

MARCH 2022



Point Of View

KINGTON YOUTH CONSULTATION

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING
RURAL MEDIA'S IN-DEPTH CONSULTATION
WITH 12-25 YEAR OLDS IN KINGTON,
HEREFORDSHIRE

Prepared and written by Toni Cook, Lauren Rogers
Rural Media Point of View

Commissioned by Open Arms Kington

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The voices and views of rural young people are too often unheard, and the contributions that young people can - and want to - make in shaping and supporting the places they live too often overlooked.

The ambition of Open Arms Kington (OAK) is to put young people at the heart of creating a new community hub with youth provision. The first step to developing such a space, from its ethos and environment to activity and sustainability, is significantly supported by reaching out to young people and listening.

It has been a privilege to connect with more than 100 young people who live in and near Kington over the past four months and to explore with them their experiences, passions, frustrations and hopes for the future. This includes strong views on what a dedicated youth space might look like and offer for all young people to be truly welcome there.

The online survey and in-depth conversations have revealed so much about the ways in which young people are poised to play an active role in the development of Kington, above and beyond OAK's planned provision. But it also uncovered a narrative from some young people who lack enthusiasm about such provision that is fuelled by a fear that it will somehow be ruined or spoiled by others.

There is a clear call from young people with these findings that any new hub must be safe and welcoming - whether that is as a young LGBTQ+ person, as an autistic young person wanting a space where they are welcomed and not laughed at, a space safe from drug use and violence or just a safe space where young people can be themselves, can be with friends, and can find connection.

In this report you will hear the voices of young people we've consulted as they candidly share their feelings about life in a rural town, and talk specifically about the impact that a dedicated youth space would have on their lives.

We conclude with 12 recommendations that would support both the ambitions and hopes of young people and the long term plans of OAK. From youth-led pop-up cultural activity to relationship building with service providers, we believe taking these next steps will lay the foundations for a successful and sustainable community space for all.

- Toni Cook, Creative Producer
- Lauren Rogers, Project Manager
Rural Media, Point of View

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BACKGROUND

It has to feel like it's explicitly for everyone. People like us - we needed this.

In 2021 Open Arms Kington (OAK) commissioned Rural Media's Point of View (P.O.V.) youth engagement and voice programme to consult with young people, aged between 12 and 25, who live in and around the Herefordshire market town of Kington. By asking young people to share their experiences, views and ambitions, the commission sought to explore how they might directly shape the development and realisation of OAK's proposal to create a new community space for all.

This was a unique opportunity to learn with and about young people in and near Kington, and was designed to generate rich qualitative and quantitative findings with young people from all walks of life, on a range of knowledge, attitudes and subject matters including, but not exclusively, access to opportunities, unmet needs, challenges and constraints of rural living, what a dedicated space or place for local young people might 'look like' and offer, and what difference would a dedicated space and/or a dedicated youth worker make to their lives.

OAK's ambition to place young people at the heart of its community space is wholly aligned with Rural Media's wider P.O.V. programme which was established in 2019/20 because the charity recognised the need to support more rural young people to use their voices to influence change.

Between 2012 and 2016 over 600 youth centres and nearly 139,000 youth service sites across the UK closed and, consequently, policy and services that critically affect young people in rural areas increasingly lack a full picture of their needs or how they contribute to their communities and wider society.



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One of the key drivers of the P.O.V. programme, supported by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, in documenting young rural voices is to address any generation gap that exists across rural communities. P.O.V. - and by extension the OAK commission - aims to contribute to the strengthening of local democracy and debate so that local service development can be better informed and rural young people feel less alienated from their communities. We believe it is vital that such understanding be stimulated by listening to then sharing the points of view of rural young people to promote a stronger sense of shared community, pride of place and social cohesion.

For this commission P.O.V. consulted more than 100 young people between December 2021 and March 2022, using the following engagement methods:

- Anonymous online survey hosted by SurveyMonkey
- In depth conversations held via Zoom and over the phone
- In person conversations via street outreach supported by Kington Police.

The opportunity to participate was widely promoted, supported by OAK directors, through flyers, social media and word of mouth. P.O.V. reached out to a range of local stakeholders from retailers and sports clubs to local police and schools. Rural Media also produced a short film with young people who had participated in the consultation to capture their views and voices.

Online survey

The online survey was live on SurveyMonkey from 12th January 2022 to 7th March 2022. A total of 73 young people participated in the survey, with a 100% completion rate. The average time spent completing the survey was 18 minutes. While responses were anonymous, a total of 15 participants emailed the P.O.V. team after taking part in order to be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 voucher.

In depth conversations

Between December 2021 and March 2022, 21 young people aged between 12 and 24 took part in-depth conversations predominantly via Zoom. The conversations were led by P.O.V. Creative Producer Toni Cook.

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The conversations were, on average, an hour long. Six participants took part in follow-up calls to explore individual experiences and specific themes in more detail.

For all participants under the age of 18, parental consent was sought and two adults were involved as per Rural Media Safeguarding policy.

In person conversations supported by Kington Police

On the evening of 2nd March 2022, P.O.V. was supported by West Mercia Police officers PC Dean Wall and PC Felix Rawlinson to consult young people who were out and about at Kington's Recreation Ground and Place des Marines. A total of nine young people, aged 13 to 24, took part in these on-street conversations, which used questions from the online survey as conversation prompts.

A note on 'hard to reach' young people

Throughout the consultation period (four months), the P.O.V. team sought to engage a diverse range of young people from all backgrounds, including young people from low income households, and those not in education, employment or training. The 100+ young people who engaged represent a range of socio-economic backgrounds, but it is important that engagement with 'hard to reach' young people is an ongoing and continuous piece of work.

P.O.V. countywide survey

Between September 2020 and March 2021, P.O.V. conducted a Herefordshire-wide youth survey which was completed by more than 650 young people aged 14-25. Headline findings from that survey are peppered throughout this report to provide a county comparison. The full results of the wider survey are available at www.pointofviewrural.com/survey.

Policy context

In the Appendices we have included a number of relevant policy documents and further reports.

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Herefordshire context

Herefordshire has the fourth lowest population density in England, has an older age population profile than both England and Wales (33% higher than the national average) and 16% lower than the national average young people (under 30). There are significant geographic and demographic variables within the county across access to and availability of services, demographic population and deprivation levels. Hereford City has a much younger profile than the county as a whole whereas the less populated areas have relatively higher levels of older people. Herefordshire experiences below average crime rates, but above average barriers to housing and services. In terms of diversity it is predominantly 'white British'.

Next steps

We hope that findings of the P.O.V. youth consultation in Kington, and the recommendations, will be used by OAK to continue the development of a new community space in Kington that is accessible to all. A separate document exploring options for a Youth Advisory Group has also been provided to OAK.

Throughout the report we have included direct quotes from young people who live in and near Kington, and a copy of this report is published on Rural Media's www.pointofviewrural.com website.

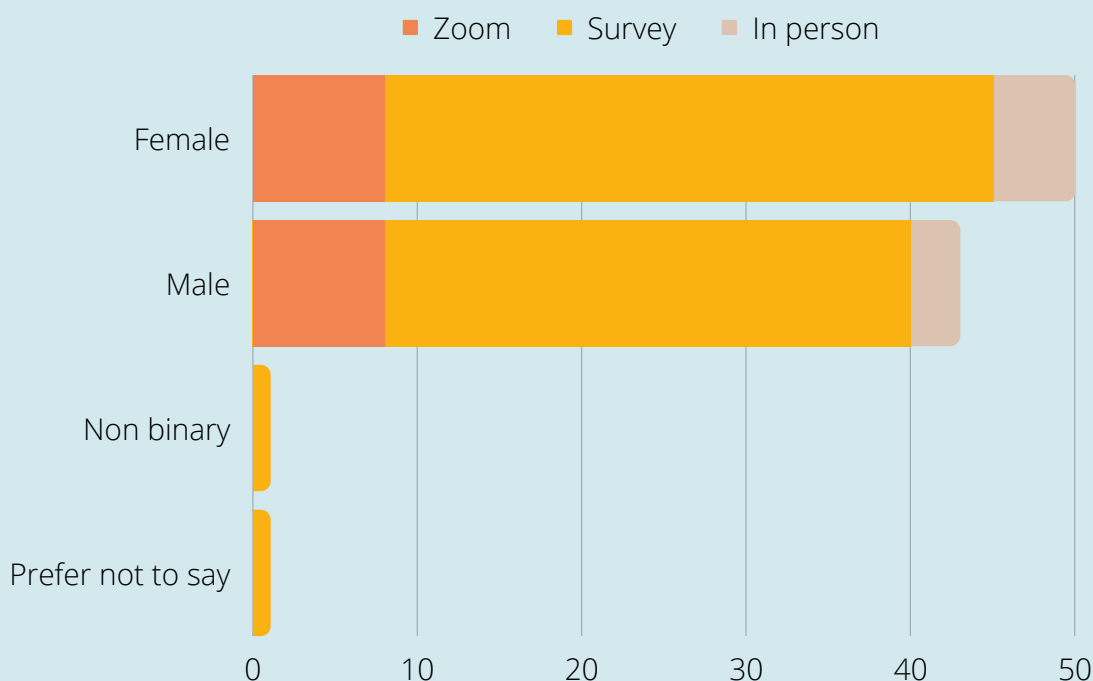
RESPONSES - SUMMARY

“There is nothing to do and nowhere to go”

A total of 103 young people participated in the P.O.V youth consultation between December 2021 and March 2022. This represents approximately 1.4% of the total 2011 population of the Kington Locality (7,596).

At the time of the 2011 Census there were 698 individuals aged between 15 and 24 years living in Kington Locality, and 1,152 residents aged between 0-14 years. While out migration of young people from Herefordshire is widely acknowledged, the 2018 Population of Herefordshire report identifies Kington as “slightly different to the other towns – with a lower proportion of 30-44 year olds but slightly higher 16-29”.

Summary of participants by gender and engagement method:



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We have been careful about drawing conclusions based on a relatively small sample. However the consultation methods sought to generate evidence of the diversity of lived experiences in both Kington urban and rural to help inform OAK's planned provision and other service providers.

