Our Journey Together: Strategic Priorities for Young People in Bristol
This strategy has been produced by organisations working with children and young people in Bristol based on consultation and published data. It sets out our aspirations and priorities for work with young people in the city.
Children and young people are often described as ‘on a journey’, though the start and finish points are not always clear. For some, the journey is a straightforward route from home to school, college, work accompanied by supportive family and friends. But for other children and young people, the journey is more complicated. There can be detours: poverty, family breakdown, illness, exclusion from school and many more. Reaching your destination can be a real challenge, and many of these young people get lost along the way.

We know that those who successfully arrive at their destination (in this case independent adulthood) have developed certain skills and capabilities along the way. Those capabilities are transferable, and enable young people to successfully navigate all kinds of different challenges. The ‘Framework of Outcomes for Young People’ (Young Foundation, 2012) showed that young people who make successful transitions in their lives have 7 clusters of ‘social and emotional capabilities’: Communication; Confidence and Agency; Planning and Problem Solving; Relationships and Leadership; Creativity; Resilience and Determination; and Managing feelings.

Play, youth work and support organisations help children and young people develop these capabilities through their work with individuals and groups in communities, playing an important role in early intervention before they reach crisis point. Organisations help them understand and articulate their achievements, enabling them to apply their learning in one setting to other situations they encounter, thus assisting them on their journey to achieve their aims and ambitions.
The majority of children and young people’s time is spent away from school and their experiences out of school, both positive and negative, have a huge impact on their educational achievement and their overall health, wellbeing and enjoyment of life. Partners in the strategy include youth work, play, arts, media and sports providers, those providing information, advice and specialist support for children and young people with complex needs including housing and homelessness, drugs and alcohol misuse, young people in the care system, young carers and young people with disabilities.
The issues identified in this strategy will link to wider developments in the city and other initiatives including the Safeguarding Strategy; Early Intervention Strategy; Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Learning City initiative.

Principles for the strategy

Bristol can be an amazing place to grow up. As partners in children and young people’s services, we pledge that our children and young people will have the best possible start in life. Together, we will achieve this by committing to:

- Actively communicating and listening to children and young people so we develop services that meet their needs and aspirations
- Making sure children and young people benefit from Bristol as a learning city
- Intervening early to ensure children and young people get the support they need
- Using our collective resources to ensure children and young people in need receive the right help
- Working together to bring in new resources to sustain a great offer to our children and young people
- Setting clear priorities for children and young people’s services based on needs
- Making sure services are relevant and accessible, e.g. for BME young people

At a time when there is limited resource and capacity on all agencies it is important the strategy is a vehicle for joint planning and co-production of services for young people. Its co-production partners are young people themselves; voluntary and community sector organisations, statutory organisations with responsibilities for young people’s welfare and achievement and those willing and able to invest in services and opportunities that help young people develop their confidence and resilience.
What do Young People want and need?

We examined published data about young people in Bristol to inform this section. We also asked young people what mattered to them about growing up in Bristol, through the Bristol Youth Council and a survey with 350 respondents. Professionals who work with young people outside of formal education were asked what they saw as the priorities for young people. These are the key points from that research.

Population trends

- Over the next 10 years (2015 – 2025) the population of Bristol aged 8-19 is expected to grow from 57,600 to 67,900, moving from 12.9% to 14% of the total population.

- Areas in the city with high youth populations also tend to be those areas with highest social deprivation indicators.

- The biggest rises in the youth population are in Bristol’s increasingly diverse ethnic groups, especially Black and Asian people. There are now 5 wards in the city where more than 45% of the youth population are ‘non-White British.

- In our survey, young people saw Bristol’s multi-cultural community as a positive aspect of the city.
Young People and health

• Bristol's Youth Council’s top campaign is ‘Healthy Body, Healthy Mind’

• 5.7% of young people in the city have a long term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities

• 1 in 10 young people have a mental health diagnosis (Rethink)

• 860 young people aged 0-15 years are identified as providing unpaid care for members of their families or others. Being a young carer can cause social isolation and lead to a young person experiencing mental health difficulties

• Public health priorities for the city include reducing health inequalities, reducing violence and abuse including sexual exploitation, smoking amongst young people, getting people active and reducing the harm caused by alcohol and drugs.

• Bristol Women’s Voice published a report highlighting ‘five key’ health concerns for 16-24 year old Bristolian women, and what Bristol can do to improve them. The five key areas: mental health, substance misuse, obesity, sexual health and violence.
Young People and crime and safety

- Young people’s involvement in crime in Bristol is sharply declining, in line with national trends. Total numbers of offences by young people have dropped by almost 50% between 2011/12 and 2013/14.

- Despite this, fear of crime remains an important concern for young people themselves. The BME Unity Forum reported fears around being targeted for stop and search. Additionally in our survey young people expressed fears of stabbings, shootings and gangs.

Young People and education and employment

- Young people told us that a big concern is that they won’t be able to find a job with enough pay and prospects in the city: they worry about low wages and high costs.

- Statistics tell us the actual number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment and training is relatively low at 563 (5.8%) (January 2015 figures).

- Bristol’s care-leavers are amongst the least likely to be in education, employment and training post-18 of all the major English cities (2014).

