

WHAT'S YOUR STORY 2011?

USER VOICE

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN
STOP RE-OFFENDING



740

QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED
BY YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS
ENGLAND & WALES

175 YOUNG PEOPLE IN
36 FOCUS GROUPS &
2 CASE STUDIES

25 REPS ELECTED TO
ATTEND ANNUAL
YOUTH JUSTICE
CONVENTION

**MORE THAN
HALF (55%)
OF THE
YOUNG
PEOPLE
SURVEYED
SAID THEY
DIDN'T HAVE
ANY
ROLE MODEL**

FRIENDS DO NOT
FEATURE MUCH AS
SUPPORT
NETWORKS WITH

7%

CITING THEM AS
ROLE MODELS

**"I GOT MATES
BUT YOU JUST
DONT KNOW WHO
TO TRUST."**

**"I DON'T WANT TO
BE GETTING CLOSE TO
NO ONE."**

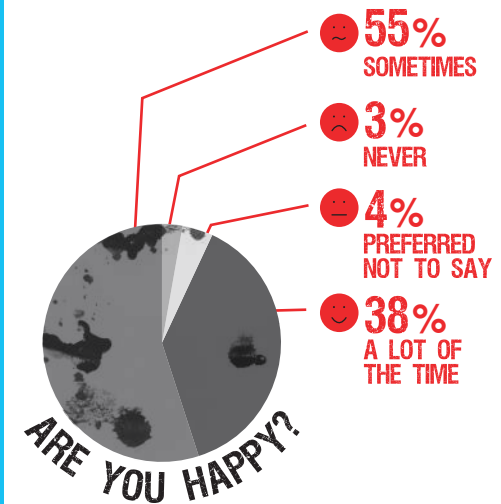
**"EVERYONE MAKES A MISTAKE IN THEIR LIFE. I SHOULDN'T
BE JUDGED FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE FOR MINE."**

User voice
youth rep.
17

USER VOICE, A CHARITY LED BY EX-OFFENDERS, SPOKE WITH 740
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-21 WHO HAD EXPERIENCE OF THE YOUTH
JUSTICE SYSTEM. WE ASKED THEM:

- 1 WHAT TRIGGERED THEIR OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR?
- 2 WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICES?
- 3 WHAT COULD PREVENT THEIR RE-OFFENDING?

**"LIFE ISN'T
HAPPY MAN.
NOT IN THIS
SORT OF
ENVIRONMENT.
THE
ENVIRONMENT
IS EVIL MAN"**



**"EVERY TIME I GET CLOSE
TO SOMEONE THEY PUSH
ME AWAY."**

Experiences of foster care.



78%

HAVE A
GOOD
OR VERY
GOOD
RELATION-
SHIP
WITH THEIR
FAMILY

**DON'T WANT
TO WORRY
THEM**

Although many
described being
close to their
mothers and
families, they didn't
turn to them when
they got into trouble

**JUST
MUM**

Most young
people
interviewed
do not live in
traditional
families.

HOW DO YOU COPE?

MANY APPEAR TO TURN TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL AS A COPING MECHANISM. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, ALCOHOL AND DRUG CONSUMPTION OFTEN APPEARS TO TRIGGER THEIR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

ALMOST A THIRD OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED WERE AWARE THAT ALCOHOL WAS A TRIGGER FOR THEIR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

81%

CONSUMED ALCOHOL

HAD TAKEN DRUGS

74%

16%

THOUGHT THEY HAD A DRUGS PROBLEM.

THE LINE BETWEEN FIGHTING IN ORDER TO STAND UP FOR ONESELF,

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR IS VERY BLURRED TO A NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

"WHEN I *DRINK* I DO SHIT THAT I WOULDN'T NORMALLY DO WHEN I WAS SOBER.

WHEN YOU ARE DRINKING YOU COMMIT A *CRIME* WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT."

"GOING THROUGH A ROUGH PATCH... SO I TAKE MY *DRUGS* (A JOINT). I JUST ENJOY IT... IT GIVES ME MORE *CONFIDENCE* AND STUFF. IT MAKES YOU FEEL *BETTER*."

WHAT TRIGGERS OFFENDING?

