Integrated Children's Services

for aberdeens children

Consultation with Children and Young People:
Priorities for Aberdeen City's Children's Services Plan 2017-2020 Report
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1. Summary of key information

1.1   The aim of this project was to capture the views of children and young people regarding the priorities for service planning in Aberdeen City, to ensure that their voices are reflected in the development of the Children's Services Plan 2017-2020.

1.2   The views of children and young people were gathered using group discussions as the main method of consultation. Over 225 participants aged 4-18 years old were recruited from 34 settings, including schools, youth groups and training programmes.

1.3   The consultation highlighted a number of areas of priority for service development centred on specific themes These included:

- **Health and wellbeing**: mental health; bullying; healthy eating; smoking, e-cigarettes, drug and alcohol use were identified as key areas of concern.
- **Participation in leisure, play and cultural activities**: providing more and improving existing outdoor spaces; increasing participation among young people; and addressing the specific needs of young people.
- **Community safety**: improving safety in play areas and parks; addressing exposure to alcohol/drug use and threatening or antisocial behaviour in the community; improving road safety and lighting in the community; and increasing awareness of online safety.
- **Ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard**: maintaining engagement with children and young people around key issues through established channels; increasing representation of different groups of children and young people; using different methods to engage; encouraging and enabling children and young people to take on active roles in community development.
- **Ensuring that children and young people with additional needs are treated fairly and equally**: increasing opportunities for young people with additional support needs to engage in work place experiences and youth groups; providing more support to care experienced young people in terms of safe housing and through care, improving relationships with service providers, and facilitating participation in different activities; increasing support for young carers in terms of support groups and promotion of awareness of their experiences; increasing support for young people who are at high risk of not entering into employment, further/higher education or training by promoting acceptance of different learning styles and speeds, providing more focused advice and guidance in terms of career choices, and supporting the developing of life skills, employment skills and confidence.

2. Introduction

2.1   The Integrated Children's Services (ICS) Partnership is responsible for the strategic planning of services for children and young people across Aberdeen City. The Partnership was inspected between August and October 2014, with a positive report published in March 2015[1].

2.2   The inspection noted that more needed to be done to capture and act on the views of the most vulnerable, hard to reach children and young people, care experience children and young people, and those with additional support needs or disabilities. The importance of children and young people's participation in improving and developing services and responding to their needs is promoted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[2].

2.3   In line with draft statutory guidance provided by the Scottish Government in relation to the Children & Young People's Act (2014)[3], each local authority is required to produce a three year plan (the Children's Services Plan), to be in place by April 2017 and covering the period up to April 2020.

2.4   The focus of this project was to consult with children and young people to seek out their views regarding the priorities for service planning in Aberdeen City. The aim was to ensure that their voices would be reflected in the development of the Children's Services Plan 2017-2020.

3. Methods

3.1   Participants were recruited from a range of settings across the city (Appendix 1). Over 225 children and young people (47.6% female; 52.4% male) aged 4-18 years old in 34 settings took part in the consultation between 30th August and 3rd November 2016.

3.2   The views of children and young people were, in the large part, sought by means of group discussions (with one-to-one discussions being used where group discussions were not possible e.g. settings where children were busy playing). A topic guide (Appendix 2) was designed to guide the discussions and collect information around eight areas of wellbeing: safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included (the SHANARRI indicators, as set out in *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC), the national approach to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people)[4]. Each consultation focused on one or two of these key areas, with an open-ended, semi-structured format used to allow participants to express their views and focus on any issues which they

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[1] Link: Care Inspectorate Joint Inspection Report Aberdeen City (4th March 2015)
[2] Link: https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/
[3] Link: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00490013.pdf
[4] Link: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright

felt were important. Participants were also asked to mention any issues which they felt service providers should know about, even if these were not related to the topic introduced by the moderator (i.e. an open discussion format). Finally, participants were invited to suggest ideas for engaging with children and young people.

3.3   Where possible (depending on time and space constraints), simple drawing and flipchart exercises were employed to direct discussions and record views among younger children (i.e. children of primary school age; examples are shown in Appendices 3 and 4, respectively).

3.4   One-to-one sessions using eye-gaze technology, talking mats and listen-up documents were conducted by staff at Woodland School to seek the views of children and young people with comorbid diagnoses.

3.5   Participants were informed that the consultation would be confidential and anonymous. Their consent was obtained to audio record the discussions (where applicable) and to include their views in the consultation. Where consent to audio record was not provided, notes of the key emergent points were taken.

3.6   Analysis of the information focused on outlining the main themes (shown below) which emerged from the discussions. Example quotations are provided in appendix 5 to illustrate each theme.

4.   Key findings

4.1   Health and wellbeing

4.1.1   Issues related to mental health were commonly raised (particularly among participants of secondary school age). The most common problems mentioned were feelings of anxiety and depression, lack of confidence, stress and academic pressure, and feelings of isolation and loss of self-esteem as a result of bullying.

4.1.2   The perceived stigma surrounding mental health was felt to be a barrier to open discussion and recognition of problems. Although many participants described teachers (including guidance teachers) as being approachable and helpful, others felt that they lacked the expertise and time required to detect, and help with, such problems. They were also seen by some participants as more appropriate to approach for academic problems rather than 'life problems'. Lack of information about the help available to children and young people was frequently mentioned, as were difficulties in getting referrals to specialist services and accessing school counsellors due to waiting lists.

4.1.3   Reducing the stigma around mental health was identified as an important priority. Participants suggested that this could be achieved by discussing mental health in more detail

during Personal and Social Education (PSE) and school assemblies. Raising awareness among younger children was considered important to aid long term prevention. The importance of 'picking up' these problems in schools before they escalated into more serious problems was emphasised, since individuals may be reluctant to make the first move to seek help themselves. Ensuring that clearer pathways to getting help were in place was felt to be important. Participants also suggested that drop-in support groups or one-to-one contact points targeted to children and young people could be helpful.

4.1.4 The majority of children and young people described bullying in schools, in particular verbal abuse and isolation, as a significant problem. A frequently mentioned issue was the normalisation of offensive language (e.g. jokes that 'went too far'; racist language). Participants who had been bullied described their reluctance to attend school and the long-term effects of bullying (e.g. low self-esteem; anxiety). Physical fights, especially among younger pupils in the academies, were also mentioned, with many feeling that these resulted from anxiety around the transition to secondary school.

4.1.5 Pupil support assistants (PSA's) were generally felt to be very helpful in dealing with bullying (e.g. intervening in fights; including children in games). Although some participants felt that they could talk to school staff, many were reluctant due to concern that other pupils would find out. They noted that in such cases the bullying tended to stop in the short term but get worse in the long term. The need to address bullying while avoiding this escalation (e.g. maintaining confidentiality; having private spaces where staff could be approached) was emphasised. Peer support systems (e.g. older pupils acting as 'buddies', prefects, or anti-bullying ambassadors; being available to help and intervene) were considered to be helpful where they were in place and participants thought they should be promoted more. Many felt that schools should focus on fostering self-awareness, by encouraging pupils to think about 'what's behind the words you use' and how certain behaviour can be hurtful. Other suggestions included reinforcing the message that bullying was unacceptable, ensuring that there were consequences to bullying and focusing on developing resilience and personal resources to deal with bullying.

