A youth research project addressing the view:

"There is nothing for young people to do in Hertsmere'

The Hertsmere Borough Council Youth Projects Team (Be There! Do It!) is continuously working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of provision for young people in the borough. In November 2011 we embarked upon a new research project to deepen our understanding of youth provision in the local community.

For further information about this research please contact

Corina Best
Youth Projects & Promotions Officer
Hertsmere Borough Council

Telephone:	020 8207 7801
Email:	corina.best@hertsmere.gov.uk
Postal Address:	Corporate Support & Community Services, Hertsmere Borough Council, Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 1WA

Headline Findings from 2011 Consultation and Research

Introduction

The Hertsmere Borough Council Youth Projects Team (Be There! Do It!) is continuously working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of provision for young people in the borough. In November 2011 we embarked upon a new research project to deepen our understanding of youth provision in the local community. We specifically wanted to address the view:

"There is nothing for young people to do in Hertsmere"

This is a view we commonly hear. There are a number of youth focused agencies in Hertsmere. All have a range of resources. A lot of time, effort and resource goes in to providing positive activities for young people. We continually review the type of activities we offer and how we promote what we do, listening to feedback to develop our work. But if people believe there is nothing for young people to do then there must be something missing between us, the service providers and our customers. We want to get to the bottom of this.

Our aims
In response to this view, we created three broad categories to look at, which could have an impact on our effectiveness; and posed a number of premise questions which we used as a starting point for the development of our research.
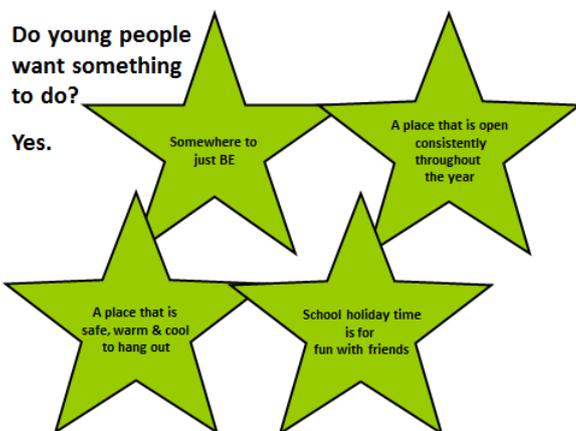
- **Young people's perceptions, wants and needs**
- Do young people actually want something to do?
- Is the phrase 'there is nothing to do' part of an unfinished sentence?
- **Environmental Impacts - socio-economic climate and local demographic changes**
- What things are impacting on our local environment which may affect the take up of youth provision or the type of provision we should be offering?
- **National Intelligence**
- Key developments in Government policy for young people aged 13-19

Research and delivery tends to be fragmented. In which case; perhaps decision making could be improved.
The key component of this particular research mission was to bring all of the different stakeholders together in to one room at the same time. This is something which has not been done before as part of our research or planning processes. It was felt that by creating this opportunity for direct two-way communication amongst all of the stakeholders, we would increase our chances of forging a better understanding of the operating environment and the issues.

Different stakeholder groups remain on the most part separate to each other (meaning that all concerned will have a chance to have an input in to developmental discussions and plans in some capacity). However, it seems that views, concerns and ideas tend to be formed independently of each other, interpreted as a whole and then the pieces put together.

The secondary part was to look at statistics to gauge any environmental changes which may have an external impact on the wants and needs in the local community. Also, to look at national intelligence to inform our decisions.

Below are some of our findings. It gives representation of what was important to young people with regard to taking part in activities. Frequently cited issues were:

Do young people want something to do?

Yes.

- Somewhere to just BE
- A place that is open consistently throughout the year
- A place that is safe, warm & cool to hang out
- School holiday time is for fun with friends

Personal Issues

- Warmth & Safety
- Fear Factor
- Bullying
- Confidence to take part
- What are friends doing?
- Being understood
- Feeling valued
- Trust & Respect from adults

Logistical Issues

Young People
- Cost of activities
- Travelling
- Not enough choice of things they *actually* want to do

Parents
- Cost of activities
- Cost of travel to activities
- Travelling time and distance to get to activities
- Logistics
- Not enough family-based activities

Increasing in difficulty the more children they have

Motivational Theories

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

McClelland's Acquired-Needs Theory

McClelland's acquired-needs theory of motivation states that, when a need is strong, it will motivate an individual to engage in behaviors to satisfy that need.

© Eric R. Berndt/Unicom Stock Photos

Young people's perceptions, wants & needs

Do young people actually want something to do?
- Yes. However the main message that was coming back to us was that they want somewhere to just BE.
- Somewhere safe, warm and cool to hang out.
- A facility that is open all the time as opposed to something that is only on for a couple of hours each week.
- Something constant as opposed to just in school holidays.
- The age 13+ group just want to have fun with friends during holidays. They do not want to be working towards accreditations. They want to have a break to 'recharge their batteries'

Is the phrase 'there is nothing to do' … part of an unfinished sentence?
- Yes. This question deals with barriers to participation.
- It became apparent that local people know there are things to do and that in fact, this phrase is used as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to very specific wants and needs not being met.

