Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Hackney Young Futures Commission

Background and Initial Analysis Findings Report
(April - September 2019)

1. Background

1.1. Hackney Young Futures Commission (HYFC) is the largest consultation undertaken with young young people, aged between 10-25 years.

1.2. The Commission was established to amplify the voices of young people in the borough and is made up of young people, community representatives, academic and voluntary sector partners and Members.

1.3. The Commission aims to gather evidence of the lived experiences of young people in Hackney aged between 10-25 and to understand how they view the borough, what challenges they face and how they feel about local services.

1.4. The Commission will make recommendations to the Council and other agencies in order to improve the lives and life chances of young people in the borough and enable Members to listen to and learn from young people's experiences of growing up in Hackney.

1.5 Between April and September 2019, the Commission collected data, which was analysed to produce the initial findings. This report is the first thematic analysis of the data and describes common experiences and emerging themes. The report was co-produced by an independent researcher at Loughborough University London and Hackney Young Futures Commission.

1.6 The thematic analysis creates a picture of what it is like for young people between 10-25 to live in Hackney. Some of the young people's experiences are consistent with previous research, but the stories also point to the need for further data collection and investigation. The Commission intends to use the thematic analysis report to "check in" with young people, namely through "Have We Got It Right" events.

2. First Phase Consultation - *"I've Been Heard"*

2.1. The Commission successfully completed its first phase of major youth engagement, listening to views from thousands of local young people during April-September. The Commission spoke directly to over 2,400 young people between the ages of 10-25 years, from a range of backgrounds. This figure exceeds its original target of 1,500.

2.2 Consultation was led by trained, young peer researchers and the data was collected through a variety of methods e.g. focus groups, 1:1 interviews, online surveys, launch events, Board meetings, filmed interviews, street-based outreach and teacher-led school classroom surveys and discussions.

2.3 Peer Researchers directly engaged with young people in schools, youth clubs, adventure playgrounds, libraries, sports facilities, youth offending, Alternative Provision and with specific community groups e.g. Haredi, LBGTQ and Traveller communities.

2.4 Street-based engagement took place on estates, in parks, restaurants, as well as part of community festivals, namely; Hackney Carnival, Hackney Pride and other local events.

3. Data Collection

3.1. The 'fact-finding mission' involved consultations with young people in the North, East, South and West of the Borough, where experiences were recorded from young people in three distinct age groups:

• Older children (ages 10 to 12)

• Teenagers (ages 13 to 18)

• Young adults (ages 19 to 25)

3.2 Young people Were Asked Four Questions:

1. *What is your favourite thing or place in Hackney and why?*
2. *What is the main issue affecting your life in Hackney today and how does this issue affect you?*
3. *If you were the Mayor, what would be the main thing you would change for young people in Hackney? What would you do and how would you change it?*
4. *Any Other Comments?*

3.3 Answers to these questions were recorded by Peer Researchers and transcribed verbatim and in total, 4493 data points (individual quotes from young people) were recorded.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Raw data from all the youth engagement sessions conducted between April and September 2019 was cleaned by data inputters, ready for analysis in October 2019.

4.2 Quotes were independently coded and assigned to first order and second order themes and then inputted into Nvivo software in order to generate and produce a thematic analysis word report.

4.3 First Order Themes included:

1. Activities and Events - Young people reported they like a range of activities
2. Community - How young people feel about the Hackney community
3. Crime - A broad range of experience or perceptions of crime
4. Education, Employment and Training - Lack of opportunities to find work
5. The Physical Environment - Issues around pollution, litter and traffic
6. Health and Wellbeing - Mental health and stress
7. Housing- Lack of affordable and adequate housing
8. Inequality - Poverty, racism, stereotypes and discrimination by the Police
9. Places and Spaces - Specific places young people like in Hackney
10. Safety - Linked to crime and traveling around the Borough

4.4 First order themes were combined into two sections within the report to enable the Council and other agencies to understand how young people view the Borough and local services and also to learn about the challenges they face.

