

Q: How can we make Wirral an amazing place for young people?

A: Care more about us.

Reviewing the Youth Offer in Wirral

October 2019

## **What is the Review of the Youth Offer?**

The Review of the Youth Offer aims to understand what young people in Wirral need and want to support their development and help them to achieve the best possible outcomes. With this insight, we will review current provision and work collaboratively to design a Youth Offer which will be accessible and beneficial to all young people in the borough.

The review is focused on listening to what young people are telling us rather than making assumptions about what we think they want- they are the experts. The review isn't just about youth clubs or leisure activities, it considers all aspects of young people's lives, including: health & wellbeing; education, employment & learning; hobbies, activities & free time; youth voice & democracy; young people in their communities; and, advice, information and access.

## **Why are we doing it?**

We want Wirral to be an amazing place for young people that supports them to be all they can be.

Wirral Council and its partners offer a range of services and activities for young people and we want to make sure that they are fit-for-purpose and meeting the needs of our younger residents.

As a partnership, we want to work collaboratively with young people, their families, communities, voluntary and faith organisations, and schools to develop and deliver a Youth Offer which makes the best of the opportunities we have in Wirral.

## **How are we doing it?**

We are doing it in collaboration with young people.

We are listening to the young people of Wirral.

From 19<sup>th</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019, we supported young people to develop and complete a survey with their peers. This included an online survey, group sessions, workshops, surveys in public spaces such as shopping centres and cafes, and promotion through schools and other organisations.

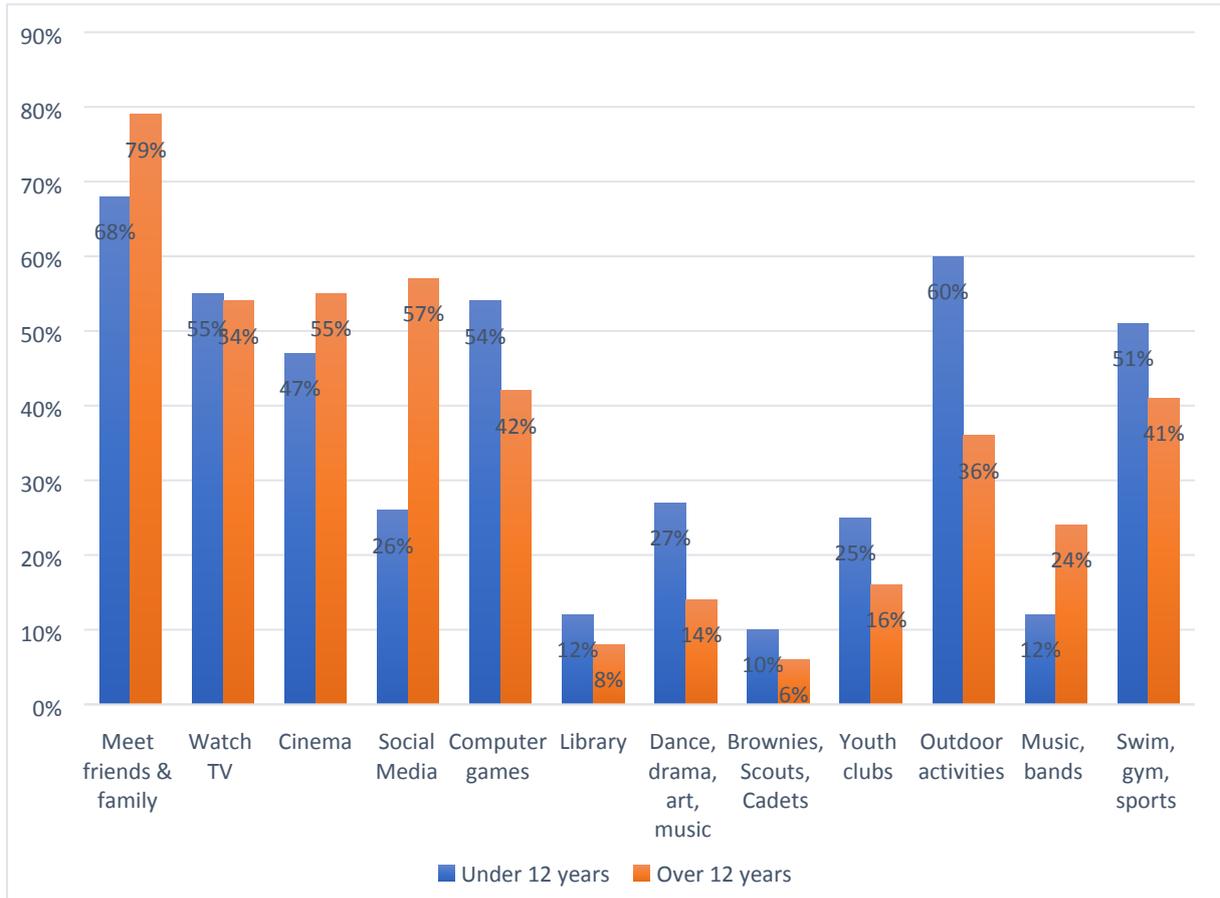
The young people leading the consultation worked hard to make sure the survey reached as many different groups and individuals as possible.

