



make space Youth Review

An inquiry into the offer to young people in the UK today: **Emerging Thinking**

During its first six months, the Make Space Youth Review has toured the country talking to over 7,000 young people about their lives, their communities and their views on what needs to change.

What emerges is a remarkable insight behind the headlines into what life is like as a teenager today. Fears and concerns about the gangs, guns and violence of the few are real, but so too is an overwhelming

confidence and ambition for the future and an optimism and understanding about what could and should be done to make things better – for everyone.

Young people have a powerful message for us all – they need a better deal. From the top priority of more places, opportunities and centres in their community to better help for young people when things go wrong. From more involvement in decisions about what

goes on locally to better protection for their own safety, young people are offering us the answers to some of the most important questions of today.

Through the Make Space Youth Review young people are setting out a compelling argument for action. It demands our attention.

Key elements of a transformative 21st Century youth offer for teenagers

A new and revolutionary offer for young people is likely to have a number of key elements. At its heart will be a vision and commitment from Government to offer a new deal for teenagers to support young people to reach their potential. It would need to include:

- **A new national vision** capable of changing the mood and attitude towards young people. It would need to raise expectations of teenagers, inspiring engagement and involvement in this new programme in every area.
- **Reformed machinery of Government** both centrally and locally, capable of bringing together all aspects of work and services for young people to coordinate strategic policy and delivery.
- **More places for young people to access coordinated support in every community** through new young people's hubs and centres. These new 'beacons' for young people will be grown from existing youth centres, clubs and extended schools with the aid of Transformation Grants from
- **Government.** Young people's hubs will provide positive activities, out of school classes, information and a place for young people to meet in every local community. Hubs will coordinate wider activities and clubs for young people – including local outreach teams.
- **Intensive support and outreach teams** to work in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour. Based in the young people's hub, teams will help to target the causes of crime whilst supporting victims and linking with local Residents' Associations, Neighbourhood Watch groups and youth services.
- **A commitment to quality in all services for young people**, delivered through a new 'Young People's Curriculum' and enhanced workforce.
- **A funded workforce transformation programme** to improve the status, skills and rewards of those who work with young people. This will include recruitment, training and access to qualifications for all those who work with young people, with the development of a
- **new role of 'Young People's Champions'** for the most skilled and experienced youth leaders and managers.
- **The involvement of young people in all aspects of their local community and local services.** This might be delivered through a new system of Young Mayors, backed up by Youth Parliaments and Councils in every area to enable young people to have their say over menus of positive activities and local support services, as well as access to transport links according to need.
- **A national volunteering scheme for young people** to encourage and support intergenerational involvement in the community. This could be linked through schools and offer volunteering opportunities that reward young people with transferable skills, contact with inspirational adults and recognition of their contribution within the community.
- **The right for parents of teenagers to request flexible working arrangements** to enable them to spend more time with their children.

Supporting young people to fulfil their potential

The Youth Review Interim Findings give a stark warning of how society is letting a generation of teenagers down, their potential unfulfilled with a lack of opportunities, activities and places to go – and the threat of gang violence, attacks on young people and unsafe communities.

There can be little doubt that the teenage years include some of the most exciting but also challenging times. A formative stage of development, this is the time when peer groups and habits that often last well into adult life become set.

As relationships with friends and peers outside the family become increasingly important, young people look to the outside world for direction and acceptance. Typically, British teenagers are more likely to spend time with friends: 45% of boys and 34% of girls reported spending more than four evenings a week with friends compared to just 17% of boys and 10% of girls in France during 2002.¹ Of the young people consulted by the Youth Review, 46% reported that they spend time regularly 'just hanging around'. This is not necessarily a problem, but with 69% complaining that there is not enough to do in their local area much of the time spent by teenagers outside school is at worst chaotic and negative.*

Not having anywhere to go was a consistent concern for young people in every area. Young people spoke of a lack of services that were often out of reach – too far away with inadequate transport to get there or too expensive. Others said they didn't know what was available, with little information or knowledge of where to go to find out. The boundaries of the local area or estate was felt to be a major influence by some young people, with an unwillingness to travel outside the area because of the risk of attacks by those from other areas.