Gender

During our analysis we compared results of the online survey by gender to specifically help OAK to identify if gender plays a key role in young people's lived experiences in and near Kington. While we cannot conclude that gender categorically informs the views shared in the survey, we found that:

When asked about what they would most like to change about Kington, 24% of young people who identify as female compared to 15% of young people who identify as male cite drug misuse and safety on the streets.

Themes

The common themes raised by young people throughout the P.O.V. consultation, both in the online survey and in-depth interviews, were:

- Transport/access
- Diversity
- Loneliness/participation
- Friendships/school
- Drug use
- Youth space
- The future/ambitions

These themes are reflected in a short film that we made in March 2022, involving several young people who had participated in the consultation.

[Click here to watch the Kington Youth Consultation film.](#)

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CASE STUDY

YOUNG PERSON, 17, STUDENT, MODERATE
AUTISM, INTERVIEW SUPPORTED BY MUM

“I am unable to do things by myself - the roads are dangerous, you can't walk on the roads, people drive too fast”

This young person moved to the area two years ago and despite Covid has a full timetable of activities outside of college where they are currently studying computing. They are involved with fencing, film making, trampolining, swimming, going to the gym and drama as well as learning to drive. This young person likes the area for dog walking, getting food from The Cattle Shed and the Friday market in Kington.

Living just outside of Kington what they have found most frustrating is the roads, **“I am unable to do things by myself - the roads are dangerous, you can't walk on the roads, people drive too fast”**. Mum adds, **“I can't let him walk or cycle by himself”**.

Our discussions moved onto imagining what a youth hub might be like, what activities would be available and whether this person felt it would be for them. They said: **“I would definitely go. I'd like it if there was drama, youth theatre, acting, computers, gaming, an escape room and a nice cafe where you feel welcome with good food and drink and the opportunity to do work experience there.”** In answer to what would it be like they said: **“A calm environment, relaxing so people would want to go there, young person focused and I think after a couple of visits I'd be able to go by myself”**.

Thinking about lots of young people in the area Mum said: **“Having a welcoming space for young people would bring young people together, to be inspired, become more engaged in the community”**.

The three of us discussed what impact a place like this might have for this young person, their independence and future: **“It would help me develop life skills, somewhere I could go independently and I could become more integrated into my local community, spreading roots, building a life here for myself.”**

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FINDINGS OF IN-DEPTH CONVERSATIONS VIA ZOOM

“What I love about living here is the same as what I hate about living here, I mean, I love that it is in the middle of nowhere and you can walk for five minutes, and you are in the countryside and there is no one else around and then I hate that it is in the middle of nowhere and there is nothing here.”

In this section of the report, we take a closer look at the qualitative data collected through 1:1 interviews.

To gather an in depth understanding of Kington seen from a young person’s perspective, young people known to OAK were asked if they would participate in interviews conducted over Zoom. These young people were either family members of the committee, friend’s children or children’s friends. Not all young people identified wanted to be involved. Further young people were interviewed through contacts of the P.O.V. team and from information shared on Kington Chat Facebook page about the project.

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A total of 21 in-depth interviews were carried out. Some parents participated in the conversations, either as a support to their child or to add additional commentary at the end.

Participants included pupils attending Lady Hawkins School, Hereford Cathedral School, Hereford Sixth Form and Herefordshire and Ludlow College; university students currently studying at Bristol, UWE and Oxford; young people on apprenticeships and the Kickstart employment scheme, as well as young people employed full time and part time.

Many participants had lived in the area all their lives with some having moved in more recent years: ***“I have deep roots here, I am interconnected, it’s comforting but also oppressive.”***

The interviews followed a similar path: getting to know the young person, their interests, their views on the area, good and challenging, discussing friendships, youth activity in the area that they participate in or are aware of, the pandemic/lockdown and a longer discussion exploring their opinions on a youth hub/space and what that might entail. Those who have moved away from Kington reflected back on when they were a teenager but also about what their needs are now. The interviewees now living in cities could compare their experiences: ***“I thought I was a country girl but I am not”, “I am missing the countryside so much”*** and talked about possibilities, ***“You can get a bus at 4am, you don’t have to think about it, you just turn up and a bus is there.”***

In discussing what Kington might need or what they and others would benefit from, young people were candid and realistic. No one asked for an ice rink or an airport, but they considered the views and experiences of others, particularly those who may not be able to access provision due to economics, transport or disability.

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The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was explored through these interviews, particularly with those under 18 who had got used to entertaining themselves on walks and at home, participating in solitary activities, such as drawing or reading, with little or no need to go out and participate with others: ***“I don’t do anything outside of school with my friends.”***

All discussions about what OAK may provide were based on the Oxford Arms building. Some needed encouragement to dream and imagine a new space, and others with no experience of any kind of youth provision really struggled: ***“We have never had anything like this so it’s difficult to imagine.”***

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND:

36% OF YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED MORE AGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS. THE MOST FREQUENTLY REFERENCED CHALLENGE WAS LACK OF THINGS TO DO AND AVAILABLE PLACES/SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The rurality of Kington’s location was a constant presence in all interviews: ***“It’s a lovely, sparsely populated bit of land with only 3,000 people”***

Nearly every young person was positive about the surrounding area, easy access to walks and the countryside. Some had explored much further and wider during lockdown and were very grateful to have been living in Kington throughout that period: ***“I love the beauty and the freedom”***. Yet in the same breath the isolation of the rural town, difficulties of getting anywhere without pre-planning and organisation, and a lack of things to do were mentioned by everyone: ***“There is nothing to do, nowhere to go.”***

The wider community was also discussed with participants: ***“I like the fact that everyone knows everyone, it’s a nice place to live.”*** Interviewees could identify what they found comforting but also restrictive: ***“Every time you go into Kington Co-op you will see at least 15 people you know by name, three teachers, you just know everybody, sometimes you have to hide in the crisp aisle!”***

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The common themes raised by young people who took part in the in-depth interviews were:

- Transport/access
- Loneliness/participation
- Friendship groups/school
- Drugs
- Diversity/attitudes
- Youth space/hub plans

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND:

ALMOST HALF OF RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED AS BEING NEITHER RURAL NOR URBAN, BUT A MIXTURE OF BOTH. HEREFORDSHIRE AS A COUNTY IS CLASSED AS RURAL BUT FOR THOSE LIVING IN THE CITY OR THE MARKET TOWNS HAVING A VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE TO THOSE LIVING IN VILLAGES, HAMLETS AND UNPOPULATED AREAS.

Transport and Access

Most young people talked about the difficulty of getting to places and activities, and the reliance on parents, on lifts and having to pre-organise everything, leading to an 'acceptance' that there are certain things you can't do: ***"You have to drive everywhere, nothing is close at all."*** This affected their thinking in relation to the Oxford Arms: ***"I won't be able to get there/get home."***

Lack of integrated bus services, specifically bus services not lining up with the times of activities elsewhere, was an issue for the majority: ***"You have to match up your desires with transport access."*** This was a major concern for those over 16 who were travelling to Hereford for college, work, appointments for health, mental health and the Job Centre.

Awareness of this lack of access to activity and provision ran through all interviews with a melancholy about not being excited about possibilities in the future as they may be too difficult to participate in.

"I spend most of my time at home because it's difficult to get places as it involves loads and loads of planning. It's very hard to get somewhere and just hang out with my friends. You have to ask loads and loads of people to arrange - there's no spontaneity."

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Loneliness/Participation

A number of young people are involved in a broad range of sports-based activities and extra-curricular activities. This includes school and organised activities including Kington Football Club, cricket, and horse-riding or activities organised independently through friendship groups including mountain biking and golf. Young people talked about belonging and being part of these communities. The football club was described as being a very positive place for young people who participate in football to feel included and supported. Others were happy not participating in this kind of activity: “I accept it, I like being alone.”

Others spoke candidly about being lonely and isolated: “I don’t have an enormous amount of friends” yet have hope that a new dedicated youth space could be a place for shared experiences and connection with others: “It would be good to have somewhere that you could go and make new friends, an opportunity for friendship.”

One young person spoke about when she was younger and there was lots to do, but as she became an older teenager there was nothing to do and a sense of powerlessness: “You just accept these are your life circumstances and you just fill the void where you can.”

Friendship groups/School

Participants told us there are different and distinct groups of young people in the town, broadly categorised as: Young Farmers, Sporty, Creative and Other.

Young people felt there was separation between these groups, and no real overlap. This is a theme mainly identified by those under 18 but older interviewees also talked about ‘them/us’ mentality, suggesting the distinct groups that were mainly based around different activities and interests. Due to the size of Kington some of these issues and differences are amplified. Older young people talked about disagreements between groups and the Oxford Arms having the potential to be a place where these issues could be reduced or rectified.

Some spoke of difficulties with friendships at school, with year groups of around 50-60 young people meaning that they could quickly become isolated from others if there were fallouts.

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Others who had moved to the area said they had found it hard to break into friendship groups that were so established. Others felt misunderstood and not accepted at school.

Most were hopeful that new relationships could be forged in a youth space and that it would also be a positive place to engage in activity with friends.

“You could make new friends, meet new people, interact with other people, work with them and have a shared experience. Not obliged to interact, just be there.”

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND:

ALMOST A QUARTER (24%) OF UNDER 16'S SAID THEY DID NOT HAVE FRIENDS OUTSIDE OF HEREFORDSHIRE. THIS WAS DOUBLE THE AMOUNT REPORTED BY 16-25'S.

36% OF YOUNG PEOPLE SAID THEIR OPPORTUNITIES WERE "WORSE" THAN YOUNG PEOPLE IN LARGER CITIES. A FURTHER 36% SAID THEIR OPPORTUNITIES WERE "DIFFERENT".

Diversity/Attitudes

“Some people are close minded - stuck in the old ways. It's a bit slow paced. I've learned to bite my tongue.”

Our conversations explored a lack of understanding of LGBTQ+ issues and safe space for young people in Kington who identify as LGBTQ+.

One young person said: “Kington can feel close-minded with no acceptance or space for individuals” and told us there was a “lack of tolerance” for people who are different to themselves.

One young person lamented that LGBTQ+ was “never something that was visible or accepted in Kington. It is missing and it could really help some young people.” They expressed hope that the new space would be inclusive and safe for all to attend.

