

EVERY CHILD MATTERS
...and every young person

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

WHAT YOU SAID...
and what we're going to do

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EVERY CHILD MATTERS ...and every young person

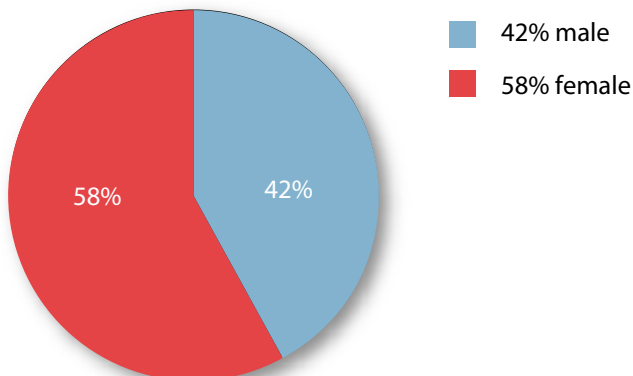
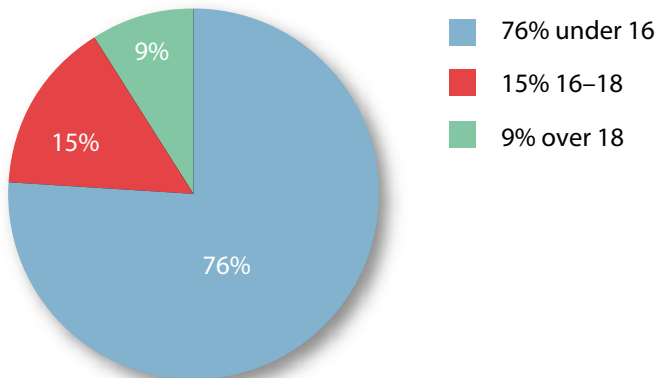
What happened last year

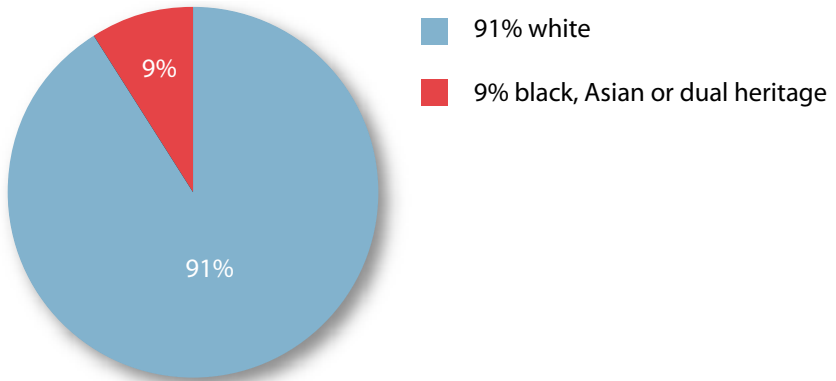
In September, the Government produced a booklet called 'Every Child Matters'. This explained what the Government wanted to do to make things better for children and young people in England. If you want to read this you can find it at

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/downloads.cfm>

The booklet asked young people some questions, so they could say what they thought of the Government's ideas.

Over 3,000 people replied. Most were 18 or under, but a few adults working with young people replied to this booklet.

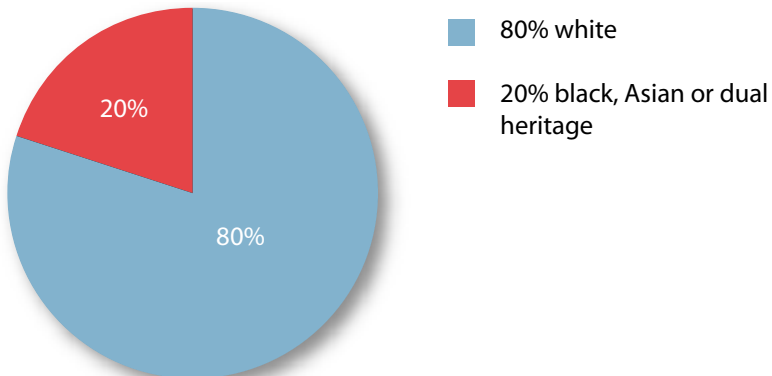
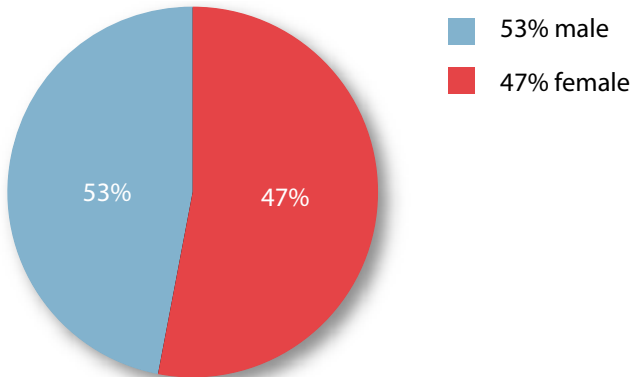




OUR MEETINGS

We met around 750 children and young people in 62 meetings around England.

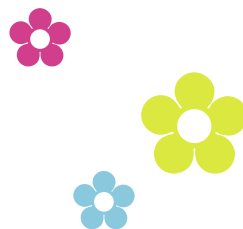
The youngest was aged 4, the oldest 18. A few young adults (18–25) also came to some meetings. The sexes and races of the young people in the meetings are shown in the two charts below.



3 meetings were with groups of young people with disabilities or special needs. There were also some young people with disabilities or special needs in other groups.