THE TRIGGERS MOST FREQUENTLY IDENTIFIED BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE WERE:

47% MONEY

40% FRIENDS

31% ALCOHOL

28% FAMILY

27% DRUGS

27% GANGS

"I'VE SEEN MY STEP DAD BATTER MY MUM. I BATTERED HIM A FEW TIMES MYSELF. THAT IS WHERE IT [THE ANGER] HAS MAINLY COME FROM."

"MONEY... ANGER... SELF PROTECTION..."

"THE ADRENALINE, THE MONEY MAKING ... YOU ARE MAKING MONEY OUT OF EVEN ENJOYING YOURSELF."

WHAT ABOUT YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICES? (YOS)

Did the YOS make a difference?

NO
DIFFERENCE
16%

HUGE
DIFFERENCE
18%

REASONABLE
DIFFERENCE
36%

“THEY HAVE TALKED ABOUT
CONSEQUENCES WHICH
MADE ME THINK ABOUT
STUFF BEFORE I DO IT.
NOW I THINK BEFORE I DO
SOMETHING STUPID.”

YOT
STRUCTURED
MY LIFE

MANY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

SAID THEY *DID NOT FEEL*
THAT PRISON HAD A
POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR
OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR.
ALTHOUGH
SOME FOUND IT HAD
IMPROVED THEIR
EDUCATION AND AGAIN
THEY LIKED THE *ROUTINE*
AND *DISCIPLINE*.

Certificate

“If you have got more
knowledge behind you,
like more certificates, you
have got more chance of
being able to find a job or
find summat like you
enjoy doing.”



THOSE WHO HAD BEEN
TO YOUNG OFFENDER
INSTITUTES SEVERAL
TIMES COMPLAINED THAT

EDUCATION IS
BELOW
THEIR
LEVEL

DRUG COUNSELLING WAS THE BEST

The majority of the young
people have experienced ‘*help
with drugs*’ although most of
them don’t identify their drug
use as a problem. However,
many young people said that of
all the services they’d been in
contact with, drug counselling
was the best.

YOU CAN TALK OPENLY. THEY DONT PRESSURE YOU.

“HE TELLS YOU ABOUT
THE **EFFECTS** OF ALL THE
DIFFERENT **DRUGS**.
VERY HELPFUL.
YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT
YOU SMOKE.
YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT
IS IN THE STUFF.”

THE SAME BACKGROUND AS ME

“I WOULD HAVE
FOUND IT MORE
HELPFUL IF THERE
HAD BEEN MORE
PEOPLE WHO HAD
HAD THE SAME
BACKGROUND
AS ME.”

“I FIND IT EASIER WHEN
THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED
WITH ME UNDERSTOOD
AND HAD BEEN THROUGH
THE SAME THINGS THAT I
HAD BEEN THROUGH.”
(FEMALE)

