



Report



**Scotland's Commissioner for  
Children and Young People**

Adults' attitudes towards contact  
with children and young people

Rocket Science UK Ltd  
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## Executive Summary

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) commissioned Rocket Science to carry out research into adults' attitudes towards contact with children and young people (aged 0-18 years); investigating what considerations influence adults' decisions to have contact, work or volunteer with them. The five objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore adults' attitudes towards contact with children and young people
2. Explore adults' attitudes towards helping children and young people
3. Explore adults' attitudes towards working with children and young people
4. Explore the reasons behind decisions to have/not have contact with children and young people
5. Explore ideas around alleviating anxieties about working with children and young people

### **Methodology**

Rocket Science, working with a partner organisation, George Street Research, carried out a face-to-face survey of 1,093 people across Scotland in February 2007. Following the survey, 53 people participated in 6 focus groups around the country to provide more qualitative feedback.

### **Contact with children and young people**

There were clear differences in the types of people currently having regular contact with children and young people. Women were much more likely to currently have formal contact with children and young people than men, with 22% having contact through their job or through a volunteering activity, compared with only 12% of men. Almost one-in-three people aged between 35 and 44 had formal contact with children and young people, with the proportion having contact declining rapidly with age. Less than 5% of those aged over 65 years had any form of structured contact.

When people were asked to describe general experiences of coming into contact with children and young people, both positive and negative, most people tended to focus on the negative experiences rather than the positive. These negative experiences tended to be mostly related to having contact with groups of older children and young people, and feeling intimidated or threatened by them. Positive experiences were described more readily by those with more regular contact with children and young people, and were often related to the pleasure gained through seeing the personal and social development of individuals over time.

The contexts in which positive and negative experiences took place were distinctly different. Negative experiences tend to take place with large numbers of young people in uncontrolled environments, while positive experiences were in structured environments or on a one-to-one basis.

### **Helping children and young people**

Survey participants were read 10 scenarios describing situations where a child or young person could possibly be in danger or distressed. For each scenario, participants were asked to state the likelihood of their intervention. Situations involving young children (under 5) were the most likely to provoke intervention, as they were to be perceived to

be more vulnerable. People indicated that they were less likely to help teenagers in potentially dangerous situations. Focus group participants generally believed that teenagers were more able to "fend for themselves". Additionally, people were more likely to intervene in situations where a teenage girl might be in trouble as opposed to a teenage boy; the teenage girls were perceived to be more vulnerable than their male counterparts.

### ***Working with children and young people***

While only around 5% of people indicated that they were currently involved in volunteering with children and young people, 69% of people said they would be willing to consider it in the future. The reported barriers that prevented individuals from volunteering were more likely to be personal than related to negative views of children and young people. Many adults felt that they just did not have the time to commit to a voluntary activity.

Many people did feel that working with children and young people would be an attractive opportunity, but were reluctant to get involved because of the perception of onerous procedures. People recognised the need and importance of ensuring individuals are suitable for working with children and young people though the provision of disclosure checks and many acknowledged that these mechanisms went some way to safe guard the reputation of individuals wanting to work with children and young people. However, they felt that other 'interfering' procedures had removed the fun and spontaneity of working with them. These included over-protective health and safety measures and the bureaucracy of paper work.

People who would like to volunteer with children and young people wish to do so for a wide variety of reasons and, when asked, expressed individual preferences for differing age groups. Additionally, the benefits of working and volunteering with children and young people were commonly identified in the focus groups as related to supporting the personal development of the child or young person. Encouraging the development of positive relationships between adults and young people appears to be key to a rewarding experience.

### ***Main barriers and anxieties***

Overall, there were some consistent themes across all areas of the research. These were particularly in relation to:

- The fear of accusations of harming children and young people;
- The reluctance of men to have contact, help or work with children and young people for fear of suspicion of their own motives;
- The fear of teenagers; and
- The perceived power of children and young people.

Firstly, the fear of accusations of harming children was the main barrier identified by both survey respondents and focus group participants in terms of having contact with children and young people or working with them. It was also identified by focus group participants as one of the main reasons they would hesitate to help a child or young person in danger or distress in the hypothetical scenarios. When this issue was unpicked in the focus groups, there appeared to be three factors underpinning this fear:

- A fear that young people might use accusations as a way of getting attention or manipulating adults (for example, in order to force them to buy drink);

- A belief that because of the seriousness of accusations, adults will be considered guilty until proven innocent, and the support provided to the accused will be minimal; and
- A belief that being accused of harming children was one of the worst accusations imaginable, and one which your reputation might not recover from despite them being unfounded.

From this research, it is not clear where these fears have originated from, as only 1 in 10 people were personally aware of situations involving false accusations, although a much higher proportion were aware of stories from the media. Focus group participants strongly suggested that even a small risk of being accused of harming children and young people is likely to outweigh the potential benefits of having contact or working with children and young people.

The reluctance of men to get involved in activities for children and young people was the second main theme emerging from the research. It was shown that almost twice as many women currently have formal contact with children and young people compared to men. The same is true of willingness to get involved in the future, with almost 40% of men not wanting to volunteer with children and young people compared to less than 25% of women. Focus group responses indicated that this was strongly linked to the fear of accusations, with people more suspicious of men who want to work with children and young people. It also appears that traditional gender stereotypes and cultural acceptability have a role to play, with women being much more likely to want to work with and care for younger children and this role being considered unusual or even unacceptable for men to play. The fear of being accused of paedophilia is quite clearly at the forefront of men's minds when considering whether to have contact with children. This fear was so strong that many focus group participants said it would make them think twice about approaching a lost child to help them, despite a relatively high proportion of people saying they would intervene in the survey.

Thirdly, the fear of teenagers was one of the most commonly identified barriers to having contact or working with young people. Further exploration of this issue in the focus groups uncovered that this fear was rooted in both people's own experiences of having contact with teenagers as well as their portrayal in the media. Many people described teenagers in a negative way, focusing on 'bad' behaviour. However, there was an acknowledgement that only a minority of young people were 'bad', yet people still felt intimidated by groups of young people because of their general boisterous behaviour, without this necessarily being intentional. The majority of people's bad experiences of teenagers tended to be in unstructured environments with groups, for example, meeting groups of young people in the street. People who did have positive contact with teenagers, or saw the value of working with teenagers, tended to describe this in terms of participating in more structured environments, for example, in a sports team. They saw the benefit in being able to relate to them on a more adult level and see them develop. However, many people generally perceived teenagers to be 'more cheeky' or lacking in respect, and this resulted in it being difficult to see the value of having contact or working with them.

Fourthly, a common issue emerging from both the survey and focus group responses was the perceived power of children and young people. On further exploration this seemed to be related to the perceived lack of power the police and other authorities had to deal with

poor behaviour in children and young people. There was a perception that children and young people are aware of the restrictions imposed on police and other authorities, for example, not being able to physically restrain young people for fear of accusations of assault, and therefore push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This was also related to the first theme in the case of accusations, with a perception that the views of children and young people carry more weight in these situations than the views of adults.

### ***Relieving anxieties***

When asked about how to encourage people to have more contact with children and young people participants had very few suggestions. The barriers to be overcome are fairly substantial, particularly given the high level of fear of accusations and concerns about being labelled a paedophile. The actual risk to the individual may be small, but this research shows that many people have strong feelings about the perceived level of risk and putting themselves in a position where they could be unjustly accused is not acceptable, and likely to outweigh any potential benefits of being involved. However, it is clear that where individuals do see the value of having contact with children and young people is in seeing the difference made through supporting them to develop personally, socially and emotionally.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What we were asked to do

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) is responsible for ensuring that the rights and quality of life for children is delivered. Her two main work priorities over the next two years, as outlined in the 'Safe, Active, Happy' action plan, are:

- **Things To Do** – activities that are affordable and accessible to all, and that are designed with the help of young people themselves in co-operation with trusted adults; and
- **Promoting Proportionate Protection** – finding a better balance between protection, fun, adventure and healthy relationships.

Linked to both these priorities, SCCYP has identified that adults are becoming increasingly wary of working or volunteering with children and young people. Factors such as strict rules on criminal checks, fear of litigation and 'health and safety issues' have been suggested as reasons for people's reluctance to get involved in activities for children and young people. If true, this is likely to have an impact on adult contact with children and young people, perhaps resulting in activities for children and young people being curtailed, as fewer people are willing to help or get involved or adults not intervening when children are distressed.

SCCYP wanted to explore these issues in more detail, and commissioned Rocket Science to carry out research into adults' attitudes towards contact with children and young people; investigating what considerations influence adults' decisions to have contact, work or volunteer with them. The five objectives of this study were to:

6. Explore adults' attitudes towards contact with children and young people
7. Explore adults' attitudes towards helping children and young people
8. Explore adults' attitudes towards working with children and young people
9. Explore the reasons behind decisions to have/not have contact with children and young people
10. Explore ideas around alleviating anxieties about working with children and young people

For the purposes of the research, children and young people were defined as those aged between 0 and 18 years.

## 1.2 What we have done

Rocket Science, working with a partner organisation, George Street Research, carried out the research in two stages.

The first stage involved conducting a survey with 1,093 adults across Scotland in February 2007. The survey asked about people's experiences of contact with children and young people and their attitudes towards working with them and helping them. The sample was designed to be reflective of the Scottish population as a whole, and results are weighted to take account of any under-representation in the sample.

