



WESTERN
Investing
for
Health

manifesto

improving the health and social well-being status of young people

A joint statement

from members of the WIFH
Youth Manifesto Project

We have developed the production of this manifesto as a youth-led project from start to finish. We identified and discussed issues and then asked other young people for their views. Our manifesto covers a range of issues that are important to us as young people. The views expressed within this Manifesto reflect the interests and needs of young people living in the West. It is important that politicians read and understand what we as young people in the West are saying. It's vital that when making decisions that affect young people in the West politicians listen to what we have to say. We, the Youth Manifesto Working Group, on behalf of young people living in the Western Board area ask all politicians to read our manifesto, consider our findings and act upon the recommendations we make. We've put a lot of effort into this - please don't let it gather dust!

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Introduction

Investing for Health (IFH) is the public health improvement strategy for Northern Ireland which aims to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of all our people. There are seven key objectives as follows;

Objective 1: To reduce poverty in families with children.

Objective 2: To enable all people and young people in particular to develop the skills and attitudes that will give them the capacity to reach their full potential and make healthy choices.

Objective 3: To promote mental health and emotional well-being at individual and community level.

Objective 4: To offer everyone the opportunity to live and work in a healthy environment and to live in a decent affordable home.

Objective 5: To improve our neighbourhoods and wider environment.

Objective 6: To reduce accidental injuries and deaths in the home and workplace, and from collisions on the road.

Objective 7: To enable people to make healthier choices

The Western IFH Partnership has within its operations, four age themed subgroups, which take forward partnership projects and programmes to help meet the overall aims and objectives. The Teenage Transition subgroup has at its core the development of the skills of young people to reach their full potential. The Youth Manifesto was a programme which developed from young people across the WHSSB area, who wished to deliver a manifesto to our local elected Assembly to begin to bring about a change of policy for issues directly relating to them.

Between January and October of this year a number of young people from Derry, Omagh and Strabane areas have been working on developing a Youth Manifesto to be presented to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The aim of the WIFH funded project was

To collate and articulate the views, opinions, needs and aspirations of young people in the WHSSB area on strategies, policies and actions they want to see implemented by the Northern Ireland Assembly and Local Government that will improve the health and social well-being status of young people in the future.

The work has now been completed - research was carried out earlier this year with almost 400 young people involved. This Manifesto now offers Ministers, MLA's and other government representatives an overview of issues that young people hold strong views on within the west of the province and thus should be given due regard when formulating strategy, policy and decision-making.

The Manifesto also has implications for each government department, some more than others of course given the nature of the findings. However, there is a real opportunity for government to take 'heed' of what young

people in the West are saying. Some findings will not come as a surprise, some will be seen as constructive and some may even be viewed as 'controversial', whilst others will be reflective of public opinion. Some will even mirror some of the views contained with the manifestos of the main political parties for the last elections in 2007.

Irrespective of your opinion on the findings contained I'm sure you will find the findings no less informative and offer a valuable insight into current thinking of young people on a range of issues in the west.

Brendan Bonner
Western Investing for Health

Commitments

and approaches to young people: views from the main political parties

DUP on.....

Protecting Children

“We recognize inequalities in educational achievement and want fewer young people leaving school without qualifications. It is important to raise aspirations, particularly in families where multiple generations have not had a job....High risk behaviours such as alcohol misuse, early teen sex and drug and solvent abuse are strongly interrelated.”

Sinn Fein on.....

A Plan for Equality for Children and Youth

“It is equally crucial that funding and policy-making for children receives a high priority in the Executive and Assembly, and includes a mechanism to have children’s and young people’s views heard and taken into account. As we move forward it is crucial that we keep the rights and needs of children centre stage and ensure that all our children have the present and the future they deserve.”

Ulster Unionists on.....

Children

“Ulster Unionists value and respect the potential of every child and young person. We believe in creating the right environment and real opportunities that will allow them to become confident young adults. There is no limit to what Northern Ireland can achieve if every child gets the best possible start in life.

