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youth

promoting best practice with young people at risk

External Evaluation: Young Voices Project

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About the Author

Rodney Green has 25 years experience in the design, delivery and management of services to young people and those who work with them at a local, national and international level. Prior to establishing an independent consultancy practice in 1998, Rodney was the General Secretary of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and worked for the Youth Council for Northern Ireland as Field Officer to the Trustees of the Spirit of Enniskillen.

As an independent consultant, Rodney has been commissioned by a range of government departments, statutory agencies and voluntary and community organisations to undertake a wide variety of work in external evaluation and assessment, research and development, project management, training and facilitation, strategic and operational planning and financial assessment.

Rodney has particular experience of involving young people in decision-making processes as a practitioner, manager and on a research/consultancy basis. He has been involved in major research initiatives including 'Taking the Initiative' and 'Turning Up the Sound', facilitated and managed various consultative and youth involvement projects including the Young People's Advisory Forum (CYPU), undertaken evaluations of youth participation, citizenship and community relations initiatives and produced associated written resources.

1.0 Background and Introduction

1.1. Include Youth

Include Youth is an independent organisation established in 1979, which actively promotes the best interests of, and best practice with, young people in need or at risk. These aims are achieved through the development and promotion of resources; provision of training, information and support to practitioners and organisations; activities to influence policy-making and public opinion concerning young people.

The work of Include Youth includes:

- **Policy Advocacy** which seeks to engage directly with those most affected by policy initiatives and, in turn, influence policy and service developers with well researched and carefully prepared submissions
- **The Give and Take Scheme**, which works to enhance the employment and training skills of young people (aged 16-21) – building on self-esteem and enabling them to access mainstream opportunities
- **The Young Voices Project**, which supports excluded and at risk young people (aged 16-21) with experience of the criminal justice system to become involved in decision-making processes impacting on their lives
- The **Practitioners' Forum**, which supports practitioners working with young people to engage with policy initiatives as well as share experiences
- The **Training and Information Service**, which meets requests for information, provides tailored training and relevant workshops, seminars and conferences
- The **Looked After Children in Education (LACE) Project**, which works to improve the education experiences and outcomes of young people in the care of the State.

1.2 Background to the Young Voices Project

Against the background of the increasing dominant theme of involving young people in decision-making, Include Youth established the Young Voices Project in 2002, initially as a small pilot and then as a demonstration project between 2004-2007.

Young Voices is a way of delivering participative democracy to marginalised young people in Northern Ireland. Its main aim is to support young people at risk or with experience of the criminal justice system, as well as young people marginalised for a variety of reasons, to become involved in decision-making processes which impact on their lives, particularly in social welfare, education and criminal justice matters.

The Young Voices Project works with a range of groups of young people in the community and both juvenile and youth custody facilities in Northern Ireland – Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre Northern Ireland (JJC) and Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre (YOC). There are currently three main areas of work undertaken:

- **Custody work:** has two main focuses – internal (to the regime they experience) and external (policy and service planning consultations), with the latter being the main focus
- **Policing:** working in North Belfast to improve relationships between young people and the police supporting both to build their capacity to engage genuinely with each other and to influence wider policing policy and practices
- **Community participation:** works with young people at risk or who have had experience of the criminal justice system, or marginalised for a variety of other reasons, to become involved in decision making processes which impact on their lives.

In December 2008, Include Youth received funding from the 'Youth Council Northern Ireland (YCNi) Short-term Funding Programme 2008-2009' to support them to 'consolidate all aspects of Young Voices work'. In addition the project sought to ensure the governance of Include Youth was informed by the views of young people through facilitating young people's advisory groups within all projects and areas of Include Youth, supporting staff training in this area and attendance at advisory groups by key staff and Board members. The main outcomes of the YCNi Programme which the project aimed to meet were 'contributing positively to community and society' and 'living in a society that respects these rights'. Include Youth also supported the project from its own depleting resources and planned to seek longer term resources from other sources.

The Young Voices Project is unique in Northern Ireland. The project works in partnership with other participation and consultation initiatives such as the NI Youth Forum, Children's Law Centre and the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) as well as with statutory agencies including the Youth Justice Agency (YJA), Children and Young People's Unit (CYPu, of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI). Include Youth, through Young Voices, are members of the Participation Network.

1.3 Aims and Outcomes of the Project

- **To support young people in custody and/or in the community to be involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.**

1.3.1 Outcomes, outputs and measurements for the project

1. **Increased numbers of young people at risk or have had experience of the criminal justice system involved in decision-making processes.** It was anticipated the project would recruit young people and facilitate their involvement in public policy consultations and direct engagement with decision-makers. Measurements included: 30 sessions and 85 interactions with young people, monthly evaluations and 90% of Include Youth's policy positions reflecting the views of young people
2. **Increased knowledge of young people in specific areas** e.g. rights, policing, health, governance and recruitment/selection. Measurements included a minimum of five information/training sessions undertaken and young people involved in any recruitment and selection during the period

3. **Public bodies directly engage with young people who are affected by their services** and these were to be arranged/facilitated (where necessary) by the project. Measurements included six meetings with decision-makers and feedback given to young people on the impact of their views
4. **Improved relations between young people and PSNI** achieved by supporting young people in North Belfast and beyond to engage with police, policing and community issues in their local community. Measurements included greater confidence in police by young people and vice versa and attitudinal surveys were highlighted as the mechanism to achieve this
5. **Improved self-esteem and confidence of young people** achieved by young people reporting they were treated with respect and their views listened to and valued. Measurement was through attitudinal surveys undertaken with young people as part of the evaluation
6. **Governance of Include Youth is informed by the views of young people** to be achieved by facilitating young people's involvement in all Include Youth's projects/areas, the training of staff and Board in governance with young people and advisory groups attended by key Board/staff. Measurement was through four meetings of the advisory groups, feedback and recommendations to Board and associated minutes of meetings produced
7. **Review and agree participation model with at risk or in need young people** achieved through establishing an evaluation steering group to include young people, appointing of an independent evaluator and support and participate in independent evaluation of the models of practice. The main measurement was the publication of an independent evaluation.

1.4 The Evaluation

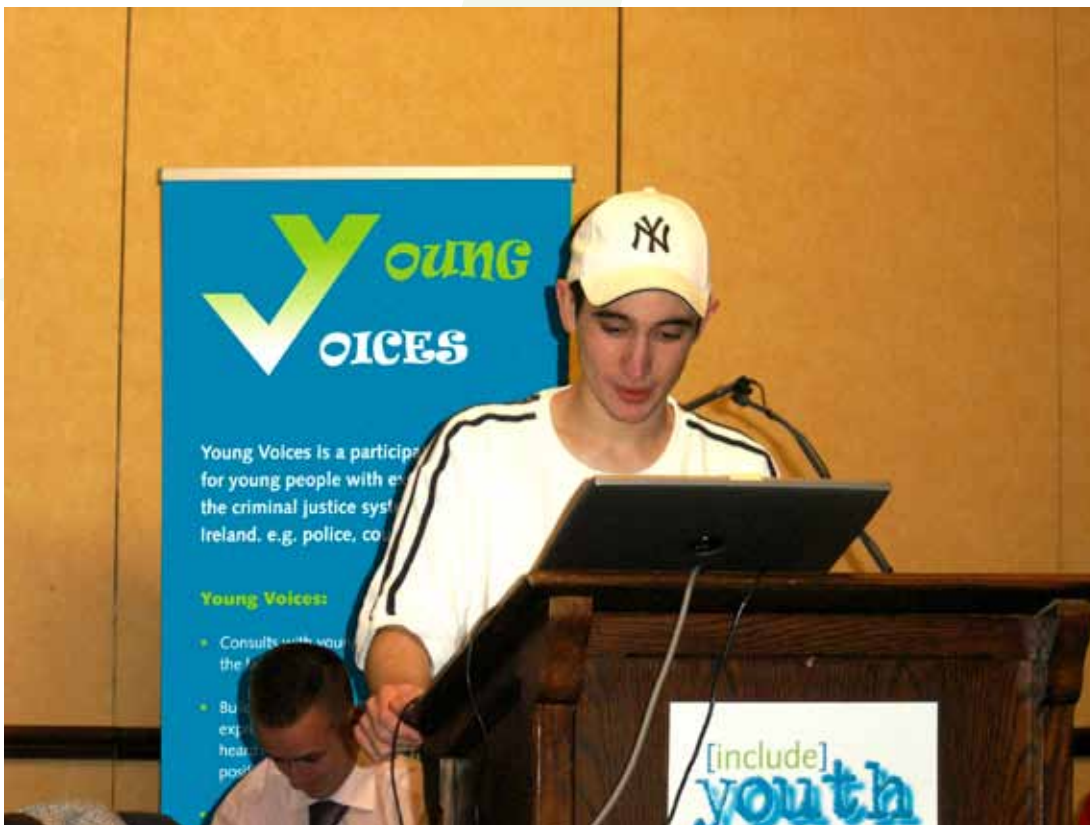
In January 2009, RG Consultants NI Ltd was commissioned by Include Youth to undertake an external evaluation of the 'Young Voices Project'. The main purpose of the evaluation, as agreed in the planning phase, was to verify the quantitative information and qualitative feedback through the production of an evaluation report.

The agreed methodology for the evaluation included:

- **Desk research:** reviewing all available project information and evaluations
- **Focus groups with participants:** two in the community setting engaged in work with the police and two in custody settings [five conducted (three custody/15 young people and two community/eight young people) and informal discussions with four young people/two parents in a third community setting]
- **Interviews:** semi-structured interviews with the two Young Voices Co-ordinators
- **Telephone interviews:** semi-structured interviews with representatives of six organisations who engaged with the project [six personal interviews were conducted (three re: custody, three re: policing) and 17 telephone interviews/email responses (seven re: policing, three re: community, five re: custody work and two overall)]

- **Focus group with advisory group:** established through 'Give and Take' Scheme to inform the development of the scheme and Include Youth's work (attended by eight young people/four staff)
- **Reporting:** presenting a draft report to the organisation for discussion and producing this final report.

The application form to the YCNI Programme outlined further methodology for the evaluation: based on previous experience of staff involved, it was agreed not to conduct attitudinal surveys with young people as these had proved unsuccessful and, given self-evaluation was already being conducted by staff on a monthly basis (or as and when a session or project was completed), the evaluation was to highlight the mechanisms used by way of examples of good practice.



"Young people need to be seen and heard"
Young Person

2.0 Young Voices: current settings, context and work

This section of the report, and the evaluation itself, provides a flavour of the work undertaken by the project in the past six months. It is important to highlight from the outset the outcomes of this work are the result of the building of longer term relationships between project staff and young people, project staff and organisational representatives (e.g. community workers, police officers, personnel in custody settings, etc.) and project staff/Include Youth and decision-makers (e.g. senior civil servants/police officers, Government Ministers, NI Assembly representatives, etc.).

Furthermore, the 'nature of the voice' is two-fold: supporting and enabling young people to directly engage with decision-makers at various levels and advocating on their behalf with organisational representatives and decision-makers in a variety of voluntary and statutory organisations and Government Departments.

2.1 Custody Work

The funding enabled Young Voices to continue to work in both youth custody facilities in Northern Ireland: Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre Northern Ireland (JJCNI) and Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre (YOC). The work had two main focuses – external (policy and service planning consultations) and a lesser focus on internal (to the regime they experience).

Young Voices has worked within the JJCNI for six years, initially when the JJCNI was located in Rathgael where Young Voices supported young people to respond to the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland CJINI Inspection Report, policy issues and to have some (albeit limited) involvement in the development of the new Woodlands JJC and wider internal and external matters. This work continued to develop and strengthen to the extent that 'Young Voices' was built-in to the weekly timetable each Wednesday afternoon; one session each month is devoted to more informal activity by way of rewarding their participation in the project. For the past two years the project worked with young people in House Unit Four (although previously was based in two different units). Participation in Young Voices varies dependent on the number of young people in custody as this fluctuates (on average between six and eight young people participate each week) and their willingness to engage with the project (although this appeared to be less of an issue).

The expansion of Young Voices into Hydebank Wood YOC was a more recent development. Include Youth and the YOC Governor agreed to a six month pilot from October 2008 - March 2009. The work involved engaging with the staff and young people in units Willow 1 and 2 (which accommodate under 18 year olds). The work took place every Tuesday afternoon, with the Young Voices Co-ordinator spending approximately 45 minutes on each landing, and involved a mixture of group discussion with the young people and more informal activity, where this could be arranged (there were difficulties arranging this due to Health & Safety regulations and scheduling additional activity sessions in the gym). Numbers varied for similar reasons as in the JJC setting; on average six young people were involved in the group session on Willow 1 and eight in Willow 2.

The nature of the consultations and group work sessions undertaken in JJCNI varied in response to a number of factors: issues raised by young people, direct requests from organisations and

public bodies to ascertain the views of young people and issues which Include Youth were focusing on. The sessions were facilitated by the Young Voices Co-ordinator and on occasions, involved staff from organisations undertaking consultations e.g. Law Commission, NIO Community Safety Unit, BIG Lottery, Criminal Justice Board, YJA, or facilitating youth rights group work/advocacy sessions e.g. Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC), NICCY, Include Youth.

