

# Report on Consultations with Young People Engaged in Garda Youth Diversion Projects

Irish Youth Justice Service  
Department of Justice and Equality  
and the  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs

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An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
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# 1. Executive Summary

## **Background & Consultation Objectives**

This report details the findings of consultations with young people on Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs). The key objectives of the consultations were to explore young people's views and opinions on how:

- GYDPs assist them to move away from and/or prevent them from becoming involved in criminal and/or anti-social behaviour.
- How important it is to young people that projects are located close to where they live or if they would travel to other areas in order to participate in a project.

## **Steering Group**

- An advisory group of representatives DCYA, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), An Garda Síochána and IYJS met in May 2018 to discuss the consultation with young people.
- It was agreed an advisory group of young people would be formed.

## **Young People's Advisory Group**

- An Advisory group of six young people who were current participants in GYDPs was established to help advise the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) on the consultation methodologies and process.
- The young people's Advisory Group met on two separate occasions in DCYA's offices to pilot the consultation methodology. The findings identified by young people from the Advisory group sessions are included in this report, as they did not take part in the consultations as participants.

## **Consultations**

- Seven consultations were held in the DCYA's offices in Dublin in July and August 2018.
- IYJS emailed all GYDPs to identify young people that would be interested in participating in consultations. Youth Justice Workers assisted by gathering and submitting signed parental/guardian consent and assent forms to IYJS.

- In total, 41 young people took part in the consultations. Of these, 36 were current participants in GYDPs aged 13 – 18 years and five were past participants aged 18 years or over.
- Young people from the Advisory Group also attended consultations but were not consultation participants.

**Methodology**

The key methodologies for the consultations were:

- Poster walls of ideas and individual lifelines based on the statement, *‘The best things about your project.’*
- Sticky wall exercise based on the question, *‘What works well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?’*
- Sticky wall exercise based on the question, *‘What does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?’*
- Jotter page session on common categories identified through what works well/does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble answering two questions: ‘What works well?’ and ‘What should be changed?’

**Key Consultation Findings**

***Best things about your project***

According to young people that participated in the consultations the best things about their projects are:

Best things about projects
• Youth Justice Workers
• Trips
• Activities
• Facilities
• Meeting new people and making new friends
• Learning new things and developing new skills
• Drop-ins
• Courses
• Positive and youth-friendly environment
• Education and employment support

**What works well and does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?**

Table 1 below highlights the key findings from consultations with regard to what works well and what does not work well in projects. Findings are listed from the most to the least frequently mentioned by young people.

**Table 1: What works well and does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble**

What works well in projects	What does not work well in projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Justice Workers: youth-centred, friendly and non-judgmental, listen and provide support and advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project times: one meeting a week was not enough, more set times per week and drop-in sessions, should be open at weekends</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities and trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Justice Workers, e.g. not youth-friendly, lack of male workers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programmes: based on choices and solutions, citizenship programmes and programmes on the impact of crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities: no facilities, far from home, youth cafés suggested</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting new people and making new friends: Drop-ins and “open-sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of trips and activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education, training and employment supports: educational and learning supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people retention in projects</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities, e.g. Youth Exchanges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative relationships with workers from other organisations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having something to do and somewhere to go</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative impact of having a drug user in a project</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drop-ins: important for Youth Justice Workers to be present and suggest should be available at weekends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative interactions with Gardaí</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs): considered “a positive influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixing younger and older age groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stigma and stereotyping</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaving projects at 18 years old and how this is communicated</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unhealthy and poor food availability</li> </ul>

## 2. Introduction

### Background Information

Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) are community based, multi-agency, youth crime prevention initiatives which primarily seek to divert young people involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour away from the criminal justice system by providing suitable activities to facilitate personal development, promote civic responsibility and improve long-term employability prospects. The GYDPs aim to bring about the conditions whereby the behavioural patterns of young people towards law and order can develop and mature through positive interventions and interaction with the project. There are currently 105 GYDPs, nationwide which are primarily targeted at young people 'at risk' aged between 12-17 years old.

The Youth Crime Policy and Programme Division, Irish Youth Justice Service, Department of Justice and Equality, will carry out a GYDP Change Programme in 2018/2019, which aims is to ensure that the service is available to all young people who could benefit from participating. This will be achieved by aligning project boundaries with Garda divisions/sub-divisions or other appropriate local areas with a distinct community identity, as may be agreed.

The Department of Justice and Equality also wants to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of GYDPs by ensuring that local projects work with young people, not just in the context of crime, but also in the context of the family and the child's community, ensuring that an integrated service is provided, either by the GYDP itself, or via strong links with all other relevant community/voluntary and statutory organisations in the community.

The Department of Justice and Equality has initiated a consultation process with relevant stakeholders, including Youth Justice Workers, Garda Junior Liaison Officers and each GYDP (105).

## **Role of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Hub na nÓg**

As part of the consultation process, the Irish Youth Justice Service collaborated with the Participation Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in planning a consultation process with young people from Garda Youth Diversion Projects. The Participation Unit assigned the development and conducting of the consultation process to Hub na nÓg, which is the Department of Children and Youth Affairs' national centre of excellence on children and young people's participation in decision-making. Hub na nÓg developed a methodological approach, which included the establishment of an Advisory Group of young people to work with Hub na nÓg on the most appropriate consultation methods, pilot those methods and advise on recruitment of young people for the consultation process. An Advisory Group of six young people was established in July 2018. Young people on the Advisory Group were recruited through the GYDPs with the assistance of Youth Justice Workers. There were two females and four males on the Advisory Group who ranged in age from 15 – 17 years. All members of the Advisory Group were current participants of GYDPs. The views of the pilot sessions conducted with the Advisory Group are included in this report.

## **Aims of the Consultations**

The key aims of the consultation were to explore young people's views and opinions on:

- How Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) assist them to move away from and/or prevent them from becoming involved in criminal and/or anti-social behaviour, in particular:
  - the people who help them
  - the activities that help them
  - how the projects link them with other activities, organisations and supports that help them
  - key moments, people or activities that have helped young people to turn their lives around
- How important it is to young people that projects are located close to where they live or if they would travel to other areas in order to participate in a project.

## **Overview of Consultations**

### **Recruitment of Young People**

Young people were recruited for the consultations through GYDPs with the assistance of Youth Justice Workers who were issued with information letters inviting young people to take part in the consultations. If young people were interested in taking part in consultations, they were given the information letter and asked to complete an assent form and parents/guardians were asked to complete consent forms.

### **About the Consultations**

Seven consultations were held in DCYA's offices in Dublin over four days in July and August 2018. Each consultation was approximately two hours in length. Members of the Advisory Group attended the consultations, welcomed the other young people and explained the purpose of consultations. Members of Hub na nÓg also provided information on the consultation and facilitated the consultations.

### **About the Young People**

In total, 41 young people attended the seven consultations. Of these, 36 were young people currently participating in GYDPs and five were young people aged 18 years or older who were past participants of projects. In terms of gender, 30 (73.2%) participants were male and 11 (26.8%) were female. Young people who were current participants in GYDPs ranged in age from 13 – 18 years. Young people who attended the consultations were involved in GYDPs from the following locations:

- Dublin
- Donegal
- Galway
- Kerry
- Louth
- Limerick
- Meath
- Roscommon
- Tipperary
- Waterford
- Wicklow



### Consultation Methodology

The methodologies for the consultations were designed by Hub na nÓg. The consultation methodologies were piloted with the Young People’s Advisory Group and adjusted according to their recommendations (please see **Appendix D** for full details of the consultation methodology).

## 3. Findings of Consultations with Young People

### Overview

This section details the findings of consultations with young people engaged in or the past participants of GYDPs, as well as views of young people from the Advisory Group sessions. During the consultations, young people were asked the following questions:

1. What are the best things about your project?
2. What works well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?
3. What does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?

The following section also provides quotes from young people that participated in the consultations.

### **3.1 Best Things About Your Project**

Young people were asked to describe what they considered to be the best things about their project.

#### Youth Justice Workers

**Youth Justice Workers** were identified by young people as the best thing about their projects. Young people liked **having someone to talk to**. This was especially important for young people who were experiencing difficulties, for example due to lack of family support. **One-to-ones** with Youth Justice Workers were mentioned as being particularly important in terms of young people **receiving support, advice, guidance and being able to talk about issues** such as mental health.

- *“They (Youth Justice Workers) are there to talk when you need them.”*
- *“People call in to talk about mental health and things like that and one-to-ones.”*

Young people that participated in the consultations noted that **certain qualities in Youth Justice Workers are very important to build a positive relationship**. Young people said the best thing about their **Youth Justice Workers** was that they are **friendly, non-judgmental**. Young people also said they were able to **trust** their Youth Justice Workers, are treated well by Youth Justice Workers and “are always there for

them.” A small number of young people said their Youth Justice Worker collected them from home, brought them to the project and drove them home afterwards. One young person said their Youth Justice Worker **continued to provide support** to him when he was in various institutions.

- *“Knowing you have the support there, like they supported me all the way which an advantage was and when things weren’t great at home it’s great to know they are there. Even when I was in institutions, he would contact me. If it wasn’t for the project, I wouldn’t have had anywhere to go.”*

### Trips

**Trips** were identified by young people as the second best feature about their projects. Trips mentioned included **sports related trips** and **Camp Diversion**<sup>1</sup>. Young people considered trips to be one of the best things about projects because they are **fun, “good craic” and a good way to make friends**. Past participants talked about making “friends for life” and good memories on trips with their project.

- *“Going away on trips was good craic.”*
- *“Made friends for life and memories on all the trips.”*

### Activities

The third most commonly mentioned aspect of projects young people liked best was **activities**. Key activities cited included playing sports such as **football, cooking, playing pool, going to the gym and outdoor activities**. Some young people mentioned **one-off activities** in their projects including getting their make-up, hair and nails done and getting massages and acupuncture. What young people liked about activities was **trying new activities, the group work aspect of activities and having something to do and somewhere to go**. Some young people also talked about taking up **activities** they liked when they were younger.

