

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMMISSION REPORT

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Glasgow is one of the best places in Europe to be a young person. The range of opportunities, leisure activities, career prospects and education options makes us a city where there is something for everyone.

This does not mean that we are without challenges. Child poverty remains significantly higher than the national average and the effects of post industrialisation and the 2008 banking crisis are still being felt by too many of our youngest citizens.

Whilst these problems are not unique to Glasgow, it is incumbent on politicians of all political hues to find solutions to improve the lives for those who elected us.

FOREWORD

That is why I was delighted to be asked by the Leader of the Council to chair this Commission and look at how we can make the experience of being a young Glaswegian better.

When forming the membership of the Commission, great care was taken to ensure that as many different opinions and viewpoints were represented. From young trade unionists, Youth Councillors, representatives from equality groups and care experienced young people, everyone offered an insight that has helped contributed to the final recommendations of our report.

I have been inspired by the testimony of our young citizens and the many examples of where the council already delivers a good service to our young people. But as we face the reality of

the ongoing pressure on the council's budget, we know we have to be more innovative in how services are delivered.

I am confident that these recommendations can help the council deliver on the next stage of improving the lives of our young people.

I would like to thank all of the organisations who took the opportunity to engage with the Commission and give us their insights. And also to the Elected Members, members of the Commission, and the officers of the council who have helped prepare this report.

Councillor
Martin McElroy



WHY DID WE HAVE A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMMISSION

Glasgow is Scotland's largest and most diverse city, with a population of around 600,000. Young people make up 24% of Glaswegians, with many more choosing to work, study and socialise in Glasgow. Glasgow is a vibrant city which offers a lot of opportunity to participate in a range of social and cultural activities. As a Council we have also made good progress in addressing issues important to young people; attainment and achievement in our schools continues to rise year on year and more young people than ever are able to secure a job, further education and training on leaving school.

Many young people, however, face additional challenges to achieving their potential. Many of them live in areas still affected by poverty and deprivation. They may be caring for family members or they may have been brought up in the care system themselves. We also know that many of our citizens, including young people feel that they are not equally able to participate in civic and public life. Some also report that they experience discrimination in schools, workplaces and in the community.

Young people are less likely than older groups to vote in elections or referendums. Elected representatives, such as MPs, MSPs, city councillors, community

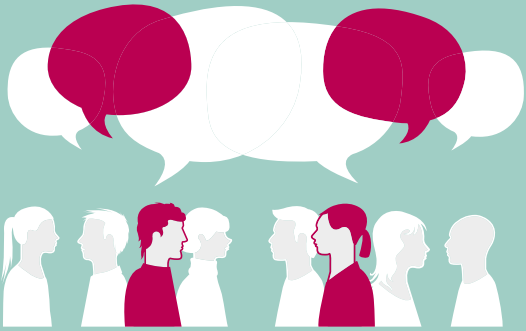
councillors, and others in decision-making roles tend to be older.

In other words, young people's views may not always be well understood, and their voices may not always be well represented in places where decisions that affect their lives are made.

Glasgow City Council wants Glasgow to be a city where all our citizens have the opportunity to achieve their potential. We believe effective engagement between communities and public services leads to better, more informed services, and offers opportunities to improve the skills and confidence of participants. Better engagement can also make us more

responsive to citizens' issues and concerns, as well as ensuring services and policies reflect these. Young people can offer new ideas and perspectives on how we deliver services. We have made good progress in improving how we engage with young people for example through the promotion of pupil voice and child rights in our schools. However we know we need to do more.

Glasgow City Council set up the Youth Engagement Policy Commission in order to better understand young people's priorities, and how the Council could best support effective engagement, and encourage active youth citizenship.