Both settings focused largely on similar issues e.g. YJA corporate plan, knife crime and related issues, drugs and alcohol, youth advocacy, young men and conflict, youth rights, establishing a Network for Youth, etc. however some work differed between the two settings e.g. Family Visits in Prison, VOYPIC Advocacy Project (YOC) and Young People and Bail, Community Safety, BIG Thinking Consultation (JJCNI). An overview of the consultation and other group work sessions undertaken in both settings during the past six months is attached as Appendix One.

2.2 Policing

The work in North Belfast which centred on improving relationships between young people and the police, supporting both to build their capacity to engage genuinely and constructively with each other, moved forward on a number of fronts. Include Youth North Belfast Young Voices (NBYV)/Co-ordinator was the catalyst or intermediary between community groups working with young people in different areas of North Belfast and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The approach to Young Voices was often made by the PSNI who were keen to both improve relationships and to address policing concerns/matters. The engagement with the police varied dependent on: the needs of the young people/community and those of the PSNI in a particular area/setting, police/community attitudes towards the work/project and the availability of resources.

In a number of areas there was ongoing work with groups of young people and police. The developing format for this work concentrated, in the initial phases, on the building of relationships at three levels:

1. between the NBYV Co-ordinator and the community group/young people
2. between the NBYV Co-ordinator and the PSNI (at various levels), and
3. between the community group/young people and the PSNI (particularly neighbourhood police, but also with response officers and area commanders).

Once the foundation stones were established, often through informal activity sessions and residential team-work activity, it became possible to move into more focused group work discussion addressing important issues to young people and to those of the PSNI. These discussions and engagements were reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis with the young people/their community workers and with police personnel to assess their effectiveness and to plan next steps.

Cliftonville Community Centre: The NBYV Co-ordinator supported work in this centre for 18 months. For the past six months, a core group of eight young people met most weeks and work focused on exploring a range of issues e.g. anti-social behaviour, attacks on emergency services, rioting and interface issues, etc.

Newington (Two-parks Detached Youth Work Project): The NBYV Co-ordinator has supported work with young women in Newington for approximately 12 months, initially six were

in the group, and now four remain involved. During this phase of the project, the young women continued to build their relationships with the neighbourhood police, were involved in meetings with the three senior police personnel (North Belfast Area Commanders) with reference to the actions/ behaviours of police officers dealing with two policing incidents and the impact of the actions of 'response officers' on neighbourhood policing and resulting community relations, met with the Police Ombudsman and Information Directorate to find out about their work and discuss the young women's experiences of policing issues and participated in the training of new policing recruits at Garnerville (further details on the Response Performance School and Youth Consultation Events detailed below).

Building Bridges Forum (based at the First Step Drop-in Centre, York Street who have worked with Young Voices for approximately 2½ years): The Building Bridges Forum is a partnership between young people of York Road/Tiger's Bay, the First Step Drop-in Centre and York Road Neighbourhood Police, facilitated by Young Voices. The forum exists to let young people have a direct voice specifically concerning policing and community safety issues. Over the past eight months, the NBYV Co-ordinator facilitated engagement between six young people and neighbourhood police supporting informal and residential activity as well as participation in frank discussions, creative workshops and fact finding trips.

A major achievement was the publication of 'Changing Faces at the Interface' leaflet which focused on rioting and its consequences on self, family, friends, police and the wider community as well as providing a young person's perspective and suggesting alternative activities. The success of the project led to new members becoming involved in the group.



UNBCEP (Upper North Belfast Community Empowerment Programme): The NBYV Co-ordinator worked with a core group of six young men to begin the relationship building process, to explore what they would be interested in doing and to identify issues they wished to discuss with the local neighbourhood police. It is anticipated this process will lead to building relationships with the neighbourhood police and direct engagement between young people and the police on issues identified by the young people as important.

In addition to the above ongoing work with young people through the above community groups, the NBYV Co-ordinator was actively advocating on behalf of young people through engagement with various police ranks in North Belfast and at Garnerville as well as with District Policing Partnerships and Community Police Liaison Committees around a range of matters. Some of this work led to direct engagement between young people and police; the main work is summarised below:

Youth Consultation Events, PSNI (Garnerville): As part of Include Youth's desire to extend the work beyond North Belfast, they attended the Police Community Fair at Garnerville to inform new recruits about Young Voices and promote a more positive aspect of youth. Additionally the NBYV Co-ordinator was invited to be one of the facilitators at Youth Consultation Events with new recruits at Garnerville. During the past four months, three consultations were held and four young women from Newington were involved in these sessions (at the last event, four young people/two staff from Include Youth's Give and Take Scheme were also involved). The sessions explored issues such as police procedures, stereotyping of young people, attitudes and behaviours and utilised role plays, group discussions and an opportunity for both young people and the police recruits to challenge/be challenged. The events themselves have evolved and developed based on feedback from young people/recruits e.g. new role plays introduced, neighbourhood police now involved, etc.

Response Performance School (PSNI, York Road): The NBYV Co-ordinator was invited by the Area Commander of York Road to present a challenging and alternative perspective from the voices of young people with regard to engagement by police/individual officers with young people. Five hour-long sessions were facilitated with approximately 20 police officers involved in each. The sessions were designed to inform, educate and challenge police response officers about NBYV, youth engagement, attitudes and stereotypes and best practice and highlighted the link between response and neighbourhood policing in relation to policing practice.

Upper and Lower North Belfast Community Police Liaison Committees (UNBCPLC and LNBCPLC): The NBYV Co-ordinator regularly attends committee meetings of both Community Police Liaison Committees in the North Belfast area during which there is an opportunity to advocate on behalf of young people, to inform the committees of the work of the project and to present a positive message of young people and police working together to solve problems. There is an overwhelming desire in the area to establish a cross community grouping of young people to feed into policing/community matters on a longer-term basis.

Principal District Policing Partnership (DPP): The NBYV Co-ordinator and Include Youth's Director each participated in a Forum to discuss meaningful youth involvement/participation and accessing young people as well as presenting a positive perspective for youth around underage drinking and anti-social behaviour at two events in the community.

Work in Down District: The NBYV Co-ordinator facilitated an all day event organised by Down DPP focusing on intergenerational issues and policing. The event was attended by 13 young

people/14 older people and enabled people to challenge stereotypes and attitudes, address community safety issues and explore how they could work together in the future. Through the Down Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG) the NBYV Co-ordinator supported a group of ten young people/one youth worker to engage with the police on similar issues and to identify possibilities for areas of work/sharing of attitudes and experiences in the future.

2.3 Community Participation

In the past ad hoc community groups operated with young people who had experience of the criminal justice system, or were considered to be at risk of entering the criminal justice system, to enable them to make a contribution to the issues that affect their lives. Resourcing implications meant Include Youth was unable to maintain regular groups, and it was the intention (even in this brief period of funding) to support two community-based groups in Belfast and Southern Health Board areas, as well as continuing ad hoc arrangements for specific work. The following work was undertaken in forwarding community participation:

Early Intervention Projects: Include Youth has a three year contract with Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) through their Child and Parent Support (CAPS) project (in Belfast and Southern Health Trust Areas) and with Extern through their Strength to Strength (S2S) project based in Newtownards and the Western Health Trust Area. The involvement of Young Voices is to provide a voice to young people and their parents to enable them to provide feedback on the early intervention services and activities provided. This work was facilitated by the Young Voices Co-ordinator.

The work initially focused on the building of relationships with staff, parents and young people in the two organisations and explaining the purpose/role of Young Voices involvement. Engagement with each project was tailored to suit specific needs e.g. within S2S where group approaches are more prevalent, the Co-ordinator attended residentials with young people in each area and in one area conducted family visits whereas in the other attended the Parent Support Group and within CAPS where individual practices are more prevalent, the Co-ordinator obtained feedback individually and in small groups from young people and conducted interviews/focus groups with the parents involved. Specific areas discussed included: referral process and understanding reasons for referral, benefits/impact of the project, improvements/changes required and how this differs from other services provided. In total, the Co-ordinator worked with 47 young people aged between 10 and 14 and 15 parents of the young people involved in the programmes.

ESCAPE Programme (Emergency Services, Community Awareness Partnership Experience): This was a 12 week programme designed to create opportunities for community participation in crime diversion. It worked with eight young people from each of two different backgrounds/communities (Wolfhill Centre, Ligoniel and Thornbush, Mid-Skegoniel) on a single identity basis on a programme mirrored in each community, prior to their engagement on a full contact basis. The programme was designed to examine attitudes, values and principles of, not only each other's cultural groups, but their feeling toward authority figures, especially the emergency services. The second phase of the programme enabled the young people to engage with the three emergency services (Fire, Ambulance and Police) individually and collectively to ask questions, see equipment used and explore attitudes and experiences. The group participated in an overnight residential involving team-building and to evaluate the programme. This work was led by the Project Worker from the Wolfhill Centre supported by the NBYV Co-ordinator and is currently being followed up with 'ESCAPE 2', working with 12 young people from Ligoniel on a single identity basis to facilitate the 'policing element' of the programme.

Bridging the Gap: During this period of funding the NBYV Co-ordinator continued to work on the 'Bridging the Gap' Project, an inter-generational initiative supported by Westland Community Centre, Age Concern NI, Clanmil Housing and Include Youth/NBYV. The young people worked with the Co-ordinator for 19 months with the inter-generational engagement taking place over the past nine months. During the past four months young people met once with a group of older people to reflect on their experience of the project, which focused on intergenerational work and exploring the work of Young Voices and negative stereotyping of young people and to share information with older people from the sheltered housing scheme.

Interface Initiatives: the NBYV Co-ordinator was involved in supporting a number of other interface initiatives including a:

- Meeting with City Council, Police and Community Representatives exploring anti-social behaviour, cleaning up the park and getting youth to 'buy-in' to this as vital members of the community
- Cross Community Youth Conference 'Face to Interface' to help young people look at reasons why they engage in violence/rioting/fighting particularly at interfaces (attended by 40 young people), the findings will be written up by the Institute of Conflict Research (ICR) and circulated in the different areas
- Residential with eight young protestant women from four different interfaces to participate in team-building and various activities around lobbying and interface issues (filmed/ supported by Public Achievement).

2.4 Advisory Groups

The main consultation mechanism utilised by Include Youth to ensure young people have a say in the development of the Give and Take Scheme (it's main direct provision for marginalised young people), is through meetings of local advisory groups and a central advisory group. The local advisory groups are based in each of the four regions where Include Youth's offices are located (Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast and Derry), meet every six to eight weeks and normally involve six young people; the central advisory group meets twice per year, normally in Belfast and involves two representatives from each of the five HSCT areas.

At these meetings young people and project staff work together to review and evaluate services provided and to identify ways to enhance them. Young people are also trained to participate in recruitment and selection processes for all relevant staff working for Include Youth. The central advisory group consists of Board members, staff and representatives of the local advisory groups to ensure the young people's views inform organisational decision-making.

3.0 Evaluation Findings: the benefits of the work of Young Voices

The evaluation findings are measured against the outcomes, outputs and measurements set for the project as agreed with the YCNI Short-term Funding Programme 2008-2009. The main aim of the project was 'to support young people in custody and/or in the community to be involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives'. The funding was to enable Include Youth to 'consolidate all aspects of Young Voices work' and to ensure the governance of Include Youth was informed by the views of young people.

As part of the evaluation process, there was direct engagement with 27 young people involved in custody and community settings and in the work with the PSNI. The various groups of young people highlighted a variety of reasons why they should have a voice as it was their right, issues affected them most and they needed to get their views across and improve things for other young people. They thought it was particularly important for marginalised or excluded young people to have a voice.

"We're people too."

"No-one listens to us and they won't listen to people who come behind us either."

"We have our own rights as well."

"To see what you are thinking."

"Speak up if we have problems or hassles."

"So many issues around young people and they effect us more than others so we should be deciding things."

"We need to get our side across."

*"It will make things better for people younger than you – 'coz of s*** stuff we have to deal with now so they'll get it better."*

NB: Additional quotations to evidence findings can be found in Appendix Two.

3.1 Relationship Building and Staff Support

Those involved in the evaluation were very appreciative of the support provided by the project and by the staff involved in project delivery. People highlighted the positive way in which the project was well structured and delivered and were very complimentary about the commitment and professionalism of the Co-ordinators and the way in which they supported, encouraged and enabled young people to have a voice and to challenge young people, organisations and decision-makers through the process of engagement. The critical role of relationship building at various levels was central to enabling 'Young Voices' to succeed. The nature of the relationship between young people and the Co-ordinator within the custody setting was considered to be different to those of other professionals so the type of relationship was different and there was less of a 'challenging role'.

“The whole project has been sustained through (name of Co-ordinator) personal commitment which has been sensational – we hope that this will be able to continue.”

PSNI Representative

“You have to build up trust with the young people, and (name of Co-ordinator) achieved this, to get them to tell people what they think and their ideas – sometimes they don’t speak out for fear of retribution. Communication and relationships were good with both young people and staff.”

Organisational Representative

“It has to be personality led – if the person is not skilled enough in working with the kids then they won’t talk. We have in (name of Co-ordinator) a skilled and experienced worker with plenty of common sense and who is driving the project forward.”