## Who took part in the Youth Offer Consultation?

**Number of surveys submitted**      **2 736**

<b>Age</b>		
Participants under 12 years	750	27%
Participants over 12 years	1 986	73%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	1 484	54%
Male	1 172	43%
Self-defined	29	1%
Prefer not to say	54	2%
<b>Status</b>		
In school	1 781	65%
In college	537	20%
In employment	245	9%
Other	168	6%

## What young people told us they like to do

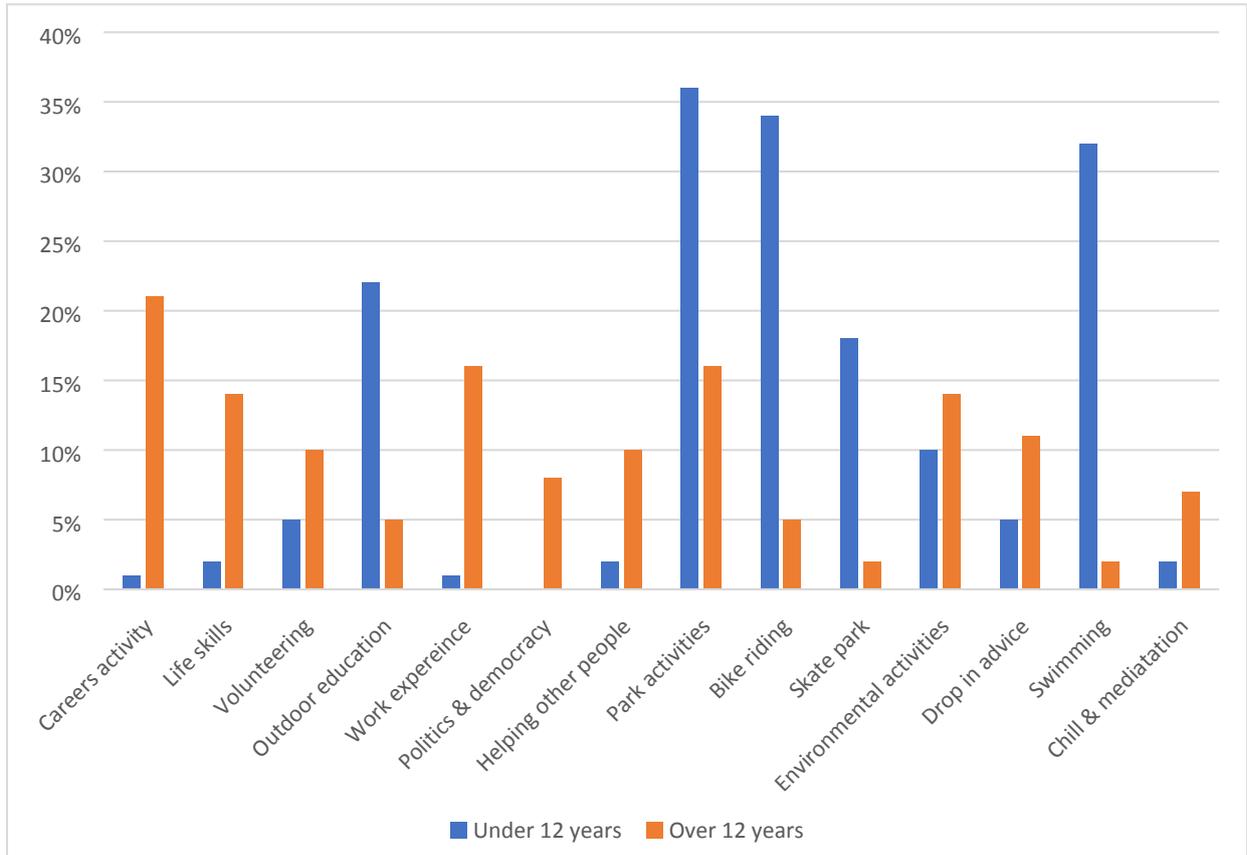


All young people, regardless of age, enjoy meeting friends and family, watching television, and playing computer games. These are activities they do at home and like to do in an organised way either through youth provision or in an online community.

The results suggest that younger children like organised pastimes and clubs which are led by an adult such as outdoor activities and sports. Older young people have more of a preference for activities based around socialising, such as using social media and attending events or festivals.

