

Draft CYP Plan Consultation 2010 - 13 October 2009

Responses from Children and Young People

Methodology

The Children and Young People's Involvement Network (ChYPIN) was invited to consult the children and young people (C&YP) they are in contact with on the draft CYP plan. This was carried out through a variety of routes, including individual conversations, consultation groups, email and Facebook surveys/discussion etc. The Participation and Play team created a set of questions to use for discussion and collated the findings. The findings are presented in relation to the 3 key priority areas of the plan: safeguarding, raising achievement and narrowing the gap.

Who responded?

165 children and young people were involved in giving their views on the draft CYP Plan 2010-13, through: Key 2, Abingdon E2E, Bicester College, OCVC, Connexions, YOS, IYSS, Anti-Bullying Advisory group, Vale of the White Horse Youth Cabinet, Henley Town Youth Council, UK Youth Parliament, Oxfordshire Youth Parliament members, Children in Care Council, OYE! Oxfordshire Youth Enablers (C&YP Disability Forum), Asylum Seeking C&YP, and vtalent year volunteers.

The C&YP were from a wide range of ethnic groups, and included a strong voice from disabled children and young people, Looked After Children, teenage parents and those within the Youth Justice systems. The age range included children and young people aged 9-25, but over 80% were between 14-18. There was a slightly higher number of boys than girls consulted (60/40).

Overall

There was a positive response from many C&YP about the draft CYP Plan and some positively enthusiastic responses! But there were also comments about areas which were not given sufficient focus or were missed out. This summary paper captures comments from C&YP, primarily in their own words, on the plan or the issues raised in discussion about the plan.

The findings below are ordered to show the most commonly held views at the top of each section. Italics represent actual quotes from YP.

1. Safeguarding

- You have to be safe to learn (a strongly voiced comment from many C&YP) ... *"Things go really wrong when you don't feel safe"*
- *"Bullying changes you – you have to be the bully to fight the bully"*
- *"Keeping us safe – adults need to take bullying seriously, need to involve YP fully in action taken ... often you're not involved and don't have control"*

and it feels unsafe, like getting you together with the bully without asking you or thinking what'll happen next “

- *“You need to think about treating everyone equally. If someone is being bullied you need to help the bully as well and learn what’s going on in their life”*
- *“I wish people wouldn’t pick on me – I wish someone would help me make friends” (Disabled YP)*
- *“I think bullying is the most common thing ever, school bullying systems are bad, they say they stick to them and they don’t”*
- *“All schools should have the same system in every school, not there own (bullying) system, so they are all doing the same thing...”*
- *“I’ve been bullied a lot in school.... they (bullies) are insecure and need help to... they need to go to something to realise they are doing wrong”*
- *When being bullied “There should be someone you can call that you know an adult or a friend (i.e. VIVA)...I feel uncomfortable talking to someone I don’t know or teachers, as they judge ‘it’s always you’...”*
- *Keeping all C&YP safe because .. “we don’t want them to get hurt and it applies to us all”*
- *Issues re lack of mental health support, especially from LAC, e.g. “more likely to self harm because of our life, where they live.... We have stressful problems.... I worry because of what I’ve been through; more likely for looked after children because of what we’ve been through.... doesn’t always get noticed....self harming is higher due to looked after children’s mental health issues”.*
- *“Most important thing for LAC is for all link into each other – if that didn’t happen, it wouldn’t happen...it’s a chain – if families were having problems, it would affect school, if home life is affected by problems, you have problems at school”.*
- *“No support could have changed what happened to me....I just needed to know more about what was going to happen”*
- *“I feel supported when everyone involved all work together”...“I don’t agree as too many interfere.... need one person instead or try to sort out yourself*
- *“If you have more sports halls in schools it would help to stop fighting”*
- *Compulsory training ALL adults in schools about bullying*
- *More peer mentoring schemes in secondary*
- *“Here there are so many stories....I’m scared people will jump out of bushes and need someone to walk me home....more street lamps at night, especially down alleyways”*
- *”*
- *”*
- *”*

2. Raising Achievement

- *“Schools aren’t everything – there’s too much in here about grades and stuff – I’m good at lots of things that my school doesn’t even know about – and wouldn’t think were important anyway – but they are”*
- *“Schools and exams aren’t everything” (common view expressed)*