Organisational Representative

“It takes someone strong to do this and if it was not for (name of Co-ordinator) and the group I am not sure whether this would have been done – I highly commend the work they do and (name of Co-ordinator).”

PSNI Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) respects you and you respect him – he knows the score and not to fry your head if you’ve been having a bad day.”

Young Person

“(name of Co-ordinator) is as sound as a pound.”

“(name of Co-ordinator) doesn’t really judge you for what you are in here for – he just wants to know the craic – he really understands you. Other people out there judge you and all – they’d say there’s that wee boy that’s just got out of jail.”

Young Person

“Include Youth as an organisation has been brilliant. We’ve had an outstanding facilitator and all this has opened doors we would not have got into.”

Organisational Representative

3.2 Increased Numbers of Young People ‘At Risk’ or who have had Experience of the Criminal Justice System Involved in Decision-making Processes.

It was anticipated the project would recruit young people and facilitate their involvement in public policy consultations and direct engagement with decision-makers (see Section 3.4 for direct engagement with public bodies). Measurements included: 30 sessions and 85 interactions with young people, monthly evaluations and 90% of Include Youth’s policy positions reflecting the views of young people.

There were 215 young people involved in the project through 107 sessions or interactions (see table below) 58 in custody, 97 in policing and 60 in community settings. In addition, towards the end of the funding period, an additional 18 young people became involved in two projects (Building Bridges Forum and ‘ESCAPE 2’), 15 parents were involved in CAPS/S2S and 22 older people in the work with Down DPP (14) and Bridging the Gap (8). In the absence of funding from YCNI, these young people would not have been involved in decision-making processes.



Name of Group/Project	No. of Young People	No. of Sessions/Interactions
Young Voices in JJCNI	20	24
Young Voices in YOC	38	20
Cliftonville Community Centre	8	16
Newington	6	6
Building Bridges Forum (1)	6	4
UNBCEP	6	3
CAPS, NIACRO (2)	22	2
S2S, Extern (2)	20	8
ESCAPE (1)	16	12
Bridging the Gap (3)	2	1
Interface Youth Conference	40	3
Residential with PA Group	8	5
Work in Down District (3)	23	3
Totals	215	107

Notes to table:

- (1) Towards the end of the funding period, an additional 18 young people became involved in the work of these projects: six in Building Bridges and 12 in 'ESCAPE 2'.
- (2) The work with CAPS/S2S also involved 15 parents: eight in S2S in Newtownards and seven in CAPS, Armagh.
- (3) The Inter-generational work involved 22 older people (14 with Down DPP and 8 with Bridging the Gap).

The project facilitated young people's involvement in external public policy consultations and direct engagement with decision-makers (for direct engagement with public bodies in consultations/decision-making see Section 3.4). In the custody settings, the sessions were facilitated by the Young Voices Co-ordinator who undertook consultations on behalf of various organisations/

decision-makers e.g. NIPS, YJA, Network for Youth (consultation for Department of Education (DE)), University of Ulster/Working with Men Project, NICCY, etc. and, on occasions, involved staff from organisations undertaking consultations (see Section 3.4). Some sessions were youth rights based group work/advocacy sessions facilitated by organisations including Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC), NICCY and Include Youth (see Section 3.3). An overview of the consultation and other group work sessions undertaken in both settings during the past six months is attached as Appendix One.

Sessions run by the Young Voices Co-ordinator also concerned matters internal to the regime in both custody settings. Where these were held there was an expectation that information gathered would be fed back to staff/management to ensure the potential for these matters to be addressed – there was also an expectation within all consultations (internal and external) that young people would also receive feedback. This worked well within the JJCNI where relationships were built up over many years, however the feedback systems within the YOC appeared to be less well developed; this factor is explored further in Section 4 of the report: difficulties and challenges within the project. It is particularly important to note the work of Young Voices was influential in the setting up of a Youth Forum within the JJCNI and a similar initiative to establish a Youth Council is being actively considered within the YOC; both initiatives designed to enable young people to be involved in providing feedback and influencing internal decision-making processes in each setting.

The outcomes of the work in North Belfast to improve relationships between young people and the police supporting both to build their capacity to engage genuinely with each other and to influence wider policing policy and practices is explored in greater depth in Section 3.5. This work enabled young people to engage with police at various levels (neighbourhood officers, area commanders, police training, etc.) and in policing and community issues in their local community. This was supported by various community/youth organisations and the NBYV Co-ordinator who also advocated on young people's behalf with decision-makers. Community participation work with marginalised young people was supported by both Co-ordinators: one supported young people's engagement in decision-making with other community and policing organisations and with the emergency services and the other with the referral procedures and service provided within early intervention programmes.

There were many benefits identified within this for young people, organisations and decision-makers. Young people felt they benefited from being able to get their views across to decision-makers, organisations benefited from having access to/hearing the views of marginalised young people and those with experience of the criminal justice system, in some circumstances it was influencing practices and procedures (whereas in others outcomes were limited by lack of feedback and the time delay in decision-making processes). Include Youth utilised the information to inform policy positions, however the percentage was difficult to calculate given the full-time Manager/strategic lead for policy (and Young Voices) was ill during this period.

"We've talked about things like knife crime, YJA, youth conferences and community safety." Young Person

"You need to talk about stuff like the way they treat you and things that happen outside too." Young Person

"They developed a youth forum thing in here with one person from each unit – we can speak to the person from each unit and they can say at the meeting if you need something done." Young Person

"We gave him more ideas for the design of the leaflet and if they're good enough our ideas will be included and people will see it." Young Person

"It enabled us to engage with young people who were outside the mainstream education system – they spoke about the work they were doing with young people and brought some young people along, although it's too soon to say what's been done as a result of this." Organisational Representative

"The culture has changed – there is now recognition that these young people have something of value to say." Organisational Representative

"Having someone independent coming in is good as the young people will open up to those who are independent. Working on a weekly basis was good as you can hold engagement with them. However, there needs to be an outcome and a benefit." Organisational Representative

"It's good for us as an organisation as we can use this in presentations and evaluation of our work and will look to roll this out to other areas of the organisation. It has improved the morale of staff and the feedback to date has been very good." Organisational Representative

"Very often young people are told what to do and this creates anti-authority culture, if they are not consulted, they have no input so whatever the scheme is, it is not meaningful to them. Young Voices tries to engage with young people and they can vocalise their problems and frustrations; this means they take ownership and have more input so it is more likely the problem will be solved." PSNI Representative

"(name of Co-ordinator) has influenced some of the work that happens in the unit on a day to day basis. There was feedback from the young people on the complaints procedure and these were taken up." Organisational Representative

"I have certainly been impressed with the Young Voices Project – from my perspective, when writing policy responses, the material gathered from discussions with the young people is absolutely invaluable – as a result I think Include Youth policy work has real depth and genuine input from the young people – I guess what is less clear is what the young people get back in return?" Organisational Representative

3.3 Increased Knowledge of Young People in Specific Areas

The project aimed to increase knowledge of young people in specific areas e.g. rights, policing, health, governance and recruitment/selection. Measurements included a minimum of five information/training sessions undertaken and young people involved in any recruitment and selection during the period.

Most of the groupwork sessions and consultations undertaken by the Young Voices Co-ordinator involved providing information to young people prior to their engagement e.g. community safety, health awareness, knife crime, youth rights, etc. Staff from other organisations also facilitated youth rights based groupwork/advocacy sessions e.g. VOYPIC, NICCY, Include Youth. A total of ten sessions undertaken by the NBYV Co-ordinator were 'information sessions' focusing on, for example, anti-social behaviour, rioting, emergency services and lobbying as well as young people being informed about policing matters and associated services through engagement with

police personnel and the Ombudsman/Information Directorate. There were no specific sessions on recruitment/selection or governance and no involvement in recruitment/selection processes during the funding period, as Include Youth did not recruit during the evaluation period. All the sessions led to increased knowledge and understanding for young people of the subject of the information/training.

*“As a result of the work (name of Co-ordinator) has done and the people he brought in, the young people are a lot more aware of their rights and of things going on around them. As a result of the work we developed a **wall of opportunity** in the unit and have all the numbers up on the wall for the likes of CLC, NICCY, Housing, NIHRC, etc. (name of Co-ordinator) inspired us in this project and the young people involved in the group did this.”*
Organisational Representative

“We talked about stuff like rights, alcohol, drugs, about you, your community, safety in the community – about being safe, drugs, drink, and all sorts.” Young Person

“We do citizenship with them in here and this can be fairly abstract – but what they do with (name of Co-ordinator) brings this to reality for them.” Organisational Representative

“We focused initially on the issue of rioting although now we have moved onto the issue of racism.” Organisational Representative

“Five young people went to Antrim Road Police Station and they see what the police actually do and the fact that it’s not just someone who moves them on or gets them off the streets – all of them said they wanted to be police officers when they were older so that was them really moving on from before.” Organisational Representative

“The young people themselves have also developed through the meaningful engagement as they learn about the reasons why we do things, for example, stop and search, confiscate alcohol, etc.” PSNI Representative

“They learn about their own rights in relation to policing and how to make a complaint so they know what to do in the future if they need to do this.” Organisational Representative

3.4 Public Bodies Directly Engage with Young People Affected by their Services

It was anticipated the project would enable public bodies to directly engage with young people affected by their services and these were to be arranged/facilitated (where necessary) by the project. Measurements included six meetings with decision-makers and feedback given to young people on the impact of their views.

During the funding period there were seven direct engagements by public bodies with the young people involved in the project (this was in addition to public bodies requesting the Co-ordinators to obtain views and opinions on their behalf or to advocate on behalf of young people). The date and focus of the event and the name of the public body/representatives involved are summarised in the table opposite.

Date of event	Name of Public Body	Focus of event/meeting
06/12/08	Down DPP	Inter-generational issues & policing
07/01/09	NIO Community Safety Unit	Community Safety Strategy
19/01/09	PSNI, Politicians & Organisation Representatives/Workers	'Changing Faces at the Interface: It's a Riot' (leaflet launch)
21/01/09	PSNI North Belfast Area Commanders	Policing incidents/attitudes & impact on police/community relations
28/01/09	Police Ombudsman & Information Directorate	Experience of policing issues and information sharing
25/02/09	BIG Lottery Fund	BIG Thinking: Future Plans for Lottery Funding in Northern Ireland
10/03/09	NIO Criminal Justice Board & Youth Justice Agency	Knife & Crime Related issues

This direct engagement benefited young people enabling them to put forward their views and opinions and to make them feel they (and their views) were valued and appreciated. Organisations benefited as the project had already built relationships with the young people and the Young Voices staff had the skills/experience to engage with young people – this enabled the Public Bodies to consult with marginalised young people who otherwise would have been excluded. Feedback from professionals highlighted the fact they would not have been aware of young people's perspective on these matters and therefore, in the absence of engagement with Young Voices, would not have considered their views.

For many of these consultations it is too soon to identify how these have influenced decision-making processes, given the time delay between consultation and decision/policy-making. It is important to note that young people and organisational representatives highlighted how they felt they had influenced matters e.g. in the JJCNI they felt they influenced the play developed on knife crime and some immediate feedback was received in the form of letters to thank the young people/Young Voices for participation and highlighting the next steps (samples of these letters are attached in Appendix Three) whereas in others the views of young people were actively being considered by the public decision-makers.



In the case of consultations with police, the views of young people directly led to some new issues and ideas to be considered e.g. engagement with the area commanders led to police considering the need to involve response officers in engagement with young people, engagement with the Ombudsman directly led to young people feeling their views were valued, engagement with neighbourhood officers/area commanders led to an impact on policing procedures/practices (see Section 3.5) and engagement in the training at Garnerville influenced new recruits and future training. It is important to note the ethos and practice of direct engagement was highlighted as an area for development and improvement and was considered preferable to staff advocating on behalf of young people (see Section 4).

“We’ve spoken to loads of different people re: lottery, knife crime, NIO, YJA, etc. – that’s good as they hear our views and we tell them what we think – they talked with us and have sent thank you letters back to (name of Co-ordinator).” Young Person

“It’s useful for other people outside as they get to hear what we think.” Young Person

“It makes you feel important when they come in here and talk to you – makes you think you’re not just thrown in here and forgot about.”

Young Person

“They came in here with the knife crime play and asked us for our views on how to make it more realistic – we told them to change squealing to touting and they did. It lets’ them know what we think about things and makes it realistic.” Young Person

“We’ve met loads of people like the area commanders, people at Garnerville, Big AI (the Ombudsman), etc.” Young Person

“It was important from my point of view that (name of Co-ordinator) had already built the relationships with the young people and this enabled me to meet with the young people and to hear their views on the issues for discussion.” Organisational Representative

“It makes the young people feel quite important to meet the likes of the Children’s Commissioner, Include Youth Director, etc. as they listen to what they have to say. They were asked to review a play on knife crime recently and to say whether or not it was realistic or not, to give their view on the language used, etc. and the Security Minister was here for that.” Organisational Representative

“We recently had a consultation and as part of this we wanted to consult directly with children and young people. Through the Participation Network, we got to the Young Voices Project and this was excellent for us as we were able to speak with young people we would not ordinarily be able to speak to as we do not have skills/ experience here in working with young people.” Organisational Representative

“What came out of the group (and the wider consultation) has been summarised into a report which has gone to committee and will then go to the wider UK Board who will consider this in detail when planning future programmes.” Organisational Representative

3.5 Improved Relations between Young People and PSNI

The outcome of improving relationships between young people and the PSNI was to be achieved by supporting young people in North Belfast and beyond to engage with police, policing and community issues. Measurements included greater confidence in police by young people and vice versa and attitudinal surveys were highlighted as the mechanism to achieve this.