It is positive that so many young people in Wirral like to do physical activity, a good basis for a healthy lifestyle.

## What young people told us they would like to do more of

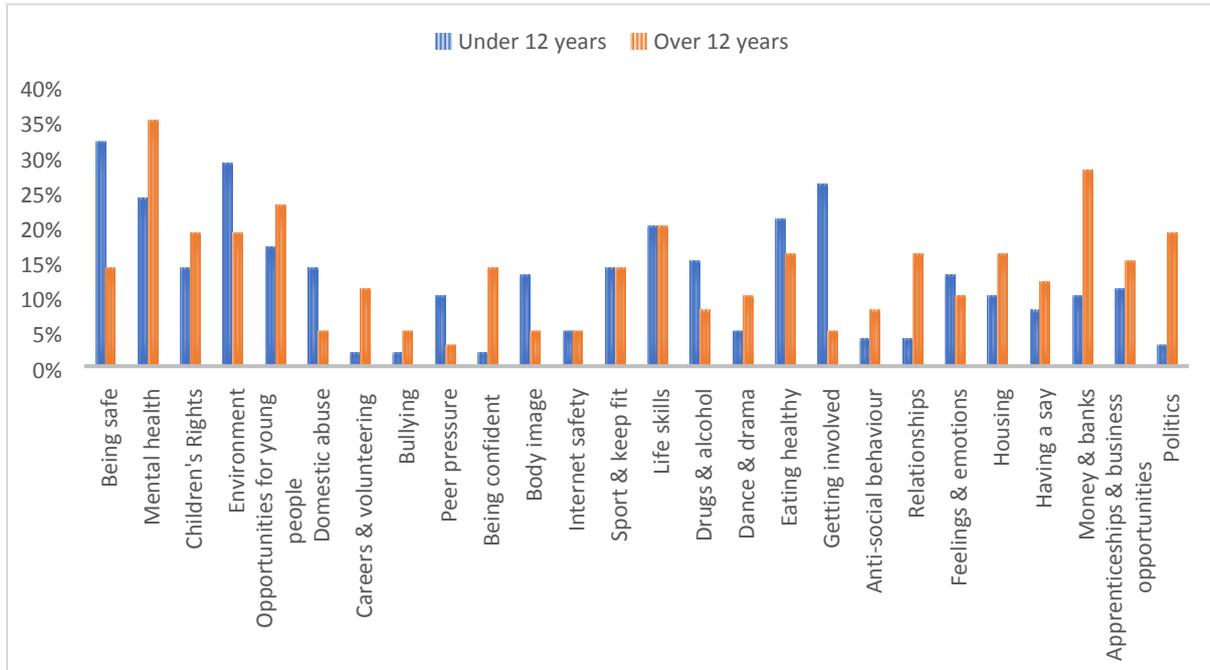


Our young people under 12 want to do more outdoors- park activities, bike riding, skate parks, and outdoor education. Living in a borough with as much to offer as Wirral, with its coastline, green spaces, parks, and natural features should make this possible. If they have to come indoors, under 12s want more access to swimming.

Older young people are more focused on their future and preparation for adulthood. They would like more activities based around careers, life skills, volunteering, and work experience. A significant number are keen to be active citizens by helping others and being involved in politics and democracy.

All young people would like to do more to protect and improve the environment- they present themselves as an environmentally aware generation.

