

# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

**This report summarises feedback gathered from a range of sources to inform the development of a new operating model for early help arrangements. This document should be seen as a collation of engagement work which has informed the proposed operating model to date.**

This document provides a summary of:

- Engagement undertaken with staff groups from October 2015 to inform the new operating model.
- Consultation carried out with young people in October 2015 as part of reviewing the city centre youth offer currently provided by 'Castlegate for Young People'.

## STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Between October and December 2015 staff were engaged through:

- All staff briefings
- Ideas sessions
- Structured conversations with heads of service
- One to one meetings
- Email

The engagement activity was not limited to Children's Social Care, Education and Skills (CSES) staff and extended to colleagues within housing, health visiting, school nursing, North Yorkshire Police, neighbourhood and community safety services within Communities and Neighbourhoods (CANS).

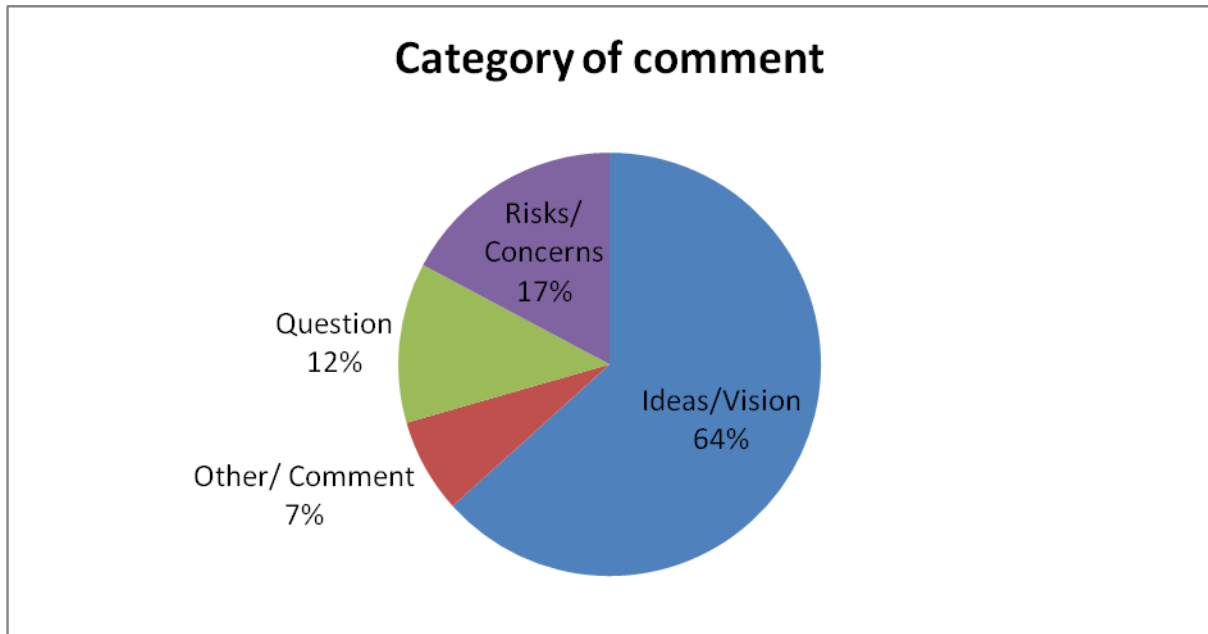
Although there has not been a formal evaluation of engagement to date informal feedback would suggest that staff feel opportunities to provide feedback have worked well.