We wanted to make sure that we had the views of young people who had known difficulties in their lives. So half of the meetings were with particular groups, children or young people who:

- live with foster carers
- care for their parents
- are homeless
- are refugees and asylum-seekers
- are travellers
- have disabilities or special needs
- are offenders
- have a relative in prison.



WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

In pages 5–18, the questions on 'Every Child Matters', we show first the number of young people who mentioned different ideas in their written answers. We show the most popular ideas, those mentioned by more than 10% of the young people who answered that question. We have not counted the 'votes' of over 18s, as this was a consultation for children and young people up to 18. But we have thought about what they said.

We did not count 'votes' in meetings, but know which ideas young people in those meetings raised most often. We say in pages 5–18 whether young people in meetings agree with those who wrote in.

Adults also sent comments on a longer version of 'Every Child Matters'. They answered different questions, but about similar subjects. We have put in here some of their ideas too.

At the same time as 'Every Child Matters' we published a leaflet 'Stopping Youth Crime – Tell us what you think'. This asked young people questions about crime and justice. As well as the leaflet, the questions were put on 6 popular websites used by children and young people. Around 2,000 leaflets were filled in by young people and nearly 6,000 replied on-line. What you said about those questions is on pages 19–29 of this booklet.

We also show some of the things that adults said about a longer version of ‘Stopping Youth Crime – Tell us what you think’.

This short booklet can’t show everything that was said. If you are interested, there are longer reports at www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters. There are separate reports for what young people said in meetings, what they wrote in, and what adults wrote in.

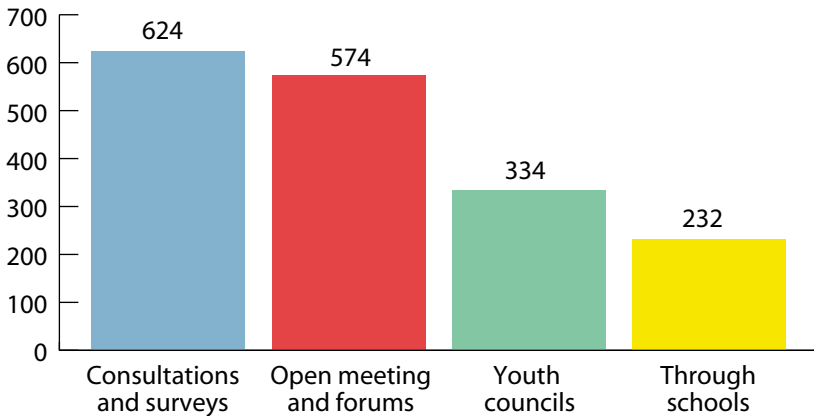
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WE ASKED

How do you think you should have a say in what your local council does to make things better for children and young people?

YOU SAID



Almost everyone said you should have a say. A few younger children were happy to leave it to their parents, but everyone else wanted young people to be involved.

Young people we met preferred meetings to surveys. Many said that they or their friends wouldn't fill in forms.

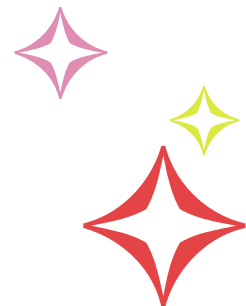
Councillors should come and talk to you where you feel at home: youth centres, schools, colleges.

“ I think that once a month or twice a month the councillors should meet with young people and hear what the young people have to say ”

It is important that adults shouldn't just *listen*, they should *take notice* of what young people say and *do something* about it.

ADULTS SAID

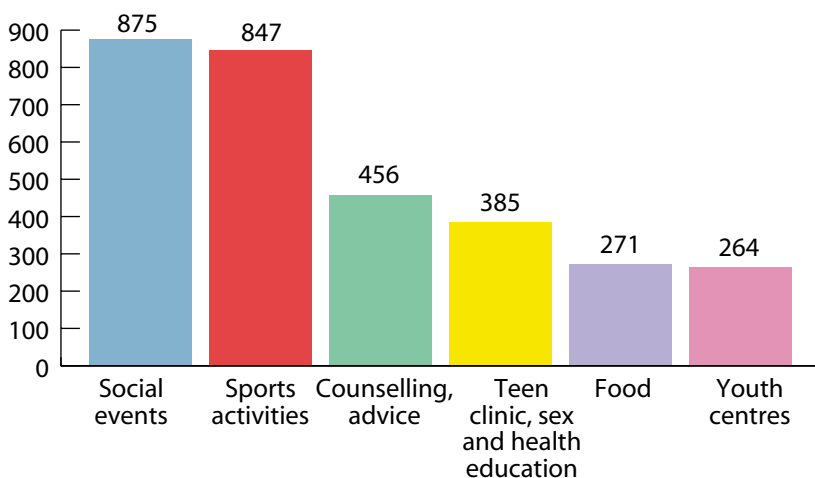
- Young people should have a say.
- There should be rules that local councils have to follow.
- Schools councils should be used.



WE ASKED

Apart from education what services would you like to see in your school?

YOU SAID



There was a difference between what boys and girls thought:

43% of boys wanted sports, 34% social events;

41% of girls wanted social events, 29% wanted sports.

The young people we met want the same things. They want the chance to learn things they wouldn't learn in school: life skills, driving, IT, languages. Some want homework clubs or the chance to get support with their schoolwork.

Young people want all these things to be *free* or *very cheap*, so everyone can afford to use them.

Counselling and health services must be *confidential*.

Most young people thought school could be a good place for extra services. But it should not be the only place. Some young people are not in school, and wouldn't be able to use other services based in schools. Other young people want to get away from their school as soon as lessons end, and wouldn't hang around afterwards whatever was on offer.