The feeling that there is not enough supported activity for teenagers is not limited to young people themselves: between 1992 and 2006 there has been a 60% rise in complaints about teenagers 'hanging around'.² For some teenagers, time spent in an unsupervised environment can lead to experimentation with dangerous behaviour, sometimes ending in the formation of lifelong habits. A US study in 2004 found that 50% of adolescent male binge drinkers and 33% of female binge drinkers continued to binge drink at ages 30 and 31. In contrast, only 20% of males and 8% of females who were not binge drinkers during late adolescence went on to heavily drink as adults.³ Meanwhile, 'activities for teenagers' topped polls held by MORI/Audit Commission in 2002 and the Survey of English Housing in 2003 as an improvement most desired for local areas.⁴ Evidence also suggests that there is a growing gap between parents and their children, with 50% of parents not knowing where their children are, who they are with or what they are doing at any one time.⁵

High-profile reports of a gang culture involving young people, whilst not applying to all, clearly are a reality for a worrying minority. 12% of 11–16 years olds were found to belong to a gang, with particularly high levels amongst those teenagers who did not get along with their parents and those who lived in areas with high levels of local disorder.⁶ Much of this time is spent outdoors, with 43% of those involved saying that their gang is centred on a park or recreation ground. Young people consulted spoke openly about a fear for their own safety – especially in urban environments. This was a top concern in many areas and one that visibly grew at times of high-profile media reports. An average of 68% indicated that they had feared for their personal safety at some point in the last fortnight,

whilst this figure rose to over 8 out of 10 in consultations held during a period of intensive media coverage of youth violence.*

In all areas there was an overwhelming feeling that adults needed to do more and offer more for young people, including safe places to go with transport to get them home safely if necessary, better facilities that have decent buildings and furnishings and a place to meet that can act as base for a wide range of activities – classes, clubs, specialist sports and arts. Importantly, young people called for skilled and enthusiastic adults who could inspire and motivate, as well as help make things happen. Whilst the majority of young people said that they spent their social time 'hanging around', there was a clear desire to be somewhere else if it was available and offered something better. Young people said that they wanted places for them in their community – somewhere that was visibly theirs and known. Early and regular openings were a particular concern for younger teenagers, with some worry over a potential 'takeover' by older teenagers. Yet provision also needs to take account of the hours and relative independence of the older teens. Again the workers were seen to be key in this through creating a positive environment for all. Some young people already went to a youth club but this was often for a limited number of hours per week with a limited offer of activities. At the extremes, some young people also found the environment too unstructured and informal; others talked of being 'bossed around' at some clubs and made to do things. Clearly, the environment and engagement and motivation skills of the workers are central to the success of any offer to young people.

But this is not just down to adults, and young people themselves showed an overwhelming desire to be involved. From planning to involvement in running activities

Identity and belonging

The devastating impact of gun crime and gang culture on individuals, communities and society has become an increasing reality in urban city life. Gun-related violence and the increase in gangs and territorialism are relatively new in the UK and, in instances where young people are involved, is influenced by cross-cutting issues such as race, poverty and the need for inner city development. Gun crime and territorialism are distinct from anti-social behaviour and are often linked to organised crime, involving complex networks and sophisticated criminal organisation. It is essential that we understand the difference between a gang (a group of young people) who may be

involved in criminal activity and a group of young people who are not involved in anti-social behaviour.

For those young people who do offend, the roll-out of Young Offenders' Panels involving a Youth Justice Board representative and community volunteers, provides for the drawing up of contracts outside of the courtroom between young people, victims and support services. However it is important to tackle the causes of, rather than just the effects of, gang culture if we are to overcome it. Tied into the appeal of gangs is the need that young people have to develop a sense of identity for themselves.

Groups of young people should not in themselves be viewed negatively. Group membership is a natural part of transition to adulthood for most young people. Consultations have revealed that young people join a gang for many reasons and usually in response to needs, including excitement, status, self-protection, family history or in response to particular social conditions. Rather than creating a moral panic about group membership, the energy and companionship amongst young people who associate together in groups can be channelled into new opportunities for learning and leadership.

and volunteering, young people said that they wanted to be included in decision-making and delivery. These experiences could have a profound effect on helping young people learn to make decisions – which will have a major impact on their ability to navigate life. An essential part of being an adult is the ability to make and live with change whilst keeping a sense of control. These personality attributes, plus those of self-confidence and cooperation with peers, are skills that are not just learned in the classroom. Academics have called these qualities ‘non-cognitive’, or personal and social, skills. They enable young people to grow into adults who are not only more employable, but also better able to plan and navigate the range of options available to them. As people grow up and develop these skills they tend to reduce or give up foolish or dangerous behaviour. Among active offenders in their early 20s the most common triggers of desistance are entering into a stable relationship and getting a foothold onto a livelihood. These socialising influences are important in cutting down on criminality, and they can be stimulated early by providing positive activities that help develop personal and social skills.