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<sup>1</sup> Camp Diversion is an annual event, which began in 2004 with projects competing in team activities. Camp Diversion has proved very successful in challenging youths preconceived ideas about An Garda Síochána and has assisted participating youths’ self-development

- *"We get massages and acupuncture, hair and nails and facials. A beautician comes in."*
- *"Going back to things I used to like."*

### Facilities

According to the young people, the fourth best feature of projects was facilities or "the gaff" they meet in. One of the most important features of facilities was **location**, i.e. that it was close to young people's homes and convenient for them to get to. Another important feature of facilities identified by young people was having **good equipment and resources** such as televisions, computer games consoles, pool tables, couches and rock-climbing walls. Other aspects of facilities that young people liked were **large spaces to play sports, chill out rooms, kitchens, private spaces** and a cosy, comfortable and well decorated building with good air conditioning and security. Young people from one project talked about their project "**being part of the community**" and their local youth facility being "like their society" as they know everyone in it and all their family went there.

- *"My centre is class. I love it! We got a new kitchen, chill out room and climbing wall."*
- *"The project is just around the corner. My whole family went to the project. Everyone around the area goes there. It's important that it's easy to get to. I was shy going there first now I go there every second day. If it was far away I probably would have walked away from it."*
- *"Have good facilities e.g. new bases, new chill room, kitchen, rock climbing all, pool tables."*

### Meeting New People and Making New Friends

**Meeting new people and making new friends** was identified as the fifth best thing about projects. Young people enjoyed **having fun and socialising with other young people**. They also talked about other young people being "sound." Some young people talked about feeling like they were in a "bubble" in the project with their friends and "making friends for life."

- *"You get to make new friends."*
- *"The project, it was your own time, in your own bubble with your pals so it was very good."*

### Learning and Developing New Skills

The sixth best aspect of projects discussed by young people was **learning new things and developing new skills** such as **social, communication and life skills**. Some young people talked about **learning to be kind and caring**, as a result of engagement with their project.

- *“Learn new and different skills.”*
- *“Learning to be kind.”*

### Drop-ins

Young said drop-ins were the seventh best feature of their project as they can **drop-in any time** they like.

- *“Go up to the project anytime we want.”*

### Courses

**Courses**, such as **health and safety courses**, were the next most mentioned aspect of projects that young people liked.

- *“All the certs and learning skills you get out of it.”*

### Positive and Youth-friendly Environment

Many young people thought the **positive and youth-friendly environment** was the ninth best feature of their project. Young people felt that their projects are **fun, fair, free, welcoming, give young people a voice, are youth-centred and give second chances**. Some young people also considered **free food** in projects to be the best thing about it and felt it contributed to a youth-friendly atmosphere.

- *“Its (project) youth centred, i.e. activities are provided based on young people’s interests.”*
- *“How it was set up, the hospitality, like food, a cup of tea, the whole feel around it.”*

### Programmes

A number of young people thought **programmes** were tenth best aspect about their projects. Programmes mentioned by young people included **leadership programmes and intergenerational programmes. Interaction with other projects, groups and people in the local community**, as part of programmes, were judged to be enjoyable by young people. Young people also liked that programmes **raised their awareness of issues** such as homelessness, immigration and cyber safety.

- *“We did a project to help the elderly with technology, which was very rewarding, and I got great fun out of it...I saw I was helping others which was good.”*
- *“Connecting with other projects in the area.”*

### Education and Employment Support

Finally, some young people thought the **supports around education and employment** were the best thing about their projects. This included **changing young people’s perspectives on progressing to third level education, helping young people set goals, assisting with CV preparation, job applications and gaining employment**. Some past participants of projects felt they would not have progressed to third level education without the support of their project.

- *“Where you want to be and what you want to do in a few years and how to get there, like a goal. I didn’t get the points in school and they said what are your alternative options.”*
- *“Without the project I wouldn’t be where I am today. I am doing my degree and working as a youth worker. At 17 I did a youth exchange and it changed my perspective on everything.”*

### **3.2 What Works Well in Projects to Help Young People Avoid Being in Trouble**

Young people were asked to identify what works well in GYDPs to help young people avoid being in trouble.

#### Youth Justice Workers

**Youth Justice Workers** were mentioned the most when identifying what works best in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble. Young people recognised that Youth Justice Workers **play a central role in projects** in helping them avoid being in trouble. This was outlined by one young person who was a past participant of a project:

- *“The worker is the most important thing about the project as they determine the progression of the young people in the projects and the way things go in the project. If there isn’t a good facilitator it doesn’t work.”*

Young people stressed the importance of Youth Justice Workers being **youth-friendly, youth-centred, treating young people with respect** and having the skills to “get on the same level” as young people.

Young people talked about Youth Justice Workers “always being in our corner” and “all for the young people.” Qualities that young people considered to be very important in Youth Justice Workers included being **friendly, nice, non-judgemental, understanding, open-minded, easy to talk to, fun, fair, helpful, trustworthy, patient, honest, transparent, not strict and “chilled out.”** It was felt these qualities were very important in order for Youth Justice Workers **to build positive relationships** with young people in projects and in turn help them keep out of trouble.

- *“The ability to be able to get on the same level as young people.”*
- *“Our worker is ‘all for’ the young people...she is the only youth worker that works hard for the kids.”*
- *“Qualities of a youth worker: open minded, fun, outgoing, fair.”*
- *“I have eczema and asthma and they always looked after me... they got rid of carpets because of the dust. They really were looking after your best interests.”*

Regular **‘one-to-one’ work** with Youth Justice Workers, **having someone to talk to and to listen to them** were judged by young people to be central to helping them avoid being in trouble.

Young people said talking to their Youth Justice Worker helped them **deal with problems, provided them with information, advice and guidance** on various issues, “calms us down”, and in some cases, provided **supports to young people with mental health difficulties**. One young person said having a Youth Justice Worker means “you always have someone to talk to” and “you have a shoulder to cry on.”

**One-to-one work** was considered to work **better than group work** by many young people as it provides young people with the opportunity to “get to the bottom of their problems.” In addition, some young people said that Youth Justice Workers can **act as role models for young people** who might not have good parental supports or positive role models in their lives.

- *“I like to talk to my youth worker she helps a lot.”*
- *“If you have stuff on your mind, she will talk to you. She helped me with depression.”*
- *“I used to be fighting all the time and then they (Youth Justice Worker) talk sense to you in the one-to-ones and it helps you.”*
- *“The one-to-on work because the young person mightn’t have good parents or role models in their lives. The group work mightn’t be getting to the bottom of their problems and the young person is cast just as a trouble maker.”*

Some young people said their Youth Justice Workers **motivate them to try new things and build up their confidence**.

- *“Motivation, they chat to you and build up your confidence.”*
- *“Workers give us more confidence.”*
- *“I didn’t want to do anything and now I’d do anything. The workers explained to me that everything is worth giving it a try.”*

The **continuous support** of young people by Youth Justice Workers “through the good times and the bad” was also identified as a vital aspect of their role in keeping young people out of trouble. Many young people spoke about how the continuous support of their Youth Justice Worker helped them keep out of trouble. This included Youth Justice Workers staying in contact with young people through texting, ringing and calling to their homes and being there when they were going through difficult times.



- *“Continuous support through the good times and the bad.”*
- *“They call me and text me and then they come and collect me. If I say I can’t come they don’t say why not, they say we’ll be there for you next week.”*
- *“The workers ring me everything if I am sleeping during the day. They ask me what I am doing and where I have been.”*

A number of young people gave direct examples of how their Youth Justice Workers had helped them stay out of trouble with the Gardaí and in school. One young person said he talks to his Youth Justice Worker before he considers going to “do something bad” and this has helped him change his behaviour.

- *“She (Youth Justice Worker) is all for the young people. If we aren’t there she’ll come to the streets and look for you. If you are getting into trouble in school, she’ll get it sorted for us, so you don’t get suspended.”*
- *“They (Youth Justice Workers) have chats with you and put you in the right direction, like if you were going to do something bad. If I was going to do something bad I would go talk to the workers first. I fight with myself about should or shouldn’t I do something...I used to fly out before, but I don’t do that anymore.”*

Other ways in which Youth Justice Workers have helped young people included **personal development**, **providing information on issues** such as alcohol, drugs and sex education, **teaching communication skills**, and **encouraging young people to grasp opportunities**. One young adult who had attended a project and is now a father said Youth Justice Workers “helped me grow up and become a man.”

- *“My worker thought me to grasp every opportunity and that’s why I am where I am today in college. Grab life by the horns, take every opportunity you get.”*
- *“It really helped me grow up and become a man. I have a young child.”*

Having the **continuity of the same Youth Justice Worker** was also deemed to be very important by young people.

A small number of young people talked about Youth Justice Workers leaving their project regularly which they found difficult as they build up a relationship with a worker and then they leave. One young person said there should be **more funding for additional Youth Justice Workers** in projects.

- *“Having the same workers all the time is good.”*
- *“Youth workers leaving regularly. You get to know them, and they leave.”*

One young person described their worker as “like a second mam” and other said the same worker “was like another mother to us.”

- *“She (Youth Justice Worker) is like a second mam, its good. When my grandad passed away she texted to see if I wanted to talk and call over.”*

Past participants felt it was important that there was an **ongoing support network available** to them after they had reached 18 and finished attending the projects.

- *“A continued support or network when the young person has gone through projects.”*
- *“They are on Facebook and they always message and check up and see how you are getting on in college and if they can help so they are very nice.”*

Finally, a number of young people felt that **Youth Justice Workers do not get enough credit and praise** for their work in Garda Youth Diversion Projects. It was acknowledged that Youth Justice Workers have a very tough job as they often have to deal with young people with behavioural issues. Some young people described their Youth Justice Workers as “warriors.”