Full demographic information on survey participants is presented in Appendix 1 and the survey questionnaire is presented in Appendix 3.

The second stage of the research was designed to explore the issues arising from the survey in more detail. To gather more qualitative feedback, six focus groups took place across Scotland in May 2007. Up to ten members of the public were recruited to participate in each focus group, receiving an incentive payment of £30 for their attendance. Some focus groups targeted a specific demographic, in order to examine whether there was a consensus of opinion or different attitudes across the different groups. These targeted focus groups took place with men only, women only and those aged over 60 years. These groups were selected because there were differences in attitudes between these groups in the survey results. An additional focus group targeted parents of school age children.

A total of 53 people participated in the focus groups. The table below shows the areas where they took place, the type of people recruited and the number who attended.

<b>Area (type of area)</b>	<b>Demographic group</b>	<b>No. of attendees</b>
Aberdeen (City)	Mixed group of adults	9
Castle Douglas (Rural)	Mixed group of adults	8
Dundee (City)	Those aged over 60 years	10
Edinburgh (City)	Women only	9
Glasgow (City)	Men only	10
Kirkcaldy (Town)	Parents of school-age children	7

More detail on the focus group participants is provided in Appendix 2 and the questions used at the focus groups are presented in Appendix 4.

This report presents the findings from both stages together. The qualitative findings from the focus groups are used to complement and elaborate on the quantitative findings from the survey.

The report is structured around the three main themes of the research:

- Section 2 presents people's attitudes towards, and experiences of, having contact with children and young people;
- Section 3 presents an analysis of people's willingness to help children and young people in need; and
- Section 4 presents people's attitudes and concerns about working or volunteering with children and young people.

## 2. Contact with children and young people

Some adults may have contact with children and young people on a formal basis, perhaps through their work (e.g. teaching or nursing) or a voluntary activity (e.g. helping in an after-school club or sports club). However, those without formal contact are likely to have experiences, attitudes and opinions of children and young people based on their contact with the children of relatives, young people they meet in the street or stories they hear in the media.

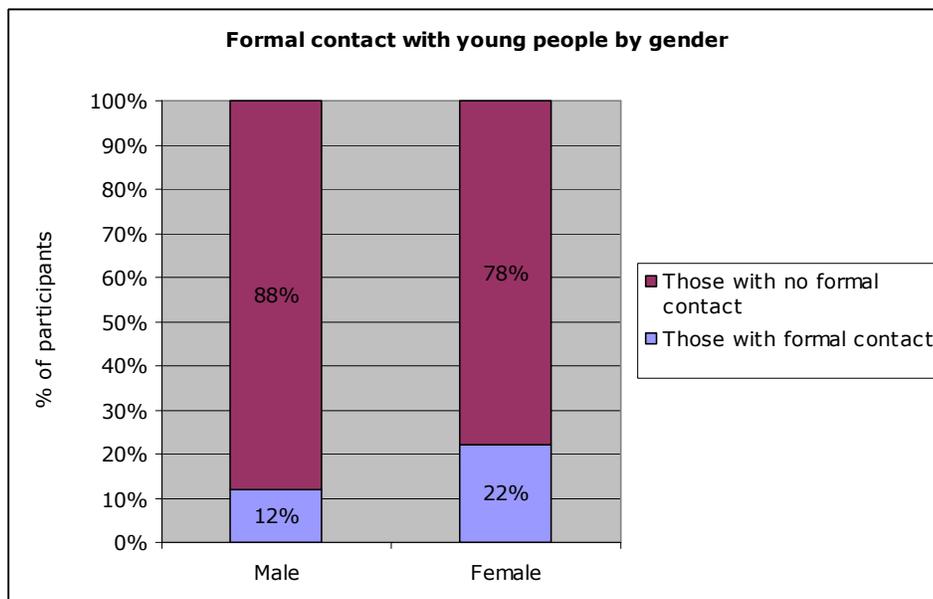
This section presents an analysis of the research findings about the profile of people who have formal contact, and more generally, what people's attitudes and opinions are about having contact with children and young people.

### 2.1 Formal contact

17% of all survey respondents indicated that they currently have formal contact with children and young people. However, there were substantial differences in the proportion of people having formal contact across different demographic groups.

Figure 1 shows the total proportion of men and women having formal contact with children and young people.

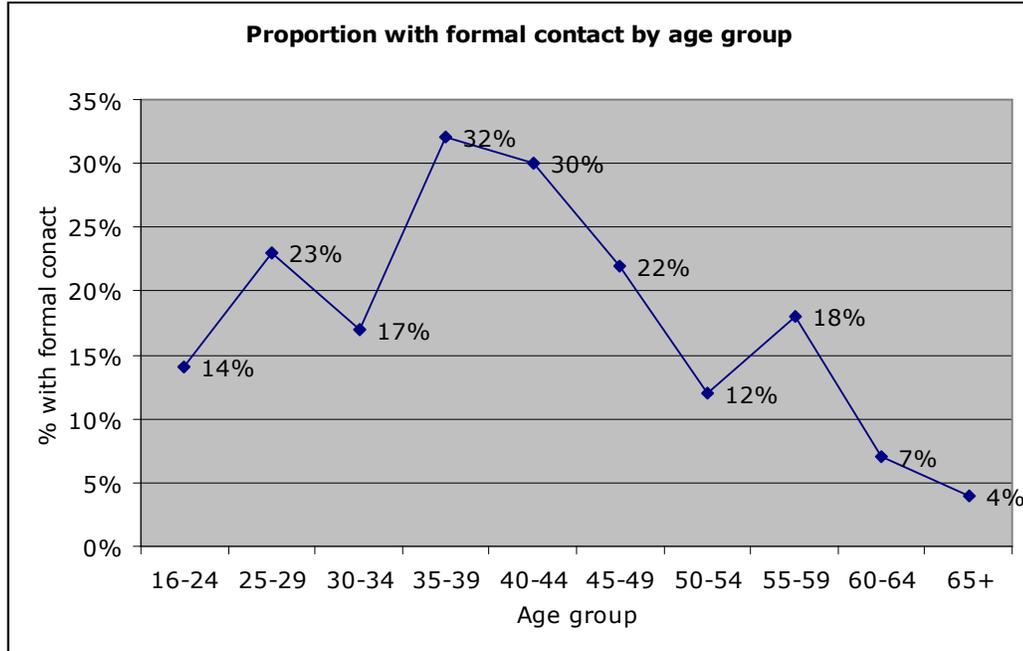
**Figure 1**



Women were much more likely to have formal contact with children and young people than men; almost double the proportion of females (22%) to males (12%) indicated that they have formal contact. The reasons people gave for wanting or not wanting to work or volunteer with children and young people are discussed in more depth in section 4.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of survey respondents in each age group having formal contact with children and young people.

**Figure 2**

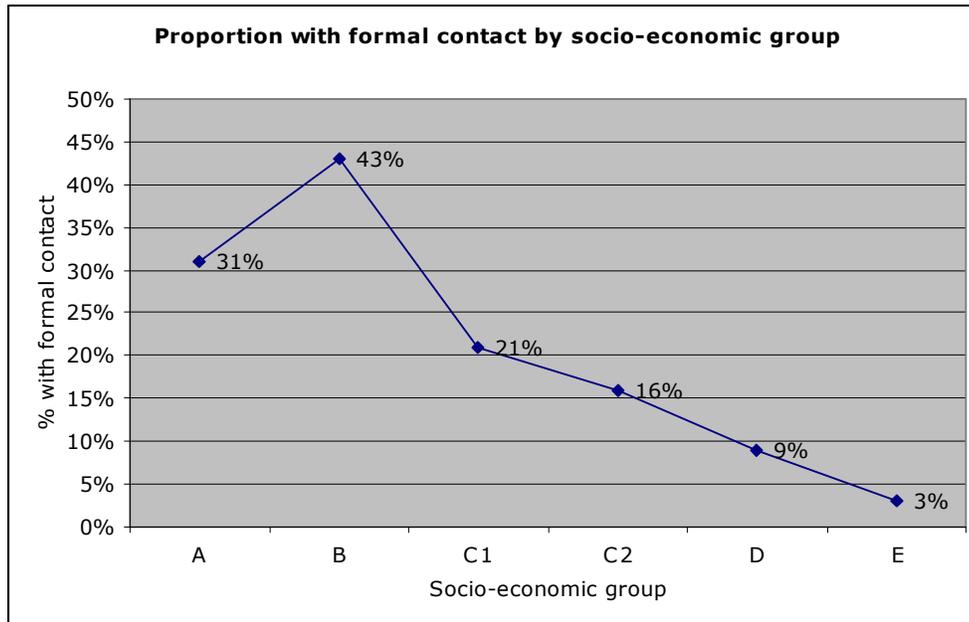


There is clear variation in formal contact with children and young people across different age groups. Involvement peaks for those aged between 35 and 44 (32% & 30%).

There is a much lower rate of contact with children and young people for younger and older adults; with between 14% and 23% of 16 to 34 year olds having formal contact, and between 12% and 22% of 45 to 59 year olds having contact. Very few older people aged 60 years and above, have formal contact with children and young people. Again, reasons for this are explored in more detail in section 4.

Figure 3 shows the total proportion of adults with formal contact with children and young people by their socio-economic group.