Teenagers also talked of the need for support in making difficult decisions and gaining support at key times – from choices over school and careers to health and personal issues. 81% called for more careers advice alongside that offered within schools.*

Sadly, the needs of the most vulnerable teenagers sometimes go unnoticed and

many young people had stories to tell of how they, their family and siblings had struggled to get help when it was needed. The National Inquiry into Self Harm amongst Young People in 2006 reported that whilst 7% of teenagers had self-harmed, only 2% of parents considered that their children had done so.⁷ Teenagers need various degrees of support, the levels of which depend on the nature of the concern. But for many young people support seems remote and levels of awareness of support services are low. Only 38% of those consulted during the Youth Review Roadshow were confident that they knew where to access support outside of school hours, whilst 71% agreed that they would welcome more contact with independent adults who are not teachers or family members, but who can provide support with issues and problems. 79% of young people consulted commented that they would welcome a ‘one stop shop’ for support needs, through which help is provided either directly through open access or indirectly through referral capabilities.* Support services exist in communities, with large amounts of government investment sustaining them, but because they are disparate and under-publicised young people are not confident enough in finding and accessing help. Services available in the community are needed to support the work done inside schools. Alongside the growth of extended schools there needs to be a support network capable of reaching young people who have lower levels of engagement with the school environment.

79% of 11–16 year olds reported that they would be more likely to access a ‘one stop shop’ for support services than if those services existed in different places*

68% of 11–16 year olds said they would be interested in activities being offered within school buildings, as long as they did not constitute just ‘an extension of the school day’*

In a study comparing the importance of personal and social skills between the 1950s cohort of teenagers and the 1970s cohort, the strength of the link between these skills and life chances increased by **33 times**⁸

Surveys carried out between 1995 and 2003 consistently demonstrate that around **28% of girls and 20% of boys aged 12–13 say they are sometimes afraid to go to school because of bullying. Black children, looked after children and children who have been excluded from school are significantly more likely to be bullied by their peers.**⁹

There are an estimated **24,000** cases of attempted suicide by young people aged between 10 and 19 every year in the UK, the equivalent of one attempt every 22 minutes¹⁰

40%–49% of young men in custody, aged between 18 and 21, have been in local authority residential care¹¹

Nearly **90%** of 18–21 year olds in custody had at least one form of mental illness, ranging from severe psychosis to depression¹²

Challenges facing young people

Teenagers face new challenges. Direct advertisement towards teenagers and the emergence of ‘must haves’ such as mobile phones, clothing and accessories has resulted in young people’s self-image becoming more tied to what they own. Targeted marketing aimed directly at teenagers in a way designed to put pressure on parents has become a symptom of consumerism. Greater prosperity can mask the problems experienced by many teenagers in a fast-moving and more highly pressured world. Unprecedented affluence

does not necessarily mean unprecedented happiness: UNICEF, using figures from the World Health Organization, ranked the UK at 21st out of 21 economically advanced countries in a league table of child wellbeing – this compares with a GDP that ranks as the world’s 5th largest.¹³ Department of Health statistics indicate that binge-drinking amongst teenage girls in the UK is the second worst in Europe, whilst consumption levels are gradually increasing for all, with particular rises occurring amongst younger drinkers. We know that almost half of 16–24

year olds have tried at least one illegal drug in their lifetime, with almost 1 in 5 reporting having used drugs in the last month.¹⁴ It is notable that teenagers from poorer households are significantly more likely to have taken Class A drugs, whilst teenage smokers from lower-income families are much less likely to have kicked the habit by the time they reach 30.¹⁵ The most common concerns amongst young people consulted during the Youth Review roadshow include bullying (34%), crime (26%) and coping with exam pressure (20%).*

Delivering high quality opportunities for young people through curriculum and workforce

A curriculum for work with young people outside school could demonstrate the link to Every Child Matters outcomes for young people, as well as providing key performance indicators for quality standards, training and development in methods, management information, evidence and curriculum materials.

A workforce strategy for the young people’s workforce includes recruitment, retention

and a clear framework for qualifications, registration and professional development. It would also include the creation of advanced practitioners across the spectrum of services for young people.

An active role for young people

The voice, choice and influence of young people should be integral to the design and delivery of ‘places to go and things to do’, whether that be youth clubs, neighbourhood

programmes or greater access to leisure facilities. Investment is also needed in effective transport and the support of over 500,000 youth workers and volunteers, for young people to have the means to take an active part. An important part of building young people’s own capacity for change and influence is to renew the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds.

Reaching vulnerable children

A proportion of children in Britain today grow up in poverty and experience diminished life chances as a result of their background. For these vulnerable children and young people extra support and intervention is a necessity, but identifying them quickly can be a challenge. We know they are out there: the Social Exclusion Taskforce Report referred to 2.5% of every generation living in poverty, whilst we know that 10% of 16–18 year olds are not in education, employment or training.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the Respect Task Force identified 7,500 families with complex needs that can range from behavioural difficulties amongst children to problem parenting. To identify earlier the

most vulnerable children is to tackle the conditions that sustain poverty, that place a strain on health services, that generate anti-social behaviour and damage social cohesion.

