



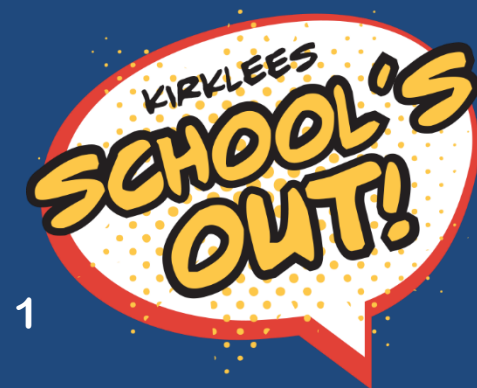
Our Voice @ Schools Out and Summer Holiday Provisions

A snapshot of children and young people's thoughts
wishes and feelings, in a post-pandemic Summer

July-September 2021

You can contact us by email, or on our Socials:
[Facebook](#) [Insta](#) or email ourvoice@kirklees.gov.uk

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Voice and Influence...

So, what's that all about then?

Our Voice is the Children and Young People's Participation Programme for Kirklees.

We work with anyone aged 4-19 (or 25 for people who experience special educational needs and or disabilities [SEND], are a young person leaving care or a young parent), who lives, works, or attends school or college in Kirklees.

Our Aim: **To involve young people in local decision making**

We support children and young people to communicate their thoughts, wishes and feelings to the Senior Managers in our Council, Elected Members, Partner Agencies and to the 'Buyers' (Commissioners) of our services. Our ethos is that children and young people are experts in their own lives. When they share their knowledge and experiences, we can listen and adapt what we offer to meet our community's needs, promote inclusion, and create a climate for co-production.

Why are we doing this project?

We have 'checked in' with children and young people throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic from March 2020 to present. Visiting our Summer provisions to speak with children and young people will enable us to continue this conversation. It creates a rich picture of the experiences of a young person's life, in Kirklees. It will also provide some young people's feedback about our activity programmes and youth offer and develop relationships between Our Voice and Community Providers.

We are a restorative service. We believe we should 'work with young people, rather than doing to them'. We value young people's contributions and our work is underpinned by Article 12 of the UNRC-That children have the right to express their thoughts, wishes and feelings and for these to be taken seriously. We know that by involving children and young people in decisions, it helps them develop skills to become analytical and active members of our community.

Find out what we do here: [Our Voice Web Page](#)

What did we do?

We visited a total of 30 summer provisions. A full list of those we visited is available on page 3.

Some providers offered activities on multiple sites, so we visited the same community provider in different locations. Some visits were repeated to sessions with good attendance and varied young people. Where possible, visits were prearranged with the group facilitators. However, some were 'drop in's'.

The Our Voice Team explained to the children and young people attending the provisions, their role within Kirklees Council *"We listen to young people and pass key messages back to the people who make decisions, so your voice is included. We'd like to ask you about your Summer, how has it been so far?"*

All conversations were organic and young person led. They focussed on what the summer had been like, but they usually included discussions about the relaxation of restrictions, mood and feelings, the 'Schools Out' (Holiday Activity Fund) activities and the food offer. Therefore, this information has been collected and analysed.

We estimate we spoke with around 460 children and young people.

We didn't take any formal monitoring information from the children and young people we spoke with, as this was recorded by the 'Schools Out' app. Our focus was on experience and voice. Some young people voluntarily shared their ages, schools, and areas where they lived. We have anonymised all information as part of this summary.

Most of the sessions we visited were with the 8-12 age group, although some sessions had allowed younger children to join in, therefore the youngest children we spoke with were 6 years old (parent/carers had remained at the session).

Most of the providers we spoke with explained attendance for the 13-16 sessions had been lower than the junior groups. Therefore, we only managed to speak with 35 teenagers in School's Out Provisions. The oldest young people we spoke with were 17. Between visits to Schools Out sessions, we also engaged with young people in our parks and open spaces. Therefore, we managed to speak with 52 teenagers during Summer 2021. Some of these young people had chosen not to access the 'Schools Out' programme and offered some reasons why. This feedback has also been included.

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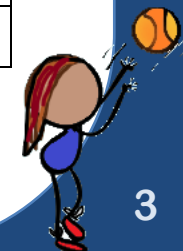
Seeing so many community organisations and providers deliver the ‘Schools Out’ programme has been AMAZING.

