

**KEY
CITIES**
UNLOCKING
POTENTIAL

CHANGING THE FUTURE: YOUTH INSIGHT REPORT

Documenting the youth landscape in order to meet the social and technological challenges of the 21st Century.

Changing the Future: Youth Insight Report

Introduction to Key Cities and Young People Portfolio



Young people are the future of this country. 18 year olds are voting now. Do we listen to them enough? And what of the next generation of voters? What are their hopes and fears? We need to hear their voice, take them seriously. The mobilisation of the young is vital if we are to develop policies that work. We know young people have a real stake in developing long term, sustainable solutions to worklessness, innovative housing solutions and environmentally future proofed resilient cities.

Gaining a clear input from young people is also essential if we are to develop strong and forward looking city economies post Brexit. Securing young people's ideas and creativity will enhance our capacity to bring forward innovative ideas and allow Key Cities to act as a national test bed for new approaches and ideas.

Transport, skills and health and social care are all issues that affect young people now and will do so in the future, and reflecting their views in the policies of Key Cities can only strengthen them.

The 20 Key Cities constitute 5.8 million people. Together, the Key Cities deliver a GVA of £110 billion to the UK economy. Collectively, the Key Cities are of great importance to the potential of the UK economy, and present a significant opportunity for the UK's growth and productivity.

The purpose of the Key Cities Group is to create a unified voice to ensure that member cities are more visible and consistently represented in policy-making at a regional, national and international level. The Group seeks to provide a united voice for mid-sized cities, and develop and influence policy to strengthen resilience, and improve economic performance and social cohesion in our cities.

Acting as the authentic voice of Urban Britain means ensuring that the concerns of young people are reflected by the Key Cities Group as it influences government to develop policies that work to rebalance our economy.

The Changing the Future Conference will provide an excellent opportunity to listen to the views of young people from Key Cities on those critical issues.

Cllr Shabir Pandor, Leader of Kirklees Council and Key Cities Lead (Young People)



Executive Summary

The Key Cities Youth Survey makes clear the challenges for young people. It shows employability and skills are a key concern for young people, who feel they don't receive enough good quality support in transitioning into work. It shows young people are interested in important issues like local decision-making and the environment but lack the understanding of how to influence them. It shows that mental health is a challenge for a large number of young people and many are physically inactive.

The Survey

During May/June 2018, 1,538 14-25 year olds completed an online questionnaire (69% from Key Cities). A further 35 young people (aged 16-19) took part in focus group discussions in Huddersfield, Bradford, and Derby.

Living: Housing

Whilst young people lose their confidence in owning their own home as they get older, a large number still expect to be owning their own home within five years.

- One in three (32%) teens expected to be responsible for their own home within five years
- Four in ten (40%) young adults expected to own their own home within five years and around the same (39%) expected to be renting.
- Teenagers are more likely to think they will own their home within 10 years (67%) than young adults (56%).

Environment

On the environment, it is clear that young people find environmental issues important, but many don't see the impact of their own behaviour.

- Litter and fly-tipping were particular concerns for young people, though they also spoke of global warming and air quality.
- Young people feel their day-to-day activities don't have an impact on large-scale environmental change like plastic in the oceans.

Other findings include

- The use of public transport declines with age, mostly because of cost and reliability.
- One in four young people (23%) said they were responsible for caring for a family member outside of work.
- Young people described money management, including looking after finances, loans, and paying taxes, as marking the threshold for adulthood.

Health

On physical health, many young people are inactive and smoke, with some drinking excessively.

- Four in ten teens (39%) and almost half of young adults (48%) are physically inactive (exercising for less than an hour a week).
- One in twenty teenagers drink over 15 units per week compared to one in ten young adults.
- One in six teenagers and one in three young adults said they smoked. Around one in ten teenagers and young adults said they vaped.

Mental health is a challenge for a significant number of young people.

- Almost one in four (23%) young people scored their mental health 3 out of ten or less.
- Exams, bullying, and family problems were mentioned as causes or agitators.

Employability and skills

Young people haven't found careers advice or work experience opportunities useful. They are equally aware of degree and apprenticeship opportunities and equal numbers are considering them.

- Half of young people think better careers advice would have resulted in a better career direction for them.
- Almost eight in ten young people said they had either never had careers advice (39%) or their careers advice had not helped them get the job they wanted (40%).
- Around four in ten (44%) don't or didn't know where to go to get extra careers advice.
- When asked how careers advice could be improved, young people said careers advisors needed to spend more time getting to know them (44%), have more sessions with them (41%), and more involvement with local and national businesses (40%).
- Four in ten young people hadn't had work experience. Of those who had, two in three said they had work experience somewhere where they wouldn't want to work full-time.
- Equal numbers of young people were considering university and apprenticeships, but six in ten think a degree gives them the best chance of getting a great job.

