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investing in children

COMMUNITY SAFETY

An Investing In Children Report

Commissioned by Durham and Darlington Police Authority
to consider young peoples views about community safety issues

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Katie Armstrong, Zoe Butcher, Kimberley Malcolm, Libby Finlay,
Frankie Hole, Donna, Kim and Claire Thorp, Tabatha Tilley, Martin Ashby
Steven Robinson, Brian Davies, Karl Owen and Alexis Gibson

Assisted by Sue Waller

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COMMUNITY SAFETY REPORT

1.Introduction

This report was commissioned by the County Durham and Darlington Police Authority who asked Investing in Children to collect young peoples views on issues regarding community safety in County Durham and to present their findings to the Police, in order to assist them to try and improve the situation for young people living in County Durham.

2.How we approached this work

Investing in Children approached this work in several different ways, but firstly by getting together a group of young people who would act as consultants and researchers throughout the duration of the Project. We decided to use several methods in order to get the information and views we wanted.

Methods used in the Project were:-

Agenda days (2 were held and part of one other day was also used)

Visits to venues used by young people

Interviews with various groups of young people

Interviews with the Police

Interview of a town centre manager

Questionnaires for young people

Research

Agenda Days or Events

The first agenda day was held in May 2004 when thirty young people from around County Durham, known to the DISC agency and from Aycliffe Young Peoples Centre responded to an invitation to meet. The complete

report from this agenda day is included as Appendix 1. Recommendations from the day are included in the chapter on "Talking with Young People". An agenda day for young people in comprehensive schools was staged in Darlington in November when twentyone young people spent several hours discussing what life is like for them in Darlington. Their views are presented in an overview of the event within the chapter "Talking with Young People". The full report is included as Appendix 2. On 15th May 2005 thirtyfour young people with special needs and disabilities from Darlington were asked their opinions about community safety in Darlington as part of an agenda day staged on behalf of the Children's Trust. That part of their day is included on pages 12 and 13 and a fuller version is in Appendix 3.

Visits to Venues Used by Young People

Researchers from Investing in Children decided to visit venues in the Seaham area as this was the first area in County Durham or Darlington that had gone ahead and introduced a curfew. It also seemed that there was a view around that the curfew had been very successful and that the Police in other areas might be thinking about having one also. We visited Seaham Youth Centre on December 18th 2004 and spent time talking to youth workers and young people and asked the latter to complete questionnaires we had prepared for them. The results from these questionnaires are analysed on pages 6-8 Graphs detailing their responses are included as Appendices 4 and 5

In January 2005 we visited Seaham Youth Initiative and spent time there with the detached youth workers who were employed to work in the Deneside area. The youth workers then asked their young people to complete the questionnaires for us during January at their weekly sessions. Analysis of these questionnaires appears on pages 8-10 and graphs with detailed information appear as Appendix 4 and 5

Interviews with Police

We decided that the views of the Police were very important to this piece of work so we asked to interview Police officers in

- Seaham, (curfew area),
- Darlington (where we were told they were planning to introduce a curfew)
- Chester le Street (for a reasonable geographic spread and because IIC have good links there)
- And Newton Aycliffe (as we were led to believe during this work that a curfew had already been introduced there), unfortunately we did not manage this interview as we ran out of time.

Analysis of these interviews is included in the chapter headed "Interviews with the Police" and the actual transcripts of interviews are included as Appendix 6

Part way through the work we decided to interview the Manager of Newton Aycliffe Town Centre and our description and views about that are included on pages 19 and 20 with a full record in Appendix 7

We also decided at quite an early stage that we would like to interview the Editor of the Northern Echo, however our requests to do this were ignored. We have included our views about that and also a list of questions we would have liked to ask him in Appendix 16.

Research

Throughout the project we have carefully considered lots of evidence from pieces of research and we have tried to include these in the sections that include our views about Young People and the Media, The Police and Community Safety. We have tried to bring in examples of things that are happening on these topics in other places around the country and what we might learn from them.

