living in rural areas to reduce rural isolation.

2.0 Background

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is the steering group responsible for the strategic direction of services for children in need, vulnerable children and their families.

Locality Partnerships have been set up with the aim of seeking to improve the life chances of children who are vulnerable to social exclusion by working together to plan services to meet their needs. There are currently eight locality groups in the Northern Trust area and three are under development.

Larne Children and Young People Locality Partnership group began in 2000. The primary purpose of the Locality Partnership is to raise the educational, health and social development of local children by:

- Listening to them to find their views and needs
- Building on existing social partnerships
- Develop stronger community ownership and
- Responding by providing a needs led range of leisure, social, health, educational and housing services in locally agreed and accessible locations.

3.0 Introduction

A key aim of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is for all children and young people to be involved in the design, delivery and development of all services that are available to them.

Within the Larne Locality Partnership group it was identified that some young people were disengaging from main stream youth provision and that there were limited services available / accessible for young people aged 14 years and above.

3.0 Methodology

To enable the Larne Locality Partnership to address the issue of young people disengaging in services and the limited amount of services available to them, it was identified by the Locality group that a subgroup would need to be set up to target this identified need.

Members of the Larne Locality group were informed about the subgroup and any member/organisation that felt they would like to be involved and contribute to addressing the identified need were included. Membership of the subgroup included: PSNI, NEELB, Larne Council and Health and Inequalities Project.

The subgroup quickly identified that if they were to address the issue full involvement with young people aged 14 plus would need to be in place to ensure effective participation and engagement and that young people would be fully involved in the design and delivery of service planning.

To obtain feedback from young people it was decided to hold an engagement workshop on Tuesday 20th September 2011 at 6.30pm in the McNeill Theatre, Larne Leisure Centre, where approximately 60 young people from the Larne locality attended. The age ranges of those in attendance were as follows:

Age Group	12 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years
Number young people Attending	1	8	15	16	11	2

Number of young people attending with no ages provided	7
Number of young people engaged with <u>who were</u> unable to attend	5

The areas where those in attendance live were as follows:

- The Glynn
- Carnlough
- Glenarm
- Millbrook
- Tullygarely
- Craighill

Young People attending were from both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds.

The purpose of this event was to obtain the young people's views and opinions in regard to the services available. The event had an interactive theme where the young people were asked six questions and were freely given the opportunity to express their views/opinions on each of the questions. The outcome of this can be found within the feedback section.

Questions included:

1. *What services for young people in Larne are you aware of?*
2. *Do you think the current services for young people in Larne are well used?*
3. *What would the perfect service / facility / project look like and where in Larne would it be?*
4. *What are your hopes & ambitions for the future while living in Larne?*
5. *What do you think young people in Larne are worried about?*
- 6a. *Do you think young people in Larne should be involved in decisions that affect their services?*
- 6b. *How can young people in Larne be involved in decisions that affect their services?*

5.0 Feedback from Young People:

Question 1: What services for young people in Larne are you aware of?

The services that young people were aware of in the Larne area included:

- Leisure centre
- Health centres
- Emergency services
- Youth service
- PSNI diversionary
- Volunteer clubs
- Transport services
- Private sector commercials e.g. shops

Young people were aware of the above services. Overall they felt that they were satisfactory services but that their knowledge of them was limited. They felt that more information should be available to them. The young people discussed this and concluded that having the information available within the schools would mean that it would be accessible to everyone.

A common comment in regard to these services included that services are mostly centred in the town and are not easily accessible to those from the rural areas. **“Not everyone can access them.”** The young people highlighted transport as being a service that they felt strongly about. **“Buses stop at around 6pm”** Those in rural areas are unable to avail of these services after 6.00 pm.



“not everyone can access the services – it depends where you live”

Question 2: Do you think the current services for young people in Larne are well used?

Young people commented that their opinion is that there are no or very limited services for their age group in Larne. The main topics which arose from this discussion were as follows:

- That there is nothing for young people aged 14 years and over
- The youth clubs are not suitable as they target under 13 years
- Sectarianism is an issue
- Lack of suitable and affordable transport
- Community centre's not being inclusive for young people

Nothing for young people aged 14 years and over

The young people felt that there is a significant gap in services for young people aged 13 to 18 years **“need something for ones who are 13 and older”**, Therefore they feel that drinking and socialising in bars is there only option. **“nothing to do so just drink with friends”**.