Factors that lead to children becoming vulnerable include low educational attainment; poor social and emotional skills; poor parental mental health; and living in a deprived neighbourhood. For those children who have more than one of these factors in place the chance of poor outcomes increases. A child born into the most disadvantaged 5% of families is 100 times more likely to have multiple problems at the

age of 15 than a child from the 50% best-off families.¹⁷ Further, a number of groups emerge from research as more susceptible to becoming vulnerable: children from black and ethnic minority communities are more at risk of multiple disadvantage than white children. The additional needs of disabled children mean that it can cost up to three times more than average to raise a disabled child, forcing many families into debt or poverty. For many of the 60,000 children in care at any one time the opportunity to have the level of support and stability enjoyed by peers is a distant reality.

Supporting young people to fulfill their potential

What are the key issues?

- Personal safety is a top concern for young people – especially in urban areas where gangs and violence are often seen as a day to day reality. Often, a developing ‘street culture’ in many inner city areas promotes a gang culture that draws in those young people who seek a sense of identity and belonging.
- Young people want safe places to go during the hours after school, during the evenings, and in school holidays. There is enormous demand and need for a range of high-quality activities for young people that are fun and attractive, classes and specialist arts, sports and music in their community. Young people wanted both choice and structure for activities.
- There is a clear demand for more input from inspirational adults. The teenage years are a period of experimentation but indicators of dangerous behaviour amongst teens demonstrate that they are a period during which more has to be done to provide support, supervision and good role models. There should be greater understanding amongst parents and professionals of emotive stages of development during the teenage years.
- There is a real desire to be involved in decision-making around any activities which have the potential to promote the personal, social and resilience skills that are essential in making informed choices, in living healthy lifestyles and in equipping teenagers for the pressures of adulthood.
- Identification of those young people who are ‘at risk’ should happen early in childhood based on a number of

indicators that become clear at early stages in life. There is a large degree of predictability to social exclusion through the use of childhood information about the family context and child development.

- The potential of family conferences in bringing families together should be more fully exploited, highlighting the success of family group conferences in New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland where, in both countries, the model is part of the law. Family conferences should be a tool in the hands of families rather than professionals, with the right for families to self-refer rather than waiting for an official to allow them access, often only at the point of crisis.
- Deprivation can breed deprivation: as disadvantaged teenagers grow into disadvantaged adults they can give rise to a family cycle of poverty and stunted life chances.
- For those who do not reach the level of seriousness for intense support even more importance is placed on those universal services in the community that are capable of providing support for all.

Emerging trends and priorities for action

- ✓ A new deal for young people is needed that provides joined-up activities in identifiable places in every community where the whole range of services for teenagers are recognisably branded as working together and are coordinated.
- ✓ Through these recognisable and branded centres or hubs a range of modern,

dynamic programmes of positive activity for older children can be rolled-out. Such activities will be fun, attractive, structured and identity forming, whilst wherever possible involving an element of team-play and cooperation towards set goals.

- ✓ A curriculum for support and positive role models are needed that will build relationships with young people over time through coordinating a dynamic new offer of support and activity.
- ✓ Young people also need specialist support and information including health and referrals to other services.
- ✓ Strong links and relationships with health practitioners, police officers and schools are needed as part of early identification and support programmes for those young people who are at risk of vulnerability and offending. Early intervention is crucial if problems are to be dealt with before they get out of control.
- ✓ Young people themselves can take a lead role in the development of their social spaces, taking part in decisions on menus of activity, spending and the decoration and layout of their centre. This can be achieved through regular consultation and the election of youth leaders within centres.
- ✓ Families should be able to self-refer for family group conferencing, rather than having to wait for a professional to refer them.
- ✓ Universal services need to be linked more effectively into specialist services that can offer prompt and more intense support.

Involving young people in communities

Teenagers make up 14% of the population in the UK and, as such, are crucial members of our community both now and in the future. However, in contrast to their dramatic involvement in online and virtual communities, young people's level of involvement in their own local 'real world' community is often worryingly low.

Young people are swift to be able to articulate the reasons for this. Many say that they feel isolated and alienated in their local neighbourhood, with little say over what goes on. Throughout the Youth Review Roadshow conversations with young people we heard consistent messages about a sense of a lack of belonging to their neighbourhood and of services that had been designed without them in mind. Less than a quarter reported that they feel they have a say over activities and support services aimed at them by adults.* Expensive admission fees, poor transport and an overwhelming orientation towards adults – from use of public space and buildings to leisure and recreational services – means that many teenagers feel that they are both unheard and under-represented in their local area, with few places to go and little to do. This feeling of alienation is compounded by consistent adverse media attention, with over 70% of coverage about young people being negative.¹⁸ For most teenagers, the focus on the few who are badly behaved is both unfair and unhelpful, with many arguing that it is adults who are behaving badly – especially when it comes to looking after the environment. This fact becomes starker in the context of consistent evidence showing examples of how positively young people can be engaged in planning and developments through local initiatives and community projects.