AROUND 12,700 CHILDREN IN GLASGOW REQUIRE ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE SUPPORT, A THIRD OF THE TOTAL FOR SCOTLAND
(PUPIL CENSUS 2016)



YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE ARE TWICE AS LIKELY NOT TO BE IN ANY FORM OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING AS THEIR PEERS AT AGE 16 AND THREE TIMES AS LIKELY BY AGE 19
(GLASGOW DISABILITY ALLIANCE 2015)



ACCORDING TO A 2013 SURVEY, 1 IN 6 LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND HAD BEEN THE VICTIM OF A HOMOPHOBIC HATE CRIME OR INCIDENT IN THE 3 YEARS PREVIOUS
(STONEWALL, HATE CRIME THE GAY BRITISH CRIME SURVEY)



AROUND 3% OF YOUNG PEOPLE 0 TO 18 IN GLASGOW ARE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
(SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SOCIAL CARE STATISTICS 2013 TO 2015)



HOW YOUNG PEOPLE CAN CURRENTLY ENGAGE

Schools in Glasgow have a wide range of pupil councils and committees, such as eco committees, and Health and Wellbeing Committees. These provide opportunities for young people (from nursery age onwards) to become engaged in school improvement. As young people move through school, they take a more active role in leading these committees and participation can become linked to recognised awards and accreditation such as sports leaders.

Beyond school, colleges, universities and trade unions in workplaces offer opportunities to become involved and influence policies and services. The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is a youth-led organisation, which campaigns and advocates on issues of importance to young people. There are around 160 directly elected Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament across Scotland. At a local level, Glasgow Youth Council (GYC) represents 12 to 25 year olds across Glasgow.

The SYP and GYC provide important opportunities for young people to play a part as active citizens. However, they are currently not formally connected into decision-making structures in public organisations in Glasgow such as Councils, Health Boards and the Police.

WHO WAS ON THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMMISSION

The Youth Engagement Policy Commission was chaired by Councillor Martin McElroy, with members including:

Bailie Elizabeth Cameron
Councillor Stephen Curran
Councillor Greg Hepburn
Councillor Yvonne Kucuk
Councillor Angus Millar
Councillor Martha Wardrop

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and Glasgow Youth Council
West of Scotland Regional Equality Council

Who Cares Scotland
Scottish Trades Union Congress

LGBT Youth Scotland

The Youth Engagement Commission met from April 2016 to December 2016. The work of the Youth Engagement Commission was supported by staff from Glasgow Life, and Glasgow City Council - Chief Executive's Department and Education Services.

WHAT DID WE DO

The Commission decided to use a range of approaches to better understand the issues that affect young people's ability to participate in civic life, and to help identify how to improve. As well as gathering personal views and experiences from young people and young people's organisations, the Commission looked at good practice in Glasgow, and research and evidence from elsewhere.

The Call for Evidence took place from 26th July to 14th September 2016. Participants were able to submit information via an online questionnaire, as well as a dedicated email address.

A webpage on the Council's website was set up, hosting information about the Commission, with details of the Call for Evidence and how to get involved (www.glasgow.gov.uk/YEPC). Members of the Commission were asked to distribute

details of the Call for Evidence throughout their networks, and a schedule of promotion on social media and online was undertaken. In addition to this, Young Scot Card set up a reward scheme where participants could claim reward points for completing the survey.

There were 196 responses to the survey, and four emails.

Members of the Commission also met with a range of organisations

that work with and represent young people across the city. Through this, the Commission were encouraged to hear about and observe good practice in engaging and involving young people. The Commission also gathered evidence from events asking young people what stopped them from getting more involved, and what public agencies could do to help them.



THIS REPORT

This report summarises the work of the Commission, including what young people told us were their priorities, as well as what makes it difficult to engage with public agencies, and what could be done to improve engagement.

The next pages outline the priorities that both young people, and those who work with young people, have identified. The remainder of the report focuses on three areas, based on the evidence gathered, that the Commission agreed were significant in understanding more about in order to improve youth engagement in the city.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

Generally young people share the same priorities as all citizens: they want a meaningful job or access to education and training that will allow them to find a future job; sufficient income to live a fulfilled life; they want appropriate housing in a safe environment; opportunities to participate socially and in their community; and, the ability to access health services when they need to. Some concerns about the affordability and standards of housing in the private rented sector were raised. A small number of young people mentioned unfair treatment at work specifically around rates of pay.