The young people expressed an interest in taking part in private courses/fitness classes but felt that they were alienated from this as their opinion is that these are for over 18's **“Private courses / classes (eg fitness) unavailable for under 18's”**.

The young people feel that community centre/youth clubs are more tailored to under 14's, **“if you are 14 or older community centres don't offer programmes”** the young people felt that youth facilities in other towns were more adequate than those on offer in Larne. **“People will go to Ballymena other than Larne”** for youth facilities (i.e.; local community centre). The young people felt that somewhere for them to go where they could socialise would be beneficial to them **“a drop in”**.

The young people confirmed that they usually socialise in the pubs/bars **“Going to bars at weekend”** as their only other option is to hang around the streets. This also causes them problems. Young people believe that this is social but feel that they are stereotyped by Adults as being a gang or a nuisance. **“Young people in groups seen as a problem, why”** Perception of young people in a crowd equals a gang and therefore a threat. **“They stereotype us.”**

The young people believe that the local community perceive that as being in a gang and therefore trouble. This leads to perceptions:

- 1) The community groups will not go out of their way to work with young people
- 2) Older people have a negative perception of younger people and that hinders their (older people) involvement with young people.
- 3) Young people don't feel valued by community representatives and therefore don't receive services or resources.

Young people felt that they aren't given the same consideration as the older people in the area ***"It feels that older people (pensioners) are better catered for"***.

Youth Clubs

Young people commented on youth clubs. Feedback included that they felt that ***"resources and equipment need to be up to date and relevant"*** and that community centres need to be age appropriate and cater for young people aged 13 to 18 years ***"need something just for us older ones"***.

Accessibility to youth clubs was also identified as an issue amongst young people with young people commenting that services are out of reach ***"have to travel to get to everything"*** and that they have ***"no chill out spaces"***.

Sectarianism

Young people commented on the perceived threat or the feelings of not being welcomed in certain areas therefore preventing access to services. ***"Can't go to certain places"***

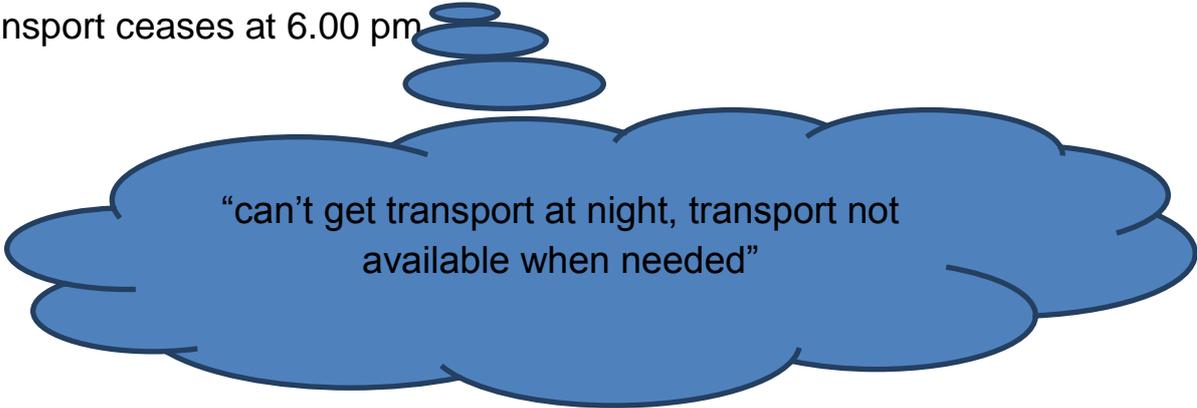
Transport and Accessibility

Availability and cost hinders young people's to access certain services. Good transport would assist community relations work. ***"it would help us to visit different areas and facilities"***.

Young people commented that access to community centres is denied, limited or out of reach due to cost, or a restriction on access to the facilities unless you are a member of a group, organisation or club.

Young people commented that for young people transport is an issue to use community centres, as these are all central to town or village, **“should be on our doorstep”**.