The perception of young people as troublemakers is pervasive. An analysis

of the British Crime Survey reveals that a startling 1.5 million Britons considered moving home during 2004 as a result of young people 'hanging around', whilst 1.7 million avoided going outside after dark because of a fear of teenagers.¹⁹ A seven-fold increase between 2000 and 2005 in headlines concerning anti-social behaviour, hoodies and ASBOs has reinforced the perception of many adults that teenagers, undisciplined and socially unaware, form a subversive sub-culture.²⁰ Almost eight out of ten adults surveyed in 2004 complained of a lack of discipline amongst teenagers as the root cause of anti-social behaviour, with particularly high levels of agreement amongst elderly people.²¹ The formation of 40 Respect Action Zones on troubled estates, a 90% increase in the issuing of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and a 250% rise in the number of parenting contracts over the last three years has contributed to the unprecedented public focus on teenage anti-social behaviour.²²

However, less attention is paid to the fact that teenagers are twice as likely as other age groups to become the victims of violent crime in their community. Whilst they form 14% of the population, 32% of victims are young people, with over 2 million reported cases each year.²³ Forgotten also is the potential that most young people have to become positively involved in their communities and to make important contributions that benefit all age groups. Volunteering is an attractive prospect for teenagers keen to make use of their time to learn new skills and meet new people. 82% of 11–16 year olds expressed an enthusiasm for volunteering, whilst 79% indicated that they would welcome a community mentor.* A recent consultation by the National Youth Agency found that young people valued the opportunity to become role models in their own right through acting as youth leaders.

"When we finish school there's nothing to do since they closed off the park for younger kids. Usually I stay out with mates and we hang out by the off licence until it gets late... There are about 8 of us... We don't want to cause trouble. If we make noise it's because we're just doing our thing."

*Ben, 15, Wakefield**

* Consulted as part of the Youth Review Roadshow

More than two-thirds of 11–16 year olds reported having witnessed at least one instance of anti-social behaviour over the last year*

52% of the 64,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder issued during 2005 were made to 16–24 year olds, with 87% of these having been issued for causing harassment, alarm or distress or being drunk and disorderly (British Crime Survey)²⁴

Almost **10%** of 18–24 year olds have been either cautioned or arrested by the police

Almost 6 out of every 10 children from deprived areas became victims of crime in 2004, with **25%** of boys and 10% of girls having been physically attacked²⁵

In 2004/05, men aged 16–24 were nearly **three times as likely** to be victims of violent crime as men aged 25–44, and seven times as likely as men aged 45–64²⁶

68% of 11–16 year olds believe that teenagers in their local area are more likely to cause disruption when bored*

82% of 11–16 year olds expressed an enthusiasm for volunteering, whilst 79% indicated that they would welcome a community mentor*

Why young people's centres and hubs?

Emerging evidence from the Institute of Education shows that positive activities combined with joined-up support can provide better outcomes amongst young people. A hub for activity for young people offering a range of support services – some available 24/7, including helplines and web-based provision – can improve young people's health, motivation and engagement, and has a positive impact on levels of crime and dangerous behaviour amongst teenagers.

- **Positive and structured support:** Young people are more likely to take advantage of the full range of opportunities and services aimed at them. In hubs for services, where providing information, guidance and a full continuum of support was an explicit aim, young people were better able to access such resources.

- **Better personal and social skills:**

The structure and level of supervision provided within more integrated centres was found to promote the development of personal and social skills. Aspiration and achievement, through menus of activity, led to higher levels of participation, cooperation and teamwork.

- **Making decisions:** Young people in more integrated centres were supported in developing and pursuing a set of objectives that were developed by young people themselves rather than imposed.

- **Being healthy:** Links to schools and other agencies, more advanced in more fully integrated centres, assisted staff in knowing more about young people visiting centres and in being better able to identify vulnerability and individual needs.

- **Enjoying and achieving:** Opportunities to take part in positive activities encouraged young people to be constructive and creative. Working closely with schools, further education, training and the voluntary sector ensures the integrated offer meets local needs.

- **High-quality supervision and support:** Amongst more experienced youth workers, and those with higher-end qualifications, integration and offering a holistic and personalised service was seen as a central component of good youth work – with access (transport, physical access, equality and diversity) a priority.

Involving young people in communities

What are the key issues?

- Both young people and communities are worried about gangs and anti-social behaviour and, in particular, a divide has opened between teenagers and older people, with each side viewing the other through a lens of suspicion rather than common interests.
- Whilst newspapers abound with headlines about young people and crime, little attention is paid to the fact that young people are also many times more likely to be victims of crime. Much of this goes unreported. Only three out of ten 11–16 year olds said that they would go to the police if they were bullied or victimized.*
- The physicality of the local community often does not represent young people. A skate park or youth centre can make a strong statement about the importance of young people in the community, beyond its primary role.