- *“The workers have a tough job, I have seen people unnecessarily mean to them and fair play they keep their cool with them...I was one of those young people and I am more responsible now.”*
- *“I have noticed that youth workers handle things really well and no one says you have done a good job. I don’t think they get any praise.”*

## Activities and Trips

**Activities and trips** were the second most commonly identified aspect of projects that works well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble. The most popular activity in projects was trips including **Camp Diversion**.

The next most popular activity was playing soccer leagues with the Gardaí, followed by cooking. Other activities mentioned by young people included water sports activities, outdoor activities, gym work, horse-riding, paintballing, fishing, swimming, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), running, playing pool and computer games. Young people liked that activities are free. Young people's **participation in decision-making** on what activities they would like to take part in within projects was also considered to be very important.

- *"Camping was a good experience. We stayed overnight for two nights and went swimming and walking. It was brilliant."*
- *"The Guards are there (at the Garda Leagues) and you get to know them. We had an 11-a-side and it was with the Guard that caught me."*
- *"You get to do what you want, and you get to pick things and give your opinion."*

Some of the **key benefits of participation in activities in projects** highlighted by young people included:

- Having fun
- Trying new activities
- Going back to activities young people used to participate in
- Going to new places
- Improving young people's mood and mental health
- Meeting new people, making friends
- Building up positive relationships with the Gardaí
- Opening up doors
- Improving communication and teamwork skills,
- Helping young people stay fit and healthy
- Staying off their phones

- *“Like interacting with other young people and things I like doing I stopped doing and now I am doing it again and getting enjoyment from it. I had lost interest completely.”*
- *“You can have a laugh. No one is depressed everyone is happy.”*

A number of young people said participating in activities in their project had **directly helped them stay away from being in trouble**. One young person talked about how participating in activities helped him keep his “head clear” and stay away from taking drugs.

Another young person said participating in activities helped him “stop doing bad things” and “go back to being a good person.” Participating in activities with a group has helped another young person “do good stuff” and has been a good influence in their lives.

- *“You get to like something that you never liked before or go on trips to places you never went before. Like I took up fishing in the harbour. We went a few times and we learned and the Guard fishes with us and it keeps my head clear, so I won’t go out doing drugs.”*
- *“I stopped everything and as time went on I got myself back and I learned to communicate with people. I just wanted to stop hanging around and get in trouble like communicating with other young people. I wanted to go back to being a good person, stop doing bad things.”*

### Programmes

The third most frequently cited aspect of projects that works well to help young people avoid being in trouble were **programmes**. The programmes judged to work best to help young people avoid being in trouble were **programmes based on choices and solutions**. These programmes aim to help young people make good choices when they are faced with difficult situations which may get them into trouble, for example joy riding or taking drugs. They also look at solutions for young people when they are in difficult situations, e.g. what to say and do.

**Addressing aggressive and violent behaviour** was also part of some programmes to help young people who may have had difficulties with fighting and controlling their behaviour. Some young people also talked about engaging in specific anger management programmes.

- *“A solution programme, like if a friend robbed a car, what would you do and say to him.”*
- *“They help us control ourselves not to be fighting on the streets. I used to be one of them. They tell you how to control yourself and to think before you act. Every project should have it. I had a problem in controlling myself, I just wanted to fight with everyone.*
- *“Do programmes around controlling yourself/getting into fights with people.”*

**Citizenship programmes** were also highlighted as programmes that work well to help young people avoid being in trouble. Citizenship programmes examined areas such as **how to be an active and co-operative member of society and the importance of community involvement and participation**. Some young people participated in the Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme, a youth development programme that involves young people researching the needs of their community, organising practical action in response, evaluating the effectiveness of their work and reflecting on what they’re learning along the way.

- *“Our group just did a citizenship programme with Foróige and a lot of the young people hadn’t finished school, but they had this qualification.”*

Programmes that work with young people to help them understand the **impact and consequences of crime on other people** were also judged to work well. A number of young people said these programmes helped them learn from their mistakes, keep them away from “the wrong people”, become a better person and choose the right path in terms of crime.

- *“Explain the impact of you committing crime on people around you.”*
- *“They explain the consequence of committing a crime.”*
- *“Helps us learn from our bad mistakes and choose the right roads in life.”*

Other programmes that young people highlighted as working well included:

- Mentoring
- Leadership
- Cooking
- Driving theory test
- Joy riding, e.g. education and making a film about joyriding
- Youth exchange
- Alcohol and drug awareness

- Mental health
  - Sexual health
  - Photodocumentary
  - Barista
  - Communication skills
  - Employment skills, e.g. CV preparation, interview skills
  - Anti-litter awareness campaigns
  - Teenagers and Gardaí (TAG) <sup>2</sup>
  - Programme that deals stress, bullying, alcohol/drug use and depression
- *“Programmes like a 10-week djing programme, a barista programme, an exchange programme like we are going down to Wicklow on an exchange.”*
- *“We were going to make a movie about joy riding.”*
- *“TAG- Teenagers and Gardaí programme. We talk about what’s going on outside with us.”*

Some of the **benefits of participation in programmes** highlighted by young people included

- Improved social and communication skills
- Improved behaviour
- Better decision-making skills
- Awareness of issues such as racism and immigration
- Qualifications
- Help with gaining employment
- Life skills such as cooking
- Learning about the impact of crime on people
- Learning about the effects of alcohol and drug misuse
- Help for young people with a lack of family support
- Learning responsibility and youth participation in decision-making

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<sup>2</sup> A programme that aims to promote positive engagement between teenagers and Gardaí and involves the facilitation of discussions between Teenagers and Gardaí on topics selected by the young people prior to the programme

Many young people commented on the **enjoyment they get from participating in group work**, e.g. participation in programmes as a group, and how it can complement one-to-one work with Youth Justice Workers.

- *“There are cool things like anger management, drugs programmes, joy riding programmes. It worked, we listened to it when we were younger. We learned about the effect of drugs and the impact of crime on people.”*
- *“Dealing with things going on at home or problems outside the project.”*
- *“Programmes highlighted a lot of things I wouldn’t be aware of. You would have a ‘village mindset’, the project changed my mindset on so many things like the immigrant crisis in Ireland. We would have had a lot of racism, but it gave me a new perspective.”*
- *“I done an anti-litter programme. We went to a parade and got dressed up and it was good. It was for cigarette butts and we got dressed up as a bin and a cigarette butt and we had posters and gave out key rings and it worked. Everyone was watching us. We also presented it to the council and we went into the schools. It was good, and it was important.”*

#### Meeting New People and Making New Friends

The fourth most commonly highlighted aspect of projects that works well to help young people avoid being in trouble was **meeting new people and making new friends**. Young people talked about the **trust, loyalty, honesty and kindness between young people** in projects. They described projects as:

- Having a friendly, welcoming and a “loving and caring” environment
  - Somewhere young people look after each other
  - A place where everyone’s voice is heard
- A space where young people learn from each other’s experiences
- *“We can trust everyone.”*
  - *“The sense of feeling welcome.”*
  - *“Everyone’s voice gets heard.”*

It was acknowledged that some young people might find it **difficult to attend a project initially** and **having friends in the project** might help in this regard. One project had an “open session” every week where any young people can attend to help young people integrate into the project. **Drop-ins** were also considered to work well to help young people meet new people and make new friends in projects.

- *“We had an open session every Tuesday and people could come along, and you would meet new people because people are shy and then you have the time of your life playing pool.”*

Some of the **benefits of meeting new people and making new friends** in projects included:

- Speaking to and became friends with other young people they would have never spoken to before or may have not got along with
- Increased social and communication skills
- Increased confidence
- Having other young people to talk to
- Finding it easier to talk to young people with similar experiences
- Long-lasting friendships

Some young people talked about **other young people in projects being a good influence** on them.

- *“Playing games with people I would never have talked to.”*
- *“It gives you more confidence like chatting to people, social skills.”*
- *“A good influence, like I was walking around being influenced and doing bad stuff, so the group helps me to do good stuff.”*



### Education, Training and Employment Supports

Education, training and employment supports were the fifth most frequently mentioned feature of projects that work well to help young people. Many young people spoke about their **Youth Justice Worker providing educational and learning supports**. This included advocacy in schools, help with school work, homework and studying, helping them access Youthreach and training courses, encouragement, motivation, belief, goal setting, information on third level education applications and grants. It also included **ongoing support for young adults who had finished attending projects at 18**.

- *“They help us with school and with homework and studying.”*
- *“Where you want to be and what you want to do in a few years and how to get there like a goal. I didn’t get the points in school and they said what are your alternative options.”*
- *“The workers can see the ability you have and how good you can do without you even realising. Say if you are going into school they say, ‘you can do anything.’ You look at your results at the start and then later you have done a lot better.”*

**Training courses** were mentioned by a number of young people as something that works well in projects as they **help young people increase their experience, are good for their CV, future career and employment opportunities**. Courses completed by young people included:

- Beauty/make-up
- hairdressing
- Personal training,
- Fitness
- Mechanic
- Electrical
- Cooking
- Safe Pass<sup>3</sup>
- Manual handling

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<sup>3</sup> A safety awareness training course aimed at all construction site personnel

Some young males said they would like if **their projects did more courses that would help them get work**, for example, the Safe Pass course.

- *"I got to do a mechanic course and I got to learn about cars and how engines work."*
- *"I did a manual handing and driving theory test and Safe Pass. It helps you for getting a job and it's good for your CV and they help you get a summer job as well."*
- *"Courses on things that will get you work."*
- *"It helps with my future career."*

A number of young adults who were past participants in projects felt they would not be where they are in life today only for the **support of their Youth Justice Worker who helped changed their perspective on education**, helped them set goals and progress to third level education.