SDLP on.....**Quality Education for all**

“...promote an awareness of social responsibility, participation and the beneficial use of leisure time among young people.”

Arts & Leisure Opportunities

“Involve young people in regeneration of their own areas by developing relevant cultural schemes and strategically harmonise development of the arts and development of community relations.”

Shared Society

“Co-ordinate cross-community activity for the young, providing opportunities for integration and cooperation between schools, community groups, youth clubs and amateur sport teams.”

Alliance on.....**Children**

Alliance would address the under-funding in support for children's and young persons' services relative to the rest of the UK. This includes support for the voluntary and community sector, and implementation of programmes such as Sure-Start.

Overview of findings

The findings contained in this manifesto are reflective of opinion held by young people in the Western Investing for Health area around a number of important issues. Findings reflect mainly the thoughts of those young people aged 15. Three hundred and thirty-seven young people completed questionnaires and a further 54 young people tested the findings in follow-up 'Test Group' sessions.

The opinion of the 'Test groups', by and large mirror the findings from the questionnaire but there are differences of opinion on some of the issues raised,

sometimes significant differences. In this manifesto we have provided a summary of both questionnaire findings and findings from the Test Groups.

For example, most young people agree that sex education should begin by 1st Year although there are clearly differences of opinion around the availability of condoms in youth clubs. There is unanimous support for continued work to support the building of relationships between Catholics and Protestants but support from government to help those

from overseas coming to settle in Northern Ireland does not receive significant support. There is a strong degree of support for the use of CCTV but the credibility of policing among young people is largely missing. There is unanimous support for the non-payment of tax by working students yet there is very mixed opinion on whether the minimum wage for young people is fair.

This variety of opinion is as welcoming as it is interesting and stimulating. This has been helpful in determining Action Points which now form the key planks of this Youth Manifesto.

Many of the points raised will not necessarily involve resource implications although of course some clearly will. The building of new facilities or making existing buildings available and more accessible to young people has potential financial implications but involvement of young people in the design and planning of services requires more an attitudinal shift than additional sums of money.

The findings contain some surprises and are certain to evoke opinions and stimulate further debate on a range of topics.

I now commend this manifesto to the Ministers and all politicians within the Stormont Government and to those within positions to influence service provision for young people in the Western Area and request that they give due consideration to the measures contained and consider how they can begin to address these within existing and planned future provision affecting young people in the West.

Fergal Barr
October 2008

Summary of findings from questionnaires

Issues	Findings
Sexual health, underage sex and teenage pregnancy	Almost two-thirds believe that condoms should be available in youth clubs whilst at least two-thirds of young people feel that Sex Education should begin by 1st year. Most agree there should be an allocated time in the school timetable to speak to someone about sexual health issues.
Community Relations	There is continued endorsement for government efforts to fund work that builds relationships between Catholics and Protestants and a continuing desire among the majority of young people to get to know others from other religious backgrounds and other countries. However, there is less support for government efforts in helping those from overseas to settle here.
Drink and Drugs	Seven out of every ten young people believe the lowering of age limits in bars and clubs will discourage street drinking although only half of young people believe greater awareness of harmful consequences will reduce drug-taking.
Safety	At least two-thirds of young people feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark and support the use of CCTV, 66% agreed that they feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark – less than one third feel there is enough protection from the police on the streets.

Issues

Voice of young people

Findings

Opinion was split as to whether or not young people have the opportunity to talk to their local council although the vast majority felt their opinions were not respected by those in power and slightly less than two-thirds felt that young people do not get appreciated for the things they do for their local community.

Jobs for young people

Only 1 in 3 agreed the minimum wage was fair whilst the vast majority believe that working students should not have to pay taxes and more than two-thirds believe there should be more opportunities for vocational training.

Facilities

The vast majority of young people believe there is not enough facilities for young people, they would use them if there were more and their views should be taken on board when developing facilities.

