

***TONBRIDGE AND MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL***

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW

***YOUTH SUPPORT AND
DEVELOPMENT***

JULY 2005

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Borough Council's Scrutiny Committee has undertaken a wide ranging review of youth support and development services available to young people in Tonbridge and Malling. The focus for the review was on services provided in partnership with the Borough Council by a range of public and voluntary sector agencies.

1.2 The review was scoped in November 2004 and the following issues were identified for the review to address:

(a) *Youth Activities – focusing on youth clubs and outreach work*

- What is the current range and scope of organised youth activities across both urban and rural areas of the Borough?
- How does the range and scope of organised youth activities in Tonbridge & Malling compare to neighbouring districts?
- What support is offered to voluntary organisations and parish councils in setting up youth clubs/groups and could more be done to facilitate this?
- Are there existing or future areas of need where there is no service provision at present?

(b) *Partnership Projects – to include Y2Crew and Try Angle Awards*

- Does the Y2Crew summer activity programme fulfil its objectives and are any changes required in the format of the programme or its organisation?
- Are the Try Angle Awards reaching their potential in Tonbridge & Malling and should more be done to support the scheme?

(c) *Involving Young People – Youth Forum*

- What is the current format of the youth forum and is it effective?
- What other youth forum models could be adopted and what are the resource implications of these?
- Which model might be effective in Tonbridge and Malling?

(d) *Advice and Support – focusing on careers, health/well being, family issues and work placements/mentoring*

- Can young people access the careers and further education advice they need as they progress through school?

- Are Personal Advisors in schools able to deal with complex personal issues?
 - Can more advice and support be provided to young people suffering from family problems to prevent homelessness?
 - Are young people not in education, employment or training accessing the Connexions service?
 - Is there sufficient access to health advice tailored to young people's needs on a variety of issues including mental health, sexual health and general health?
 - Is there a larger role for mentoring, particularly for young people at risk of exclusion from education or of offending?
 - Do young people have sufficient access to work placement opportunities to assist with their career choices?
- 1.3 The review process involved addressing the above issues in two phases. The first phase of the review of youth support and development dealt with three issues:
- organised youth activities supported by KCC Youth and Community
 - the Y2Crew summer activity programme
 - the annual Try Angle Award scheme
- 1.4 The second phase of the review dealt with :
- The future of the Youth Forum
 - Advice and support given to young people (careers, well-being, health)
- 1.5 Each phase of the review involved the Scrutiny Committee hearing evidence from a variety of sources. A number of agencies attended the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee to assist with their consideration of the issues. These were KCC Youth and Community, Mid Kent Education Business Partnership, Maidstone Mediation Service, Connexions Service and Maidstone Weald PCT. In addition, findings from a survey of youth attending locals secondary schools (Annex A) and the results of a youth focus group meeting (Annex B) were reported to the review and supplemented by an additional police survey of pupils at Hugh Christie School in Tonbridge. A survey of youth provision and needs at the Parish Level was also undertaken and reported into the review along with studies from the DFES on the value of youth work to the wider community.

- 1.6 Final recommendations for each phase of the review (as set out below) were reported to the Borough Council's Cabinet on 22nd June and these were endorsed without amendment.

2 PARTNERSHIP YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 The scope of this part of the review focused on the organised youth activities supported by Kent County Council Youth and Community including 'detached' and centre based work. In addition, the review looked at the role of the voluntary sector in establishing and running youth groups and the support made available to assist it.
- 2.2 Results from the youth survey indicated that many young people are already engaged in attending youth clubs and activities of various kinds and many felt provision was good. For these young people, it was not uncommon for them to be involved in two or more different activities every week. There were, however, a significant number not engaged in any activities and for some, it appeared that there was little that would encourage them to attend regardless of how locally they were provided and how informally they were run and organised. Of those that might be encouraged to attend, the provision of services closer to their home and a wider range, and lower cost, of organised activities were seen to be the key issues.
- 2.3 The survey of youth provision within parishes indicated a particular problem in organising activities in more rural areas. Due to the size and location of some villages, specific youth provision was not viable and they relied on provision in neighbouring areas. In addition, the lack of adult volunteers to establish new groups and develop them was also a constraint.

(a) The Type of Facilities Required

- 2.4 In general terms, there appears to be fairly good provision in more formal groups and activities across the Borough including 'uniformed' groups such as guides and scouts. The lack of provision appeared to be mainly in the more informal, non membership-based style of provision eg youth clubs, occasional activities and informal meeting places. For those young people who felt themselves to be unsuited to more formal activities, their needs could best be served by the provision of more informal 'drop-in' activities provided locally.
- 2.5 In addition, the review found that many young people did not wish to participate in any organised activities, no matter how informally they were organised. For this group, the provision of informal meeting places such as youth shelters in parks or drop-in facilities at local halls would best meet their needs. From the survey of young people, the

provision of shelter facilities needed to be in well lit secure areas, perhaps covered by CCTV, as young people said they would feel insecure in more remote locations. They acknowledged, however, that the siting of such facilities needed to be sensitive to the amenities of local residents and constructed from vandal-proof materials.

- 2.6 It was concluded that further research about the need for youth shelters in the Borough should be undertaken along with an assessment of best practice with regard to the siting and design of such facilities.

(b) Transport barriers

- 2.7 The lack of available public transport was recorded by young people as a major constraint on accessing youth activities, particularly when these ended later in the evening. Particularly affected are the more rural parts of the Borough. However, the urban areas, including those in reach of local rail services can also suffer similar problems due to the lack of public transport services at non-peak periods. Transport issues have been one of the key issues to emerge from discussions at the Tonbridge and Malling Youth Forum and this is identified in the Youth Action Plan, prepared by the Forum, as one of their key areas of concern.

- 2.8 Public transport issues for young people in the Borough need to be drawn to the attention of public transport providers, perhaps via a special meeting of the Borough Council's Public Transport Panel. There is a need to evaluate where and when new services that meet the needs of young people in the Borough could be developed, or how other forms of transport services could be developed, for example, wider use of community mini buses such as the one that operates in Snodland.

(c) Local Voluntary Initiatives

- 2.9 Increased engagement of young people in activities and clubs could also be achieved if additional provision was encouraged in more local places in and around the Borough, more accessible by young people. Local initiatives at the parish and neighbourhood level could meet this need but more support would be required for volunteers and groups to organise and operate activities that would be attractive to young people. When establishing new groups, it was clear from the views expressed by young people, that they would appreciate involvement in decisions about the type of group to be established and its planned programme of activities. Although often difficult to achieve, a wide range of ages would need to be catered for and different activities provided.

2.10 It was apparent from the review that a wide variety of neighbourhoods needed support to establish youth facilities. Although there is a focus on the areas of greatest need including Snodland, East Malling and Trench, some more affluent areas suffer similar problems related to isolation of young people from urban centres, lack of transport and lack of available facilities. The current spread of detached activity by KCC Youth and Community rightly encompassed all areas from the most deprived wards to the most affluent.