It was noted that isolation for young people greatly increased with distance from Larne. This again raises the transport and accessibility issue. Due to the cost incurred **“transport is so costly”** and that public transport ceases at 6.00 pm



“can't get transport at night, transport not available when needed”

Better transport enables greater contact which is a positive move for young people and groups to mix. Later bus service would increase mobility of young people and reduce underage drinking by providing alternatives.

If transport met local needs (i.e. accessible , affordable , convenient) this would reduce boredom, lessen drinking and reduce anti-social activities as there are other things to do and other places to go.

Community groups / Committees

Young people felt that they were not welcome or not able to be represented at community meetings **“young people not trusted”**. Young people commented that they felt community groups should have young people representation sitting on them; and that groups need to change or amend their structures to be more young people friendly.

Young people commented that they should be represented on every committee in every community. This is something that needs to be addressed. Young people felt that public meetings are advertised but there is no encouragement for young people to attend meetings. Young people felt that youth forum or committees for young people needs to be set up in each area to enable them to feed into local community groups.

Furthermore they felt that when no young people are in attendance young people's views and attitudes can be twisted (to detriment). ***“we know they are discussing us in there”***.

Young people commented that they felt that community centres are not open unless for organisations groups. Private business and block booking in community centres reduces accessibility for the local people, not just young people. ***“Community groups and centres have nothing for young people”***. The Structures and conditions of use within community centres needs to be examined as their nature limits the use of the facilities and keeps young people out.

Shops

Young people commented that they felt the shops in Larne are **poor** ***“shops in Ballymena are better.”***



“Community centres have nothing for young people”

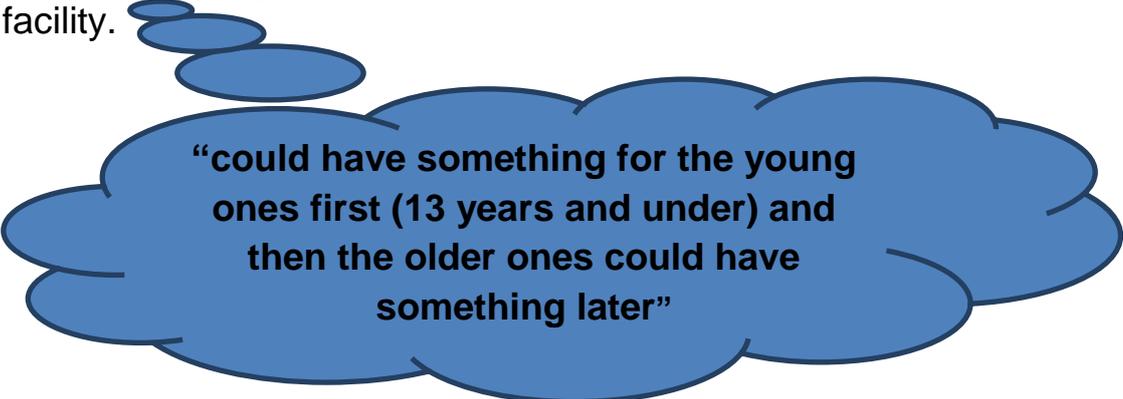
Question 3: What would the perfect service/ facility /project look like and where it Larne would it be?

The young people felt that the following discussion topics were key to their perfect service/facility/project:

- Targeted age range
- Targeted at both male and female
- Location
- Start/finishing time
- Supervisory staff

Age:

Young people stated that as they feel there is a gap in services etc. for over 14 plus ***“there is enough for under 13’s and older people, this is why young people end up in bars under age cos nothing for them”***. The perfect service/facility/project designed to meet the needs of 14 years and above would be beneficial ***“Something for young people aged 14 plus to 18 years”***. The young people seemed open to a shared facility.



“could have something for the young ones first (13 years and under) and then the older ones could have something later”

Sex:

Young people highlighted that they would want a mixed sex group, so that both males and females could socialise together. ***“would want it to be mixed with both”***.

Where:

Young people all wanted something to be available to them in their local area. ***“somewhere where we can be together and chat with friends”***. The young people seemed to have an idealist image of a building which would be a safe house to them, where they wouldn't get into trouble for loitering etc.” ***“we just hang about the bus stop now, and we are always being told to move on or go home. Be good to have somewhere of our own to go”***.