- *"Only for the project I would not be where I am today. If I ever needed help with college work my youth worker could point me in the right direction or with life in general."*
- *"The workers would always be there, and I wouldn't be where I am today without her, like she helped me get into college and all."*

A number of young people said their **project had helped them with CV preparation, interview skills and job applications**.

- *"Helping young people with CVS and job applications."*

### Opportunities

The sixth most frequently mentioned element of projects that works well to help young people avoid being in trouble was opportunities. Young people discussed how involvement in projects had **helped create many new opportunities** for them. Often, **Youth Justice Workers** were mentioned as being responsible for creating and opening young people up to opportunities, as well as motivating them to take opportunities. **Key opportunities** young people highlighted included Youth Exchanges, trips, awards (e.g. Gaisce Award, Foróige Youth Citizenship Award), programmes (e.g., Foróige Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) youth entrepreneurship education and development programme), educational

opportunities, qualifications, participation in events (e.g. Hackathon<sup>4</sup>), taking up new sports and having new experiences.

- *“We went on a foreign exchange to Italy. We did exchanges to Belfast as well. We got to spend the day in Italy and the excitement was great. I had never been away on holidays before.”*
- *“I did the citizenship award and I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to do that. I went on a Youth Exchange and without the connection to the project I wouldn’t have had that opportunity.”*
- *“I have done so many things in my project. I have got a foot in the door to do things like a hackathon. We worked on how to integrate immigrants into society and I wouldn’t have had those opportunities.”*
- *“One thing I really enjoyed was my parents didn’t have a car, so we rarely went away, and the project brought us around Ireland and try things like kayaking and surfing when I loved. They brought us to Galway where I had ever been before. I never had the experience to explore places when I was a kid and the project did that.”*

Past participants spoke retrospectively about the opportunities they had encountered, as a result of attending projects. For some of these young people, the opportunity of going on **Youth Exchanges** had “changed their lives.” However, the main opportunities discussed were the **educational and career opportunities** arising from their participation in projects.

Some current participants said their Youth Justice Workers had helped them access educational and career opportunities, for example through providing encouragement, information and assistance on third level applications and grants. One young person who is training to be a youth worker has received **career advice and employment opportunities** from their former project.

- *“Discussed grants when I knew nothing about it. I’m now in my final year in college.”*
- *“My project has definitely helped me. I didn’t know I could get a grant and go to college because I knew my dad couldn’t afford it. They said what are you interested in, and it was history, so they pointed me in the direction of the SUSI grant and the Credit Union to sort myself out financially. I decided not to do the apprenticeship and go to college then.”*

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<sup>4</sup> A hackathon is a social coding event that brings computer programmers and other interested people together to improve upon or build a new software program.

- *“I go in (to the project) every few weeks and they help me with getting work and I’m going to be a youth worker.”*
- *“I was in the European Parliament in June as an Irish Youth Delegate and it was really interesting.”*

### Something To Do and Somewhere To Go

Having something to do and somewhere to go was the seventh most commonly mentioned aspect of projects that works well to help young people avoid being in trouble. Many young people said their **project “keeps them off the streets” and away from trouble** and **anti-social behaviour** by keeping them busy and giving them somewhere to hang out. Many young people said when they are in their project they aren’t getting into trouble. One young person said having somewhere to go gave him “the space to think clear” about issues.

- *“You go there to get away from the street for a few hours. That’s two hours you aren’t getting into trouble.”*

### Drop-ins

Having a **drop-in** service as part of projects was the eight most commonly cited feature of projects that works well also to help young people keep out of trouble. Young people like drop-ins as they can **see people they know every day, meet new people, Youth Justice Workers have time to talk and are welcoming to new young people**. Young people said **Youth Justice Workers should be present at drop-ins** and suggested **drop-ins should be available at weekends**. However, it was agreed that a drop-in service on its own was not enough and group work and one-to-one work is also necessary for projects to work well.

- *“You can drop in and have a laugh. If you are there it keeps you out of trouble.”*
- *“Drop-ins should be available as much as possible.”*
- *“Staff are welcoming to new faces.”*

### Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers

A number of young people said their Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) helped them avoid being in trouble. They described their JLO as being **“a positive influence”** and someone they look forward to seeing in the project.

- *“My JLO keeps me out of trouble.”*

### Food

Finally, young people said having food in projects worked well. Young people thought having food in projects works well as it is free and **“you are never hungry.”**

### **3.3 What Does Not Work Well in Projects to Help Young People Avoid Being in Trouble?**

Young people consulted were asked what does not work well in GYDPs to help young people avoid being in trouble. **A number of young people said there was nothing that did not work well in their projects and there was nothing they would like to change about them.** Others provided feedback, which is outlined below.

#### Project Times

The most commonly mentioned issue that does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble was **project times**. Overall, young people did not think **one hour a week was enough time** for them to engage with the project and help them avoid getting into trouble. Some young people also felt one hour a week was **not enough of an incentive to encourage young people to attend projects** regularly and that some young people may consider it “a waste of time.” Young people suggested projects should have **more set hours per week** and should be open to young people to **drop-in** and engage with Youth Justice Workers five days a week.

- *“It’s probably not enough time to because it is only one hour out of your whole week.”*
- *“We only had an hour a week and you would want to go more, and resources might be strained. What’s going to stop young people getting into trouble every other hour they are not in a project?”*
- *“The centre should be open every day – don’t expect people to come every day but the option should be there.”*

Some young people spoke about paperwork taking up a lot of time in their project and called it “a pain” and “a waste of time”:

- *“You are in the door five minutes and they rush you through everything and filling forms could waste 20 minutes of your time and then you are out the door.”*

The fact that projects are **not open at weekends** was also identified by young people as something that does not work well to help young people avoid being in trouble. Young people felt projects should be open at weekends because this is **the time young people are most likely to get into trouble**. It was also suggested that young people would have more time to attend projects at the weekends as they are busy during the week attending school.

- *“Weekends is the time you get in trouble.”*
- *“It should be open at the weekend – that’s when you get in the most trouble because all the youth services and everything is closed.”*
- *“The centre is closed at the weekends, so you can’t go in when you want to.”*
- *“If it was open at the weekends it would give you more time and some people are in school during the week and don’t have too much time in the evenings.”*

Other time related issues raised by young people included **project times clashing** with the times of other local youth project activities, not getting enough notice when project times are changed, project times being cancelled due to times not suiting young people, not having enough group time in projects, not enough one-to-one time with Youth Justice Workers and too much one-to-one time with Youth Justice Workers. Young people suggested there should be **better planning and notice given** in advance of activities and times should suit young people better.

- *“Some people have things going on and others don’t but it’s a bit frustrating when you want to do something, and the times don’t suit you.”*
- *“Times for the project clash with other things we want to do, e.g. in the youth service.”*
- *“Plan in advance so it suits everyone.”*

### Youth Justice Workers

The second most frequently identified aspect of projects that does not work well to help young people avoid being in trouble was **Youth Justice Workers**. As a **good relationship** between young people and their Youth Justice Worker was judged to be very important to help young people avoid being in trouble, Youth Justice Workers who are **judgmental of young people, do not understand young people**, speak to young people disrespectfully, make young people feel bad for decisions they have made, take sides and “treat you like a kid” do not work well in this regard. One young person spoke about young people becoming “numbers and targets” for some Youth Justice Workers.

- *“Workers judging you if you tell them something.”*
- *“The youth worker, she doesn’t understand us.”*
- *“Don’t make young people feel bad for their bad decisions.”*
- *“Young persons becoming numbers and targets.”*

**Lack of adequate training for Youth Justice Workers** on how to work and engage effectively with young people, particularly those with behavioural issues, was also highlighted as a problem.

Some young people spoke about a **lack of communication** between them and their Youth Justice Workers, some Youth Justice Workers “working out of a textbook” and constantly offering the same advice. One young person reported that some Youth Justice Workers were afraid to work with him due to his reputation. Another young person spoke about a Youth Justice Worker giving up on young people when the work become too challenging and a further young person spoke about “empty promises” from Youth Justice Workers. **Training for Youth Justice Workers on specific issues** such as health and mental health was also recommended by young people.

- *“Lack of communication between you and your worker.”*
- *“Fear and lack of understanding on behalf of staff working on the projects. Some people would be afraid of you and where you are coming from and would think, ‘Jesus get them away from me’ and wouldn’t want to work with you.”*
- *“Constantly giving you the same advice and just repeating themselves.”*
- *“Giving up on the young person when work becomes challenging.”*

A number of young males felt a **lack of male Youth Justice Workers** in projects did not work well to help them avoid being in trouble. While young males said they were able to talk to female Youth Justice Workers about some issues, they did not feel comfortable talking about certain issues and would prefer to talk “man-to-man” with a male worker. As there are more young males in projects, it was argued that there should be more male Youth Justice Workers. Some young people also felt Youth Justice Workers **should be younger** and there was a **lack of Youth Justice Workers** in general in their projects. One young person suggested young people should be able to choose their Youth Justice Worker.

- *“Most of the project is boys but we have no male workers. You can talk to the female worker about a lot of things, but you need to talk man-to-man.”*
- *“You need a fella (Youth Justice Worker) in the group.”*



While the majority of young people thought **one-to-one work** with Youth Justice Workers worked well a small number of young people said they found **one-to-ones uncomfortable**, “awkward” and “like an interview.”

- *One to ones, I have never done them. They are a bit awkward, but they are alright. Its two people, it's like an interview like when you are talking to someone, they aren't talking to you to do something for no reason, they are helping.”*

### Facilities

The third most regularly cited feature of projects that does not work well to help young people avoid being in trouble were the **facilities**, youth centres or “the gaff” projects meet in. A small number of young people said their projects had **no actual facility, centre or building of their own to meet in**. As a result, they meet in cafés or other public spaces.

Some young people from the same project stated that their project did not have a set facility to meet in and said moving between locations was off-putting and affected attendance. In addition, using a **shared facility** was not considered to be an ideal option. One young person spoke about their project having a facility that was robbed and damaged in a fire. Young people called for **more funding for facilities** for projects.