Someone to talk to

At least six out of every ten young people feel they have someone they can talk to about difficulties they are having with families, romantic relationships and friends but just over half would like more opportunities to speak to someone when having problems.

Results of findings from Test Groups

Issues	Findings
Sexual health, underage sex and teenage pregnancy	There was broad agreement with 85.1% of those in agreement that sex education should begin by first year although there was much less agreement on the availability of condoms in youth clubs with 26% agreeing, 26% disagreeing and almost 43% undecided. There was endorsement for allocated times in school for young people having someone to talk to with 57.35% agreeing and only 12.95% disagreeing – 24.05% were undecided.
Community Relations	Almost 80% of those quizzed continue to support government efforts to build relationships between Catholics and Protestants but there is even less support (14.8% as compared with the 59% sampled in the questionnaire) for government efforts in helping those from overseas to settle here. Seventy-eight percent disagreed with the idea of government help.
Drink and Drugs	Seventy-two percent of young people agreed that the lowering of age limits for bars and clubs will help discourage street drinking. Equally the same number, disagreed that greater awareness of harmful consequences will reduce drug-taking – the majority view being that young people are already aware of the dangers. The view that if there were more things to do young people would be less inclined to take drink and drugs was reinforced with 74% (as compared with 70% in questionnaire) in agreement.
Safety	Just under two-thirds of young people feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark and support for the use of CCTV is also constant with 76% agreeing that it is a good measure for tackling crime. Again the perception of policing and credibility among young people is in question with 81.40% disagreeing that there is enough protection from them on the streets.

Issues	Findings
Voice of young people	<p>Whilst opinion was split among young people who completed the questionnaires as to whether or not young people have the opportunity to talk to their local council, the consensus among our group of respondents testing these results was clear with almost 76% disagreeing and an even higher figure of 91.5% believing that their opinions were not respected by those in power. Interestingly and perhaps surprisingly only 40.7% felt that young people did not get appreciated for the things they do for their local community, although 48.1% were undecided.</p>
Jobs for young people	<p>Only 14.8% agreed the minimum wage was fair which is significantly less than the figure for our questionnaire, i.e., 1 in 3; 55.5% disagreed that the minimum wage was fair. Significantly 27.75% were undecided. Ninety-two percent of respondents agreed working students should not have to pay taxes and 74% believe there should be more opportunities for vocational training – both these figures lend support to those contained in our questionnaire – 83% and 72% respectively.</p>
Facilities	<p>The views expressed in the questionnaire were echoed by our group of respondents with 90.65% in favour of greater involvement in planning and design processes, 96.2% agreeing that there are not enough facilities and 74% would use them if there more of them.</p>
Someone to talk to	<p>In our Test groups 85% felt they had someone they could talk with about difficulties in their family whilst 81.4% felt they had someone they could talk to about difficulties with friends - significantly higher than the six out of every ten in our questionnaire findings. Incredibly 86.95% were undecided if they had someone to talk to about romantic relationships.</p>

Action Points proposals for change

Issues	Action Points
Sexual health, underage sex and teenage pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss further the availability of and accessibility of condoms for young people • Implement sex education for young people by year 8 • Examine current availability of staff i.e., allocated time in schools when pupils can speak with someone about related issues when necessary
Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote and fund community relations/programmes between Catholics and Protestants • Provide greater opportunities for young people to meet with their peers from other countries • Continue to support those from overseas coming to settle in Northern Ireland but also carry out further examination with young regarding their thoughts, views and attitudes regarding this
Drink and Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate the merits of lowering the age limit for young people to get into bars in order to minimise street drinking • Discuss existing levels of provision for young people with a view to increasing services as alternatives to drink and drug related behaviour • Examine alternatives to drink and drug taking behaviour • Examine the effectiveness of existing information campaigns designed to deter young people from drink and drug related behaviour with a view to developing possible alternatives
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine further the issue of how safe young people feel on our streets – address fears of young people after dark • Increase visibility of police on the streets at key times • Increase credibility of police among young people - young people believe the police are not doing enough. • Continue with but also engage in further debate among young people around the on-going use of CCTV