(d) The role of Kent County Council Youth and Community

2.11 Kent County Council Youth and Community provide detached youth workers to provide youth clubs and activities often in partnership with voluntary groups. Projects operate in both the Tonbridge and the Malling parts of the Borough. Voluntary Field Officers also operate across the Borough to support voluntary and community groups to set up youth groups. Additional provision of this kind could enable more areas to be covered and would assist more local voluntary groups to be established in areas close to where young people need to access them.

2.12 The review heard that, compared to other districts in Kent, the County Council 'spend' on youth services in Tonbridge and Malling is quite low. Although this is due in part to the lower number of youth centres in the Borough compared to elsewhere (and hence lower maintenance costs etc), the lack of built facilities in the Borough indicates that more detached and outreach youth work is required to develop youth support services further. The Borough Council has invited the County Council to review the resources currently available to the Area Youth Officer for Tonbridge and Malling with a view to enhancing outreach resources to ensure both urban and rural areas of the borough can be provided with adequate youth support services.

(e) Information for Young People

2.13 The review of youth services has revealed a wide range of formal and informal activities in the Borough, some being provided through formal channels with the support of KCC Youth and Community and others more informally by voluntary work. The youth survey found that many young people were not aware of the activities and groups operating in the Borough. Greater awareness of what is currently available locally could also assist with encouraging more young people to get involved.

2.14 A mapping exercise of all youth activities and facilities available in the Borough is currently being prepared. When complete, the information gathered could act as a signpost to the kind of activities and groups available in local areas. Consideration would need to be given to how

best to present and publish the data to ensure it is disseminated to a wide range of local young people. One means to achieve this is to prepare a directory of youth services for the Borough and ensure this can be freely distributed amongst schools, groups, libraries and other access points. A web-based database would also assist. The Youth Forum will be invited to consider these options further.

- 2.15 Where there is a built youth facility, considerably more services and activities can be provided. There is currently only one such facility in the Borough operated by KCC Youth and Community at Samays, Snodland. Support activities are also provided at the Teen and Twenty Club in Tonbridge which operates independently. Where opportunities may arise around the Borough, for example, as part of new development, it will be important to ensure that the needs of young people are incorporated as far as possible into individual proposals. The involvement of KCC Youth and Community in commenting on key development proposals would be useful where facilities might be provided or supported via developer contributions, where the needs arise from the development itself.
- 2.16 An emerging site specific opportunity relates to the educational development proposals being considered for East Malling. There is a clear need within the community and the surrounding area for an element of built youth provision to be incorporated as part of the development package, potentially as part of a 'Children's Centre' proposal for the area. The Borough Council is to express its formal support for this idea to the County Council. Although unlikely to come to fruition in the short term, the provision of such a facility could provide a much needed focus for youth support in East Malling which could serve an area significantly wider than just the adjoining estates.
- 2.17 Elsewhere, organised youth activities are dependent upon community halls and buildings to take place. Evidence has suggested that, in some cases, groups involving young people have difficulties in accessing such facilities due to concerns (often misplaced) about the conduct of the participants, noise, health and safety issues and concerns about vandalism, and public insurance. The cost of the hire of halls is also a deterrent as some have no reduced charges for activities related to younger people. It may indicate a degree of unnecessary prejudice against young people by those that control access to community buildings. The Borough Council could assist by seeking assurances from Parish Councils, village hall committees and others that there are no barriers to youth groups in accessing local facilities. Drawing their attention to the outcomes of this review and the need to promote more opportunities for young people generally might also assist in removing such barriers.

(f) Recommendations

- 2.18 Further research be undertaken with regard to the provision of youth shelters and best practice in the design and siting of such facilities, the results of which to be reported to a future meeting of the Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth Advisory Board.
- 2.19 A special meeting of the Public Transport Panel be organised to deal with youth transport issues and that the Tonbridge Youth Forum be invited to participate in the organisation of that meeting.
- 2.20 The Borough Council be recommended to express support for the current range of youth services provided in the Borough by the County Council's Youth and Community team but invite the County Council to consider the need for additional resources being made available for Youth and Community services in Tonbridge and Malling, in particular, to strengthen existing detached youth work and the support provided to voluntary groups and clubs providing services for young people.
- 2.21 In consultation with the Youth Forum, consideration be given as to the best ways in which information on local youth services should be publicised and made available to young people in the Borough.
- 2.22 The Planning and Engineering Advisory Board be invited to consider how best the needs of young people can be catered for as part of new development and facilities funded, as part of a wider study into developer contributions.
- 2.23 The Borough Council expresses support for the provision of built youth facilities in East Malling being included in future educational developments in the area.
- 2.24 The findings of the review be drawn to the attention of Parish Councils, village hall committees and other similar bodies to ensure there are no unreasonable barriers to youth groups having access to local community halls and facilities.

3 THE Y2 CREW PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The Y2 Crew programme is a series of organised activities for 11-15 year olds, currently operating in North Tonbridge, East Malling, Hadlow and Snodland during the school holidays. The programme is run jointly by the Borough Council and KCC Youth and Community with involvement from local voluntary groups. Funding has been made available from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. As such,

the focus of the programme has been on the provision of a range of positive youth diversionary and developmental activities and, in addition to applications for attendance by young people themselves, the scheme also receives referrals from the Youth Offender Service and Social Services.

3.2 The review heard that:

- Numbers attending the scheme, particularly local activity days, over the past two years has been disappointing. Greater publicity, joint marketing and a review of the activities on offer would be required to increase participation so that spare capacity is fully taken up
- Resources required to organise activities (particularly those of KCC Youth and Community) are considerable and this has affected the management of other on-going projects during its operation. There is a need to be clearer about the roles of each organisation participating in the scheme. The Borough Council could appropriately undertake the administration of the scheme to provide better overall co-ordination with the responsibility for the delivery of the programme resting with KCC Youth and Community and other partners. Sources of external funding also need to be explored.
- The programme was found to be generally meeting its intended objectives of providing diversionary activities for young people in areas in the Borough more prone to higher levels of anti-social behaviour during summer months. However, some increases in criminal damage had occurred in two of the target areas on 2004. It was felt, however, that this may have been due to the use of 'move on' powers by the local police which had the effect of shifting groups of young people to other, less visible areas.
- It was felt that there was a need to continue to strike an appropriate balance between those attending the events by choice and those referred to the programme by other agencies. The interaction of the young people at the events had a major positive benefit which needed to be retained. One means to achieve this would be to encourage greater involvement of older young people from voluntary groups such as the VSU to provide assistance on the programme much in the same way as young helpers are recruited annually to assist in the Summer play scheme for 8-12 year olds. This could include training before the programme begins for both adult and young helpers. Such an approach would assist in relieving the pressure on KCC youth workers over the summer period and over time, recruitment could be drawn increasingly from young people within the target areas themselves as a further developmental opportunity.
- The inclusion of a 'celebration evening' after the conclusion of the programme awarding effort and good behaviour, was regarded as a

positive addition to the scheme and was well received by the participants themselves.