It would seem that the young people are either socialising in the local bar/pubs or around the streets of Larne. **“need to have somewhere to go, have to go to the bus shelters to stay out of the rain”**.

This then causes animosity with the local community **“we are always told off when we are doing nothing wrong. If we had a place of our own to go to we could just chill with our friends”** and again they are deemed as being a gang. **“we are treated like we are not wanted. Constantly being told to move on - to sit at home”**.

The young people believe that there are ample opportunities for this in the Larne area as a number of buildings are lying derelict. The young people feel that these are place which could be utilised into services for them **“there are loads of buildings not being used (like the nursing home)”**. They also felt that services already in use could be incorporated to include the young people **“town hall should be have a youth wing and be available for young people and youth projects”** and **“the leisure centre”**.

In regard to facilities available there were many ideas including: **“if there were football pitches and an ice skating rink, along with tennis and basketball courts”**. Among the discussion as to where the perfect location for any such facilities, food, heat, and keeping dry were high on the comments received. **“anywhere, just out of the rain”, “near to a McDonalds”**.

The general consensus with young people is that they wanted something to be central to all and easily accessible.

“a community centre in every area would be good and it could be used by everybody”

When:

The duration of activities and for how long they should be on, provided a mixed response ***“maybe have it on two nights during the week and on a Friday and Sunday”, “two nights during the week and on a Saturday night”***.

The majority of young people commented that they would like something to be on two/three times during the week and at the weekend. ***“would like it to be open every day, then have somewhere to go every day if bored or want to meet up with friends”***.

Again a mixed response regarding what time the youth facility should be open. Comments included:

“during the week on 5pm to 8 pm”

“7 to 11pm during the week”

“At weekend 9pm to 12 midnight”

Staff

Young people expressed a very definitive type of person they would wish to have working within their perfect facility. Comments received were:

“friendly”

“someone you can talk to”

“someone who is good crack and does stuff with us”

“good looking”

“young person, someone who is less than forty years old”

“Funny”

“does not get too easily offended if you are just mucking about”

“good listener”

“adults that don't look down on you”

“ones that don't judge you just because you smoke and drink”

“adults can be there to supervise but we want to have our own space”

A young person commented on his experience ***“would go to Baptist church if youth leaders where different. Young people and over 18 plus don't get on”***

Young people commented on what they though the venue should be like

“sofa, tv, sky tv, pool table, Wii, Facebook”

“want somewhere safe, warm, comfortable,

“have things to do to keep you out of bother”

“like to have football to go to”

“have comfortable seats, pool table, tv, computers, music”

“be able to get food (to buy from tuck shop or vending machines)”

The majority of young people commented that the main thing that they wanted was somewhere to go. However some young people commented that they would like to be involved in some activities. Activities include:

“like to go on a few trips, like go karting, paint balling, ice rink”

“not bothered about activities, just somewhere to go”

“like stuff to keep us busy, football and stuff”

“like to do courses, something like nail art”

Young people commented that they would be prepared to pay a small amount each week if it meant they had somewhere good to go. ***“would pay a small amount, but only a little cos don't work”***.

Question 4: What are your hopes and ambitions for the future living in Larne?

Young people were asked if they would like to still be living in Larne in the future? Comments included:

“No”

“we don't like Larne because of the roads and coast”

“young people get the blame for damages”

“the aim of attending university is the only thing that will keep us here”

“no local jobs, future is bleak and ambition is stunned”

Young people commented on things that they would like to see in the future in Larne?

“more social activities such as pubs and nightclubs”

“restaurants”

“McDonald's – create more jobs”

“we enjoy the cinema”

“more activities, such as youth clubs” (especially in rural areas)

“better education”

“variety of sporting activities, such as dance classes, drama”

“jobs”

“friendly environment”

“places to go”

“cheaper facilities to use”

“ice-skating facilities”

“a variety of clothes shops, such as Primark – thus creating more jobs”

“24hour garage”

“Places for young people to go”

“places when you get older and potentially your children to go”

“support for children”

“have opportunities to be successful”

Young people commented that they would like services to stay open longer at night. Comments include:

“shops such as spar close at 9 or 10pm”

“24 hour garage”

Young people would like better transport so that they are able to get to places. Comments included:

“need to get to places by buses, taxis”

“transport is difficult” in rural areas because the bus stops at 6.00pm, thus difficult to access services”

“transport is expensive



Young people are the future. What would you like to see in Larne when you're in your mid 20's

“Running Club”

“Skate boarding parks”

“An association were both the parents and young people can attend.”