To be honest, it’s made everyone feel warm and fuzzy 😊

The children, young people and their families often knew the members of staff and were familiar with the venues and providers. The benefits of being connected with the community and having meaningful and established relationships was evident. Here are the provisions we visited. We would have loved to have visited them all, but alas, we are a tiny team!

Enabling Youth	Project Communities*	empowER
Chickenly Community Centre	Ellysium	Batley Bulldogs
Left Jab Boxing Club	EFGS Out of School Club	AVL Fitness
Rawthorpe Amateur Boxing Club	CricEAT	20:20 Foundation
Fearless People	Huddersfield Town Foundation*	Outreach sessions at:
Howden Clough Community Centre	Kixx	Greenhead Park
Time Step	Ultimate Sport	Mirfield Skate Park
Dance for Everyone	Kumon Yall	Cowlersly
Youth Development Player	Junior Jam	Crow Nest Park
Endorphins	Game Changerz	Ravensknowle Park

*These session visits also included the groups for children who experience SEND and may not have been funded via the Holiday Activity Fund.



Summer 2021: The Good Stuff

"I'm going to London next week. It's a bit of a holiday, but it's mainly to see my family. I've not seen them for over 2 years"

"I'm really excited to be going to high school, it's a big change"

"I'd normally spend the whole of my summer in Pakistan. Last year I spent the whole summer in my bedroom. This year I joined a girl's football club and made lots of friends (points to group of girls around). Next year I hope I can go back to Pakistan"

"Yeah it's brilliant. Back at school, back out in the park. Just want to be able to get on now, no more burst bubbles..."

"I'm going to Butlins on Monday. We are all going, my parents, brothers and sisters and some of my aunts and cousins..."

"I'm off camping with my mates for 3 days, can't wait" (part of the Summer Play Camp Scheme)

"It's just been amazing. Being out again"

"I wish 'Schools Out' didn't have to end. I'd love to come to these activities on weekends too. I've been here all summer"

"Go to the activities on the rec?
No, we're not going...
Why?"

Just want to chill in town with my mates, not do sport"

"No, we aren't going on holiday, so this (School's Out) is great"

"It's been so great this summer. The best thing is that I'm out playing with all my friends"



"I've finally got out, away from my parents and my annoying little brother. Don't get me wrong, they are great, but it's just really nice to be with my mates"

"I meet my mates here in the park, then we get the bus to town. Still wear a mask, but like to hang around the shops and get food"

"If I'd not been here, I would have been so bored. I've no brothers or sisters and live a fair way from my friends. I've met new people here"

"Looking forward to going back to school? Noooooooooooooo!
I don't want Schools Out to end"

Summer 2021: a time for reconnecting

Throughout the pandemic, our conversations with children and young people told us, that relationships and being close to others, was the thing that was most important and most missed. What we have learned this summer, is that families are starting to travel, venture out and that children are once again playing together, partying and visiting each other's homes.

Relationships between the providers and children and young people are key

"I come here because of the staff, I'd visit any of their clubs, I know they will be great"

"They're alright, you know. The guys that run this. That's why we come..."

Many of the young people who had attended a Schools Out provision, or returned to sessions, stated this was because of the relationships they had built with the facilitators and staff. The older young people particularly, spoke about the provision staff being 'fun', 'alright'. Some providers were already known to the young people because they already delivered activities in the area. This increased confidence for some young people to attend.

"I've been here most days, the team that run the sessions are really great. We can choose the things we enjoy, and they help us play..."

The young people spoke most positively about providers who were flexible in letting them pick and choose activities and involved the young people in deciding the session's structure. We observed lots of great examples of how this could happen; these included picture cards of activities on boards, for the young people to 'build' the session, to 'circuit/station' type approaches where young people could move freely between activities of interest. Flexible and adaptable delivery styles were positively recognised and received by the young people.

Outdoor sessions where young people could 'just turn up' on the day were also noted to be popular.

Summer Projects supported friendships and promoted cohesion

"We're not from round here, we've come to my Dad's and so we've come along to this one"

Allowing children and young people to book on sessions in different localities appeared to have lots of positives. These included:

- Blended families being able to access provisions local to both their parents/carers homes.
- Families being able to choose activity based on interest, rather than what was available locally.
- Having access to provision on days where there wasn't any local provision offered.
- Cohesion. Young people forging friendships with others from different areas and with varying experiences.
- Young people could still access provision in the final weeks when local sessions may have ended (the offer was more condensed in week five and six).