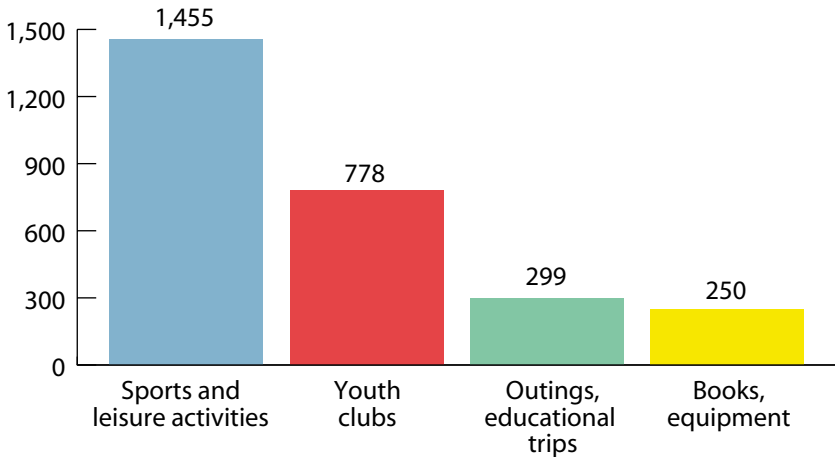
ADULTS SAID

- Good idea to put more services in schools, but
- To do this, schools need more money.
- Look at how some schools are already doing this well, and learn from them.

WE ASKED

How should we spend the Young People's Fund to give young people more and better things to do?

YOU SAID



Young people we met want the same things. They mentioned gyms, skate and BMX parks and swimming pools as examples of what they want.

Prices should be low so that young people can use sports and leisure facilities.

Some young people, mainly those living alone, want it spent on direct financial support to help them get by.

Young people feel that they should be involved in taking decisions about what is done in their areas.

“ The council should ask us instead of doing it themselves then nobody uses it ”

Some spoke about what might stop young people using facilities:

- Safety – many young people don't feel safe in their areas. There were mixed views about whether more police would be a good thing.
- Access – transport is a problem for young people in country areas. And disabled young people need facilities that they can use alongside their friends.

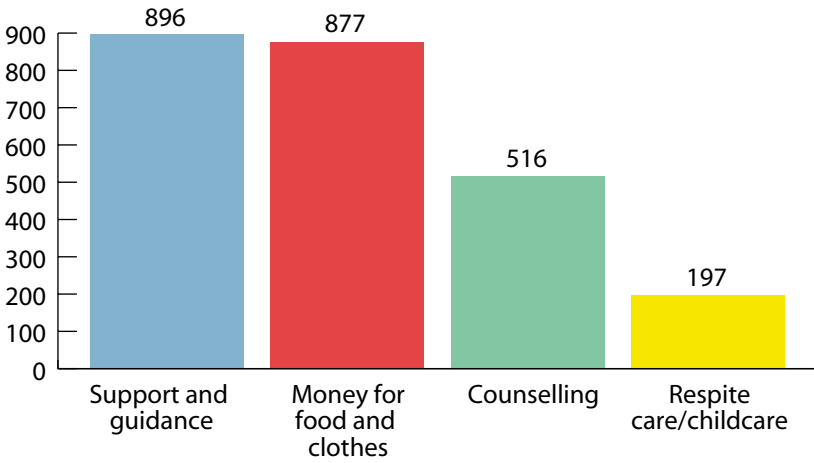
ADULTS SAID

Adults weren't asked about this, so there were no comments on it. We thought this question was about things for young people to do, so it was young people's views that counted.

WE ASKED

How do you think the government can best help families at difficult times?

YOU SAID



Respite care: when someone else – foster carers or a boarding school – looks after young people for a time so that their parents or carers get a break

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Young people in meetings said the same things.

Families need support and guidance that is practical and non-threatening.

“ Parents deserve it – it’s a big job ”

Families should get help *when they want it*. But it should not be forced on them. Some young people we met said their families had asked for help and been refused. But when the council decides to get involved, the family has no choice; they are forced to go to meetings where

“ There are lots of people round the table, all of them useless ”

Money can prevent problems as well as solving them.

Young people spoke of how drug and sex education could be used to prevent problems. Views were mixed, but most thought sex education should start around Year 8. Most also thought that drug education would be most helpful if it came from other young people.

Young people felt that counselling could help them and their parents or carers.

ADULTS SAID

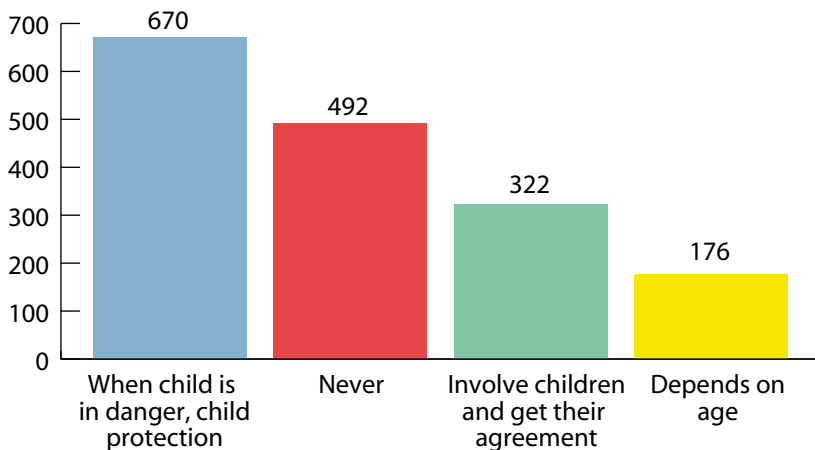
- More money is needed.
- You must act *before* there is a crisis not *afterwards*.
- Provide better information about what is available.
- Don’t forget the parents of disabled children.