Issues	Action Points
Voice of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in further discussion with young people as to how they feel their views and opinions can be heard• Challenge authorities and public bodies (especially councils) in finding more effective ways of engaging young people, i.e., actively seeking out and listening to their opinions• Encourage communities and other bodies to bring greater recognition for the efforts and achievements of young people and the contributions they make to society
Jobs for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider campaigning for working students to not have to pay tax• Increase opportunities for vocational training• Engage further debate on minimum the wage for young people
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the possibility of an increase in facilities and services for young people• Challenge authorities and other public bodies and agencies to develop methods to engage young people in the planning, design and delivery of services and facilities
Someone to talk to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase awareness, availability and accessibility of existing services as well as examining if there are gaps in current provision and acting upon them



Breakdown of detailed findings from questionnaires

manifesto

... and social well-being status of young

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Sexual health, underage sex and teenage pregnancy	<p>69% of young people agreed sex education should begin by 1st year.</p> <p>65% agreed that condoms should be available in youth clubs.</p> <p>64% agreed that there should be an allocated time each week in school where young people can speak to someone about sexual health issues.</p>	<p>DHSSPS</p> <p>OFMDFM</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Education</p> <p>DFP</p>	<p>Community health and personal social services Children and Young People</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>The Youth Service</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>

Reaching consensus or any kind of agreement on issues around sexual health and particularly that with regard to the teaching of sex education is always divisive. Giving the findings in this section there are implications for both health and education departments to consider as well as OFMDFM given its remit for Children and Young People.

Almost 2 out of every 3 young people believe sex education should begin by 1st year and almost the same number agree condoms should be available in youth clubs. Whilst the availability of condoms in youth clubs is unlikely to happen (certainly for the foreseeable future) and would probably be viewed as radical as it would be controversial perhaps the availability of condoms in youth clubs is not so much the issue but rather the availability of condoms itself?

Young people are also saying that sex education is necessary at a young age and this might be the case for a number of different reasons. Whilst we cannot begin to presume why it seems obvious that the issue of sex education is important to young people findings would nonetheless seem to support this. Is there a need for greater uniformity and/or continuity of approach across the education sector with regard to the issue of sex education for young people?

Another issue to consider within the school environment is one of accessibility to and availability of someone that pupils can speak with. The experience of pupils surveyed would seem to suggest that this doesn't exist. What such a service might look like and how it would operate is in itself open to debate not to mention has financial implications. Overall it is apparent that the young people would like more information and guidance on sexual health and for condoms to be free and easily available.

Should make information on sexual health as available as possible.

Female 17, Derry

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Community Relations	<p>76% agreed that the Government needs to continue to fund work that builds relationships between Catholics and Protestants</p> <p>59% agreed that the Government needs to do more to help people from other countries fit into our society</p> <p>70% agreed they would like to get to know people from other religious backgrounds</p> <p>69% would like to get to know people from other countries</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>OFMDFM DFP</p> <p>OFMDFM</p> <p>OFMDFM</p> <p>OFMDFM</p>	<p>Promotion of CR between Schools; The Youth Service</p> <p>Good Relations Additional Resources</p> <p>Good Relations</p> <p>Good Relations</p> <p>Good Relations</p>

Even though young people are now growing up in a relatively peaceful and stable society as compared with generations before them the need for better community relations between Catholics and Protestants is still a view held by young people. This has implications for a number of government departments in terms of policy, practice and resources but reassuringly government has the support of young people with regards to this.