The developing format for this work concentrated, in the initial phases, on the building of relationships at three levels: between the NBYV Co-ordinator and the community group/young people, between the NBYV Co-ordinator and the PSNI (at various levels) and between the community group/young people and the PSNI (particularly neighbourhood police, but some groups engaged with new recruits, as well as the direct engagement already highlighted with the area commanders).

Young people generally described the engagement as a *“real learning experience”* and an opportunity to get to *“know the police officers”*. The experience of involvement in the Young Voices Project led to: an opportunity to explain how each party saw/experienced matters in policing/community, changed perceptions, improved relationships and behaviour towards each other, changed approaches towards each other and more openness and understanding of each other and the role of policing. Attitudinal surveys to measure this change were not utilised based on previous experiences of staff involved as these had proved unsuccessful.

It is important to highlight that these improvements were aided by the building of relationships over many years and longer-term engagement as opposed to short-term/one-off initiatives; this was considered critical in relation to funding requirements for work of this nature (see Section 4). The engagement not only led to improved relationships between young people and the police, but as the project developed and evolved it impacted on communities (3.5.1) and policing (3.5.2).

“Some came into the group with bad experiences of the police and were not open-minded – this experience changed their outlook and they thought that some of them were really dead on.” Young Person

“It’s improved things a lot – at the start everyone was cracking up and called us touts, traitors and were really annoyed at what we were doing – now we can stand and talk to them and have a laugh with them. Others have got involved in talking to the local police officers too.” Young Person

“Some police have tried to approach this in a better way but for others I just don’t think we’ve got through to them yet.” Young Person

“We recognise that all this is long-term stuff and will take time to get things changed. What we’ve started is really important. We had to take things easy at the start as people on the (name of road) really hated the police – I think that changed and people now don’t see them as that bad.” Young Person

“There used to be continual harassment – now they are a lot more open and understanding.” Young Person

*“The Building Bridges Forum was a chance for us to speak our views and things are now far different than before. Before this I thought (name of police officer) was a d**k – now we’ve got to know them they won’t pass you by without beeping the horn at you or chatting.”* Young Person

“The events we had with the young people, for example, bowling, residential, etc. were good as these helped to build up the relationships with them and then this enabled us to move into the project work itself. This was relevant to both parties as we were able to explore with the young people policing matters and explain things from our perspective and they were able to do the same – we had open discussions and were both able to challenge each other.” PSNI Representative

“From my observations, the first time the group came to the consultations, they really wanted to get at the police and how things were policed – now they’ve had discussions to share how each viewed things and the sea-change in their mindset is rather amazing. It’s not just carte blanche criticism now, it became constructive and both listened to each other so the communication improved.” PSNI Representative

3.5.1 Benefits to the local community

Through engagement between young people and the police through the Young Voices Project, it was reported this had a positive benefit on local communities. This included benefits such as some young people causing less of an annoyance to the community knowing what’s acceptable/not acceptable behaviour, quieter interfaces, the diffusing of tensions/situations, young people having a greater sense of belonging and ownership in the community and the potential for shared work across traditional community divides whereas before this may not have been possible.

“It is less likely now that we have any hassles or rows in the area.” Young Person

“They know how to approach you now and this has calmed things down on the interfaces. They stop people and talk now.” Young Person

*“The leaflet was good as it showed the community we’re not just hassling them.”
Young Person*

“I got to know the peelers through this – there was one guy there, and one day he stopped outside the school as there was a bit of trouble – I recognised him from the group work things and he was able to talk to us and sort things out.” Young Person

“Producing the riot leaflet was beneficial as this made them recognise the issue and face the issues that cause that type of behaviour. The statistics on rioting have been down and this is due to 1) engagement with Include Youth/Police/Young People 2) education in terms of what’s acceptable and not acceptable and 3) enforcement – we are working with kids we have previously prosecuted.” PSNI Representative

“It’s also had an effect on the other young people – there was an incident a few weeks ago outside the centre and all the young people ran out of the centre to see what was going on – the two Community Officers were involved in the incident and the ones from the centre were able to say to the other young people they were dead on and were able to talk to the Officers.” Organisational Representative

*“It has increased their sense of belonging and pride in the community and also the community don’t see them (young people) as a negated thing.”
Organisational Representative*

3.5.2 Benefits to policing (and other emergency services)

Through engagement between young people and the police through Young Voices, this had a positive benefit on policing in local communities and policing practices. This included benefits such as: how some police approach young people and deal with issues with young people, tangible benefits in terms of policing and diffusing tensions and situations, dealing with and resolving problems, changing attitudes and procedures, influencing the training of new recruits as well as starting to influence other parts of the police (although this was difficult to measure) and some young people were considering the emergency services as a future career.

“They approach you in a different manner – before we knew them all they did was chase us or we threw bricks at them, now they are more like mates.” Young Person

“We are all learning and improving and finding out how to do things differently – the difference is we are asking now whereas maybe years ago we would have been telling them what to do.” PSNI Representative

“The process has been validated. There was tangible benefit on the street in situations where things that could have gone into disorder but didn’t.” PSNI Representative

“There’ve been big changes as they’ve taken the young people away and we’ve discussed how to deal with issues – they deal with the issues there and then instead of chasing the young people away and moving the problem elsewhere.”
Organisational Representative

“It helped the police review their actions and helped young people to know what they were doing wrong. We were able to resolve social issues in this area without things being heavy handed.” Organisational Representative

“Some of the local officers came along to the consultations and their attitudes changed as well as some of the procedures and practices in place. Based on our positive experiences to date, this is now an on-going process and part of the training programme whereas before it used to just be a bolt on.” PSNI Representative

“It’s probably influencing other parts of the police as well. We are able to interact with young people more and if they are at the interfaces we can go and speak to them and they know us so they can talk to us – I think this helps.” PSNI Representative

3.6 Improved Self-esteem and Confidence of Young People

The outcome of improved self-esteem and confidence of young people was to be achieved by young people reporting they were treated with respect and their views listened to and valued. Measurement was to be through attitudinal surveys undertaken with young people (although as previously reported this was not implemented based on the unsuccessful past experiences of staff involved).

At a basic level young people reported the positive impact of being involved in the project as it *“gave us something to look forward to”*. This view was stronger within custody (particularly the YOC) than in the community/policing work given the restrictions placed on young people in this environment. Young people in custody reported it *“gives you something to do – takes your mind off this place for a while”*, *“passes a few hours in here”*, and in the JJCNI they were particularly appreciative of the *“take away every month”* to recognise/reward their involvement in the project.

There was also a positive impact on the young people in relation to having staff they could talk to or confide in as, *“it saves us lying about out there and we get to talk to someone that we can talk to”, “it makes you think more and you know that there’s someone there you can talk to”* and *“it’s good as it helps to get a few things off your chest”*. Again these feelings were articulated more in the custody settings than in the community/policing work, although young people in S2S and CAPS were also appreciative of the approach and engagement through Young Voices (a view that was also shared by the parents of the young people involved in these projects).

It was evidenced, through feedback from youth workers, staff, organisational representatives and engagement with the evaluator, that young people had improved their confidence and self-esteem. Within the short period of time covered by the evaluation, young people themselves seemed to find it difficult to measure this improvement. Some further work by Include Youth/organisations involved to help the young people measure their development would be beneficial.

“The girls there were fantastic as they were very confident.”
PSNI Representative

“From the young people’s view it’s a good thing as it raises their confidence, self-esteem and sense of ownership of the community.” PSNI Representative

“When the Youth Council was up and running, you could see that the ones from House 4 (the Young Voices group) had time to give thought to what was under discussion and they were giving the leads – they were quite settled and articulate.”
Organisational Representative

“The confidence and self-esteem that the young people get out of this is good – we had the young people speaking at the launch and other things and this has been good for them.” Organisational Representative

3.7 Governance of Include Youth is Informed by the Views of Young People

The outcome relating to the governance of Include Youth being informed by the views of young people was to be achieved by facilitating young people’s involvement in all Include Youth’s projects/areas, the training of staff and Board in governance with young people and advisory groups attended by key Board/staff. Measurement was through four meetings of the advisory groups, feedback and recommendations to Board and associated minutes of meetings produced.

There were eight meetings of local advisory groups during the period of funding and two meetings of the central advisory group, the latter in April to review progress of Give and Take, plan future events and meet with the external evaluator. There was no training undertaken by staff/Board members in governance with young people during the funding period, however, Include Youth are investigating the potential for involvement in The Big Deal Organisational Change Programme. The views and opinions of young people were fed back to the Board through reports from staff and the Director to ensure their views informed organisational decision-making.

Young people and organisational representatives highlighted the value of this process in terms of enabling young people to speak out, accept responsibility, meet others, experience new opportunities and solve problems and unlike some of their other experiences they felt: listened to, valued, a sense of belonging and on a level with workers. Organisationally, these views informed practice, the policy agenda and added value and depth to the views expressed by Include Youth.

"It's good to get our opinions across." Young Person

"It encourages you to speak out." Young Person

"We are being given a lot of responsibility to come here and put forward views." Young Person

"It makes it fair – the Ballymena ones did not have enough laptops the last time and now it's all sorted." Young Person

"It makes you feel like it's your own and you have a say." Young Person

"You can be on a level with the workers and that's good." Young Person

"It helps you to know what the others are doing." Young Person

"You feel part of the group more." Young Person

"It makes you feel more comfortable with everything." Young Person

"You get to meet new people from different areas." Young Person

"It's not like the (name of review process) where no-one actually listens to you, you get talked at and people don't really want to change anything." Young Person

"The experience opened up other opportunities for us." Young Person

"I think the work they do is vital in terms of the policy agenda. I have had the real input and genuine voices of the youth coming through and I put this down to the fact that they (name of Co-ordinators) have built up a good relationship with the young people and they open up to them about the issues." Organisational Representative

Whilst there were many benefits from the young people's involvement, there were also some changes suggested in terms of helping them to prepare better for meetings and to gather the views/opinions of their peers in advance of these and also in the processes to feedback the results/outcomes from the central advisory group meetings to young people in local areas.

"Every group should have a meeting before they come here." Young Person

"We should have a meeting in advance and get the agenda before hand." Young Person

"You could send out information to people by email." Young Person

"We need to try to find out the views of the other young people and get them all together to share their views." Young Person

"We could get their views by text or on the phone." Young Person

"We need to meet with people afterwards and feedback the ideas from here."
Young Person

"It's ok but other people are not here and you have to go back to them." Young Person

"We need to take things back from the meeting." Young Person

"We need to work out more ways for people to get their views across." Young Person

3.8 Review and Agree Participation Model with ‘At Risk’ or ‘In Need’ Young People

The outcome of reviewing and agreeing a participation model with ‘at risk’ or ‘in need’ young people was to be achieved through establishing an evaluation steering group to include young people, appointing of an independent evaluator and support and participate in independent evaluation of the models of practice. The main measurement was the publication of an independent evaluation.

An independent evaluator was appointed, however no evaluation steering group including young people was established given self-evaluation was already being conducted by staff on a monthly basis (or as and when a session or project was completed). It was agreed the evaluation report was to highlight the mechanisms used by way of examples of good practice.

The overall Young Voices model was highly praised by various organisational representatives and decision-makers and policing representatives as a positive model for engagement with marginalised young people and those ‘at risk’, or with experience of the criminal justice system. It has provided opportunities for young people to influence decision-making and working practices in organisational and policy making processes. As a result of the PSNI highlighting the work of NBYV at a ministerial steering group, the model of engagement with the police in North Belfast is being investigated by KPMG as a ‘model of best practice’.

“We have a tried and tested model here and a good example of a collaborative project and how what a partnership looks like and how it should work.”

Organisational Representative

“We met with (name of Co-ordinator) about the work in the North Belfast area so we can profile this particular model with other agencies.”

Organisational Representative

“They are actually doing it, not just talking the talk but they are giving young people a voice at a genuine level. It is so important for us to use this in the right way as the opinions are people’s real stories and experiences. Some of the other stuff that I do is incredibly boring – it completely changes my work and the way I think when I know Young Voices is involved.”

Organisational Representative

“The chair of the Management Committee went to the launch and he emailed me a few days later describing what we were doing through this project as pioneering, groundbreaking and revolutionary.”

Organisational Representative

“Include Youth have become one of the key groups in the field as they are doing something substantial and consistently well. They are a credible organisation with a value base that does not change and this project is second to none.”

Organisational Representative

There were two particular areas of the model highlighted for additional consideration: the need to move towards and encourage further direct engagement between young people and decision-makers and in terms of the policing work, this needs to be developed further from engagement with local neighbourhood police to a more strategic and holistic approach within various levels of PSNI; these suggestions are explored further in Section 4 of this report.