WE ASKED

When do you think that services should talk together about a child without the child knowing or saying that it is OK?

YOU SAID



“ This is a hard question. I think that when a child is in big danger of some sort and services think they can help by talking without them is when it should happen ”

Young people we met said the same things. So we asked what they understood as ‘danger’. They said they meant when a child is being abused or there is a risk of death or serious injury. Even in these cases the young person should be told that the information is being passed on.

Some who said ‘never’ thought that young people would not confide in adults if they couldn’t trust them.

“ I don’t think they should; it is up to the children if they want people to talk about them ”

Young people are worried about the accuracy of information held about them. Also some think that schools keep records for too long – they feel they are still being blamed at 15–16 for things they had done aged 11–12.

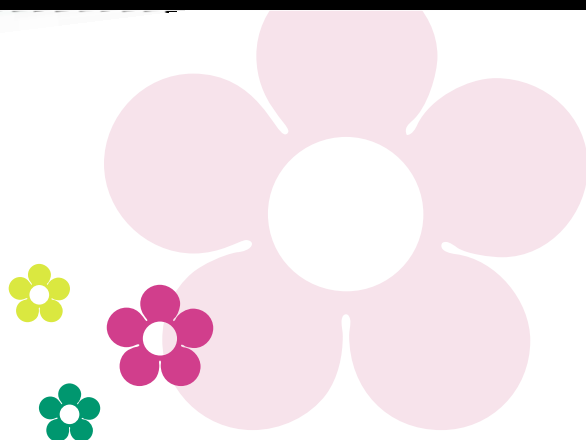
It may be necessary for one person (the head or a form teacher) in a school to know a young person’s situation, but it should not become general gossip.

Some young people are more worried about what workers tell their mums or carers than about what is passed from one worker to another.

ADULTS SAID

- Worrying about confidentiality can stop us working together to protect children.
- Information should be shared, about children and their families when it is in the best interests of the child.
- Different groups of workers should work better together.
- There should be clear rules so that people only do what is allowed.

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WE ASKED

How do you think children and families should have a say in deciding what extra help they need?

YOU SAID



Young people in meetings said the same things. They feel that they and their families must be involved in decisions.

“ Children and families should always have a say in deciding what extra help they need so they don’t get bossed about ”

People from the council should visit families to talk about their needs. If young people and families have to make decisions, they must be given information. They should be able to talk about their problems, and workers should offer them a choice between different sorts of help.

Young people know when they need help.

“ If you don’t get help when you are stressed then it just builds up in your head until you can’t cope with it any more ”

There should be one person whom families or young people can contact with problems and who can put them in touch with others.

Some young people said that help should not be forced on people.

*‘I’m not letting someone in my home to tell us what to do.
It’s a family thing’*

ADULTS SAID

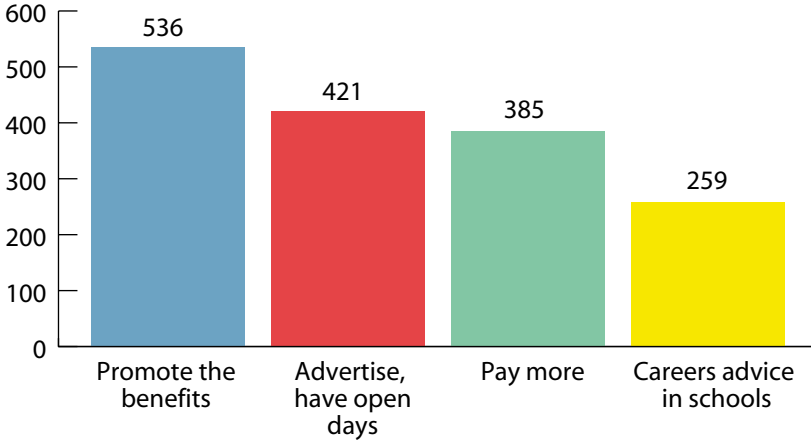
- Parents need to know what is available
- Help people to help themselves. It is better if they don’t always have to depend on others.
- A helpline would help – people could call a number, say why they want help and be put in touch with the right people. Some said that a good example is NHS Direct where people worried about their health can call for advice.

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WE ASKED

What ideas do you have for encouraging people to consider careers that involve working with young children and families, such as social work or childcare?

YOU SAID

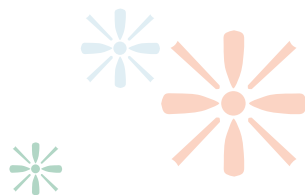


“ That by doing the job they’re helping many people, and they should be proud that they care for others so much ”

Young people we met agreed that the most important thing is to stress how your work can help people.

Groups that we met also said what workers with them should be like:

- fair
- supportive
- good listeners
- respectful
- committed
- patient.



Some felt that you can't train people to be like this: adults either are good at it or they're not. There were mixed views about those who work with young people now. Some were very negative.