4.5. A final section includes the solutions put forward by young people.

5. Findings

5.1 How do Young People view the Borough and Local Services?
Activities and Events
Young people reported that they like a wide range of activities and events in Hackney. These included cultural activities and local services such as the cinema, theatre and museums and specific events such as Carnival and festivals.

"Living in Hackney for all the years I have been to many places such as Hackney Empire, Hackney Picture House and Concorde" (Young Person, Youth Club, E9)

"Museums! They are really exciting and interesting. There is always something I did not know and it's so nice to have so much new pieces of history" (Young Person, Jewish Community)

"Hackney Empire because I like watching plays and people who act" (Year 6, Primary School, E9)

Young people spoke about healthy activities they were able to participate in such as a range of sports, spending time in outdoor spaces, taking part in leisure centre activities and using estate-based facilities.

"Leisure centres because I like exercising and it is fun since it can also teach you how to do sport like: swimming, tennis, badminton" (Year 2, Primary School, E5)

"Going to parks and swimming in Britannia, I like swimming, I like the swings in park" (Young Person, Youth Club, E8)

"The gym - Clissold Leisure Centre because I go there on a regular basis" (Young Person, LGBTQIA Community)

Young people talked at length about the range of activities within play and youth provisions and community services in the Borough, recognising the enjoyment they get from activities such as cooking, sports, filming, setting up a new business, meeting new people and being in a safe space.

"Youth club, awesome activities" (Young Person, Youth Club, N4)

"Youth hubs and community areas keep us safe and make us feel comfortable" (Young Person, N4)

"Youth club because of learning to run our own business and filming sessions" (Young Person, Youth Club, E9)

Places and Spaces

Similar to the activities young people reported they liked to take part in, young people mentioned specific places and areas in Hackney they liked. The number one reported 'place' young people liked was Victoria Park, which is a park in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Clissold, Finsbury and Springfield Parks were the next highest ranked parks.

Young people specifically mentioned areas of Hackney they liked which housed key shops and restaurants, this included Ridley Road Market, Dalston, Boxpark, Shoreditch and Mcdonalds, Hackney Central.

"Mare st such as Primark – Vicky park somewhere to chill" (Young Person, Autograph Event)

"I like Mare Street McDonalds because I feel safe" (Young Person, HYFC Launch, E8)

"Dalston, lots of places to eat, it is a cosmopolitan place, you can find whatever type of food you want" (Young Person, ESOL)

Young people also mentioned in this section that they liked places such as their own homes, their "nan's house" and "their church".

"My house and my estate community" (Young Person, Youth Club, E8)

Museums, libraries, leisure centres and youth clubs were mentioned again, alongside Lee Valley Ice-skating Rink and Hackney City Farm.

"I loved Hackney City Farm, the camping, cooking my own meals, it's really good to get into nature" (Young Person, CICC)

"We went to Hackney Museum for the Citizenship Scheme and learnt how to stay safe. I remember I have to call 999" (Young Person, Jewish SEN Community)

Community

Young people talked about the pride they had for the Borough they lived in and mentioned the diversity of people, cultures and reported many positive things about their communities.

"Stoke Newington has nice people and culturally diverse" (Young Person, National Citizens Service)

"Caring community and supportive members" (Young Person, Hackney Hive Event, E9)

"Hackney is an amazing community; they're always trying to improve!" (Young Person, Jewish Community)

5.2 What Challenges Do Young People Face?
In this section there were a large number of themes young people reported that affected their lives, ranging from the effects of crime, lack of opportunities in respect of jobs, training and work experience, the physical environment and concerns about pollution and litter. How young people's mental and physical health is affected by different stressful events in their lives, lack of affordable and adequate housing and related issues of homelessness. Inequality issues, such as discrimination and racism, stereotyping and the cost of living, how young people feel they are treated by the Police, how unsafe they feel and how they are impacted by transport issues such as traffic and being scared to travel around the Borough. Each challenge will be described in turn.