4.1.6 Healthy eating was also highlighted as a priority in discussions about health. Participants felt that there was a need to: provide children with more in-depth education to promote awareness of healthy eating and encourage them to think about their diet (e.g. the nutritious value of different foods; how to eat a balanced diet; the ingredients and processes used to make 'junk food'); continue to provide education in secondary school (with many noting that there was less focus on this after primary school); and reinforce healthy eating through practical measures (e.g. providing more healthy options in the school canteens; 'fruit Fridays' and rewards to encourage pupils to eat fruit).

4.1.7 Among teenaged participants, smoking, the use of e-cigarettes, drinking, and drug use were considered to be problems which required more attention. Many felt that there was a need to make it more difficult for young people to obtain these items and to better control their use at school (e.g. in toilets and on school grounds). They also felt that it was important to engage young people in constructive extracurricular activities. Providing more in-depth education (e.g. PSE lessons were felt to only provide some basic facts about the risks of smoking) and interactive lessons (e.g. wearing 'drunk driving glasses' to highlight the effects of excessive drinking) in schools was also mentioned, as was the idea of inviting speakers who had experienced problems like drug use.

4.2 Participation in leisure, play and cultural activities

4.2.1 Discussions around the topics of healthy, active and achieving highlighted that children in a number of schools felt a need for more outdoor space to play during their breaks. Many also highlighted a need for more safe spaces in the community to play ball games, skate, and ride bicycles, particularly in areas where busy roads limit such activities. Some children noted that they were not allowed to go to out to play alone, because they had to walk far or cross busy roads to reach the nearest play area. For instance, children at Clinterty Travelling Person's Site found access to play areas challenging as the site is near a fairly busy road and is also quite remote. This was also a particular problem for children whose parents or guardians were unable to accompany them (e.g. one participant explained that her mother's illness prevented this). Improving access by increasing road crossings and outdoor spaces were therefore considered to be important priorities. Many children and young people also felt that more should be done to enable them to use their bicycles safely (e.g. improving cycle paths in the city; undertaking more in-depth cycling proficiency courses).

4.2.2 The improvement of existing outdoor spaces was also discussed, including: removing litter, broken glass, dog waste, graffiti, and thorny bushes; covering concrete with soft surfaces to prevent injury; repairing broken equipment; reducing vandalism; ensuring that all equipment is safe; increasing the availability of public toilets; putting fences up around play areas to prevent children from running out onto nearby roads; and providing more variety in terms of equipment (e.g. zip-lines, 'big swings' and climbing frames were very popular), which is also suitable to a wider age range (e.g. larger goal posts and bigger/more challenging climbing frames for older children).

4.2.3 Many of the participants attended a variety of clubs, both at school and in the community (e.g. out of school clubs, youth groups, music, dancing, drama, and sports clubs). Although many felt that there was good provision in this respect, the need for more information about different activities on offer at local community centres, and more swimming and football clubs was frequently mentioned. Opinions about provision also tended to vary by age and setting. For instance, children at the Travelling People's Site (some of whom did not attend school) and Fersands & Fountain Community Project, and young people at the Keen4Work

programme said that they would appreciate opportunities to participate in more varied activities, such as art and music clubs, while others (e.g. pupils at Aberdeen School for the Deaf) mentioned the need for more activities tailored to their needs (e.g. opportunities to receive swimming lessons with instructors who use sign language). Participants noted that out of school clubs and activities in the local community were especially important for those who had difficult home environments (e.g. young carers felt that the social aspect of their group was important).

4.2.4   The needs and experiences of teenaged participants differed somewhat from their younger counterparts. Many felt that they were overlooked as a group and had nowhere to go in their spare time. They described feeling unwelcome in many public places (e.g. some had been accused of loitering; many felt that groups of young people were generally considered a nuisance). Participants noted that activities of interest (e.g. music gigs) often demanded an entry fee and/or were age restricted and that their nearest community centres were either too far away or did not provide information about youth clubs or activities. When asked what they would find helpful, participants said that they would like to be able to access outdoor spaces with sheltered tables and benches, where they would not feel that they were 'getting in the way'. They also wanted youth clubs in their local communities where they could relax, meet other young people, and organise evening events and other activities.

4.2.5   Following on from the above issue, many teenaged participants felt that boredom and a lack of engagement in extracurricular activities contributed to feelings of isolation and loneliness, was detrimental to mental health, and caused young people to engage in risky behaviours such as drinking. A common consensus was that more needed to be done to engage young people in constructive activities and to include them in their local communities.

4.3   Community safety

4.3.1   Discussions about safety highlighted several issues with respect to outdoor play areas and parks. Participants noted that older children and teenagers sometimes started fires, behaved in a threatening manner (e.g. shouting abuse; smashing glass bottles; fighting) and bullied younger children. Groups of adults also often gathered in play areas and parks. Many children either did not feel safe going to these places alone, or were not allowed to do so. Some children also noted that their school playground was accessible to people outside and that this made them feel unsafe.

4.3.2   Many participants also discussed the presence of groups of teenagers and adults who drank alcohol and used drugs in the streets, parks and play areas. They expressed concern about the bad example this set and the fact that certain substances could be readily available to children and young people. A related issue was the presence of broken glass and used syringes in these areas.

4.3.3   Some participants spoke about antisocial or violent/abusive behaviour they had witnessed in their communities (e.g. men using baseball bats to damage cars; racial abuse). Other sources of unease lay in the ownership of dangerous dogs, the presence of empty flats which tended to attract drug users, and being approached and asked for money by people in the street.

4.3.4   Participants who experienced bullying at school described feeling threatened when they met certain pupils out in the community, particularly due to the lack of adult supervision in these situations.

4.3.5   Children and young people noted that they often walked home in the dark, especially after school in the winter. Many felt that there was insufficient lighting in their communities (e.g. in certain areas broken street lights had not been repaired; the lights described as being spaced too far apart and not bright enough; parks and play areas were often felt to be very dark and isolated). Some participants described walking home through parks, under bridges, and through closes which were in complete darkness.

4.3.6   Road safety was also a common concern. Although younger children found school crossing patrol officers helpful, some felt that their local communities were underserved in this respect. Many also felt that there were insufficient crossings on busy roads (e.g. some children spoke of the difficulty of getting to their local libraries and parks on their own). A common observation was that drivers did not appear to observe the speed limits in many areas and often did not stop at road crossings when children were trying to cross.

4.3.7   Children and young people spoke about the presence of city wardens and the police in communities. For instance, participants at Walker Road School noted that they regularly saw the city wardens when they were walking to and from school and they often spoke to them and were given stickers. In other areas (e.g. near Ashley Road School) children were reassured to see city wardens walking about, but they did not generally talk to them. On the other hand, children in the Woodside area (i.e. Fersands & Fountain Community Project and Printfield Community Project) felt that there was a need for more city wardens and a stronger police presence, noting that the latter were often called out to deal with disturbances. Similarly, young people attending the Keen4Work programme commented that they never saw city wardens in certain areas which were considered to be dangerous. Finally, members of Torry Radioactive felt that it would be helpful to have city wardens talk to them about how to stay safe in the community. They noted that open discussion about the potential dangers and risks that young people are exposed to was important, since avoidance made people more reluctant to talk about important issues such as sexual abuse.

4.3.8   Opinions about online safety were mixed. Participants generally said that, while they had witnessed cyberbullying, it was not that common. Most young people did not consider online privacy to be an issue, since they were confident in their ability to protect themselves from 'the big stuff', such as being 'stalked'. However, others noted that they did not know

how to make their social media profiles private. A small number of participants gave accounts of distressing experiences among their friends. These participants generally felt that there was a need for more education about online safety (e.g. during PSE).