"I didn't know anyone before I came here today.

I've made some new friends"

"I'm not alone! I recognised some of the people from Mosque"



Feeling healthy, being outside, moving and a grooving!

Children and young people throughout the pandemic spoke about the challenges of finding things to do outdoors, particularly if they were unable to play independently due to their age. The Schools Out programme has created safe play opportunities.

Schools Out had increased the amount of physical activity children and young people were undertaking

“If I hadn’t been here today, I’d have been at home, playing on my xbox”

What would children and young people would have done, if they had not attended ‘Schools Out?’ The most common answer was that they would have been at home, playing on a games console, devices or sitting in their bedroom. Approximately a quarter of the young people we spoke with said they would play in their garden or on the street with friends.

“I like that I’ve done something fun in the morning. It’s like I’ve been up and out. I get to enjoy my day”

During the pandemic, the School Survey completed by Public Health and Our Voice Outreach had noted that the changes to routine and structure had been a challenge for some young people.

The ‘Schools Out’ sessions had offered structure and routine. Although children and young people described being ‘ready for a break’, there was a sense that morning sessions were helpful in motivating families to be up, out and active. The 10-2 slot was preferred as it was not a too early start and left plenty of the day to do other things. It also afforded time to eat breakfast (if young people had access to it) before starting.

Children also spoke excitedly about working with a variety of coaches, from different sports disciplines and the new experiences and opportunities this afforded them.

“I’d never played cricket until yesterday. I liked it so much, I’ve come back today”

“I really wanted to try a dance class. My Mum hasn’t ever had the spare money to pay for one”

“Archery has been good. I’d not done it before, and I’ve spent all my time here, I’m good at it too”

“This cricket ground is lovely. Didn’t even know it was here.”

Not only did young people meet new coaches and friends, but they were also introduced to buildings and resources within their community, which they might not have known about or previously accessed. It was noted sites with a building (club house, school site, community centre) were preferred by young people. They offered shelter, kitchens and toilets!



Feeding hungry tummies; thoughts about food

As a key component to Schools Out, was the provision of lunch, young people often discussed the food on offer. Although the food was appreciated, there were suggestions on how to improve this in any future programmes.



“I’ve never met so many vegan young people [laughs] once they spotted the crisps” (session provider)

It was noted very quickly that the grab bags catering for people with vegan diets contained crisps, as opposed to carrots. The crisps became most popular. Therefore, considering offering crisps or baked type snacks for all, was a common theme.

“You hear about poverty, but when you see a child bringing tinfoil, to put food in, to take home for their parent, it really hits you. The family are working; but still struggling” (session provider)

Providers shared stories of some children arriving hungry and asking to take spare food home to support their families.

“Can you run around ok after eating 3 egg sandwiches?” (V&I Worker)

“I need to eat now, or I will be hungry later” (young person)

“Did I eat breakfast today, nah...”

At least two thirds of the children that we spoke with across all sessions, had not eaten breakfast before arriving that morning. They told us that by lunch, they were often hungry. Therefore, looking at options to offer breakfast too within a holiday programme would be beneficial.

“The foods been great. My favourite so far was today’s Mac and Cheese”

Providers who had sourced or produced their own food offer, generally received more positive feedback, than the ‘grab bags’. This was because there was more variety and often an offer of a hot meal. There also appeared more control over quantities and reduced waste, for the groups who catered themselves. It should be highlighted connections between providers and local foodbanks/ services and groups ensured spare food was distributed within the community.

“The foods been ok, but I’ve been to every session here [4 weeks] and because it’s the same every day, it’s been a bit boring”

A lack of variety was the main feedback from young people regarding the ‘grab bags’ offered. As some young people attended sessions daily, they ate the same lunch for 4-6 weeks of the school holidays. Flap jacks were frequently mentioned as the least favourite part of the food offer and lots of young people said they wouldn’t choose to eat them again.

Building on this learning: Speaking to these young people was great, but what next?

Our Voice: "What will you do next week, when this activity ends?"