4.0 Evaluation Findings: difficulties and challenges

For many of the young people involved in the evaluation process, there was a feeling that Young Voices “*couldn’t get better at it*” and describing the project as “*great*”, “*class*” or “*powerful*”. On more than one occasion young people, describing Young Voices said: “*It’s sweet*”.

There were, however, a number of areas where young people, project staff, organisational and policing representatives felt there were difficulties, problems or challenges, and by implication, areas for improvement, strengthening, change or development. These factors are summarised below.

4.1 Building Relationships/generating Understanding

There were difficulties and challenges reported in the relationship building process, and generating understanding of the work of the project, between:

- Young people/youth and community organisations and the police
- Project staff from an external organisation (Include Youth) with staff in custody settings and the PSNI
- Youth/community organisations and representatives and project staff from Include Youth.

“It took a long time to break down the barriers with the PSNI and that was at the start. We are now doing stuff with the police that we would not have been able to do and, whilst there were difficulties getting the young people to engage, we still got a core group who do not want to engage with the police, although they are only in the small minority.”

Organisational Representative

“There were some issues away at the start about someone from outside coming in and they had a particular perception of why they were here – there is more of an understanding of the role of Young Voices and (name of Co-ordinator) talks with the staff. There is a lot more contact with staff now than previously was the case.”

Organisational Representative

“There were some challenges or difficulties getting established in the different areas and trying to get a foot hole in and credibility.” Co-ordinator

4.2 Involvement/turnover of Young People

Both in and out of the custody settings there was a high turnover of young people. In custody, this varied dependent on the length of time a young person was in the JJCNI or YOC whereas in the community/policing work this was dependent upon a number of factors including:

- The attitudes and behaviours of some adults towards young people
- The time the young person had available to be involved and/or their commitment to the project

- Whether or not some of the young people were able to stay out of trouble/custody settings
- Other personal reasons and circumstances.

In custody settings there was particular appreciation of the ‘rewards’ offered of food and activities and an apparent reluctance to participate in their absence; there was a willingness amongst staff for this to improve but, as noted in 2.1, difficulties reported by the YOC with health and safety and scheduling additional activity sessions.

“It was a challenge for us to stay out of trouble.” Young Person

“People dropped off as they were just too busy and one of the girls left as one of the police officers insulted her about her father.” Young Person

“It takes someone who actually cares about this to make the change – some of the ones in our group didn’t seem to really care.” Young Person

“I didn’t like him (name of PSNI representative) – he didn’t shut up and he was dry and submissive of us – he didn’t let us get a word in edgeways.” Young Person

“The trouble is the young people involved in this project change quite frequently and therefore it is difficult to have a structured group session or setting.”
Organisational Representative

“Sometimes there were problems getting the numbers and they would fall away for different reasons.” Organisational Representative

“Need to come in and do more activities rather than just sitting about and talking all the time – they should have more things you like doing.” Young Person

Some young people in community and custody settings were switched off by hearing the same messages, particularly as policy changes takes so long and often too long for the young people involved to ‘reap the rewards’; a point reiterated by project staff, organisational and PSNI representatives. For some organisations there was a practical challenge in relation to the participation of young people and an unwillingness of staff or the organisation to be involved.

*“It’s a waste of time if f*** all gets done about it.”* Young Person

“More need to come to the group and not be impatient with it – we’ve showed you have to stick at it to get improvements done.” Young Person

“Heard it all before over and over again – different people with the same messages.”
Young Person

“It’s often a waiting game for the young people as many of the outcomes will be longer term and I think this makes it difficult for them to voice opinions for fear of nothing happening for a few years and for staff it is difficult to generate enthusiasm to get young people to participate.” Organisational Representative

“At a practical level, engaging with the young people was challenging and sometimes I wondered why they get involved – they do not see the long-term.”
Organisational Representative

4.3 Scheduling Activities and Competing Priorities

There were sometimes difficulties reported with the scheduling activities within one of the custody settings and in terms of having time available to support young people in the community when they are released from these settings. There were particular difficulties in the engagement with the PSNI associated with other work taking priority over their involvement in this project and arranging times when people could meet. One of the community organisations felt a more detailed work plan may assist in the planning and implementation of their engagement with the Young Voices Project.

“Sometimes we have had to re-arrange at short notice as we had other work to do with other areas of policing taking priority.” PSNI Representative

“There were some difficulties trying to fit the project in with the new timetabling. This is now out a week in advance so we said to (name of Co-ordinator) to get Young Voices on the timetable.” Organisational Representative

“We’ve not really done anything as yet as it’s in the early stages. We were provided with a work plan in the planning stage – I think it would be good if we had a more detailed plan to guide this over the next few years which would enable us to find a better way to work together.” Organisational Representative

4.4 Feedback Systems

The issue of feedback systems was highlighted as difficult and challenging at two different levels:

- Firstly in terms of organisations and decision-makers providing feedback to young people involved in all the projects about the issues discussed – the lack of feedback to young people was most apparent in custody settings (particularly the YOC)
- Secondly in relation to Young Voices providing feedback to organisations/institutions, particularly in relation to internal matters raised by the young people where the organisation itself could explore suggestions and either a) make suggested changes/improvements or b) explain to young people why it was not possible to make the changes/improvements (again there appeared to be particular difficulties in this regard with the YOC). It was noted that this feedback should take place soon after discussions/consultations to ensure young people did not become disillusioned with the process.

There were also specific difficulties associated with the length of time it takes to make changes or improve policies and procedures and this in itself can create frustrations for young people, youth/community workers and organisations themselves. In this regard there needs to be clarity in relation to this and good communication to let people know time-scales and change processes.

“You don’t know what happens and you are not told.” Young Person

“He put all this down on paper and we never heard anything back from them yet – we never hear anything back.” Young Person

*“There needs to be feedback into the system to enable us to enhance their experiences – so far there has been none to enable us to change anything.”
Organisational Representative*

“If there are internal issues then we need to be involved so we can hear the ideas and either discuss with them solutions and ways forward or be able to explain to them why things can’t be changed. We would need to hear the ideas very soon after, within a couple of weeks, so we can feed them into the system and the young people don’t get frustrated if they see nothing happens with their ideas. We lose out if we do not get the feedback, for example, if there were good ideas that came out of the session on family visits then we should have been informed about these sooner and fed them into the system.”

Organisational Representative

“Garnerville’s been good lately – maybe there needs to be more of a follow up on this as we’ve tried to open their eyes a bit. Some disagreed with us and gave us a hard time, but having the discussion was really good and opened their eyes a bit. Maybe we should meet them again once they’ve passed out and where they work.”

Young Person

“As much of the policy work has to be revisited over a longer timescale, we need to look at what we can do in the interim and how we feedback to the young people – we need the chance to demonstrate how their views and opinions are influencing change.”

Organisational Representative

4.5 Moving towards Direct Engagement with Children and Young People

Whilst young people and youth/community workers and some organisations recognised the value of youth/community workers and organisations advocating on behalf of young people, there appeared to be a movement towards encouraging and facilitating more direct engagement between young people and decision-makers. Again this movement appeared to be at two levels: with decision-makers in organisations and institutions and with external decision-makers consulting with children and young people. It was also highlighted that the whole concept of youth participation could be broadened further within Include Youth and that engagement with the police needs to also continue at a more strategic level.

“It would be good for them to come in to directly hear our views, but it depends on who it is.”

Young Person

“They need to come and talk about the staff in here and changing things in the jail.”

Young Person

Whilst there was a movement towards direct engagement between decision-makers and young people, it was highlighted this may be difficult in custody settings (particularly the YOC) given the turnover of young people, the difficulties in the relationships between young people and staff internally and the loss of an independent person to facilitate the process. Reflecting on the benefits/impact of the project, there were also issues raised in relation to the absence of relationships between decision-makers and young people, the need to build the capacity of young people (and decision-makers) to engage directly with each other and the necessary support mechanisms required to facilitate direct engagement.

*"Would tell (name of Co-ordinator) that stuff but would not tell them." (referring to staff)
Young Person*

"We look at them day in and day out and they do not have to put any guards up for Young Voices." Organisational Representative

"If we do it ourselves, then we will lose out on the independence currently in the structure." Organisational Representative

4.6 Specific Difficulties Associated with Working with the PSNI

There were some other difficulties and challenges associated with work with the PSNI which have not been previously noted. These included:

- Actions/attitudes of response police officers and some police recruits towards young people and the project itself
- Limitations of working in narrow geographical areas or with specific sections of the police and the need to broaden the coverage of the project
- Threats from dissident republican paramilitaries to youth/community workers engaged in discussions/activities with the PSNI and the recent deaths of police/army officers carried out by dissident republicans.

"Before Christmas we had two bad experiences over two weekends – there was a bit of rioting and the police circulating – there was trouble between two brothers and the police weighed in with the batons out and a couple of us got hit. We are all for trying to do what we can do but that just put me up against them. I know it's not everyone of them – just the response unit ones – but they don't try to calm the situation down and they should think before they act – I know they say they don't have the time to do this as things would get worse, but then it takes them longer to calm things down after." Young Person

"There was a trickiness in managing the process properly and not get into the 'he said/she said' stuff. Given that the service (PSNI) is getting younger, I would have expected them to engage better with the young people, but I don't think their social and communication skills are there." PSNI Representative

"We need to develop this on a more district wide approach and filter down to response police." PSNI Representative

"Policing at the weekend is done by what I call 'out of towners' – it makes a difference as they do not know the young people and I regularly mention to the young people about not raising their head and trying not to get into hassle again." Organisational Representative

“There was a time when they could not meet the police because there was a threat against the community workers. There was a residential trip organised together for the young people and the police and this had to be postponed until after Christmas. They did not get on the residential because of the threat from the republican group – one of the young lads (aged 12) said ‘any danger here towards (name of Co-ordinator) or the workers themselves, then we would not go on and this showed real maturity. The only real challenge was outside interference from paramilitaries.”

Organisational Representative

4.7 Funding and Sustainability

The final issue related to the difficulties and challenges associated with the short-term nature of funding for this project and the limited financial resources available within organisations to support the engagement with children and young people. It was highlighted there was a need to secure more long-term funding to sustain the work of the project.

“(name of Co-ordinator) is seriously over-worked and underpaid.”

Young Person

“You need to keep it going as new people come in here all the time and you need to hear their views.” Young Person

“The YJA, like everyone else has no or limited money. We would like to contribute to this if there was some money.” Organisational Representative

“The trouble is this is short-term funding for what is really long-term work – it’s really a while ago when we started this and it’s still not off the ground yet.”

Organisational Representative



5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The YCNI Short-term Funding Programme enabled Include Youth to continue to support the vital work of Young Voices. The project met the short-term funding programme aims of 'contributing positively to community and society' and 'living in a society that respects these rights' as evidenced by the evaluation findings.

Include Youth, through the various components of the Young Voices Project, has built up a wealth of experience/skills and a positive reputation for facilitating the involvement of young people at risk or with experience of the criminal justice system, as well as young people marginalised for a variety of reasons, in decision-making.

The project increased the numbers of young people involved in decision-making either through direct engagement with various decision-makers or staff/Include Youth advocating on their behalf. Whilst both approaches were valuable, there appears to be a movement towards facilitating more direct engagement.

In custody settings there is also movement towards more direct engagement through the establishment of youth participation structures, although limitations given the turnover of young people, difficulties in relationships between young people and staff internally and loss of an independent facilitator, therefore, it may be too soon to consider the withdrawal of Young Voices from dealing with internal custody matters.

The work facilitated by Young Voices to build relationships between young people and the police has progressed beyond initial expectations in terms of neighbourhood policing and moved towards engagement with decision-makers and influencing recruitment, training, practice and procedures. This dual approach to development is important and one which should guide future work of the project in this area.

The work developed around community participation and custody settings there appears to be clear boundaries about the role/remit of the project whereas these seem to be less clear in the relationship building between young people/community organisations and policing; some clarity around boundaries may be beneficial in terms of, for example, commitment, time-scales and withdrawal from the process.

Include Youth worked to ensure young people's views informed the policy agenda and organisational governance. There is scope for further development by ensuring views of young people are fed into policy matters and strengthening participation structures and interaction between young people and governance structures.

Feedback systems were not consistent across the project and there is a need to further develop these to ensure decision-makers and organisations provide this to young people and Young Voices provides this to organisations and institutions, particularly in relation to internal decision-making matters.

The very nature of 'short-term' funding for a project of this nature, although very welcomed and appreciated, appears to work against what is essentially a longer term commitment to ensuring the views of marginalised and 'at risk' young people are listened to, heard and respected.

5.2 Recommendations

Include Youth must:

- continue to support the work of the Young Voices Project and to enable the views of marginalised and excluded young people to be heard
- work to further develop ways to help young people measure their development, particularly in relation to their confidence and self-esteem
- further develop internal structures and systems to ensure the views of young people are inputted to the policy agenda and organisational governance
- work to develop the model of engagement with the police to ensure further interaction between young people and decision-makers and to influence both policing practices and the policy agenda
- continue to work with the relevant public bodies to:
 - (1) extend young voices in custody settings beyond original agreements;
 - (2) support further development of structures to enable the views of young people to be heard on matters internal to youth custody settings; and
 - (3) seek to secure financial/human resources to support young people who leave custody to have a voice on their return to community settings
- develop a draft 'service level' or 'partnership' agreement for organisations wishing to utilise the Young Voices Project which clearly establishes the boundaries and roles/responsibilities of each party
- work to enhance the feedback systems to organisations that utilise the services of the Young Voices Project to obtain the views of young people
- work in partnership with the Participation Network and other organisations to encourage direct engagement between young people and decision-makers
- continue to seek sustainable sources of funding for this project.