- BME young people are more likely to be NEET.
Young People and environment, culture, sport and personal development

• Young people told us they liked Bristol’s wide range of activities and opportunities – play and youth projects, music, shops, cinema, parks and green environment, The Station, cheap and free classes and the influence of lots of different cultures

• Young people were concerned about factors that would prevent them from making their successful journey to adulthood - managing money, homelessness and housing shortages, lack of mental health support and not enough jobs

• Young people also told us they worried about the effects of exam pressure and teenage hormones

• They worry about their safety in terms of bullying, peer pressure, fear of crime, fights and gangs, racism and stereotypes
What support do Young People want?

Young people said they get support from family, best friends, social workers, youth workers, family friends, siblings and some teachers. They want professionals to understand them, listen to children and young people and take them seriously; keep young people safe and off the streets; stop closing youth centres; do fun play activities; help young people interact with others to build their confidence; make space for 1:1 time with young people; help young people deal with the consequences of situations they encounter.

“Adults should help you make your way in life so when you get to 18 you know the way forward”

What those who work with Young People say

Professionals working with young people identified some key concerns:

• Education and employment opportunities are crucial but some young people miss out for a range of reasons (e.g. care leavers and BME young people)

• Poverty and low income have a huge negative impact on young people’s ability to participate and benefit from education and employment and other opportunities in the city

• Health, particularly mental health and wellbeing services are not fully geared up to provide the right support and deal with the symptoms (e.g. self-harm) and causes (e.g. cyber-bullying) of mental health concerns

• Cohesive communities are important in young people’s development and young people want to take positive roles and be treated as part of communities, as well as organisations working together to tackle issues at a local level
• Awareness of opportunities for Children and young people and being able to help navigate young people to positive activities and opportunities

Our pledge to Young People

We want children and young people in Bristol to lead healthy, safe and inspiring lives. They should not be excluded from opportunities and support by cost, distance, lack of information, physical and/or learning difficulties or cultural barriers. Where there are high numbers of children and young people living in socially deprived areas, we will make special efforts to create accessible services and a relevant and inspiring offer in their area.

The needs identified through the consultation and published vdata lead us to focus on these core actions, linked to Bristol Youth Council’s manifesto for 2015/17.

Healthy body, healthy mind

• Promote and create positive, fun and challenging opportunities to help young people develop their confidence, creativity and resilience and enhance their health and wellbeing

• Enhance the support available to improve young people’s physical and mental health in the city, including early intervention, counselling and support for groups most likely to experience mental health issues and activities to combat obesity, smoking and drug and alcohol misuse
A child and Young People - friendly city

• Work with children and young people to secure a green and sustainable future for Bristol, making best use of and protecting parks and open spaces, promoting safe and sustainable transport options and using local resources and enabling young people to achieve sustainable, affordable housing in the city.

Young People active and safe in their communities

• Ensure young people have a strong voice and are actively involved in their communities. This includes volunteering and mentoring opportunities and young people involved in decision making locally and city-wide, as well as ensuring there are aspirational role models for young people to identify with e.g. BME figures.

• Take a combined approach to building young people’s resilience and confidence to combat practices that put young people at risk including all forms of bullying, gangs and violence, drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, environmental factors, FGM, racism and discrimination, homelessness.
A curriculum for life

- Help all young people make positive informed choices that lead to interesting and inspiring careers through a ‘curriculum for life’ that includes financial education, good quality work experience and sustainable employment and training opportunities, body confidence, relationship and sex education, equalities and stereotyping, bullying, keeping safe

What happens next?

To keep this strategy real we need to:

- Promote the strategy to children and young people, statutory agencies and others who can support action on its priorities
- Encourage providers, commissioners, funders and statutory agencies across the city to become part of the strategy
- Work to embed priorities for children and young people's services in Bristol's wider strategies
- Establish realistic plans to achieve priority actions
- Monitor progress on achieving priorities and report back to young people and other stakeholders
- Keep the strategy live as a tool to develop new ways of working
- Work to embed the co-production approach to the design, delivery and evaluation of services
This strategy was designed with input from the following organisations (logos) and consultation with key groups (list/logos), but is designed to help all organisations working with children and young people to plan future work/priorities.

1625 Independent People
ACE
ACTA
Barnados
Barton Hill Settlement
Bread Youth Project
Bristol Autism Project
Bristol City Council
Bristol City Youth Council
Bristol Drugs Project
Bristol Play Network
Bristol Women’s Voice
Children in Care Council
Children’s Scrapstore
Creative Youth Network
Felix Road Adventure Playground
Full Circle
Integrate Bristol
Learning Partnership West
Learning South West
Linkage
Playbus
Princes Trust
Salaam Shalom
Shelter
South Bristol Youth
Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI)
Unity Forum
VOSCUR
Watershed
WECIL
YMCA
Young Bristol
Young Carers Voice
Young Healthwatch
Youth Moves
In the writing of this strategy the partners decided to refer to children and young people when appropriate and just young people at other times. In following the principles of early intervention it recognises the impact this strategy can have on children and young people aged 8-19, while at the same time focusing specifically on the needs of young people aged 13+.

References and useful Links:

2011 Census statistics, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright

Bristol City Youth Council and Youth Mayors Manifesto: www.bristol.gov.uk/bcyc

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) report on the health and wellbeing needs of people in Bristol www.bristol.gov.uk

Learning City www.bristollearningcity.com


Young Foundation www.youngfoundation.org
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