**Figure 3**



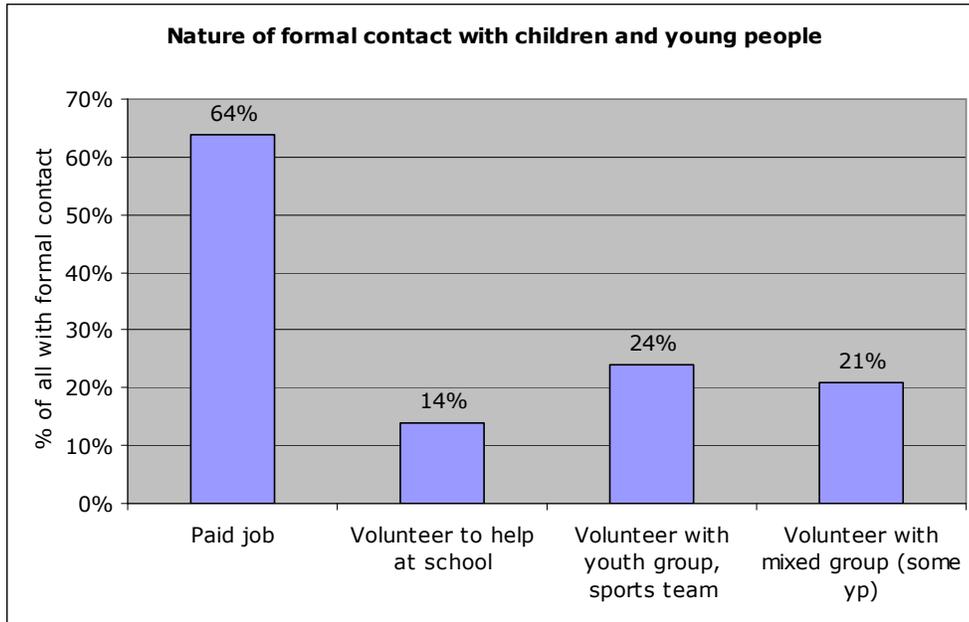
There is a clear linear trend for formal contact with children and young people to increase with affluence. Only 3% of those in the lowest socio-economic group (those dependent on the state) had formal contact with children and young people, rising to 43% of those in group B and 31% of those in group A (professionals and management). More explanation of the socio-economic groups is provided in appendix 1.

Survey respondents who did have formal contact with children and young people were asked to state in what capacity they had this contact (paid job or volunteering activity) and the time devoted to this each week.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of all those with formal contact who indicated that they had contact through:

- Their paid job;
- Volunteering at school;
- Volunteering with a youth group or sports club;
- Volunteering with a mixed group of people, where some children and young people participate.

**Figure 4**

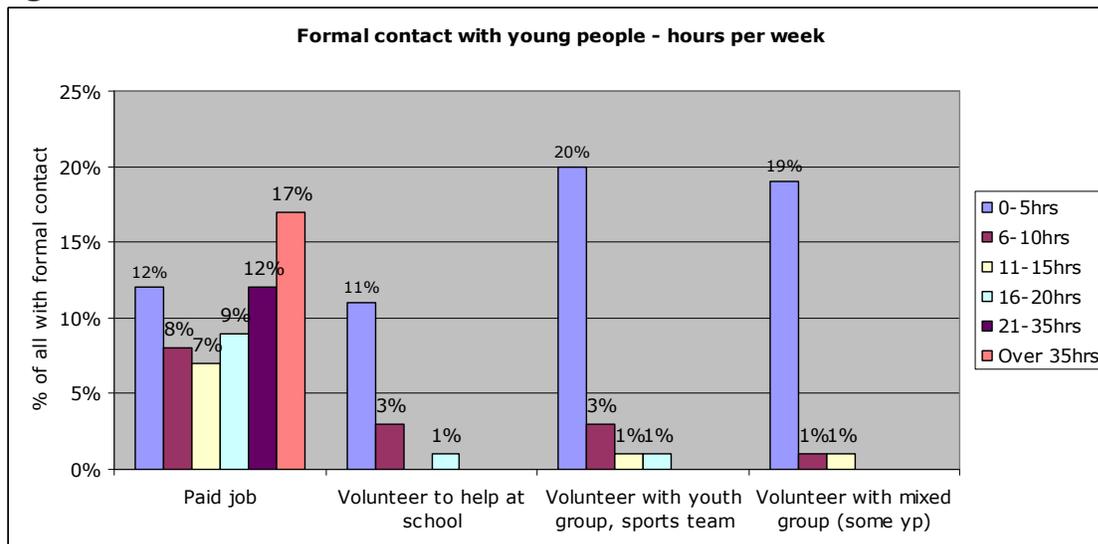


64% of participants who had formal contact with children and young people did so through their paid job (11% of the whole sample). Formal contact with children and young people through volunteering was less common with:

- 24% volunteering in a youth group or sports team (4.3% of the whole sample);
- 21% volunteering in a mixed group where young people participated (3.6% of the whole sample); and
- 14% volunteering at school (2.4% of the whole sample).

The length of time spent in each of these roles is presented in figure 5.

**Figure 5**



Those who came into contact with children and young people through volunteering were most likely to have contact with them for only a few hours per week, with relatively few people having contact for more than five hours per week.

Unsurprisingly, there was much greater variation in the time spent in contact with children and young people through employment. 17% of all those who had formal contact spent more than 35 hours per week in contact with young people through their job. Others had varying levels of contact through their job.

Discussion related to why people would want to work or volunteer with children and young people, and what prevents them, is presented in more detail in section 4.

## 2.2 Attitudes and experiences

At a more general level, all survey participants were asked if they had ad-hoc contact with children and young people over the previous 6 months. 23% of people reported not having any contact, while table A shows the situations where people have come into contact with children and young people.

**Table A: Ad-hoc contact with children and young people**

Contact	% of all participants
With children of friends or family	61.5%
In the street	31.7%
In a shopping venue	17.7%
At school	15.8%
In sport or leisure facilities	15.7%
In open spaces (e.g. parks, playgrounds)	13.5%
On public transport	9.1%
At crèche or play facilities	8.8%
At (volunteer) work / training	2.6%
At church	1.2%

Meeting children of friends or family is the most common way adults report coming in to contact with children and young people, with 62% of all participants reporting this contact in the previous 6 months. Just under a third of participants (32%) reported coming into contact with children or young people in the street, while 18% came into contact when shopping.

Focus group participants were asked to describe their general experiences of coming into contact with children and young people; both positive and negative. However, most people tended to focus on the negative experiences rather than the positive.

These negative experiences tended to be mostly related to having contact with groups of older children and young people and being intimidated or threatened by them. Some people were able to tell stories of particularly bad experiences, which included:

- Regularly having “hoodies” throw eggs at their house. When they go out to confront the young people they are confronted with a barrage of verbal abuse.
- *“My mum was passing the shop and a 12 year old asked her to buy her drink. When she said no, they started throwing things at her.”*

- *"I had my windows panned in for Christmas."*
- An experience of witnessing an 80 year old man being threatened by a young girl, who had said: *"if you don't buy us some drink I'll tell the police you touched me."*
- Having a group of young people throwing stones at a car and breaking its windows.
- Working in a school and having young people throwing things at them.

Many other people recalled more general bad experiences of having contact. Most of these experiences were related to large groups rather than individuals. This was particularly apparent outside schools. Many people spoke of feeling intimidated by groups of children outside schools at lunchtimes being difficult to get past on the high street, forcing people off the pavement and making it difficult to get into shops. Young people in situations like this were not generally considered to be overtly threatening or purposefully intimidating, but it was the size of the groups, their boisterous behaviour and lack of consideration which made it a bad experience (for example, *"throwing food and banging on bus stops"*).

However, several people did have experiences of young people being cheeky towards them or verbally abusive. People often attributed young people's behaviour in these circumstances to being drunk or *"trying to look hard"* in front of friends.

*"I went to the shops and got a ball kicked at my head. When I said something, all I got was cheek back."*

*"They ask if you're going to get them drink or fags and when you say no you get a mouthful of abuse."*

Discussions about these types of experiences tended to lead to debate about perceptions of how society and young people have changed. Common themes included increased violent behaviour; a lack of discipline; a feeling that children are growing up too fast and exposed to too much information; and a belief that children are generally *"more cheeky"* and lack respect. Some people attributed this to the breakdown of conventional family structures and the erosion of traditional family values.

*"Kids are just generally more gobby these days"*

*"What's wrong with teaching them morals, respect and values?"*

Overall, there tended to be a feeling of helplessness amongst those who have had bad experiences of contact with children and young people. Most people tended to perceive that the police had very little power to challenge bad behaviour, and there were little repercussions for young people. The prevalence of stories in the media about children and young people not being disciplined or facing the repercussions was a factor people thought resulted in children and young people pushing boundaries.