(b) Recommendations

- 3.3 The Y2Crew scheme should continue to operate with its original aims and objectives which concentrate on the provision of diversionary and developmental activities, subject to the concurrence of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- 3.4 A Partnership Agreement should be adopted which identifies the contribution of each agency and its obligations. The Borough Council should confirm its willingness to continue to administer the scheme and liaise with other agencies over referrals.
- 3.5 There should continue to be an appropriate balance struck between those attending the activities by choice and those referred by other agencies.
- 3.6 The Y2 Crew scheme should be marketed as part of the Council's Activate promotional brochure and other publicity opportunities taken to attract wider participation in events.
- 3.7 The participation of voluntary sector groups in the operation of the organised events should continue to be encouraged and developed.
- 3.8 Consideration should be given in the future to the recruitment and training of staff, including young people from within the target areas to assist with the organisation of the scheme.
- 3.9 Additional funding to support the scheme should be explored with the aim of securing more consistent levels of funding for future years.

4 THE TRY ANGLE AWARDS SCHEME

(a) Background

- 4.1 The Try Angle Awards are delivered in partnership with KCC Youth and Community and cover both Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone boroughs. The awards seek to acknowledge personal achievements in a range of categories.
- 4.2 The review found that the Try Angle Award Scheme was meeting its aims. By rewarding the efforts of young people who would normally not achieve such recognition, it was found that the awards were complementary to the Young Achievers Award scheme operated by the Borough Council which sought to recognise individual excellence.

- 4.3 The Borough Council works in partnership with KCC youth and community to deliver the scheme. This was found to be working well, although some clarification of roles was needed. It was suggested that a single point of contact within the Borough Council be nominated, and that the Cabinet Member for Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth should continue to be involved in assessing nominations.
- 4.4 It was agreed that more marketing of the awards scheme within the Borough was required to increase the number of nominations coming forward. Maidstone usually provided more nominations than Tonbridge and Malling. Additional marketing could be provided via the Council's Activate brochure, Here and Now, the youth website and at leisure facilities using posters. Parish Councils could also be invited to assist with raising the profile of the scheme within local communities.
- 4.5 Funding for the scheme is provided from the Council's CDRP budget. Costs for 2004 were £1,000. Provided our contribution was matched by Maidstone Borough Council, this level of funding continued to be appropriate.

(b) Recommendations

- 4.6 The Borough Council should continue to affirm its support for, and involvement in, the Try Angle Awards scheme.
- 4.7 The Borough Council's Youth and Play Development Officer should be nominated to provide a single point of contact.
- 4.8 Additional marketing of the scheme should be undertaken to increase the number of young people nominated from Tonbridge and Malling.
- 4.9 Funding for the Award Scheme for 2005/06 should be confirmed, subject to the agreement of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and to the provision of matched funding from Maidstone Borough Council.

5 THE YOUTH FORUM

(a) Background

- 5.1 The Youth Forum is an important vehicle for engaging young people and encouraging them to become active in their community by representing others, and enabling a wide range of agencies, including the Borough Council, to gain feedback from young people on service issues. The review found that the current Youth Forum was run on fairly 'informal' lines:

- 6-12 members usually attend on an ad-hoc basis usually through informal contact with KCC Youth and Community. No elections to the Forum are held
- the forum met every two months either at Hadlow or Snodland
- the Borough Council and KCC Youth and Community shared responsibility for organising the Forum

5.2 The review found that only a small number of young people in the Borough (14% of those surveyed) were aware of the Forum and as part of the review of its operation, there was a need to consider ways in which the profile of its work could be raised through greater publicity. Young people felt they would prefer to hear about the work of the Forum via school contacts, leaflets and posters.

5.3 Analysis of other Youth Fora in Kent and elsewhere found that most operated on a more formal basis than the T&M model, usually with a larger group of young people. Only a small number operate formal elections to their fora with the majority recruiting young people via schools, youth groups and voluntary organisations. Some fora were given a small budget to undertake activities and to pay for transport costs. Most fora are held in more formal surroundings at council offices. During focus group discussions with young people, it emerged that they did not agree with formal elections to the Forum but that young people from different backgrounds should be encouraged to participate via 'nominations' from schools and local groups.

5.4 It was generally agreed that the existing Forum had operated well and had produced some useful work, especially the Youth Action Plan. Joint operation of the Forum by the Borough Council and KCC Youth and Community was also regarded as a strength.

5.5 It was agreed, however, that a more 'formal' approach should be adopted with the organisation of the Forum, commensurate with the need to ensure young people remained at the forefront of its work and effectively engaged. For the Forum to be more effective and meaningful, it was felt that there was a need to forge closer links between it and the Council, for example, with joint meetings of the Forum and Cabinet, and attendance by Youth Forum members at relevant Advisory Boards and Panels. A more formal system of nominations to the Forum from local schools and groups was felt to be the appropriate way forward and that process should include schools outside of the Borough but attended by young people resident within Tonbridge and Malling. To achieve greater formality, Forum meetings should be held in the Council Chambers at Tonbridge and Kings Hill,

with formal Forum meetings held quarterly, supplemented as required by additional meetings of smaller working groups.

(b) Recommendations

5.6 The following changes be implemented to the Tonbridge and Malling Youth Forum:

- Formal meetings should be held quarterly in the Council Chambers either at Tonbridge Castle or at Kings Hill;
- Membership of the Forum should be refreshed and be drawn from nominations from schools, clubs and groups with an aim of recruiting between 20-30 young people;
- The Forum should be invited to nominate a chairman and executive committee to oversee operation of the Forum and any working groups that are established;
- An annual revenue budget be established to assist with the work of the Forum and to fund transport to and from Forum meetings;
- The Forum should be invited to consider how best to promote itself and its work to a wide cross-section of young people in the Borough with the help of key partners;
- The work of the Forum should be reported to the Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth Advisory Board and the lead Member for the Forum should be the Cabinet portfolio holder for Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth;
- The Forum continues to be organised in partnership with KCC Youth and Community with appropriate input by the Borough Council being provided by the Community Partnerships Officer and Youth & Play Development Officer;
- Opportunities be explored to develop closer links between the Youth Forum and the work of the Council, for example, with joint meetings of the Forum and Cabinet, and attendance by Youth Forum members at relevant Advisory Boards and Panels.

6 YOUTH ADVICE AND SUPPORT

(a) Background

6.1 The review heard from a number of agencies involved in the provision of support and advice to young people covering careers guidance, health and well-being, work placements, and mediation services. The youth survey/focus group highlighted the following issues:

- A significant number of young people felt that they had been offered inadequate advice over careers
- Awareness of the Connexions service varied between age groups, with younger groups (Yrs 8/9) being much less aware than older (Yrs10+).
- Advice on health and personal problems was mainly obtained from family and friends although 'professional' sources of advice remained important for some
- Many young people felt that mentoring schemes should be extended although awareness of the benefits was low amongst younger age groups
- 84% of respondents felt that work placements during school was useful.