- *“We don't even have a centre.”*
- *“We have no drop-in or no centre.”*
- *“One of the issues was they (the project) were renting three different places in the area and some people weren't bothered going to different places. Now they have a set place. You had to use a staff kitchen where the staff were having their lunch so I'm sure it was a pain for them as well.”*
- *“We had a centre, it was lethal - computers and games and all - but it was robbed and then burned.”*

Some young people suggested **project facilities should be improved** to make them larger and less “squashed.” Some young people said they would like a bigger kitchen. Others said they would like a new modern building.

- *“A new building like a spaceship.”*
- *“A building enough for a youth club- so it’s not squashed.”*

According to young people, youth facilities where projects meet should also be **better resourced** with equipment such as televisions, computer games consoles, pool tables, air hockey etc. Project buses were also suggested as an important resource that should be available.

- *“Make the building better, more things in it, e.g. pool, air hockey.”*

Young people emphasised the **importance of the distance of facilities from where young people are living** in terms of how likely they are to attend the project due to issues such as available transport and motivation. Some young people from a rural town said there is no project there, so they have to get a lift to a project twenty minutes away. One young person from the project stated they wouldn’t be able to attend if they didn’t have a lift there.

- *“There is no project in the town, so we go to a project that is around 20 minutes away, but we get a lift there.”*
- *“I get a lift for the project. I wouldn’t be able to go if I wasn’t getting a lift.”*
- *“If the location is far away it could put people off.”*

Young people highlighted the **need for drop-in type facilities** where projects meet, such as **youth cafés** which could help young people stay out of trouble by giving them somewhere to go and hang out with their friends. It was suggested that drop-in facilities **should also be open at weekends**. In addition, some young people identified the **need for more private space in projects** for one-to-one meeting with Youth Justice Workers.

- *“A café that you could go to from time to time to drop into.”*
- *“Having a place to go to be able to talk in private.”*

### Lack of Trips and Activities

**Lack of trips and activities** was the fourth most frequently mentioned aspect of projects that does not work well to help young people avoid being in trouble. Young people would like their projects to have **more funding for trips and activities, as well as for insurance**. They would like projects to bring them on more regular trips abroad and in Ireland, for example camping trips. The types of activities young people would like more of included:

- Paint balling
- Go-karting
- Football tournaments
- Bonding activities

Some young people spoke about a **lack of variety in the activities** they engage in as part of their project and “doing the same activities over and over again.” Young people who are in projects where they only meet one-to-one with Youth Justice Workers said they would like to be involved in **more group-based activities**.

- *“I’d like to go camping with my group.”*
- *“More bonding activities.”*

A number of young people suggested there should be more **youth participation in decision-making** in relation to activities and trips in projects.

- *“Ask more if there’s anything young people want to do.”*
- *“Give more ideas.”*
- *“Make a list of what different people like to do.”*

Some young people also suggested there should be **rules around mobile phone use** during activities to make them more enjoyable and to ensure young people interact with each other more.

- *“Stay off your phone during activities.”*
- *“People always on their phones, rules like when you are camping not to be on your phone and interacting.”*
-

### Young People Retention in Projects

The fifth most cited issue identified in relation to what does not work well to help young people avoid being in trouble was **young people dropping out of projects**. According to those consulted, it is **difficult to motivate some young people** to continue to attend projects. **Challenges** related to retention of young people in projects included drugs, distances from projects, small numbers of young people in projects, lack of girls in groups and lack of time. However, some young people suggested **Youth Justice Workers need to motivate young people more** to attend and **follow-up with young people not attending**, e.g. texting and calling. Young people stressed that projects only work to keep young people out of trouble if they attend them regularly.

- *“Get people to come. No one ever texts them to asks them to come. Need to push people to come or it’s just the same old faces.”*
- *“Follow up with people who don’t come to groups.”*
- *“Getting young people to go to the project is hard, it’s a challenge. The teenagers are worse now, like there are more people taking drugs.”*
- *“Make groups bigger and motivate people to attend.”*

Some young people said **being in a group with other young people they don’t like** does not work well and can be a reason why they don’t attend projects. According to young people, **bullying, intimidation and fighting** can occur in some projects which affects attendance and the atmosphere in the project. It was suggested that projects should run anti-bullying programmes to address this issue.

- *“If you fell out with someone and they join the group with you, you feel intimidated.”*
- *“I felt like I wanted to fight them. People would be shouting at each other.”*

**Ideas** put forward relating to **the retention of young people** in projects included allowing them to bring a friend, finding out what young people are interesting in, advertising the project better and providing more one-to-one time with workers for young people who are not engaging with other young people.

- *“When you are referred over to the club they should maybe say bring your friend over for a game of pool. They should find out what you are interested in and advertise it more. If they aren’t into communicating with others you need to build them up and have more one to one time.”*

### Negative Relationships with Other Organisations

A small number of young people spoke about **negative relationships with workers from other organisations** in instances where projects shared facilities. According to the young peoples, they **encountered workers from other organisations who were judgmental** and did not know how to interact, communicate, listen or get on the same level as young people. One young person reported being barred from a centre by other organisations and, as a result, their Youth Justice Worker had to meet them at the door. Another young person said they were not allowed in the building if their Youth Justice Worker was not there. Negative interactions with workers from other organisation made **young people feel rejected and angry** for being treated poorly.

- *“There are other organisations that don’t know how to interact with young people, compromise and get on their level.”*
- *“Everyone in the project would have known us and there were other organisations in the centre and they were very judgemental of us and they didn’t want us in the building having coffee and playing pool. I hated them, and you are looking for someone to treat you like a human and meet young people at their level and where they are at.”*
- *“I wasn’t allowed into the centre. The worker had to meet me at the door.”*
- *“Some leaders don’t let you in if your leader isn’t there, so they turn you away.”*

One young person also mentioned negative interactions with facilitators involved in external activities:

- *“We had a three-day sailing trip with the young people and the skipper made everything more difficult. If he had got down to young people’s level it would have worked much better.”*

### Negative Impact of Having a Drug User in a Project

Young people from one project spoke about the **negative impacts of having a young person who is a drug user** in their project and how it does not work well to help young people avoid being in trouble. According to the young people, having a young person who is a drug user in the project is not nice to be around, disruptive, difficult to deal with, intimidating and “not healthy for the group.” Some young people feared for their **personal safety** as a result of drug users being in their project, e.g. being stabbed by a needle, being followed home from the project and intimidated. The young people felt **drug users should not be allowed in projects** and should be in a **separate drugs programme**. The young people

also suggest all projects should have **drugs awareness and prevention programmes** to help young people stay away from drug use.

- *“When he (drug user) comes it’s not healthy for the group.”*
- *“There should be no drug users in the group, it’s bad for the rest of us. I’m afraid I’m going to get stabbed by a needle or something one of these days.”*

### Negative Interactions with Gardaí

Some young people identified **negative interactions with the Gardaí** as an issue. These young people believe they are being “targeted” by the Gardaí as a direct result of being part of their project. This is having a negative impact on relationships between these young people and the Gardaí.

- *“Being targeted by Guards because you are in the GYDP.”*
- *“The Gardaí often harass us because we’re in the project, stop you for nothing.”*

### Mixing Ages

**Mixing younger and older age groups in projects** was considered not to work well in terms of group dynamics and some young people found it “a bit weird.” Also, young people felt mixing ages might not work well as **younger teenagers might not be able to participate in the same activities as older teenagers**. While the lower age limit for project is 12 years of age, some young people recognised that children under 12 years may benefit from the involvement in the projects but mixing ages would not work well.

- *“Mix of age, it’s a bit weird, you can’t do things when you are under 14-16 years and 17-18.”*
- *“The rest are 12 or 13 and I am the eldest. I know them, but they are younger, so I don’t hang out with them. I go with my friend who is in the project with me.”*
- *“It’s hard to say we’ll take people at 10 as it would be like a creche. I think 12 is good but if you are older you don’t want to be walking it a creche. If someone could benefit from the project and they were under 12 that would be a better strategy.”*

### Stigma and Stereotyping

Some young people said they had experienced **stigma and stereotyping as a result of their involvement with projects**. This included people treating them badly and having misperceptions about them because they are in a project.

- *“People treating you wrong because you are in the GYDP.”*
- *“Some people think you are a scumbag because you are in the group.”*

### Leaving Projects

One past participant discussed the **circumstances around leaving their project and how it was communicated** as not working well. The young person was unaware he would have to leave the project on turning 18 years of age and felt the way he and his friends were discharged from the project was very abrupt. In addition, he was promised a portfolio of his work on leaving but this was never handed over. Furthermore, he and his friends had to find other things to do as they had all hung around together in the project. He felt **better communication and transitions around leaving the project** would have been advisable.

- *“The one bad thing about the project was how they got rid of us. Our workers went on leave and I just feel the cut-off point, there was no message. Then we wouldn’t get any texts so we all hung around together, so we had to find something to do. They brought in two new youth workers and none of our info was handed over and they got younger groups in. It was our routine going there every Wednesday. They didn’t tell us when we were 18 we would have to move on.”*
- *“They said they would have a portfolio of everything we did but the workers went so the portfolio was never handed over or finished.”*

This experience was in contrast to another young person’s experience of leaving his group where there was on-going communication and interaction with their former Youth Justice Workers:

- *“It was the opposite in our group. You wouldn’t go a week without hearing from the workers. It’s like a big family there. The respect that is show to you and not one person is left out. I was in the club for so long it would have been hard to be discharged.”*
-

### Courses

Some young people spoke about **courses not working well in projects**. This included lack of variety in courses, courses taking too long and course times not suiting young people. Young people would like to participate in **more courses that will help their future careers and employment**, such as the Safe Pass course, as noted earlier. Some young people also said more effort should be put into **making sure young people get along with each other before they do courses together** as this can lead to issues around challenging behaviour and conflict.