Our place in the world

Young people don't feel engaged in local democracy or community decision-making, don't understand politics well enough, and don't know who their local politicians are, even though they think they have the biggest impact on their lives.

- MPs, Councillors, and other politicians were rated as having the biggest impact on young people's lives, but over half couldn't say who their local MP is (57%) and almost four in five couldn't say who their local councillor is (78%).
- Nine in ten young people said it was important, very important, or extremely important that young people are involved in decision-making in their local community.
- However, two thirds of young people (66%) said they had never considered getting involve in decision making in their local community.
- Young people scored themselves 3 out of 10 for their involvement in local democracy.
- A third of young people hadn't voted in the local elections, with the general feeling that politics was too complex and they didn't understand it well enough.

Young people are generally dissatisfied with Brexit, but some are optimistic.

- Young people scored the Government 3 out of 10 for their performance in delivering Brexit.
- Almost half (45%) of young people expect Brexit to make Britain worse.
- One in six (17%) expect it to improve Britain.

Spending priorities

Finally, we asked young people to rate a series of spending options for £10 million

- Education and skills got the best overall score, with training, apprenticeships, and reducing university tuition fees scoring highest overall as the best use of the money.

Summary

Young people have identified the key challenges they face in the years ahead. Their ideas and creativity will always be a key part of any solution. Key Cities have listened to young people to enhance our joint capacity to tackle these challenges. We will continue to be guided by young people's voices in the years ahead.

Key issues and insights raised by the survey

- How can areas be supported to build effective networks and expertise that facilitates the engagement of young people?
- What is the impact on services of the increasing number of people not identifying as a specific gender? Is there a risk of not engaging 4% of young people by addressing them as male/female?
- Is a lack of responsibility as a teen resulting in less engaged adult citizens? What can be done to give teens more responsibility?
- Do youth expectations around home ownership affect the planning of services for young people?
- Should young people be encouraged to stay in their home town or is social mobility inevitable?
- How can young people be encouraged to use public transport?
- Are young people who have a care responsibility being supported sufficiently to maximise their potential?
- How can young people be stopped from feeling powerless?
- How can young people be engaged with key environmental issues?
- Should work experience be redefined? Do young people and employers know why they are undertaking it?
- Are a young person's first experiences of work (such as part-time job, work experience, careers advice) effective? Is there a lasting hangover from negative early experiences of work?
- Does career advice need to be overhauled?
- How can education and business leaders be brought together?
- Are young carers failing to maximise their potential because they are caring for others?
- How can 'work experience' be 'widened' to include more diverse businesses?
- How can young people be helped with identifying potential careers options?
- Are there sufficient apprenticeship vacancies available to encourage young people to not take the degree option?

- Should young people be encouraged to gain the skills demanded by the local labour market?
- Is it important that young people know who their MP and local councillors are?
- How can young people be encouraged to take part in local democracy?
- What is the impact of youth views towards Brexit?
- Is youth mental health a ticking health time-bomb and what can be done about it?
- Where could young people go to learn about the things they don't know?

Section 1: LIVING (Housing, Environment, Transport, Health & Social Care and Culture)



TRANSITIONING FROM A YOUNG PERSON TO AN ADULT

One of the key themes we were keen to explore with the research was **the transition from young person to adult**. Most of the attendees were happy with being called young people – though they suggested that when they were referred to as ‘young adults’ it implied that the other person had more respect for them.

When asked **“When do you become an adult?”** they suggested it was after sixth-form/FE college, as this is when they expected to have more ‘responsibility’.

In each of the groups, the participants spoke about having “things done for them” and this included “getting hand-outs for college work”. They equated being an adult with doing things for themselves – “Once you get a job or go to university you are on your own” and “you have to do it yourself”.

Further conversations with college lecturers suggested that the vicious circle that colleges face (student success = college success – meaning that lecturers have to help students ‘pass’) is being exploited by students as they know that a lecturer isn’t going to let them fail and as a result they can get away with doing less.

The groups painted a picture of being “molly-coddled”- both at home and at college. They talked about doing very little for themselves, but they expected this to change beyond the age of 18. It is

the opinion of the author that this lack of responsibility and ownership of their own actions has influenced how a number of the questions have been answered.

The groups also identified ‘adult responsibilities’ as being “looking after finances”, “loans”, “managing your money” and “paying taxes”. Participants also suggested that responsibility included “having to sort your own transport” and “having to cook for yourself”.