As much as there still exists the need for strong community relations our society is slowly evolving and young people are now presented with new sets of relationships to consider, i.e., increasing numbers of people from overseas coming to settle here. Findings clearly indicate less support for the idea of government offering help for those coming to settle here. Although six out of every ten young people support this it could be interpreted as young people viewing overseas visitors as getting preferential treatment and therefore any practice in this regard should be discouraged. It could also be perhaps a failure to recognise the unique position that overseas nationals find themselves in when they come here but as some respondents made both sectarian and xenophobic comments this would seem to suggest a growing resentment to the idea of overseas nationals settling here. However, there is a significant number of young people keen to meet with those from other countries indicating an openness to such experiences. Ultimately it is a challenge to government to continue to fund community relations programmes at all levels of society from which there is significant support from young people.

I think that bringing people from different religions and backgrounds should be done more often because the town or city will become a better place.

Male 17, Derry

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Drink and Drugs	<p>70% agreed that if the Government lowered the age limit in bars and clubs less people would drink on the streets</p> <p>48% agreed that fewer people would take drugs if they were aware of the harmful consequences</p> <p>70% agreed that if young people had more things to do they wouldn't binge or take drugs</p>	<p>DHSSPS</p> <p>DHSSPS</p> <p>Education</p>	<p>Public Health</p> <p>Community health and personal social services</p> <p>Youth Service</p>

The qualitative responses suggest there are always going to be some young people who will drink and take drugs. More than two-thirds of respondents agreed that a lowering of age limit would reduce on-street drinking and in many respects it would do so by opening up access to bars to young people and this in itself would present a different set of issues. Whilst such a move might alleviate or reduce on-street drinking it may not do anything to tackle the serious drinking culture which exists in our society.

However, many of the young people commented that if they had more things to do there wouldn't be as many people drinking or taking drugs. Exactly the nature of what other things people could be doing to reduce drink and drug taking is unclear and needs further examination but certainly there seems to be a clear message that the majority of young people recognise the need for alternatives to the current drink and drug culture. This in itself sounds like a challenge to relevant agencies and organisations to deliver alternatives (in consultation and partnership with young people) which require imagination, creativity and innovation.

Another clear message that young people seem to suggest is that information campaigns are proving ineffective or certainly not as effective as hoped. It seems that more than 1 in 2 young people would take drugs even if they knew of the harmful consequences – the implication being that young people already know but choose to ignore the risks.

People will do it anyway its how our society is, sex, drugs and rock and role lifestyle.

Male 17, Strabane

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Safety	<p>66% agreed that they feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark</p> <p>28% agreed there is enough protection from the police on our streets</p> <p>69% support the used of CCTV cameras as a measure for tackling crime</p>	<p>DFP</p> <p>DHSSPS</p> <p>DSD</p> <p>DRD</p>	<p>Additional Resources</p> <p>Community health and personal social services</p> <p>Northern Ireland Housing Executive</p> <p>Transport</p>

There is enough police on our streets but they don't do anything to help. You actually never see them on the street. They just cruise about in cars and landys! They never get out.

Female 18, Strabane

There is a common perception in society that the elderly are most at risk from attacks in their neighbourhood. Fear of attacks is greater than reality and facts demonstrate the reality that young people are the group most likely to be at risk. According to our survey, 66% of young people feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark and whilst this is somewhat reassuring more significantly 1 in 3 young people don't feel safe. This constitutes a significant minority and fear from attacks among young people is often a statistic that is ignored in the media.

The comments written by the young people suggest that they would like more street lights and that there should be a more visible police presence. However, there is also a credibility issue for police among young people with just over 1 in 4 believing there is enough protection on the streets. While the young people feel safe they do not believe the police are doing enough.

More than $\frac{2}{3}$ of young people support the use of CCTV and this may come as a surprise to many. There is a perception that young people are more likely to be opposed to the use of CCTV because of it being seen as 'Big Brother'. However, the clear message coming through is that young people approve of its use and in the on-going debate about the use of CCTV then these views and those of other young people must be considered.

The need to address the fears of young peoples after dark, increase the visibility and credibility of police are key issues to be addressed. The continued use of CCTV seems to have the backing of young people.