*"They know the law from what their hear in the media. They'll push the boundaries."*

*"There's nothing you can do"*

*"The police aren't interested and you can't fight back"*

*"There's no point standing up [to anti-social behaviour] because the police don't do anything and it's not worth the risk to do it yourself"*

Despite the common feeling of being intimidated by groups of young people, many focus group participants acknowledged that most young people were generally good for the majority of the time. Referring to those young people who cause trouble, one participant stated: *"I'm not sure if it's a small minority but it's a minority."*

The majority of those that were able to describe positive experiences of contact with children and young people were those that already worked or volunteered with them. Many described the positives in general terms, rather than individual events, noting the pleasure gained through working with individual young people:

- Driver / school taxi: *"I've got a six year old with autism that I take to school and he's a joy to be with in the morning."*
- Youth worker: *"I could describe millions [of positive experiences]"*
- Nursery nurse: *"I love seeing them come on and develop."*
- Nurse: *"I worked in a child psychiatric unit... being a positive role model was very rewarding. Money couldn't buy it."*
- Brownies volunteer: *"It's great to see them blossom."*

A few people without formal contact also described positive experiences:

- *"When you're at school discos and you see them all enjoying themselves."*
- *"I've taken lads through apprenticeships... I've seen them grow up and develop. Some of them have even started their own businesses."*
- *"There's a boy down the street that says hello all the time and that's really nice."*

The contexts in which positive and negative experiences take place are distinctly different. Negative experiences tend to take place with large numbers of young people in uncontrolled environments, while positive experiences are in structured environments or on a one-to-one basis.

Survey respondents were asked generally what the main barriers were for adults to have any contact with children and young people. Responses are shown in table B.

**Table B**

Barrier	% of all participants
Fear of accusations of harming children	48.4%
Fear of teenagers	33.9%
Children and young people have too much power / say in what happens	15.4%
Too bureaucratic – lots of forms to fill in first	12.4%
Lack of appreciation by children and young people	10.6%
Lack of understanding of children's rights	9.6%
Don't know	4.7%
Kids' lack of respect; their behaviour / attitude	4.4%
Friends will think I am weird / pervert	3.0%
Legislation; (too many) restrictions / rules; political correctness	2.2%

Fear of accusations of harming children was by far the most common reason people believed prevented adults from having contact with children and young people. Almost half (48%) of all participants identified this as barrier. This was a common theme throughout the research, both in the survey and in the focus groups.

Discussion in focus groups highlighted a strong fear of accusations; especially from men. Many people indicated that they feared young people use the threat of accusations as a way of getting something that they want (as illustrated by the earlier example of the old man being asked to buy drink for young girls). Individuals expressed a worry that if people are accused, there is a *'guilty until proven innocent'* attitude: both from professionals and the public at large. Also many felt that being accused of harming a child was the *"worst thing imaginable"* and their public reputation would be irreversibly damaged even if an accusation was completely false. Men in particular seemed to indicate that the first thing that would jump to their mind about an 'accusation' would be a child sex offence. This meant that having contact with children and young people was considered to be a very risky activity and they could not see enough benefits to make this risk worthwhile.

The fear of accusations was closely related to the issue of children and young people having too much power. Many felt that because children and young people are knowledgeable about their rights and the powers of the police (or perceived lack of them) they will push boundaries without fear of consequences.

*"They are a lot more switched on. They know their rights and try to push the envelope."*

*"They know how far they can push things and they know what they can get away with."*

*"The young kids on motorbikes... the police can't chase them, because if they fall off they'll get in trouble."*

*"I left the Children's Panel because I felt that they were not getting punished enough."*

In the survey, fear of teenagers is the second most common reason preventing adults from having contact with young people, identified by one-third of all participants (34%). Focus group participants tended to indicate that this fear was based on their own personal (bad) experiences of having contact with groups of teenagers, like those described earlier; although it was acknowledged that the media has had some influence.

*"I saw a young person on the ground being kicked... that has put me off going out my house at night."*

*"Underage drinking is terrible – you see them everywhere."*

Other barriers were less readily identified by survey respondents, and varied between issues related to children and young people themselves (lack of appreciation or a lack of respect), bureaucratic restrictions and personal issues (lack of knowledge about children's rights or the perception of friends thinking they were weird or a pervert). Some people in the focus groups also noted that they may just not like children and young people.

Survey respondents were also asked about what could be done to reduce the barriers that may exist for adults to be able to have more positive contact with children and young people. Table C outlines the most common responses.

**Table C**

How to reduce barriers	% of participants
Don't know (depends on the individual)	39.5%
Lack of restrictions / political correctness; reduce legislation; fairer legislation	8.1%
Parents to have more control over their kids; the way they're brought up; improve their behaviour; more disciplined	8.1%
More / facilities / clubs / groups / organised events / community involvement; more for kids to do	5.5%
More training / education / information; (parenting) classes / skills	4.4%
Nothing	3.7%
Reduce adult's fears	3.2%
Greater communication / engagement with children and young people	3.1%

Almost 40% of people did not know what could be done to reduce barriers, believing contact to be more of a personal choice.

There were no particularly strong common themes, although

- 8.1% of people wanted to see less restrictions / legislation;
- 8.1% of people wanted to see children and young people being better behaved; and
- 5.5% of people wanted more opportunities and activities for young people.

Interestingly, these issues do not directly impact on the most commonly identified barriers (namely fear of accusations of harming young people and fear of teenagers) and there were very few relevant suggestions from people as to what could reduce these fears.

Some people in the focus groups did believe that there were not enough activities for children and young people to participate in, but people were reluctant to take personal responsibility and get involved in provision because of the perceived risks and a lack of time. Overall, people were very positive about the idea of providing more activities for young people. There is more discussion of working with children and young people in section 4.

*Over 60's focus group participant: "There's a skate park near us. Loads of young people go there and it works. I never hear of any trouble."*

*"I'd like to see more [activities], but I just don't have the time."*

There were also several people in the focus groups that noted the importance of mutual respect between adults and young people. They believed that when you were able to speak to the children and young people in the local community, they would get to know you and talk to you more.

*"One you get to know them, they speak back"*

## 2.3 The media

SCCYP were interested in exploring the extent to which the media had an impact on people's attitudes and beliefs, as indicated in the survey, about having contact with children and young people. Focus group participants were therefore asked about what role they perceived the media to have in creating positive or negative perceptions of young people.

The consensus was that the media is almost always critical of young people and rarely portrays them in a positive light. People believed that the media portrayed young people as the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, and the lack of positive stories gives people the impression that all young people are anti-social, whereas most people considered it to be only to be a minority in reality.

*"Stories are very rarely positive"*

*"Seems always to be about yob culture"*

*"It's the [bad] 5% that you always hear about"*

*"You see the programmes [about anti-social behaviour] then you think there will be weans going out and doing that tomorrow"*

A few people also indicated that the media are overly critical of projects that try to help young people:

*"They are also negative to the things that try to help young people"*

However, some felt that this was not demonising young people in particular; instead it was just living up to the media's reputation for criticism and sensationalism in order to provide more interesting stories.

*"[The media are] always going to highlight the negative rather than the positive"*

Some people believed that young people may behave badly to live up to the expectations created by the media. For example, some believed that young people saw ASBOs as a badge of honour.

*"When young people see things on TV, they want to copy that culture"*

Linked to the perception that children and young people 'have too much power', some people believed that the media rarely reported on the consequences children and young people have faced; rather choosing to encourage a belief that young people do not get punished for their actions.

*"People that hit teachers and throw rocks at ambulances should be made an example of"*

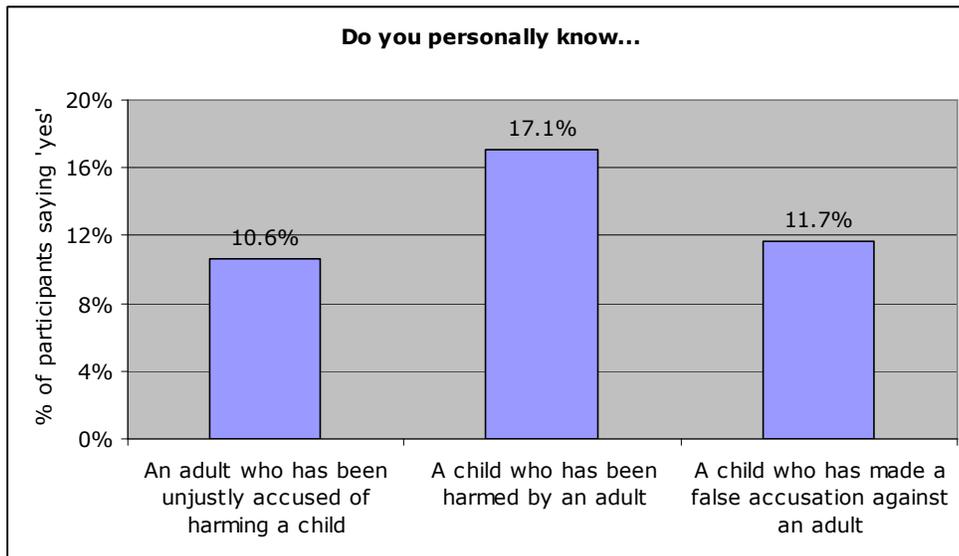
People generally acknowledged that the influence of the media was very likely to impact on how they view children and young people themselves, encouraging stereotypes and reinforcing the negative experiences of their own. However, it is important to note that,

to a large extent, people believed their attitudes and beliefs about young people were based on their own personal experiences and these opinions are not wholly influenced by the media.