**Discussion point: Is a lack of responsibility as a teen resulting in less engaged adult citizens?
What can be done to give teens more responsibility?**



LIVING

Splitting our respondents into ‘Teens’ and ‘Young Adults’ – **94% of teens and 53% of young adults lived with parents**. Only 2% of teens were responsible for their own property (either purchased or rented) compared with 34% of young adults. (Q47) [Describe your current living arrangements.](#)

Fast-forward five years and (Q48) [In five years what do you think your living arrangements will be?](#) 32% of teens expected to be responsible for their own home (10% purchased / 22% rented) whilst 40% of young adults expected to have bought their own home and 39% expected to be renting.

Our online questionnaire (Q49) [When do you think you will own your own home?](#) showed an array of interesting information including that participants still have an expectation of home ownership with 56% of young adults and 67% of teens expecting to own a home within the next 10 years.

Interestingly 14% of young adults expect to 'Never' own their own home compared with 7% of teens which perhaps suggests that expectations around house ownership are reduced with age.

Discussion point: Do youth expectations around home ownership affect the planning of services for young people?

SOCIAL MOBILITY

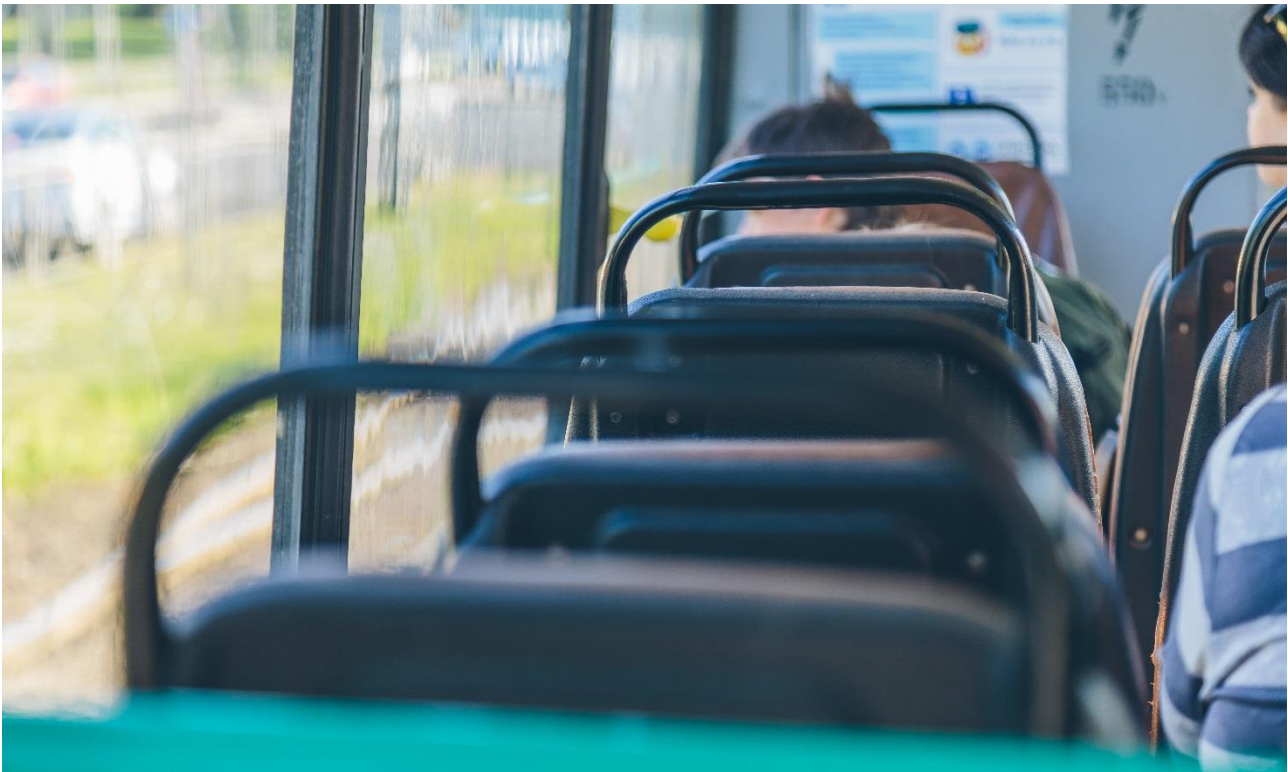
The question of where their home would be was also asked. (Q25) *Do you think that you will still live in your current area in five years?* Of all the respondents to the questionnaire, 54% said that they would stay in their current area whilst 46% said they wouldn't. Those who said they wouldn't stay cited reasons such as it "gives me more options" and that "there are more jobs in what I want to do". Other reasons included: "depends where I would study at University" but for some it was a "fresh start", "a chance to reinvent yourself", "have new experiences" and "get away from here – it's boring."

A number of the participants said that they would want to stay at home due to family. Culture played a large part in these decisions. As one of our Asian participants said: "It's important Asians stay at home with the family!"