‘ *Most teachers look like they don't care; it's not in their job description* ’

ADULTS SAID

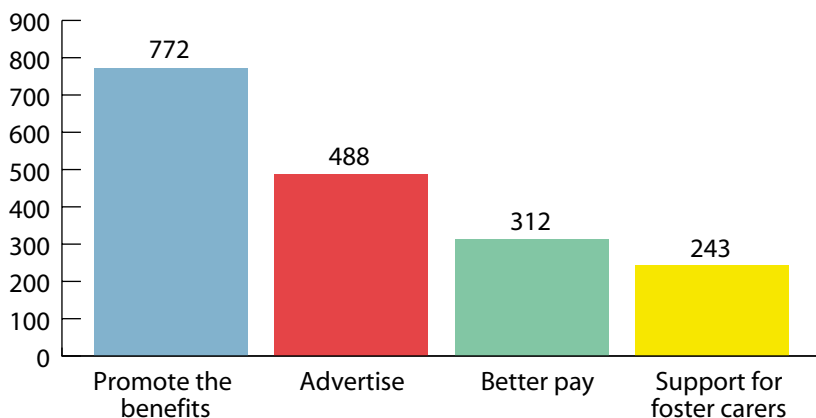
- Better training.
- Better pay – linked to how hard jobs are. More pay for jobs that need a lot of training or cause stress to workers.
- Improve the image of the work so that workers get more respect.

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WE ASKED

Do you have any suggestions for encouraging people to become foster carers and making sure that they feel good about their work?

YOU SAID



It is important to tell people what is good about being a foster carer.

“ Making sure that if someone is looking into becoming foster carers they know that they will change someone’s life for the better ”

Good advertising would make people aware of this work.

Children and young people understand that it can be difficult to be a foster carer. So foster carers need good training and continuing support.

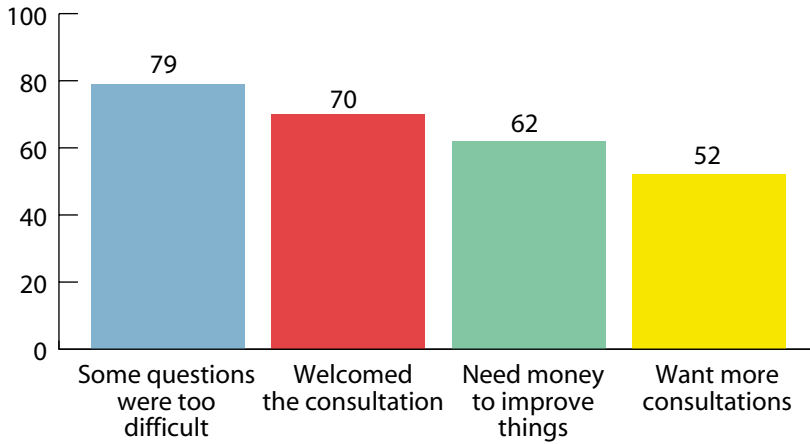
Young people we met said what foster carers should be like: dedicated, kind, trustworthy and supportive. Most do not think it is important how old a carer is or whether it is a man or a woman. But some want to be able to choose someone who shares their religion or cultural background, and some feel that a gay foster carer might have helped them.

ADULTS SAID

- Foster carers are important so they should be paid properly.
- Give foster carers support – people they can talk to in social services and health service.
- Advertise in schools to find local people who can be foster carers.

OTHER THINGS YOU SAID

Not many young people who wrote in sent extra comments – only 15%. The things mentioned most often were:



“ This booklet isn’t easy to understand. I feel as though the questions should be explained more so young people can understand them better ”

“ I like the illustrations in the booklet also how the writing is set out ”

Some said that the name ‘Every Child Matters’ was wrong as the word ‘child’ doesn’t include teenagers.

We asked the children and young people that we met what else was on their minds. So they spoke about a lot of other issues.

They discussed the idea of a *Children’s Commissioner*, someone to speak for children and young people. Everyone wanted young people to be involved in choosing the Commissioner.

Many are concerned about *crime* and *safety*. They want to feel safe on the streets, but there are mixed views about the police – a number of young people feel that the police pick on them and show them no respect.

Groups of young people often raised issues about their own situations:

- Disabled young people were worried about access to facilities, support for their parents and discrimination against them.
- Gay, lesbian and bisexual young people mentioned discrimination, bullying and how hard it had been to get good advice.
- Asylum-seekers' children had sometimes had to wait months to get into school.
- Accommodation and money are problems for young people aged 16-18 living away from their families. There should be more safe housing for young people, and they need more than their current benefits – they feel worse off than their friends who still live with families.

“ I can only fit in with my friends to a certain extent... then the money runs out ”

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OTHER THINGS ADULTS SAID

Adults were asked more questions than those in the booklet for children and young people. Some of the things they thought important were:

- Allow local councils to do what is best for local people. Don't have one system for all of England.
- Don't get rid of services that are working well. Learn from how they do things and build new services around them.
- Use computer systems that let different workers communicate with one another.
- Make sure that information is passed on when families move from one area to another.
- The police must see child protection as one of their most important jobs.
- Children and young people have rights. All people working with them should respect their rights.
- The Children's Commissioner must be independent, not told what to do by the Government.
- Training for different groups of workers should use the same words for the same thing. All workers need training in some key skills: listening to children and young people, child protection, working with others.

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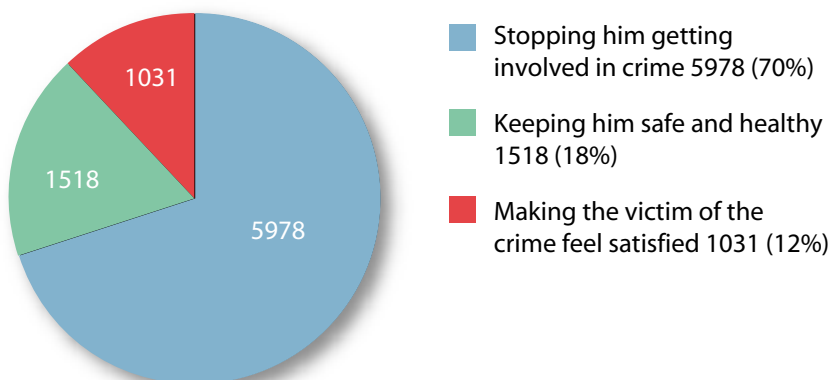
‘Stopping youth crime – tell us what you think’

We said on page 3 that we also asked questions about stopping youth crime. Here are those questions and your comments.