- There is a significant lack of opportunities for adults and young people to come together around common interests. As a result there is limited intergenerational contact outside teachers and pupils, and those within the family.
- Many teenagers express an interest in getting involved in community projects; however, volunteering opportunities are often short-term in nature, not sufficiently mainstream and not properly coordinated through schools.
- Despite some leading exceptions, there remain insufficient opportunities for young people to meaningfully influence the way that the local environment and services are planned and delivered.

Emerging trends and priorities for action

- ✓ New victim support and prevention initiatives targeted at young people are needed to provide support for those

who suffer crime, victimization and harassment

- ✓ Local intergenerational projects should be encouraged and supported.
- ✓ Local youth volunteering schemes should be developed and supported as part of mainstream extra-curricular activities.
- ✓ A National Mentoring Scheme should be developed which encourages and supports individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to become 'youth buddies'.
- ✓ Innovative approaches to planning that involve young people in decisions need to become the norm when designing local spaces and facilities.
- ✓ Every area should be encouraged to have a Young Mayor post, backed up by a Youth Parliament, as a way of giving young people a say over their area as well as experience of voting and decision-making.

Supporting families to bring up teenagers

Despite major changes in demographic and family structure in the UK over the last 30 years, the fact remains that the most powerful influence on young people's outcomes is their parents, family and home environment. From achievement in school and job prospects to health, wellbeing and involvement in crime, evidence shows that powerful and persistent inequalities remain, with those teenagers brought up in families in poverty at least twice as likely to become poor adults as those from better-off homes. Studies show that, above all other factors, parental interest in a child's education and development has the biggest positive influence on that young person's self-esteem and control, whilst parental hostility has the most adverse effect. The role of the family in setting a positive framework and boundaries as teenagers grow up is unsurprisingly crucial, with increasing recognition of the importance of fathers in establishing positive and consistent role models for their children.

With such clear links between family and outcomes for young people, support for parents to bring up their teenagers must be a core part of any new offer for young people. There can be little doubt that the job of parenting has become increasingly difficult over recent decades. Family life has changed dramatically, with an increase in the number of lone parents, parents living apart and step-families. In the early 1970s, just 8% of children lived in a one-parent

family, a figure which had risen to 24% by 2006.²⁷ The geography of families has also become much more complex, with 34% of parents now living 50 or more miles away from their own parents. The much revered structure of extended family and the culture of support that it can bring have become less and less the norm in the UK, in sharp contrast to many places within Southern European countries. The reality is that modern families exist in a more atomized state, meaning that support often has to be sought out rather than being on hand.



Ed Balls MP takes part in a National Roadshow Consultation at Outwood Grange School, Wakefield

At the same time parents work some of the longest hours in Europe, with little support to balance home and family responsibilities once their children reach teenage years. 80% of mothers of teenage parents now work – a huge increase from 34% only 30 years ago.²⁸ Whilst childcare for younger children has increased rapidly over recent years, 4Children estimates that there are supervised places outside school for less than 1% of secondary school age children. The impact of this on teenagers can be profound, with a third returning home from school to an empty home. Young people regularly described an after school 'down-time' during which time is 'filled' by wandering from house to park and park to chip shop until their parents return. School holidays are often spent in a similar way, with a startling estimated 1 million young people 'hanging around' at any time.²⁹ 50% of parents say they do not know where their children are, and who they are with, at any one time.³⁰

The Respect Taskforce Action Plan recognises the huge impact of positive parenting: "Parents have a critical role in helping their children develop good values and behaviour. Conversely, poor parenting increases the risks of involvement in anti-social behaviour."³¹

Some families need more support than others, with parents of vulnerable children,

teenage parents and workless parents needing particular help. From those parents who experienced intervention from social services or other bodies, more than 8 out of 10 reported that they would have liked help sooner, with things having had to reach crisis point before support was brought to them.³² Diversity and poverty are closely linked: in spring 2005, the proportion of people of working age living in workless households was highest for the Black African ethnic group, at a startling 27.4%.³³

Children in black and ethnic minority families face particular challenges, with patterns of ethnic minority achievement strongly associated with differences of social class or poverty. The use of English as a first language in homes is an important factor in determining success at school. The proportion of African Caribbean pupils getting 5 good GCSEs in 2000 was 37%,³⁴ compared to 50% for white students. Meanwhile in 2000/01, 38 in every 10,000 Black Caribbean pupils in England were permanently excluded – the highest rate for any ethnic group and three times the rate for white pupils.³⁵

This is concerning in the context of life chances as evidence suggests that two out of three pupils permanently excluded from