Young carers want to be able to access additional support from public services to ensure that they can fulfil their potential. Young disabled people want to be able to access learning, employment and social activities and highlighted the constraints that recent reductions in public funding have placed on their lives.

Some young people voiced frustration about the lack of suitable local activities for young people, and places where they can go to meet friends, or new people. Practical things such as money, time, and access to transport can limit ability to socialise, participate and share views with other young people.

Some are concerned about safety in their local communities, in particular a perceived rise in hate crime, and the impact of bullying on their health and well-being. Tension between the Police and young people was highlighted, with some feeling that they were unfairly targeted by Police when walking, or hanging around. Increasing numbers of young people report experiences of poor mental health.

Young people want to be respected and have their views listened to. Some feel that they are not regarded as equal citizens. Issues of fairness were highlighted, for example someone of 16 or 17 is expected to pay an adult bus fare to work but then receive a lower minimum wage at work due to their age.

The issues and concerns are not new; those raised by young people who responded to our survey mirror and reflect findings from wider research, and also experiences of youth workers in our services.

WHAT STOPS YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ENGAGING WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES – WHAT WE FOUND

- Lack of awareness about opportunities/how to get involved/support that agencies offer
- Feeling intimidated/looked down on/not taken seriously by staff
- Transport, timing/location of meetings/events/activities

Within each section we outline what we found, and how identified barriers could be removed to further improve engagement. Where possible, we have used the words of young people we engaged with, to reflect both the issues and possible solutions.



LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES/HOW TO GET INVOLVED/SUPPORT THAT AGENCIES OFFER

"We don't know how to approach these agencies and there's no one telling us how to. People are worried about doing/saying the wrong thing or not talking to the right people".

WHAT WE FOUND:

In general, people in Glasgow have a mixed knowledge and understanding of public agencies in Glasgow, and what they provide. The landscape of public services is often seen as cluttered and complicated, and information may not readily be accessible or provided in a format that is easy to use.

Many young people told us they did not know how to get more involved, and were not aware of opportunities to participate, for example in the Glasgow Youth Council or Scottish Youth Parliament. Others mentioned a general lack of awareness about what services public agencies can offer, as well as how to access these.

"Lack of knowledge of public agencies and their roles. Bad previous experiences".

Young people tend not to be well represented in

decision-making structures of public organisations. This lack of involvement is most obviously evidenced in the frustration that some young people voice about the lack of suitable youth activities in their area.

"They don't make a lot of effort to involve young people".

"The youth clubs are boring and there aren't a lot of them, and you have to pay to get in".

"There are not many spaces where young people can gather for activities or even just socialising in Glasgow; most spaces are adult or family orientated".

It was felt that more could be done to explain what services are provided for youth people, and how to access them. Also, young people could be more actively involved in the design of services and activities that they use, such as local youth activities and Personal and Social