In our work about young peoples attitudes to Community Safety issues we also invited Graham Mc Ardle Anti-Social Behaviour Officer from Durham's Community Safety office to talk to us about his work. This is described on page 19

We also discussed our work with the Youth Centre staff in Seaham and got their views about the Deneside curfew and with the detached youth workers who work for Seaham Youth Initiative.

3."TALKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE"

Seaham Youth Centre

Four of the young people from the group met with the young people from Seaham Youth Centre. It was on a night that when the young people ordinarily meet at the youth centre so the group took base in the tuck shop and the young people were asked if they wanted to answer some questions on community safety in exchange for some sweets at the tuck shop.

The centre was very lively and there were lots of young people there - it seemed like it was a very popular place to go. Twenty-two young people joined us in the tuck shop at different times during the evening to complete the questionnaires. We were made very welcome by the Youth Workers there and they told us that they believed the Police had not been behind the curfew that was in place in the area. They believed that most of the trouble on the Deneside was caused by youngsters who were too young to come to the Youth Centre ie under 11s. They felt that people in the area including the Police seemed to not know how to deal with the problems as taking these children home to their parents had not had any effect. They described a picture where they believed the teenagers of the area were now subject to a curfew unfairly, when they were not responsible for the problems that exist. The youth workers views were that it had been pressure from local residents on councillors in the area that had resulted in the curfew being imposed.

They also told us that they believed that the Police were not enforcing their powers to take young people home after 9pm- they said that young people leaving the centre at the end of the night to go home were always in breach of the curfew as they would be doing so at 9.30pm. Police were ignoring this.

We were very surprised and sad to learn about three weeks later that Seaham Youth Centre had closed about one week after our visit as there was no-one to continue running it. We were left wondering where all those young people were now spending their evenings?

Twenty-two people filled in the questionnaire at the youth centre. The outcome of the questionnaire showed that 79% of the young people feel safe within their community but the majority of these young people admitted that they only felt safe when amongst family or friends. There was only 5% of the young people that said they "don't feel safe" and the other 16% said that they feel "all right" when in their community.

When asked question two, the results showed that many of the young people felt mainly insecure and not safe when walking past groups of large groups and gangs when they are walking on their own or the groups are being abusive due to alcohol and drugs.

The young people's results varied when asked question three, 50% of the young people said that they think their concerns and views about safety in the community are responded to as well as adults get responded to and 25% of the young people said sometimes they think that they get listened to and the other 25% of young people felt like they don't have their views responded to as well as the adults are.

It was very clear to see what the young people felt about the way that adults feel about themselves and other young people, the results show that 68% of the young people answered that they are seen as trouble

makers by the adults in their area due to the fact that one person may cause disturbance, therefore all the other young people can not be trusted and respected by any of the adults in their community.

The young people said that 53% of them are being treated unfairly by the police in their community, for example, one young person mentioned that even though themselves and the people they are with are not doing anything wrong, the police still ask for name and addresses from each and every young person.

Although 83% of the young people didn't actually live in the area of where the curfew was placed, 100% of them exclaimed that it was unfair that the young people should become targeted with a curfew, many went onto saying how the curfew would not work as rules get broken, for example, many stay out until the time the curfew ended (09.00pm).

Although 28% of the young people said they thought the curfew would improve the relationship between the police officers and the young people, 44% thought it would make matters worse in their area and the relationship between the young people and the police were going down hill due to the fact that young people will only become more rebellious when faced with curfews.

"It isn't fair that the police have the power to move young people on when in a group of two or three people, we should have the right to go out with more than one or two friends"

said one young person who filled in a questionnaire the youth centre. 36% said it is stupid for the police to have this power to move people on and 18% said it is a good idea for them to move people on who are causing a disturbance.