4.4   Ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard

4.4.1   Discussions related to respected, responsible and included indicated that children and young people valued the opportunity to voice their opinions, have their views taken on board, and play an active role in shaping their schools and communities.

4.4.2   Many children and young people said that they felt listened to. They mentioned the systems in place for them to voice their opinions at school (e.g. pupil councils; suggestion boxes). However, many participants also said that they felt that their teachers did not listen, that their schools did not have councils or suggestion boxes, and that they did not feel included when Aberdeen City Council made decisions about their community. Members of the pupil council at Bridge of Don Academy felt that there were many young people whose voices were never heard, both because they did not tend to approach the council themselves, and also because they did not tend to be invited to participate in activities. While some children and young people felt that their suggestions were taken on board, others said that they although they often completed surveys about improving their school, nothing ever changed. Some participants commented that they found it very frustrating to be asked for their input and then have their opinions ignored. Finally, some participants were sceptical about voicing their opinions as they felt that Aberdeen City Council would be unlikely to listen.

4.4.3   When asked about the best approaches to engage with children and young people and ensure that their voices were heard in service planning, a wide range of ideas was put forward. These included: conducting surveys among different age groups who often have different needs; involving older children by asking them to have discussions with younger children; using text messages to contact care experienced young people through their support worker; organising art and other creative projects (e.g. asking children to draw their ideas, make posters, take photographs of things they liked in Aberdeen, and write stories about their experiences of different issues such as bullying); showing children a selection of ideas and asking them to vote; establishing 'council clubs' to discuss community improvement; asking children to deliver presentations on different topics during school assemblies; having a phone line that children could use to discuss any issues they felt were important; having a website that provided updates on children's services; using posters, leaflets and other means to share information about children's services; more face-to-face engagement (e.g. many of the groups felt that the discussions had been a good experience, which showed that service providers were willing to listen); using social media, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (although opinion on this was mixed, with some participants commenting that they preferred face-to-face engagement, as social media was 'hit and miss' and Facebook was 'dead'); having PSE and guidance teachers ask children and

young people about the issues they were experiencing rather than pupils being required to approach them themselves; maintaining regular and open communication (e.g. telling children and young people about any developments and changes; letting them know when something they have suggested would not be taken on board); selecting participants for future engagement activities randomly rather than limiting participation to pupil councils; using google classroom for online discussions; sending ideas to Aberdeen City Council in letters or on postcards; using suggestion boxes in schools; asking 'responsibility groups' which are in place in some schools to discuss different topics; inviting children and young people to meetings at Aberdeen City Council to share their ideas and discuss their concerns; having discussions during PSE classes; inviting children and young people to attend festivals; providing anonymous online feedback forms or emails; keeping in touch with pupil councils; having one-to-one conversations, which would help individuals who are concerned about privacy to open up; increasing the visibility of pupil councils and encouraging children and young people to share ideas with them; using school newsletters to keep children and young people updated about new developments in children's services; using incentives and ensuring that children and young people are thanked for their contributions (e.g. having pizza lunches to attracts participants who may then become committed to regular engagement because they find it interesting and rewarding in its own right).

4.4.4   Participants also expressed enthusiasm for being actively involved in developing new initiatives. Specific ideas included: fundraising (e.g. to purchase new play equipment in schools and parks); developing areas of wasteland into gardens; growing fruit and vegetables for distribution to food banks and people in need; and organising litter picks. They noted that receiving updated information on the changes and improvements in children's services, and actually being able to see the results of what they were involved in, would make them feel more enthusiastic about taking part in more projects. Young people at SHMU Positive Transitions felt that taking part in initiatives to 'make things better' would help them gain respect from other people and build their confidence. Finally, several participants felt that it was important to have more youth groups in place to get their views across and to bring about change.

4.5   Ensuring that children and young people in need of additional support are treated fairly and equally

4.5.1   When looking at hard to reach children and young people, as well as those with additional support needs or disabilities, a number of issues emerged with respect to how included, respected and supported they feel. These issues are discussed below in relation to each of the different settings in which consultations were held.

4.5.2   At Hazlewood School, young people with ADHD/autism spoke about their participation in a number of initiatives in very positive terms. This included Young Leaders (e.g. participants valued the opportunity to coach young children in basketball); work experience (e.g. helping

at Airyhall Community Centre had developed their confidence); attending North East Scotland College once a week (e.g. participants had made friends, built confidence, were enjoying the subjects they had chosen, and were thinking of taking a course when they left school); and dog walking (participants described this as exciting because they loved animals). The group were also looking at the possibility of setting up a small school-based dog-walking business to gain more experience and life skills.

4.5.3   Areas in which these young people felt they required more support included participation in youth clubs. They did not go to any clubs because prior experiences had been too stressful (e.g. noise levels; large groups were too intimidating; bullying by other members). During the previous year, the school had taken them to visit groups for individuals with special needs, with the aim of helping them find somewhere to socialise after school. These groups had not been popular because many of the people there had complex needs and were aged 65 and older. Another challenge had been that of finding a wider variety of work experience placements.

4.5.4   The discussion with care experienced young people at the Keen4Work programme (not audio-recorded) revealed that one of the main challenges they faced was the length of time it took for any issues they had to be resolved. They had experienced delays in finding housing and felt that immigrants were often given precedence (with their complaints often being met with accusations of racism). Several of the participants had moved from a residential care home into a hostel or Bed & Breakfast until they received proper housing. These young people were being housed with older men (often drug users), in areas with poor street lighting, empty flats and a high volume of drug users, which made them feel frightened and unsafe.

4.5.5   Feelings of being disregarded and disrespected (participants used the term 'second class citizens') were frequently mentioned by care experienced participants. They described a lack of trust in Aberdeen City Council; they did not go into Marischal College because they felt disrespected and looked down upon (e.g. they felt that the security guards followed them about and that the customer service staff were rude and unhelpful). Many commented that and they would not approach the police for help as they appeared to target them (e.g. one participant was stopped three times by the police on his way to his work placement; some of the participants described having received no support when they reported verbal abuse but being charged when they retaliated). They also felt that the police were very disrespectful when they were alone with young people, but when a parent, guardian or support worker was present their attitude changed.

4.5.6   Care experienced participants also commented that the through care team was understaffed, with staff being unable to spend enough time with them, resulting in them feeling they were 'not listened to'.

4.5.7 Half the expected participants at the Keen4Work Programme were unable to attend the consultation. Aberdeen City Council provided bus passes, but this was only for a limited number of journeys so that they could get to and from their work placements. This meant that participation in other activities was problematic due to travel costs.

4.5.8 During the consultation with the VSA Young Carers' Group (discussion not audio recorded), participants explained that they did not want staff at school to know about their roles as young carers because this might result in more pressure (e.g. being asked to see teachers during break). They were also reluctant to explain their situation to friends and peers. Barriers to open discussion included: concern about 'being seen as different'; feeling that other young people would not be able to understand their situations (e.g. 'they think we have normal lives like them'; young people not knowing what terms like ADHD or autism mean); and attitudes towards disability/illness (e.g. insensitive jokes). The young people also felt that there was a general lack of awareness of the existence of young carers.