## What young people told us they would like to know more about



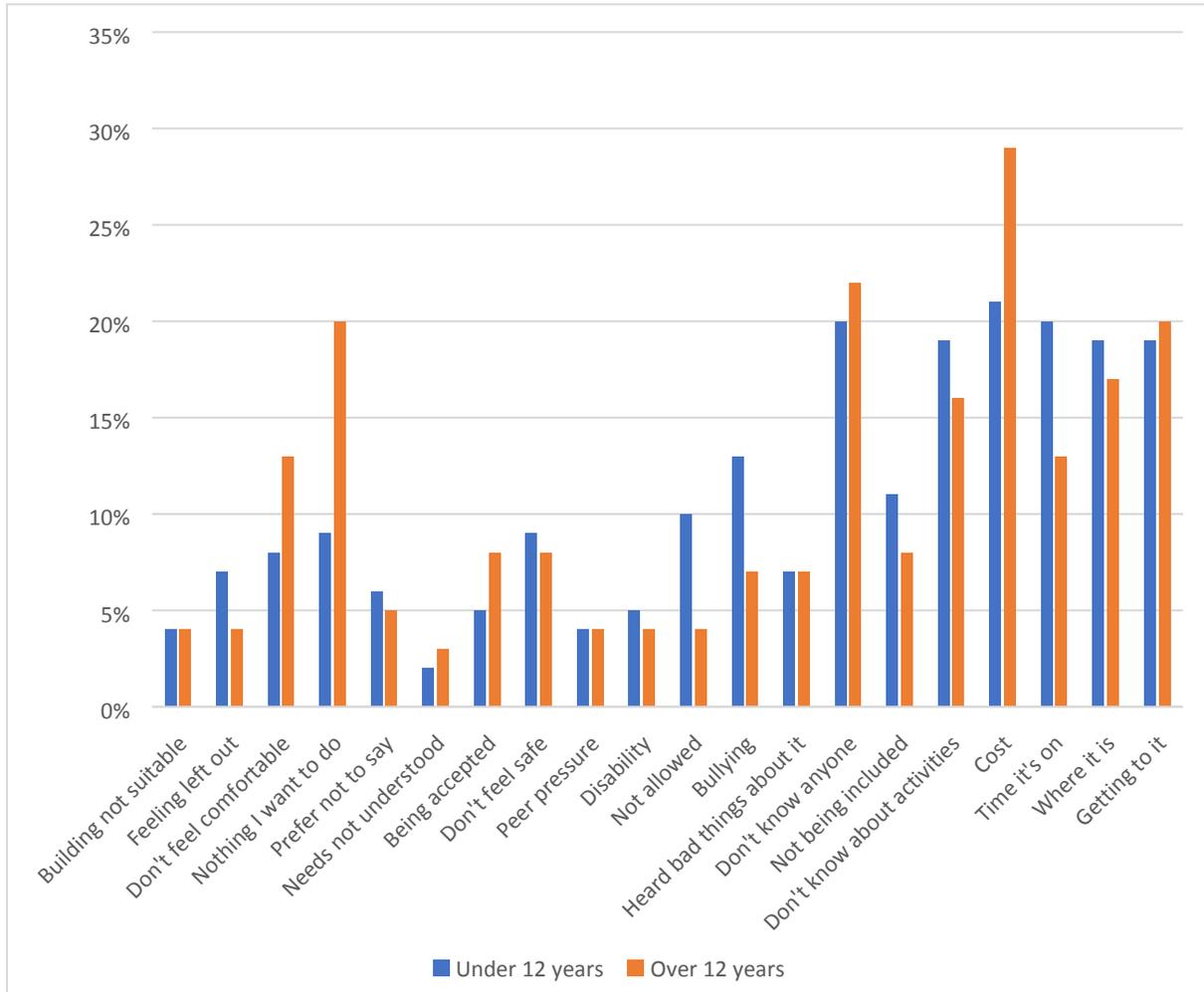
The response to this question clearly shows that young people in Wirral are keen to know more about a whole range of subjects and issues. Schools, residents, parents, professionals and politicians need to respond to their eagerness by working together to provide the right opportunities.

Our under 12s want to know more about being safe, the environment and getting involved in their communities.

Over 12s are once again focused on preparation for adulthood, wanting to know more about careers and volunteering, money and banks, and politics. Interestingly, the younger age group are equally interested in life skills as the older teens.