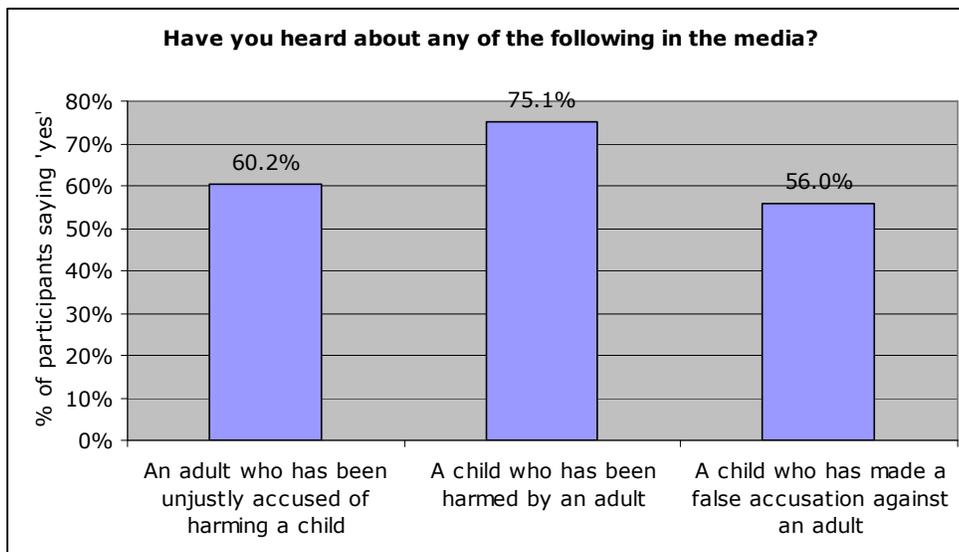
Survey participants were asked to identify whether they personally knew (figure 6) or had heard about in the media (figure 7):

- An adult who has been unjustly accused of harming a child;
- A child who has been harmed by an adult; or
- A child who has made a false accusation against an adult.

**Figure 6**



**Figure 7**



17% of people (almost one in five) reported personally knowing a child who has been harmed by an adult. Less people were personally aware of false allegations, either an adult accused of harming a child (11%) or a child who had made a false allegation (12%).

As to be expected, many more people were aware of these issues through the media. Three-quarters (75%) were aware of a child who has been harmed by an adult, while 60% were aware of an adult unjustly accused or a child who has made a false allegation.

Given that almost half of all participants identified the fear of accusations of harming children as the main barrier to contact with them, it is interesting to find that only around one in ten people personally know of an adult who has been falsely accused or a child who has made a false accusation. However, the relatively high reported awareness of this through the media may be one factor influencing the high level of fear of accusations.

One additional issue about the media which focus group participants raised, although not directly related to contact with children and young people, was the effect reporting of paedophilia had on their perception of children's safety.

*"It makes you want to keep your children inside."*

*"There's no more paedophilia than in the olden days, it's just that people are more aware of it now"*

Only a few people were able to recall positive media stories about young people. A handful of people in different focus groups remembered hearing about an awards event for child carers. Some other people noted that generally stories about primary school age children are more positive than those about teenagers.

### 3. Helping children and young people

One of the aims of the research was to explore adults' attitudes and willingness to help children and young people where they may require assistance or, more seriously, be in a dangerous situation requiring an adult to intervene.

This section presents an analysis of how likely survey participants said they would be to intervene in a range of hypothetical situations. Feedback from focus group participants, who were presented with the survey results, is also included which highlights what they would do to intervene in each situation and, more generally, what they thought might prevent them from helping.

#### 3.1 Intervention scenarios

Survey participants were read 10 scenarios describing situations where a child or young person might be in danger or distressed. For each scenario, participants were asked to state whether they would be likely to intervene. Responses were on a scale of 1 (definitely not) to 5 (very likely).

Each scenario is presented in table D in descending order of the mean likelihood of intervening, i.e. scenarios where people stated they were most likely to intervene are at the top, with least likely at the bottom.

**Table D**

Situation	Mean likelihood of intervening
A child of around 2 years old is running along the pavement beside a busy road and there is no adult carer in view	4.59
A young boy aged 5 or 6 is alone in the street and crying	4.32
A 7 year old girl is alone in the street and crying	4.22
A child around 6 asks you to help them get down from a climbing frame in the park	4.08
A child aged 9 is left alone after an activity you have helped to arrange. No-one has come to pick them up. It is dark. Neither of you has a phone. You have a car.	3.89
A girl of about 14 is on her own at a bus stop and is being chatted to by a man in his 40's who seems to be a stranger	3.55
A group of teenage girls (around 14 years old) are pushing another teenage girl around who looks quite scared	3.51
A teenager, around 15, has lost their mobile phone and wallet on the train	3.42
Two teenage boys (about 15 years old) are pushing a boy of a similar age who looks quite frightened	3.31

A 14 year old boy is at a train station with no staff. He is being chatted to by a 40 year old woman he does not seem to know.	3.00
--	------

Situations involving young children were the most likely to provoke intervention. There was a very high reported likelihood (mean=4.6) of participants intervening in the situation involving a 2 year old child running along the pavement with no adult carer in view. The second and third situations most likely to provoke a response involved a young boy or young girl alone in the street and crying, with a similarly high likelihood of intervention.

Focus group participants said that they would be likely to intervene in these situations because the children involved were younger; and the younger the child, the more vulnerable they were perceived to be. People perceived the need to take direct action quickly for the sake of the child's safety.

*"With little children there is an automatic reaction to help"*

*"The under 10s benefit more from adult assistance"*

Parents in the focus groups were particularly keen to help in these situations, often suggesting that they would want to help because they wouldn't want their own child in the same situation without assistance.

*Parent: "I don't think anyone in this room would walk past one of these situations"*

*Parent: "I'd be thinking, what if it was my kid?"*

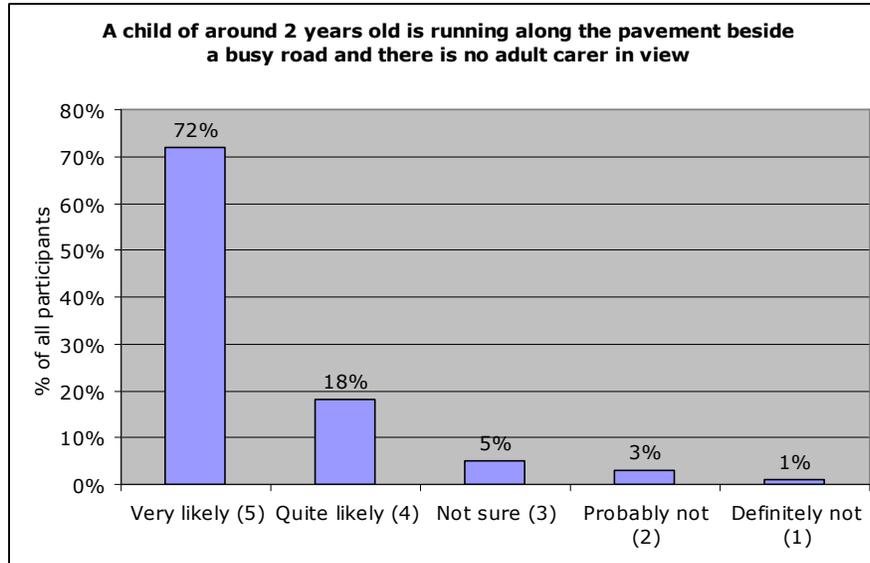
Survey participants indicated that they were less likely to intervene in the scenarios involving teenagers. Focus group participants generally believed that teenagers were more able to "fend for themselves" in these situations, and less likely to need direct and immediate intervention. People tended to indicate that their likelihood of intervening would be dependent on how uncomfortable or distressed the individual was, and if they were to intervene, their response would be less direct, for example, watching the situation to see if it escalated rather than stepping in.

There was also a higher reported likelihood of intervening in situations involving teenage girls as opposed to teenage boys, both in relation to the situations involving fighting or being approached by an older stranger. Women in the focus groups indicated that their first reaction would be to think that the girls were more vulnerable than the boys, however, on reflection, they believed both to be in similar danger. It was suggested that while boys have a reputation for being more violent, girls can also be "vicious" to the same extent. Similarly, many women in the focus groups believed that while people commonly perceive male strangers to be the most risky, women can also take advantage of young men (some recalled recent stories of teachers taking advantage of pupils). Conversely, the majority of men in the focus groups did not believe the situation involving a female stranger and a young male presented a particularly strong risk to the young person involved and saw girls as more vulnerable.

Overall the minimum mean score for a scenario was 3 meaning that generally that more people were likely to intervene in each situation than not. Although, the responses from the focus groups indicate that people would be much more cautious about intervening than the high survey scores indicate.

Figures 8 to 17 present the distribution of scores for survey responses to each scenario in more detail, and specific comments about each scenario raised in the focus groups.

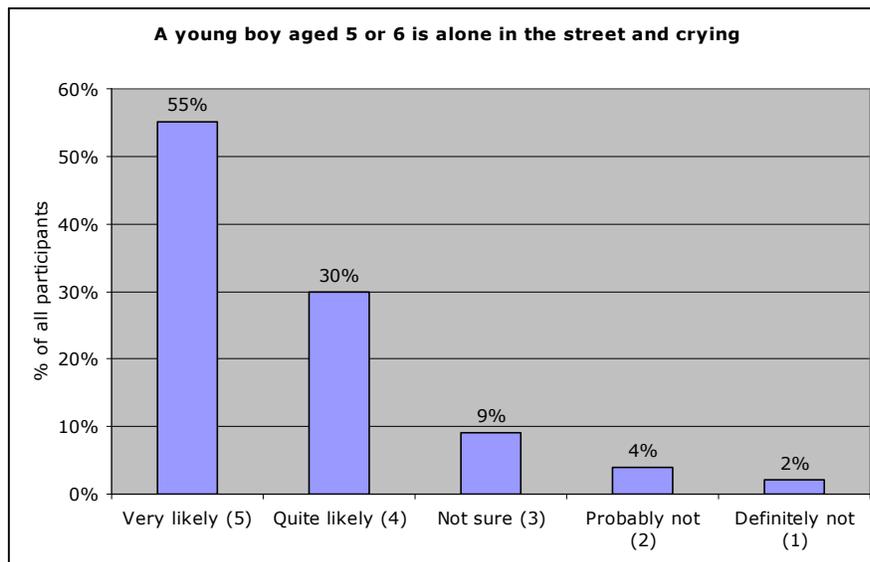
**Figure 8**



The scenario involving a child aged around 2 years old running along a pavement beside a busy road provoked a strong response from survey participants. 72% of people said they were very likely to intervene, while 18% said they were quite likely to intervene. Only 4% of people indicated they would not intervene.