The question on the media issue was asked and whether or not the media should have the right to publicise on young people who have an anti-social behaviour order placed upon them, 69% stated that publicising is a bad idea and is wrong, for example one young person exclaimed that "it gives the young person a bad image".

The views from the young people on how Seaham could be improved, included;

41% saying, having more activities to do,

12% saying that police should stop being judgemental about young people.

Seaham Youth Initiative

Two young people from the group plus the IIC Consultant met with Mickey Waters from the Seaham Youth Initiative in early January 2005. They met initially to ask when would be the best time to come to meet with a group of young people. But as a discussion progressed and Mickey informed the young people and consultant to how the initiative worked the young people felt that it would be better to have the young people decide how and when they wanted to contribute to the discussion. This was because the young people came up with schedules of what activities etc. they did and when. They young people and consultant agreed to send a copy of the questions asked to the group at the youth centre to Mickey and he could hand them out to the young people and the young people could add anything that they thought that the group had missed of just any issues that they felt should be brought up.

We were very impressed by the work that Mickey and staff were doing. Mickey told us that the money for it had been made available **after** the Deneside curfew had been imposed and had come as a direct result of it!

The same questions were used in a questionnaire that were completed by sixteen young people in Seaham Youth Initiative.

Only 25% of the young people said that they do not feel safe in the community of which they live, where as 37% said they do feel safe and another 37% percent said they feel ok within their community.

50% of young people said that they mainly feel unsafe when it is dark on a night and 18% said that they feel very unsafe when there are drunken people on the streets. 66.7% of young people answered question three as that they do not get responded to as well as adults do 33% said they do feel that there views are taken into consideration as equally as the adults views.

The young people commented that they get seen as;

13%- hooligans,

38%- bad, 18%- annoying and

another 18% said that adults in their area see them as thugs and vandals.

When question five was asked about whether or not that they have had any experience with the adults within Seaham and whether they were treat fairly or unfairly in the experience, the young people responded to this question and said that

50% of them were treated fairly and

37% of them said that they have been treat unfairly

Only 21% of these young people lived within the Seaham area where the curfew was placed, but 33% of them said that to place a curfew on young people is just simply targeting them and it is unfair to place a curfew where as 13% thought that it is a good idea to have a curfew.

Although 33% of the young people said that it was unfair to place a curfew on young people, 50% of them answered that the relationship between the police officers in Seaham and the young people would get better as a result of a curfew, in question five.

27% of the young people thought that the police in Seaham, having the power to move groups along is a bad idea where as 33% thought it is a good idea that will improve community safety.

The group of young people from Seaham Youth Initiative come up with the following as to what they think would improve and make Seaham a better community;

7%- more activities,

7%- more leisure facilities,

7% skate park and

29% said "more places to go" would improve the young peoples behaviour in Seaham.

The questions we used in these surveys are included in Appendix 8 and graphs illustrating the answers are in Appendices 4 and 5

Agenda Days

May 2004

Recommendations from the day

The police shouldn't pick on the same kids over and over again.

We should be able to go wherever we want if we don't do anything wrong

The police should believe us.

There should be CCTV in some known well-lit areas - there are mixed feelings about them, safety or privacy?

Police community wardens walking about to make it safer.

Need community wardens outside schools, people smoking fighting etc.

More jobs for scholars keep them off the street.

More things like investing in children.

The curfews should be after 9 on weekends

Curfews should be 9:30 for u16s and 10:00 for under 20s

Times should get extended on weekends

Police should warn you before they chuck the alcohol away

The government should give young people money for somewhere to go on a night

Under 11s should be in before 8 on week nights

If young people stick to curfews, they should get paid £5-£10 so they stick to the law

Police should send young people to Boot Camp if causing trouble in the community

Police should be better trained to young peoples issues

Police should listen to you and believe you, take young people seriously when we have problems and not see trouble makers all the time

They should fine young people for drinking, adults too

They should only tell young people off when causing trouble

The police take lads on trips for good behaviour, they should do this more often and for more people

Overall this agenda day was a success with everyone having a chance to voice his or her opinion on the police and their own safety.