## ALL STAFF BRIEFINGS

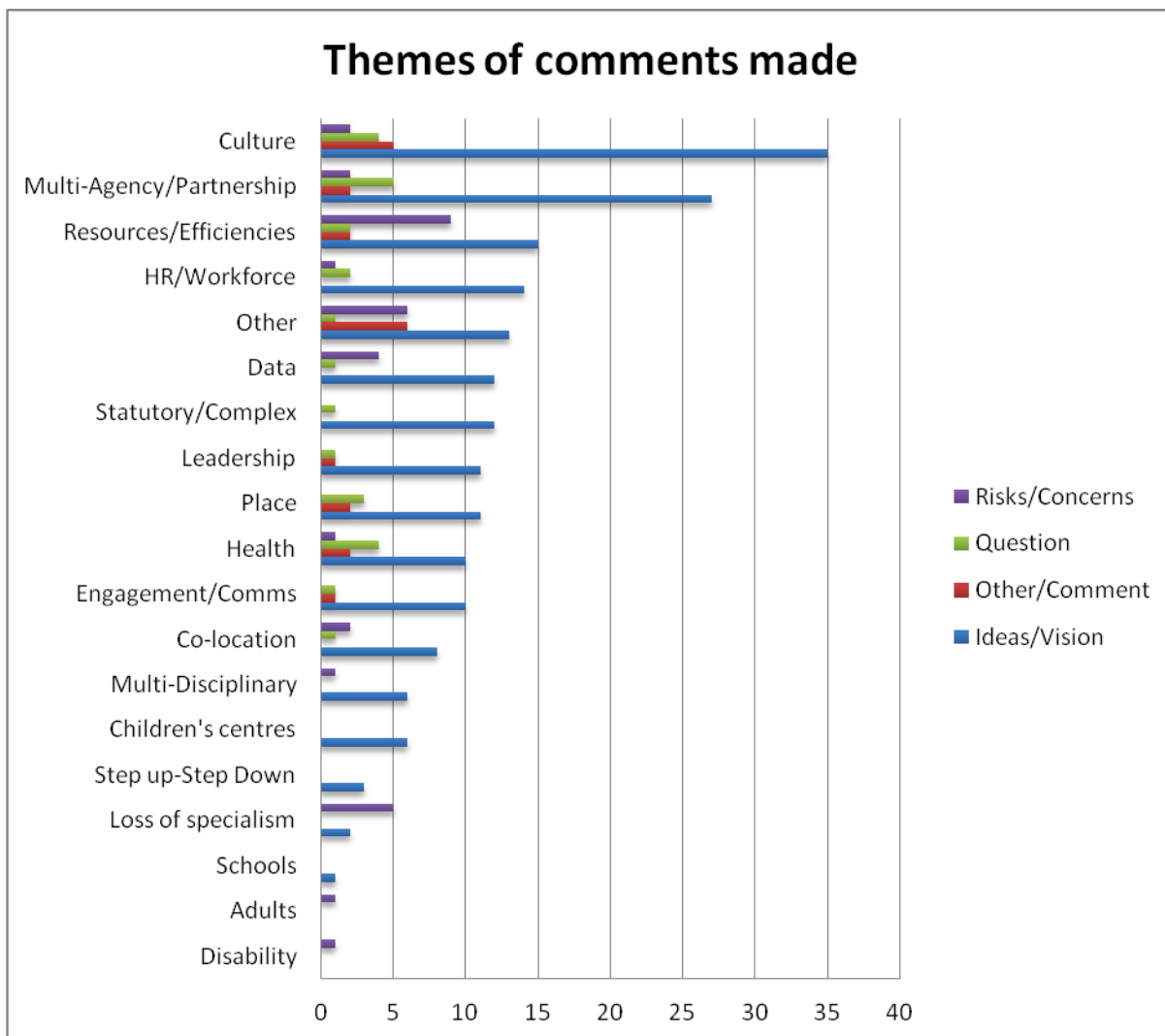
- At the beginning of November 2015 four briefings were held with CSES staff to introduce them to the council wide approach of looking at new operating models and to explore in more detail the model in relation to early help.

- This briefing was repeated for health staff (health visitors and school nurses) at the beginning of December.

Staff were encouraged to ask questions during the sessions and to leave their thoughts on post-it notes. From the four briefing sessions held there were 182 comments left on post-it notes. These can be summarised as shown in the chart below.



The fact that such a large proportion of comments related to ideas put forward by staff suggests that the concept of the new operating model was introduced to staff in a constructive way. The second chart shows a summary of how comments made against the above categories breaks down across the themes of message.



The chart above has been ordered in descending order of the most prevalent themes relating to ideas/vision. This clearly shows that most comments relating to ideas spoke about culture and multi-agency/partnership working. A number of ideas related to reducing duplication and “red tape” in order to make better use of resources and improve efficiency. The theme of resources and efficiencies also attracted the highest number of comments relating to risks and concerns.

In addition to these all staff briefings:

- Four sessions were held with housing staff through November and December 2015. Although no feedback was directly gathered from these sessions staff were left with options over how they could engage with the development of the new model.
- A session was held with neighbourhood and community services from within CANS to provide a briefing on the new model and explore scenarios relating to early help. Four key areas were identified by the group which the model needed to consider: culture, service specifications, better and smarter systems of delivery and increasing worker confidence to support a whole family approach across multi-disciplinary services.

- A further briefing and scenario session was carried out with Police Community Support Officers in December 2015.