4.5.9 Following on from these issues, the young carers explained that the VSA support meetings were important; they could discuss their problems openly with other carers and support workers who understood them, socialise, and get help with their school work. They noted that the VSA used to hold more regular meetings, which were reduced due to funding cuts, and that having more meetings would be helpful. The VSA support workers mentioned plans to have weekly drop-in sessions in schools to provide a contact point for young carers, which the participants felt would be a good source of support. They felt that promoting awareness of the existence and experiences of young carers, issues related to disability and illness, and equality and diversity (e.g. during assemblies and PSE lessons at school; school visits by VSA staff), could be helpful. Finally, they felt that the support available through the VSA needed to be promoted to reach out to other young carers (e.g. by means of an open day which they would help to organise).

4.5.10 During their discussion about health, young people participating in the Early Interventions programme at Harlaw Academy mentioned that they did not feel supported by the school. They generally felt that teachers did not understand or make allowances for different learning styles and speeds among their pupils. They noted that they experienced a lot of pressure from teachers to keep up with the rest of the class, resulting in feelings of stress and anxiety. While academic achievement was felt to be over-emphasised by teachers, provision of support was described as less forthcoming. Participants described giving up and being disruptive during lessons because they were not being given the support they needed.

4.5.11 In discussing respect, issues related to provision of support at school also emerged among participants of the Positive Transitions group at SHMU. This group spoke about the challenges they had experienced in finding employment, particularly because employers tended to require previous experience. They described feeling 'let down' and 'pushed out' by their schools because they had not been helped to build their confidence or find their

way (e.g. they felt that they had not been given useful advice or been put in touch with careers advisors). Many felt that they were negatively stereotyped as 'shirkers', both at school and now that they were unemployed. They spoke of the Positive Transitions programme as a 'confidence booster', describing how they were being trusted with responsibility (e.g. speaking live on air) and developing valuable skills for employment (e.g. teamwork; working under pressure; preparing live radio broadcasts).

4.5.12 Similar issues were highlighted among participants of the SHMU Youth Media Group, during a discussion which focused on achieving. Generally speaking, these participants felt that schools could do more to help certain pupils develop their confidence. For instance, they felt that PSE lessons should focus more on developing life skills such as paying bills, applying for jobs, and having an organised approach to work. They also felt that there was a need for teachers to be more understanding of pupils' different needs and to be more empathetic towards those who exhibited low self-esteem or mental health problems. Finally, provision of support in terms of careers advice was also emphasised, with participants noting that it was important for careers advisors to be more effective in helping young people who had not yet discovered the direction they wanted to take in life.

5. Conclusions and recommendations for future work

5.1 This project has ensured the substantial engagement of children and young people in the planning process of the Children's Services Plan 2017-2020, with key priorities driven by what they highlighted during consultations. These priorities included:

- **Health and wellbeing**: mental health; bullying; healthy eating; smoking, e-cigarettes, drug and alcohol use were identified as key areas of concern.
- **Participation in leisure, play and cultural activities**: providing more and improving existing outdoor spaces; providing more clubs and groups and increasing participation among young people; and addressing the specific needs of young people.
- **Community safety**: improving safety in play areas and parks; addressing exposure to alcohol and drug use in the community; addressing exposure violent and antisocial behaviour in the community; improving road safety; improving lighting in the community; and promoting online safety.
- **Ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard**: promoting channels for engagement with children and young people; maintaining communication around key issues; increasing representation of different groups of children and young people; using different methods to engage with children and young people; encouraging and enabling children and young people to take on active roles in community development.
- **Ensuring that children and young people with additional needs are treated fairly and equally**: increasing opportunities for young people with additional support needs to engage in work place experiences and youth groups; providing more support to care experienced young people in terms of safe housing, working to increase trust in, and improve relationships with, service providers, facilitating participation in different activities, and improving support provided in through care; increasing support for young carers through more regular support groups and promotion of awareness of relevant issues; increasing support for young people who are at high risk of not entering into employment, further/higher education or training by promoting acceptance of different learning styles and speeds, providing advice and guidance in terms of career choices, and focusing on the development of life skills, employment skills and confidence.

5.2 One of the main strengths of this project has been the inclusion of participants across Aberdeen City. This project has also been successful in accessing the views of some of the more hard to reach groups (e.g. traveller children; young carers) and children and young people with additional and special needs. Although the sample cannot be considered, and is not intended to be, representative of all children and young people in Aberdeen, it has sought out the views of a fairly large sample of over 225 participants.

5.3 Ongoing engagement with children and young people is important in order to assess how well we are doing in terms of addressing the key priorities identified in this work (i.e. 'is what we are doing making a difference?'). As noted by children and young people, an important aspect of such engagement work is communicating back to them what is being done in relation to the key

priorities identified and ensuring that they remain involved throughout the process. This is also emphasised in the 7 Golden Rules for Participation, a set of principles designed to help anyone working with, and for, children and young people to support them to understand, experience and exercise their participation rights[5]. In line with this, a follow-up of each consultation included sending a thank you card and a summary of the key points to the participant groups. This will be followed at a later date by an update on the Children's Services Plan.

5.4   Future work should focus on increasing participation among care experienced children and young people; younger children (i.e. early years); and other often under-represented groups such as LGBT youth and straight alliance groups. The participation of more youth groups across Aberdeen City should also be sought to increase representation among children and young people who might not be selected for participation by schools. Although this work did attempt to engage with these groups, a number of challenges need to be considered in undertaking consultations with such groups in future:

- Engagement with care experienced children and young people was challenged by the fact that activities tend to be run to a strict agenda. Future work should be easier to arrange since the appointment of a Development Officer with Who Cares? Scotland whose role it is to arrange participation events and help to facilitate the Champions Board.

- Engagement with younger children (i.e. early years) was challenged by the fact that specific engagement tools and methods for this age group are not widely used or available. Collaboration with PlayScotland to develop meaningful engagement methods may help to address this going forward.

- Youth groups (including LGBT and straight alliance groups) found it difficult to accommodate the consultation work, as their activities tend to be planned months in advance. In future, regular communication should be maintained and consultation activities should be set well in advance to enable collaboration.

5.5   The current project invited partners to provide results from any prior consultation exercises for review. However, attempts to link in with such work were not successful, with work which was provided not found to be relevant to the project (e.g. specific information was not available for Aberdeen City). Developing better links with ongoing work would be useful to increase the reach of consultations and ensure ongoing engagement with children and young people around the key priority areas.

5.6   A limitation of this project was the fact that issues related to home and family environments were not explored in detail. Although many children and young people did speak about this aspect, this was generally in positive terms, with most describing their homes and families as supportive and nurturing. While this is extremely positive, it may also be the case that participants who experienced challenges in this respect were less willing to discuss their

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[5] Link: http://www.cypcs.org.uk/education/golden-rules

situations. Future consultations should include private, confidential one-to-one interviews to address these topics. This would help to overcome the limitations of group or one-to-one discussions conducted in the presence of other children and young people.

5.7   Further work is also needed to provide more detailed information on specific areas of concern which are of a particularly complex nature. This includes areas such as mental health and provision of support for mental health problems (also identified as key priority areas in a consultation among young people and families conducted as part of the process to develop Child Health 2020 - NHS Grampian's strategic framework for children and young people's health) and supporting more vulnerable young people into positive destinations.