In a follow up conversation to understand some of these issues more fully one young person further articulated this view, saying: “Everyone's sense of community is completely different”. Another interviewee added: “I second that view entirely. That is well thought through - a commonly felt experience where a group's mindset for the group does not respect individuals.”

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Youth Space/Hub

All young people we interviewed embraced the notion of a dedicated youth space or hub. They shared ideas of what a space for young people should look like, and offer in terms of activities, for example film nights and trips.

During all in-depth interviews we discussed what a multi-purpose or shared space might be like. Suggestions have included: a hub for over 18s during the day to access services and support; somewhere other than home to be; and an after school and after college space in the early evenings for younger people aged 13+. All participants said that there is no indoor space that they can currently use for free.

“Kington has quite nice parks, the Rec and in the new park there's a few playground things. It's quite good for meeting friends but there's nowhere indoors to go when the weather is bad or if it's dark.”

When asked what a youth space or youth hub might look or feel like, interviewees said:

- *“warm and welcoming”*
- *“a communal area”*
- *“a chill environment”*
- *“pool table”*
- *“somewhere to go with friends”*
- *“it would be important that it's a space where you have choice”*

A common view among all interviewees was summarised by a young person who said: “It would be massively beneficial to the young people of Kington - a welcoming place where they could just chill, be with friends in safe space, give them something to do.”

A repeated view given by young people was a need for “a place for connection” where someone could “meet up with friends, do something with them, activities to do as a group, have fun, be together.”

Young people had strong views of what a youth worker should be like even though only two of them had experience of a youth worker. “Charismatic” “non-judgemental” “able to listen and support” “fun” and “not a teacher” were themes of the required characteristics. This view was echoed by the online survey respondents.

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When asked why they felt a youth worker would be a good idea, one young person said: “You could have a drop in to talk about stuff freely. If they're [youth worker] not directly involved in your life it would help get the weight off your chest, just to tell someone.”

One young person, as ever, not dreaming too big and expressing hope for a minimum of provision, said about the potential impact of having a youth worker, “It would give you peace of mind knowing that someone is there, even if it's only every Wednesday evening, it would give young people a sense of relief.”

Drugs

Some young people were concerned about issues surrounding drugs and associated violence.

This has made some young people fearful about walking at night. For younger people interviewed, drugs are not seen to be an issue at all. Either they are unaware of it or it is not perceived as something affecting their lives. Most participants acknowledged that they were aware of some drug users in the town. Most young people shared a view that some young people were involved in recreational drug use, including cannabis and alcohol use on the Recreation Ground and in the Black Hut, but there were also heroin and crack cocaine users living in the town. A number of young people referenced ‘the crack flats’ in interviews.

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THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND:

SAFETY CONCERNS RAISED BY YOUNG PEOPLE COUNTYWIDE RANGED FROM DANGEROUS ROADS, TRAFFIC, LACK OF STREET LIGHTS, OTHER PEOPLE, DRUGS, OLDER TEENS, BULLIES, VIOLENCE, AND CRIME.

12% SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE "LESS CRIME, VIOLENCE AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR", COMPARED TO 27% WHO WANTED TO SEE "LESS TRAFFIC/CAR POLLUTION".

Those who knew people with addictions had a different view: ***"Drugs are not the issue, support and help for addicts is an issue."***

Some felt the visibility of the issue was a problem that wasn't being addressed: ***"It is pretty bad to be fair. You see people and they do drugs, see the dealers, you can see who does what, it's become more of an issue."***

This had a direct impact on their feelings of safety: ***"I don't feel as comfortable as I used to. There is a different dynamic, you have to be more aware, more conscious than before. It's not the same as it was when you knew everyone."***

One parent told us that she had concerns for the safety and opportunities to go out for their younger teenagers: ***"The local park becomes a no-go area in our tiny, lovely, safe town due to the activities of a differentiated youth culture."***

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CASE STUDY

YOUNG ADULT, 19, WORKING FULL TIME
LOCALLY

“Kington is a very rural place. I lost my [driving] licence so family members help me out with work lifts. I would have been in quite a situation if they hadn't. Thank God for [Person A] and getting the Sunday bus going.”

In this interview we had an open and honest discussion about the impact of drugs and drug culture in Kington and the surrounding area: “Younger me, at say 15, was frustrated by the lack of activities, there just wasn't much to do, so you would just go out, get drunk, smoke some weed, no other options, just get high.”

Now working full time this person was hopeful about the impact of the OAK plans: “I think it could bring a bit of life to Kington”.

They were honest about the difficulties they had encountered in the town and felt a new youth space/community hub would help: “I think to be honest it could be really good if you bring people together, there were a lot of disagreements in Kington even based on ridiculous things, so maybe a setting like this things could be possibly rectified, more things for people to do, people just stay in, this would be a chance to get people out”.

We discussed access to activities based around the pub or sports, and they felt that if you were either not interested in either or trying to stay away from alcohol then you were limited in what you could do.

The conversation then focused on rural isolation having both a positive and negative impact for young adults. They were keen to say that “there are some amazing walks, it is a beautiful area, the Ridge, the golf course, there's a nice sense of community one way or another,” but that the difficulty of getting to places without either a car or a fuller bus timetable severely curtailed their ability to work, get to appointments and to socialise.

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CASE STUDY

They made suggestions for how the balance between country living and city working/studying could be made easier for young people and adults, saying: “a later bus back from Hereford, 10 or 11pm would be great because you could have a Job Centre meeting, or go out after work, and then you would reap the benefits of living in the beautiful countryside and also reap the rewards of what the city has to offer.”

The quietness of Kington was discussed at length: “You don't see many people about, the streets are just empty, that must affect your mental health”. Overall they were in favour of any new opportunities for young people and young adults in the town and had ideas based on experiences elsewhere: “I think it would appeal, activities to draw you in, pool table live music spaces, I think that would be really cool, there's a place that I go to in Brecon will they have a different band each time, it's called The Muse, maybe the Oxford could be like that with pop up events.”

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RESULTS OF THE ONLINE SURVEY

The anonymous online survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey where young people could easily participate on smartphones and computers. A total of 73 young people, aged between 12 and 25, completed the survey.

45% of respondents identified as male, 52% as female, 1.4% as non-binary and 1.4% prefer not to say. 94.4% of respondents identified as non-disabled, 4% as disabled. 4% identified as neurodiverse.

We have grouped the key research areas as follows:

1. Celebrations and frustrations
2. Views on groups of young people and where young people meet
3. Views on a dedicated youth space and youth workers
4. Hobbies and passions
5. The future

See Appendix 1 for a copy of the survey questions in full.

Celebrations and frustrations

Young people identified a wide range of positives about living in the Kington area and these could be grouped into categories of walking, access to countryside/the views, small community where everyone knows each other and facilities.

The best thing about living in this area?

- *“rural and quiet - easy access to the countryside”*
- *“everything is 10 minutes or less away like the shop or the chip shop”*
- *“there are lots of opportunities for sports”*
- *“a nice quiet area that I can afford”*
- *“the sense of community”*

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND 85% OF YOUNG PEOPLE FELT POSITIVELY ABOUT LIVING IN HEREFORDSHIRE, AND ONLY 8% FELT NEGATIVELY ABOUT LIVING IN HEREFORDSHIRE.

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In the survey, we asked young people to score (on a scale of 1-10) their current state of mental health and happiness. While such a broad scale cannot provide in-depth data on young people's wellbeing, it is designed to elicit a basic insight to help OAK understand how young people currently measure their own wellbeing. Any further or future in-depth consultation that probes wellbeing and mental health with young people should be delivered with professional mental health services on hand for participants.

Happiness

Respondents were asked to score how happy they are on a scale of 1-10. The mean score was 6 out of 10.

Mental health

Respondents were also asked to score their mental health on a scale of 1-10. Again the mean score was six.

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY LOOKED AT COVID AND LOCKDOWN IMPACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH. 35% MORE 16-25 YEAR-OLDS REPORTED MORE SEVERE NEGATIVE AFFECTS TO THEIR MENTAL HEALTH COMPARED TO UNDER 16'S

What are the main frustrations for you living in Kington?

Young people provided many details of their frustrations of living in Kington. These responses can be grouped into the following areas:

- Nothing to do / feelings of being isolated
- Transport
- Drugs, crime and safety
- Pubs as dominant spaces for socialising
- Lack of services and opportunities

“Nothing to do/ not much going on/ nowhere to go/ not enough to do/ Nothing happening/ not much to do/ there's not much to do/ the isolated feeling and the lack of facilities/ the lack of opportunities by which I mean everything/ lonely, I don't have many friends in the area/ it's so remote/ nowhere to go indoors and not many outdoor areas either with anything to do/ having to travel to Hereford to do most things recreational”.

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“Transport/ Lack of public transport and facilities /have to drive to get to see friends/ I can't make a spontaneous plan because I have to ask for lifts/ have to get parents to take me everywhere/ you have to drive everywhere, I don't like walking alone”.

“No restaurants/ you can only eat out in pubs/ nothing to do other than pub/ nothing to do for late teens young adults other than go to the pub/ too many pubs I've run into a lot of drunk people which made me feel uncomfortable”.

“Drugs/ the amount of things that go on, drug dealers/ litter/not enough police presence, feels more and more unsafe as time goes on/ the recent spike in crime/ too many drug addicts/ I don't feel safe walking around by myself/ lots of bad people”.

“Limited or no work opportunities/ no jobs for locals lack of healthcare/ no food delivery/ Internet speed/Potholes closed shops with no signs of a future/ shops closed early full of judgemental old people”.

What would you most like to change about Kington if you had the power?

Young people's answers were thoughtful and well considered. Respondents made an enormous range of suggestions of things they would like to change about Kington and the surrounding area if they had the power.

Their changes can be grouped into four main areas:

- Improved activities and facilities for young people including sport
- Public transport and roads
- Drugs and crime
- The town - shops, services and appearance

“More things to do/more activities for teens/more stuff for young people to do in all weathers/add more things to do such as go Kart track or adventure park/more events on for people my age/add some entertainment/ more youth activities/ good walking routes maps with different levels of ability and clear sign posting/ Somewhere I could go with my friends after school or at weekends like a youth club/ add a youth centre so people mainly teens have somewhere to go and hang out.”