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Voice of Young People	<p>39% agreed and 41% disagreed that young people have the opportunity to talk to their local council</p> <p>61% agreed that young people do not get appreciated for the things they do for their local community</p> <p>Only 15% agreed that young people's opinions are respected and listened to by people in power</p>	All Departments	Consultations & Equality Impact Assessments

The issue of young people having their voice heard is always one that causes much discussion and probably most agreement among young people. An overwhelming majority of young people feel their voice is not heard and whilst this has been a constant in many surveys over the years our own survey would seem to suggest that there is division over whether or not young people have access to politicians in order to have their voice heard. For example, the difference between those who say they have access to their local councils and those who do not is marginal.

Whilst just over 1/3 of young people feel they can access their council equally the same amount (and a little more) feel that this is not the case – perhaps this indicates that councils are more open than before and/or young people are more willing and able to approach councils or have experience of doing so. There is however still a lot of work in this area as ultimately still only a third of young people feel they can access councils. Comments by young people would seem to support the lack of access to councils.

Young people are also acutely aware that they are being stereotyped and they do not get recognition for the positive things they do for their community. Whilst it could have been anticipated that the actual figure in agreement with this might have been much higher significantly 4 out of 10 young people disagree indicating that some young people do have their efforts recognised by the community. Whilst this in itself creates a foundation from which to build upon, the importance of greater recognition for the efforts and achievements of young people cannot be underestimated.

**They ignore
everything we say.**

Female 15, Fermanagh

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Jobs for Young People	<p>32% agreed and 57.4% disagreed that the minimum wage is fair</p> <p>83% agreed that working students should not have to pay taxes</p> <p>72% agreed that there should be more opportunities for vocational training</p>	<p>DFP</p> <p>DETI</p> <p>DEL</p>	<p>Additional Resources</p> <p>Economic Advice & Research</p> <p>Vocational Training, Employment Services</p>

The minimum wage is wrong, we should all get the same wage for the same job.

Female 15, Omagh

The survey delivers some clear messages around issues affecting jobs for young people. Eight out of ten young people believe that students shouldn't have to pay taxes. On one hand this is entirely understandable – if all respondents go to university this is likely to affect them directly and therefore it's no surprise that the overwhelming majority agree with this. On the other hand, some would argue that everyone else has to pay taxes so why should students be exempt? If it were to be the case it might offer some relief from the borrowing that students take on when taking out student loans.

Seven out of every ten young people agree that there should be more opportunities in vocational training. This may indicate a move away from the emphasis that is put on academic qualifications as much as it suggests that not only do young people want greater variety across a range of disciplines but the need for flexibility is perhaps central to a successful and thriving economic future.

Whilst opinion on student taxes and vocational training is clear, views on the minimum wage is not so clear. One-third of young people believe the minimum wage is fair. It would have not been unexpected had almost the entirety of respondents said that the minimum wage was unfair - the comment on the previous page offers an indication of why this might be so, i.e., pay should be based on the job done rather than age. However, with one-third of respondents believing that the minimum wage is fair there is perhaps a case for exploring in more depth why there are differences in minimum wages for different age groups.

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Facilities	<p>88% agreed that young people's views should be taken on board when developing facilities</p> <p>82% agreed that there are not enough facilities for young people</p> <p>81% agreed if there were more facilities they would use them</p>	<p>DFP</p> <p>Education</p> <p>DCAL</p> <p>DSD</p> <p>DARD</p>	<p>Additional Resources</p> <p>Youth Service</p> <p>Art & Creativity, Sport & Leisure</p> <p>Urban Regeneration</p> <p>Rural Development Strategy</p>

Opinions on facilities probably created the greatest consensus among respondents on all of the issues surveyed. Eight out of ten young people believe that there are not enough facilities and if there were more facilities young people would use them. Almost nine out of ten young people were clear in their opinion that young people's views should be sought when facilities were being developed.