6.2 Apart from the Government-funded Connexions Services, many agencies involved in providing essential support to young people were from the voluntary sector. The review commended the work of such agencies but it was recognised that a lack of mainstream funding often limited the important work that was carried out. All agencies involved in the review recognised that they could do more to support young people if a higher and consistent level of funding was available to them.

6.3 The future of support services for young people are currently under review by Government. A Youth Services Green Paper was due to be published in March but has now been delayed following the election. The future of the Connexions Service will be a key issue to be addressed. The original intention of the service was to provide support to all young people on careers and personal issues. In reality, the need to focus resources on 'Tier 1' and 'Tier 2' client groups (those excluded from education or in danger of becoming so) has meant that services for Tier 3 clients (the vast majority) has arguably been less satisfactory. In particular, there are concerns that advice and guidance on careers has been limited and perhaps not provided at an earlier enough stage to help young people with their GCSE option choices.

- 6.4 The content of the proposed Green Paper has been the subject of considerable press speculation. It is clear, however, that significant changes to youth and children's services are under consideration. The Connexions Service function may be split with responsibility for the provision of careers guidance to 13-18 year olds seemingly resting with schools and colleges; and responsibility for work with young people who do not attend a learning institution going to Children's Trusts.
- 6.5 Having completed this Scrutiny Review, the Borough Council is well-placed to be able to comment on the Green Paper when it is published. It is suggested that this a response be formulated by the Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth Advisory Board at the appropriate time, reflecting the concerns highlighted above and, in particular, the inadequacy of core funding to key support agencies (both public and voluntary sector) who deal with youth matters.
- 6.6 Careers advice and support will be a key issue to be addressed by the Green Paper. At the local level, the Education Business Partnerships provide a key role in linking employers and schools, arranging work placements for both pupils and teachers and, for the Malling area, arranging a careers fair for Year 9 pupils to raise early awareness of career choices. Better and more consistent levels of funding for the EBPs should be a matter addressed in our response to the Green Paper. The Maidstone/Malling careers fair has run successfully for a number of years but there is currently no such event for the Tonbridge area. This should be explored with the West Kent EBP, the Chamber of Commerce, local schools and other partners the possibility of introducing such an event for the Tonbridge area in 2006. The Borough Council, as a key local employer, could also adopt a more proactive approach with local schools to promote local government jobs and careers. Some presentations are already undertaken as part of the national 'democracy week' and other school visits are undertaken when requests from the schools are received.
- 6.7 Assistance also needs to be provided to the promoters of the Healthy Schools programme as it was clear that the benefits of such a programme in local schools extended well beyond healthier school dinners. The review heard that only 24 out of 54 schools had obtained 'Healthy School Status' to date although a number were in the process of applying. As part of the Borough Council's work on the delivery of its new key priority – 'promote, encourage and provide opportunities for healthy living', we should explore opportunities to assist partners with the promotion and take up of this important initiative with the aim of achieving a 100% take-up across Borough schools.

- 6.8 There appears to be scope for further mentoring schemes to be introduced in schools in the Borough. Young people themselves recognise the benefits of this facility both as assistance to those being mentored and as a developmental opportunity for the mentors. A range of local agencies appears to be involved in the provision of such work and some mapping of providers and existing schemes across the Borough would be beneficial in order to target efforts to extend mentoring schemes to those schools most in need. Education Business Partnerships promote adult mentoring for young people and offer training for this. There is currently a shortage of adult volunteers to carry out this work and the Borough Council should potentially assist by promoting the opportunity amongst its staff.
- 6.9 The review heard that mediation services for Malling and West Kent often play an important role in resolving family problems involving young people, difficulties in school, preventing homelessness and resolving issues related to anti-social behaviour including neighbour disputes. Currently, the resources of the two voluntary agencies providing mediation services require them to be targeted on areas of most need. There is, however, scope for services to be extended.
- 6.10 An example of this is the work of the Mediation Services in seeking restorative justice whereby those committing an offence are brought to meet their victims where offenders have the opportunity to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and victims have the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged. The approach is particularly effective in dealing with instances of anti-social behaviour in local communities and bullying within schools. It is suggested, therefore, that the further use of mediation services be commended to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as a means to help tackle anti-social behaviour and that the extension of mediation services to local schools be commended to the County Council for consideration.

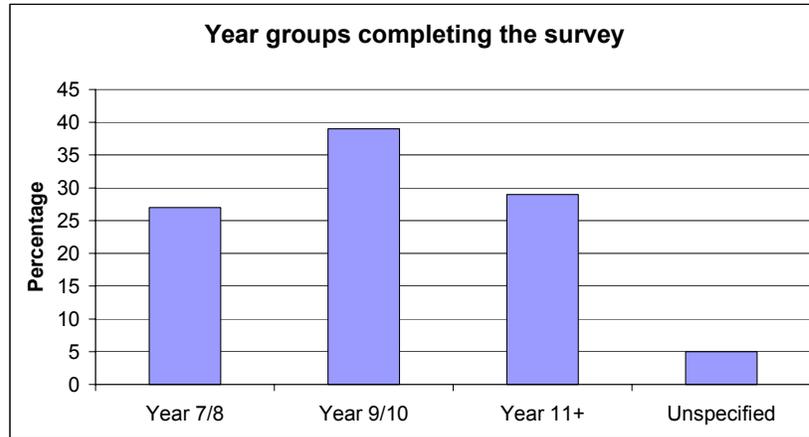
(b) Recommendations

- 6.11 The Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth Advisory Board be invited to submit comments on the forthcoming Green Paper on youth services in particular to address the inadequacy of core funding to public and voluntary sector service providers.
- 6.12 Local Partners including the Chamber of Commerce and the West Kent EBP be invited to assist with the organisation of a schools careers fair for the Tonbridge area in 2006.

- 6.13 The Borough Council, as a key local employer, explores further opportunities to promote local government jobs and careers to local schools.
- 6.14 The Borough Council should seek to assist partners with the promotion and take up of Healthy Schools initiative with the aim of achieving a 100% take-up across Borough schools.
- 6.15 The scope to extend mentoring schemes operating within schools be explored with partners and the opportunities to become adult mentors for young people be promoted amongst staff.
- 6.16 The use of mediation services be commended to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as a means to help tackle anti-social behaviour and the extension of mediation services to local schools be commended to the County Council for its consideration.