Crime

Young people reported a range of crimes that they had either been a victim of, witnessed or had a negative perception of including knife and gang crime, fights they had witnessed, anti-social behaviour of neighbours, robberies, burglaries and theft. Most statements made by young people were about the effect crime had on their lives, which centred around them being scared either for themselves or the safety of their family members, especially their siblings.

"Knife crime makes me feel unsafe. I have lost multiple family members due to knife crime" (Year 6, Primary School, E9)

"I got chased from here to here and I won't go back. London fields is really bad" (Young Person, Secondary School, E8)

"Knife and acid attacks around London. It affects me because I was down the road from the last acid attack and it makes me want to avoid going outside over the summer and in general" (College Student, E8)

"I've been a victim of crime many times" (Young Participant, Hackney Carnival)

"There are some drunk/crazy people around and I get terrified of them (Amhurst Road)" (Young Person, Primary School, E5)

"Because I know that children at the age of 12 and under are seeing these stuff and there is a saying that you can't unsee something" (Young Person, Housing Estate, N16)

Education, Employment and Training

Young people reported the lack of opportunities available in order to get jobs, apprenticeships, work experience, training and support. Some young people reported having to travel out of Borough in order to secure opportunities. Some young people spoke about issues within their schools, such as quality of teaching staff, lack of life skills training, facilities, transitions and choice of school to attend. For those young people at College, fees and cost of living were mentioned. Some young people specifically mentioned lack of job opportunities as a contributing factor towards the issue of gang crime. In the section on health and wellbeing, we will cover the issue of stress associated with school exams, though it is worth noting here that this was a key theme under education.

"The biggest problem in my life is employment. It affects me because I might not get the job that I want" (College Student, E5)

"Bad prospects – not enough opportunities" (Young Person, Pride in the Park Picnic, Stonebridge Gardens)

"Gang culture – lack of employment" (College Student, N1)

"I think kids outside of Hackney get more opportunities and that separates us from doing good from bad – kids are on the street – more in Hackney than other areas" (Young Person, Youth Club, N16)

"Teachers put down students, especially about futures" (Young Person, LGBTQIA Community)

"They should teach us how to live our lives and not everything works for the same students" (Young Person, N4)

The Physical Environment

Young people reported their fears over climate change, pollution and global warming. In some areas, young people talked about their immediate physical environment being dirty or noisy, with dog mess and litter brought up as an issue. Homelessness is highlighted, however it is worth noting that homelessness causes young people anxiety and they do not like seeing homeless people on their streets. Traffic and congestion in the Borough came up as an issue that affected young people getting to school on time.

"The pollution because it makes it harder for me to breathe" (Young Person, Primary School, E5)

"Littering because sometimes there's stuff on the floor that is sharp and if you don't have your shoes on it might stab you or make you bleed." (Year 6, Primary School, N4)

"Noise find it hard to sleep" (Dalston Children's Festival - New City College)

"There's too much dog poo everywhere. The signs don't work." (Young Person, Primary School, E5,)

"Too much power being wasted – should switch electricity off, turn off taps, people are wasting water" (Young Person, Youth Club, N4)

"The roads are so crowded; I spend a lot of time on the bus" (College Student,N1)

"Traffic because it always slows me down, so I have to wake up earlier and not get as much rest" (Year 6, Primary School, E9)

"Traffic makes me late, have to leave earlier" (College Student, E5)

Health and Wellbeing

Young people reported various aspects of their mental health being affected by exam stress at school, loneliness, bullying and drug abuse.