Whilst there is no guarantee that young people would use new facilities (depending on the services offered) there are a number of clear messages here for those involved in the planning, design and delivery of services. Engage with and seek the views of young people! This in itself would nurture and promote ownership and partnership with young people and most likely lead to a more harmonious relationship between young people and adults within communities across the Western Health area.

The comment below certainly seems to suggest that the problems communities face with young people hanging around on the streets would go a long way to being addressed if there were more facilities. The shape and design of facilities is open to debate but the message from young people is clear – more facilities are required and an input into their development is an absolute necessity.

There definitely needs to be more facilities. Problems that happen on the streets caused by young people wouldn't happen if they had somewhere to go.

Female 15, Strabane

Issue	Opinion	Implications for Government Departments	Remit
Someone to talk to	<p>63% agreed they have someone to talk to about any difficulties they are having with their family</p> <p>61% agreed they have someone to talk to about any difficulties with romantic relationships</p> <p>64% agreed that they have people they can talk to about problems in their friendships</p> <p>53% agreed they would like if there were more opportunities to speak to someone when having problems</p>	<p>DFP</p> <p>DHSSPS Education</p>	<p>Additional Resources</p> <p>Mental Health Youth Services</p>

Sometimes we can't talk to family about things. It would be nice for us to talk to people that understand us.

Female 15, Derry

Just over six out of every ten young people believe they have someone to talk with if they're having difficulties with their family, romantic relationships or friendships. Whilst it's reassuring that a significant number of young people believe they have someone to talk to there is still a substantial number of young people without anyone they feel they can talk to. The question to consider with regard to these figures is this – who or what can/do young people turn to in the event that they are unable to confide in anyone? Are they accessing other services? How do they deal with the issues that concern them? If such a substantial number of young people have no-one to confide in then we should be quite concerned about the mental health and well-being of young people.

There is a clear need to increase the percentage of young people who feel they have someone to talk with by increasing awareness, availability and accessibility of existing services as well as considering if there are gaps in current provision.

Process of gathering opinion

Issues and concerns were initially identified using Open Space Methodology and from this a questionnaire was designed and circulated. Three hundred and thirty-seven young people completed questionnaires.

Profile of respondents who completed the questionnaire

- 57% were male and 43% were female. One person identified as Transgender
- The age of respondents varied from 11 to 24, the average age was 15.9 and the most common age was 15. Only 5 respondents were aged 20 or over.

- 43% lived in Derry/Londonderry
- 33% lived in Strabane
- 19% lived in Omagh
- 3% lived in Limavady
- 2% lived in Fermanagh
- 73% lived in a city, town or the outskirts of a city or town
- 24% lived in a country village or a farm or home in the country
- 66% were Catholic
- 24% were Protestant
- 9% were another religion or did not have a religion

A number of gaps in the research was identified, namely the views of young people from the Limavady and Fermanagh areas. Findings were then tested with 54 pupils from Limavady Grammar in Limavady and Devenish College in Enniskillen in order to provide a more reflective view of issues and concerns affecting young people in the WHSSB area.

Young people involved

Sean Barbour

Ian Sheridan

Rebecca Maguire

Katie Brown

Rachel Brennan

Kirsty Mc Adams

Bronagh O' Gorman

Shaunnagh Mc Menamin

Lauren Gallagher

Amy Callghan

Eimear Evans

Niamh Farrell

Ceire Devine

manifesto

This document has been prepared by Fergal Barr from 'Inside Out'

Thanks also go to...

All young people who completed questionnaires

Western Investing for Health for providing funding

Michelle Reid (Northern Ireland Youth Forum and Western Education & Library Board)

Bob McAdams (North Eastern Education & Library Board)

Helen McNamee (Northern Ireland Youth Forum)

Kevin Hughes (Lisburn YMCA)

Ciaran McGinley (REACH Across)

Teachers and pupils at Limavady Grammar and Devenish College

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manifesto



manifesto



manifesto

improving the health and social well-being status of young people