#### CHILDREN'S SERVICES FEEDBACK EMAIL

At all points of engagement staff have been provided with a generic email through which they could provide feedback or comment.

Although not the main channel for staff engagement the email inbox has provided a helpful method for staff to share any ideas they may not have wanted to voice in front of colleagues, in a considered way. Staff have in addition to the generic email address also taken the opportunity to email the project leads directly.

Feedback received by email has related to:

- Merging specific teams and functions where it is viewed that there may be duplication and efficiencies could be found.
- Greater sharing of responsibilities and function rather than requiring specific staff for every task.
- The engagement of schools.
- Information sharing and how this could be improved.
- The potential use of volunteers to support the new operating model.
- Business support arrangements in relation to the new operating model.
- Locations of delivery and concerns over locations.
- The importance of transitions (e.g. adulthood)
- The Local Offer and how this relates to Independent Specialist Providers and the choices made by families.

#### STRUCTURED CONVERSATIONS

Heads of service from CSES were invited to take part in one-to-one "structured conversations". This allowed for exploration of opportunities or risks identified by them in relation to moving to a new operating model for multi-agency, place based, intelligence led early intervention arrangements. The summary presented below presents a simplistic summary of emerging themes from these conversations.

#### IDEAS/VISION

- This presents an opportunity to break down silo working.
- We need to make the lead practitioner role less daunting and time intensive.
- Want all voluntary interventions explored before referrals are made for statutory assessments.
- There is a need to simplify our early help arrangements and structures.
- There needs to be an infrastructure to actively drive this model. Set clear expectations and challenge.

- There also needs to be a strategic infrastructure. How YorOK arrangements evolve to support the model.
- Broaden the membership of YorOK to take in partners outside of traditional children's services arena.
- Statutory "blue light" services currently in the community should be relocated centrally. The analogy being GP (early help) and hospital (emergency) model.
- Consolidation of budgets to support these requirements would be helpful to realign historical allocations to current and future need.
- Any funding streams currently directed towards early help arrangements should be brought together to make a single commissioning pot to support early help. Development of more community led budgets.
- Ensure links with new ward committee arrangements.
- Ensure the links are there with adult services to address wider needs of family.
- Getting whole family working culture across our organisation and partners is critical.
- Voice and the involvement of communities must be an integral part of the new model.
- There is an opportunity here to improve our approach to consent to allow us to work with families. Currently consent is still obtained on a silo basis rather than in a more joined up way.

#### RISKS/CONCERNS

- A clear vision and expectation must be laid out for this work.
- Worry about the model being all things to all people which it will not be able to do.
- Challenge is getting this to actually work. We have been working on early help for a long time. The principle is sound but the delivery requires complete commitment.
- Strong message that there must be strong leadership and commitment to this. Not engaging should not be an option.
- Sharing of information could still present a big barrier to this working.
- Where we currently work well in early help, we work well. Where we don't it is down to people, leadership and communications. Partners are likely to engage with statutory plans but less so for voluntary ones.
- Co-location is only part of the solution. There has to be work to change the culture.
- There are some concerns about what possible venues will be used and the feasibility of co-location into these. Worries are focussed on multiple expectations for use of buildings that do not currently line up.
- We should not risk income from troubled families interventions during the transition.
- There must be real engagement across all levels internally and with partners.
- Many mainstream partners need to improve their skills and capacity in order to effectively deliver early help interventions.
- Getting the right business support arrangements in place is important.

#### IDEA SESSIONS

As a follow up to the all staff briefings, eight "idea sessions" were facilitated for staff. The aims of these sessions were to:

- Give space and time for practitioners to explore their ideas following the all staff briefings carried out in early November 2015.
- Develop practitioners approach towards new ways of working.
- Provide ownership of finding the solution to practitioners.
- Support the cultural change required to achieve new approaches to working.

The sessions were focused on:

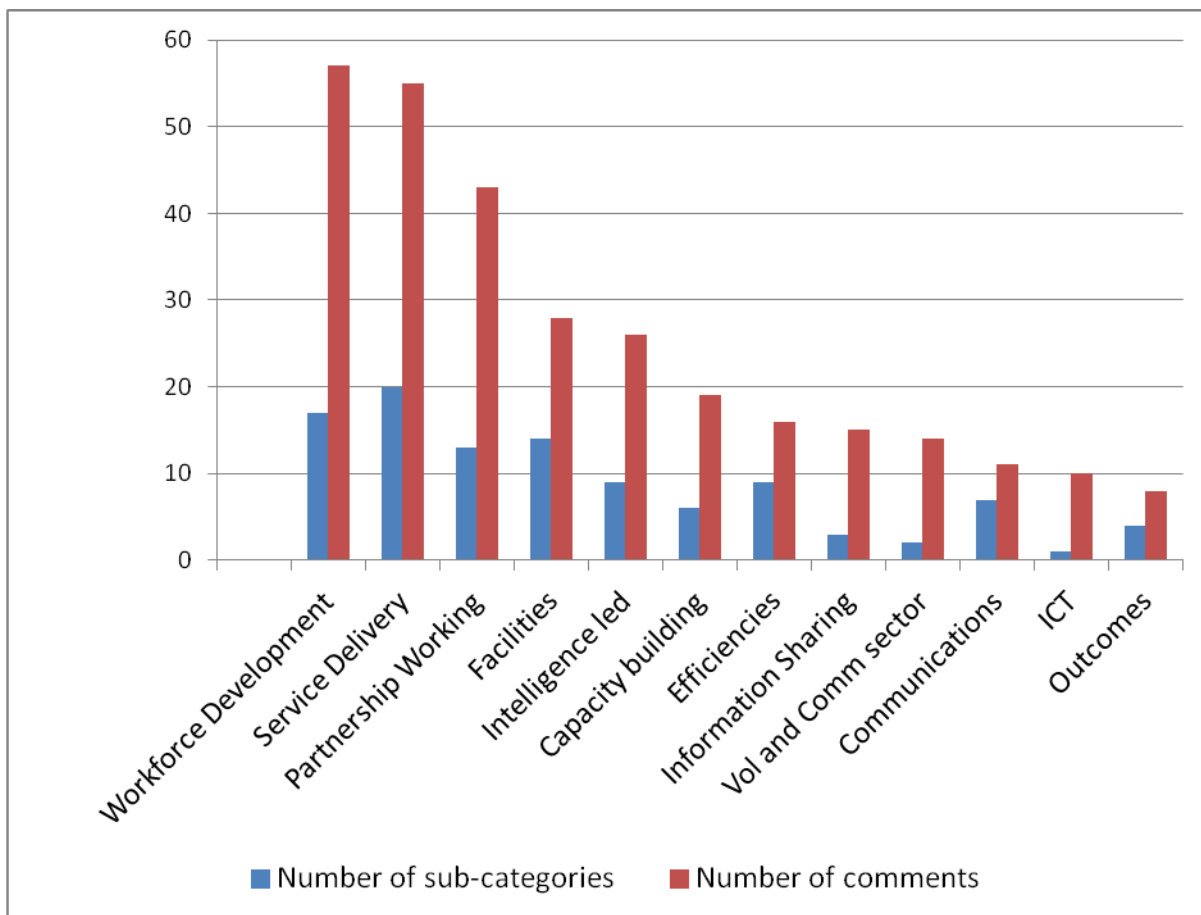
- A short recap of the parameters set out at the all staff briefing sessions.
- **Where are we now** - Small groups to explore the strengths and weaknesses of our current work.
- **“If only we could” and opportunities** - Small groups to explore the question of “If only we could...” and opportunities to improve our work and make better use of resources.

#### SUMMARY FEEDBACK

The table below shows a break down of feedback gathered through the idea sessions. All of the comments have been grouped by staff as relating either to a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity or Threat. These have then been indexed to a headline theme and sub-category.

The number of sub-categories under each theme shows how varied comments were relating to this theme. For example of the 14 comments under the theme of “Voluntary and Community sector” these could be broken further down into just two sub-categories. However of the 55 comments relating to “Service Delivery” these break down into 20 sub categories, demonstrating a much greater diversity of comments.

Theme	Number of Categories	Opportunity	Strength	Threat	Weakness	Grand Total
Capacity building	6	4	2	8	5	19
Communications	7	2	2	4	3	11
Efficiencies	9	2	1	9	4	16
Facilities	14	13	5	4	6	28
ICT	1	3		2	5	10
Information Sharing	3	6	2	3	4	15
Intelligence led	9	9	9	4	4	26
Outcomes	4	5			3	8
Partnership Working	13	15	16	3	9	43
Service Delivery	20	29	13	7	6	55
Vol and Comm sector	2	9	2	1	2	14
Workforce Development	17	11	15	17	14	57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>302</b>



## OPPORTUNITY

There were 108 comments made relating to opportunities that staff can see within a new operating model for early help. The comments spanned across all of the headlines themes and significantly so within the themes of service delivery, partnership working, facilities and workforce development.