Public bodies and decision-makers engaging with Young Voices must:

- recognise the valuable service provided by Young Voices and contribute long-term funding to support the project
- build their capacity and skills to engage directly with young people and be prepared to listen/act on the views and opinions expressed
- commit to working with Young Voices Project to establish appropriate and agreed recognition/reward for young people who take part
- commit to providing immediate feedback to young people explaining the outcomes and proposed action as a result of engagement.

Glossary

BBC	British Broadcasting Company
CAPS	Child and Parent Support
CJINI	Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland
CLC	Children's law Centre
CPLC	Community Police Liaison Committee
CYPU	Children and Young People's Unit
DE	Department of Education
DPP	District Policing Partnership
ESCAPE	Emergency Services Community Awareness Partnership Experience
HSCT	Health & Social Care Trust
ICR	Institute for Conflict Research
JJC	Juvenile Justice Centre
JJCNI	Juvenile Justice Centre Northern Ireland
LNBCPLC	Lower North Belfast Community Police Liaison Committee
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NBYV	North Belfast Young Voices
NI	Northern Ireland
NIACRO	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NICCY	Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PBNI	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
S2S	Strength to Strength
UNBCEP	Upper North Belfast Community Empowerment Partnership
UNBCPLC	Upper North Belfast Community Police Liaison Committee
VOYPIC	Voice of Young People in Care
YCNI	Youth Council Northern Ireland
YIAG	Youth Independent Advisory Group
YJA	Youth Justice Agency
YOC	Young Offenders Centre

Appendix One: Consultations with Young People in Custody Settings

Young Voices: Topic/Sessions with Young People in Woodlands JJC

Date	Theme
10 Sept. 2008	Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan
17 Sept. 2008	Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan (Informal session: food)
24 Sept. 2008	Young People & Bail (Bob Hunnyford, Law Commission NI)
1 Oct. 2008	Knife Crime
8 Oct. 2008	Young People and Alcohol
15 Oct. 2008	Informal Session: food
5 Nov. 2008	Design an alcohol leaflet for young people
12 Nov. 2008	Design a knife crime leaflet for young people
19 Nov. 2008	Informal session: food/football
26 Nov. 2008	NI Network for Youth Consultation
3 Dec. 2008	Young People and Advocacy
10 Dec. 2008	Meeting with Include Youth Director
17 Dec. 2008	Community Safety Strategy: Creating Safer Neighbourhoods
7 Jan. 2009	Community Safety Strategy: 'Together, Stronger, Safer (Lee Davidson, NIO Community Safety Unit)
14 Jan. 2009	Informal Session: food
21 Jan. 2009	Community Safety Strategy: Focus on Families and Young People
4 Feb. 2009	NICCY Outreach Clinics
11 Feb. 2009	Young Men's Experience of Conflict and Violence (Research on behalf of University of Ulster & Working with Men Project)
25 Feb. 2009	'BIG Thinking': future plans for Lottery Funding in Northern Ireland (with two staff from BIG in to conduct consultation)
4 Mar. 2009	Feedback on Young Voices: structure, methods and effectiveness
10 Mar. 2009	Knife and Crime Related issues (meet with Carol Moore, head of NIO Criminal Justice & Frances Dunn/Graham Robb Chairperson and Board Member of Youth Justice Board)
11 Mar. 2009	Feedback on Young Voices
18 Mar. 2009	Design of a leaflet for Young Voices
25 Mar. 2009	Meeting with External Evaluator: Rodney Green, RG Consultants (NI) Ltd.

Young Voices: Topic/Sessions with Young People in Hydebank Wood YOC

Date	Theme
30 Sept. 2008	Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan: Youth Conferencing & Community Services
7 Oct. 2008	Knife Crime
14 Oct. 2008	Food Session:
21 Oct. 2008	Young People and Alcohol
28 Oct. 2008	Visiting a Parent in Prison: NI Prison Service Family Strategy
4 Nov. 2008	Family Visits in Prison: NI Prison Service Family Strategy
11 Nov. 2008	NI Network for Youth Consultation
18 Nov. 2008	No session
25 Nov. 2008	Football Session:
2 Dec. 2008	Young People and Advocacy
19 Jan. 2009	VOYPIC Advocacy Project (Eddie Wallace, VOYPIC)
27 Jan. 2009	NICCY Outreach Clinics
3 Feb. 2009	Young Men & Conflict: Community Context (Research on Behalf of University of Ulster & Working With Men Project)
11 Feb. 2009	Young Men's Issues: Personal Factors (Research on Behalf of University of Ulster & Working With Men Project)
17 Feb. 2009	No session
24 Feb. 2009	Image of Young People
3 Mar. 2009	Messages for 13 year olds to discourage the carrying of knives
10 Mar. 2009	Feedback on Young Voices: structure, methods and effectiveness
17 Mar. 2009	Design of a leaflet for Young Voices
24 Mar. 2009	Meeting with External Evaluator: Rodney Green, RG Consultants (NI) Ltd.
31 Mar. 2009	Youth Diversionary Services in the Community (OFMDFM)

Appendix Two:

Additional Quotes to Evidence Findings

3.0 Evaluation Findings: the benefits of the Work of Young Voices

3.1 Relationship Building and Staff Support

“At the start there was a lot of tension and even suspicion between ourselves/staff and Include Youth (and name of staff), however this has actually disappeared and we are now at the stage of conversation not confrontation.” Organisational Representative

“The preparation work with the groups had already been done before the police came in and this gave us a focused reason for coming in – from a police perspective we knew that this was part of a longer process.” PSNI Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) blends in well with the staff and young people and involves himself in the activities – there is no pretence, he just has such a natural manner.” Organisational Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) has excellent group work skills and doesn’t know why the young people are here – these are the worst behaved/most persistent offenders. They like to see a new face coming in and someone from the outside.” Organisational Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) works with the kids and also brings some others in – we have groups of other staff come in and they respond well to him – he’s not seen as one of the staff and the atmosphere in the group is different.” Organisational Representative

“There’s always suspicion when we bring people in from outside so we brought (name of Co-ordinator) in and ran a couple of sessions with the staff first where it was explained what the project was about and what would be done – this seemed to work ok as any questions people had were answered.” Organisational Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) came along to the activity days and to get to know the young people on the project and has met with the parents. The sessions with the young people were arranged to enable (name of Co-ordinator) to get to know the young people and to build relationships with them so he would be able to come into the room with them and get feedback.” Organisational Representative

“Although we jointly facilitated, (name of Co-ordinator) took more of a lead as the young people recognised and trusted him and he was able to encourage conversation and discussion – we would not have had the discussion and debate if it was not for the involvement of the Co-ordinator.” Organisational Representative

“In some places there is a suspicion of what I do and therefore there is a need to bring people along and ensure they gain an understanding of what this work is about.” Co-ordinator

“It is more about engaging with organisations and not about assuming that I can just go right in and say I am Young Voices and we are going to do this. We have to respect that they have a different job and make sure what I do respects what they do and I do not muddy the waters of what they do – my job is different to theirs. It’s important that I have the relationship with the staff – this is something that doesn’t happen overnight and what I try to do is to create an environment

where they understand what I do and who I am and to create a more conducive environment where they are willing to work with me and help me.” Co-ordinator

“I do not change or improve the young people and find the non-judgemental approach very valuable as they have done some serious things and I never ask them what they have done or why they are there, sometimes it comes out when we talk in the group. They don’t feel criticised in any way; some people would criticise them first however they hear from me that their views are important – if there is stuff going on in the group then I do challenge them on this, but often other people in the group challenge before I will. I may question and tell them what I believe and that’s as far as I go on challenging – I maybe question and ask them and that makes them think so it’s not by me telling them. This is important as people always told them they are wrong – why is one more voice like me going to be any good, what good has it done them. I give this from my perspective and how I see it.” Co-ordinator

“We do loads of consultation with young people, however many projects will listen to young people and then decide ‘we know them best’. They say about the need to be clear about the limitations – that is a challenge when you talk about things and give young people a voice – young people have to know that their views are valid, even if you don’t agree with them.” Co-ordinator

“Investment of time can never be lessened at all e.g. one of the ones in Hydebank was previously in Woodlands a few times before/in different houses, and I would sit and talk with him and he thought all this talking was s**t as nothing changes – when I asked them ‘do you feel you are being taken seriously’ he would say no-one listens to us – ‘people don’t take us seriously but they listen to you’. So he now thinks the project can be useful – he would engage with me now, but that’s only because we plodded away – it takes time to build this up and build the relationships up – when I am with them I don’t usually clear off straight away, the informal time is a big part of my engagement with them, the youth work side of it.” Co-ordinator

“What works with the people I work with in terms of youth participation is a very unstructured approach – a conversation with young people – not a forum, a set group, etc. as they don’t like being told what to do, don’t like structure, etc. and I don’t want Young Voices to become this either. It’s important to not just talk about the topic but to meet them where they are comfortable. I do try to talk to people informally when we are sitting about also and I stay on after the sessions to chat with people, play pool, etc.” Co-ordinator

“(name of Co-ordinator) has such a great way of eliciting information from young people and is very unassuming. This is really good.” Organisational Representative

3.2 Increased Numbers of Young People At Risk or have had Experience of the Criminal Justice System Involved in Decision-making Processes.

“The link with police and politicians from the different parties was good as the numbers in the group have now multiplied as this showed that they could have their voice heard.” Co-ordinator

“It has a positive influence and the kids know they are being listened to. They know about the problems and the issues and by giving their opinions they know it will have an impact at some stage – they know there is a process and that this could take a while.” Organisational Representative

“There was a lot of discussion around youth provision and lack of facilities and the need for alternatives to the Juvenile Justice System, although how this is taken forward will be the subject of a report and then filtering this down to other sub groups.” Organisational Representative

“It’s been good for us – I don’t know exactly how (name of Co-ordinator) feels about custody setting and maybe there’s a structural/ethical debate, however, over the past few years I get a sense that people recognise that custody exists whether you like it or not and there is a willingness to work alongside to make things better for the young people who are in here.” Organisational Representative

“They saw the script from the play and recognised that’s what I told them and they’ve used it in the play; the new JJC rules and their input to these – they know the rules and there is an acceptance that you have to have rules and regulations.” Organisational Representative

“There was a dress rehearsal in here a few weeks ago where the young people were asked to give feedback on a play about knife crime. There was a launch of all this yesterday and by way of courtesy from the NIO, I was handed six goodie bags to give to the young people from here who took part in this.” Organisational Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) has written a number of articles for ‘Connections’, the Youth Justice Agency Newsletter. He did one on youth participation, one on Young Voices and the work they do and will be doing one for the next edition due out in June or July on some of the consultations that have taken place recently. Biggest positive in this is that the kids see the magazine.” Organisational Representative

“On the media front, the BBC also came out and did preparation work for a series of programmes and (name of Co-ordinator) supported the young people in this keeping them calm – they were talking to the young people to come at the issue from a different angle.” Organisational Representative

“I have been in this service for a long time and for 23 years between 1979 and 2002, to the best of my knowledge no-one ever came to set up a group – I think once in 1998 CLC came down as part of a consultation so no-one ever came to seek the views from the young people. My experience is it never happened and it took a catalyst like this to make it happen.” Organisational Representative

“The project has ran fairly unhindered from my perspective – what’s being done is very useful, both inside and outside of here. It’s only if there were operational reasons, then I would be stepping in to help. There were a few child protection matters and when we were made aware of these, we were able to resolve them.” Organisational Representative

“Their involvement was arranged through the Children’s Services Planner as they wanted participation and for young people to have a voice – they were brought in to give us feedback and because they were independent.” Organisational Representative

“It benefits us immensely – (name of Co-ordinator) is neutral and has met with referral agencies, parents and young people and the feedback from them to us has so far been very positive – we have also encouraged them to talk to (name of Co-ordinator), to provide critical feedback and be open and honest – this will help us to improve the service provided.” Organisational Representative

“(name of Co-ordinator) has accompanied them on sessions and at residential in order to build some type of relationship with the young people to enable the process to occur. So far it’s all been very useful, it’s been good for us to have independent feedback of how the programme is seen by children and young people and their families.” Organisational Representative

"It's still early days, but so far everything has been very positive. We would hope that if we do receive feedback this would lead staff to make changes that would improve the programme." Organisational Representative

"The parent support group met before Christmas and gave feedback on the topics/workshops they would like to cover in the monthly meetings. A programme for the coming year was drawn up based on this facilitation." Organisational Representative

"(name of Co-ordinator) attended the Parent Support Group and gave the parents the opportunity to feedback their views and experiences on the S2S Project e.g. quality of service to meet needs, information awareness, approach of staff, etc. and also attended the young people's residential and informally collected feedback on their views and experiences. This has been written up and sent via email. The approach and style was appropriate (i.e. informal with very good relational and engagement skills) and it gave the young people and their parents the chance to talk and share their opinions to someone external and this can be used within the project and wider afield." Organisational Representative