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“Better sport opportunities/ affordable swimming/ better gym/ concrete basketball court/ outdoor exercise machines/ girls netball club”.

“Public transport/ late night public transport/ more affordable public transport/ free bus pass for young people/ improve potholes/stop speeding”.

“Support people with drug and alcohol issues/ the drug situation/Remove drug culture/ safety”.

“Better shops for young people/ better nightlife/ more restaurants/food chains use the empty shops for something useful/ outdoor cafe seating like in Hay eg ice cream shop/ nicer takeaways/ arcade or gaming centre/ Decorate the High Street/ make it look interesting/ better care for old buildings/ make it more posh and tidier/ anything that's being held back by outdated thinking”.

What services or help do you need to access? Do you need to go outside of Kington for these?

Young people said they have to travel to Hereford, Leominster, Brecon or Llandrindod to access a range of services, including mental health; employment opportunities/job centre; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), bank; dentist; and hospital. ***“I have to take time away from school due to travelling to Hereford.”***

THE COUNTYWIDE SURVEY REVEALED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO FELT THEY HAD “WORSE” OPPORTUNITIES THAN THEIR PEERS IN LARGER CITIES CITED LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES AS A CORE REASON.

Some respondents used the question about services to talk about the specific services they would like to see available in Kington. This included:

- *“a local safe space for teens”*
- *“a place for children to go in the day if they need somewhere safe to go”*
- *“a youth centre”*
- *“somewhere to go if struggling with mental health”*

26

What would you like to be able to do in Kington that you can't do at the moment?

When we asked what young people would like to be able to do in Kington that they can't currently do, there was an overwhelming number of answers identifying a youth space that was warm, safe, cheap and fun.

Many of the young people interviewed talked about the lack of food provision for them in Kington. There was mention of no fast food outlets, the poor quality of what was available, the lack of a restaurant and that if they wanted a sit down meal it would have to be in a pub. The lack of Deliveroo or UberEats options was also mentioned. Food was discussed in relation to Hereford and all the options for eating out there but no way of getting back to Kington after 6pm if using public transport - the two were interlinked. Young people were desperate to have a food offer that they would want to eat. The criteria for food was that it was "good" "reasonably priced" or "cheap" "warm" and "good quality". We believe that if OAK can provide a food offer that is suitable for all including vegans and vegetarians it would be very popular, particularly in that after school/after college period and perhaps for specific events.

See Appendix 2 for young people's responses, in full, to the question of what they would like to see in Kington.

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One young person expressed a view that their wishes would not be an option: *“I don't think any of the things I want to do are financially viable by being set up in Kington. A lot of the activities I want to pursue are only feasibly going to be offered in cities or places with access to a larger populace and a similar age demographic.”*

Do you feel you have any influence over decisions made in Kington and the surrounding area?

Of the 70 young people who answered this question only two felt they had any influence over decisions made in Kington. One said: *“a bit but I don't really mind”* and a second said: *“I support the sports clubs so that they will keep running.”*

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND THAT ONLY 8% OF YOUNG PEOPLE FELT THEIR VIEWS OPINIONS AND NEEDS WERE REPRESENTED.

An overwhelming 97% of young people felt they have no influence at all. Their comments included:

- *“Absolutely not, this place is literally made for old people, by old people”*
- *“It's very much governed by the elderly population”*
- *“No but this survey may help”*



28

Views on groups of young people and where young people meet.

We were asked to explore with young people how they perceive and feel about social groups in and near Kington. Confirming the experiences of young people who took part in in-depth interviews, 77% of young people who completed the online survey said that there were distinct and different social groups. They also said that the different groups rarely interact.

How would you describe the different groups?

- *“Some do drugs, some play sport, some just walk around town and some go to the park”*
- *“Farmers, drugs”*
- *“Some groups are sporty some are stay at home people”*
- *“Very different from each other and cold to letting new people in mostly because they all grew up together or the groups are specific like young farmers or the sports people”*
- *“Popular, unpopular, drama seekers and drug users”*
- *“Not well bonded, meaning that it is hard to be in multiple friendship groups as they all have different interests and there’s nothing people really have in common”*

Does it matter that there are different groups? Do you get on? Are there issues?

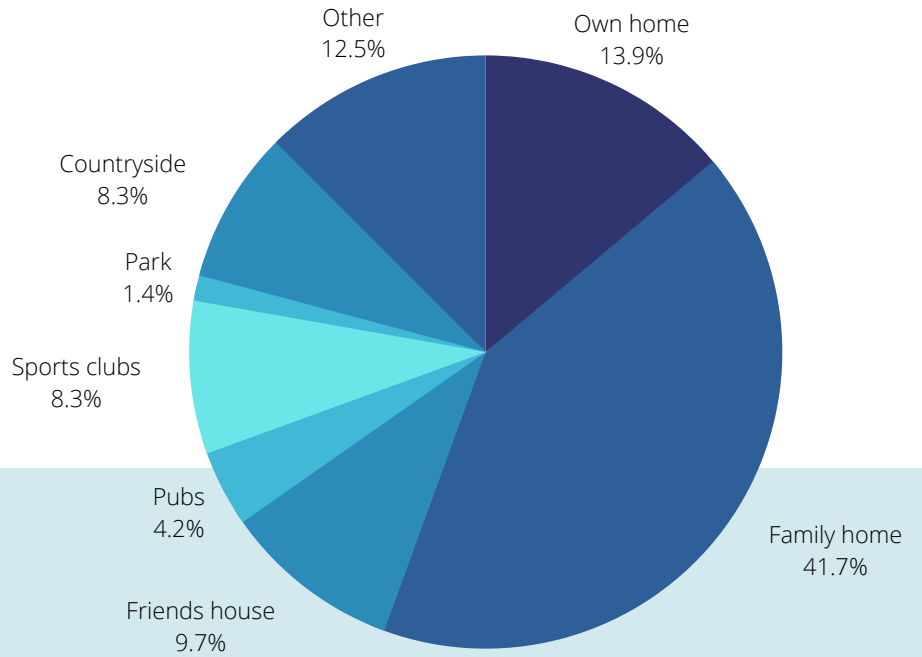
- *“The community is quite tight so most people know one another. Debates about occurrences can happen but they are usually resolved.”*
- *“It does matter, you have that everywhere - not always getting on due to conflicting opinions and experiences etc.”*
- *“Yes it does matter greatly that there is no diversity. I believe diversity is a very important thing in a community as it is boring for all to be the same.”*
- *“I feel unsafe when I meet other groups on my travels.”*
- *“It doesn’t matter as long as no trouble is caused.”*

See Appendix 3 for further comments made by young people about different social groups, and the impact this has on them.

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Young people were also asked where they spend their time.

Where do you spend your time?



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CASE STUDY

YOUNG ADULT, 22, WORKING FULL TIME, RECENTLY MOVED AWAY FROM KINGTON TO PURSUE CAREER

“The phrase youth space or youth hub has a certain association and I wouldn't automatically assume or initially think that it was for me or my age. I would assume it was for people aged between 12 and 18”.

Discussions with this young person centred on thinking back to what Kington was like for them as a teenager and reflecting on what would have been helpful for them then and for young people now. Conversations were full of suggestions and well processed ideas of how things could be better for others and what the impact on them would be. Talking about activities growing up they said, *“When I was younger I think oh I'd like to do that, oh I can't the buses don't line up and my parents are working. You are so reliant on parents for lifts. I always shrugged my shoulders, you miss out on things living here, and I just accepted it”.*

Reflecting on that image of other young people not having to shrug their shoulders and accepting nothing is happening our discussion centred on what kind of things a youth hub could offer and more importantly what it would be called. Thinking about what might be on offer for older adults this person suggested that it could be a local place to access services, for example, *“job centre, mental health services are difficult to access- the idea of having to get onto a bus to go to Hereford find your way round for mental health appointment not an ideal thing to do when you're in a crisis, so that would have a big impact.”*

In terms of what could be available this person raised the issue that *“loneliness is significant here, this place could be a place for connection”* and suggested a series of *“shared experiences where you bring people together”* including *“film showings with food and discussions afterwards so you could process it, open mic nights to get people together to play music, you could have quieter events like board games. It would be important to let people know that there will be other people there to participate, Internet access and you could have a notice board matching up people's desires with things to do.”*

3 1

CASE STUDY

The issue of diverse friendship groups, when younger, was a key part of our discussion, helping to explore what some of the younger people feel very strongly: *“In Kington there are many microclimates, little pockets, if you're not born into that world there's no easy way of accessing it, a lot of the boys would regularly see each other at the livestock market for example.”*

“There's a lot of separation and there's no easy way of breaking in to groups and there feels like there's no easy way of changing that when you're young. When you're older you can push down those barriers discuss and address it. Imagine being dropped into this world as a teenager .There is a barrier of 'you can't do this as you're not one of us.' I think it's important to acknowledge there's a lack of tolerance and it's important to recognise these barriers and helping to overcome them.”

Our conversation explored the need for understanding and the need for an ally if you are LGBTQ+ : *“There's no queer space. I identify on the LGBTQ spectrum but it was never something that was visible or accepted in Kington. It is missing and that could really help young people going forward. Somewhere that you feel you can go to escape to, not be out on the street I had no one to talk to, no ally.”*

This conversation ended with a proposal to make a new space accessible to all; *“it's important that young people in less privileged backgrounds get to access this place so maybe more fortunate people could sponsor a bus or a trip or something like that there could be some kind of bursary fund or hardship fund that there's equality of opportunity.”*

32

Views on a dedicated youth space and youth workers

Young people who completed the survey contributed plenty of ideas of what a youth space in Kington would be like, what would be on offer and when it should be open. See Appendix 4 for the responses in full.

Some focused on ways of steering clear of problems and others were honest in their assessment of saying they wouldn't use it. Common answers for what the space might have includes a pool table, table tennis, reasonably priced food and drink, a warm and welcoming atmosphere and optional activities. Suggestions were also made about after school/college opening hours on weekdays plus Saturdays and school holiday openings too. Respondents suggested that support services that could be available on site.