WE ASKED

To help the court decide what punishment to give a young offender, what should it think about?

YOU SAID



You also said that it was important to focus on:

Nature of the crime	Young person's age	Fair punishment
Increased monitoring	Reparation	Rehabilitation
Circumstances of committing crime	Public safety	
Peer and family pressures	A second chance	
Fairness to victims		

“ Make sure the young person knows and understands that he has committed a crime ”

“ Kids are aware that they will not be put in prison so it encourages them to commit crime ”

“ Avoid prisons – kids learn more techniques there ”

“ Have an interest in the person and not only the crime ”

“ Punishment should suit the crime ”

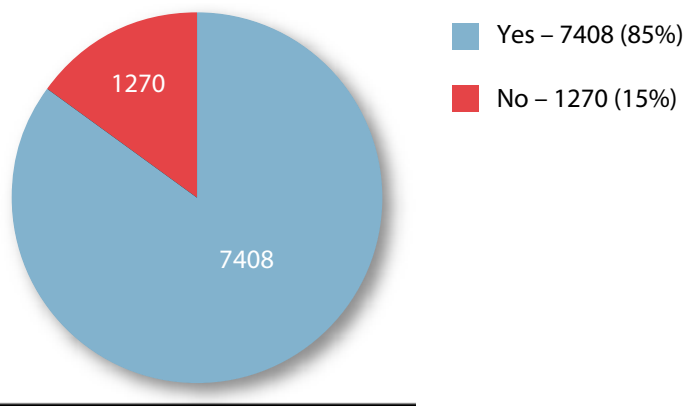
ADULTS SAID

- Happy that courts will think about the whole family.
- It is important to prevent offending, but judges must also think about the health and welfare of young offenders.

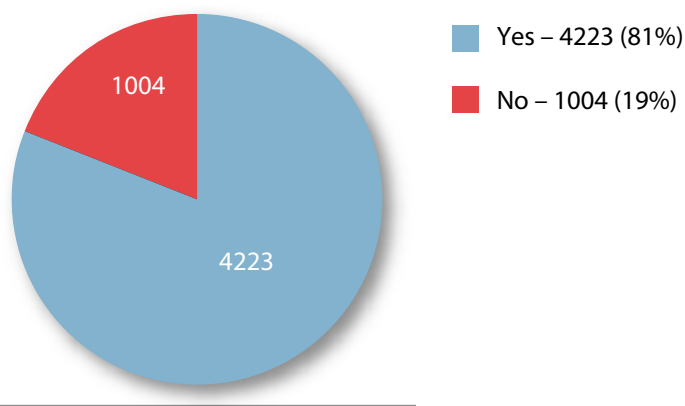
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WE ASKED AND YOU SAID

Is an information pack a good way of explaining what happens in court?



Is having a special worker for young people in court a good idea?



Many of you thought there should be a pack **and** a special worker. You would like a video version of the information pack – or DVD and CD-ROM versions. Some of you suggested an interactive website with virtual tours.

YOU ALSO SAID

“ Have a trial court ”

“ Posters and leaflets given at school would be more helpful ”

“ A youth worker or special worker who is separate from the system ”

“ Explain through young people who have been through it themselves ”

“ Judges should use plain English in court ”

“ Teach court processes at school ”

“ Schools tell us about drugs so why can they not tell us about courts, GBH and stealing as well? ”

“ Too much information to take in ”

“ A special person who visits schools and explains court processes ”

“ Some of the jury should be the same age as the defendant ”

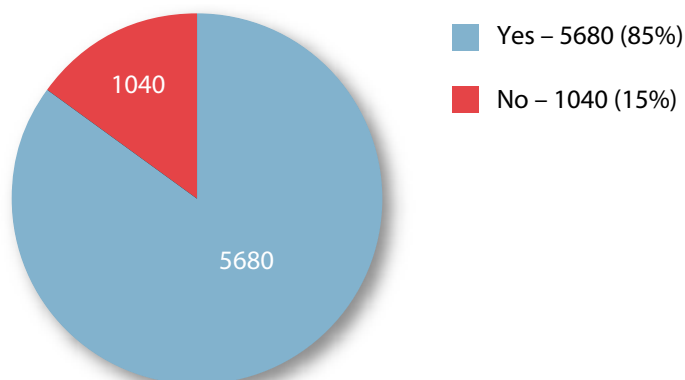
ADULTS SAID

- There should be more support for defendants and their families to help them understand better what is happening.

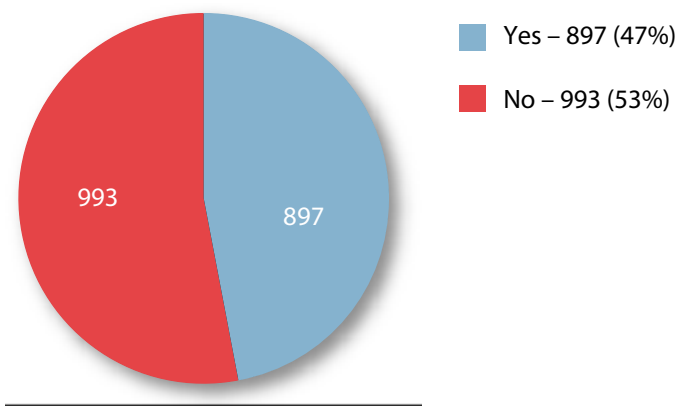


WE ASKED AND YOU SAID

Should judges for young people be specially chosen and trained to deal with young people's crimes?