"I have to tell you that although we want to set up a committee for the young people, we have not been in touch with young people. The big problem here in North Belfast is so much has happened through the troubles that it's very hard to get the young people from the different neighbourhoods to meet together – we still want to do this and hope that (name of Co-ordinator) will be able to help us to do this to set up a committee of young people who will meet together and meet with the police also." Organisational Representative

"(name of Co-ordinator) attends the meetings and gives a report on what happens with young people and we have also attended meetings at NICVA. This was project work between older people and young people and they heard about what they thought about each other and they got to hear the views of the other people – this was really excellent." Organisational Representative

"(name of Co-ordinator) attends our committee meetings and tells us about things Include Youth is involved in and gives the view of young people. This has given most a more positive opinion about young people, although there's just some I think you'll never change their mind about young people." Organisational Representative

"The benefits of working with young people for me is learning a whole lot more about them and their lives and this is a real benefit for me in terms of my future insight and my knowledge - I input this learning and experience into the work of other organisations and professionals e.g. like the YJA strategic plan." Co-ordinator

"Where I support young people to make presentations and stuff, an important part of that is not about making the young people change their style – it's about creating the atmosphere where the people who are there will listen to the young people and see them as they are, talking and giving their insightful views. I will never try to make young people change this – we need to find ways to get the people in other organisations to listen to the young people and what their views are." Co-ordinator

"We have set up a youth forum here where one person from each unit meets up once a week to discuss issues in here and they meet with staff to talk about things like complaints, behavioural limits, etc. (name of Co-ordinator) was instrumental in setting this up." Organisational Representative

“We have included the views of young people in the papers we develop and ensure these are central to our policy responses and lobbying. For example, in the response we submitted about community safety, we have used this to set up meetings with (name of MLA) to lobby for change.”
Organisational Representative

“Their views have informed several of the policy papers I have been responsible for writing on behalf of the organisation e.g. the response to DE Literacy and Numeracy Consultation (Every School a Good School. A strategy for raising achievement in literacy and numeracy.’ DE, June 2008). They gave general views about what it was like for them in school and how the schools let them down and we fed this into the Department. I know the Minister spoke with (name of staff member) and was very interested in hearing the young people’s experiences and indicated that she would use our policy response in developing her report and taking matters forward.”
Organisational Representative

“The most recent piece of work was around prison visits and asking young people about their experience of the visiting arrangements. In the feedback there was some incredibly practical stuff e.g. having the crèche closer to the visiting table, making the atmosphere more comfortable, etc. We have written this into the response and it would be interesting to hear, as these are very tangible/practical ideas, whether these changed as it would not take a long time to implement these ideas.”
Organisational Representative

3.3 Increased Knowledge of Young People in Specific Areas

“The kids benefit as they enjoy it and they get the chance to meet (name of Co-ordinator) by themselves without the staff and we don’t know what exactly is discussed – we know about the various issues in advance of this.”
Organisational Representative

“The young people themselves have been fantastic. We have worked through difficult experiences together through the project work on rioting and now moving into working with other ethnic minorities. We have both had opportunities – they have had many things like residential, football, driving courses, etc. – the whole project has gone well beyond my initial expectations.”
Organisational Representative

“Young people got to know their rights about policing and got to meet the community police outside of them being on duty.”
Organisational Representative

3.4 Public Bodies Directly Engage with Young People Affected by their Services

“This work needs to be seen in the longer term context of what happened previously. The YJA is now six years old and as far back as I can remember we always had tentative arrangements with Include Youth. In 2003 when we were in the process of moving out of Millisle into Rathgael and then here, we were gearing up for the new build and a former young person who was in Lisnevin (along with others) inputted to the process. I think then at this stage the penny dropped within YJA regarding participation of young people and hearing the voice of the child. We developed a more formal link with Include Youth and had young people involved in the designing of the new building, picking names/colours, choosing carpets, the shape of building, routines, policies and procedures. The more we got via (name of Co-ordinator) the more we felt we were onto a winner.”
Organisational Representative

“Two from our group went to the forum at the NI Assembly at Stormont where they joined with a load of other young people exploring all sorts of issues and inputting to policy making – they have listened to what the young people have to say.”
Organisational Representative

"This new building is now more transparent than previous ones and we've reviewed policies and procedures. We are very much now child-centred and (name of Co-ordinator) has worked alongside us in this." Organisational Representative

"We try to be progressive in ourselves with the juveniles in terms of what we offer them and how we deal with them – yes they are subject to prison rules but we are trying to change the discipline system through the Minor Report System. We are trying to implement a structured time-table for them to meet their needs, the same way we have a structured time-table for other people in here." Organisational Representative

"The food day once every four weeks is good for them – whether it's a motivation or not I just don't know, but they seem to enjoy meeting with (name of Co-ordinator) and the other people he brings in." Organisational Representative

"Include Youth are asked by other organisations to get the views and opinions of the young people on many different things and we are happy to facilitate them to get the views of young people in here. We hope that they will influence facilities and what they do." Organisational Representative

"It would be good to hear the ideas that come from them. We are going to have a council with the young people so we can sit and discuss things with them, look at issues with them that affect them on the inside and improve these as we go along. We may start out with what appears to be small or insignificant but something that we could act upon and this may help to build an element of trust." Organisational Representative

"If it was done internally by the staff, then they'd assume the role of facilitator and the issues would be fed to me or someone at my level and we would feed this back down to them – we already have our own internal ways of communication with regard to internal matters. The regular staff are really switched on and have a good understanding of the young people's needs – there is an element of trust." Organisational Representative

"They kept us involved with them and it was good for us to have a contact as sometimes it's hard to get cross community involvement in a project. Young Voices is touching on all sides and with the grass roots so they are getting the real views of the young people – this is something we would like to build on and do consultation on next year." Organisational Representative

"Those who have had direct engagement with the young people have had the chance to think about how their behaviour and actions impact on young people." Co-ordinator

"Having access to all these people they did not have the opportunity to meet before is a real benefit. It's not just about having input to youth and community workers and they input into the police, but the ramification of the response meant they wanted to challenge police at a more strategic level. To get three area commanders to meet them was a real rarity and a bonus." Co-ordinator

"We got feedback from the young people to questions like what's missing, what's provided, who provides it, how should young people be involved, where should future funding go. They had answers to all of those and had ideas of the types of activities they would like to see for young people." Organisational Representative

"Unfortunately, everything has been a bit slow to happen. It has, however, made them aware of the need to do consultations with the young people and we hope to do some work with the young people and are currently developing a young person friendly questionnaire, with support from (name of Co-ordinator), so we can gather feedback from young people directly." Organisational Representative

“We need to make sure the summer youth interventions are not solely about taking the kids away when there is a parade on just to diffuse the tension. That does not bring down the culture of stereotypical mindsets and an element of this type of work needs to be involved in diversionary activity. It should be noted that perceived anti-social/community behaviour is not just a matter for the police in isolation. It needs to be driven by the Department of Education through the citizenship agenda and those types of skills embedded in this as early intervention work is important.” PSNI Representative

3.5 Improved Relations between Young People and PSNI

“Before we started this I could not have told you who they were. A few months ago I needed to get a lift home and he gave me one – that would never have happened before this.” Young Person

“There’s no hassle now and a lot more trust and respect for them – both from young people and police. There is now a bit of banter between them.” Organisational Representative

“The police have changed their attitudes – at the start they had face-to-face meetings with us and one of the first things we were explaining to them is that when we stop and ask young people what they think of the police they were always negative views. That’s changed – they’ve now started coming in and just sitting and chatting to the young people.” Organisational Representative

“There used to be a saying ‘when the police come we run’. The young people have got to know them through the various trips and groupwork and are now on first name terms.” Organisational Representative

“The relationships are better between the police and the community and we need to thank (name of Co-ordinator) for this as she did all the background work.” Organisational Representative

“We may have had difficulties before, but now we are able to deal with them with the young people – they see what they say is being listened to and this is spreading out to the other kids in the area so it’s not just the ones that have been involved in this project. The important thing is that it’s not just been a one-off but has lasted over many years.” PSNI Representative

“We were invited to a presentation of the report last year in Belfast Castle. As I was sitting talking to the young people, I got a real feel for this and saw how they were starting to build up relationships with the police.” Organisational Representative

“For the members to see how young people on the ground talked about and think about the police meant it was very informative. They brought along some of the young people and I can remember one of them saying ‘we did not realise the peelers were human’.” Organisational Representative

“It has provided an opportunity to create a different view of what the police are – young people are able to see the police as real people, with real lives and real problems. In a way they can see the police are not the enemy, are not the bad guys and it’s not about ‘us and them’. The young people also learn what’s acceptable and not acceptable – this helps us as the biggest complaint we get is about anti-social/anti-community behaviour and underage drinking and kids causing criminal damage – this is not something that response can fix, so it has to be a neighbourhood approach – it should be noted that these schemes don’t just change things in a year, so it has to be a longer-term approach.” PSNI Representative

"The contact with the police is still ongoing. They still see the police they worked with as they call in to the centre now and again and they can talk to them now whereas before they would not have – they can see they are there to protect us. Even as a centre we would never have had dealings with the police before – it was one of the proposals a year ago to do this and it has now happened. We now know who the community officers are. In fact my co-worker was saying she asked one of the police officers to sign her passport photo; that would never have happened before it would always have been the priest or the GP." Organisational Representative

"From our point of view we had contact with the (name of group) and I don't think that would have been possible to interact with them as much without the Young Voices Project. I had mentioned to (name of Co-ordinator) about this some time ago and we got to engage with some of the young people from the area – and also with another group in (name of area). They get to know us and we got to know them – these are two groups we would not have got involved with without the contact with Young Voices." PSNI Representative

"Before (name of Co-ordinator) came up to do the project, there was polarisation between young people and police. After initially doing team building and ice breakers with them to get to know them and build relationships, they then went on to do workshops re: police – positives and negatives. Their ideas were taken to the police themselves and then we were able to arrange visits to different police stations and other relevant places. I have to say the atmosphere in the area has mellowed and instead of getting attacked and stoned, the police were able to walk in the area and were on first name terms." Organisational Representative

"There was a realisation amongst the group that young people were not all bad. This interaction helped to dispel the stereotypical view that young people were all bad and it moved us along a great deal in terms of how best we communicate with young people." PSNI Representative

"Demystifying a lot of the myths the young people had about police officers. The group met with the police and through the engagement this helped to change perceptions, attitudes and break down barriers, particularly with the neighbourhood police." Co-ordinator

*"One of the young people said to me after this experience, that he (referring to a police officer) used to be a 'd**k', but now he's as sound as a pound."* Organisational Representative

3.5.1 Benefits to the local community

"It's policing with the community and getting a greater understanding of the community and their needs and what they want so in this respect policing is no different in this approach. The community says here's what we want you to do and we look at how this links with our service priorities and some of these things are the same. It is Important for us that we don't lose the community confidence." PSNI Representative

"I was on the CPLC for (name of area) and we had an invite a few years ago to go to Antrim Road Police Station where there was meetings going on and met (name of Co-ordinator). The trouble is at these meetings they are all older people and all they do is complain about the young people and everything they do – I think young people need a voice and they need to have it in their community. We wanted to set up CPLC meetings for only the young people so they could sit and talk about the police in the community and what they want in their area, although this has to meet a lot of criteria e.g. same number of females and males and from different backgrounds and communities. We still have not yet achieved this." Organisational Representative

3.5.2 Benefits to policing (and other emergency services)

“It’s allowed us to do a lot more intervention work and enabled us to reduce anti-social behaviour amongst the young people – we are able to come along to the likes of (names of Community/Project Workers) and mention to them if they could have a word in people’s ear.” PSNI Representative

“It’s had a massive impact on policing – we may have come across situations on the street and because of the relationships we have built up with the young people we are able to talk to them and this has helped to diffuse many situations.” PSNI Representative

“It was a two way agenda and this identified ways in which we could do things better. We explored issues like rioting, anti-social behaviour, police behaviour, etc. The forum was a good way to facilitate this on an on-going basis.” Organisational Representative

“I have used what I have learnt from (name of Co-ordinator) to help me to set up things around the interface – this made a big difference on the street because of what we are learning through the process – we are able to speak with the kids on the interface and in the streets who do/don’t riot so it’s not just been a talking shop.” PSNI Representative

“This project gives a way of challenging behaviour but it is also important that we listen to the young people. I am not saying we can do all that they ask for or say but if we can’t we can explain why we can’t deliver on this so they know the real reasons. This model has made a difference to policing in this area and I’m flagging this up as a model of best practice and something that could be potentially rolled out to other areas. It has enabled us to engage with previously difficult and hard to reach communities.” PSNI Representative

“We have planted a seed in the minds of the student officers and they now understand young people more – hopefully this will grow as they move into the various neighbourhoods where they will work.” PSNI Representative

“We are now in at the start and hopefully getting to the police officers before they learn bad habits and enabling them to speak to young people in a different way and with respect, after all young people make up 30% of the population. We were recently criticised by politicians that police attitudes towards young people stank – through this initiative we are proving ways in which we are trying to improve things.” PSNI Representative