Young people were asked what difference it makes to their lives that there is no dedicated space for just young people in Kington outside of school. Responses included:

- “No social areas to make friends outside of people's houses - there's no privacy.”
- “For me personally it's not a huge problem because I meet my friends whilst doing sporting events but for other people who don't do sports I think not having a place where they can meet is a huge part of their life.”
- “Having a dedicated space would make it easier to meet new people and hang out with existing ones.”
- “I can't hang out with my friends outside school.”
- “Bit lonely and I don't really have a reason to leave the house.”
- “It's not great particularly for late teens/early adults in terms of turning to drugs and drink to socialise.”

While the idea of a dedicated youth hub was welcomed by the majority, some young people expressed concern that any new youth space would be spoiled or ruined by others.

33

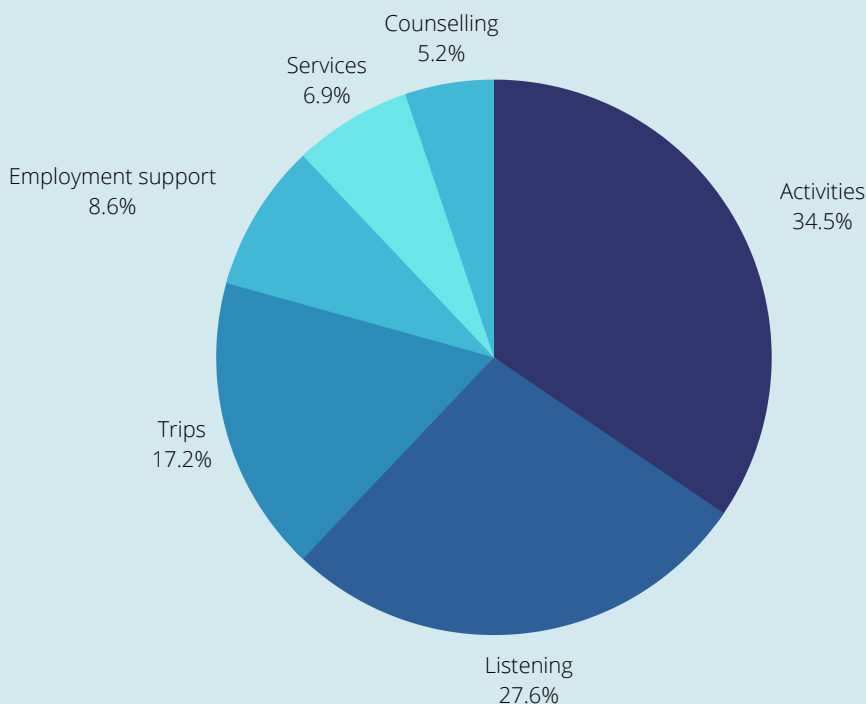
Speaking about the feel of a dedicated space, young people said:

- *“You want it to feel friendly and welcoming”*
- *“Feel like home/ a chill place to relax.”*
- *“Have opportunities to try different activities.”*
- *“A place to go if young people need to feel welcomed.”*
- *“It would always help people who came there.”*
- *“Modern atmosphere, refreshments.”*
- *“Just a relaxed friendly affordable place.”*
- *“Feel safe and open to everyone, not feel uncomfortable going in there.”*
- *“You would not be laughed at.”*

When asked what skills, characteristics and qualities they would want to see in locally-based youth worker/s, young people said:

- *“Caring, patient, trustworthy, to speak on our behalf.”*
- *“They would need to have a strong passion for helping people who may be very troubled.”*
- *“Non judgemental.”*
- *“A good role model.”*
- *“Planning to stay in the role for a number of years*
- *“There should be different leaders from all walks of life to create a more diverse environment.”*

More than a quarter of respondents wanted a youth worker to provide "listening", and 34% would want them to run activities.

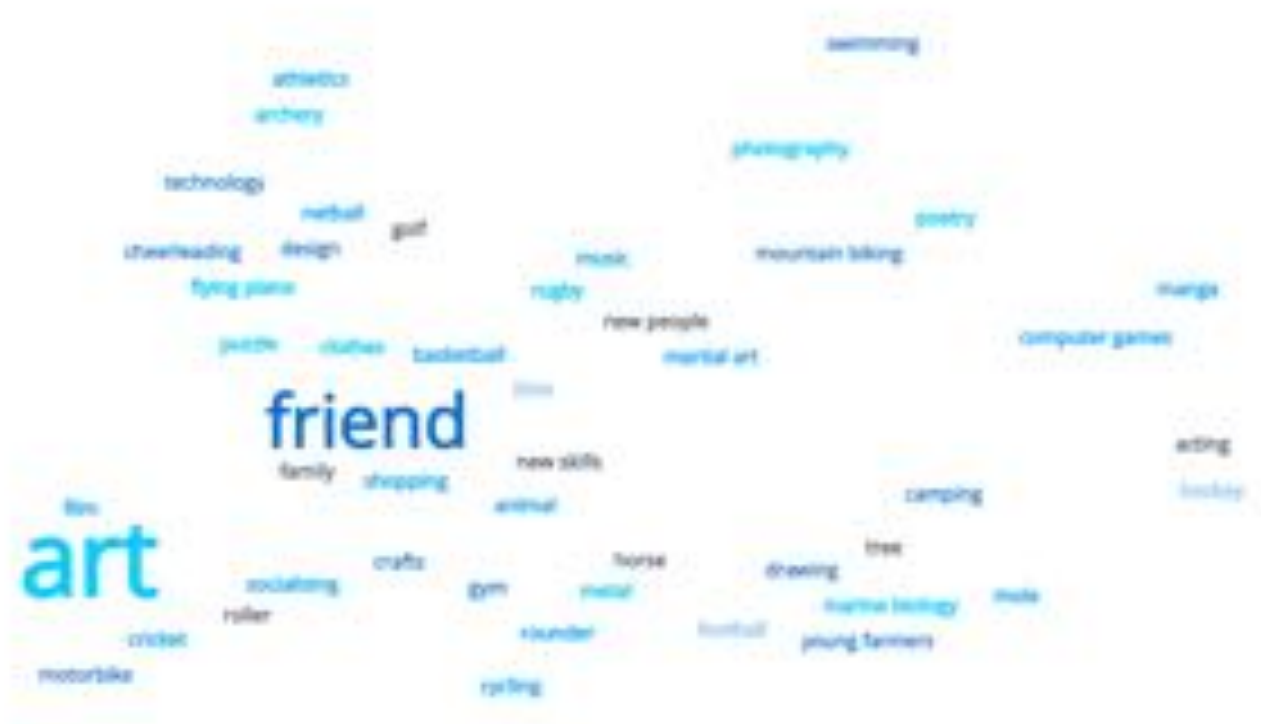


34

Hobbies and passions

Over 60 different hobbies and interests were identified by young people in Kington with only two responders saying that they had no hobbies at all. Some hobbies were mentioned numerous times.

See Appendix 5 for the full list.



How easy is it for you to participate in your hobbies and interests?

Many young people found their hobbies easy or quite easy to access with some activities done at home or locally. Young people mainly identified sports activities as being easy or fairly easy to access.

- “A lot of people in Kington and surrounding areas have a good passion for sport”
- “Very easy because Kington has a team in every sport”

Others highlighted challenges to accessing hobbies:

- “Depending on the hobby it can either be easy enough to do at home or impossible to access from Kington.”
- “Need to sort transport and lifts so not that easy.”
- “Kington Library is always closed so I have to leave Kington to get books.”

35

Young people were also asked to detail what issues and things they felt passionate about. It was in this section of the online survey many young people took the opportunity to express their concerns about drug misuse locally and the impact on the community. Ideas expressed here show young people's feelings about perceived lack of safety.

Answers to the question 'what are you passionate about' included:

- *"Safety around drugs and alcohol."*
- *"The drug and alcohol users. needing help and taking it off the streets and dragging younger people into it."*
- *"Supporting people with drug and alcohol issues in the area."*
- *"Stop drunk men hitting on younger girls. It's an issue that's been around for ages and no one seems to care."*
- *"I am disgusted by the state of the Rec and the things I find there."*
- *"Drugs and murder."*
- *"There is a lingering feeling of being unsafe, especially at night with the few dodgy people."*
- *"The leniency of use of drugs, with Kington being on one of the County Lines, lots of drugs are used but the local police force is understaffed and overstretched to be able to deal with it."*

In common with the Herefordshire-wide youth survey of 2020/21, young people also said they were passionate about:

- Preserving habitats
- Disabled access
- Child disability
- Global warming/climate change
- Litter
- Mental health support
- Training and employment opportunities
- The environment around me
- Animal cruelty
- Racism
- Sexism
- LGBTQ+ rights/ homophobia/transphobia
- Housing
- Equality in access to healthcare
- Freedom of speech

36

THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY FOUND THAT 93% OF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE PASSIONATE ABOUT EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. HOWEVER 38% REPORTED NEVER HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING OR ACTIVISM OF ANY KIND.

When asked if they have been involved in any activism, volunteering, fundraising or campaigning 20% of young people answered yes. The details included: enterprise days; hockey coaching; climate change activism; sponsorship; charity volunteering; sponsored silence; tractor run fundraising; and bone marrow cancer fundraising.

One young person identified that it had been difficult to get involved in activism or volunteering as there were no opportunities in recent years due to COVID, and a second said that they would like to but they were not sure where to go to find opportunities.

The Future

A number of survey questions asked young people to share their thoughts about the future, including current views on whether they would remain in Kington.

Over 50% of respondents said that they do not see themselves always living in Kington, with an additional 22% saying that they may leave but return in later life. The main reasons identified by this 75% of respondents were employment opportunities and study. Others highlighted a desire to get away from the drug culture and associated violence. Those who identified they would be more likely to stay (9%) gave the reason of friends and family.