Would the money for training judges be better spent elsewhere?



YOU ALSO SAID

“ Specially trained judges would understand us better ”

“ More activities should be made available for young people so that they are off the streets and do not get into crime ”

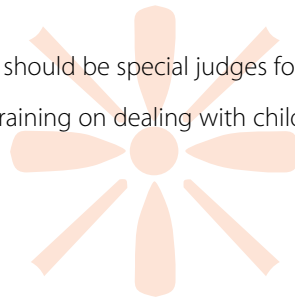
“ Spend money on training younger judges ”

“ Get judges to spend a number of days with young people ”

“ Put judges on work placements with young people ”

ADULTS

- Had mixed views about whether there should be special judges for young offenders.
- Agreed that all judges should receive training on dealing with children and young people.



WE ASKED AND YOU SAID

For punishing young people in the community, are the 4 choices below enough for the courts? The choices are:

- let go without punishment;
- pay a fine;
- a community group decides punishment; or
- two or three smaller punishments.

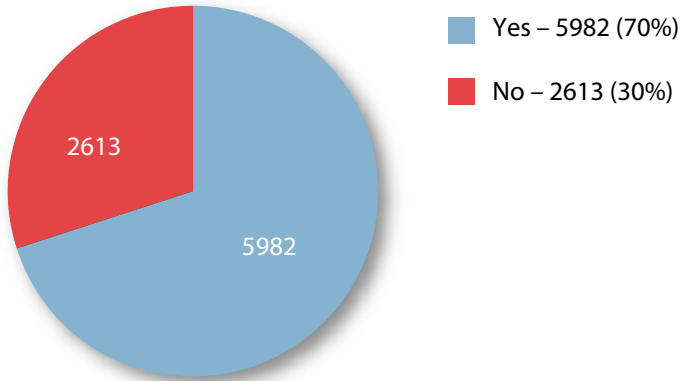
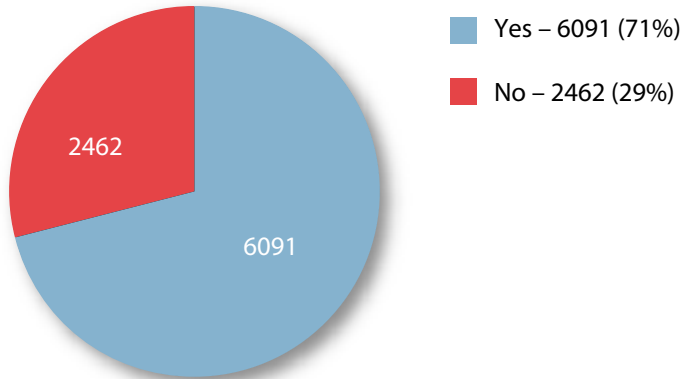


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Is it a good idea to take a young person away from his/her family if they are the reason for his/her involvement in crime?



YOU ALSO SAID

“ Sentencing should be toughened up ”

“ Parents should have more control over their kids ”

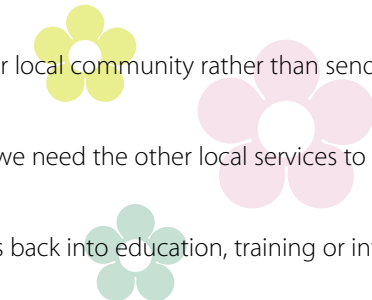
“ There is enough choice already ”

“ Put responsibility on the parents ”

“ Splitting families does not help, the entire family should be treated ”

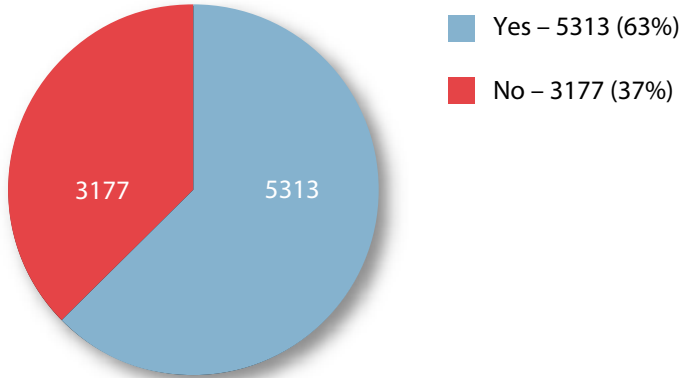
ADULTS SAID

- It is better to keep young offenders in their local community rather than sending them to prison
- To make community sentences effective, we need the other local services to back them up
- It is very important to get young offenders back into education, training or into employment