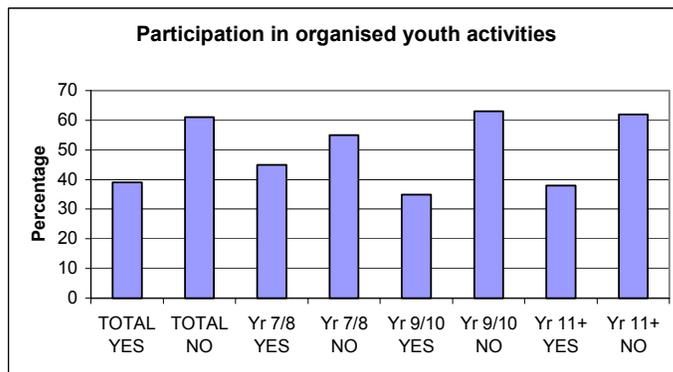
ANNEX A - Scrutiny Youth Review - Survey Results

The survey has been circulated to youth groups and schools in the borough. Overall 517 responses were received from a good balance of age groups, ranging from Year 7 through to Year 12. The results should be representative of young people's views.



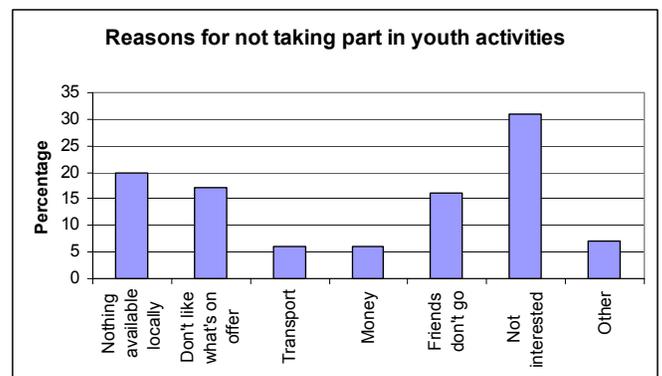
1. Participation in organised youth activities

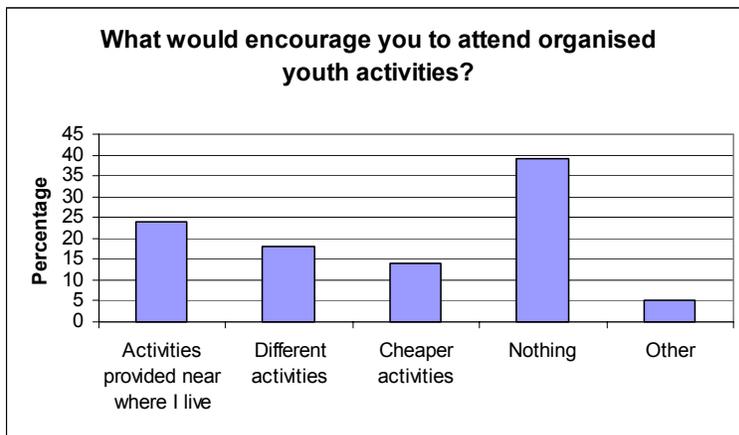
When asked about regular participation in organised youth activities 61 per cent of total respondents said they did not participate in any.



There are no significant variations between the different year groups, although the highest percentage of young people not taking part in organised activities are those in Year 9/10.

When asked for reasons why they were not taking part, the result shows that a lack of money or transport was of low concern. A lack of interest in the type of activity overall, lack of local provision and a dislike of what was on offer were more significant. We then asked what factors would encourage more young people to attend organised activities.





24 per cent of respondents said they would get involved in activities if they were provided near home with 18 per cent requesting different activities.

Nothing was the most common answer given by 39 per cent when asked what would encourage them to attend.

The survey included questions about whether young people felt there was enough for them to do overall and which sort of things they would like to do more.

The results across all year groups showed that young people felt there was not enough for them to do, particularly years 9/10. When asked what sort of things they would like to do, a wide range of responses was given. The most popular are listed in Table A.

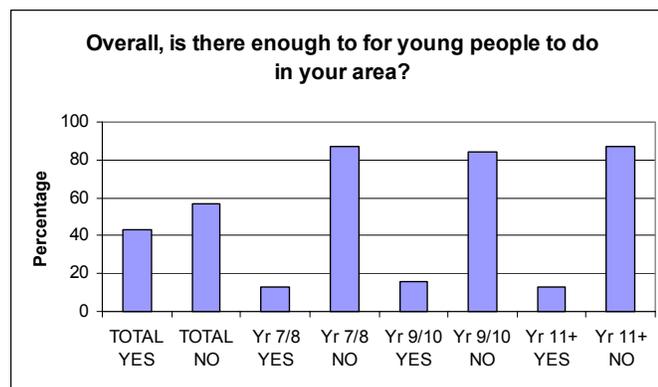


Table A: Most Popular Activities

Young people were asked to indicate which type of organised activity they would like to see more of provided locally. A wide range of answers were given but those mentioned more often than others included:

- Youth club/organised events
- Informal places to meet/socialise
- Football facilities
- General sports
- Skate parks
- Motorbike/Motocross track

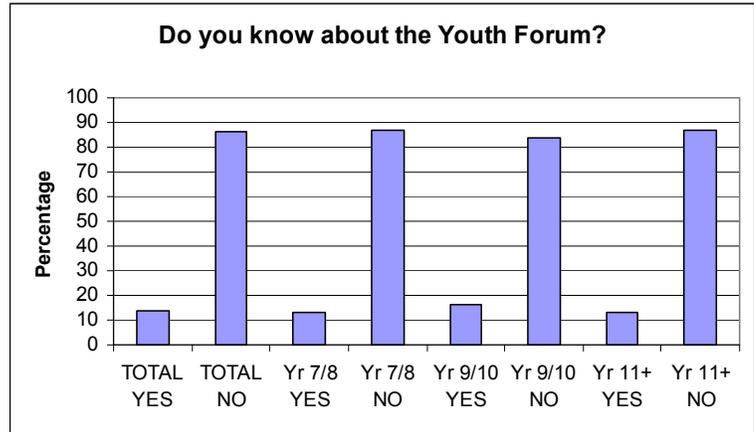
Additional comments that appeared on several occasions:

- there is not enough sports/activities aimed at girls
- needs to be somewhere to go that is dry and warm
- swimming is too expensive/swimming should be free

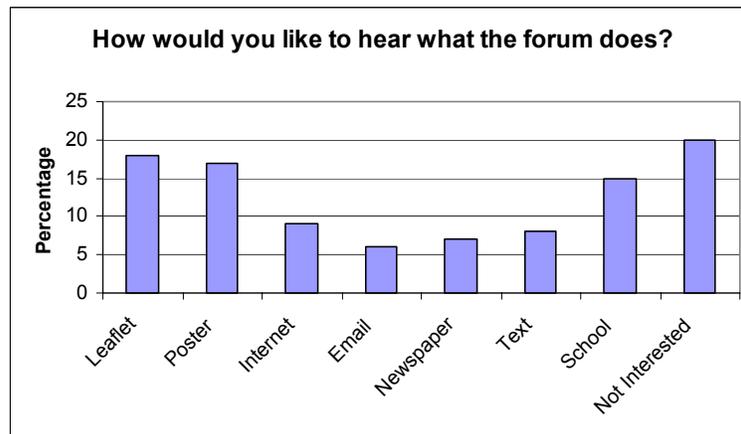
2. Tonbridge and Malling Youth Forum

We asked if they were aware of the Tonbridge and Malling Youth Forum and how they would most like to hear about what the forum does.