Interestingly, when compared with (Q26) *On a scale of 1-10 (1=Easy and 10=Hard) how easy would you describe it is to get a decent job in your town/city?* Those expecting to move away scored almost identically to those looking to stay (6.34 / 6.21 respectively) which suggests that employment (or at least getting a 'decent job') is not a determinant in moving away.

When those who were looking to move away were challenged - no one had considered the cost element of the move or whether they would need a higher income to live in a "less boring" location.

Discussion point: Should young people be encouraged to stay in their home town or is social mobility inevitable?



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Whilst a sizable proportion are prepared to travel around the country, how many are prepared to travel on public transport?

Within the survey and the focus groups we discussed public transport usage (Q52) *How often do you use public transport?* As can be seen from the data, the use of public transport declines with age. This could be expected as people become more independent from public transport and car ownership increases, but the highest recorded reason (Q54) *What are the reasons that stop you using it more?* with 'young adults' was 'Cost' (72% of respondents) rather than 'Reliability' (65%) and 'Doesn't stop near me' (24%) - reasons that could be associated with the traditional benefits of using a car. Traditionally, one of the main reasons to use public transport has always been that it was a cheaper option to car ownership – but if public transport is perceived as expensive (especially for young adults without bus passes) how do we encourage its use?

Interestingly within the group, Uber and taxis were discussed as being cheaper options, especially for groups going out together.

Discussion point: How can young people be encouraged to use public transport?

YOUNG CARERS

Whilst 74% of young people are not responsible for another person (Q50) *Outside of work, are you responsible for looking after anyone?* – 26% were. A number identified either their own or other 'Children' but a large proportion (23%) stated they were responsible for caring for a 'Brother/Sister', 'Parent', and/or a 'Grandparent'.

Discussion point: Are young people who have a care responsibility being supported sufficiently to maximise their potential?

Discussion point: Are young carers failing to maximise their potential because they are caring for others?



ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Main finding: young people are concerned about the environment, though they don't feel they have any influence on it, especially not in their day-to-day actions.

When we discussed the issue of the environment (Q62) *What do you feel are our greatest environmental challenges?* we had markedly different responses. Within the prompted answers, 'Plastic Waste' scored highest with 67% of respondents. However, no young people mentioned plastic waste without being prompted.

When prompted – young people agreed it was bad – but there was certainly no passion from them that it needed sorting or that it was a cause they believed passionately about. In fact, in one instance a debate started around the fact that McDonalds was to remove plastic straws and replace them with paper alternatives.

When asked why they weren't bothered, young people told us they were bothered but changing their behaviour wouldn't make a difference. They asked how 'stopping using a plastic straw [could] stop all plastic in the ocean?

This is not to say that young people weren't concerned with the environment. They spoke of their concerns for global warming, car pollution and they were particularly concerned about litter and fly-tipping (though when challenged a handful admitted that they would drop litter "if there wasn't a bin.")

Discussion point: How can young people be stopped from feeling powerless?

Discussion point: How can young people be engaged with key environmental issues?



HEALTH

We asked the respondents a number of questions relating to their health and the perception of their health.

(Q55) How much alcohol do you drink on average per week? (1 pint, glass of wine, spirit [vodka, whisky etc] =2 units)? (Q56) Do you Smoke? (Q57) Do you Vape? (Q58) On average, how much exercise do you do per week? (Q59) Would you describe yourself as Inactive, Fairly Active or Active? and (Q61) On a scale of 1-10 (1=Rubbish and 10=Excellent) how would you describe your sexual health knowledge? We also asked about their mental health and this is discussed in the next section.

In terms of alcohol, 4% of teens and 10% of young adults said they drank over 15 units/week.

16% of teens and 31% of young adults said they smoked (including those who said occasionally). 12% of teens and 11% of young adults said they vaped (including those who said occasionally).

In terms of exercise 28% of young adults and 21% of teens described themselves as 'inactive' yet 39% of teens and 48% of young adults identified themselves in the exercise bracket of 'inactives' (0-59 minutes/week according to Sport England guidelines). On the whole young adults suggested that they did less exercise than teens.

The average score of our participants sexual health knowledge was 7.40, and as would be expected our teens scored slightly less (7.29) than the young adults (7.87).

Section 2: EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS



This section looks at how young people enter the world of work and whether they are sufficiently prepared for the challenges they face.

FIRST INTERACTIONS

The first contact with the world of work for most people is either a part-time job, work experience or careers advice.

Of the teen respondents who stated they were in full time education (Q5) *Which of the following describes your current situation?* and (Q6) *Which of the following describes your current situation?* 23% stated they had a part-time job with another 4% stating they had a zero hour contract. This suggests that 73% of teens don't have a part-time job. Whether they have had one in the past cannot be ascertained – but this is a large number not regularly experiencing what it is like to have a job.