Ed Miliband MP takes part in a National Roadshow Consultation at North Doncaster Technical College

school fail to return to full-time mainstream education. Not only are ethnic minority children all at risk of educational hardship but their levels of poverty differ from their white counterparts: seven out of ten children from Bangladeshi families live in poverty compared with fewer than three out of ten white children. By every measure of poverty used by the Policy Studies Institute, including housing, worklessness and the unique Families and Children Study index of hardship, ethnic minority children are more likely to live in households prone to hardship and marked by disadvantage and persistent low income. Whilst only 18% of white children fell into the bottom fifth of income distribution, 61% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi children, 43% of Black Non Caribbean children, 34% of Black Caribbean children and 26% of Indian children fell into this qualification.³⁶

The increasing pace and complexity of communication and lifestyles also has had a profound impact on parents' ability to provide the positive framework that their teenagers need during a crucial stage of development. More pressurized working lives can often lead to a more chaotic home environment, with little time for the regular chats and shared experiences that keep families in touch and operating as a unit. At the same time, teenagers' own world of communication and socialising has changed beyond recognition over the last decade, with an all-consuming culture of 24-hour messaging, texting and mobile phones creating a non-stop social environment with often loose and unregulated boundaries. Within this environment teenagers operate in the context of new norms of communications and social groups that are often beyond the understanding or reach of parents. Just 5% of parents surveyed by Parentline Plus felt that they had the strongest influence on their children's lives.

34% of 11–16 year olds reported regularly returning from school to an empty home*

70% of young people say they are bored and do not have enough things to do or safe places to go after school, in the evenings or during the holidays³⁷

80% of mothers of teenagers work³⁸

An estimated **1 million** children live in housing that is overcrowded, run-down, damp, or dangerous³⁹

Some **80,000** children are in care at any one time, equivalent to the entire population of 200 primary schools⁴⁰

Nearly **8 out of 10** children in care gain no formal qualifications⁴¹

Family breakdown is estimated to cost the taxpayer **£24 billion** every year⁴²

In 2003, just **64%** of 15 year olds in the UK ate with their parents around a table several times per week – a lower proportion than any European country with the exception of Finland⁴³

50% of parents say they don't know where their children are, what they are doing or who they are with at any one time⁴⁴

'I don't know how to talk to him any more. He's my son and I don't know how to talk to him. He's 15 and has been excluded from school so many times. He's been violent towards other kids and I don't know how I can stick up for him. I love my son and I'd never leave him – when he's not been on drugs he can be a lovely kid but when he's been on them he gets aggressive...he's hit me twice.'

Anonymous, East Ham

* Consulted as part of the Youth Review Roadshow

Supporting families to bring up teenagers

What are the key issues?

- Parents struggle to balance their work lives with home. High-pressure jobs and work patterns have led to a tension between supporting the family through work and keeping the family together by ensuring time outside of it.
- Changing family structures mean that access to both parents has diminished and support for parents is often limited.
- Teenagers are increasingly unsupervised in their activities as parents spend more time outside the home and young people develop their own social networks.
- Communication between parents and teenagers competes for time with modern lifestyles. Regular family meal times and other family routines have been replaced for many by multi-channel TV, online chat and MySpace.

- Vulnerable families often cannot get help until a crisis arises, wherein emerging difficulties are allowed to escalate out of control.

Emerging trends and priorities for action

- ✓ Parents need support in balancing commitments at work and at home. The right to request flexible working for parents of older children is essential.
- ✓ Increased support through regular activities for older children during times that parents are at work is important in creating a positive supervised environment.
- ✓ Early intervention is crucial to support parents as difficulties unfold if subsequent crises are to be prevented.
- ✓ More targeted support needs to be available for parents in particular need, including intensive outreach schemes.
- ✓ Parents and wider families need to be recognised as central to the solution when difficulties occur. A family conference system which involves parents and families at all stages should be rolled out in every area.

A key role for Local Authorities

Youth Matters sets out a framework for reformed services for young people through integrating support around the needs of young people. The Make Space Youth Review supports this approach and is keen to see the effective implementation of the programme across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Investment in reform, however, is key and an essential prerequisite to delivering the level of system change needed. With this in place a programme may be delivered that:

- Puts local authorities at the forefront – mapping, leading and delivering effective change
- Delivers detailed and ongoing auditing of young people's needs, as well as existing services, with a timed programme to fill identified gaps
- Puts young people at the heart of shaping and planning
- Brings all services for young people together in an area – from crime prevention to support for teenage parents, extended support around school to more traditional youth and outreach services. This is to be delivered locally in a joined-up way around community hubs and centres
- Plans and commissions services in an integrated way across public, private and voluntary sectors
- Raises and ensures quality in all that is offered for young people, including a new young people's workforce
- Runs intensive intervention teams for areas of high risk