Opportunities

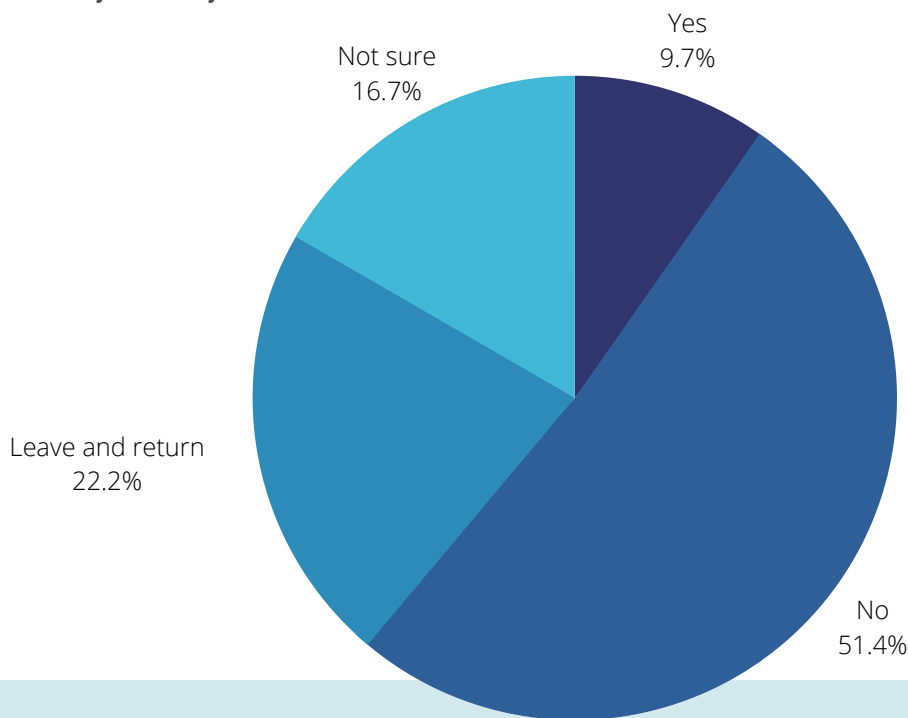
Young people were asked to score on a scale of 1-10 how good their opportunities were. The average score was five.

Future opportunities

Young people were asked to score on a scale of 1-10 how good their future opportunities were. The average score was seven.

37

Will you always live here?



Some young people used this section of the survey to express their general feelings about the area and why they would be leaving:

- *“There are no pull factors whatsoever for Kington or in fact the whole of Herefordshire. I plan to move away as soon as possible due to the lack of opportunities in work, education at university level, entertainment and attractions and transport. When I leave for University I plan on never returning.”*
- *“I hate it here, I’m leaving as soon as possible because I don’t want to be hit on by 50-year-olds anymore, so I will definitely leave.”*
- *“There’s not a lot of opportunities I can’t use my full potential.”*
- *“I would like to have my own family eventually and I would like them to grow up in a more diverse place.”*

IN THE HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE YOUTH SURVEY 46% OF YOUNG PEOPLE DID NOT THINK THEY WOULD ALWAYS LIVE IN THE COUNTY. 14% SAID THEY WOULD LIKELY LEAVE AND RETURN LATER IN LIFE.

See Appendix 6 for all comments made by young people about their future, including hopes and ambitions for their lives.

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CASE STUDY

STUDENT, 16 HEREFORD SIXTH FORM

This young person had numerous hobbies including mountain biking, video games and climbing. They were very thoughtful about the possible youth hub, its intended use and impact on themselves, their friends, and others. They were positive about accessing a youth hub as they found that, **“the only place to get together is friend’s houses”** and **“there is nowhere to go for food other than Border Bean but there’s not loads of food options.”** They said that they wouldn’t go to a hub/space by themselves but would go if **“especially if there was food I’d rather go with my friends”** and would be happy to access a space straight after College after getting off the bus from Hereford. They felt that there was a real need for a communal dedicated space for young people as **“it’s a bit frustrating when other people meet up and you can’t meet up with them”** but identified that a barrier to accessing the space would be **“that I don’t live in Kington so travel and transport would be an issue, I would need to get lifts there and back even if I went after College.”**

One of the issues we found with those under 16 was the impact of different groups of young people in Kington. This young person was a good example of showing that difference of when school is your complete world and then when you move on to the next stage some of those issues fall away. When talking about the different friendship groups in Kington and at school this young person said, **“When I was at Lady Hawkins my year group was one big friendship group ; no sub friendship,groups of the girls and the boys but we were all really connected. It could be a bit 'judgy', some of the farmers are perhaps set in their ways but since I've gone to college my friendship group has completely changed.”**

They identified the key skills and characteristics of what a youth worker would need to be effective at the Oxford; **“A youth worker would be somebody who is easy to talk to, fun, someone you could trust. They would need to be non-judgmental, be neutral but able to give advice. For younger people puberty can be a really confusing time so it would be good to have somebody they could talk to, plus services, you could have a drop in to talk about stuff freely.”**

They were also concerned about accessibility of the provision to be available to all young people. **“There could be trips to activity centres, things that are fun, helps people who haven't had those experiences, maybe trips to bowling, cinema, seaside.”**

They welcomed the close community and countyside location of Kington, but added: **“I want to move out of Kington”** and **“I'd be happy to stay around here but jobs might be limited”**.

39

CASE STUDY

STUDENT, 14, LADY HAWKINS' SCHOOL

This young person enjoys drawing and reading in their spare time and said **“I don't participate in any extracurricular activities at school as they are all very sports based.”** They talked about some of the difficulties they encounter with different groups of young people, a common theme that matched the experience of some of those who completed the survey - **“In my year there's the rest of the year and then there's my friendship group. We are different from them, they can be very annoying and judgmental.”**

They could clearly imagine a youth space and in our discussion, we designed one together with **“sofas and bean bags, somewhere you could sit down and relax, there could be a signature wall, you could have a billboard with details of gigs for young people, cool posters on the walls, a communal area with a chill environment, a pool table.”**

They expressed a need for such a space that they could access after school with their friends that they could walk to without the need for lifts, as they spend most of their free time at home and don't have a space other than the parks where they can be social with their friends outside of school. **“I would go with my friends but I wouldn't want to go alone. I think that's the same for all of my friends, go in a group but not alone.”**

As this young person is not sporty and so many of the external youth activity in the area seems to be sports-based they have no other options for any youth activity. They suggested that the hub could host **“art workshops including clay, ceramics,”** and the young people could make **“an art piece that everybody could add to and develop.”** They suggested an events programme including **“movie nights, comedy nights, gigs of bands, and a sort of party/ disco.”**

They had no experience of drugs or crime in Kington and said: **“I feel safe in Kington. I'm generally pretty happy if I'm there but I don't really explore”**. Showing perhaps evidence of the different experiences of the younger and older teens they added, **“I wouldn't know where not to venture.”**

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FINDINGS FROM IN PERSON CONVERSATIONS SUPPORTED BY KINGTON POLICE

“There's nothing to do, so we do nothing.”

- Young person, 17

The P.O.V. team reached out to West Mercia Police officers PC Dean Wall and PC Felix Rawlinson of Kington's Safer Neighbourhood Team, to explore the local police view on young people's activity, both positive and negative.

Following a face-to-face interview with PC Wall, we were invited to join both PC Wall and PC Rawlinson in Kington on a Wednesday evening, after dark, to talk to young people who were out and about at Kington Recreation Ground and also the Place des Marines.

Both officers were encouraging about the idea of a safe indoor space being created in Kington for young people. They identified areas where young people do spend time outdoors and also said the young people are constantly using the NISA and SPAR shops for drinks and snacks when out and about.

PC Wall identified that “over the last three years there's been no real crime involving 15 to 18 year olds” in Kington. He and colleagues have built good local relationships with young people but that had all been adversely affected by lockdown and the pandemic, so they are keen to rebuild positive relationships with local young people.

“It would be nice for young local kids to have somewhere safe to go, to talk, to gossip, to have fun and not be hanging around on the back end of a dark field. Because there aren't other distractions like a cinema or McDonald's here in Kington, behaviour can become amplified.”



On Wednesday 2 March 6-8pm on the Rec - Young persons aged 12+ come & tell Toni @RuralMedia and Dean @KingtonCops what you think about Kington. #activities #youth



8:00 AM - Feb 17, 2022 - Twitter Web App

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“We don't have young people walking the streets en masse here in Kington and a lot of young people are involved in clubs, things after school. There's no indoor space for them to meet up and hang out with their friends. Some congregate on the Recreation Ground, specifically the play area near the lights, to sit on the benches with lights from the bus station cascading over. But others are a bit more off the beaten track over by the Black Hut where there is perhaps drinking and recreational drug use.”

When we were out on the streets, all young people who we approached were courteous and spoke to both the P.O.V. team and the police. There were evidently good relationships with some young people. Both officers were keen to find ways to improve and build on positive relationships with young people and were very positive about the idea of the Oxford Arms creating a youth hub space.

“Positive social engagement with other young people is really important. A dedicated youth space would mean young people were not isolated or at home on their devices. I would be able to go to the Oxford and see everyone there; all the young people in one place not fragmented or distanced all over the town.”

PC Wall had some safeguarding concerns about young adults over 18 sharing space with under 18s and would not be encouraging of an environment where older adults could engage in any predatory behaviour with younger people, particularly those at risk.



Young peoples comments

The after dark consultations with young people in Kington with the police focused on three main questions:

- 1) What's good about living in Kington?
- 2) What's challenging about living in Kington?
- 3) What activities would you like to see at a youth hub and would you attend?

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What's good about living here?

- *"I don't really like living here, I don't like these things the old men say to me in the pub and there are a lot of weirdos."*
- *"When I was younger I spent most of my time down the Rec and played in the river, there's loads of outside space, loads of things to do outside, very nice places to walk"*
- *"The majority of my family live here, some of the people that live here are great"*
- *"It's quite a small town, it's not packed like Hereford"*
- *"The best thing is how close I live to school"*
- *"It's rural and it's out of the way."*
- *"Everyone knows everyone which is good and bad"*
- *"It's small"*

What's challenging about living here?