Other research that the author has undertaken has suggested that the jobs that teens might previously have done have been taken by 'older workers' who are doing two or three different part-time jobs rather than having one full time position. Teens also face messages from colleges that 'part-time' jobs may be a distraction to studying. This may be a contributory factor, but it shouldn't be ignored that many 'don't need to work', 'aren't pressured by parents' and therefore don't have the motivation to seek additional income.

For those who don't work, they have – in theory – the option of work experience. In terms of work experience, (Q28) *Have you ever undertaken any work experience?* showed a 60:40 split in terms

of those that had against those that hadn't. However, when asked (Q29) *Was your work experience in a role that you hope to have as a full-time job?* 66% replied 'No'.

It would appear that work experience is moving away from learning the core skills of working – time keeping, understanding how a work environment operates, being presentable - and that young people are expecting it to be an opportunity to learn how to make a film or conduct heart surgery. The latter is obviously an exaggeration but it was clear that they didn't know why they were doing it and, if it didn't meet their specific interests and expectations, it was "a waste of time".

Discussion point: Should work experience be redefined? Do young people and employers know why they are undertaking it?

Getting young people matched with interest-appropriate work experience is difficult when a large proportion of young people don't know what they want to do as a career. In order to help this decision making, young people are offered the services of a careers adviser.

When asked (Q9) *On a sliding scale of 'bad' (1) to 'great' (100) how would you rate the careers advice you received at secondary school?* The average number was 44. When asked (Q8) *Did your careers advice help with the job you wanted?* (and only sampling those aged 17 to 24) 21% said 'Yes', 40% said 'No', and 39% said they 'had never had any careers advice'.

Discussion point: Are a young person's first contact with work (part-time job, work experience, careers advice) effective interactions? Is there a lasting hangover from negative early experiences of work?

If young people don't rate their careers advice do they look elsewhere? In terms of alternative sources of careers advice (Q10) *Did you seek additional information from the following?* our respondents consulted: 'Parents' (62%), 'Internet' (57%), 'Family' (43%), 'Friends' (39%), 'Teachers or lecturers' (34%) 'Library' (6%). However (Q12) *If you wanted extra careers advice, did/do you know where go for it?* demonstrates that 44% ('No' or 'Don't know') of respondents didn't know how to seek additional information.

This also raises the question of whether or not these alternative sources, though trusted by the young person, are providing accurate information.

It would appear that careers advisers are communicating some information. When asked (Q11) *How would you describe the careers advice you received at school?* whilst 32% said 'They told me lots of things I already knew', 33% said 'They explained the varied options including A' Levels, Degrees and Apprenticeships' and 28% replied 'It helped me think about how I could use skills in an area that interested me.'

With (Q11) we gave respondents the opportunity to describe their careers advice they received. Their comments included:

- Access to HE course, needed no careers advice
- Told me I should look at other options because i was aiming too high
- They just told me to go to University
- Not useful
- I was simply directed to look online, and directed away from what I wanted to do.
- It was awful the person put me off a career in law because I wasn't the right class
- Careers advice was poor, they had the generic apprenticeship or college advice When I explained my interests and the sector I wanted to work in they knew nothing about it and couldn't help
- Patronising and stereotypical
- He talked me into doing Health and Social as that's what he thought was right for me due to my home life after I stated it was not I wanted to do, that I wanted to do Animal Care
- It was very limited we did an online questionnaire which said what we should do
- They showed me a few websites and that was all
- They gave me unrealistic expectations of things that will never happen
- They basically were a tick box exercise for employability and told me nothing useful, I disagreed with a lot of what they said
- Only marketed University as a legitimate option
- I had no idea what I wanted to do when I was at school
- Bad, totally didn't listen
- Careers advice was mainly focused around University, apprenticeships were spoke about now and then. I feel like they had no time for the students, including myself, wanting an apprentice or full-time job
- They talked about the routes from school, focussing mainly on college but never went into detail about careers. Apprenticeships were not highly promoted and were seen as something to do if you didn't have the grades for college
- Hairdressing, hospitality, mechanics
- It was very poor
- Just spoke about going on to further education, no help with advice about going into employment
- I remember having careers advice but it not really having a bearing on what I ended up doing
- I filled out an online questionnaire and it generated a job for me
- Not very helpful

When asked (Q13) *How do you feel careers advice for young people could be improved?* 44% answered 'More time spent getting to know me'; 41% said 'More Sessions' and 40% answered 'More involvement with local / national businesses'. When asked to provide specific examples respondents suggested the following:

- Use multiple sessions to get to know the young person
- Do more work experience
- Sessions outside and away from school
- Give people options
- More specialised into different type of subjects, e.g one for humanities or one for science
- Creative industry careers also need support
- More encouragement towards less academic careers
- If someone doesn't have an aspiring career choice, find out why
- Honest advice that you might not end up in the job you want whilst at high school
- Schools tend to lean more towards jobs in medicine and very high education jobs but there isn't a lot of support for people who want to pursue art
- Understand and be non-judgemental
- Take the young persons opinion instead of what they think is right
- Not assuming I want to go down the same/normal path that others have taken
- I need more experience of the workplace so I know what work really means, at the moment I'm just assuming what it's going to be like
- More advice later on I changed my mind multiple times after I'd seen the school careers advisor
- A person rather than a computer
- Careers advisers who listen
- More realistic options
- Knowledge about more niche careers. Not just teaching, forces, and nursing etc
- More emphasis on actual work experience - rather than sitting in a room for an hour send the pupil to try a job/industry for a day
- More important is experience and seeing what work is like!
- Allowing young people to explore any type of career without judgement and to not rush the decisions with deadlines
- More information about what different jobs are out there for those who don't know what career to take
- Taking different factors about myself into consideration to whether or not the jobs would suit me
- I think what would be best, would be a good connection between schools and business. At high school it's very difficult to know what you want to do, and with subjects as broad as 'maths' or 'IT' it can be extra difficult. I see how going to college, A levels, and university help with this. Allowing a young person to focus on a particular field. But in my case I feel a disconnect between what I've learned, and what I apply in the workplace
- I don't think a lot of young people know what they want to do when they leave education

Discussion point: Does career advice need to be overhauled?

In addition, (Q19) Does/Did your school/college bring local businesses or community groups into the classroom to share their experience? only 44% said that they did. Within the focus groups none of the participants said they had experienced business leaders or community groups sharing their experiences – other than careers fairs where it was felt that people were ‘promoting’ their sector rather than giving them a warts-and-all story of their experiences.

Discussion point: How can education and business leaders be brought together?

Of the Young Adults we surveyed (Q14) Do you think better careers advice would have resulted in a better career direction for you? 51% said ‘Yes’ it would, and to the question (Q15) Are you currently doing now what you thought you would be doing five years ago (e.g. at college, university or job)? 71% replied ‘No’ and 29% said ‘Yes’.

Discussion point: How can ‘work experience’ be ‘widened’ to include more diverse businesses?

MAPPING THEIR CAREER

As was said previously, thoughts weren’t really on the ‘next stage’ of their life so they were mainly concentrating on their studies and deferring thoughts on their future to another day. The ones who had their career mapped out knew what they needed to do. Those who were unsure did not give the impression that they were waiting to be inspired about an unknown career and in this instance it would be difficult to see how a traditional careers interview would inspire an unmotivated young person.

It was mentioned in Section 1 that many people documented the transition from young person to adult when they started to have responsibilities – either by having a job or being at university.

When we spoke to one focus group about transitioning into employment and whether they were ready, the participants listed a set of employability skills (work experience, communication skills, teamwork, confidence) that they said they possessed. However, it was noticeable that a number of the participants were unable to refine them in the session. For example – before the start of the session one of the participants approached the author asking how he could get into the industry and how he could get some work experience. Time was taken to suggest some options and the person was told to make sure that he got contact details before he left. So far, so good and full marks for initiative – however during the session some of the answers given didn’t portray the person in the best light for employment and at the end they left without securing the much-prized contact details. This epitomised that the group had employability skills but didn’t know how to deploy them to their benefit.

Whilst the majority of the participants spoken to directly didn’t have a career mapped out – it was an approximate 50:50 split in those considering university or apprenticeships. Interestingly one person was looking for a ‘degree apprenticeship’, however when pressed it was clear that this route was chosen to get a ‘degree’ rather than a ‘job’ – with the latter seemingly less important.

When pushed on whether a Level 3 qualification would be seen as valuable, the consensus was that this was ‘less attractive’ than the actual job that it could lead to.

Discussion point: How can young people be helped with identifying potential careers options?



APPRENTICESHIPS

Awareness of apprenticeships has always scored low in previous surveys undertaken by the author, but within this research (Q20) *At the age of 16 were you aware of the following opportunities that were available to you?* (and removing everyone under the age of 16 or below) all options scored high. ('A' levels' – 86%, 'Apprenticeships' - 77%, 'Degree' – 69%, 'Work Experience' – 67% and 'Volunteering' – 55%). 'Apprenticeships' actually scored higher than 'Degree' which is unusual and shows that awareness could be increasing.

However, the perception is still there with young people that obtaining a degree qualification is the best option. (Q21) *Which of the following do you feel will give you the best chance of a great job?* shows 59% think 'GCSEs + A' Level + Degree' whilst 19% think 'GCSEs + A' Level + Apprenticeship' and 17% thinking that 'GCSEs + Apprenticeship' is the best option.