- Raising achievement of all – *“it’s not fair on the people that do try hard and get ignored”* (a view expressed by several YP)
- *“I feel like a pawn in a game of results – rather than being supported to learn, be the person I am and be happy”*
- *“Targeting support to BME groups is patronising and stigmatising”* – all C&YP need support if and when they need it (comments from several YP)
- All schools need improving instead of excluding people (comment from several YP) ... *“set up alternatives like weekend school so you can still get qualifications and get back into school in your time”*
- Having other staff in schools to support you helps .. *“Youth workers in schools are brilliant – they’re someone normal to talk to”*
- *“If you listened more to what we say, you’d learn more about what would help us to raise our own achievement – you can’t raise it for us”*
- *“School age extension puts more pressure on us – it doesn’t help raise achievement”*
- *More outside stuff and active and practical things – sitting in class is boring and if you don’t like theory stuff you can’t concentrate*
“When I return (from an activity) and feel proud no-one says anything...they focus on the bad.... need to be appreciated for doing the things I do”
- *“Excellent school environments don’t make you learn better – people not objects make you learn”*
- *“People working WITH me and not telling me what to do all the time would help”*
- *“Being at Meadowbrook College full time for at least a year”*
- *“Being able to complain about teachers confidentially, so we don’t get told off for causing trouble”*
- *“More courses at college – when you need them – not having to wait until it suits the college – I need it now”*
- Sometimes classes are too big, sometimes too small – *“like when there’s 6 in it you don’t learn as much as if more people are in it”*

3. Narrowing the gap

- *“If you can get all above right then...if you’re safe, supported in an environment where you’re comfortable working in... Relevant to your education – your sorted”*
- Need more weekend opening of youth clubs ... *“I still can’t believe that at the very times we need them, everything’s closed. You’ve got school stuff to do in the week when they’re open and then when you want to go out at weekends you can’t go there and so you have to hang about the streets getting shouted at by everyone”*
- *“It’s like they forgot we’re here”* (common view of YP living in rural areas in response to the CYP plan)
- *Getting mental health support earlier – “if I’d had support when I got depressed I wouldn’t have hit rock bottom”*
- *Easy, local, early support for families is really important – because I’m 17 and I’ve got a 3 year old daughter* (echoed by other young parents)
- Having aspirations and being heard – *“to hear their optimism about the things that concern them”* ... *“to get better communities in the future”*
- Being more involved in decision-making in and out of school

- *“When seen as a yp in care, seen as vulnerable, things happen if you’re vulnerable...people think you can’t make decisions for yourself.... if you say don’t need something it’s forced upon you....foster parents always think they know best...they probably do but we have to learn from experience even if it is negative.... we need to know the support is there if it goes wrong.... we need to know how to take risks and feel able to go back to safety”.*
- Support is not quick enough especially if you live in rural areas
- *“Every child should be treated the same no matter what there situation is. You should get more support if your mum and dad is in prison...may need someone to sit down and talk to them”.*
- YP in rural areas find it difficult to get play, leisure or social activities
- *“Support for BME groups is the most important thing – Connexions need to point you in the right direction instead of being dismissive”*
- Play opportunities for disabled children in rural areas .. *“I’ve got a friend with a disabled child in the country and there’s nothing for him to go on and we’d love to take him to the park”*
- *“Making town areas more accessible from rural areas”* (expressed by many YP)
- Knowing our rights
- More things to do – play, leisure, fun, chilling out - outside school
- Cheaper transport in rural areas
- Less red tape in volunteering so more people can do it
- Co-operation of schools in getting involved in local democracy and citizenships stuff
- Fair pricing for school and public transport for over 16’s still in FT education
- More cycle paths
- Survival tips for pregnancy
- Disabled YP have no aspirations for their future – and are particularly vulnerable to exclusion from employment without sufficient support
- Kids who aren’t black or disabled always get left out of things
- Internet safety courses for parents/workers/YP
- Age appropriate reward schemes
- More NVQ/apprenticeship schemes
- Help YP to get jobs – *“having a job is the most important thing”*
- *“Choice of good housing, not everyone can stay at home when they grow up”*

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