- *"There's not much to do, you have to travel if you want to do something properly"*
- *"The buses, no buses on a Sunday, I can drive now but before it was really difficult to go anywhere. Travelling is so expensive. If petrol prices go up that will have a real impact on me."*
- *"There's nothing to do and nowhere to go when it's raining"*
- *"The amount of drama, particularly up at Greenfields, there's a lot of arguments, the police are around a lot, sometimes all of that can be quite annoying."*
- *"There are a lot of druggies, they're just on the High Street, on the Rec, they take up quite a lot of space"*
- *"Some people are smoking weed at the Black Hut, I don't like it, I don't go there"*
- *"The last bus back from Hereford leaves at 6pm to get back to Kington so you can't stay on in Hereford after college to take advantage of the things that are there."*
- *"There's nothing to do"*
- *"Finding things to do"*

What are your thoughts about a youth space?

- *"I think it would be good for younger ones - games and that sort of thing"*
- *"I'd like for there to be a music night and a place to chill"*
- *"I've loved to go there if I was younger, to play pool, darts, board games, watch TV, listen to music"*
- *"I would go now for cinema night or a music night they would be really good."*
- *"I'd like somewhere to make new friends, someone nice to sit and chill, quiet but bubbly"*
- *"I'd like somewhere where I could watch films, have nice cheap food, like Knighton Youth Club"*
- *"I know about the plans for a youth group - Mum knows about it. It would be nice to do a lot of different things, activities I might go but not if loads of people are messing about."*
- *"I'd go to play pool but I don't go out much"*
- *"I think a mix of ages would be OK sort of intermingling, I'll go to a film night or music night"*
- *"I think if it had a pub vibe I would like that sort of like a dry pub"*

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“Kington is like one big family, everyone knows everything about each other which is both good and bad.”

- Young person, 13

Both PC Wall and PC Rawlinson would be happy to engage in further consultation like this and said they would definitely come and visit young people at a youth hub space.

Knighton Youth Club was mentioned for the first time in this consultation and has directly informed our recommendation for OAK directors to visit Knighton Youth Club to see what is available locally.

It is also recommended that OAK build relationship with Kington Police and inform and involve the officers about consultation events and future activities.

“Young people need somewhere to go, a safe space off the streets. I used to go to the youth club at Knighton when I was younger on a Wednesday. I might go back and become a volunteer. Young people really need something here.”

- Young adult, 24

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COVID CONSIDERATIONS

Two years of lockdowns have impacted on our young people in many ways.

They have missed out on so much socially but have simultaneously been inventive, resilient and creative. Many young people have become more self-sufficient in terms of participating in activities by themselves at home.

A common response amongst younger people we interviewed was: ***“I don't do anything with my friends outside of school.”*** Often parents have helped by creating social spaces at home: ***“One of my friends has a converted shed with a sofa, TV and table, so we can hang out there.”***

Older teenagers and young adults spoke frequently of ***“dog walks, beautiful walks, mountain biking with friends in lockdown”*** and many spoke about how fortunate they are to live somewhere so rural, with access to walks, particularly during lockdown. National restrictions also saw many young people retreating into their homes and now feeling unsure about accessing a new social space for them. Many said: ***“I wouldn't go there by myself, but I would go with friends”.***

Work would need to be done to build relationships with young people who would access any new space or be supported by a youth worker to overcome this reticence and uncertainty. A common theme in the survey was a fear that anything may be spoiled by others, and therefore it may not be worth investing in before it has even been created.

This was not a theme during in-depth interviews, but there was a sense of: ***“I'm not sure I would have gone to a youth space as we wouldn't have gone as the people who would go would be the ones that hate us we'd be in a corner.”*** This issue was immediately addressed by the same person who then suggested, ***“It has to feel like it's explicitly for everyone, people like us we needed this, not just the Young Farmers, we need to be able to be social too”***

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Commence activity with young people living in and near Kington to continue and build on momentum of the consultation period. This will help counter some young people's fears that any provision may be ruined or won't happen, while evidencing to young people and the wider community that OAK has a presence and commitment to deliver. This activity could take the form of a series of pop-up activities, for example live music or film night with young people involved in the planning and delivery. Such activities would be an opportunity for young people to attend, albeit passively and not feel obliged to participate above and beyond accessing and enjoying the provision.
2. Further activity is needed to firmly establish a Youth Advisory Group for OAK. This could take the form of a series of workshops with space for conversation with young people alongside creative activity. Common practice is to reward young people with vouchers for their time and contribution. This would also act as an incentive to participate.
3. The findings of this report and OAK's planned next steps are fed back and shared with young people and the wider community. This might be through an online sharing session, webinar or in person meeting. This could be an pop-up event at the Oxford screening the short film, report findings alongside a summary of OAK's future plans.



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RELATIONSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Visit and experience best practice youth provisions in other areas of the UK. This could include Knighton Youth Club. These relationships would support OAK and young people directly involved to gain knowledge of what has worked and not worked in the past in rural towns. There could be the possibility of Knighton worker(s)/volunteers hosting some sessions with OAK.
2. Consult with Lion Café, Kington, where an after school opening is being piloted on Fridays until 5.15p.m with special term time offers for young people such as milkshakes, ice cream, sundaes. Collaborating with existing or new provision rather than being in direct competition for the same target group would be sensible.
3. Build a relationship with Kington Police to encourage positive relationship building with OAK and users of the planned provision. Invite Kington officers to future consultation events and work with them to identify young people who may need additional support attending the sessions/provision.
4. Build relationships with service providers, organisations and existing networks, such as HVOSS No Wrong Door partnership, to further explore services that might be able to offer drop in/outreach sessions with young people and young adults at the Oxford Arms. Suggestions of services from young people include; banking, mental health/CAHMS, listening service, employment/unemployment support.



PROVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Operate different session times for provision for under 18s and over 18s. Supported by Kington Police.
2. Involve young people in all stages of recruitment for youth workers/sessional workers from the start to end. Support them through this process so their participation is meaningful and effective.
3. Involve not just a youth advisory group but a wider group of young people in the design and activity programme of OAK youth provision.
4. Have effective and well publicised policy and procedure in place to deal with any activity to do with drugs on the premises.
5. Be open and consistent in OAK's offer to young people. Be aware of over promising provision which risks damaging fledgling relationships and burgeoning trust. As per earlier recommendations, it would be more effective to offer a series of pop-up events over the next 12 months with dates and activity agreed that are able to be delivered well.

Conclusion

Our research provides evidence that young people in Kington are not only poised to directly shape OAK's planned provision, but the future direction of Kington itself. The range of experiences, ambitions, and challenges faced by young residents is rich and varied - and not always easy to find solutions for. In one of our interviews with young people on the streets of Kington there was a discussion about groups of young people "taking up a lot of space" and in a Zoom interview one parent talked about the Rec being a no-go area for her children. Whichever it may be, it is important for OAK to address these concerns with activities and events that are open, accessible and safe for all. Bringing young people into every step of planning and delivery will significantly support OAK to engage and earn the trust of young people - reaping rewards as they give back, and shape their town for the next generation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Online survey questions in full

1. How old are you?

2. What's your postcode?

3. What's your gender?

Male

Female

Non-Binary

Prefer Not to Say

Other (please specify)

4. Do you have a disability? If so please state the nature of your disability. w

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Please specify the nature of your disability-, e.g. physical, long term condition

5. Are you neuro diverse?

Yes

No

6. What do you do? (tick all that apply)

School/College/University

Apprentice/Training

Work Full Time

Work Part Time

Carer

Parent

Looking for Work

Signed off work or education

Not in Education, Work or Training

Give details...

7. What are the best things about living in this area for you?

8. What are the main frustrations for you living in Kington (or surrounding area)? w

9. What would you most like to change about Kington if you had the power? w

10. What services or help do you need to access (ie mental health, relationships, health, education, employment support)? If you access these already, do you need to go outside of Kington to access them? If none, please comment None

11. Do you think you will always live here?

Yes

No

May Leave and Return

Not sure

12. What factors are involved in your decision to stay/leave?

(i.e. employment opportunities, family, friends, transport links, access to services, mental health, hostility/violence, drug culture)

APPENDIX 1, CONT.

Online survey questions in full

13. What are your hobbies/interests?

14. How easy is it for you to participate in your hobbies/interests?

15. What makes it easy/hard?

16. What would you like to be able to do in Kington/surrounding area that you can't do at the moment?

17. What issues are you passionate about?

18. Have you been involved in any activism/volunteering/fundraising/ campaigning? If yes please specify.

19. What are your hopes or ambitions for your life right now?

On a scale of 1-10, please score how you feel about the following four things. 1 being I feel extremely negative and 10 being I feel extremely positive. If you want, please explain why you gave these scores in the comments.

20. My Happiness

21. My Mental Health

22. My Opportunities

23. My Future

24. Any comments on why you gave those scores?

25. Where do you spend most of your social time?

Home (I live on my own/independent)

Friend's House

At Family Home with parents/family

Pubs

Sport Clubs

Parks

The Countryside

Other (please specify)

Thinking about everyone who is 13-25 in the Kington area, tell us what you think about other young people.

26. Are there different groups of young people in Kington?

Yes

No

Not Sure

27. If yes, How would you describe the different groups?

28. Does it matter that there are different groups? Do you get on? Are there issues?

29. Do you feel you have any influence over decisions made in Kington and the surrounding area?

30. What difference does it make to your life that (apart from school) there is no dedicated space just for young people in Kington at the moment?

31. If a youth space/place was created for young people in Kington what would you want it to be like? (When would it be open? What could happen there? What could be available there? What sort of place would it be? What would it look like/feel like? Would you use it?)

APPENDIX 1, CONT.

Online survey questions in full

32. If a space was created would you be interested in being involved in decision making of how that space (for under 25s) was run? w

33. Do you have any experience of a youth worker or mentor?

Yes

No

Not Sure

34. If yes what was it like? What was good? What could be better?

35. If Kington had a youth worker/mentor for young people what skills/characteristics/qualities would it be important for them to have?

36. What would you want a youth worker/mentor to do?

Activities

Access to Services

Counselling

Listening

Trips

Support for Work

Training

Other (please specify)

37. Have you had any experience of going to the following?

A Youth Club

A Young People's Space

Meeting a Youth Worker Outside of School

Any comments about your experience?