Discussion point: Are there sufficient apprenticeship vacancies available to encourage young people to not take the degree option?

(Q30) *Other than GCSE's, A' Levels or a Degree, do you have any other extra-curricular qualifications or certificates (such as NCS, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Leadership qualifications etc)?* 62.5% of respondents said 'No' and 37.5% said 'Yes'. Of the 438 'Yes' responses, 106 people had completed NCS and 111 had completed a Duke of Edinburgh Award. Other awards included First Aid – 21 people and a Sports Leaders award – 19.

Within the online questionnaire (Q23) Did/would you consider an apprenticeship as a career? 43% of respondents answered 'Yes'. And for (Q24) Do you know who the biggest employer is in your town/city? only 11% said 'Yes' they did.

Discussion point: Should young people be encouraged to gain the skills demanded by the local labour market?

AUTOMATION

Finally, we asked about automation and whether or not they felt threatened by the introduction of technology (Q31) Do you think technology, artificial intelligence and/or robots will make your life better or worse in the future? The answers were mixed, 32% said it would be 'Better', 31% said it would be 'Worse' and 37% said they 'Didn't know'.

Section 3: OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

It is clear from the research that a large proportion of young people live in a protected bubble until they reach the stage in their lives when they accumulate the ‘responsibilities’ that require them to transition to becoming an adult.

Traditionally, adulthood comes at 18 with responsibilities around laws and voting.



VOTING & DEMOCRACY

We asked the respondents (Q32) *Have you voted in the last six months?* and of our young adults, 65% reported they had and 35% said they hadn't. When they were asked why they hadn't – few of them were excited about the prospect of having their say. “Can't be bothered”, “can I do it online?” “it's a done deal” - were three responses – with the general feeling being that they “didn't have enough knowledge”, “didn't understand it” or that you “shouldn't have to take politics to vote.”

When asked who makes the decisions that have an impact on their lives – ‘MP's & politicians’ and ‘Councillors’ finished highest (Q34) *Who do you think makes the decisions that affect you in your town? (Tick all the answers that apply).* We then asked if they could name their local MP and Councillors. (Q37) *Do you know who your local MP (Member of Parliament) is?* 43% said ‘Yes’, and 57% said ‘No’ and (Q38) *Do you know who your local Councillor is?* 22% - ‘Yes’, 78% - ‘No’. It should be added that we didn't ask them to supply a correct answer.

When we asked (Q39) *Do you know what a councillor does?* 38% answered ‘Yes’, and 62% answered ‘No’. The answer to (Q40) *Would you know how to contact your local Councillor?* generated a 30% ‘Yes’ and a 70% ‘No’ response.

Discussion point: Is it important that young people know who their MP and local councillor are?

A significant number of our respondents suggested that young people should be involved in local democracy (Q35) *How important do you think it is that young people are involved in the decision making in their local community?* 90% said it was either ‘Important’, ‘Very Important’ or ‘Extremely Important’.

However, when asked (Q36) *Have you ever considered getting involved in the decision making in your local community?* 66% answered ‘No’ and when asked (Q41) *On a scale of 1-10 (1=Low, 10=High) how involved would you describe yourself as being in local democracy?* The average score was a low 3.43.

Discussion point: How can young people be encouraged to take part in local democracy?



BREXIT

We then got onto Brexit. We started by asking (Q43) *On the whole do you think that Brexit will be good or bad for you?* 15% answered ‘Good’, 47% answered ‘Bad’ and 38% answered ‘Don’t Know’.

This question sums up the responses given by the young people we spoke to. An overall feeling that it will be “bad”, but in reality, they really “didn’t know”.

We tried to ensure that the survey was politically neutral and (Q44) *What do you think will be opportunities of Brexit?* was used as an opportunity to allow audiences to highlight positive aspects of Brexit.

Of the 962 'free text' responses the most popular words or phrases were "don't" (including variations such as "don't" / "IDK") used by 20% of respondents and "more" (14% of respondents). 8% of respondents used the word "none" and 4% used the word "jobs".

A full list of phrases is available on request

Of the responses to (Q45) *What do you think will be the outcome of Brexit?* 17% said 'A better Britain', 45% said 'A worse Britain' and 39% said 'Don't know'. When asked (Q46) *On a scale of 1-10 (1=Poor, 10=Brilliant) How well do you think the Government is doing with Brexit?* The average weighted score was 3.08.

Discussion point: What is the impact of youth views towards Brexit?

Section 4: AND FINALLY



We concluded the research with two questions: **What is the biggest issue facing young people?** and (Q66) **...if you were given £10m to improve the lives of young people in your area, how would you spend it: (please rank the following in order 1= Best use of money 9=Worse use of money).**

From experience people often find it difficult (especially in the context of undertaking research) to generate answers to complicated questions. In order to ask this question, it was posed at the beginning of the research, and participants were asked to keep it in mind as a range of issues were discussed.

