



A consultation
with young people
of Redditch to
understand what
activities and clubs
they would engage
with, to support their
mental health and
emotional well being.

ABOUT US.

The UP Foundation is a Community Interest Company formed in 2015. The organisation provides positive sporting and energy expending activities for young people in Redditch, which are aimed at helping them believe in themselves, learn new skills, move away from unhealthy and anti-social behaviours, and progress in their lives.

Led by a part time staff team and supported by volunteers, UP Foundation provides multi-sports activities to local young people (aged 13-21) in Redditch helping them to stay active and healthy, access mentoring and life guidance, and to stay out of trouble. We also have a project which aims to help young people gain short qualifications in particular areas of interest, to help them achieve more in the future.

As a group of staff who have lived and grown up in the community of Redditch, the team believe strongly in developing community cohesion via working closely with other local organisations with their youth sports provision.

This includes projects and programmes that engage approximately 200 young people several times per year via sporting festivals, which aims to build better community cohesion.



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BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION.



The UP Foundation has become extremely concerned to the well being of young people following an increase in their workload linked directly to having support more young people who request help and guidance.

The organisation has experienced challenges in recent times with reductions in public funding support. There has also been limited access to funding opportunities for the organisation to maintain its levels of work with local young people.

The demise of public sector infrastructure and services, coupled with the increased challenges facing young people, have motivated the team at UP Foundation to be proactive and take a new approach to support the young people of Redditch.

However, we also recognise and understand we need to know more about what young people desire, want and need in terms of community activity and clubs to ensure we support their well being – both physically and emotionally.

We are aware an increasing number of young people suffer from mental health issues – anxiety, depression,

and conduct disorder. In 2017 the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Worcestershire found there was a higher prevalence of common mental disorders in the county than England – rates of depression were significantly higher (at 10%) and increasing. Most go undiagnosed as people fail to seek treatment – either due to stigma or a failure to recognise symptoms.

However, whilst our motivations are real and the small resources we access are mainly focused on out front line main stream provision, we were conscious we must understand more about what our young people in Redditch wanted and needed.

Subsequently, with funding received from Comic Relief commissioned by Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, we set about speaking with young people of Redditch and commence a period of consultation. The outcomes from the young people and our own summary of this consultation report are enclosed.

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THE PROCESS

The consultation has purposely targeted a diverse range of a young people and organisations in mainstream youth based activity as well as those who we are aware have experienced mental or emotional health challenges. This included young people with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND).

As a consultation aimed at young people, the focus of the information has been centred around the children and feedback from the young people. However, spending time with professionals, families and the people wrapped around our young people, we felt it was important to put some of the outcomes into a context for this to be a working document for our future developments and other stakeholders in the Redditch community.

The consultation was carried out through three specific ways;

- Formal meetings and interviews with professionals working with young people in the Redditch community.
- Detailed time spent with young people. Informal interviews but most often in a 'play' or recreational setting.
- A questionnaire completed independently by local young people.

The range of people, organisations and professionals consulted during this period included;

- Children and their immediate families and carers.
- Professionals from sectors and backgrounds in; sport and activity, community development, youth work, teachers and education support staff and mental health sector.
- The public, private and third sector communities.
- Strategic and senior leaders, middle managers and front line workers.

Young People and their families consulted included;

- Young people from school year 5 (9 /10 years) through to 21 years.
- Venues and settings included holiday sports camps, evening youth activity clubs and targeted services for young people with specific needs.
- Communities in central Redditch as well as wider neighbourhoods i.e. Batchley, Matchborough etc



RESULTS

THE THREE MAIN REASONS YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDED CLUBS WERE;

- Their love for participating in that specific activity at the club i.e. dancing, football etc
- To meet friends and spend time with people they like socialising with.
- The pure enjoyment of going to that club and taking part in their activities.



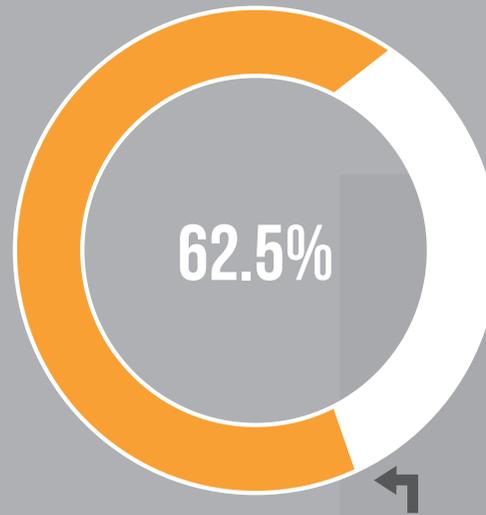
THE ABOVE THREE ANSWERS MADE UP 75% OF WHY YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDED THE CLUBS. OTHER RESPONSES TO NOTE INCLUDED;

- It gets me out of the house.
- To improve at the specific skill or activity.
- Helps me with my fitness and the well-being aspect.