- *“Offer courses that benefit our futures, e.g. first aid courses.”*
- *“Course times to be more flexible because I’m working all the time.”*
- *“Put more effort into making young people friends with each other before the course.”*

### Unhealthy and Poor Quality Food Availability

Finally, some young people said **poor quality and unhealthy food** did not work well in projects. Young people would like to **have a say** in what type of food is provided in projects.

- *“Healthy food options too.”*



## 4. Appendices

### **4.1 Appendix A: Steering Group Meeting Notes: 17 May 2018**

#### **Attendees**

Linda O’Sullivan, DCYA  
Anne O’Donnell, (Hub na nÓg)  
Geraldine Walsh, DCYA  
Martin Donohue, Senior Participation Officer, Foróige  
Deaglán O Briain, IYJS  
Aideen Clery, IYJS  
Jennifer Malone, IYJS  
Edel Kelly, Best Practice Development Team  
Niamh Skelly, Best Practice Development Team  
Kayleigh Canning, Best Practice Development Team  
Alison Finn, Independent Project Committee  
Aoibhinn Loye, Independent Project Committee  
Colm Healy, An Garda Síochána

#### **Absent**

Eimear Flood, Extern

#### **Advisory Group**

It was agreed that an Advisory Group would be established to assist with the development of the methodology, recruitment and piloting of the questions to be asked during the consultation. The advisory group will consist of 4-5 young people from different projects. IYJS will send an email to all projects (CEOs, CBORs, and Youth Justice Workers) asking them to identify volunteers. If more than 4-5 volunteers are identified, selection criteria will be chosen. The Advisory Group does not need to be representative of CBOs or have an urban/rural mix.

IYJS will send DCYA an overview of the objectives of the consultation with young people before 25 May 2018. DCYA will write up a draft invitation, consent and assent forms and send them on to IYJS. Once this is agreed, IYJS will send an email to CEOs, CBORs, and Youth Justice Workers asking them to nominate volunteers.

The initial timeline agreed for the Advisory Group is as follows:

- 28 May-1 June: email sent by IYJS to CEOs, CBORs, and Youth Justice Workers
- 15 June: Deadline for submissions
- 25-29 June: first advisory group meeting

### Consultation

- DCYA will review staffing of the consultation and will provide an update.
- The consultation will take place in July, August (if possible) and September.
- DCYA to provide IYJS with a list of report writers and IYJS will undertake a tender

As the consultations will take in projects, a clinical psychologist will not be required as youth justice workers will be close by (although they will not be able to be in the room during the consultation). Consultations will last between 20-30 minutes.

It was agreed that talking to past participants where possible would be a good idea and that movement away from adult orientated questions would be encouraged.

Talking to Young People in Oberstown was suggested but it was mentioned that only 2 or 3 Young People at a time could be worked with at that location.

It was questioned if it could be asked of Young People how important a stable adult relationship is and how important work of the service is regarding local communities. It was suggested that this could be asked in a neutral way.

It was suggested that looking at the Value for Money (VFM) consultations could provide answers to some questions without having to double up the work.

2-3 meetings of the advisory group would be needed, 7 consultations (2-3 in Dublin as well as ones in the north, south, east and west), perhaps Limerick City, Cork City, the Midlands. It was suggested that there should perhaps be a rural consultation for every urban area.

I was agreed that the decision on the location of consultations should be made after we see how many Young People have agreed to take part.

Representatives from the Best Practice Development team stated:

- Consultations should include 4-6 young people using natural and pre-existing groupings;
- Youth Justice Workers should suggest a time for consultations to take place.

## 4.2 Appendix B: Information Sheets, Assent and Consent Forms

### INFORMATION NOTE FOR YOUTH JUSTICE WORKERS

#### Consultations on how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help young people

The Irish Youth Justice Service wants to ask young people how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help young people to avoid getting into trouble or to move away from being in trouble.

We would like to invite young people who are or were involved in a Garda Youth Diversion Project to consultations (meetings) to hear their opinions. The consultations will be conducted by expert facilitators from Hub na nÓg in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Please review the schedule of consultation dates and times and select the one most suitable for young people from your project. There are 10 places at each consultation.

Please note that we will conduct two consultations for past participants in the week of 13 August and are flexible about the time of these consultations, which could be in the evening to facilitate young people who are working. Young people over the age of 18 do not need parental/guardian consent, but please ask them to complete the Assent Form.

We will:

- Give the young people pizza and other tasty food!
- Pay their travel expenses, their youth justice worker's travel expenses and any other expenses
- Make sure they are safe and have a good time

#### What do you do if a child or young person is interested in getting involved?

1. Please give the enclosed information note for young people and parents/guardians to those who are interested in attending a consultation.
2. Please ask interested young people to complete the Assent Form.
3. Please ask parents or guardians to complete the Parental/Guardian Consent Form.
4. Please post the completed assent and consent forms to IYJS, Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50-58 Lower Baggot St, Dublin 2.
5. Please send the completed forms back to IYJS by 19 July 2018.

#### What will happen after you send in the forms?

The IYJS will contact the youth justice workers to confirm the date of the consultation your young people will attend.

#### How will the young person get to the meetings?

We will pay all travel expenses of young people and youth justice workers and help make arrangements for young people to come to meetings.

If you have any questions or would like to talk to someone, please email [jxmalone@justice.ie](mailto:jxmalone@justice.ie) or phone Jen on 01 647 3087.



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**Assent Form (to be filled out by young people)**

**Consultations on how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help young people**

The Irish Youth Justice Service wants to ask young people how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help young people to avoid getting into trouble or to move away from being in trouble.

We would like to invite young people who are or were involved in Garda Youth Diversion Projects to consultations (meetings) to hear their opinions. The meetings will be in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in Dublin.

Your youth justice worker will talk to you about the meeting date and time that suits you best.

We will:

- Give you pizza and other tasty food!
- Pay your travel expenses, your youth justice worker’s travel expenses and any other expenses
- Make sure you are safe and have a good time

**Information about you**

Your name	
Your city town or county	
Your age	
Your medical conditions or special needs	
Foods you cannot eat	
The name of your youth justice worker	

Please read and tick the boxes you agree with:

- I understand why I am coming to the consultation (meeting) or someone has explained it to me.
- I know that a researcher is writing a report and will attend the meetings, but my name or the name of any other child will not be used in the report.

Signed.....

Date.....





## Parent / Guardian Consent Form

### Consultations on how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help young people

The Irish Youth Justice Service wants to ask young people how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help them to avoid getting into trouble or to move away from being in trouble.

We would like to invite young people who are involved in Garda Youth Diversion Projects to consultations (meetings) to hear their opinions. The meetings will be in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in Dublin.

The youth justice worker will talk to you about the meeting date that suits your son or daughter.

We will:

- Give the young people pizza and other tasty food!
- Pay their travel expenses, their youth justice worker's travel expenses and any other expenses
- Make sure they are safe and have a good time

IF YOU WOULD LIKE SOMEONE TO EXPLAIN THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM, PLEASE PHONE THE PARTICIPANTS YOUTH JUSTICE WORKER.

#### Details of child or young person

Name	
City, town or county where the child lives	
Age	
Dietary requirements	
Other relevant information (medical conditions or special needs)	

#### Contact details of parent/guardian/care worker

Name of parent or guardian	
Relationship to child/young person	
City, town or county where you live	
Parent/guardian contact number	
Contact details of person collecting the child/young person (if different from above)	
In case of emergency, please contact (if different from above)	
Contact details for the child/young person's doctor	

- In the event of illness or accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a suitably qualified medical practitioner and/or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible. (Please tick the box)

**Please read and give permission for the points below by ticking the boxes:**

- I give permission for the young person named above to take part in the consultation with young people on how Garda Youth Diversion Projects help young people to avoid getting into trouble or move away from being in trouble.
- I understand that there will be suitable supervision at the consultation and that young people attending will not have permission to leave the premises without prior arrangement.
- I understand that the DCYA will only take responsibility for the young person named above from the time of arrival at the consultation, up to the time of departure from the consultation. No responsibility will be taken during the process of travelling to and from the consultation.
- I understand that my child is taking part voluntarily.
- I understand that the consultation will be attended by researchers who are writing a report of the consultation. This report will be anonymous and no young person's name will be used.
- In keeping with *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2015*, I understand that if the facilitators learn about any risk to the safety or welfare of my child or another young person they will manage this information in line with their policy.
- In the event of illness or accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered to my child where considered necessary by a suitably qualified medical practitioner and/or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

Signed..... (parent/guardian/care worker)

Date: .....

### 4.3 Appendix C: Advisory Group Information and Notes

**GYDP consultations Advisory Group meeting**

**Tuesday, 3 July 2018**

**1. Why you are here. What IYJS want to find out.**

**How GYPD projects help young people to avoid getting into trouble or move away from being in trouble**

- the people who help them
- the activities that help them
- how the projects link them with other activities, organisations and supports that help them
- key moments, people or activities that have helped young people to turn their lives around
- the location of the projects

**2. Other things we do – Oberstown, Adoption, GAL, LTOV etc**

**3. Individual lifeline:**

**“Best things about your project”**

**4. Two walls of ideas**

- **Wall One**  
What **works well** in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?
- **Wall Two**  
What **does not work well** in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?

**5. Categorise ideas on each wall**

**6. Discussion about the consultations:**

- **Where?**
- **How long?**
- **Methods?**
- **Words to use**
- **Letter of invitation? (put draft on the sticky wall)**

**7. Next meeting**

## Notes from GYDP Consultations Advisory Group Meeting

3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2018

### Feedback on Methodologies for Consultations

#### Introductions/Ice-breaker Activities

The facilitators asked the young people if they enjoyed the introductory session.