The results show that a significant proportion of the over 12s want to know more about mental health, being confident and relationships. Pastoral care and access to services need to address this through the revised Youth Offer.

## What young people told us stops them from taking part



There are a number of practicalities stopping young people from taking part in activities, including: cost; timing; location; transport; and not knowing what's on. For older teens cost is far more significant, which may be related to the types of activities they want to do, or that the cost of these activities and the travel expense to get there increases as they get older.

The results suggest that the current offer for young people in Wirral is not attracting older teens with 20% stating there isn't anything on offer that they want to do.

For all young people in Wirral, there are fears to engaging: fear of bullying, feeling left out; not feeling comfortable or safe; or not being accepted. Inclusion must be a priority for the future Youth Offer.

## What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people? Focus on health and wellbeing

When we asked young people what would make Wirral an amazing place **91** responses were given relating to their health and wellbeing.

Category	No. of responses
<b>Mental health</b> - anxiety, depression, awareness	54
<b>Substances</b> - alcohol, drugs, smoking, prevention	16
<b>Confidence</b> - body image, self-esteem,	9
<b>Healthy lifestyles</b> - healthy eating, fitness	6
<b>Period poverty</b> - cost of sanitary products	3
<b>Pressure in education</b> - exam stress, decisions, careers	2
<b>Sexual health</b> - awareness	1

Understanding their own mental health and how to stay well is a priority for the young people of Wirral. A revised Youth Offer needs to respond to that.

### In their own words:

“I think we should make the Wirral more safe for people who have mental illness.”

“Mental health workshops. Mental health summer camps. Suicidal help groups. Little groups and camps with churches or schools. Not too costly but donations required....Support groups for parents to understand teens and their problems.”

“Places for kids to open up- look beyond the smiles.”

“Designated smoking areas for children's safety.”

“There needs to be more support around mental health, body issues and LGBT as it is often hard to talk to trusted adults about these things for fear of disappointing them.”

“Free sanitary products in toilets where people can't afford them.”

**What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people?  
Focus on education, employment and learning**

When we asked young people what would make Wirral an amazing place **180** responses were given relating to their education, employment and learning.

Category	No. of responses
<b>Curriculum for life</b> - learning about jobs, money, life skills	79
<b>More employment opportunities</b> - jobs, apprenticeships	41
<b>More flexible education</b> - options, individual approach	17
<b>Improving provision</b> - school facilities, quality, access	16
<b>More post-16 support</b> - advice, guidance, information	8
<b>More arts opportunities</b> - art, drama, film, writing, dance	8
<b>More after school clubs</b> - open access, more choices	7
<b>School lunches</b> - cost	4

Having a curriculum that prepares them for adulthood is a priority for the young people of Wirral. A revised Youth Offer needs to respond to that.

**In their own words:**

“Help young people in schools to know how to progress as an adult, e.g. learning about insurance, money and politics.”

“Very talented and experienced teachers to teach how to chase your dreams.”

“Better advice in school. More school meet ups and outside meetings or events supporting needs of teenagers such as housing, finances and mental health and job opportunities.”

“Provide real job opportunities for young people.”

“Improve school treatment towards children.”

“We need to know how we can get to what we want to be. How do we get the job we want? How can we afford our first home? I also want time to be a young person and enjoy it without the stress of everything (exams, money, fitting in etc.). Affordable housing is VITAL. But also jobs and nice cafes - I go to Liverpool because there is more to do so my friends like to go. But why can't I stay on Wirral to do that?”

## What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people? Focus on hobbies, activities and free time

When we asked young people what would make Wirral an amazing place **779** responses were given relating to hobbies, activities and free time.

Category	No. of responses
<b>Variety</b> - older teens, different formats, more choices	388
<b>Facilities</b> - quality, access, choices	100
<b>Cost</b> - discounts, memberships, travel	94
<b>Location</b> - local options, barriers to travel, inequalities	54
<b>Existing facilities</b> - condition	45
<b>Spaces to socialise</b> - engagement with peers, permissions	40
<b>Inclusion</b> - being accepted, activities that cater for all	30
<b>Events</b> - festivals, outdoor events, competitions	28

Having access to a range of activities, delivered in a variety of ways is a priority for the young people of Wirral. A revised Youth Offer needs to respond to that.