When asked if they had heard about the Youth Forum, 86 per cent had not. This was reflected across all year groups. More perhaps needs to be done to promote the work of the Forum to a wider audience of young people.



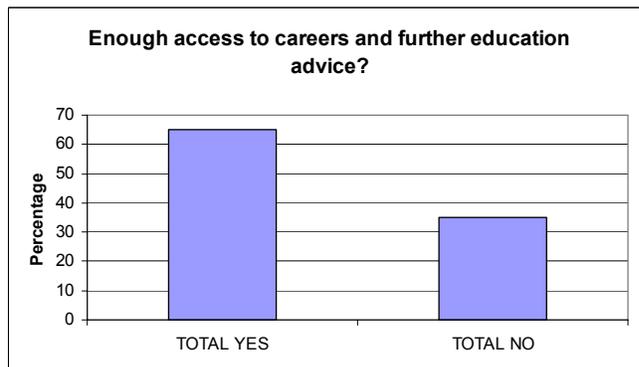
The preferred medium for hearing about what the forum does is via leaflets, posters and through school. Surprisingly use of Internet, emails and text messaging did not rate as highly. A number of respondents remain uninterested in hearing about the Youth Forum.



3. Careers and Further Education

The survey included questions about careers advice and awareness of the Connexions service.

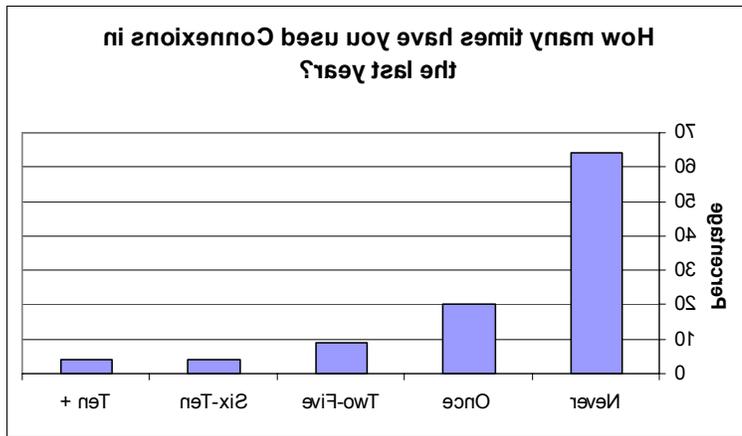
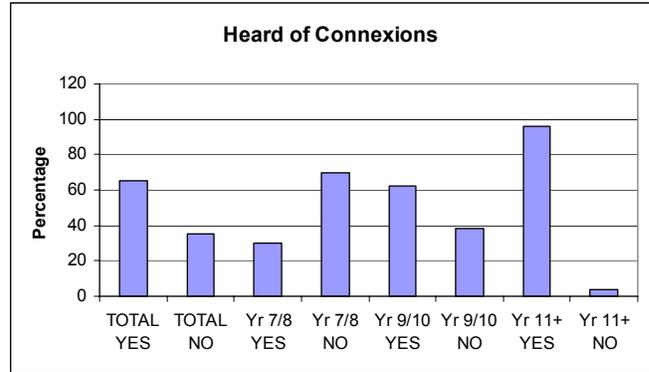
Access to careers and further education is quite good with 62 per cent of respondents feeling they received



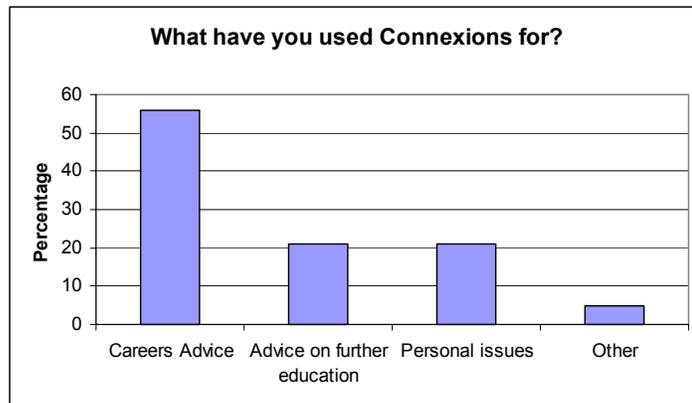
enough advice. However a significant number felt that more needed to be done to promote careers advice, particularly to younger age groups.

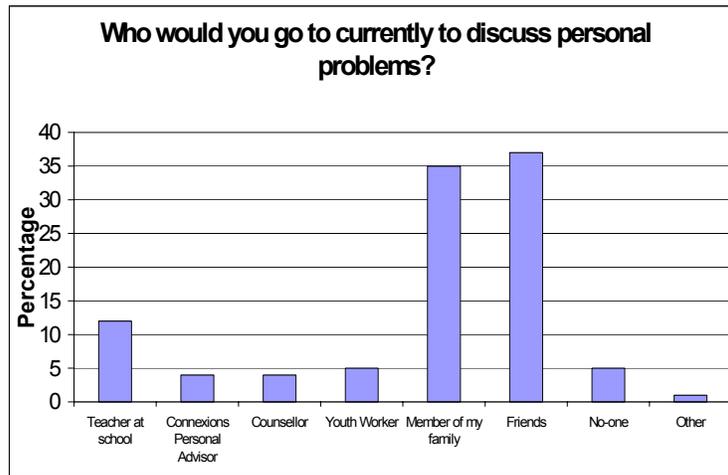
4. Connexions Service

Awareness of the Connexions service also rated highly, particularly in the older year groups where 96 per cent of those in Year 11 have heard of Connexions. The reverse is evident in younger year groups, with a much lower level of awareness in Years 7 and 8.



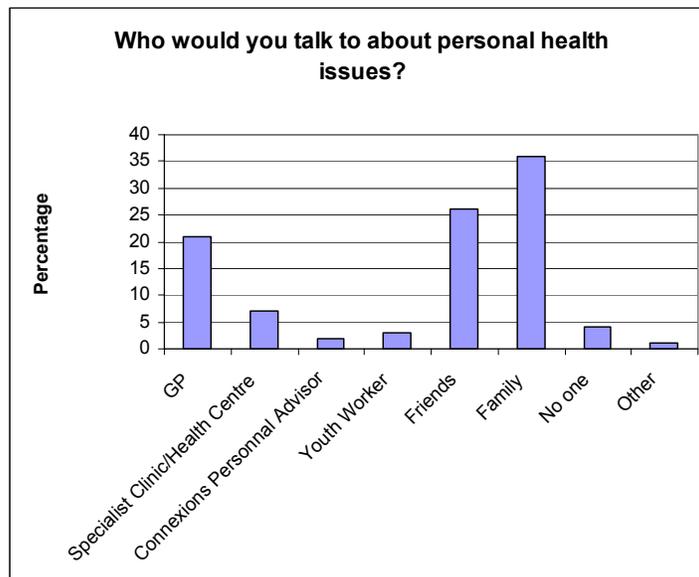
Of those that had heard of Connexions, the frequency of times they had used the service was recorded. Over 60 per cent had yet to make use of any of the services. They were also asked what they had used Connexions for and although this did vary, the majority of respondents were using Connexions for career advice.