The requested frequency of when young people want to attend is on a weekly basis. 63% of YP stated they enjoy clubs on a weekly basis. Just under half of this group would also love to have access to their clubs at least twice a week.

When this was drilled down in the interviews, Monday to Friday early evenings was a time young people

OUT OF 136 PEOPLE ENGAGED, 85 YOUNG PEOPLE REGULARLY ATTENDED 'A CLUB' BEYOND SCHOOL ON AT LEAST A WEEKLY BASIS.



THIS WORKS OUT AT 62.5% OF YOUNG PEOPLE. 6 IN EVERY 10, 3 IN EVERY 5.

were often bored. Interestingly there was also requests for holiday engagement and specifically this increased when consultation came via SEND young people.

YOUNG PEOPLE RATING THE LOCAL OFFER FOR YOUTH ACTIVITY... 45% OF YOUNG PEOPLE RATED ACTIVITIES IN THE LOCAL AREAS AS "I THINK THEY ARE OK."

The three other answers young people were offered to this question were equal;

"It's brilliant", "should be better" or "It's not good".

Several young people did comment via this answer that the promotion and

communication about young people's services in Redditch is poor.

Whilst not having significant evidence to substantiate this, concerns were raised by professionals about the way provision in the area is coordinated and promoted.

When asked young people about the importance of well-being activities for their emotional health, 40% responded stating they agreed it was 'important' whilst 41% 'weren't bothered'.

The most important types of activity young people like going to help with their own well-being is sports clubs and performing arts. Listening or participating in music-related activity was popular.

"SILENT SUFFERERS ARE A BIG WORRY TO US."

Mental Health representative in Redditch

"THIS WEEKLY SESSION ON A FRIDAY NIGHT IS REALLY GOOD, WITH STAFF WHO UNDERSTAND US AND LADS WHO WANT TO JUST GET ON WITH PLAYING. I WOULD DEFINITELY ATTEND ANOTHER NIGHT AND ACTIVITIES, IF IT WAS LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME"

17 year old boy attending weekly sports / youth project



When asked what they do at times when they are bored and can't go to clubs' responses were;

29% STATED, "GAMING" RELATED ACTIVITY (THIS INCLUDED XBOX, YOU TUBE, SOCIAL MEDIA ETC

22% STATED, "HANG AROUND WITH MATES"

"CATCHING UP WITH FAMILY" AND "RELAXING" WERE THE REASONS BEHIND THESE CHOICES.

"6 WEEKS AT HOME WILL BE SO HARD THIS SUMMER WITHOUT THE RIGHT TYPE OF INTERVENTION SUPPORT FOR MY LAD/ HE REQUIRES SPECIFIC SUPPORT WHICH IS NOT AVAILABLE TO US IN THE HOLIDAYS. HE WILL MOST LIKELY STAY AT HOME IN HIS BEDROOM A LOT."

Parent of 11 year old boy in a local special school.

What is important at a club if we want to get more young people attending them. Responses to this were;

- Nice friends, nice people, and good staff / the leadership.
- **Quite simply, young people were clear that by creating an enjoyable and fund environment where they are happy will attract more attendees.**

Understanding why young people might not go to activities or be put off from attending was important. Responses were;

- Young people having no one to go to a club or activity with was the top response.
- Not knowing the staff, not feeling it is a safe place and people there they don't connect with were consistently stated. Bad behaviour and 'knowing it's a wrong crowd.'
- The young people were very clear to avoid clubs or activities where there was risk of anti-social behaviour. They said taking recreational drugs and been associated with gangs were big concerns to them.

AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO GO TO AND SEE MORE OF IN REDDITCH? POPULAR CHOICES INCLUDED...



WILLINGNESS TO PAY

40% OF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE CONFIDENT THEIR PARENTS OR CARERS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE ACTIVITIES IF THEY WERE KEEN TO ATTEND NEW CLUBS.

45% WERE UNSURE IF PARENTS OR CARERS WOULD PAY AND THIS RESPONSE WAS USUALLY BACKED BY YOUNG PEOPLE SAYING, 'WE WOULD NEED TO ASK OUR MUM OR DAD'.