A few young people (approximately 4 young people) spoke of the future for them in their mid 20's would see them ***“on the dole”***

In terms of 15 years down the line, young people commented that they would like to see the following for their children.

“after school club”

“sporting activities”

“playground”

“they need a good future, things for them to do”

“education”

“childminders”

“safe community”

Young people describes Larne as?

“cold”

“we have a cinema and a leisure centre, but it's too expensive to use the facilities.”

“there is lack of activities”

“people in Larne focus on the past”

Some young people commented that ***“they do not believe that they will be living in Larne in the future”***. The young people continued to insist that that they wanted to leave Larne or ***“wouldn't be here”***

Young people commented that they feel that there are more opportunities outside of Larne such as; more sport, better education, better range of food, more variety of activities, shops, university, build social skills etc. Jobs and shops where the main reasons for young people wanting to move somewhere else.



Question 5: What worries you about living in Larne?



The things that worried young people in Larne include:

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Drugs | PSNI | Violence |
| Bully's | No jobs | Having to go out of Larne to study |
| Sterotypes | Sectarianism | Money issues |
| The future | | |

Drugs

Comments that worried young people about drugs included:

"drugs are easy to get"

"can be slipped into a drink"

"influenced by older people to take drugs (E's/Yellows/Blues diazepam)"

"ones using prescription drugs, Cannabis, Heroin, NRG"

"people high on drugs start rows"

"forced to take them, peer pressure, afraid of getting addicted, worried about depression and cannabis."

“glue sniffing and driving”

“drugs available in school”

“people take drugs cause there's nothing else to do”

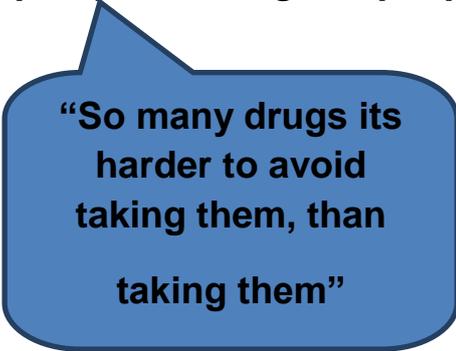
“parents think you are on drugs if you aren't”

“all drugs available, E's, blue, weeds, speed. Mixing of drugs”

“all ages of people taking drugs”

“people forcing young people to take drugs, threatening / violence”

“drug paraphernalia gives people something to do”



“So many drugs its harder to avoid taking them, than taking them”



“Drugs are everywhere”

Violence

Comments on what worries young people about violence includes:

“sectarian issues – depends who you are and what area you can go into”

“vandalism / antisocial, makes people paranoid”

“getting blamed on doing things just cos hanging about in groups”

Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)

What worries young people about the PSNI. Comments included mixed responses with some young people having a poor relationship with the police and others feeling that they are there to help them. Comments include:

“they lift you for stuff that you don't even do”

“police are stuck up, they think they know everything”

“council tell young people one thing and PSNI say something different”

“PSNI don't listen to young people when they report anything”

"police are looking after us"

"the community police are dead on, they just talk to us about normal stuff"

No Jobs

Young people commented that they were worried about not being able to get a job and having nothing to do. Comments included:

"have nothing to do"

"people doing the double"

"scared won't get a job"

"want to do well in school to better the chance of getting a job"



Bullies

Bullies worried young people. Comments included:

"ones shout abuse at you for no reason"

"teachers make bullying worse"

"being stereotyped, how you look, what you wear eg Antrim hoodie equals sectarian / religious."