Young Person: "Wait-this ends next week!?! [looks sad] I don't actually know; I've been here everyday"

A re-occurring theme raised by young people, was "How can provision be sustained when the Summer Programme ends?"

Some young people attended sessions local to them, on a daily basis. This was particularly noted in the open access models, where they could just turn up and join in, providing there was space. Within these activities, the young people had forged strong relationships with the providers and each other. There was a sense of sadness that this would 'just end' when the 'Schools Out' summer programme concluded, in the final weeks of the holidays. All children who we spoke who, who were attending a summer programme session, stated they would continue to attend if activities remained available at weekends/out of school hours. Therefore, it was evident there is the desire to attend and participate in localised youth provision.

The benefits of local providers running sessions in accessible places, was evident. This offers useful learning when looking at possible models of youth provision.

- Some activities already had established groups, which were developing as new young people attended.
- Existing relationships between providers and young people were seen to assist inclusion and support managing behaviour.
- Providers had localised knowledge and knew the community well. The activity offer could be adapted to this.
- Providers were familiar to and trusted by the families of local children and young people.
- There, at times were pre-existing relationships, as some providers also taught in local schools, groups, or Mosques/Churches. This again could enhance trust, encourage children to participate and created connections within communities. As providers belong to the communities, there is pride and investment in the activities offered.
- Some established groups have already tried and tested their activity offer, increasing the likelihood of a successful programme.
- As some providers are already running projects in the community, they could continue with the relationship building after the summer programme ended.

Frequently raised feedback from the Providers & Young People

What we heard	Possible solutions*
Booking on via the app was a challenge for some people	Have allocated workers to assist with signing up, in a variety of service areas/locations.
Children being booked onto multiple sessions at the same time.	Ensure the app/web sign-up, only allows for one activity to be booked per child/young person, per day.
Children being booked on to sessions, but not attending.	Have a 'wait list' facility, so that should there be 'no shows', the provider can access this and call parents/young people to prevent sessions running under capacity.
Several similar provisions running at the same time, in the same area.	Mapping and structuring future programmes so that sessions run alternate days or either AM/PM sessions, so children could access both.
Funding arriving close to the date of programme delivery.	Ensure that for the providers who need to purchase resources, funding arrives 2 weeks prior to sessions commencing, to prepare and plan.
Provision for teens being under accessed	Advertise earlier, have a programme of marketing with outreach workers to speak directly with young people about the offer. Offer more evening activities for senior sessions. Widen the offer: " <i>sport is great, but we really like places to chill, use the wifi and eat</i> ".
How do we sustain provision now groups established?	Can work continue to link Providers with grants or funding streams to continue delivery? Are there existing activities to sign-post children and young people to?
We want to be inclusive; we don't always know how...	Some of the providers spoke about understanding how to adapt activities to make them more inclusive for young people who experience SEND/SEMH. There was an acknowledgement that training, and support could help develop colleague's confidence and increase participation, if resource was dedicated to this.

*These themes will have been raised through the Family and Provider feedback, collected by the Holiday Activity Fund planning team. Overall, everyone we spoke with was impressed by the ambitious and varied offer and understood the challenges of delivering the programme during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Summary and Recommendations

To summarise, the discussions held with the young people attending 'Schools Out' provisions and during summer outreach were overall positive.

For the children and young people attending an organised provision the things they enjoyed were:

- Connecting with friends, while having fun.
- Having the support of the activity providers, to offer new opportunities, keep the session 'safe' and structure the play.
- Being able to locally access a free provision.
- Being offered food.
- The variety of activities on offer and quality of skills brought by the providers.

This was echoed by the young people we met on outreach, who first and foremost were enjoying the freedom of being 'out and about' and socialising with friends. The main reasons given as to why they didn't want to access a 'Schools Out' provision were:

- The activity offer being too narrow, and sports focussed.
- Being unaware of what was available and where to go.



Therefore, based on young people's voice...

Children and young people appeared cheerful and relaxed when we spoke with them this summer.

Continuing outreach into Autumn and Winter would provide us with a continued 'check in' as the academic year resumes, activity offer changes and we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Communicating this feedback and young people's voice to our Senior Leaders, Decision Makers and Commissioners can help us embed young people's ideas within any future decisions, programmes, or youth offer. Young people's ideas and suggestions can actively shape our services and communities.



8-12's participating in a dance class in North Kirklees



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