"Having had the anxiety and pressure of having SATS" (Year 6, Primary School,N1)

"GCSEs and the mental stress it causes, not everyone is academic and they don't take into consideration our feelings or how we learn" (Young Participant, Shoreditch Festival)

"I'm a lonely Greek man" (Young Person, Youth Club, E8)

"Isolation and loneliness, would be good to have more LGBT meetup" (Young Person, LGBTQIA Community)

"People under the influence of alcohol affects our safety" (Young Person, Youth Club, N16)

Housing

Young people reported various issues including lack of affordable housing, inadequate housing and overcrowding. As previously highlighted, the issue of homelessness is also included.

"Lack of Social housing – can't move out of home" (Young Person, SEND Club, E8)

"Housing. The council needs to make changes and simplify the process" (Young Person, CICC)

"The main issue in my life is that I'm trying to move houses, but I can't. The house I'm living in is a flat and I'm living with my family of seven, it's too small and we sleep in one room." (Young Person, E5)

"Don't know where to look for a home that's affordable and nice for first time buyers and renters" (Young Person, Shoreditch Festival)

"5 of us in a 2 bed apartment that we've had to convert to 3 bed, no living room – just wish Hackney could help us – kids we all have to share rooms – 1 bathroom and I'm 21 (female) they are 12 and 13 (points to brothers) It's not appropriate" (Young Person, Youth Club, E5)

"Homelessness - council needs to help them, drinking and drugs causes of crimes" (HYFC Member)

Inequality

Young people reported that their experiences of inequality are related to the changes to the Borough through gentrification and regeneration. They describe the cost of living and issues of poverty that affect them. Some young people report that they experience stereotyping in the media and describe experiences of racism and discrimination, sometimes by the Police.

"Hard to get a job - young black woman and young people are judged a certain way" (College Student, E5)

"Gentrification – I feel like I don't recognise parts of hackney anymore" (Young Person, HYFC Launch)

"The stigma around actually living in Hackney, when I mention to people I'm from there there's usually a negative response. There needs to be a project where positive light is shed on Hackney. Aside from gentrification there needs to be something for young people." (College Student, N1)

"Always followed in local Cost cutter - discriminated against" (Young Person, E9)

"I had an antisemitic incident, all the police did was take down the details and close the case (no checking CCTV to identify the offender" (Young Person, Jewish Community)

"Can't go to a local shop as police might stop me" (Young Person interviewed outside Dalston Library/McDonalds)

"Stop and Search - They stop and search us because of what we are wearing which makes you uncomfortable, we still wear the clothes, but it makes us weary. Made to feel like we are carrying drugs or a weapon" (Young Person SEND School, E5)

Safety

Young people reported being unsafe in a number of areas. They either specifically mentioned areas that made them feel unsafe or they feared for the safety of their family members. Reasons young people felt unsafe ranged from fear of crime, lighting on the streets, sexual harassment and dangerous driving.

"The main issue is not feeling safe and able to go to the park (London Fields)" (Young People interviewed on Mare Street and Well Street Common)

"Hearing about knife crime and stabbing that are near your area it affects me because then I get paranoid and sometimes scared for no reason" (Year 6, Primary School, E9)

"Family members you're not sure about them going out" (Young Person, Youth Club, E9)

"It stops me from wanting to go out – I have an older brother and I'm scared for him, (people) wanting him to be in gangs and stuff" (Fellows court)

"That they let the dogs run around in parks all over and I am scared of dogs" (Young Person, Jewish Community)

"Coming to school on time when the cars don't stop when crossing the roads on (Morning Lane" (Year 6, Primary School, E9)

"The main issue affecting my life is getting touched by men older than me or just by people in general" (Young Person, HYFC Launch, E8)

6. Young People's Suggestions to Tackle Issues Identified?

6.1 In this section we share some of the solutions young people put forward on the issues identified in Section 2. Most young people suggested solutions that began with 'more of….'. These included more activities for young people in schools, communities and youth clubs i.e. more support and guidance to deal with issues that young people face.