There are a few concerns about the way young people are treated and need to be heard by the police themselves to see if they can sort the problems out.

There was some good and bad points but the most common answer what come out was that, there needs to be more police on the streets to make safer, not just for young people but for everyone and there needs to be a place to go.

There does seem to be a barricade between police and young people about how everyone is treated. This report shows that some young people don't have respect for police because of the way that they are treated and police don't have any respect by the young people. This needs to be

sorted out as soon as possible to make life better for everyone in every community.

The young people who facilitated the agenda day on the 19th may, 2004, which would have been carried out before the Curfews and ASBO's were in place. Came up with near on the exact replies and responses that this group have received whilst discussing the issues with young people from Darlington and Seaham. Therefore the group feel that this backs up what has been said by the groups of young people that they have met with. That is that young people and the police should have more opportunities to enter into dialogue so their voices can be heard and their opinions taken into account. As it seems that young people feel misunderstood and police in turn be misunderstood, and that the views of young people haven't changed in over a year.

Darlington November 2004

Conclusions from the day

The basic view that came out of the day was very mixed, even within each individual group but some main themes were:

The young people believed that curfews were a good idea if used in the right way, such as for those who have committed serious crimes, repeatedly committed crimes or broken conditions of an ASBO as they have then brought it upon themselves.

The young people felt that it was however extremely unfair and unjust to punish all young people for the small percentage of young people who actually do wrong.

The general opinion of young people around the subject of "moving on" is that in some cases this is probably the fairest thing to do but concern was voiced about examples where Darlington Police have put young people in a situation that could be extremely dangerous by moving them on and

then leaving them, split up from their friends, in quieter deserted areas having herded individuals through the streets.

Young people felt that adults in general are always expecting them to be getting into trouble or as a threat to themselves, their peers and most popularly to their local community inhabitants. Opposed to this feeling young people themselves said that they would feel much more comfortable and safe if there was more police presence on the street, as many young people said that they often felt unsafe walking around the streets even in their own area and not just at night but during the day as well.

Children with Disabilities (Darlington) Agenda Day - May 2005 Comments from the Day

1. Do you feel safe in your community?

The young people responded to this question with answers that were negative. There was not a single young person that identified him or herself as feeling safe within their community.

2. If you don't, what are the things that make you feel unsafe?

The young people gave a wide variety of answers;

Too many gangs hanging around

Police do not speak to young people with respect

Shops selling alcohol to under age drinkers

Too many drug takers

Lack of street lights

Too many people with weapons

Objects thrown at busses

Not enough speed limits

There are plenty more answers that came from the young people, these can be found in the appendix.

3. How can they be improved to make your community safer?

The young people suggested the following to be improved to make them and others in their community feel safe;

Security wardens to move people on when amongst a group

More children friendly police officers

Street lighting, can be improved by putting more around in the areas where there are no lights

More camera's

More activity clubs, gives young people the choice to do something other than hanging around the streets

Camera's in bus stops

More police on the beat, more ambulances and fire engines on standby

More bike paths

More zebra crossings

Separate bus lanes

The young people at the agenda day came up with some very strong views and ideas on what makes the community unsafe for them. They talked about how there should be more police on the beat to prevent people causing them harm and how Darlington would be improved if the police learnt how to respect and talk to young people with issues. There were many views given on gangs of youths and the disturbance they cause towards other young people, which are usually due to their alcohol level or the effects of drugs.

4. INTERVIEWS WITH THE POLICE

The group felt that meeting with the Police would give a different perspective on community safety, as they were often seen as the people who had to keep a community safe. In order to do this the group planned on meeting with Police from several different areas throughout County

Durham and Darlington to ask them to contribute to the groups' research; amongst these were Darlington, Newton Aycliffe, Seaham and Chester-le-Street. Unfortunately we ran out of time and the Aycliffe interview was not possible.