- Some young people thought the introductions at the beginning of the Advisory Group meeting were “odd” and “a bit weird” while others thought they would work well at consultations, if young people felt comfortable.
- A facilitator proposed an alternative introduction activity where young people work in pairs, find out one thing about the other young person’s project and what they would do if they won the Euromillions and then introduce them to the larger group. This was considered a good idea and young people said that it would be “fun” and “a bit of craic”.
- The Advisory Group suggested staff working at consultations should be approachable and should talk to young people to make them feel at ease before consultations begin.

#### Individual Lifeline Exercise: “Best things about your project”

The facilitators asked the young people if they enjoyed the lifeline session and if it should be done at the consultations.

- Some young people felt the individual lifeline exercise would work well in consultations “if you had a lot to say about your project”.
- However, the majority of young people felt this exercise might not work well in consultations as there is a pressure to have something to say and to fill in all the speech bubbles.
- In addition, not all young people might be in their project long enough to have something to say about it, not all young people will put their thoughts down on paper and some young people might not have the confidence to read out their comments.



### Group Lifeline Exercise

- The idea of a group lifeline exercise was proposed by a facilitator and discussed with the Advisory Group.
- Young people from the Advisory Group felt a group lifeline exercise would work better than an individual lifeline exercise as hearing young people discuss ideas might help other young people think of ideas.
- Some young people felt a five-foot long lifeline sheet might be too big.
- A facilitator proposed a medium sized 'poster wall of ideas' with individual bricks for each idea and this was considered to be a good idea by the young people.

### Wall of Ideas Exercise

The facilitators asked the young people if they enjoyed the wall of ideas session and if it should be done at the consultations.

- Overall, young people liked the wall of ideas exercise.
- They described it as "clear" and liked that ideas were "all there to see".
- Young people also liked the fact that they didn't have to read too much information and points were quick and easy to understand.
- Some young people suggested Youth Justice Workers could use the wall of ideas exercise in their work with young people in projects, e.g. to get young people's ideas on activities they like etc.

### **Feedback on location of consultations, letter of invitation etc.**

#### Location of Consultations

The facilitators asked the young people if young people would be happy to come to Dublin for the consultations.

- Young people from the Advisory Group felt other young people would be happy to attend consultations in DCYA's offices in Dublin as it would be "a day out".
- One young person described DCYA's offices as "a bit fancy" but the majority said they would be happy to attend consultations there.

- One young person from Kerry felt it was very far to travel to Dublin and suggested a regional consultation in Cork.

### Letter of Invitation

The facilitators showed the young people the letter that was sent by the Adoption Advisory Group inviting young people to adoption consultations and asked if the GYDP Advisory Group would like to send an invitation letter to other young people.

- The majority of young people thought the consultations invitation letter should be sent from the Irish Youth Justice Service rather than by young people from the Advisory Group.
- It was felt that a letter from the Irish Youth Justice Service would be respected more by young people than a letter coming from “another teenager” and would be more official and legitimate
- One young person stated, *“If someone gave me a letter from a young person I would probably throw it away”*.
- It was suggested that the invitation letter should be sent to young people via their Youth Justice Worker, as young people are used to receiving information and advice from them.
- One young person thought the invitation letter should be sent from young people from the Advisory Group as young people would be able to relate to it more and it would work better.

### Advisory Group Attendance at Consultations

The facilitators asked the young people if members of the Advisory Group would like to attend some of the consultations.

- Young people from the Advisory Group said they would be happy to attend the consultations and explain their role, what the consultations are about etc.
- It was suggested that two members of the Advisory Group could attend each consultation.

**1. Welcome and chat**

**2. Introductions**

**In pairs share name, where you are from and what you would do if you won the euromillions lottery**

**3. Brick Wall – best things about my project**

**4. Review opinions and categories on the sticky walls from the last meeting ('what work well' and 'what does not work well')**

**5. In twos, complete Jotter Pages on each category**

**6. Debrief on method**

**7. Session on the Lundy checklist (method on separate document)**

**8. Dates of consultations and who will attend each one**

## **Notes on GYDP Consultations Advisory Group Meeting**

**12<sup>th</sup> of July 2018**

### About the Advisory Group Meeting

The second Advisory Group meeting was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 in the DCYA and was attended by six young people (four male and two female).

### **Feedback on Methodologies for Consultations**

#### Introductory Session

The facilitators asked the young people if they enjoyed the introductory session (where young people worked in pairs, shared their name, where they are from and what they would do if they won the Euromillions lottery).

- Young people felt this introductory session would work well in consultations and was much better than the introductory session conducted at the first Advisory Group meeting

#### Graffiti Brick Wall Exercise: “Best Things About Your Project”

The facilitators asked the young people if they enjoyed the graffiti brick wall exercise and if it should be included in the consultations.

- The young people had mixed views on the brick wall exercise.
- Some young people enjoyed working on the exercise as a group.
- However, other young people said they would rather work on the exercise individually as they found it difficult to think of ideas and would find it easier to think of ideas by themselves.
- One young person felt the exercise was “not working as a group because you are just thinking by yourself”.
- Another young person suggested dividing young people at consultations into two groups of five to discuss ideas and each group to come up with their top five ideas which could then be fed back to the group as a whole and written on the brick wall.
- It was also suggested that young people could have the option of filling in an individual lifeline if they wished when they are in the smaller groups.

### Review of Sticky Wall Exercise

The facilitators asked the young people to review opinions and categories on the sticky walls from the last meeting ('what works well' and 'what does not work well' in projects).

- All the young people were happy with the opinions and categories on the sticky walls and agreed there was nothing missing from them

### Jotter Page Exercise

The young people worked in pairs to complete jotter pages on three categories (drop ins, activities and courses) from the sticky wall exercise and each pair got the opportunity to work on each category. The facilitators then asked the young people if they enjoyed the jotter page exercise and if it would work well at the consultations.

- The young people liked the jotter page exercise and thought it would work well at the consultations.
- The young people liked working in pairs on the exercise as they felt it was less pressurised than working alone.
- They felt it was important to have an opportunity to chat with the other young person they would be working with prior to the exercise as this would make them feel more comfortable working together and make the exercise easier.
- One or two young people felt they did not have much to say in the jotter page exercise.

### Feedback on Young People's Participation in Consultations

The facilitators asked the young people if they would be happy to come to Dublin to attend the consultations in pairs to welcome other young people, make them feel at ease and to explain the role of the Advisory Group.

- The young people said they would be happy to attend the consultations in pairs.
- It was agreed that the two young people from Donegal would attend the same consultation for logistical reasons.

- The times and dates of the consultations the young people will attend is to be agreed with individual Youth Justice Workers
- One young person was unsure if they could attend consultations as they have a summer job

## Methodology Decisions

The following methodology decisions were made by the facilitators at the end of the second Advisory Group meeting:

- The introductory session worked well and should be included in the final methodology.
- The sticky wall review indicated it worked well and it should be included in the final methodology.
- The graffiti brick wall exercise worked well and should be included in the final methodology.
- Young people should be divided into two groups of five for the brick wall exercise to discuss ideas in smaller groups and also have the opportunity to fill in individual lifelines if they wish.
- Young people should then return to the larger group to discuss ideas and complete the brick wall exercise.
- The jotter page exercise worked well and should be included in the final methodology.
- The jotter page exercise may require some facilitation at the consultations.
- The young people from the Advisory Group should be helped prepare for their introduction piece about their role etc.
- Young people's attention span should be taken into consideration in terms of the length of consultations.
- The idea of using a venue other than DCYA offices for the consultations was discussed, but it was felt that conducting the consultations in DCYA's offices added to the importance of the consultations.
- It was suggested that young people attending the consultations should have the opportunity to chat and have a coffee/drink to relax and get to know each other before the consultations begin, i.e. in the canteen or a meeting room on the ground floor in the DCYA. It was felt this would help young people feel more comfortable with each other, young people could go upstairs to the consultation room as a group and youth workers would not have to accompany the young people upstairs.

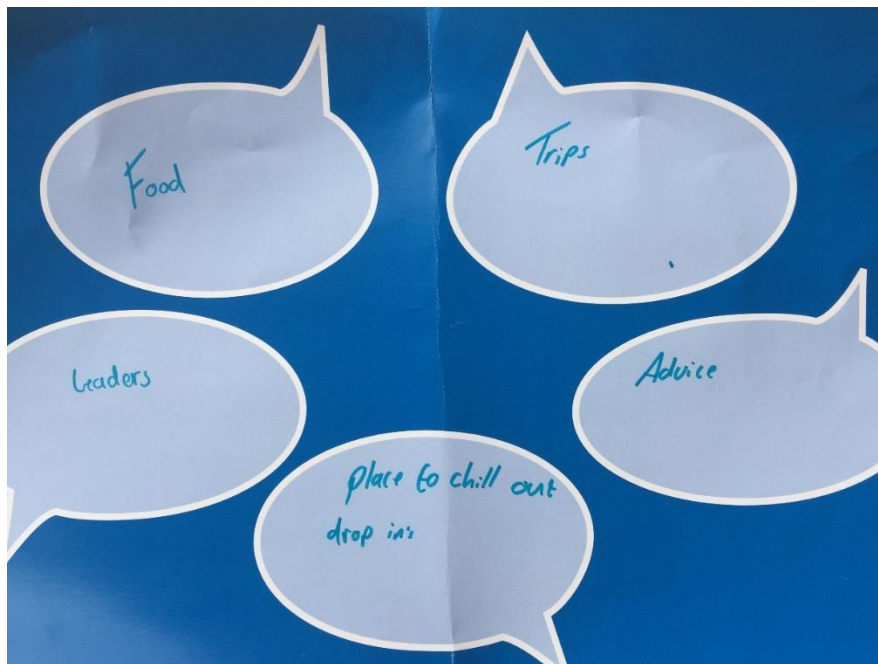
#### **4.4 Appendix D: Methodology**

##### Introduction

The methodologies for the consultations were designed by DCYA's Participation Support Team. The consultation methodologies were piloted with young people from the Advisory Group and adjusted according to their recommendations.