5. Personal Problems and Personal Health Problems

We then asked respondents who they would go to if they wanted to discuss personal problems. In addition to this we asked who they would discuss personal health issues with. In both incidences family and friends scored highly, although a wide range of other groups were mentioned.



Clearly for some young people there is a need to supplement advice and assistance provided by family and friends to ensure that the right kind of support is provided to all those that need it.

6. Mentoring and Work Experience

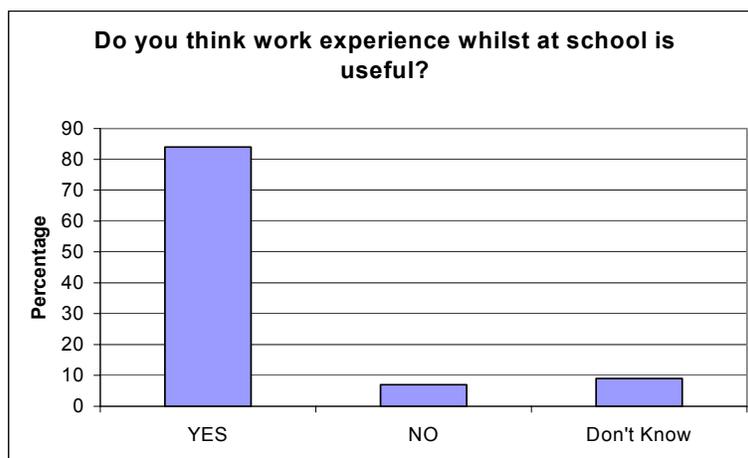
There was a high proportion of respondents who felt they did not know if mentoring should be more widely available to young people.

The percentages changed throughout the year groups- with the majority of those in Year 11 indicating that mentoring would be useful.

Low awareness of the use of mentors in lower age groups needs to be improved.



There was a very positive response regarding work experience. 84 per cent of respondents felt that work experience whilst at school is helpful with deciding future career choices.



Annex B

Young Persons' Focus Group 12 January 2005

Discussion 1 – Organised Youth Activities

(a) Why do you think so many young people are not interested in taking part in activities?

- All the young people asked cited transport as one of the key issues for not taking part in activities. The bus routes available do not run after 9pm in the winter, and it is not therefore possible to get home having attended an activity.
- All the young people asked raised the cost of activities as an issue. They felt that more people would attend if it were cheaper.
- Some young people felt that the activities were not interesting enough and that they were too organised, as opposed to a 'drop in' centre.
- When asked specifically why they did not attend schemes such as Y-2 Crew the majority responded that they did not know about such activities or they were excluded from them due to where they live.
- One group in particular stated that young people wanted to be consulted on the activities being put on rather than being told to attend something which they may not be interested in.

(b) How would you encourage other young people to attend?

- All the groups cited publicity as the key to raising attendance. When asked about the means of publicity, the majority opted for a text messaging facility.
- Two groups wished to see regular focus groups within schools where they have the chance to ask officers questions, and they also have the opportunity to find out what is happening within their local area.
- Word of mouth seemed to be high amongst the young people themselves. They all felt that people attend activities and events because their friends do.

(It is important to note that all the groups and leaders felt that there is a need for a range of different activities and groups in order to target the differing backgrounds.)

(c) What prevents you from taking part in activities in your spare time?

- Lack of money was again raised as an issue, although most young people felt that if it really was something that they wanted to do they would find a way.
- Access to facilities was raised as a potential barrier. Young people felt that they were excluded from some activities and venues.

(Again it is important to note that the majority of the young people who attended currently take part in a wide range of activities)

(d) What should 'hang out' places be like?

- All groups raised the issue of lighting and the need for youth shelters to be well lit.
- Some of the young people welcomed the idea of CCTV as this would provide them with a safe and secure location within which to congregate.

- Some young people wished the shelters to be open, whereas others preferred a closed hut style, however they could see the safety implications behind this.
- All the groups had concerns over vandalism, and stated that the shelters would need to be built using appropriate materials.

(e) Where should 'hang out' places be?

- All wanted the shelters in central but visible locations.
- One of the most popular locations proposed was in parks, however they would need to be placed on the edge of the park within a reasonable distance from local amenities.
- Some discussion was entered into with regards to having the shelters near shops as this tends to be the trend for current meeting places, however, some young people felt that this may effect other members of the public.

(f) Other points to note:

- A sports facility / club in Hadlow was requested.
- There is a need for more youth venues across the borough so that young people have ownership of a specific space.
- A Student pass for activities and buses.
- A Ball court in south Tonbridge at the Racecourse Sportsground.

Discussion 2 – Youth Forum

(a) What should the Tonbridge & Malling Youth Forum be like?

- Most groups thought meetings should be informal in style because more formal meetings would put young people off, however, older teenagers, including those already on KCC's Youth Council, would prefer a more official style, which they felt would enable them to be taken more seriously
- The group should have a stable membership, although young people agreed that it should not be necessary to attend every meeting

(b) Should there be elections?

- Young people felt that elections were not a good idea. Those with some experience of elections were particularly against the idea because they are difficult to arrange and have an extremely low turn out.
- Elections were considered to be a 'popularity contest' where the leaders of big groups would be elected, rather than those who would benefit most/have most to offer a youth forum
- Young people were happy with 'representing themselves' at the forum rather than others, with membership open to anyone who wanted to have a say
- Wishing to be involved was considered the most important factor in determining membership, where people wanted to be members, they were more likely to continue coming

(c) Should schools send representatives?

- All groups thought that schools should be involved in the youth forum in some way, with one group suggesting a nomination system for representatives

- Other groups felt involvement should be encouraged through peer promotion – all accepted that they were unlikely to hear about a youth forum from teachers, and some said they wouldn't listen to them if they did
- No group thought that teachers should be responsible for nominating representatives because this would lead to a limited membership in terms of the backgrounds and attitudes of the young people involved
- A forum made up of young people from different backgrounds was considered a positive

(d) How frequent should meetings be?

- Some groups thought meetings should be held monthly, some felt less frequently would be better, say every 2-3 months
- One group suggested quarterly meetings with 'working groups' set up to carry out activities as necessary in between main meetings
- One group felt that 'satellite' youth fora in different locations around the borough would be a good idea. These smaller groups would meet annually at a large event

(e) Where should meetings be held?