As preparation for these visits the group came up with a set of questions for each group, these questions are included as Appendix 6

The three interviews that took place in Chester-le-Street, Seaham, and Darlington give us several different opinions on how police feel about young people in these areas and how they think young people should be addressed.

In two out of the three places we visited, the Police view of young people was quite negative as the officers all believed in some way that enforcing curfews for young people under 16 was a good idea. These two had already had a curfew and found that this had been a great success in reducing the fear of crime in these areas, Seaham and Chester-le-Street.

Darlington was the only interview in which we found that the police believed that there was other ways in dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in young people, other than curfews, and that curfews should only be used as a last resort.

While researching into what other Police forces nationally think of young people we found a report in which, the Chief Constable in South Wales said about her opinion of curfews, for young people to combat anti-social behaviour. She believes, like Darlington Police that there are other ways to tackle the problem and curfews should only be used as a last resort. For full report see Appendix....

Although Chester-le-street and Seaham liked the idea of enforcing curfews in their areas, the figures that the police gave us in these areas

on crime and anti-social behaviour, showed us that only a small minority of the crime and anti-social behaviour is being committed by young people e.g. the interview with the Police in Chester-le-Street says that most of their crime is being committed by people in their 20's, so why should they penalise young people under 16 by enforcing a curfew when they find that most of the crime is being committed by older people rather than younger ones.

These two places are two of the 79% of Police forces in England and Wales that used curfew power last Summer. Research carried out by Liberty shows that at least 34 of 43 police forces in England and Wales have authorised curfew zones last year, and as was mentioned before only a small minority of the crime is begin committed by the young people who are being targeted by the curfews.

It is our view therefore that young people are being unfairly targeted by such curfews and that they are being used to help reduce peoples fear of crime.

5. YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE POLICE

Whilst looking through different young people's perspective of Police and curfews on a national basis we found other young people's views on curfews in a variety of different places. These views varied from some thinking that having a curfew would be a good idea as there is too many young people roaming around the streets on a night to others thinking that young people have a reason to be out on a night passed 9pm as they might be at a youth club or round a friends house.

For the whole report see Appendix.

We also found, while looking for other young peoples opinions on the police, a piece of research that was done by young people in Barnet, named:

" It's time to change negative attitudes between young people and the police".

Barnet Action 4 Youth

These young people carried out a survey, which asked young people how they feel the police see and treat them and also asked police how they feel about young people.

From this research they found that 86% of young people believed that police have negative attitudes towards them and 61% of police officers agreeing that they have a negative attitude towards young people.

"Negative relations between Police and young people are the perception and the reality" is what the survey concluded.

Key findings were:

Young people tend to have a negative not positive attitude to their most recent contact with the Police

In matters of general attitude young people have a lower opinion of the Police than the Police think they do

Four out of ten officers agreed they had a negative attitude to young people

Young people want the Police to interact more, have a more positive and friendly attitude and for them to listen and demonstrate more respect and care

We would support these views and our work in the agenda days with young people also seems to support this research. It is time for change negative attitudes between young people and Police.

To read more about the survey and its findings read Appendix 11.

6. YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA

During the course of this project we became very aware of how young people are often presented in the newspapers and media generally.

This topic has been written about a lot in recent weeks also by "Young People Now" magazine who conducted a Mori survey to look at how the media portray young people particularly in relation to crime.

Their survey suggested that a third of all press articles about young people were about crime and 71% saw young people negatively.

" Move over football, we now have a new national sport - talking down young people and its more popular than ever before"
(James Michael for Childrens Express)

"When it comes to young people.....bad news is good news for newspapers"
(Steve Barratt, Young People Now)

Another recent survey of tabloid and broadsheet newspapers found that young people were referred to as thugs 26 times, and yobs 21 times in 74 articles about young people and crime.

Other descriptions included evil, lout, monsters, brutes, scum, menace, heartless, sick, menacing, and inhuman. (Shape the Debate Campaign).