Many focus group participants noted that the child was in immediate danger in this situation and the natural reaction would be to go and stop the child from running on to the road.

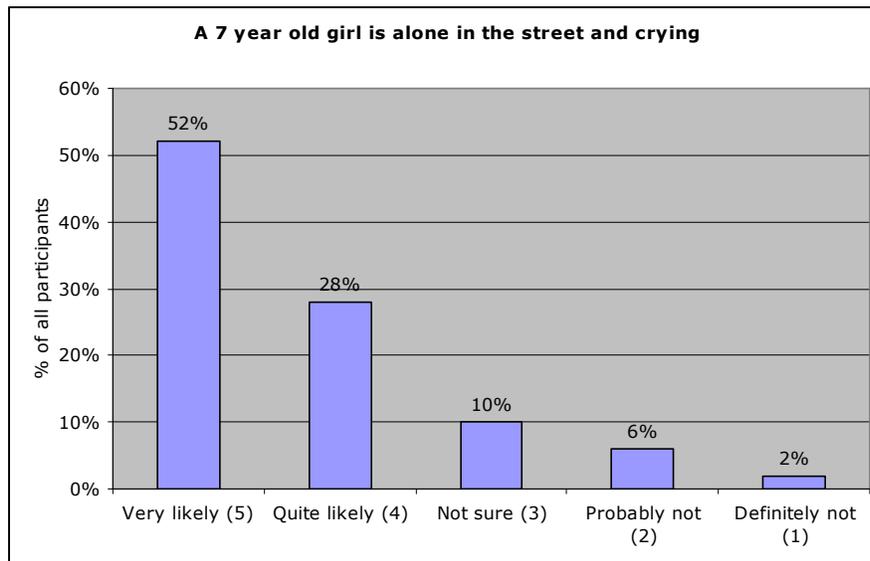
**Figure 9**



The scenario involving a young boy, aged 5 or 6, alone and crying in the street provoked a fairly strong response from participants. 55% of people said they were very likely to intervene, while 30% said they were quite likely. 9% were not sure and 6% were unlikely to take action.

Focus group participants suggested that a less direct intervention was needed in this situation: simply going up to them to find out what was wrong. The child would not be in immediate danger and a physical intervention was not required. Many people noted similar experiences of seeing lost children in public spaces, however some (mainly men) noted apprehension about the witnesses perceptions of a stranger approaching a young child.

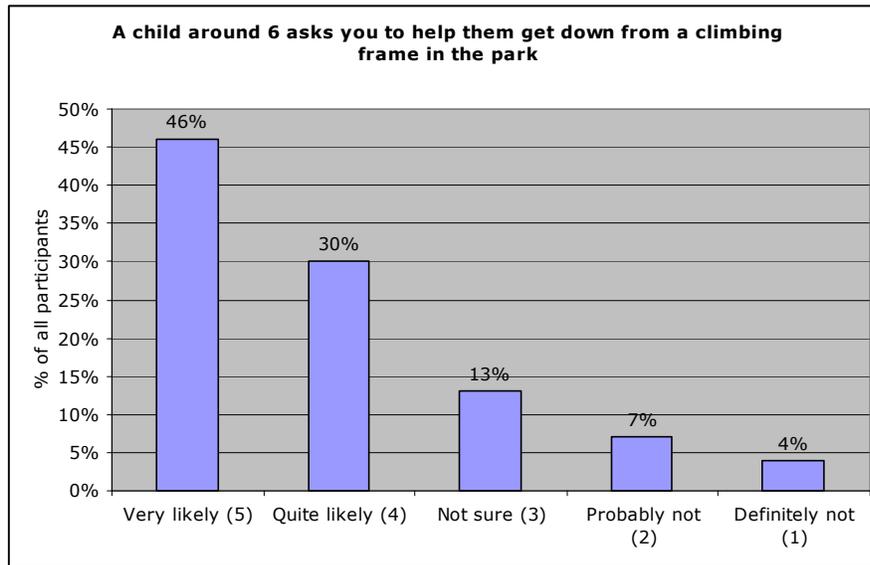
**Figure 10**



The scenario involving a young girl, aged 7, alone and crying in the street provoked a similarly strong response from participants as the same scenario involving the younger boy. 52% of people said they were very likely to intervene, while 28% said they were quite likely. 10% were not sure and 8% were unlikely to take action.

Again, as focus group participants explained, this situation required only a limited intervention.

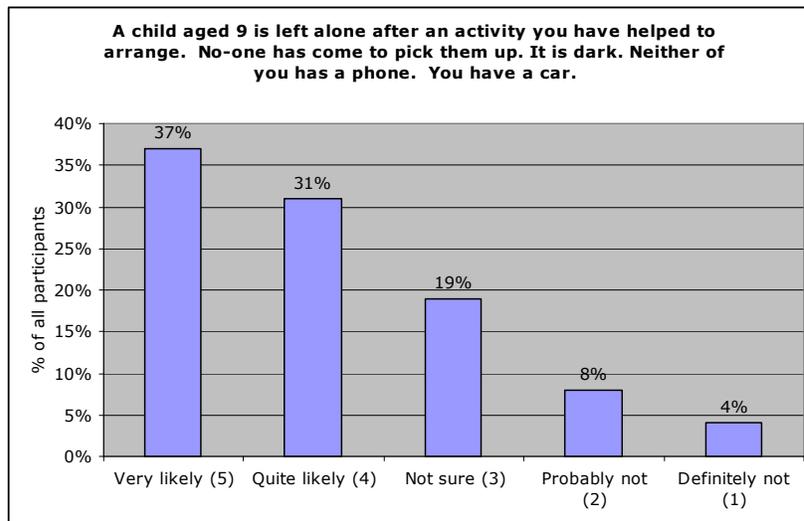
**Figure 11**



The majority of people (46%) said they were very likely to respond if a child of 6 asked them for help to get down from a climbing frame in the park, while 30% said they were quite likely. 11% said they were unlikely to help.

Focus group participants were more cautious about this situation as it involved a degree of physical contact. Many men in particular said they would be reluctant to help because of the need for physical contact with an unknown child, while women were generally more open to helping. Focus group participants considered it to be more socially acceptable for a woman to physically help a child than a man.

**Figure 12**



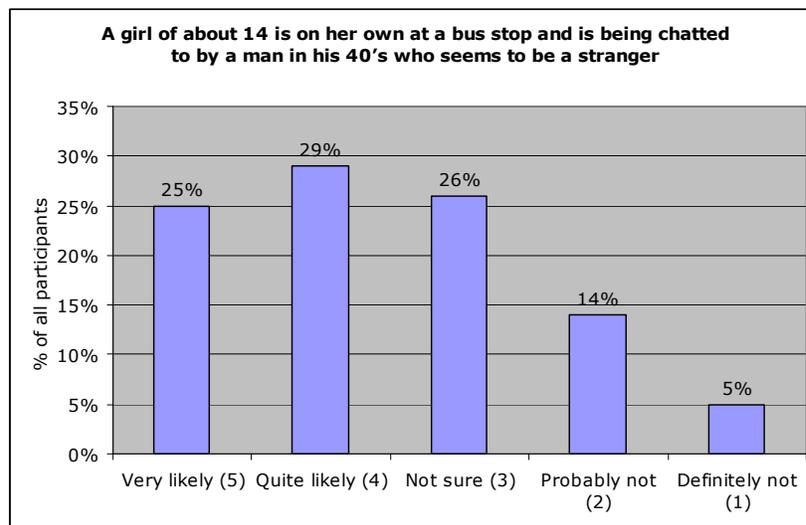
68% of people were likely (37% of which were very likely) to take action in the scenario requiring them to drive a 9 year old home after an activity when no-one has come to pick them up. Only 12% of people said they were unlikely to take action while 20% were unsure.

This scenario provoked significant debate from focus group participants. Many people suggested they would be very reluctant to take the child home in this situation and whether it might depend on how well they knew the parents and whether there were other adults present. Some people suggested they would be worried about what the parents would think, or accuse them of, if they turned up at their home with their child, rather than being grateful. The privacy of the car seems to be a key issue: people were reluctant to be alone with a child in a private situation and a few suggested they would rather leave the car and walk than be alone with a child in car.