As expected, the question failed to generate insight of value in two of the groups, but in one session, after a slight pause, and completely unprompted, an answer of Mental Health was given. Once this issue was raised everyone in the group became very animated. A number of the participants reported friends who were stressed, depressed, having panic attacks or suicidal thoughts. Whilst the group suggested that they did discuss issues affecting themselves between close friends – they often lacked the knowledge to provide correct advice. For those without close friends, they felt that people “didn’t know who to talk to”, that they would be “judged” and that they “tended to keep things to themselves”.

When the issue of Mental Health was mentioned to the other participants – they equally became animated and whilst exams were obviously mentioned, equally so was “bullying”, “depression”, and “family problems”.

This issue was asked within the online questionnaire (Q60) On a scale of 1-10 (1=Not okay and 10=Okay) how would you describe your mental health? The weighted average score was 5.82. This could be perceived as being in the middle – but when you look in more detail – 9% of respondents answered ‘1 - Not Okay’, 4% scored ‘2’ and 10% scored ‘3’. This is 23% of all young people defining their own mental health as being in the lowest 30% of available options.

Discussion point: Is youth mental health a ticking health time-bomb and what can be done about it?

The final question we asked was (Q66) ...if you were given £10m to improve the lives of young people in your area, how would you spend it: (please rank the following in order 1= Best use of money 9=Worse use of money).

Overall, the top three highest scoring options were ‘Reduced fees for University’ with a score of 6.35, ‘Training for jobs’ (5.50) and More Apprenticeships (5.52).

However, when you look at people’s first choice selection, ‘training...’ and ‘...apprenticeships’ were pushed into the bottom three of options and were replaced with ‘More police and emergency services’ (17% of respondents) and ‘Sort out Brexit’ (12%).

Interestingly when you look at respondent’s bottom choices ‘Brexit’ (17%) and ‘More police...’ (14%) are also listed amongst the most popular answers. This suggests they are very polarised opinions. Young people however, are agreed on the fact that they don’t want to spend money on ‘More sports centres’.

Anecdotally, some young people spoke about the investment being in “something” that would give them “somewhere to go”. When this was discussed further it was about “having someone to talk to about the things that they don’t know”. A discussion started around youth services and youth clubs as a place where young people could go and meet new people, get “a fresh start” – and get access to relevant information such as health, politics and general knowledge about transitioning into an adult.

Discussion point: Where could young people go to learn about the things they don’t know.

Research Methodology

During May/June 2018, each Key Cities area was asked to distribute a questionnaire (either directly or indirectly via influencers such as schools, colleges and youth groups) to young people in their area. Throughout the survey, young people were asked a number of questions related to perceived issues facing them and specific questions posed by Key Cities’ leaders.

Throughout the document a number of ‘**Discussion points**’ have been highlighted. These are points that the author believes are areas that Key Cities should be considering when developing future strategies around young people.

In total 1,721 young people completed the online questionnaire of which 1,538 identified themselves as aged between 14-25. The 183 respondents that weren’t identifiable as being within the age range 14-25 have been excluded from the survey results.

A further 35 young people (aged between 16-19) took part in focus groups in Huddersfield, Bradford and Derby.

We received responses from each Key City area ranging from 2 to 292. Of all responses, 69% came from 5 Key Cities.



Of all the young people ‘Teens’ (people aged between 14-19) made up 83% of respondents and ‘Young Adults’ (people aged between 20-25) made up 17% of respondents.

53% of respondents were female and 43% were male. 4% (66 in total) didn’t identify as either male or female or opted not to say. When asked how they wanted to be defined answers included alternative definitions such as “Trans, Trans Male, Trans Girl, Non-Binary (7 responses), Gender Liquid, Gender Fluid (4), Genderqueer (2), Proxvir, Bi-Gender, and Demigirl”.

*For the purposes of the analysis all percentages have been rounded up or rounded down to produce a whole number. Therefore 34.49% (and below) would be presented as 34% whilst 34.50) as above) would be presented as 35%. Figures below 0.49% are displayed as 0% but with an * to demonstrate the number represents a figure where appropriate.*

Discussion point: How can Key City areas be supported to build effective networks and expertise that facilitates the engagement of young people?

Discussion point: What is the impact on services of the increasing number of people not identifying as a specific gender? Is there a risk of not engaging 4% of young people by addressing them as male/female?

View the full results and analysis

For a copy of full analysis and data from this piece of research please contact keycities@wakefield.gov.uk

For more information on this survey please contact Tina Cooper tina.cooper@kirklees.gov.uk

About the author

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