### In their own words:

“Run longer, open more often, more workers....Places made just for teens”

“Advertise spare courts on facebook - cheap rates for young people to use. I see so many empty ones.”

“Get rid of no ball games signs.”

“Just having more things locally as it is hard to get to activities because they are normally straight after school and most people’s parents are in work”

“Lots more events like bike race and festivals.”

“More access to cheap/free activities such as athletics, gymnastics, dance, swimming. The private clubs are so expensive. It’s hard to be involved in these if you don’t have a high income. I really miss the free swimming in the school holidays when we could go nearly every day, this summer I have only been once because it is too expensive for my family to take me and my siblings.”

“Leave football goals up in the summer.”

**What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people?  
Focus on youth voice and democracy**

When we asked young people what would make Wirral an amazing place **102** responses were given relating to youth voice and democracy.

Category	No. of responses
<b>Being heard</b> - being asked, being heard, action taken	33
<b>Engagement</b> - how we engage and when, approaches	24
<b>Acceptance</b> - being valued as a young person	16
<b>Inclusion</b> - involve everyone, access, understanding	16
<b>Creating communities</b> - local approach, togetherness	6
<b>Aspirations</b> - believe in and want more for young people	4
<b>Politics</b> - understanding politics	3

Having their voice heard is a priority for the young people of Wirral. A revised Youth Offer needs to respond to that.

**In their own words:**

“Approach kids in a more sensible way, consider lesser fortunate kids, take kids with serious disabilities more seriously.”

“Ask us what we want.”

“Be fair listen to everyone.”

“Bring the community together and doing things to make sure Wirral is a great place to live.”

“By sticking together and sharing opinions, we can do this maybe monthly meeting.”

“Connect with young people more.”

“Everybody to show kindness and respect.”

“Give young people more of a choice on large decisions being made now that will greatly affect us in the future.”

**What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people?  
Focus on young people in their communities**

When we asked young people what would make Wirral an amazing place **547** responses were given relating to young people in their communities.

Category	No. of responses
<b>Improve the environment</b> - litter, improve rundown areas	160
<b>Feeling safe</b> - street lighting, traffic management, CCTV	140
<b>Cheaper transport</b> - discounted travel	60
<b>Being environmentally responsible</b> - plastics, recycling	51
<b>Shaping the future</b> - being involved, reducing inequalities	45
<b>Transport links</b> - frequency, routes, later services	27
<b>Social spaces for young people</b> - indoor, outdoor, safe	26
<b>Community approach</b> - togetherness, inter-generational	22
<b>Kindness</b> - showing kindness to each other	16

Making the physical environment more pleasant to live in is a priority for the young people of Wirral. A revised Youth Offer needs to respond to that.

**In their own words:**

“I want to feel accepted here. Always feel like an outsider.”

“Only the wealthy get a chance to do what they want and enjoy life, while us who are poor only get to survive.”

“We can be inspired to help and volunteer in the community.”

“The Wirral gives us low expectations in life from the poor quality housing, buildings and poor areas. No one can afford anything to make things look better so we know we will live somewhere gross and unsafe.”

“Free public toilets everywhere.”

“Open old buidings, give them to small/new businesses to use. Would make the town centre look better....More creative arty decorations on buildings.”

“Make the parks a safer place for us to be.”

“If someone is lonely get them a friend.”

**What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people?  
Focus on advice, information and access**

When we asked young people what would make Wirral an amazing place **205** responses were given relating to advice, information and access.

Category	No. of responses
<b>Modernise</b> - the offer, communications, advertising	73
<b>Inclusion</b> - make services/advice/provion accessible to all	70
<b>Flexible access</b> - online services, opening times, locations	28
<b>People first</b> - Youth Workers, communities, relationships	27
<b>Social spaces</b> - social groups, support networks	7

Updating the ways that we advertise, communicate and engage is a priority for the young people of Wirral. A revised Youth Offer needs to respond to that.

**In their own words:**

“Mostly make us aware of what activities there are for us to do and take part in instead of getting bored and then as we get older causing trouble etc.”

“We're all more aware than people think, just more support and feeling like we belong.”

“Face to face advice, not just over the phone.”

“Get People involved more. More workers to talk to.”

“Have more LGBT friendly communities.”

“I would really like a support group so I can feel included and talk about my feelings as I sometimes feel alone.”

“Make more student deals.”

“More friendly places, more places to go, understanding family with anyone with additional needs.”

