

Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help Services - Premises Consultation with young people

The consultation was carried out with 64 young people in four groups:

- Youth Council
- Burnley Zone
- The Zone Wyre
- The Zone South Ribble

The questions were adapted from the parent consultation. It was not possible to get through all the questions with all the groups. The varied nature of the groups and their understanding of the issues affected the amount of time it took to get through the session. For some young people it became too long. There was a difference in responses between those young people where the centres were remaining open and those where they are closing. Another point that came up was querying why the politicians hadn't come out to conduct the consultation.

The young people clearly value their centres and they offer them a lot of services. There is some variation in what is on offer with some appearing to have a largely recreational offer and some offering more specific services and activities. This is mirrored in how young people use them. For some it is a valued space for leisure and recreation, others use centres for specific groups, i.e. girl's groups, boy's group, LGBT, support for special need young people, contraception. The importance of the relationship with youth workers came across from young people.

Young people value the centres for the safe environment they offer and for the opportunities they provide to try new things and to learn.

There were things young people wanted to happen in the centre, the most frequently mentioned being:

- More money
- Trips
- Support for unemployed young people, disabled young people
- Life skills

Good cleaners were of concern to young people in discussion and there was an awareness of the state of the buildings and the cleanliness of them. There was a great deal of upset and in some cases anger over the closure of the buildings, particularly and unsurprisingly in those buildings proposed for closure. For some it felt like a betrayal of young people. They have an attachment to their own building and although they are aware of other initiatives, i.e. Onside Youth Zones, they singled them out for criticism for being sport focused.

Where young people attend centres for very specific reasons they were concerned they would not find alternative buildings nearby that had the same offer. In Chorley young people felt that those with an interest in the arts would lose out. Chorley was also described as a very 'hostile environment'.

They were concerned over the lack of transport to alternatives, the cost of travel and were seemingly unaware of the alternatives. Where buildings were staying open they felt they might be affected by more people using the centres but thought that could be positive as it may lead to more resources being available.

Lack of a trusted adult to talk to was a common theme and worries about what they would do if they had problems. They felt very strongly young people are being targeted, especially the more vulnerable and expressed a view it was a false economy. Some of the consequences they identified are:

- Fewer facilities and opportunities for SEND young people
- Increase in crime and lack of support for young offenders
- Lack of safety
- Lack of support for them as young people
- People will lose their jobs

Their message to the Leader of the Council was to think again. Young people contribute to society but now feel abandoned. They ask the Leader to put themselves in young people's shoes and see the closures as impacting on their development leading to generational damage. A question that came up is 'where is the money going?'

Their ideas on how the council could save money:

- Cut how many nights it is open/join other councillors/spend less money on other things
- More equal split of how money is saved
- Invest money to raise money
- Combine with other councils and combine services
- Stop tax evasion
- Let young people fundraise
- Stop building pointless buildings.

Summary:

- Young people value the offer available and the relationship they have with youth workers
- They are concerned about support being removed
- Lack of affordable transport is an issue
- They want clean facilities
- They don't seem aware of alternatives
- Lack of specific groups, i.e. SEND, LGBT, gender specific groups concerns them
- Generational damage was a theme
- There is a lack of understanding of the council's position, priorities and money available