ONLY **14%** OF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE CONFIDENT THAT THEIR PARENTS OR CARERS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO CONTRIBUTE TO ATTENDING A CLUB OR ACTIVITY IN THE FUTURE IF THEY WISHED TO ATTEND.

When asked when they would want to attend these new clubs in Redditch, the responses were;



There is a clear demand for provision to take place Monday to Friday and on a weekly basis. This is possibly linked to young people wanting to have places of activity where they can be safe and meet friends away from everyday pressures such as home or school.

School holidays should also be considered in the future for young people's activities in the Redditch community. This would be both from a parenting perspective but also the young people themselves often stating they "do get bored" during school holidays.

The frequency of regular and consistent activity we know could link directly to young people establishing trust with their own peers, providers and leaders of clubs. We know is essential to any successful engagement of young people.

"A BULLYING EXPERIENCE AT SCHOOL IN PE AND SPORT, PUT ME OFF GOING TO ANY SPORT OR YOUTH CLUBS. HOWEVER, COMING HERE VIA CAMHS HAS REALLY HELPED WITH MY DEPRESSION AND I LOVE ATTENDING WEEKLY AS A PARTICIPANT, AS WELL AS A VOLUNTEER FOR THE YOUNGER GROUP"

17 year old boy, autistic, local youth club.



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The overall sample size in this consultation process in relation to the Redditch population was small and this was intentional. The priority was on the detailed discussion and time spent listening and understanding smaller groups and individual young people. There was a very diverse range of young people and a good range of workers engaged in the process, which reflected the Redditch community. Listening to the thoughts of the professionals working with young people was essential part of the consultation process, however the opinions and feedback of the young people is the main outcomes of this report.

Clubs and activities are delivered in a variety of formats and by a range of providers from various sectors with a range of qualifications, skills and experiences. It is essential the future offer for young people in Redditch is delivered via a range of providers such as schools, community and youth clubs, church and faith groups, charities and CIC's as well as private companies and businesses. This will ensure access for all.

It is very clear throughout the whole consultation that enjoyment, the right environment and having great people involved is by far the most significant motivation for young people to attend any activity, club, programme or project.

Not all young people recognised directly the importance of their own well-being. However, it was very clear young people recognise risk, harm and potential dangers of poor behaviour on their own welfare. Any place of activity needed to be safe and led by people they had confidence and trust in.

Overall, young people had a satisfactory outlook on the activity and clubs available to them in Redditch. The majority thought current provision in the town was 'ok' and older teenagers reported there was 'definitely less' on offer at local community centres, leisure sites and youth clubs, than there was previously. Young people, but more significantly professionals working with young people, commented about the lack of promotion of the current provision that is available in Redditch. Joining this up, especially in a time when the resource is smaller and the need to maximise this resource is even greater, is essential.

The whole aspect of clubs and activity for 'social engagement' was hugely important to young people. There is clear evidence young people are reluctant to attend clubs and activities when they are feeling outside their comfort zone. This maybe attending a centre that is based outside their own immediate community or attended by young people they have never met previously.

'Hanging out' is nothing new for any generation of young people, however it was interesting to hear that young people were conscious of this and given the opportunity, many stated they would prefer to attend a club or activity than hang around the streets. It will come to no surprise there is a huge growth in how our young people engage online or in the digital world – which in modern society is a very normal form of social engagement or social participation. Quite often this online engagement will take place in isolation in their own home.

Whilst there are many benefits to the use of social platforms and modern technology, this also presents huge challenges and potential risks to all stakeholders around young people not least their immediate parents and carers. The increase in young people socially engaging via digital technology is likely to keep increasing.

However, it was also great to hear that young people want to participate in both social and physical based activity and clubs in the future.

It was the social activity type of provision that created the biggest discussion and positive influence with young people. In what we described as 'Lifestyle Activity' – those activities and clubs that provided variety of activity programmes covered by the traditional youth club sector, with the activity or club the meeting point for young people to connect, integrate and engage.

Examples included young people wanting to go to the cinema or ten pin bowling, but also more diverse activity such as residentials, day trips and adventure. The offer that the traditional youth club sector delivered often via the local council services. This personal and social development, new cultures and experiences, and exploring some of those new things in life that are not everyday opportunities for some young people provide a huge gap and opportunity for providers in the Redditch community. Such opportunities and experiences we know can have a significant positive impact on raising aspirations and the lifelong learning of young people.



The feedback of young people wanting to attend clubs on a weekly basis could also add weight to the importance of developing places for young people to create those physical networks and meet with new friends, possibly outside their existing immediate circles.