"stereotyped by older people"

Future

Young people spoke about the future and their concerns for what it might mean for them:

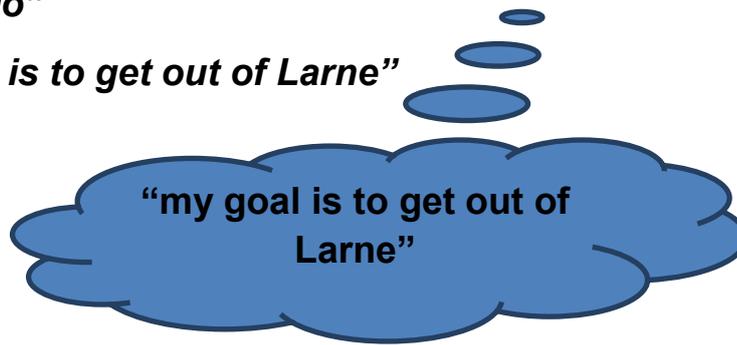
"nothing to keep you in Larne"

"stuck in Glenarm"

"youth club in Glenarm is crap"

“lack of jobs, too much pressure to get qualifications don't know what to do”

“my goal is to get out of Larne”



Alcohol

Young people commented on how easily it was for them to be able to get alcohol and get into bars. Comments included:

“easy to get into bars”

“worried get caught by parents”

“Friday / Saturday nights – drinking on streets”

“getting caught with alcohol, nothing else to do, live in depressing village”

“alcohol gives you something to do, don't worry about health consequences”

“drinking is normal, nothing else to do, easy to get into bars”

Question 6A: Do you think young people in Larne should be involved in decisions that affect them?

All young people commented that they thought young people should be involved in decisions that affect them. Comments included:

“yes because it is people like us who get into mischief and need support on some services”

“yes because we live in the area and our opinion counts”

“our opinion counts”

“teenagers know what they want”

“yes we will be the ones who use the services”

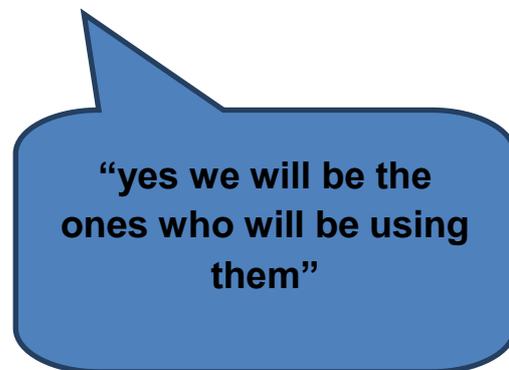
“yes because it affects us”

“we will be the ones that will be using them so yes”

“yes because our opinions count”

“yes because we live in the area and we want our opinions heard and taken seriously”

“yes because we have a unique perspective on the community”



Question 6B: How do you think young people can get involved and influence decisions that affect them?

Young people commented that would like to be involved and influence decisions that affect them. Comments included:

“get young people to meet on a regular basis and discuss problems or issues on services”

“write letters to service providers and organisations involved”

“a group voice is stronger than one voice”

“protest”

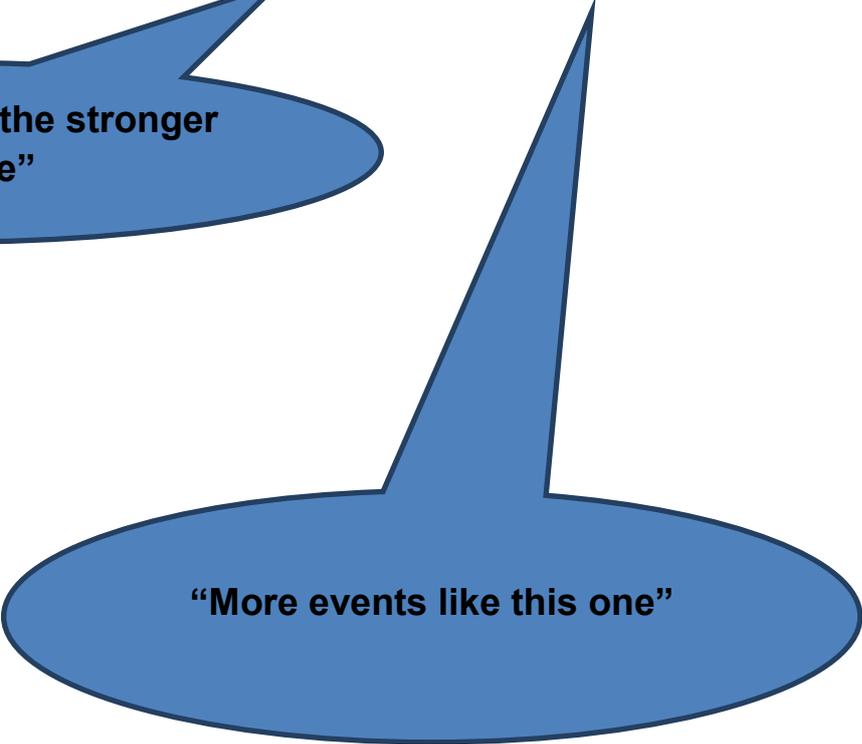
“boycott the services until they improve”