APPENDIX 2

Young people's responses, in full, to the survey question, "What would you like to do in Kington that you can't at the moment?":

- Swim more cheaply
- An indoor skate park
- Basketball court
- A boxing club
- Better football pitches
- I'd like to see some drama classes
- A small cinema not dissimilar to the one in Hay on Wye that does viewing for all ages

- Clothes shopping
- Shop more diversely
- More shops of interest
- More book and art shops
- A decent takeaway
- Greggs
- Going out for food with friends

- Electric bike hire
- I would like a youth club
- A youth club
- Mental health support
- Work

- Social gathering for young people
- Stuff for younger people to enjoy
- Have a place to hang out with friends outside of school or homes
- A place to hang out with my friends
- Connect and communicate with more people of my age
- To hang out with my friends in fun places
- Having things to do and places to go
- Better social areas
- More social events

- Somewhere safe to go with my friends
- Walk in the late afternoon/evening without constantly feeling unsafe or on edge
- Walk without having to use my phone torch at night because of the lack of street lights
- Meet up with my friends without the fear of getting followed
- Safely go out meet up with friends more often and join more clubs
- Being able to hang out with my friends and be warm and feel safe
- See my friends outside their homes and be able to socialise with others in sheltered warm dry places
- Have somewhere to go when it's cold, a free space rather than having to pay to sit in a café. Somewhere that's entertaining

APPENDIX 3

Young people's responses, in full, to the survey questions about different social groups.

How would you describe the different groups?

- *"Some do drugs, some play sport, some just walk around town and some go to the park"*
- *"Farmers, drugs"*
- *"Different groups have different interests"*
- *"Different aspirations in life"*
- *"Some just stand around the streets"*
- *"Some groups are sporty some are stay at home people"*
- *"Very diverse with small friendship groups"*
- *"Very different from each other and cold to letting new people in mostly because they all grew up together or the groups are specific like young farmers or the sports people"*
- *"Druggies and decent ones"*
- *"There is absolutely no diversity in Kington"*
- *"We are all different"*
- *"Popular, unpopular, drama seekers and drug users"*
- *"Not well bonded, meaning that it is hard to be in multiple friendship groups as they all have different interests and there's nothing people really have in common"*

Does it matter that there are different groups? Do you get on? Are there issues?

- *"The community is quite tight so most people know one another. Debates about occurrences can happen but they are usually resolved."*
- *"As Kington is a small place everyone knows everyone so there are sometimes arguments or issues however they are usually resolved well."*
- *"Some conflict between them."*
- *"No, not really."*
- *"Social settings are regularly being dominated by groups which makes it a bit intimidating."*
- *"It does matter, you have that everywhere - not always getting on due to conflicting opinions and experiences etc."*
- *"Yes it does matter greatly that there is no diversity. I believe diversity is a very important thing in a community as it is boring for all to be the same."*
- *"I mainly stay with my own friends."*
- *"I try and stay away from anything dodgy."*
- *"I feel unsafe when I meet other groups on my travels."*
- *"It doesn't matter as long as no trouble is caused."*

APPENDIX 4

Young people's hobbies and passions in full.

- Young farmers
- Socialising
- Hockey
- Walking
- Going to pub
- Swimming
- Computer games
- Art
- Acting
- Skating
- Poetry
- Being with friends
- Making and adjusting clothes
- Cricket
- Rugby
- Golf
- Football
- Mountain biking with my friends
- Climbing
- Arts and crafts
- Reading
- Horse riding
- Learning new skills
- Meeting new people
- Spending time with family
- Shopping
- Animals
- Film watching
- Basketball
- Going to the gym
- Puzzles
- Metal detecting
- Shooting
- Roller skating
- Cycling
- Writing
- Technology
- Drawing
- Martial arts
- Listening to music
- Photography
- Design
- Archery
- Netball
- Rounders
- Cheerleading
- Athletics
- Marine biology
- Racing
- Flying planes
- Motorbikes
- Mole catching
- Manga
- Tree climbing
- Camping

APPENDIX 5

Young people's comments about a dedicated youth space in full.

On the facilities, they said:

- “A youth club with a pool table, table tennis, fun activities, a shop to purchase snacks. Something warm and welcoming. Yes, I would use it often and my mum would feel better knowing I was safer than walking the streets.”
- “I would like somewhere that we could go after school each day. Somewhere we could all sit, talk, play basketball, skateboard, buy snacks (not things like energy drinks). There would not be adults like teachers in school you could not talk in front of or who would tell you off. I would like the place to feel cosy with sofas. Not really any organised activities but just a place to hang out.”
- “It should be warm and have Wi-Fi.”
- “Chill out area with pool table and darts board.”
- “Communal area with games to play maybe like darts or pool.”
- “Sofas and signature wall with art opportunities.”
- “I would like an area to have drinks like water squash and fizzy drinks and sit down to eat. Maybe a TV on the wall with a few video games. It should be a place that everyone will enjoy and mix with others.”
- “Watch films and sports, have games to play i.e. pool table, table tennis. Lots of seating and a bright inviting look. Snacks and drinks available not at an inflated cost though.”

On the services, they said:

- “Support for drugs and alcohol and open late at night as that is when drugs are most prevalent.”
- “Discussion about how to get out of the drug and alcohol scene and support in finding people jobs to turn their life around.”
- “For younger generations I would just like a safe space for them to be in where they can get an education on problems that arise when participating in crime etc.”

On opening times, they said:

- “I think after school hours weekends and school holidays would be good. There could be a study club or socialising hour.
- “After school and on the weekends for teens to meet and hang out, playing pool snooker and darts gaming together and chilling in a friendly environment devoid of any drugs.”
- “If it will be open after school and on Saturdays I would use it.”
- “I would want it to be open in the afternoon and evening on weekends and holidays. A place which has a variety of activities for all age groups.”
- “I would like it to be open at night so that we could access it after jobs and college. If it was available for 18+ people could go to discuss personal things but also have a drink.”
- “It should be open at night because that’s when everyone is out and potentially drugs or are around. But I don’t think it would work if any age could go so maybe one for under 18 and one for 18+.”
- “I think it should be open every night but people don’t have to go every night if they’re busy or they just don’t want to go. There is no designated day where they would have missed something the day before. Maybe open 3:30pm until 9:00pm.”
- “Open at the weekends and in the holidays during the daytime.”

On safety/concern about use of the space, they said:

- “I most likely wouldn’t use it, however I feel it would be very good to have a safe environment for people who may not have a good home. If it had mental health support some people may benefit a lot.”
- “It could be a good decision, however it could very easily turn into another place for bad to be brought to.”
- “I think it should be large the different friendship groups can stay separate from each other.”
- “I would want it to feel like a comforting and safe environment as I’m sure it would end up being full of scary people and therefore make us want to leave.”
- “I probably wouldn’t use it if people took advantage of it.”
- “It would end up messy easily and some young people would ruin it however it would possibly help others.”
- “I would prefer more inclusive environment that encourage friendships across ages young learning from the old is something that has long been lacking in the UK.”
- “I don’t think I personally be interested.”
- “I wouldn’t have a lot of time for it really.”
- “I don’t really like those kinds of things so personally I wouldn’t attend it if it did open and also I think it’s younger kids that go to them.”
- “I wouldn’t be able to access it.”
- “Don’t see the point it would just end up as a place for the smackers to meet up and ruin it.”

APPENDIX 6

Young people's responses, in full, to the survey question, "What are your hopes or ambitions for your life right now?":

- *To go to university / get a job/ finish school with good grades*
- *To purchase a nice house in the surrounding areas of Kington and get a well paid job which makes me happy*
- *To pursue my new career and build a life around it*
- *Something that makes a difference*
- *Being a hairdresser*
- *Own a physio or chiro practice*
- *To be the best plumber I can be*
- *Become a qualified electrician*
- *Be happy and fulfilled*
- *I want to go to art school then go into interior design*
- *Get a car and then work on getting a flat*
- *To add enough money to move out of Kington and be successful in my career*
- *To be able to afford a house and to have a family*
- *I'd like to move to the USA*
- *For my business to grow*
- *Get through education and make more friends locally*
- *Excelling in school in order to get a well paid job and having a library in my future*
- *Improve football and pass GCSEs with good grades*
- *Become an actor*
- *Leave Kington and go somewhere fun*
- *To travel*
- *Become fitter*
- *Be a vet or a farmer*
- *To have a happy and successful life*
- *Maintain my social life and focus more in school*
- *Leave Kington, go to Milton Keynes and work for Red Bull Racing as a race engineer*
- *Get better friends*
- *Mechanical engineering*
- *Be a gamekeeper*
- *Be a jockey*
- *Travel the world and getaway from Kington*
- *To be an architect*
- *One day play for Kington Town reserves or first team*
- *Interact with more friends*

APPENDIX 7

Relevant policy, research, and reports

The Children and Young People's Plan for Herefordshire (2019 – 2024)

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/586/children_and_young_peoples_plan

Herefordshire's children & YP partnership

<https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/>

Point of View youth programme, Herefordshire youth survey, Rural Media (2021)

<https://pointofviewrural.com/survey>

Herefordshire Profile: Insight to enable sport and physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Herefordshire. Sports Partnership Herefordshire & Worcestershire (2019)

<https://www.activehw.co.uk/local-insight>

JCSH Youth Engagement Toolkit Youth service research needs of rural young people.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/Youth%20Service%20Research%20-%20Needs%20of%20Rural%20Young%20People.pdf>

State of the nation 2020: children and young people's wellbeing, Research report (2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2020-children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing>

The State of Herefordshire Report, Brightspace foundation (2017)

<https://www.brightspacefoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/imce/SRM%20Summary%20Doc%20Sept%202017-1-reformatted-181212-4.pdf>

HVOSS a strategic plan for Youth Work provision in Herefordshire (2013)

<https://www.hvoss.org.uk/media/52483/Herefordshire-Youth-Action-Plan-5-6-Final-draft-All-Rights-Reserved.pdf>

Priorities for Youth: Improving young people's lives through youth work, Department of Education

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/priorities-youth>

The damage, how cuts to youth services are damaging young people's lives. Unison (2015)

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/08/23996.pdf>

Young Minds: Coronavirus: Impact on Young People with Mental Health Needs, 2020/2021

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/covidcases>

OECD Education and COVID-19: Focusing on the long-term impact of school closures (2020)

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/education-and-covid-19-focusing-on-the-long-term-impact-of-school-closures-2cea926e/>