“By being more friendly and open to people.”

## What would make Wirral an amazing place for young people? Top 10 Recommendations

In total **1904** responses were made about what would make Wirral an amazing place for young people. Using all that information, these are the top 10 recommendations:

### 1. “...make the place feel like there’s stuff to do...”

Young people are asking us to co-ordinate and publicise what already goes on, to add new activities and opportunities, and wherever possible to make it local to them.

### 2. “...make parts of the Wirral look less run down...”

Young people are bothered by litter, derelict buildings, empty shops, dog fouling and neglected neighbourhoods. They’re asking for more trees, more flowers, more appealing buildings and housing, inviting green spaces and more bins.

### 3. “...make it a place where I feel safe all the time, as I don’t at the moment...”

Young people are asking us to make the places they go and travel through feel safer by improving outdoor lighting, managing traffic and having an increased presence of trusted adults, particularly on public transport and on the streets.

### 4. “...let everybody be included...”

Young people are asking us to make our services, facilities and activities more inclusive. Additionally, they are challenging adults to be accepting of all people regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, or religion.

### 5. “...support young people to stay on the Wirral more...”

Young people report that they go out of borough to enjoy cafes, music venues, shopping, for further education and to find work. They would like to be able to do more of those things in Wirral by having improved facilities and opportunities.

**6. “...have activities for us to do that our parents can afford...”**

Young people want to participate in activities, they want to do more but are often unable to because of financial pressures, particularly where they experience transport costs or are part of a sibling group.

**7. “...stop increasing my ticket prices and improve trains and transport...”**

Young people are asking for better transport links, increased frequency of buses, later services (particularly on Sundays) and subsidised travel. They want to enjoy all that Wirral has to offer but struggle to access it.

**8. “...help young people in schools to know how to progress as an adult...”**

Young people are asking us to provide a curriculum for life, one that teaches them about mortgages, insurance, benefits, politics, sex, substances, DIY, health, careers, jobs, domestic abuse and relationships. They want this to be delivered in their schools by subject experts.

**9. “...get out on social media...”**

Young people are asking us to modernise how we communicate, advertise and deliver services to them. Online booking, apps, live chat, web-based services and reward schemes that can be accessed via mobile phones are more suited to their lifestyles and habits.

**10. “...give us space to talk and relax with friends...”**

Young people want to be accepted, to be treated fairly, and not to be pre-judged because they are young. They want to have places where they are allowed to meet with friends, not for activities, but just to socialise and be young.

## Acting on what the young people of Wirral have told us Next Steps

With almost 3,000 young people taking part in this consultation (survey and focus groups) we need to make sure their voice is heard and acted on.

### What we will do next:

1. We will take share this report as widely as possible to make sure that the voice of Wirral's young people is heard.
2. We will bring professionals, agencies and communities together to learn from the findings.
3. We will collaborate as a partnership, with young people, to look at how we can make the resource we currently have (in people, services, funding, buildings, facilities, and natural resources) go as far as possible to provide the young people of Wirral with a Youth Offer which meets their needs.
4. We will negotiate, on behalf of the young people in Wirral, with external agencies who can contribute to and/or improve the Youth Offer.
5. We will act now, wherever possible, to make improvements to current services.
6. We will keep an open communication with young people via the internet, media and youth groups on the progress of the review, ensuring that they know what we are doing on their behalf and can hold us to account.
7. We will work collaboratively to develop a business case for a Youth Offer which makes Wirral an amazing place for young people and supports them to be all they can be.

## Acknowledgements

To the young people who designed and tested the survey- thank you.

To the young people who facilitated the focus groups and went out into Wirral to complete surveys face-to-face with their peers- thank you.

To the young people who are members of the Young People's Advisory Group and have provided oversight and guidance to the process- thank you.

To all the young people who took part in focus groups, drew pictures, left comments and shared ideas- thank you.

To every young person who took time to complete the survey, submitted open, honest and helpful comments- thank you.

The contribution of more than 3,000 young people in Wirral, either as a participant or a facilitator, has given us a fantastic opportunity to understand what it is young people need and want from their Youth Offer. Not only was the volume of response positive, but the quality of the response was amazing.

We will do all we can to make sure an amazing Youth Offer in Wirral becomes a reality. In their own words:

**“Let's hope it gets done.”**