“more events like this”(youth engagement event)

“bigger the group the stronger the voice”



“bigger the group the stronger the voice”



“More events like this one”

5.1 Significant Key Findings from young people's feedback

- Young people feel more services should be available for young people aged 14 plus to 18 years.
- Young people want somewhere where they can go (during the week and at weekends) and be with their friends. A place where they can feel like they belong and not be constantly told to move on.
- Transport for young people is very limited and not accessible in all areas. In the evenings when young people need transport most it is not available.
- Young people living in rural areas are particularly isolated with limited access to services and transport.
- Young people expressed a desire to have a particular kind of staff to be working with them. They wanted someone who was friendly, someone they could talk to, someone who does not get easily offended and someone that doesn't judge you.
- The majority of the young people commented that they did not see themselves living in Larne in the future and that they would like to see more social activities and other services being available in the Larne area. Young people reported that there were far more opportunities outside of Larne such as better shops, jobs, better food outlets etc.
- The main things that worried young people in the Larne area included: Drugs; Alcohol, Violence, PSNI, No jobs, Bullies, Their future.
- All young people felt that young people should be included and involved in decisions affect them. Young people commented that they should be represented at a community level and that a youth forum would be good to enable young people to discuss local issues that affect them.

6.0 Recommendations on improving local services by young people

- Figure heads need to be seen to be in touch with young people
- Improve relationships with PSNI. Young people from Tullgarley highlighted that investment in neighbour staff reaps benefits for all.
- Community groups could improve by sourcing funding, making venues accessible and just talking to young people.
- Young people's representation or advocacy on every community group; structure of meetings needs to be appropriate.
- Young people want to be involved more by organisations such as PSNI, community groups and Larne Borough Council.
- Private courses/classes (e.g. fitness) made available for under 18's
- Good transport would assist community relations work
- If transport met local needs (i.e. accessible, affordable, convenient) this would reduce boredom, lessen drinking and reduce anti-social activities as there are other things to do and other places to go.



7.0 Next Steps

The Larne Locality group and the Diversionary Activities Subgroup aim to be inclusive and involve young people (where appropriate) in the designing and planning of services. From this initial engagement work with young people short term and long term goals have been developed.

7.1 Feedback for young people involved

- All young people who contributed to the engagement workshop will be kept up to date and informed how their input has been considered and will be included in service design and development.

7.2 Short term goals

- To research within the local areas in Larne if there would be any potential for young people to be able to avail of the community centres already available.
- To provide all young people involved in the engagement an information leaflet on what is happening with their feedback and how they will be involved in future planning of services.
- To start communications with other services providers such as Translink.

7.3 Long term goals

- To provide young people aged 14 years plus with a safe place where they can go and mix with their peers.
- To provide a method where young people can provide a voice and influence service planning.
- To identify methods to improve transport facilities to enable young people to be better able to access services. Improved transport facilities in particular to young people living in rural areas to reduce rural isolation.

CONCLUSION

Young people commented that young people should be represented at a community level and that a youth forum would be good to enable young people to discuss local issues that affect them.

Furthermore young people felt that they should be able to team up with adults to influence their work. Or that a young person's representative or a youth worker at community groups could bring the voice of young people to groups.

In addition young people commented that when resources are not there or are not being spent on young people then they can attract attention to their plight by creating a problem (i.e. vandalism / criminality). Some young people feel that they need the skills and confidence to represent themselves in these structures. ***“we are discriminated against because of our age that makes us feel frustrated and angry”***

Comments by young people included that they felt ***“community groups need to be teenager friendly”*** and that there is ***“no support for young people”*** It would appear that some young people end up involved with underage drinking and taking drugs as they have nothing else to do and feel that there is not the same facilities for 14-18 years age group as are available for 13 year olds and under and older people.