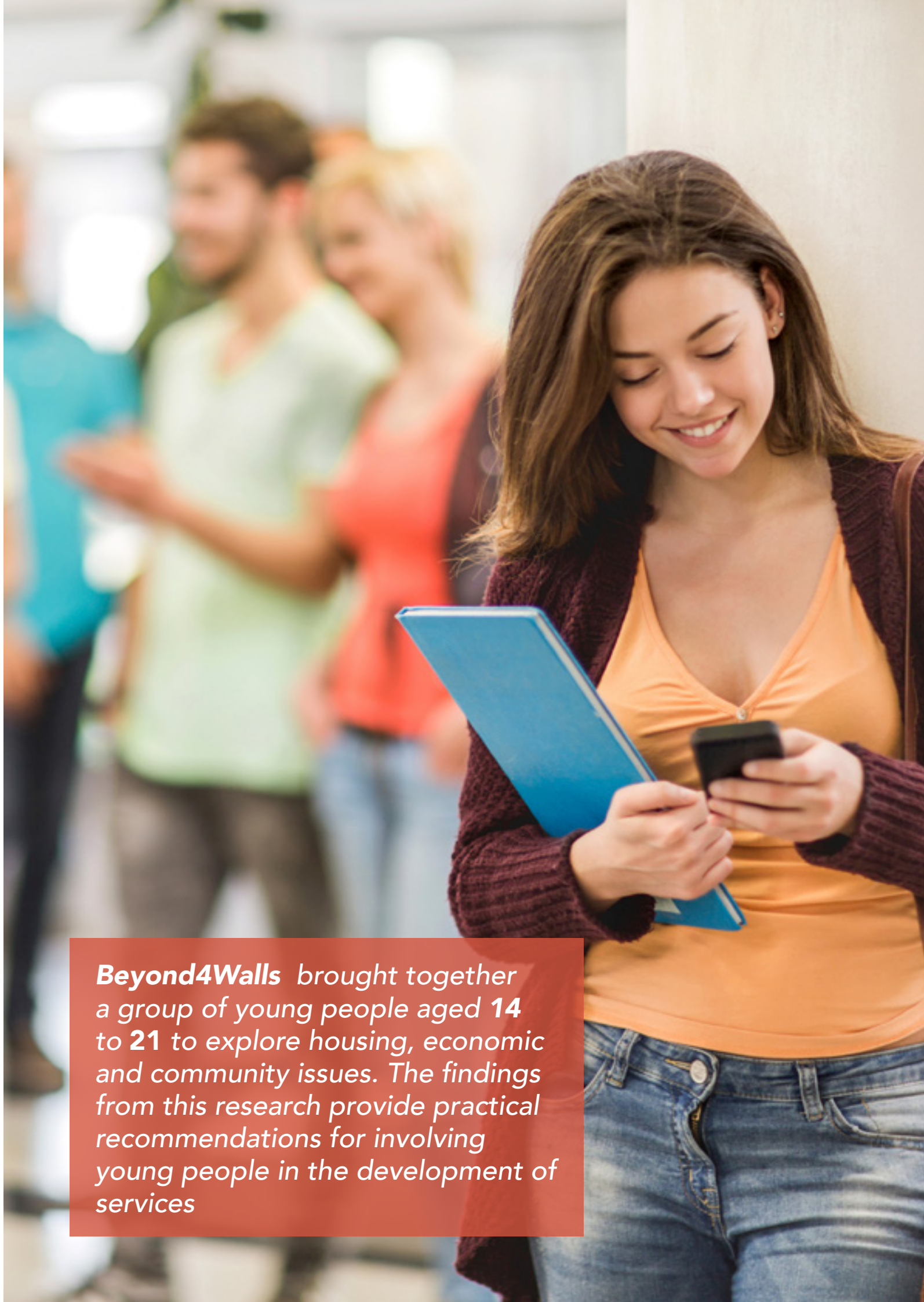
Education (PSE) in the school curriculum.

"Come in to schools and explain role in society".

"To be more young people friendly and to include young people more in decision-making. To encourage us more to do stuff"

Public agencies should review how they communicate with young people. Targeted messages suited to their needs could help to spread information, and increase the likelihood of increasing awareness and reaching people. Better use could be made of existing, local networks to raise the profile of services, and make people more aware of support and opportunities to get involved.

"Local information on activities/services through social media. Engaging with young people face to face. Promotion in schools".



Beyond4Walls brought together a group of young people aged 14 to 21 to explore housing, economic and community issues. The findings from this research provide practical recommendations for involving young people in the development of services

FEELING INTIMIDATED/LOOKED DOWN ON/NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY STAFF

"They don't take us seriously and we lack the confidence to speak to them because we don't think they will listen/take us seriously because we are young"

WHAT WE FOUND:

Some young people told us that they don't think that they are taken seriously by people in positions of authority, or people who provide services, and that this affects their ability to participate and contribute. A range of different examples were provided across services that young people use. The perception that staff had poor opinions of young people, and were not helpful or understanding was felt by some of the young people. Young people may not feel that they have the authority to contribute, or feel that lack of experience means their views matter less.

"I'm too young to be taken seriously, though I have a baby. How am I expected to be grownup and mature when everyone judges me and tells me to get my mum to come to appointments".

"Because we are young and they don't listen to us. Parents, teachers, social workers – no one listens".