5.8   The development of a survey, informed by the in-depth exploration of the issues reported here and a review of existing work in local authorities across Scotland, would advance this work further. Distribution among a representative sample of children and young people in Aberdeen would provide information on how widely the issues discussed in this project are experienced. This would aid refinement of the priorities for service planning in Aberdeen City. Targeting a representative sample would also ensure that results are not biased or skewed by the over- or under-participation of particular groups of children and young people (e.g. those residing in more affluent areas of Aberdeen). The anonymity of surveys would also allow for a greater understanding of the extent of certain experiences related to sensitive topics such as mental health and family life.

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Appendix 1: Consultation settings, participants and methods

	Consultation setting	Age range (years)	Number of participants	Method of consultation
Schools	**Harlaw Academy** Pupils selected by the head teacher	13-15	4	Group discussion
	Ashley Road Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-11	6	Group discussion
	BrambleBrae Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	9-11	8	Group discussion
	Charleston Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-11	7	Group discussion
	Tullos Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	9-11	6	Group discussion
	Culter Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	10-11	8	Group discussion
	Brimmond Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-11	5	Group discussion
	Riverbank Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-10	7	Group discussion
	Scotstown Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-11	8	Group discussion
	Walker Road Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	7-11	8	Group discussion
	Middleton Park Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	7-11	8	Group discussion
	Braehead Primary School Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-11	8	Group discussion
	St Machar Academy Pupils selected by the head teacher	12-13	5	Group discussion
	Sunnybank Primary School Members of the schools' pupil council	9-11	8	Group discussion
	St Peter's RC Primary School Members of the schools' pupil council	7-9	7	Group discussion
	Bridge of Don Academy Members of the schools' pupil council	14-17	8	Group discussion

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	Consultation setting	Age range (years)	Number of participants	Method of consultation
Additional & special needs settings	**Woodlands School** Children/young people with comorbid diagnoses	7-18	7	Eye-gaze technology, talking mats, listen-up documents
	Aberdeen School for the Deaf Pupils selected by the head teacher	8-11	10	Group discussion assisted by teachers using sign language
	Hazlewood School Young people with ADHD/autism	16-17	6	Group discussion
After school clubs & play sessions	**Aberdeen Play Forum** Drop-in play sessions for children living on Clinterty Travelling People's site	4-12	13	One-to-one discussions
	Aberdeen Lads' Club After School Club for children in the Tillydrone area	5-10	5	Group discussion
Training providers & work placements	**SHMU Youth Media Group** Provides opportunities to young people (primarily from the regeneration areas) to participate in media production at SHMU (Station House Media Unit)	12-17	5	Group discussion
	SHMU Positive Transitions Employability & skills development course for young people who are not in further/higher education, training or employment	16-18	6	Group discussion
	SHMU Early Interventions (Kincorth Academy) Intervention project to support young people who exhibit learning difficulties, lower literacy/numeracy skills, lack of confidence and intermittent attendance; at increased risk of not entering into further/higher education, training or employment	15-16	7	Group discussion
	SHMU Early Interventions (St Machar Academy) As above	14-17	6	Group discussion
	SHMU Early Interventions (Harlaw Academy) As above	15-17	11	Group discussion
	Keen4Work Programme Work experience placements for care experienced young people (Action for Children/Aberdeen City Council)	16-18	6	Group discussion

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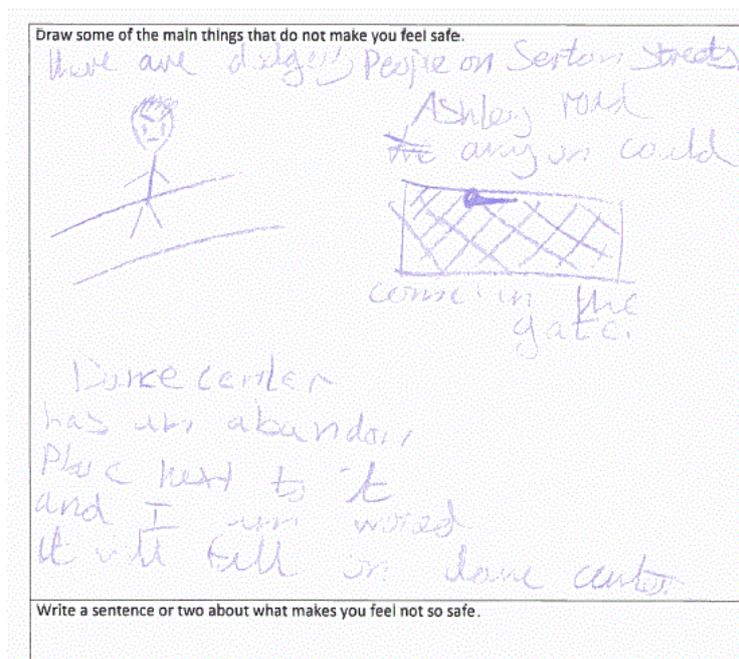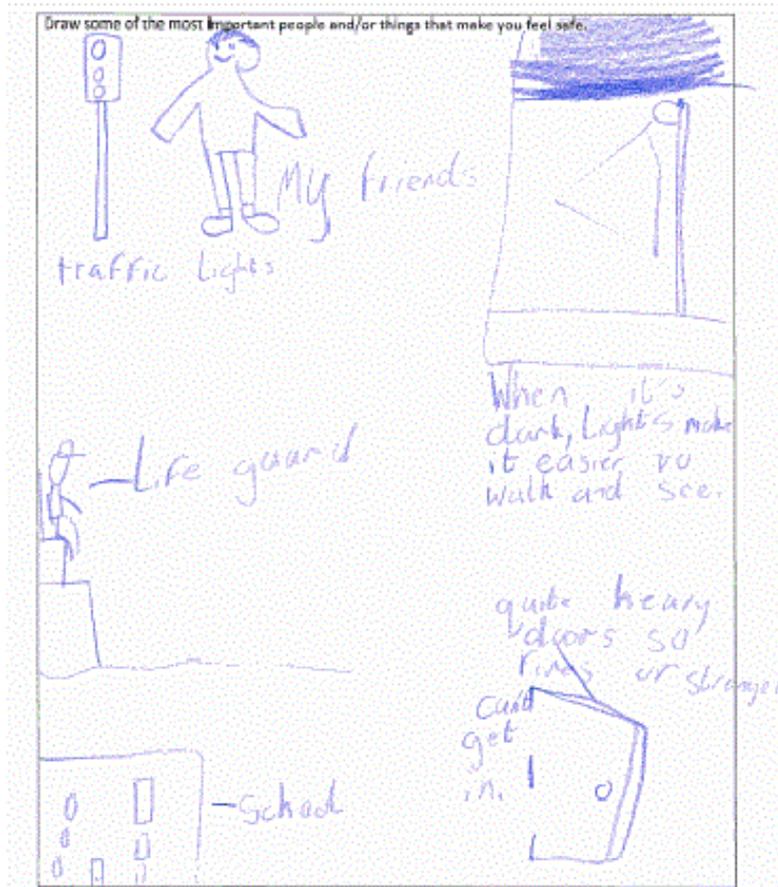|	Consultation setting	Age range (years)	Number of participants	Method of consultation
Youth forums, clubs & groups	**NHS Grampian Youth Forum** Members discuss local NHS services for young people, health and wellbeing	16-19	5	Group discussion
	Young Carers Group Support group for young carers (have a significant role in caring for a family member) run by VSA	14-16	4	Group discussion
	Printfield Community Project Youth Club run by a voluntary organisation which provides family support services in the Woodside area	12-14	6	Group discussion
	Fersands & Fountain Community Project Junior Youth Club run by a voluntary organisation in the Woodside area which provides advice and support to vulnerable/hard to reach families	8-11	8	Group discussion
	Sport Aberdeen - Young Ambassadors Young people who motivate other young people to get involved in sport	14-17	9	Group discussion
	Hanover Youth Group Run by Aberdeen City Council youth workers	11-12	Not specified	Group discussion
	Harlaw Youth Group Run by Aberdeen City Council youth workers	15-16	Not specified	Group discussion
	Torry Radioactive Run by Aberdeen City Council youth workers	11-14	Not specified	Group discussion
	Torry Youth Project Run by Aberdeen City Council youth workers	15-19	Not specified	Group discussion