The largest single category of comment related to the engagement of the voluntary and community sector and engaging these groups in the development and delivery of any new model. The theme of commissioning was also common and focused on being more targeted and intelligence led in how commissioning is used.

Related to these comments the second most common feedback related to partnership and multi-agency working. This focused on building better partnership working particularly between children's services, health, housing and adult services.

In moving towards a new operating model staff saw an opportunity to revisit how workforce development supported delivery. Inducting staff into the new way of working, processes and culture were all seen as being very important as was supporting the workforce to access training and workforce development opportunities.

Outcomes featured regularly within comments. In particular it was felt it would be helpful to move to having a single outcomes framework which staff can work to or can be tailored to the needs of each area. Staff also wanted to be able to easily quantify outcomes from early help interventions.

Better use of data was a consistent message. A clear and consistently agreed idea was that we should move to a multi-agency, partnership based consent model for early help. It was flagged that this needs to not only meet any legal requirements but also the spirit of consent based voluntary engagement.

The role of information was frequently reflected in feedback from staff. This centred on the common theme of “knowing what is out there” and what services were available to support families.

## STRENGTHS

Staff highlighted many strengths that they saw within the existing early help arrangements; in particular, the quality of our workforce and partnership working. Staff also placed value on the professional specialism’s held by staff across our workforce.

Culture was highlighted as a strength but it should be noted that this often related to culture in particular service areas and that there was a desire to see a more consistent and positive culture across the workforce.

Staff also highlighted that they view their work as being intelligence led currently and that there is a good ‘on the ground’ understanding of need and ‘what works’.

## WEAKNESSES

Having recognised strengths in the current early help arrangements staff also highlighted areas of weakness. The most common weakness identified related to “silo working” in particular relating to where staff are based by way of location or structure, duplication of work and a lack of responsiveness. It is felt that reduced resources have resulted in services retreating into silos at the cost of partnership working.

The next most common weakness was relating to the range of different database systems being used by services. It was felt this created inefficiencies, duplications of work and hindered good information sharing.

As well as being clearly highlighted as a strength workforce issues also arose as a weakness. Comments here related to the workforce development (ingrained out-dated practice, low take up of training, key services not “getting” early help, inconsistency of quality within workforce, lack of planning and use of skills) and the capacity and resilience of staff.



## THREATS

Understandably common threats identified by staff related to budgets, capacity to deliver and capacity to change. Another area of concern related to the workforce and in particular the loss of skilled and knowledgeable staff in any change process.

Workforce Development was highlighted as a common threat to the implementation of any new operating model. Concerns centred on staff not having the space, time or support to access necessary training and development opportunities. There was also a concern raised that should specialism's be reduced that the operational capacity of the workforce would suffer as a result. Further threats identified related to decision making and fear of losing the ability to discuss cases with team members if teams aren't based together.

Although most comments relating to co-location and locations for working were positive some threats were identified as well. These related to the location of where direct work with children, young people and families would take place. Staff questioned if the new model would mean people trying to work with 0-5s, teenagers, parents and young offenders all out of the same location.

Another threat identified related to leadership and management. Staff felt that there needed to be strong and clear leadership throughout any changes and in the implementation of any new operating model for it to have any chance of success.

## CASTLEGATE CONSULTATION - HAVE YOUR SAY!

### BACKGROUND

The Executive decision in October 2014 to maintain services at Castlegate while exploring different options for service delivery called for a fresh analysis of young peoples needs when accessing services.

A previous consultation carried out in December 2014 heard from 81 young people and provided decision makers with a services blueprint written by service users. The services blueprint (appendix I) provides organisations with the building blocks required to deliver a service that not only engages our most hard to reach young people, but ensures service users thoughts and ideas are at the heart of how services are co-designed.

Following feedback gathered during its evaluation by the Young Inspectors and to suit the target audience, the 'Have Your Say' consultation used a different methodology to the December 2014 consultation. It had been designed to capture current Castlegate service user's voice. We know from our client profiling that many users are put off by written forms and 'flowery' language and respond well to a straight talking approach that provides an opportunity to discuss issues with their peers.

In partnership with the Show Me That I Matter panel, a piece of work was designed that had a particular emphasis on encouraging participation in a process that was easy to navigate. It was crucial that the process could be understood by all service users including those with the most challenging barriers to learning. It was also important that the process stimulated healthy debate and sparked an interest in looking for solutions.

A total of 131, 16-25 year olds gave their time to the 'Have Your Say' consultation and 19 young people participated in either a discussion group or targeted group work.