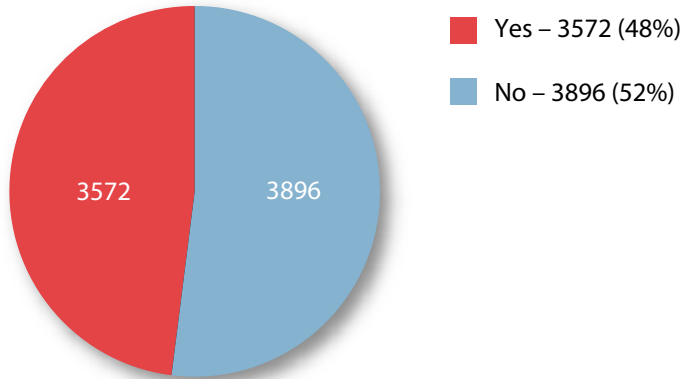


WE ASKED AND YOU SAID

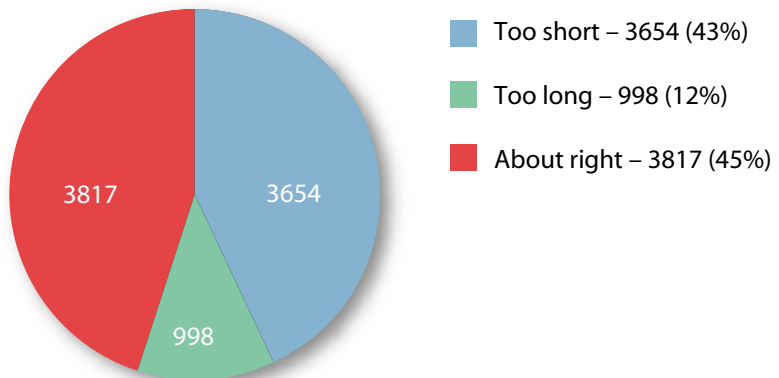
Is it a good idea to keep a young person out of prison if someone keeps an eye on them?



Is this fair to victims?



If a young person is sent to custody, is a minimum sentence of two months



Many of you thought it better to use community sentences. You also thought that it would be better for them to have mentors and some constructive work to do in their community. Some of you said that there should be short spells in 'prison', tagging and boot camps.

YOU ALSO SAID

“ *Have punishments that benefit the community as well as punish the offender* ”

“ *Give them curfews and public bans* ”

“ *Make them finish school* ”

“ *The victim should be involved in deciding the punishment* ”

“ *Make them do something they dislike doing* ”

“ *The judge should take away their playstation instead of a £10 fine, it would have more effect* ”

ADULTS SAID

- Community punishments are better than 'prison' for young people.
- Serious or dangerous young offenders should be locked up.



What happens next?

‘EVERY CHILD MATTERS’

Ministers* have thought about what people said about ‘Every Child Matters’: the young people who met us or wrote in, and the organisations and adults who sent their views.

We are bringing a proposed new law to be discussed in Parliament*. It would:

- Create a children’s Commissioner to speak for children and young people. Children and young people will be involved in choosing the Commissioner. The Commissioner will have to listen to children and young people regularly to find out what they think.
- Make it clearer who is responsible for which services. Councils will have to appoint a Director of Children’s Services.
- Give all services working with children a clear duty to work together. They will have to work together to protect children and to improve other parts of children’s and young people’s lives.
- Make it easier to share information where this will help children or young people – but within rules to stop people passing on information when they shouldn’t.

You said it was very important that adults should listen to you. That will be a big part of the Children’s Commissioner’s job. The Commissioner will also have to judge whether the Government is making things better for children and young people.

We are working with councils, health organisations and charities to help them improve their services. As part of this we will make all local services work together and get them to involve children, young people and families more in planning services.

We, the Government, will also continue to involve children and young people. Margaret Hodge, the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, is setting up a Youth Board. This will contain young people who will have the chance to meet the Minister and tell her what they think about the things that matter to children and young people.

****The people of the UK elect Members of Parliament (MPs) in General Elections. Every MP speaks for people in a particular area. The Government – from the party with most MPs – suggests new laws. MPs talk about and vote on those new laws. Ministers are people in the Government who are in charge of particular issues: health, education, justice***

We will improve the training of people who work with children and young people. To do this, we will speak to workers, unions, councils and other employers, and to the universities and colleges that train workers.

We are talking about how to split up the money that will be spent by the Government in the next 3 years. We want to spend on the most important services.

We will change the way money is given to councils so that it is easier for councils to use it where it is most needed in their area and where it will have most effect.

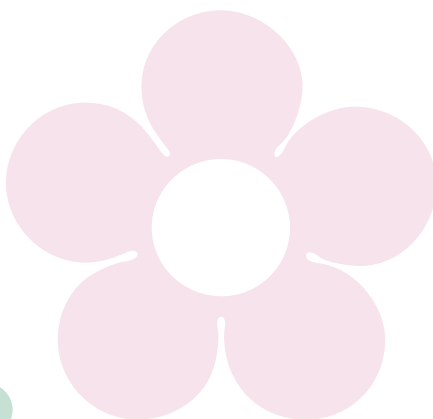
We will pass on what you said about the Young People's Fund to the people setting up that fund. As this is National Lottery money, there are rules about what it can legally be spent on. So it may not be possible to fund everything you want. But the people running the fund will consult local young people about how money is spent in their area.

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‘STOPPING YOUTH CRIME’

Ministers have seen what was said in consultation, and decided what we should now do.

- Judges should think about the welfare of a young offender as well as protection of the community when deciding how to punish them. But their most important job is to prevent future offending. We will make a new law to make this clear.
- We will prepare an information pack for young defendants so they understand what happens in court. We will involve young people in putting this together. We are talking to charities about how they can help young people in court. We will ask judges and lawyers to use simpler language in court.
- We will train judges and lawyers in how to work with children and young people.
- We will help to provide more accommodation for young people on bail or community sentences.
- We will simplify the system of community sentences. We will link these to new centres which will provide activities – education and training, counselling, sports – for young people on community sentences.
- We will provide more help with services for young people on community sentences or coming out of young offender institutions.
- We will create a new sentence with strict supervision and electronic tagging so that young offenders can have a last chance in the community.
- We will keep young offender institutions available, not only for serious crimes, but also for those who do not stop committing crimes.
- We will highlight activities to help young offenders to go back to education and training or employment when leaving young offender institutions.
- We will improve the training of youth justice workers.



If you have any questions on this booklet, please contact
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