Appendix 2: Topic guide

1. What does [insert topic: being safe/being healthy/being active/being nurtured/achieving/being respected/being responsible/being included] mean to you?
2. What helps you to feel [insert topic]?
3. What does not help you to feel [insert topic]?
4. Imagine that you are a group which is in charge of planning services in Aberdeen and your job is to make sure that children and young people are [insert topic]. What are the most important things to think about and improve?
5. What can be done to solve the things that do not help you?
6. How can we make sure that we keep in touch and hear about what children/young people think is important?

Appendix 3: Example of drawing exercise

Draw some of the most important people and/or things that make you feel safe.

traffic lights

My friends

Life guard

When it's dark, Lights make it easier to walk and see.

quite heavy doors so find or stranger can't get in.

—School

Draw some of the main things that do not make you feel safe.

there are dangerous People on Serton Streets Ashley road the anyone could come in the gate.

Duke center has an abandon Place next to it and I am worried it will fell on dane center.

Write a sentence or two about what makes you feel not so safe.

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Appendix 4: Example of flipchart exercise

SCHOOL	HOME	COMMUNITY
lucky to have teachers	nice + clean ⟶ no dirty clothes	— Leaders @ Tuesday club (games)
PSAs ⟶ help you	— pets (company)	— Shops to buy food / clothes
having friends	— electronics (only child) eg phone	— Parks to play in
Clean school ⟶ avoid diseases	— parents	— keeping area clean (eg bin collecting)
— Lunch / dinner ladies ⟶ need people to make sure you eat	— Food + drink	⟶ Town / stuff to do
	— Family	— people to help ⟶ doctors ⟶ police ⟶ ambulance
	— House ⟶ Furniture ⟶ somewhere to sleep	

Appendix 5 – Examples of quotations related to each theme

	Health and wellbeing
Mental Health	"Say you need counselling, or you need a referral and stuff like that, you need the guidance teacher or the nurse to do it, but you can be waiting for ages. Even with some teachers, I feel like some of them kind of need to be informed about mental health as well." (SHMU Youth Media Group)
	"I don't think people are comfortable talking about it…I know a few people who do have depression and anxiety, and they feel like they're quite isolated, don't really have anyone to talk to, apart from me and a couple of other friends…so I don't think there's much help." (Harlaw Academy)
	"For something more serious like mental health they [guidance teachers] wouldn't be as good as someone who, like, that's their job, who knows more what they're talking about than a guidance teacher…it's so broad, what they know." (Sport Aberdeen – Young Ambassadors)
Bullying	"The person who is bullied tends to withdraw themselves. They isolate themselves, because other people have isolated them. They don't really see a point in trying to reinstate their place with that group so they just isolate themselves further." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	I was made fun of a lot, from verbal abuse to actual physical abuse. It got so bad I just couldn't keep coping with it. I tried talking to the teachers but they'd just kind of brush it off and say, oh, it's just teenagers being teenagers…it got so bad that's how I ended up with my depression. Everyone just kind of brushed it off and I felt completely alone." (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy;)
	"It was mostly rumours spreading, like really horrible rumours. I did tell the guidance teacher but they just like acted like it was my fault so I stopped…I was like really, really shy for a period of time and kind of just didn't talk to anyone, pretended not to exist really." (SHMU Positive Transitions)
	"We need more done about it, harsher punishments rather than just a telling off." (Harlaw Academy)
	"People need to be reassured that they won't get bullied worse if they tell someone…I think that's something everyone fears that the bullies will find out." (Harlaw Academy)
	"We've got a group to protect you against bullies, they're called the defenders…they do presentations about bullying, how it affects people, how you don't realise what you're doing to others, how you don't know what's going on in a person's life and you're making it worse. I feel like that's something a lot of schools need." (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy)
Healthy Eating	"We got a lot of education in primary and we haven't had it since…the whole 'eat well plate' and stuff I haven't seen that in a long time" (Harlaw Academy)
	"I only remember doing one lesson on healthy eating…in a very general sense, like oh…eat fruit not sweets…they don't really go into depth about how to get a varied diet and how to get all the proteins, iron and stuff" (Sports Aberdeen – Young Ambassadors)
	"I've heard of groups of people from school going out and getting, the exact word was 'hammered', and not just people my age [17] who I suppose you could kind of let off, because we're only one year off, but like people from second and third year which is ridiculously young to be anywhere near alcohol" (Bridge of Don Academy)
Smoking, alcohol & drug use	"We've gone over some basics of it, but in my PSE class we didn't really do much, we just made a poster, saying don't do this, don't do that…it would have been better to have sat down in class and said these are the risks if you were to start smoking" (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy)
	"Maybe like Drugs Action, like their people come in and explain what they've had to see people go through instead of just having a teacher who has probably never even looked at a drug in her life saying don't do it" (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy)
	"I think part of the problem is how easy it is to get cigarettes and alcohol because of older siblings and friends" (Sport Aberdeen – Young Ambassadors)

Participation in leisure, play and cultural activities

More outdoor spaces	There's only two pitches at school and girls don't like football, some boys don't like football, where else can we play?" (Fersands & Fountain Community Project)
	It's annoying, during break they take up nearly the whole Astro Turf playing football at school so it doesn't leave much space for anyone playing other games and you're like, isn't it meant to be for sharing?" (Brimmond Primary School)
	"The park that the older ones go to is across the busy road so you have to have an adult with you, but it's not very fair, because the one next to my mum's house only has baby things." (Brimmond Primary School)
	"I would make safer roads just so more people can ride their bikes and be much more active and have like a park area with only bikes and roller skates only." (Scotstown Primary School)
	"You need to make more like Astro Turfs because up where I live there's like none…if some of the children from other schools are at Astro Turfs near them they can then make a lot more friends." (Brimmond Primary School)
Improving play areas & parks	"Children should get better parks…we've had the same park for years and it's getting really old and unstable. We should have more things that children can have fun with, like in the parks, things that actually make them, like, that they have to be active." (Scotstown Primary School)
	I was in the park one day and a dog was taking a poo right beside where I was playing so I couldn't play there." (Riverbank Primary School)
	"Some people litter and throw cans in the park…I see the cleaner but I don't think he goes down the park." (Fersands & Fountain Community Project)
	"The park was fixed and half of it is already vandalised again – they're ruining the equipment that we're getting…you've got a right to it." (Tullos Primary School)
Youth groups & clubs	"If somebody is meant to be looking after you and they're not, like they are, but they're watching TV and stuff, I think we should have somewhere to go after school, like that you don't have to pay…I think we should have more clubs at the school." (Tullos Primary School)
	"We need more community centres and stuff…there needs to be more publicity for community centres and youth clubs. There's a community centre near me and there's like no publicity for what goes on there." (St Machar Academy)
	"The advertising's not really good, they don't advertise a lot of things, they get other people to advertise for them instead of advertising themselves. It's hard to find things and by the time you do, they've already had a lot of people applying and you're the last one." (SHMU Positive Transitions)
Activities for teenagers	"There's not too much in Aberdeen for teens to actually do that's free. Everything costs money…so for like young teens from 13/14 straight up to 18/19, there's really not that much to do." (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy)
	"There's this thing on Saturday at the Carnivals for Halloween and you get to go on the rides all night for free, but it's over 18, because there's alcohol there, so there's nothing for our age at the Carnival. It's not about us wanting to drink or anything, it's just about wanting to do some fun stuff for free." (Positive Transitions – Kincorth Academy)
	"It wouldn't be that bad if maybe there was a couple of tables, benches, and like a sheltered kind of thing, even just beside a park, somewhere we can go and not be bothering other people, or well, without making us feel like we're bothering other people." (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy)