"The media presents young people at best as problems and at worst criminals: 71 per cent of stories about them are negative and one in three focus on crime." (Positive Images)

Fact - Young people are only quoted in about 8% of stories about them

We support the view of youth campaigners, who also supported by Children's Minister Margaret Hodge who say that young people are being unfairly targeted and automatically linked with anti-social behaviour. We also welcome and support the Positive Images campaign to improve the portrayal of young people in the media and would like to see a more balanced line being taken in the Press.

"Almost all of the publicity that the media gives to young people is negative" admits David Seymour, the Political Editor of the Mirror Group.

Politicians are also guilty of talking about young people as being problems in our society rather than being an important part of it.

Blossom Young, chairman of the British Youth Council said

"BYC believes that politicians must take a more responsible approach when talking about crime, anti-social behaviour and young people. All the political partners are guilty of scare mongering around so called "yob culture", helping to fuel hysteria across the country and increasingly vilifying young people. Yet again young people are being talked about as a problem in our society, rather an important part of it. What we need to remember, that young people are actually one of the largest groups who are victims of crime. The governments "crack down" on anti-social behaviour, including measures such as curfews, will only serve to alienate young people from their community and the police, whilst doing to improve the safety of young people or the public as large. Young people are becoming political scapegoats for the problems in today's society, especially around crime, anti-social behaviour and issues like binge drinking. The government must start properly consulting and listening to the views of young people on issues like this, which directly impact on them".

We were particularly disappointed during this piece of work to see stories on the front page of our regional newspaper - the Northern Echo - that attacked young people over several weeks, on the issues of ASBOs and crime. We have included these articles as Appendices.....

We requested an opportunity to interview the Editor of the Northern Echo so that we could put some of our concerns to him. Unfortunately our request for a meeting was ignored.

It is our view that reporting young people generally and individuals specifically in these ways is counter productive. It not only feeds

negative perceptions that many members of the public already have about young people but it also somehow sets young people apart as a strange breed within our own society. It also encourages anti- social behaviour we think, in that one of the individuals concerned enjoyed the publicity and the "hero" it made him in his own community.

Presenting young people and their behaviour in that way is not helpful and has the opposite of the intended effects ie he deliberately committed **more** crime because of the attention he received, **not less**.

We have noticed in recent weeks however that the Northern Echo has begun to campaign for resources and facilities to be made available in Darlington, directly following the deaths of two teenagers on the main East Coast railway line through Darlington. We welcome this better approach - what a shame it took such awful events to change the Northern Echo's stance.

We would like to see the Northern Echo follow the lead of the Warrington Guardian who have carried a youth page in their paper since 1997. The page is constructed in partnership between the local council and youth workers who come with young people to the Guardians office each Thursday evening and work on the young peoples ideas together.

7. YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Community Safety is not only about being safe, but feeling safe. Young people are one of the most vulnerable to crime and disorder. On average each year young people aged 15-24 are more likely to be victims of crime than any other age group.

From the work that we have carried out we have found that many young people don't feel safe in their communities. For example for some young people with special needs or disability in Darlington when asked the

question "do you feel safe in your community?" responded with negative feedback saying things like

- there are too many gangs hanging around and
- police do not speak to young people with respect.
- other young people in Darlington that where asked the same question say "there is never anything to do on a night, so we have to walk around the streets and we get moved on by the police and youth offending officers for doing nothing wrong. This is unfair as many young people are split up from their friends and moved miles away from their homes."

Although the view we got from the young people in Darlington was that of feeling unsafe within parts of their community the vast majority of young people in Seaham said that they felt safe within their communities.

This is quite surprising as Seaham is an area in which the police felt they needed a curfew to reduce the number of crimes and anti-social behaviour being committed.

During our research we invited Graham Mc Ardle from County Durham's Community Safety Partnership to come to speak at one of our meetings. He provided us with information about his job which is Anti-Social Behaviour Officer.