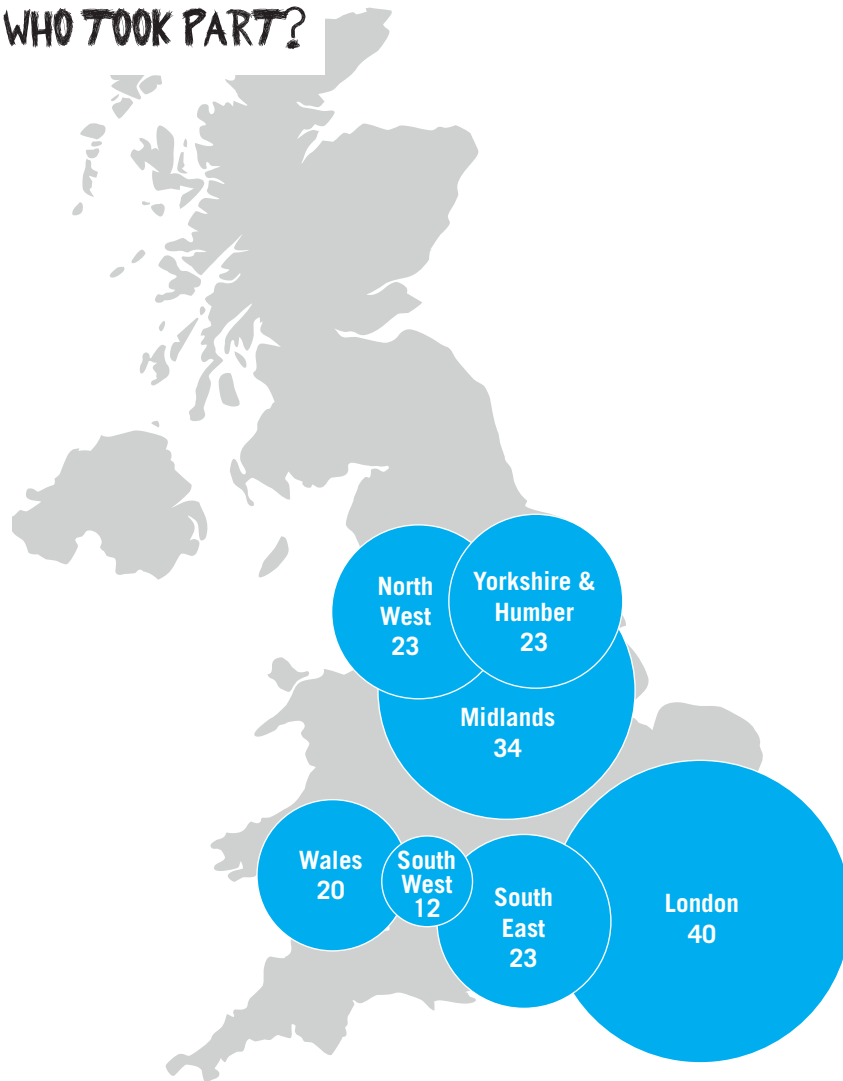
THEY APPEARED TO WANT
TO LEARN AND TO BE
DIFFERENT WHEN THEY
CAME OUT, BUT THEY
FELT THAT THE
OPPORTUNITIES WEREN’T
BEING PROVIDED.

“THEY TRY AND
GET YOU TO GO ON A
TRAINING SCHEME WITH
SOMETHING YOU DON’T
WANT TO DO.
I DON’T WANT TO BE
A CARPENTER OR A
PLUMBER.”

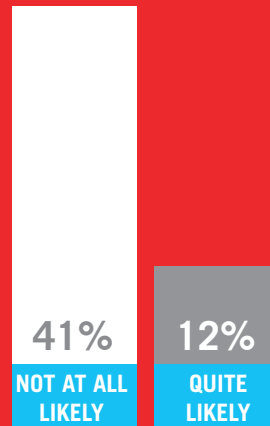
WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

YOUNG PEOPLE WERE KEEN FOR THE YOS TO PROVIDE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR EDUCATION AND GET MORE QUALIFICATIONS AS THEY APPRECIATED THIS COULD INCREASE THEIR CHANCES OF GETTING A JOB.

WHO TOOK PART?



WILL YOU RE-OFFEND?



A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE CONFERENCE

16 OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WERE INVITED TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT. ON 5 DECEMBER 2011, THEY PRESENTED THE ACTION PLAN FROM THE PROJECT AND DISCUSSED HOW TO TAKE IT FORWARD WITH MPS AND PEERS INCLUDING PRISONS MINISTER, CRISPIN BLUNT.

DETTHERENTS

HIGHER CHANCE OF GETTING CAUGHT

28%

HIGHER SENTENCE

33%

FAMILY DISSAPPROVAL

36%

SERVICE USERS + SERVICE PROVIDERS = THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 A USER VOICE CONFERENCE
- 2 OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME PEER MENTORS.
- 3 LOOK AT CRIMINAL RECORDS POLICY
- 4 MORE RESOURCES FOR YOT'S.
- 5 POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION FOR EX-OFFENDERS.
- 6 GIVE YOUNG OFFENDERS MORE OF A VOICE.
- 7= PERSONALISED SUPPORT
- 7= BETTER LISTENERS.
- 9 SPECIALISED TRAINING FOR POLICE
- 10 FOCUS ON POSITIVES

"THE NEXT STEP IS TO SEE WHAT THEY ARE ACTUALLY GOING TO DO. WE'VE DONE WHAT WE CAN. IT'S UP TO THEM NOW."

(USER VOICE YOUTH REP)