Make Space Youth Review Panel

Oona King, Co-Chair	Writer, broadcaster and campaigner
Wilf Petherbridge, Co-Chair	Former Young Mayor of Lewisham
Flo Armstrong	Head of Barnet Youth & Connexions Service
Graeme Cooke	Public Policy Researcher, IPPR
Charlotte Edwards	Make Space Youth Cabinet member
Isatou Faal	Make Space Youth Cabinet member
Leon Feinstein	Reader in the Economics of Education, Institute of Education
Professor Helen Haste	Professor of Psychology, University of Bath
Anne Longfield OBE	Chief Executive, 4Children
Viv McKee	Director of Policy and Development, National Youth Agency
Mary McLeod	Chief Executive, National Parenting Institute
Lord Northbourne	Chair, Associate Parliamentary Group for Parents and Families
Pip O'Byrne	Chair, 4Children
Ian Rayson	Corporate Affairs and Internal Communications Director, Nestlé UK

Sources

- * Make Space Youth Review (2006/7) Youth Review Roadshow Consultation
1. Nestlé Trust (2002) Make Space for Young People
2. Walker A, Kershaw C and Nicholas S (2006) Crime in England and Wales in 2005/6
3. US Study on Teenage Drinking: Adolescence into Adulthood 2005
4. MORI on behalf of Audit Commission (2002) Quality of Life Indicators Survey; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002/03) Survey of English Housing
5. Nestlé Trust (2005) Youth Provision Counts – A Make Space Report
6. Sharp C, Aldridge J and Medina J (2006) Delinquent Youth Groups and Offending Behaviour
7. National Survey into Self-Harm Amongst Young People (2006)
8. Blanden J, Gregg P and MacMillan L (2006) Explaining Intergenerational Income Persistence
9. Armstrong D, Hine J, Hacking S, Armaos R, Jones R, Klessinger N and Armstrong A (2005) Children, Risk and Crime
10. Hawton K, Houston K and Shepperd R (1999) Suicide in Young People. Study of 174 cases, aged under 25 years
11. Barrow Cadbury (2006) Lost in Transition
12. Office for National Statistics (2004)
13. UNICEF on Children's Well-being in Industrialised Countries, available at www.unicef-icdc.org
14. Department of Health (2006) Drug use, smoking and drinking among young people in 2005: headline figures.
15. Chivite-Mathews N, Richardson A, O'Shea J, Becker J, Owen N, Roe S and Condon J (2005) Drug Misuse Declared: Findings from the 2003/4 British Crime Survey of England and Wales
16. Home Office (2005) Social Exclusion Taskforce Report; Respect Taskforce Action Plan www.homeoffice.gov.uk
17. Prime Minister's Speech on Social Exclusion (6th September 2006)'Our Nation's Future'
18. Nestlé Trust (2005) Youth Provision Counts – A Make Space Report
19. IPPR Analysis of British Crime Survey 2004/5, Freedom's Orphans 2007
20. IPPR Analysis of National and Regional Press Articles about Anti-Social Behaviour, per month, 2000-06, Freedom's Orphans 2007
21. Page B and Wallace E (2004) Families, Children and Young People – Key Issues London: MORI
22. Barrow Cadbury (2006) Lost in Transition
23. Analysis of British Crime Survey 2005/6
24. Barrow Cadbury (2006) Lost in Transition
25. Home Office (2005) Respect Taskforce Action Plan www.homeoffice.gov.uk
26. Nicholas S, Povey D, Walker A and Kershaw C (2005) Crime in England and Wales 2004/2005 London: TSO
27. Babb P, Butcher H, Church J and Zealey L (2006) Social Trends 36 London: TSO
28. Office for National Statistics (2006)
29. Nestlé Trust (2002) Make Space for Young People
30. Nestlé Trust (2005) Youth Provision Counts – A Make Space Report
31. Home Office (2005) Respect Taskforce Action Plan www.homeoffice.gov.uk
32. Figures from Parentline Plus
33. Kober C, End Child Poverty (2005) Black and Ethnic Minority Children and Poverty: Exploring the Issues
34. ibid.
35. ibid.
36. Child Poverty Action Group (2003) Ethnic Minority Children and Rates of Poverty
37. Nestlé Trust (2002) Make Space for Young People
38. European Social Monitor
39. Figures from Barnardos
40. Institute for Public Policy Research (2006)
41. Figures from Barnardos
42. The Children Leaving Care Bill [HL] Bill 134 1999-2000
43. OECD PISA Data
44. Nestlé Trust (2005) Youth Provision Counts – A Make Space Report



Make Space
c/o 4Children
City Reach
5 Greenwich View Place
London E14 9NN
youthreview@makespace.org.uk
www.makespace.org.uk
Helpline 020 7522 6960
Fax 020 7512 2010