Sport and wider physical activity are still extremely popular past times for young people with traditional sports often cited in their feedback. It is important future opportunities consider more modern approaches of activities linked to fitness and group exercise, as local young people are very aware of the latest trends and opportunities often from online and social media. Its important for sports clubs or activity providers, to consider young people of varied abilities– not just those who may be able and want to participate in competition.

Ensuring all young people can access a range of high-quality clubs and activities is essential. Evidence was presented on several occasions through the consultation, where young people with SEND had poor experiences of PE and School sport, that subsequently had direct consequence on their mental health. In turn, this often became a barrier to attending any mainstream club or activity - not just in school but into community settings.

Drilling down to understand the target groups will be important for future delivery and design. There are clear and obvious activities that young people for certain groups want different to others. For example, girls reported a significant interest in music and dance activity and clubs, whilst drama, arts and crafts were popular with SEND.

Understanding the barriers to activity is also essential and what would deter young people attending clubs in the future. We have already stated the environment and the people are essentially important, so we should not be surprised that unruly behaviour and negative behaviour experiences would be the biggest turn off.

It became more apparent in the more detailed interviews of the consultation that Redditch is a town built around local communities and young people traditionally would go to their 'local' activity. Grappling with young people who have a clear reluctance to travel across communities and districts, must be balanced with the need to encourage young people to raise aspiration and explore new experiences. There seems to be a need to continue a balance between central and community-based activity.

We know resources will continue to be a challenge in the foreseeable future for youth services, therefore maximising the way services are resourced needs to be innovative. Young people recognised that any new activities are likely to require contributions or subsidy, with many showing a mature understanding that contributions are to be expected. Therefore, it is important the local networks and infrastructures ensures provision for young people reaches those most in need, at the heart of our most needed communities.

During interviews with families with young people who had SEND, the majority said they were willing to contribute towards increased and more diverse range of opportunities, however it was very clearly stated services must suit the individual needs of their young people. Using proven and established providers in the community who they had establish trust and confidence with, would be welcomed.

“WE HAVE LOTS OF IDEAS IN REDDITCH BUT LITTLE IF ANY WORKING CAPITAL”

Professional worker in Redditch



RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. There is an existing activity and youth engagement offer for young people in Redditch however more activities in communities and places they are comfortable with is requested by young people. Local proven providers who can demonstrate sustained engagement and positive social impact are essential to future developments.
- ii. Young people want activity and see it as important, but they don't want what used to be delivered – it needs to be cool new activity, in nice places and at times to suit. Embracing modern technology and innovative content, including young people centred promotion and marketing is vital.
- iii. To support more opportunities for young people with SEND, it would be worth exploring the value in resourcing those providers who deliver existing provision in the local community. With established operations, a proven track record and an ability to demonstrate impact, additional funding will allow them to increase their existing capacity in both the range and volume of activities and services they currently offer.
- iv. The community ethos of clubs and 'sense of belonging' is important to creating the safe places that is very important to young people in Redditch. However, future provision should also consider 'neutral zones' for clubs. This will actively encourage young people to come out of their own communities and participate in new provision, particularly if this is linked via reward to the 'lifestyle' based activities identified by young people themselves.
- v. The rate of young people becoming more isolated via online activity and gaming is increasing. We must develop ways we educate young people, parents and families about online engagement and the influences of social media and gaming is likely to have upon young people's physical and emotional health and well being.
- vi. Social engagement is hugely important and the theme or activity on offer is often the 'hook' for many - not always the purpose for attending. Future investment into providers should always be supported by a need to demonstrate how the activity promotes social opportunity and connectivity.
- vii. The impact great workers have upon young people in all youth settings is well documented in this report. It is essential senior leaders develop plans for the leaders of tomorrow and Redditch can attract the people to run and develop these services across the private, public and third sector.
- viii. Whilst green shoots of funding seem to be appearing, substantial levels of investment into youth activity are unlikely. Therefore, community assets such as schools, libraries and leisure centres must be exhausted for partnership working, so providers can engage with young people at affordable costs, in their own community, in places that are safe and familiar to them.
- ix. There were young people during the consultation who reported some level of undiagnosed mental health concerns and regularly attend a club or activity. It is essential for many young people that these clubs and services continue and if possible, increase in capacity and access. It is very likely there are many young people who suffer in silence or do not reach diagnosis thresholds, therefore the importance to socially and physically engage into local clubs and activities is essential for the future health and well being of young people in Redditch.



136 YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED INTO THE CONSULTATION FROM THE RANGE OF ORGANISATIONS. 30 OF THE 136 YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN DETAILED INTERVIEWS AND MEETINGS, WITH 12 YOUNG PEOPLE JOINED BY THEIR FAMILY OR CARERS.

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