"Just like a chill-out area, there's like one up in Cove. I used to go but I stopped. I just couldn't be bothered walking up every Friday. It was actually quite good, it wasn't like people telling you what to do, like not to the extent of pleasing yourself, doing whatever, but like just you could like see people and stuff." (Positive Transitions – Kincorth Academy)

"Now there's less youth clubs you see people forming bad habits because of peer pressure or plain boredom. It's important to keep away from peer pressure. So many people just fall in with people who have bad habits like smoking or drinking or drugs…having a group to go to would help you to define yourself and discover what you love to do" (Positive Transitions – Harlaw Academy)

Community safety

Parks, play areas & at school	"I never get to go out the house by myself. I don't get to go to parks…older people go there and my mum's afraid I might get hurt." (Tullos Primary School)
	"Victoria Road Park sometimes feels safe. It depends on the people that are in it…some dodgy people do go into Victoria Road Park, adults, they're just not very pleasant to be around and they drink alcohol." (Walker Road Primary School)
	"There was a big fire in the playing field and it was that big a fire it almost spread to near the houses. It started in a wheelbarrow." (BrambleBrae Primary School)
	"I was at the park down beside my house and there was this group of Academy boys, year sixes, and they started calling me names and kicked my football out of the park." (Braehead Primary School)
	"In the morning there's no PSA's in the playground to supervise and there's, random people can just walk in and out of the school because the gates are open." (Walker Road Primary School)
	"People who weren't supposed to get in were getting into the school, so they did lock-down, but people can still come in…the fence is literally up to your knee." (Printfield Community Project)
Alcohol & drug use in the community	"Near where I live, at night, like at the weekends, there's like a lot of drunk people walking around and it doesn't make me feel safe…there are children around there" (Braehead Primary School)
	"There's a car that comes by the school after school that teachers have claimed to have seen giving kids drugs and alcohol and stuff" (Sport Aberdeen – Young Ambassadors)
	"A lot of people round here take drugs, I caught someone right beside that wall." (Fersands & Fountain Community Project)
	"The other week I was walking in Scotstown and there's this big group of men in their 20s and you could really see and smell that they were smoking drugs. If anyone can, like if the younger people go out and see this, they could, these people could go up to them and say do you want to smoke this? Kind of peer pressure type thing." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"I was out with my gran having an ice-cream and I opened a bin and when I put the wrapper in I found needles in it." (Culter Primary School)
Threatening or antisocial behaviour	"You see people smashing glass bottles…sometimes when you're walking home, sometimes it's teenagers." (Fersands & Fountain Community Project)
	"Sometimes there's fights set up after school. Everyone will meet at a certain place." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"I've seen a lot of adults fight…mostly on the road." (Fersands & Fountain Community Project)
	"Sometimes when there's drunk people on the streets they, like, chase after you." (Bramblebrae Primary School)
	"They were shouting abuse at an Indian man who was telling them, like kind of get out of here because there's kids and stuff." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"I know one person who was racially assaulted, verbally assaulted by a group of people and now instead of walking a five minute path home he walks a fifteen minute path, because that group hang out at the same place and they shout this abuse every time he walks past." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"The dodgers in town, like the junkies and stuff, they don't even know you and they try and speak to you and ask you for money and annoy you, some of them can be like creepy. Once a homeless guy told me to come over and I just ran away. I was scared." (Positive Transitions – Kincorth Academy)
	"If you're prone to being bullied a lot and then you see these people out of school you don't feel safe at all, because you think there's probably no adults around who are going to come and help you if something does happen" (Bridge of Don Academy)

Lighting	"Mugger's Bridge has got no lights under it…it's like a tunnel and you can't see at all when you're walking under it…it's like round a corner so no one can like see you coming…there's no lights, it's really scary. I just run home" (Printfield Community Project)
	"Along my street the lights all turn on and off randomly, all at the same time." (Printfield Community Project).
	"In the winter when you leave school it's always starting to get dark" (Bridge of Don Academy)
Road safety	"There's not much crossings, so it's really hard to like get across the road because there's some cars that go okay but then there's some that like speed down the road." (Walker Road Primary School)
	"Making roads safer or proper big lights or lollipop people or that, because I can't get to my friends because of that busy road near my dad's and it's really annoying." (Brimmond Primary School)
	"There should be more zebra crossings…there's little islands you can go onto but you have to like wait till the cars let you cross, there's not a zebra crossing where cars have to stop. When you try to cross the road and there's no zebra crossing they all like speed up at you. They start speeding up when you're halfway across the road." (Printfield Community Project)
Police & city wardens	"I normally speak to them [the city wardens] on my way to school…they look out for people on our way to school." (Walker Road Primary School)
	"We need more police…like walking around the streets…at night you hardly see any." (Printfield Community Project)
	"More police around to stop fights and all that. The police don't come on time so they run." (Fersands & Fountain Community Project)
Online safety	"It isn't really such an issue because we've kind of grown up with it, we kind of know what to do it we're in that situation." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"Sometimes there's like fights set up after school…and everyone will meet at a certain place and there's like snapchat stories and stuff…and also Facebook." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"I very rarely see people being hurt or criticised or anything…There's been quite a big deal in the last few years about cyberbullying and it does happen but not very often." (Harlaw Academy)
	"The big stuff that they talk about, stalking or something like that …it does happen and we need to be aware of it, but it doesn't happen that often and it's not as big an issue as people think it is." (Harlaw Academy)
	"He made a sexual picture using her face…it wasn't her, but it just looked so real…and he threatened to make it viral if he didn't meet her and stuff. She told the police, and me and her had to be interviewed…she didn't want to because she was embarrassed so I went for her…he said if she didn't meet him he'd stalk her for years and years." (Positive Transitions - Kincorth Academy)

Ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard

Being listened to/asked for your opinion	"No one has asked me before if I feel healthy or safe…so it shows that the Council are beginning to listen to young people." (Harlaw Youth Group)
	"From the four years I've been on pupil council I think there's been one instance where we've been told that something's happening, and every other one we've just never heard from again and then we have to keep bringing it up and it gets really annoying. Just even if the head told us." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"I think the teachers are pretty good at letting us speak." (St Machar Academy)
	"No they [the teachers] don't listen to you, in a way…they talk over you." (St Machar Academy)
	["Is there a way you can tell people what you think about all these things you're mentioning about the school?"] "No there isn't really a way…it's just what happens." (St Machar Academy)
	"Sometimes we get a quiz, like about how to make the school better, like what you think of it, but nothing ever really changes after that." (St Machar Academy)
	["Have you ever been given the opportunity to say what you'd like to see in the community? Has anyone ever asked you?"] "No" ["Do you think it's important to be asked?"] "Yeah…because it will show other people that younger people are trying, that they actually do want to do something, other than people just thinking, oh they just want to skive, play around. There are things they want, that are important and we could say that and maybe they'd [employers] take on people with no experience or younger people." (SHMU Positive Transitions)
	"She [the head teacher] gives us like our own leadership, like last year me and some people, we just went and asked if we could do a talent show and we called it 'Middleton Park's Got Talent' but we just did it for the little ones and they really, really enjoyed it…we just went and said to her and she said, oh, what a good idea, and we organised it ourselves." (Middleton Park School)
Ideas for engagement	"The pupil council could help by doing assemblies and asking people what they'd like the school to be like or what they need help with." (Tullos Primary School)
	"Maybe the schools can talk about things in a whole school assembly and maybe us can make up our part about it." (Braehead Primary School)
	"I think things like this is a good idea, only instead of it just being pupil council, you should just take a name out a hat and get a group of people. That would give other people a chance, not just the pupil council, to like speak to you guys, if they wanted an opportunity to say something they would like to change." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"Also the council actually telling us when they're about to do something or if like they're not going to do something." (Bridge of Don Academy)
	"You could get the school to organise you coming to us so we share our ideas." (Brimmond Primary School)
	"Assemblies are a good idea…a short assembly." (Riverbank Primary School)
	"I think maybe in each school we should have a box and we could put our ideas in the box and maybe every once a week we could give them to you and you can know about them." (Scotstown Primary School)
	"We could write like bullying stories, like not bullying stories, but like stories about being safe and stuff." (Walker Road Primary School)

Involvement in developing new initiatives	"I think, really, if people took them [young people] on they'd have less time to do other things and they'd actually focus and get on and as you said, get the respect that we want." (SHMU Positive Transitions)
	"We could grow plants in empty wasteland to improve the environment, like a little garden to grow stuff…when we're having break, when we come outside, we would have something to do, and there could be like jobs and then you could say you get the job of watering the plants today." (Tullos Primary School)
	["What can we do to make sure you're listened to and involved in decisions?"] "We could do fundraisers to raise money for the things we wanted… I don't think communities are as close as they could be. I think if we get closer, there's a lot more good we can do." (St Machar Academy)

Ensuring that children and young people in need of additional support are treated fairly and equally

Hazlewood school	"We feel included because we help new basketball players…we're doing this young leaders thingy and that means helping the little ones and the equipment and stuff…we can talk to the little ones and that's how I feel about being included."
	"Work experience was fun. We were doing the doors and windows and there was a customer at the counter and I asked to see what he was wanting and he was a nice guy and then I asked to see if he liked his drink. So I'm slowly getting out my shell."
	"I'm not quite fond of clubs because I used to be in a club and there was a kid there, he was bullying me a lot there and I didn't have a lot of friends there, so I'm not quite fond of clubs…I hardly go out much I just stay at home on the computer."
	"We've met a lot of new friends and we know some of the students with special needs, their abilities, so if they need help with anything, we can help, by doing things for them, teaching them how to go around college and things, so we're just basically like adults helping."
Positive Transitions (Harlaw Academy)	"Quite a lot of teachers don't grasp that not all students learn in the same way."
	"I'm quite heavily dyslexic…it's like on one side we're told it's okay and the other side we're told it's not acceptable, like the way in which you learn. Like some teachers are like, no you've got to do it the book way, when your brain grasps the concept of an alternative way much better and you find it trickier to do it the black and white way."
	"It would be easier if teachers came to you on a helping level than a you-need-to-do-this-that's-why-I'm-here level…there's a level where your education needs to be pushed, but also the support. If the you-need-to-do-it, you-need-to-do-it, you-need-to-do-it is too much, like the brain actually freezes when it's too stressed, so when you've got someone pressuring you to do something there's a lot of stress in that and your brain just doesn't work as well as it should."
	"Some teachers, it feels like they're pushing us. I mean, I get that they've got to, but sometimes it feels like they go too far… it's like, some people don't follow things as fast as others do and I've noticed that some people that get it quicker can be a little irritating."
	"Or it's like "keep up!" Every pupil works at different speeds and not every pupil can keep up with the speed that you yourself work at…quite a few teachers start the lesson trying to keep at your speed and then before you know it they're flying ahead."
	"Quite a lot of teachers think you're just taking the mick. I got sent to the deputy head once because I was just struggling too much and they thought I was just laughing and joking."
	"Quite a lot of the time when you're laughing and joking it's because you've said to the teacher several times, "I'm not keeping up", and you've just given up…once you've explained you're not keeping up and the teacher just continues, it's like, well what's the point in continuing, so that's when everybody ends up laughing and joking."
Positive Transitions (SHMU)	"It's hard to get into work full time. I've just been rejected by a job because I've got no experience, so like it's hard to get into a job if you've got no experience, but no-one will take you on if you don't have any experience, so it's not easy."
	"If we'd had more of these things it would have given a sense of responsibility, someone trusting you to do that [speaking live on air]…it's something I didn't feel I got from school."
	"They knew I didn't want to be at school, so they tried to help me, but then it never really went well, so I just left school. They could have helped, like, put me to the careers advisor. They never really gave me any other advice or tips. They could have set up a meeting or something with someone that actually knew a bit better. I'm not slagging them off, just saying, they're not like proper careers advisors or anything…just my guidance teacher."

	"They did speak to me a lot but they just really wanted me out the school. I felt like I was kind of getting kicked out of school…it happened to my sister as well…they just didn't give me any advice at all. They told me to go to the careers advisor, but that's all they said to me. I had the feeling that the school wouldn't really compromise. The situation I was in, I was only taking two periods, and you have to take a mandatory amount of four, but I didn't really want to do another two, because I felt I wouldn't be interested and I wouldn't really be focused as much…I felt that would bring me down overall and I wouldn't perform well in any of them. I either had to just take two other subjects that I didn't care about or leave school."
	"Yeah I feel misrepresented or stereotyped quite a bit. It's like I don't want to work , or I'm lazy or things like that…at school that's the kind of vibe you get."
	"The only time I got a confidence booster was through football…the coaches praising me…they'd all just give you a little advice, give you a little jump, like, simple little words and even if you're struggling they give you a little confidence booster and it helps just to get your chin up and then move on…but if you're like sitting at home and no-one's giving you that little word or whatever, it's kind of when you start losing confidence or whatever."
SHMU Youth Media Group	"When I was at school, the guidance classes, we never really did anything guidance, it was just like study period week after week after week and I also wasn't learning like life skills that I needed to know."
	"Really we should be learning life skills in PSE. I don't know where to get my national insurance number, I don't know how to pay rent, I don't know how to do finance. This is all the kind of stuff I should be learning. I don't know how to fill in a job application form. I don't know any of this. This is the stuff I should be learning and it's neglected."
	"We have PSE, we don't do much in it, we just hang around there…this year was supposed to be for health and safety and everything, but we have our PSE and we don't really do anything."
	"Some people really struggle with being organised, and studying, so like there's not the support in place for helping them with that."
	"We get appointments with careers advisors but we don't get them very often…but the experiences I've had with careers advisors, I mean if you don't know what to do you're kind of stuck, they can't really help you."
	"They sometimes expect you to understand stuff straight off the back, like it doesn't always kind of compute."

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