“When we have got things wrong we have been challenged, but we have also challenged ourselves, peers, senior officers and superiors. Young people have a voice through the district so we have been able to do something about bad behaviour and bring this back to both police and young people – the police benefit from this.” PSNI Representative

“From the perspective of the student officers and more recently the police on the ground, there was an improvement in their attitude and communication skills with young people and they took on board what the young people had to say; this was important as dealing with young people on the streets is one of the big issues of policing.” PSNI Representative

“Generated awareness and created opportunities for young people to speak with the people from the police, fire and ambulance services who they did not have access to before. In fact some of the young people are thinking about joining emergency services as a result so this has put an option/avenue on the table they maybe had not thought of before.” Co-ordinator

4.0 Evaluation Findings: difficulties and challenges

(by association areas for improvement/strengthening/change/development)

4.1 Building Relationships/generating Understanding

“One of the biggest challenges was to find a person to get the right access to young people. We now have this, and the other contacts which include Youth bring, so you just start to build up relationships and this impacts on the work.” Organisational Representative

“It took a long time to build relationships and confidence between young people and the police in the area as there was a fear about not being able to say what they wanted in case they implicated themselves in any way.” PSNI Representative

4.2 Involvement/turnover of Young People

“He gave out details about something to do with my best friend and he should not have brought this up.” Young Person

“More groups like us need to get involved as we’ve only had an effect in our community.” Young Person

“Young Voices is now part of the routine and there is only the odd young person that doesn’t want to go.” Organisational Representative

“The changes in the group and therefore the dynamics in the group when new people come in can be difficult, not just for (name of Co-ordinator) but even for the members of staff as behaviours are not great and create real challenges.” Organisational Representative

“We deserve something for doing this, maybe something extra every four weeks.” Young Person

“Maybe an issue to maintain interest with young people over the time period.” Organisational Representative

“There is always learning for me on the job e.g. how to best meet expectations to ensure there is an outcome but not to build the young people up to fail. We worked together at neighbourhood police level and with young people and wrote up the experiences and brought this to the chief superintendent at this level.” Co-ordinator

“Young people not being able to see any tangible outcomes – more true of the work in the YOC than the JJC setting.” Co-ordinator

4.3 Scheduling Activities and Competing Priorities

“Dealing with both the reality of not having the time or resources to deal with the issue from a policing perspective” Co-ordinator

“The police were very busy and sometimes it was hard to arrange when to meet.” Organisational Representative

4.4 Feedback Systems

“Never hear nothing about it and what we said.” Young Person

“Nothing ever comes back to us.” Young Person

“We never find out if anything ever happens.” Young Person

“It needs to be a two-way street – people come in and do the type of work they do and have issues presented to them – they need to feed this back into the system and not just publish a report damming what we do as sometimes what they have written is not accurate and needs to be checked for factual accuracy first.” Organisational Representative

“We don’t get feedback from them as such. Whenever (name of Co-ordinator) comes in, we take no part in it.” Organisational Representative

“We did stuff on (name of institution) Child Protection Policy and this was written up as response – that was started about 18 months ago and will be March 2010 before something happens about it. There is huge frustration for young people if they don’t see, hear or experience changes, even in the short-term.” Co-ordinator

“Young people can be very impulsive and expect/want things to happen right now – things don’t just change in a system overnight and people need to recognise this.” Organisational Representative

4.5 Moving Towards Direct Engagement with Children and Young People

“We need to change the way the staff get on and the way things are done in jail.” Young Person

“We would love to see the ones who tell us why we should or should not get the stuff in here.” Young Person

“We never have any feedback on it – they should come in and tell us what’s been done.” Young Person

“We need to look at how we do follow up between youth and community workers and the police. Maybe we need to re-look at the informal agreement we have with the groups and what the role of the project is and what their role is in this and to establish boundaries. It’s been a while since I undertook the first meeting with a group, so maybe we just need to be clear about the remit and at some stage I let go and they maintain and facilitate direct engagement themselves.” Co-ordinator

“This model needs to go beyond engagement between young people and police to have an impact at a policy/strategic level. During the period of YCNI funding we have been influencing the training of the new recruits also – so this has been a major change as opposed to solely a youth worker hearing the views of young people and advocating on their behalf.” Co-ordinator

“We’d not talk to them (the staff in YOC) about the stuff – they’d tell the cops.” Young Person

“We’d have nowt to do with them ’uns.” (referring to YOC staff) Young Person

4.6 Specific Difficulties Associated with Working with the PSNI

“The response needs to get involved with a group and meet with them and go out on wee outings and stuff like we did.” Young Person

“The response ones, they were awful – they had no respect for young people. We got the impression that what we were saying did not really sink in. There was one of them who thought it was civilians in the area that needed to solve the crimes and get rid of the drug dealers – it was down to you to get it sorted. That wouldn’t work and our families would get kicked out of the area. He raised this as an issue although the other recruits disagreed.” Young Person

“More than keen to extend to the response police – statistics tell me if someone has a good experience with police, they tell four people, if it’s bad they tell 20 people – that means we have to work five times harder to make that up. There was an incident before Christmas which gave us a bit of a setback, I would like us to push out and engage youth with the response officers.” PSNI Representative

“I think it helped to show young people in a more positive light, although we as community police officers would have always tried to see the positive side. I think maybe the lack of engagement with the response officers could be rectified as they have different opinions of the young people.” PSNI Representative

“Not enough police involved in the project. Most of the young people in the area benefit as police in the area have changed their attitude towards them; however this does not extend to the response officers.” Organisational Representative

“We need to get more involved with the police officers and to improve this and put regular measures in place so we can make an impact on ground and before the police hit ground.” Co-ordinator

“This project is not about a pill for all ills; we need to keep the focus in terms of ‘youth participation with police to affect policy’. Therefore it’s not my role to get into the politics of it either internally in the police or because of the recent threat from dissident republicans – I need to make sure the people in the project are safe, including me as the worker.” Co-ordinator

“We are dealing with a very sensitive issue for our country re: policing and the recent deaths of police and army officers and difficulties around people preventing this type of work going forward. In some places the work stopped and started because of this re: safety for the young people, the police and the youth workers.” Co-ordinator

4.7 Funding and Sustainability

“The key thing is don’t raise expectations – if I raise ‘ABC’, there is an expectation something will change and, in general, everything comes down to money. Will we pay for it after the trial period, that will be the question, and the money is not there?” Organisational Representative

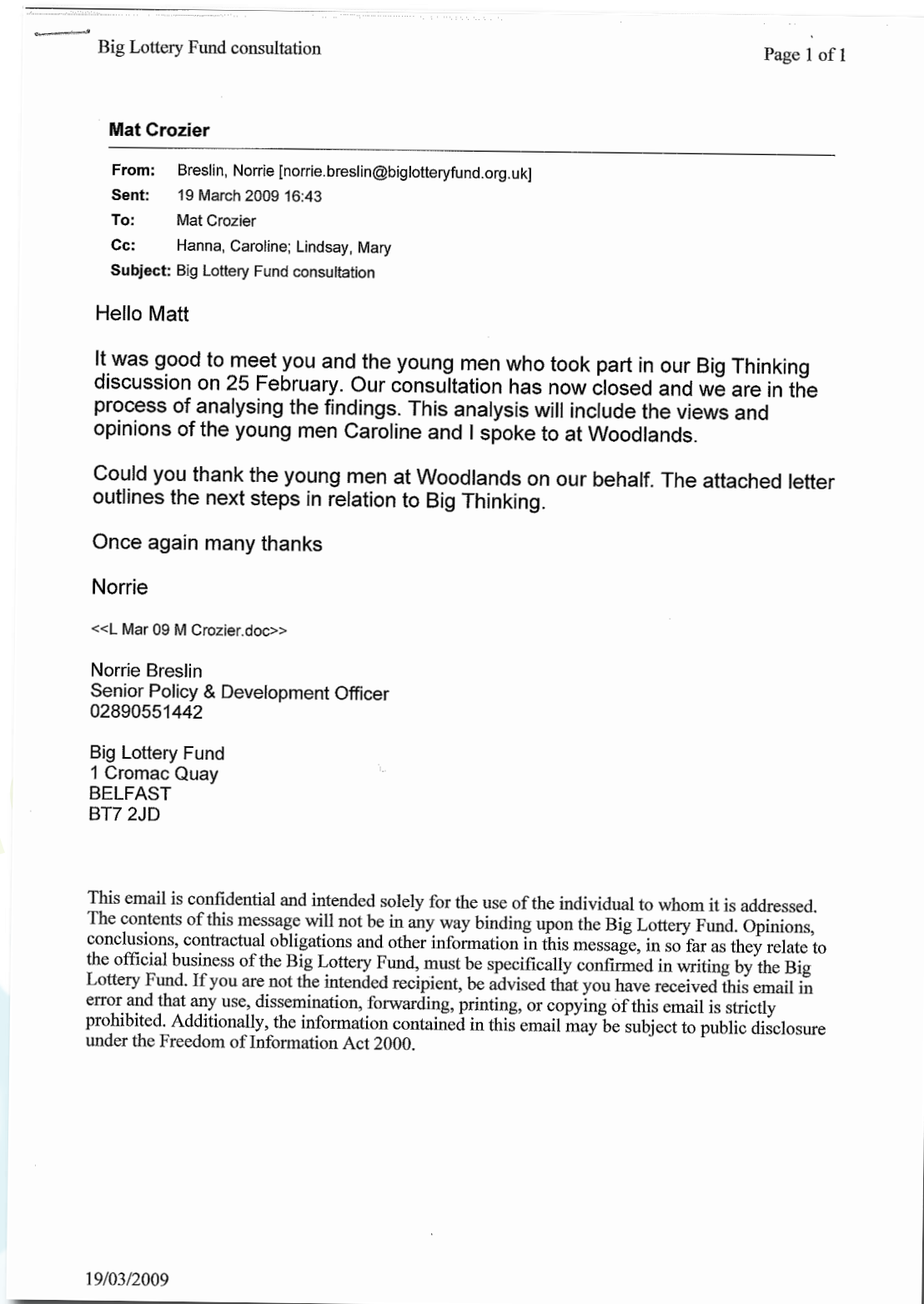
“My view is there is always a need for organisations from outside while there is still funding from outside. They have an interest in coming inside to talk to institutions and we learn and improve if there is a sharing of information and learning, without of course a breach of confidentiality.” Organisational Representative

“This project needs more sustainable funding or else it becomes a wee diversionary type programme – I know all the organisations are struggling with resources and the police struggled with resources but if this is taken away there would be a gap there so it needs to be consolidated upon now and resourced.” Co-ordinator

“(name of Co-ordinator) post finishes at the end of the month. This should be a permanent post as we would not have got to this stage if it was not for her. She’s the one who has done all the hard work.” Organisational Representative



Appendix Three: Samples 'Thank You' Letters Received





Matt Crozier
Include Youth
Alpha House
3 Rosemary Street
BELFAST
BT1 1QA

19 March 2009

Discussion with young people at Woodlands

Dear Matt

As you are aware Big Lottery Fund have been engaging with our stakeholders as part of the Big Thinking consultation. This has included speaking to approximately 200 children and young people, such as the young men at Woodlands Youth Justice Centre on 25 February 2009.

The key points raised through this discussion have been summarised together with findings from conversations with other children and young people. This information is currently being analysed and will be presented to our Northern Ireland Committee (March 2009) and then to our UK wide Board (May 2009). The evidence we have gathered through our Big Thinking consultation will be used to help us develop new funding programmes. We expect these new initiatives to be open during 2010.

On behalf of Big Lottery Fund I would like to thank the young men who took part in this discussion on 25 February 2009. The views and opinions of all our stakeholders are important to us. I would also like to thank you for facilitating the discussion group.

A report summarising the UK wide findings from our Big Thinking consultation will be published in summer 2009. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on 02890 551442 or by email at norrie.breslin@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Norrie Breslin
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We are committed to bringing real improvements to communities and to the lives of people most in need



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Mat Crozier
Include Youth
Alpha House
3 Rosemary Street
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BT1 1QA

9 January 2009

13 JAN 2009

Dear Mat

Thank you for inviting me to Woodlands this week to discuss the new community safety strategy. I found the conversation both interesting and useful and I would be very grateful if you could pass on my thanks to Joe, Michael, Shane and Blaine for taking the time to meet with me and for sharing their opinions openly and honestly.

I wish you every success in your continuing work with the group at Woodlands and I hope that in working together all of us in the field of community safety will help make these young men and their communities safer now and in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lee Davidson



TOGETHER. STRONGER. SAFER.



5th December 2008

To: Young Voices participants
(via Mat Crozier, Include Youth)

I am writing to personally thank you all for the extremely interesting and informative feedback you provided, through the workshop sessions with Mat Crozier, on the topics of under-age drinking, knife crime, and the Youth Justice Agency itself.

Your views have already been fed into individual working groups which are examining these issues and I hope that they will have a strong influence on the action plans which are formed as a result.

I intend to keep you informed of further progress through Mat and I am also hoping that we may be able to show our appreciation to you in a more direct way in the not too distant future.

Many thanks once again.

Bill

Bill Lockhart
Chief Executive



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