*"It's a difficult situation, what do you do?"*

*"I'd be worried. I would have to stand and wait."*

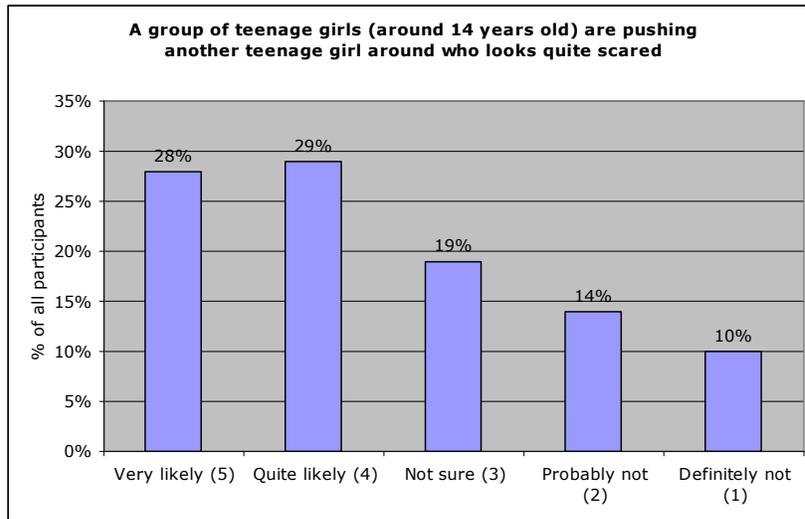
**Figure 13**



There was a higher level of uncertainty about intervening in the scenario involving a teenage girl being chatted to at a bus stop by an older stranger, with 26% of people not sure whether they would intervene. The majority (54%) indicated that they would take action, but the response was less strong when compared to previous answers. 19% said they were unlikely to intervene.

Focus group participants tended to suggest that their reaction in this situation would depend on how uncomfortable the girl looked. The typical reaction would be to get close to the pair and listen in on the conversation, watch from a distance or try to get involved in the conversation.

**Figure 14**

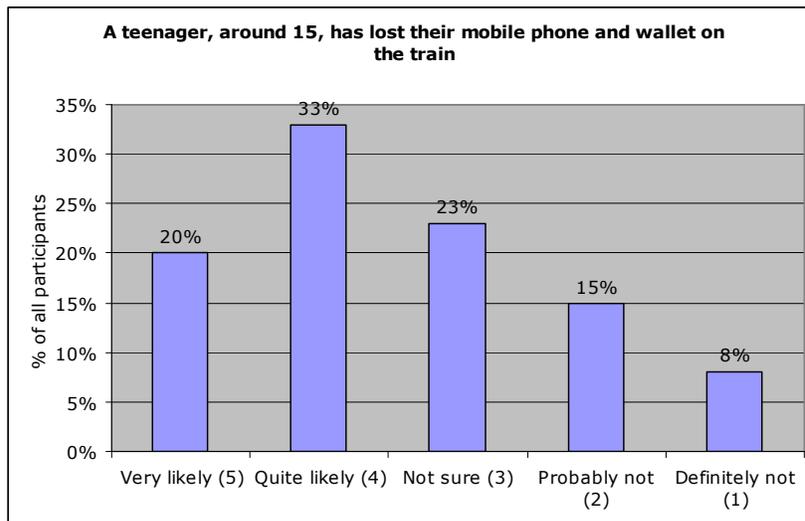


57% of people indicated they would take action to stop a group of teenage girls pushing another teenage girl around, while 24% were unlikely to intervene and 19% were unsure.

Focus group participants expressed concerns about this situation given that the perpetrators were teenagers. There was a perception that teenagers may be dangerous and could “turn on you” if you tried to intervene. Concerns were also expressed about the danger of intervening as they may be carrying weapons. The typical reaction to this situation would be to shout from a distance, rather than to physically intervene, to minimise the risk to the individual. Some people did say they were more likely to intervene if the situation was particularly violent and the young person was in clear physical danger.

*“I saw a girl being attacked. I shouted and they ran away.”*

**Figure 15**



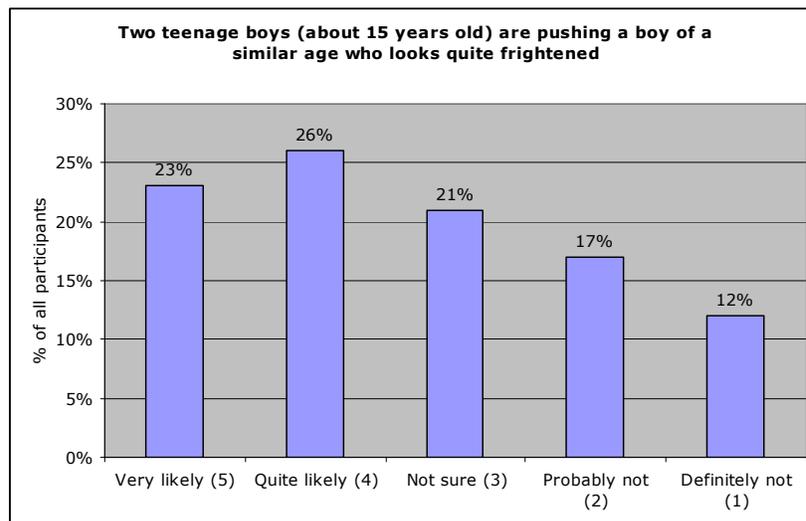
53% of people indicated they would help a teenager who had lost their mobile phone and wallet on the train, while 23% were unlikely to intervene and 23% were unsure.

Focus group participants varied in their reactions to this situation:

- Some thought that the young person may be trying to con someone out of money or steal their phone;
- Some said they would only give help if the person looked especially distressed;
- Some would have asked the train conductor to help rather than getting personally involved;
- Some had no sympathy; and
- Some would have no hesitation in helping them out by giving them the use of their phone for a call.

One individual noted witnessing a similar situation where a young person was thrown off a train for not having enough money for a ticket, despite having arranged for a parent to meet her at the destination. In this instance, the individual was particularly concerned about the potential dangers of a young person left alone with no transport in an unfamiliar place, but did not intervene.

**Figure 16**



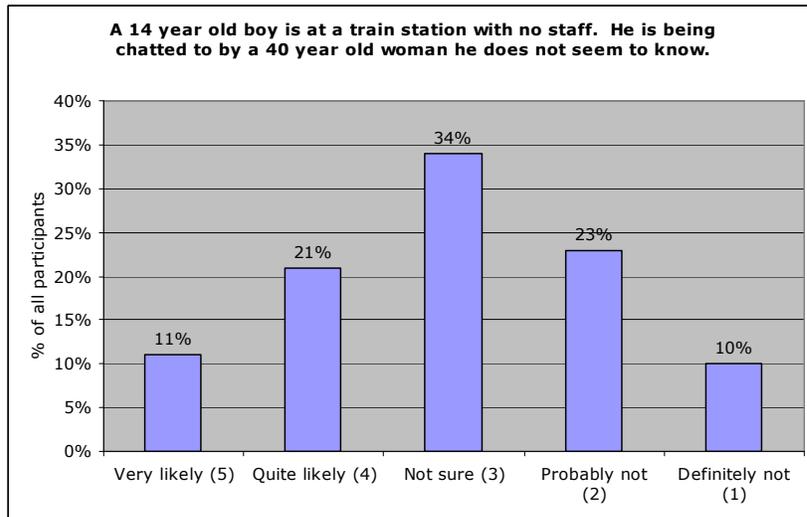
There was a very mixed response in relation to the scenario involving two teenage boys pushing another boy of a similar age. 49% said they were likely to take action, while 29% indicated they were unlikely to intervene and 21% were unsure what they would do.

Focus group participants had similar concerns about their own personal safety with teenage boys as with teenage girls, however some perceived there to be greater danger with boys as the perpetrators. Again, people tended to indicate that their decision to intervene would depend on the level of violence involved. There was a perception that teenage boys play fight regularly and are generally boisterous, and misjudging a situation would be very likely to lead to verbal or physical abuse.

*"15 year olds push each other about all the time, you could step-in and they could all turn on you."*

*"If kids are screaming, are they in trouble or having a laugh?"*

**Figure 17**



The majority of people (34%) were unsure whether they would intervene when a teenage boy was being chatted to by an adult female stranger. 33% of participants said they were unlikely to intervene, while 32% may take action.