Graham told us that County Durham does not yet have any good accurate information about what is happening as a result of ASBOs and other matters. However this will change over the next few months.

We had an interesting debate with Graham about the positive and negative aspects of having ASBOs and curfews. Amongst the group of IIC researchers we did not have agreement about these issues which perhaps reflects what a difficult matter it has become. Graham however was quite clearly not in support of curfews and does not see them as a helpful thing for dealing with problems of youth crime.

Meeting with Newton Aycliffe Town Manager

Two of the young people from the group went to meet with Newton Aycliffe's Town Centre Manager, as there had been an article in the Newton News (Newton Aycliffe's free newspaper) that a couple of young people from the group had seen that implied that there was a curfew on the Town centre. The young people met with the Town Manager at his office in Upper Beveridge Way in the town centre.

It was evident from the interview that a curfew in Newton Aycliffe town centre is not very far off as the public and the Manager are very much of the opinion that young people are responsible for the problems the town centre has with graffiti and vandalising of lifts.

It does not seem that young people will be consulted about this.

Whilst carrying out the research on how young people feel in their communities we found an article on 'The Young People's Safety Survey'. This report outlines how safe young people feel in their hometown of Ipswich. They have found that young people feel more concerned about being a victim of crime than the elderly and than other young people elsewhere in Britain who were other crime surveys made by the British Crime Survey.

After carrying out this survey Ipswich Borough Council have found and are now targeting 'Making Ipswich Safer' as one of their key priorities. For full report see Appendix 17.

The best way to sum up the interviews that took place and our findings from the research that we did is to use this quote from Liberty:

'the imposing of curfews on young people is unfair. The police have a range of powers to deal with anti social behaviour but under16's are now being treated like criminals just for being out of their homes past 9pm'

CONCLUSIONS:

We think our work and research seem to suggest that the messages from young people are:-

It is time to change negative attitudes between young people and Police - look at ways of improving this

Find better and more constructive alternatives to curfews- stop driving young people off the streets - stop infringing their rights- use curfews only with those who deserve them

- Put finance into local communities to prevent the need for curfews, not AFTER they have been introduced
- The Media's attitudes, approach and actions concerning young people need to be challenged - people believe what they read!
- Young people have views about the world we all live in and have as much right as anyone else to express these views and to have opportunities to do that
- Show young people more respect
- Stop over-stating the case of young people's involvement in crime- only a small minority of young people commit crime - stop demonising youth
- Recognise that young people are also victims of crime - more young people are victims of crime than people over 80yrs
- Recognise that young people have a positive contribution to make to society - treat them like the citizens that they are
- Encourage young people to get involved in shaping their local community instead of chasing them out of it
- "hanging around on street corners" is what they like to do and is quite natural - its not illegal
- Start positive campaigns to improve facilities and resources for young people in local communities - don't wait for tragedies before deciding to do something

"Community Safety is being able to go anywhere at any time without being afraid"

(15 yr old, The Block*)

We believe this applies as much to young people as it does anyone else. However we leave the last words here with Shetlands Islands Council on their website, which sums up our views

"Young people are one of the groups most vulnerable to crime and disorder. It is important that we promote a positive image of young people, engage them in our work and consult with them every step of the way.....so that they are not seen as perpetrators of crime and disorder.....this is the case of a small minority,this strategy must ensure that this myth is dispelled.

Young people in Shetland are, not unlike their counterparts across the country, struggling to grow up in a rapidly changing world.

It is natural, and it should be expected, for young people to "hang about " on street corners, but they should not be treated as "scapegoats" by people who find this intimidating.

Therefore it is the responsibility of Shetland's communities to ensure our young people are respected and nurtured and not be railroaded into a life of crime and disorder, that others expect of them. They are the next generation: they are the future and should be allowed the freedom to develop into mature and responsible citizens."

Shetlands Islands Council