- Most young people said they would feel more comfortable in a youth club type setting
- Many said they would be interested in visiting other youth centres so they could get ideas for activities at their own club. Others said they would feel comfortable only on their own patch
- Most groups felt that changing venue was a good compromise, enabling some young people to attend some meetings, or all meetings if they wished
- A neutral, central venue, such as the council offices, was felt to be the best solution by older more confident teenagers, others felt it would be intimidating

(f) When should meetings be held?

- Young people generally felt that meetings should be in the evenings, starting around 6pm to enable anyone to attend, including young people with jobs
- Some young people liked the idea of having meetings during the school day, but acknowledged that their motivation to attend would change
- All groups felt 2 hour long meeting slots with one hour of 'work' and one hour of socialising, would be ideal for getting things done, while enjoying attending

(g) What should the forum do?

- All groups thought the current focus on the youth action plan themes (crime, education, health, leisure and transport) was correct
- Groups liked the current format of discussing issues and thinking of some appropriate solutions to problems
- All groups also wanted the youth forum to take positive action on issues too, doing things, not just talking

Discussion Group 3 – Careers Advice

(a) Awareness of the Connexions service

- Awareness of the Connexions service was good amongst older teenagers (y11 and above). For Y10's and below, awareness was poor
- Those with in-school Connexions advisors felt they were particularly well served
- Some young people had sought out advice at a Connexions centre and had received useful careers advice
- Some had accessed the Connexions website but felt that one-to-one contact was preferable.
- Some felt that the careers advice given by Connexions tended to concentrate on jobs/vocational training rather than FE/HE options

(b) Other Careers Advice

- Those young people who had a clear idea of what career they wanted to pursue were generally successful in getting the right advice at the right time
- Those without a clear idea found it more difficult to get advice to help them decide
- there is a lack of access to, and awareness of, local careers fairs but many felt that these would be of benefit
- Few schools invited business representatives to give presentations on careers
- Few Years 9/10 pupils were able to access careers advice when selecting GCSE options
- Schools generally provided a good range of written information in libraries about FE and HE options but direct advice on this was usually found from family and friends rather than specialist advisors

(c) Work Experience

- not all young people had had the opportunity to undertake work experience whilst at school
- those that had generally were positive about the benefits
- the range and choice of placements on offer were thought to be good
- in some cases, a work experience had led to either direct employment or had enabled young people to make a clearer choice about a future career

(d) Mentoring Schemes

- Some young people were involved in peer mentoring at school eg befriending schemes for Year 7 entrants
- Most felt that mentoring was a good thing and needed to be expanded
- Mentors were able to access different levels of training and this assisted with their own personal development
- young people with more challenging issues had benefited greatly from direct support and assistance from youth workers and personal advisors

Discussion Group 4 – Personal and health advice

(a) Do you think there are enough places to get advice?

Do you think there should be more sources of information and advice?

- There is not enough health advice for young people.

- When counselling services are offered- there are very long queues. It's daunting and embarrassing waiting in the queue.
- You don't need appointments to speak to counsellors-which is a good thing.
- Very difficult to get appointments at the sexual health clinic.
- Often the pharmacists are rude to young people when collecting morning after pill. They do not address the young person, but speak to the adult who's with them.
- Would speak to youth workers at the church
- Would speak to parents to get health advice
- Would speak to youth workers for health advice would not speak to the school nurse- a nurse at a youth club would be less daunting.
- School nurse is part time and they are not aware of when they can see her.
- Confidentiality is a problem. Some felt they could not trust the school nurse as she discussed things with other staff in the school.
- In some cases the school nurse was dismissive and unfriendly.
- No facilities available in school to be ill. Unwell children have to sit in reception which does not look good. Receptionists taking on nurses responsibilities.
- In school there needs to be greater staff awareness of health issues for young people. It is felt that many teachers are embarrassed when they have to talk about health issues. They need specific training to deal with this.
- Sex education at one school was just a 30-minute video, which did not offer enough help and advice.
- It was felt that as part of the sex education in school, young parents, who have experienced teenage pregnancy themselves, should be able to offer advice to other young people. It was felt that young people would be able to relate better to other young people.

(b) Are you happy discussing problems with your family GP?

- Would not be happy to speak to family GP (all groups agreed with this)

(c) How would you rate the advice given to you by friends?

- Good to talk to friends but have to choose friends carefully in case they tell everyone.
- Helps to talk to friends, but for advice would prefer to talk to a trained professional.

(d) Do you think specialist clinics for young people are a good idea and if so, what services should they offer? What should they look like?

- Think it would be quite useful to have a health clinic for young people- but it must be clear that it's for all health issues, not just sexual health (social stigma attached to going to clinics).
- Clinics should be held at venues where other youth events are taking place, so that you wouldn't have to make a separate visit.
- Concerns that a drop in health clinic for young people in a small village would not be confidential and everyone would know if you'd attended.

e) Other issues

Drinking

- They felt the main reasons for binge drinking and smoking was peer pressure. Again, would not seek help from GP- would prefer to talk to someone they knew and trusted.
- Drinking- aware of the dangers, but feel that alcohol is readily available for young people.
- Rarely asked for ID when buying alcohol and fake ID is easy to get.
- One of the reasons for drinking was boredom
- No longer able to drink in the street in Snodland due to the policing. If they are caught - alcohol is confiscated and they are taken to a cell for the night. Cameras everywhere, which also deters adults from buying alcohol for young people.
- Drinking is mainly a problem in the summer- nothing else to do.

Smoking

- Smoking- young people are aware of the dangers, but getting help to stop is limited (all groups agreed with this)
- Perception that some young people wanted to stop smoking and couldn't whereas others liked smoking.
- It was felt that a help group to give up would not work, as they'd be too embarrassed to go.
- Difficult to give up smoking when the whole family smokes and it's accepted at home.
- Peer pressure to smoke- help to give up should be confidential.

Drugs

- Plenty of advice given at school on the dangers of drug use.
- More information needed on the different types of drugs and their effects. Although they felt aware that "drugs are bad" they would like to know which drugs cause which harmful effects and long term problems etc.
- For drink, drugs and smoking it was felt that shocking illustrations of the effects were necessary. One school had met the mother of a teenager who'd died from taking an ecstasy pill. The mother cried in the class and it shocked people and made them think about the dangers. They also felt that graphic television adverts were effective.

Nutrition

- Aware of healthy eating issues, but some school dinners offered no healthy options.
- One school had started a healthy eating scheme, which was considered a good thing.

Self harming/depression

- It was felt that this was a common problem
- Need more information about self harming
- Specialist help and advice is needed

Stress issues

- Would feel more comfortable talking to youth workers about stress issues

Homelessness

- Nowhere for young people to go if they've had a row with family. Somewhere safe to stay is needed in the short term, until things have calmed down at home - without involving social services.