The Police were mentioned a number of times: some young people felt that the Police were inclined to be suspicious of them and that they were pulled up or singled out for no good reason, for example with stop and search. On the other hand, some young people mentioned safety in the community as an issue that limited participation, and their willingness to travel or go to new areas.

"Bad stigma from the Police. Always getting told off in the street or for hanging around outside shops and community centre when we are at the youth club. Community centre staff are judgemental".

"You can't play street football anymore without getting moaned at. You get pulled by the Police if you walk about with your hood up".

A range of different approaches could be used to improve relationships and understanding. These will vary from agency to agency, and should built

on the good practice already there. Some young people spoke of a need for staff to be more open minded and understanding when working with young people. Training to help understand young people's points of view, as well as trying to portray a more open and friendly image were suggested.

"Make sure council staff are more open minded and don't judge. The minute I enter the gym with my friends I get judged and moaned at. When I go with my dad I get a smile!"

"Ensure access to services for young people. Train staff to deal with people of all ages and backgrounds and ensure that training is implemented"

"More education on these areas and putting across a friendlier, more relaxed front to these agencies so that people don't worry that they would be unwanted or annoying the public agencies they're trying to engage with".

"Educational tools to teach young people how to make phone calls to agencies, or apply for things".

"Make more of the employees more able to relate to our age range, make sure they treat us like the young adults we are"

Some people suggested relationships with the Police could be improved by having Police officers come in to schools and talking about their roles, and building relationships.

"I think visits from the local police to where young people are and slowly break down the barriers. Such as visiting youth clubs, schools, walking the streets talking to young people maybe even out of uniform in a way where they can still be identified as police officers or teaming up with a local youth service which has a street work service."

*In the South of the City , **Police Scotland** have involved senior school pupils in discussions to contribute to the development of policing priorities for that area*

***MCR Pathways mentoring programme** provides support for the most disadvantaged young people in Glasgows secondary schools, particularly looked after children. The vision is that the young people can achieve significantly more in education with the support of a volunteer adult mentor. The programme also helps to build positive relationships between older and younger generations.*

LOGISTICAL - TRANSPORT, TIMING/LOCATION OF MEETINGS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES/ ACCESSIBILITY

WHAT WE FOUND:

Some young people told us that they would like to be more involved in events, activities and meetings. However, it was often difficult for them to travel to places where meetings are held, or they may take place at inconvenient times, such as at the same time, or close to when education or work activities finish.

"Timing of classes and events at sport centres can clash with compulsory attendance at school".

Young people, as with everyone, can be busy with work, education, home, and social commitments. Some may have caring responsibilities for younger siblings, or they may have children of their own. When asking people to give their time to participate, whether it be a questionnaire or an event, agencies need to make sure it is their time is well spent, and that everyone can get something positive out of the experience.

"The timing of community meetings are a real barrier to young people's involvement – although community council and public partnership forum meetings happen in the evening – area partnership and

community planning meetings happen during the day whilst young people are at school, college, university or work".

The venues of events or meetings can also be a barrier to participation. Some venues may not be accessible for those with disabilities, or they could be far away from where people are willing to travel, or some may not feel comfortable or confident travelling outwith areas they are used to.

The cost of travel around Glasgow was also highlighted as an issue by many young people, in particular having to pay adult fares at 16. Young disabled people highlight the additional challenges that they faced; public transport is not always accessible and other forms of transport such as taxis are expensive.

If possible, organisations should provide or pay for transport costs. Meetings could also be held when and where convenient for young people. If possible, organisations should go to where people already meet, rather than the other way round.