##### Individual Lifelines Exercise

The first exercise young people participated in was an individual lifeline exercise. Young people were asked to write down, *"The best things about your project"* on an individual lifeline sheet with clouds/speech bubbles. They were then asked to share whatever they wanted with the group.

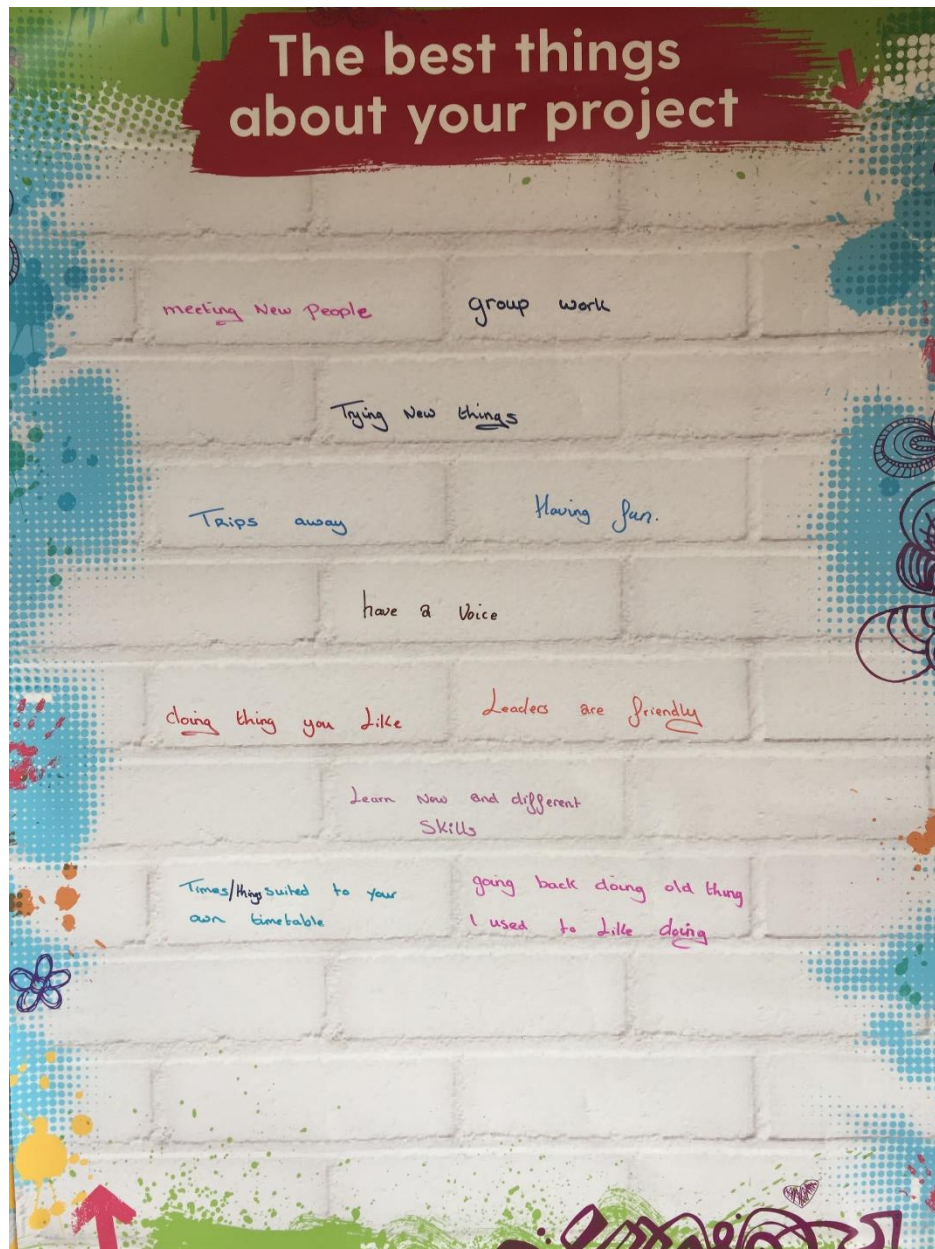




## Poster Walls of Ideas

Young people then had the opportunity to write on a 'poster walls of ideas', which were large posters with individual bricks for each idea with the heading:

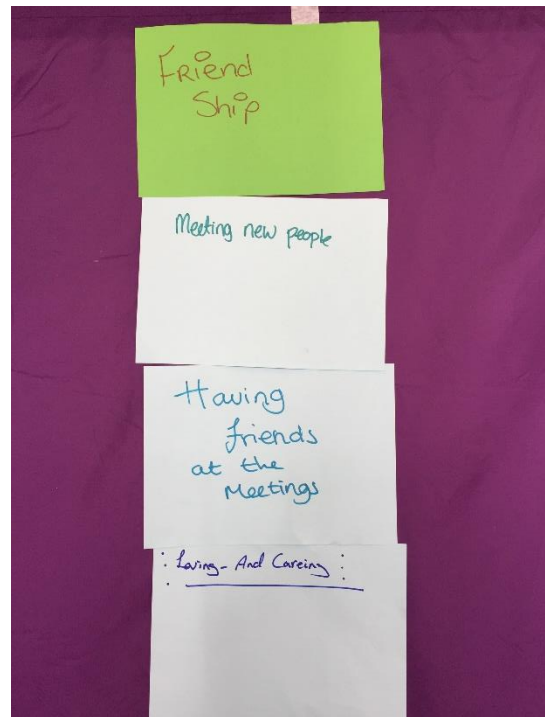
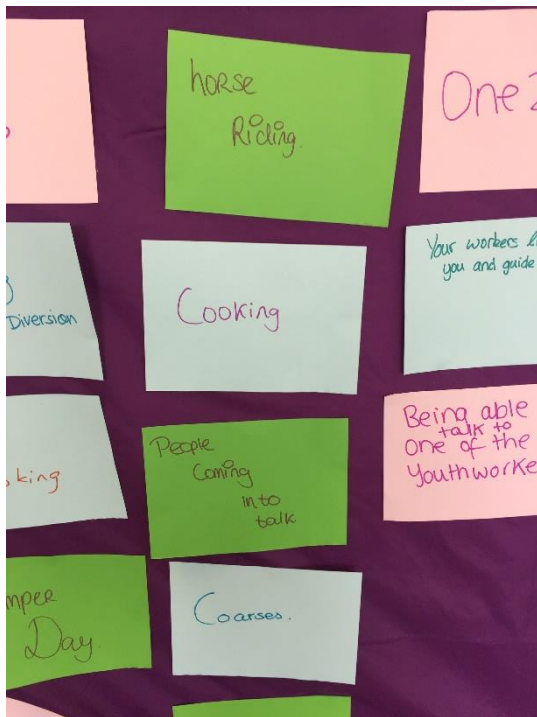
- The best things about your project



### Sticky Wall Exercise

In the next exercise, young people were asked, "What works well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?" Young people wrote their ideas on A5 pages and grouped them into categories on the sticky wall.

Young people were then asked, "What does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?" Again, young people wrote their ideas on A5 pages and grouped them into categories on the sticky wall.



### Jotter Page Session

Young people then took part in a 'jotter page session' on common categories identified through what works well/does not work well in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble in the sticky wall exercise answering two questions:

- 'What works well?'
- 'What should be changed?'

Young people worked in groups and got the chance to work on each category.

Youth Workers	
What works well?	What should be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding</li> <li>- listen to you</li> <li>- Good advice</li> <li>- You can tell them anything</li> <li>- like another mother to us</li> <li>- always in our corner</li> <li>- calm us down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Younger ones</li> <li>- more fun</li> <li>- more time to meet</li> <li>- more male workers</li> </ul>

### Note Taking

Finally, detailed notes of what young people said at the consultations were taken by the report writer who was present at the consultations and data from these notes were analysed and included in the report findings.

## **GYDP Consultations Final Methodology (31 July, 1 and 3 August 2018)**

### **1. Introduction by Advisory Group – in Ground Floor Room**

Why you are here. What IYJS want to find out.

How GYPD projects help young people to avoid getting into trouble or move away from being in trouble

- the people who help them
- the activities that help them
- how the projects link them with other activities, organisations and supports that help them
- people or activities that have helped young people to turn their lives around
- the location of the projects

### **2. Introductions (20 minutes)**

In pairs share name, where you are from and what you would do if you won the euro millions lottery

---

### **3. Best things about my project (20 minutes) – Martin**

- Two groups of five discuss ideas and fill in individual lifelines if they wish
- Return to the larger group to discuss ideas and complete the brick wall exercise

### **4. Two walls of ideas (30 minutes - 15 minutes per wall) - Martin**

- **Wall One**  
What **works well** in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?
- **Wall Two**  
What **does not work well** in projects to help young people avoid being in trouble?

### **5. Categorise ideas on each wall (5 minutes) - Anne**

### **6. In twos, complete Jotter Pages on each category (30 minutes) - Anne**

### **7. Evaluation**

**4.5 Appendix E: Evaluation Findings**

<b>Did you feel listened to?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>No</b>
85.7%	11.9%	2.4%
<b>Did you have fun?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>No</b>
92.9%	7.1%	-
<b>Was the meeting interesting?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>No</b>
87.8%	12.2%	-
<b>Were you told what will happen to your opinions?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>No</b>
89.7%	-	10.3%

<b>Things young people enjoyed most about the day</b>	<b>Things young people would change about the day</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting new people, talking to people and making friends</li> <li>• Giving your opinion and having your voice heard and respected</li> <li>• The food</li> <li>• Listening to other people’s opinions and learning about their projects</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• The facilitators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of young people said there was nothing they would change about the day</li> <li>• However, things they would change included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Getting up early and travelling long distances to consultations</li> <li>○ The food</li> <li>○ More bonding activities</li> <li>○ Less writing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>