## SUMMARY

The following report will describe the methodology for engagement and report on the top five post 16 services voted for by young people. This report will also inform readers of the most valued methods of service delivery and discuss alternative ways of delivering services to the clients who need them most. Key themes from discussion groups will also be presented together with the most popular times to access services.

## METHODOLOGY

- A 'pop up' consultation space was available through-out the consultation period using a visual engagement tool to record young people's opinions on essential services, methods of delivery and preferred opening times.
- Facilitated discussion groups ran throughout the consultation period.
- Targeted group work unpicking key themes gathered via the facilitated discussion groups.
- Online consultation and an open access email address to engage users who are more confident giving their views online.
- The consultation was launched on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August and ran for four weeks ending on the Monday 21<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

## RESULTS

131 young people were asked to vote on their top five services and rank them in order of importance:

Name of service	Rank in order of importance
Help with somewhere to live	1 (30%)
Mental health and emotional wellbeing	2 (13%)
CV writing	3 (8%)
Sexual health/ looking for work/ apprenticeships	4 (6%)
Talking to a trusted person	5 (5%)

Young people were asked to cross reference particular services and choose from the following methods of service and delivery. Participants were asked to consider alternatives to face to face delivery. Here are the results:

Type of service delivery method	Rank in order of popularity
Face to face appointments	1
Face to face drop-in	2
Telephone	3
Website/ online forum	4
Text	5
Apps	6
Facebook/Twitter	7

Overall a high value was placed on face to face delivery of services with nearly every participant voting for face to face drop in or appointments against each service. For many young people appointments were popular because they could be sure of whom they were going to see. This echoes the December 2014 consultation which reported that ‘knowing who you are going to see’ is very important to service users. Another common reason given for choosing appointments is that young people appreciate the time to prepare and ‘think about what they wanted to say’. Often participants reported that they found it much easier to express themselves in a face to face setting and were unsure how they could effectively communicate with a practitioner using alternatives methods. Comments such as ‘I don’t know what to say’ and ‘how do you know you are talking to a trustworthy person?’ were common. It would appear that most young people talked to were cautious when it came to communicating online and were very safety conscious when using the internet.

In general the following services were reported as the most likely to be used by telephone or website forums/online without needing an initial face to face meeting.

- Help to look for work / apprenticeships
- Benefits advice
- Help to look at career options
- Debt and money
- Interview skills
- Finding the right course/training
- CV writing

Ideas about using online services to provide an initial checklist or eligibility test prior to being signposted to face to face services were popular.

It is important to note that the majority of young people were open to using alternative methods of accessing services after a face to face meeting had taken place. Many young people felt it was difficult to build the necessary trust required when using particular services unless you were meeting face to face. The reason typically given was that, if a service required a client to 'explain' or 'discuss problems' then sitting with a practitioner really helped.

Apps and Facebook/twitter hardly received any votes and not many young people consulted felt they had much value when accessing services. When this was unpicked during group work the following reasons were gathered:

- In general young people change their mobiles and numbers often.
- Expensive devices and phone contracts are often viewed as a luxury expense.
- Some clients don't have access to the internet at home.
- Apps can cost money so this is seen as a barrier.

In discussion groups lots of young people explained the importance of 'central places' to go where they could access computers, the telephone and the internet for free.

A key theme among many young people gathered during discussions and group work, was if you had to 'tell your story' or 'explain your problems' then the best way to do this was in a room face to face with a practitioner. However if you were learning a new skill or obtaining information, then platforms such as forums, Vlogs, webinars or facetime could all be used to deliver these types of services.

We asked young people the most popular time for people to access services:

Weekday 4-7pm came out as the most popular time. It is worth commenting that there is in general a preference for weekday access over weekend times but votes were very evenly spread.

## EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, participants in the consultation were able to understand that the challenging political environment dictated the need for frank discussions with young people and ongoing engagement with service users. Service delivery must change radically in the future and if services are to make a successful transition, then harnessing the expertise of our service users is critical to its success.

Overwhelmingly, young people valued the opportunity to express their views and again demonstrated their ability to provide valuable information to decision makers.

The findings tell us that trust is a key ingredient for delivering an effective service and that young people need to be able to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a safe place. The range of services that young people voted for, demands that any future model considered, provides a raft of support for our most vulnerable young people. Creative thinking will be required with moving forward to co-design a viable offer. Any new model must provide clear pathways and outcomes for young people, and work in partnership with the voluntary sector and local community.