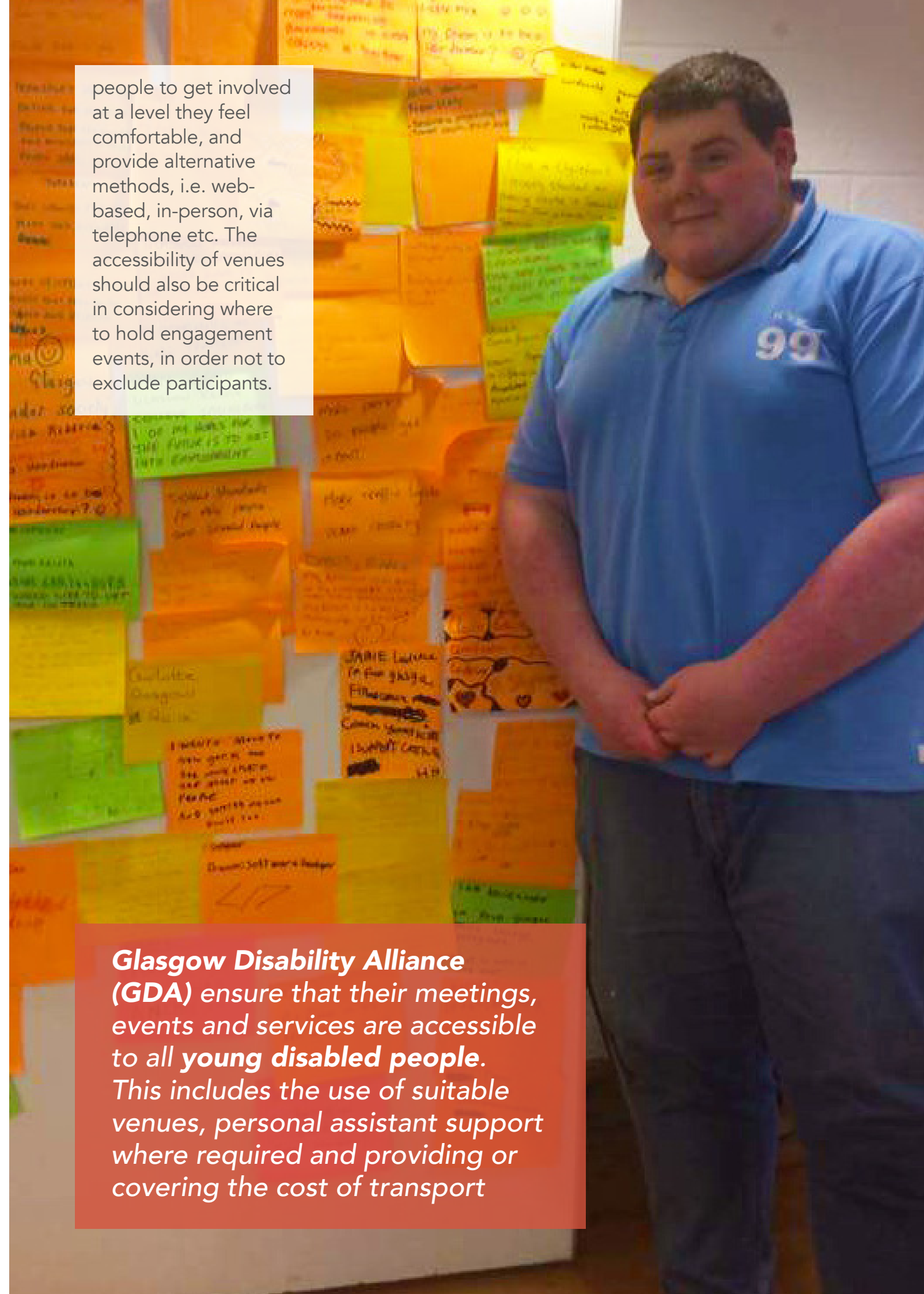
"Ensure that sports centre events are scheduled for a reasonable time after school finishes".

"Meeting times of Area Partnerships and Community Planning could be changed to evening time slots".

When planning engagement exercises, agencies should consider the timing of meetings and who might be excluded. Organisations should also provide more than one opportunity to get involved, allow

people to get involved at a level they feel comfortable, and provide alternative methods, i.e. web-based, in-person, via telephone etc. The accessibility of venues should also be critical in considering where to hold engagement events, in order not to exclude participants.

Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA) ensure that their meetings, events and services are accessible to all young disabled people. This includes the use of suitable venues, personal assistant support where required and providing or covering the cost of transport



WHAT WE RECOMMEND

The issues that the Youth Engagement Commission have discussed are not new. Neither are the solutions. In the current environment we have an opportunity to work more innovatively to make progress. In this report we have highlighted examples of positive practice by both public sector partners in engaging and involving young people. In developing recommendations, we have drawn from this good practice. Our recommendations are set out below. We believe that these recommendations provide a framework to improve engagement with young people in Glasgow and we would ask all public sector agencies in the city to commit to these.

Young people and young people's representatives should have a stronger voice in places where decisions are made about services in Glasgow.

Public agencies should routinely involve young people and young people's representatives in service design and delivery.

Public agencies should routinely involve young people and young people's representatives in design of information channels to improve awareness of services.

All agencies should explore the scope for engagement with young people about improving

local facilities and services and what is offered in local venues.

Mentoring/peer support opportunities should be publicised and promoted to help support young people and give them the confidence to participate

Public agencies should develop awareness raising and training on youth issues for staff and involve young people and young people's representatives in the development and delivery of the training.

All agencies should promote activities to improve relationships and understanding between

different age groups.

Consideration should be given to other ways to promote positive images of young people.

All agencies should ensure issues for young people are considered as part of policy and service development.

Approaches to involving young people should include specific actions and practical steps to ensure the participation and inclusion of young people who face additional barriers to engagement.



INITIAL ACTION PLAN

As a result of the findings of the Youth Engagement Commission, a number of actions have been identified that can be taken forward immediately. These are not a comprehensive list and we will, along with other Community Planning partners develop an action plan. Some of these are actions that Glasgow City Council can deliver, others are the responsibility of other city partners or require the Scottish Government to take action. We will

- Improve the voice of young people and young peoples representatives on decision making structures. As a first step, consideration will be given to appointing a Youth Champion and also improving and strengthening the voice of young people in Community Planning structures
- Work with housing providers to strengthen the voice of young people in the governance of student accommodation in the city
- Explore the provision of appropriate financial support to Glasgow Youth Council (GYC) for engagement activities
- Work with Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA) to support engagement with and the participation of young disabled people.
- Continue to identify and remove barriers facing looked after children when they leave our care, including examining proposals to remove the financial pressure of their first year's Council Tax
- Improve and refresh training for teachers to address homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in our schools
- Work with Young Scot (the national youth information organisation) and with young Glaswegians to further improve information and awareness about services and rights and further develop the media platforms to support this
- Seek to develop a fairer transport model for young people and explore practical options to extend concessionary travel schemes with our regional and national transport partners including SPT and Transport Scotland.
- Address issues affecting fair treatment at work for young people by encouraging employers to adopt the Glasgow Living Wage. We will consult with the business community on creating a single tiered Glasgow Living Wage so workers pay is dependent on their skills and abilities not their age. We will also work with Trade Unions to ensure that young workers are advised of their rights and the role of Trade Unions in the workplace and look at the development of a nighttime workers charter.
- Call on the Scottish Government to strengthen the legal position of children and young people in Scotland, to respect their rights as citizens, promote equality and ensure their safety to ensure they can participate fully as citizens. In particular we would ask the Scottish Government to :
 - Reduce the age for legal gender recognition to 16 and the ability for children under 16 to access legal gender recognition with consent from a parent or guardian
 - Review the current rules for Council tax exemption/discount and consider the scope to allow exemptions for young care leavers and other groups

NEXT STEPS

The Youth Engagement Commission wants to make sure that its recommendations are acted on by city partners.

As the actions are relevant to a number of public agencies in the city, the report will be presented to the Community Planning Partnership (where all public sector agencies and the voluntary sector



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Youth Engagement Commission would like to thank the following
for their support and contribution

Glasgow Youth Council

Glasgow Disability Alliance, staff and members

LGBT Youth Scotland

West of Scotland Regional Equality Council

Who Cares Scotland

Scottish Trade Unions Congress

Headteacher, and senior pupils Hillhead High School

University of Strathclyde Students Association

Swamp Media

Police Scotland

The Wheatley Group