6.2 In particular, issues that caused young people most anxiety were; having more opportunities for paid and unpaid work, more Police on the streets, more security in schools and more affordable, adequate housing.

6.3 Some young people spoke about solutions for their specific needs, such as young people with cultural needs, disabilities and those from the LGBTQ community.

6.4. Other solutions included tackling environmental issues, such as climate change and pollution.

6.5 Young people also made suggestions on how they can build better relationships with the Police.

6.7 Young People's suggestions on youth activities;
- *"more youth clubs"*
- *"Youth clubs open later for older young people and more youth clubs generally"*
- *"I would increase awareness of youth provisions by speaking more about them in schools"*
- *"They need to get the youth more involved"*
- *"youth club makes me feel safe, we aren't automatically stereotyped. There are always kids around so if there are other kids it makes you feel safer"*

- *"I did a really great self-defence session in my youth club where young people were taught how to defend themselves, we need more of that"*
- *"Night clubs for young people" (YP, SEN)*

6.2 Young People's suggestions on how to support young people in Hackney;
- *"More young people's mental health in schools"*
- *"invest in young business and business skills, investing in people's dreams"*
- *"I would meet with young people more often to understand their struggles"*
- *"Guidance for gang members"*
- *"More opportunities – support for young people so they don't get into crime"*
- *"better help for young people who have messed up and committed crimes to find jobs"*
- *"I would encourage young people to develop an understanding of the world around them and what's going on. This could be through activities based on the things happening in the world"*
- *"More campaigning and teaching young people the consequences of committing crimes – workshops in youth centres/school"*
- *"Could we have an LGBT library or LGBT book clubs for young people"*

6.3 Young People suggestions on how Police can support young people in Hackney to feel safe/build better relationships;
- *"Less focus on young boys as criminals and we need to stop doing stop and search for no reason because the police are violent when they search them and it traumatises them"*
- *"More police on the streets"*
- *"build up police and youth relationships"*
- *"I want everyone to be safe and police is everywhere"*
- *"More security in the community"*

6.4 Young People's suggestions about the Community?
- *"community help"*
- *"community groups"*
- *"community service"*
- *"Jobs – litter picking – pay them to do something good for the community"*
- *"Kids need more rights – more say over their communities"*
- *"more community owned – run spaces where everyone is welcome"*
- *"Put more funding in community projects and encourage community leaders and people's political involvement in the running of their area"*

6.5 Young people's suggestions about Housing;
- *"If I were Mayor I would give priority to young people who are first time buyers and who were born/lived in Hackney for over 15 years, giving them priority and discounts for renting and buying homes"*
- *"Would make more affordable housing for young people – not sure how to do it as developers won't change their prices – but the council could set up a scheme to allow some areas to have cheaper housing/discounts"*
- *"Build more houses"*
- *"more homes"*
- *"I would like the opportunity of affordable choice"*
- *"invest in a lot of housing"*
- *"Help the community get housed"*

7. Second Phase Consultation - "*Have We Heard You Right*?"

7.1 In October, the Chairs of the Commission were trained to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) within the data, using thematic analysis. This training will support the second phase of the Commissions work, namely; the "*Have We Heard You Right*" feedback sessions to young people.

7.2 The Chairs intend to use the thematic analysis report to check-in with young people and in this phase of the Commission's work they will look at young people's experiences in more detail and work with young people to agree the solutions they wish to be considered are viable.

7.3 The "*Have We Got It Right*" feedback event/sessions with young people will be delivered between January and February 2020, supported by Members and key strategic leads. The events will be organised as an opportunity to share the findings with young people directly and for them to prioritise the themes identified. Also, to allow them to start thinking about solutions to the issues raised. It is envisaged that these solutions will be "co-produced" with Members, Officers and Voluntary Sector Partners.

7.4 The consultation will formally close on 31st December 2019, with identified gaps in the data being met and analysed by March 2020 and the Commission's final report to be produced for Cabinet by May 2020.