Frequently cited issues were:

Personal
- Warmth and safety are basic needs that have to be met.
- The 'fear factor' – Fear of not fitting in, not being able to do the activity and looking silly.
- Being bullied or feeling out of place amongst the 'cool crowd'
- Fun with friends is key. If friends do not go, they are less likely to go.
- Trust. They want to be treated with more respect and to be trusted by adults.
- They want to feel valued.

- They need to be around people who can connect with them and who understand them. Therefore, the people supervising the sessions must fit this criterion for retention and growth of participants.
- Confidence, feeling comfortable to go.

Logistical
- Travelling can put them off or limit accessibility
- Cost of activities
- Not enough choice of things they actually want to do. E.g. it was raised that there is too much sport based activity.

Parent's biggest issues
- Cost of activities AND travel to activities
- Travelling time and distance to get to activities
- Logistics e.g. getting their kids to and from activities around their work schedule
- Not enough family-based activities

Linking to motivational theory (Maslow, Alderfer, Herzberg, Mclelland)
- If the basic needs are not met then the higher needs are irrelevant. The basic needs are required to attract participation in the first instance. In the case of this research that includes – a warm, safe place, affordability easy and affordable travel, logistical consideration.
- Next is 'fitting in' and socialising with friends.
- Motivational factors also need to be fulfilled and will vary according to each individual.
- The main message coming out was that factors of extrinsic source were most important – acceptance, respect and understanding from other people.
- Once this is fulfilled, the young people will be more inclined and ready to focus on intrinsic motivation. The prior needs are required to be met as this will make them comfortable and confident to take part in activities.

Environmental Impacts
By reviewing socio-economic statistical data about Hertsmere we are able to gain a better understanding of our local environment. Through this we can focus our resources more effectively.

Some of the key pointers which these pieces of information highlight are:

1) 19.1% of total residents fall within the 5-19 age category.
2) Of this we can make an approximate estimate that across Hertsmere there are:
   4257 aged 9-11
   5676 aged 12-15
   3849 aged 16-19
   Which gives us an actual idea of the size of our total target market.
3) White British is by far the highest ethnicity 77.8%
4) The overall population has increased by 4450 people. The white British population decreasing significantly and all other ethnicities increasing.
5) 63.04% are Christian followed by 11.34% Jewish
6) We know that multiple deprivation indicators have increased in several areas and the categories which have highest depravation link directly to the types of advice that is being sought out via the CAB.
7) We know that income deprivation affecting children is one of the top categories.

National Intelligence
It should be noted that national research, guidance and latest policy on youth-related matters, reflects our observations and findings on local needs and behaviour.

Key developments in Government policy for young people aged 13-19

i. Positive for Youth
Positive for Youth, published on 19 December 2011, is *a new approach to cross-Government policy for young people aged 13-19 in England. It brings together all of the Government's policies for this age group, presenting a single vision across the interests of at least nine departments.*
It has been produced with young people and youth professionals through extensive collaboration and consultation. Positive for Youth sets out a shared vision for how all parts of society – including councils, schools, charities, and businesses – can work together in partnership to support families and improve outcomes for young people, particularly those who are most disadvantaged or vulnerable

ii. The Positive for Youth Vision
At the heart of the statement is a vision co-produced with young people and those that work with them for what a society that is positive for youth would look like. The vision is that all young people will have.
1. Supportive relationships
2. Strong ambitions
3. Good opportunities

iii. We all have a role to play
Government cannot create a society that is positive for youth on its own. Real progress depends on everyone playing their part. The policy outlines the role each stakeholder can take including: young people, parents, carers and families, other adults, the media, businesses, teachers, youth workers, other professionals, local authorities, other commissioner and Government.

Conclusion
- The findings matched up to our premise. This highlights and provides testimonial to our view that a greater effort needs to be made to focus resources to have the most effective impact.
- When planning it may be more effective to assess viability from the viewpoint of barriers and aim to minimise as much as possible. For example: Instead of looking at a trip to Thorpe park as a good price because we could get discounted tickets we need to look at it from the perspective of the young person and which of these barriers might present itself and also from the perspective of the parent with several children.
- This also links further to understanding why long term projects tend to be more successful. Reasons could include:

  1) Young people develop a feeling of safety and security in this type of environment and become comfortable to go.

  2) They develop deeper friendships and camaraderie which encourages them to continue going.

  3) In terms of logistics, travelling and cost, it is already known prior to commencement and built in to the schedule and the routine for the young person and for the family. With long term projects there are more likely to be termly schedules which lay out costs and commitment requirements and so on, hence making it easier for the young person and parents to commit to and manage.