There was a clear gender difference in the responses from focus group participants to this scenario. Women were more likely to express a concern about the teenager's safety, while men tended not to see a risk, with several comments such as:

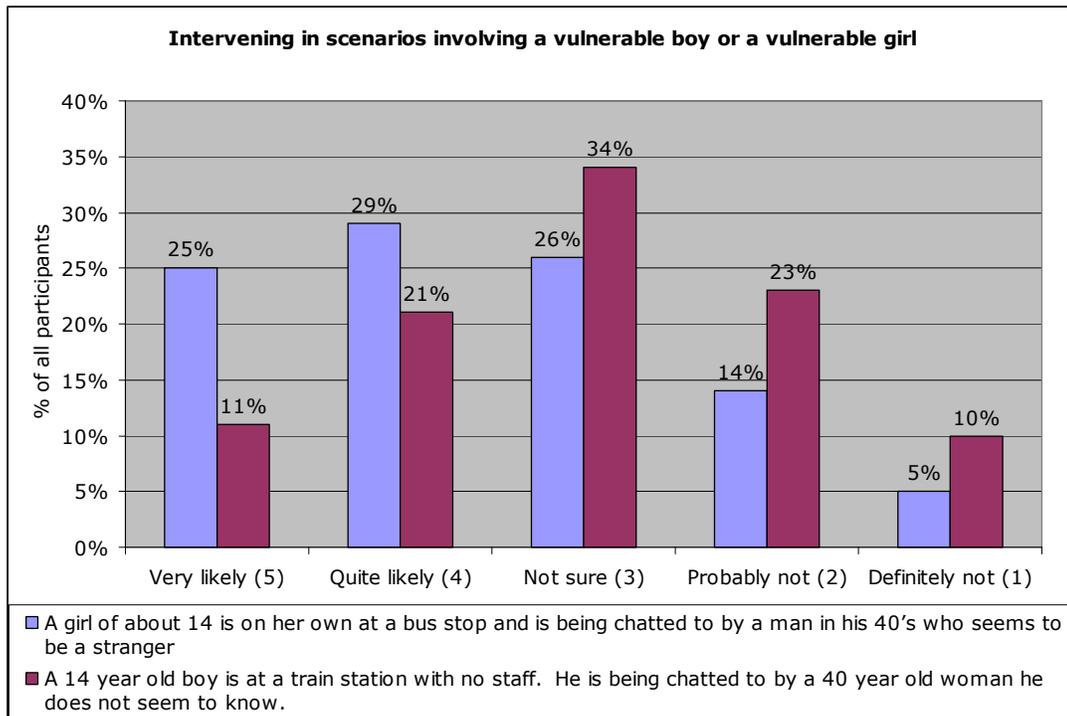
*"I bet the boy thinks his luck is in"*

*"Lucky bugger"*

*"Chance would be a fine thing!"*

Figure 18 combines the data from figures 14 and 17, showing the different responses to similar scenarios, where potentially vulnerable young people being chatted to by an older stranger. The main difference between the scenarios is that in one scenario the vulnerable young person is a girl, while in the other they are a boy.

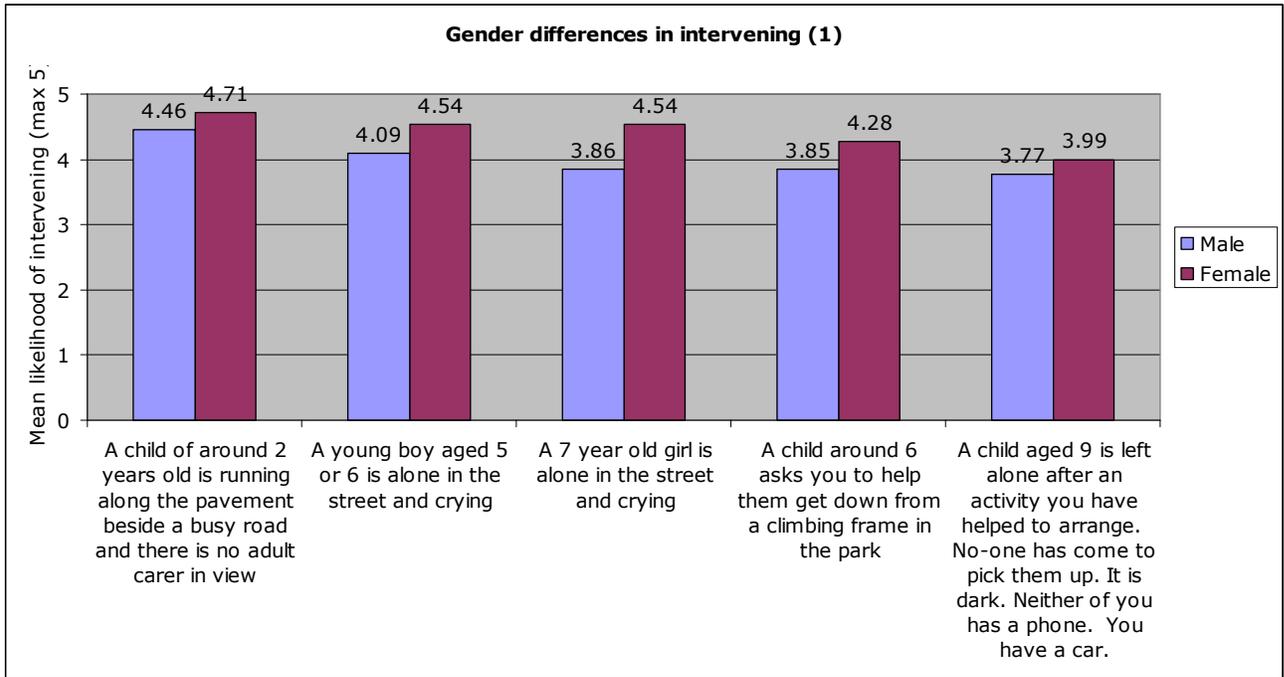
**Figure 18**



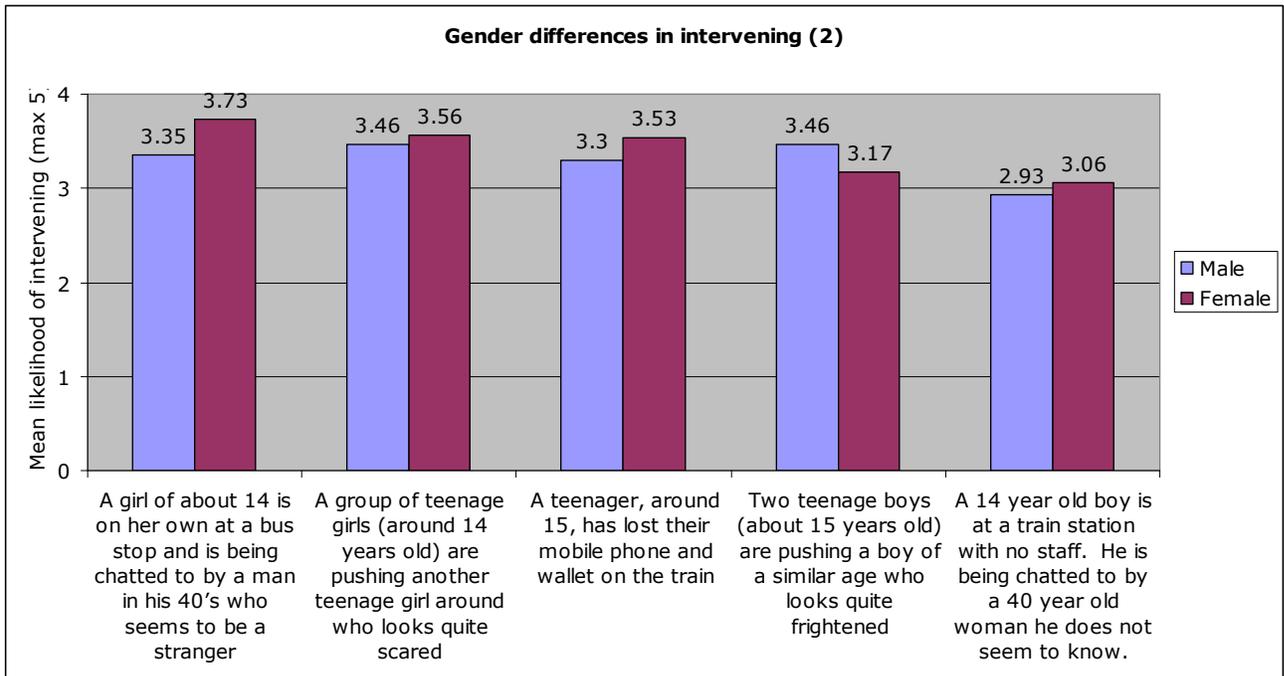
While 54% of respondents were likely to intervene in the situation involving a young girl, only 32% were likely to intervene in the similar situation involving a young boy. This tends to suggest that people generally perceive young girls to be more vulnerable than young boys.

There results from the survey also showed clear differences in the likelihood of intervention between the gender of respondents across many scenarios. Figures 19 and 20 show that women were more likely to intervene in every scenario, with only one exception: men were more likely to take action to stop two teenage boys pushing around another of the same age.

**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**



Focus group participants were asked why they thought men were less likely to help young people in these scenarios than women. There was a clear and consistent answer across focus groups: men were perceived to be more at risk of allegations of impropriety than women. Men in particular felt very strongly that putting themselves in a situation which might involve talking to or having physical contact with an unknown child put them at high risk of suspicion of their motives. There is a perceived risk of being labelled a paedophile when a lone man comes in to contact with a child and this risk, however

small, is considered to be unacceptable, unless there is an immediate and physical danger to the child.

As noted earlier, many men see being accused or being suspected of being a paedophile is the "worst thing imaginable". Many used words like 'self-preservation' to describe why they would not help a child or young person. The fear is of the accusation or suspicion itself. Many highlighted the perception of men being seen as guilty until proven innocent, and even when the accusation is dismissed, suspicion remains.

*"I wouldn't even speak to her unless she was in real danger"*

*"You are hung before you are tried"*

Women also acknowledged that men were much more likely than women to have their motives for helping children and young people questioned. One man noted that if their child was lost, they would be much happier if a woman helped them than a man.

*"It's easier for a woman than a man [to help]"*

*"When you hear about paedophiles in the news – they are all men"*

*"If a woman brought my [lost] child back, I wouldn't be worried, but I might be with a guy"*

A small number of focus group participants recalled stories of men being discriminated against on the basis of their gender. In one example, a man wanted to help on a school trip and he was disclosure checked, while the women on the trip were not. Another example involved a refusal to leave children with a male babysitter at a holiday resort.

Both men and women indicated that they would be more likely to help in any given situation if there was another person to act as a witness, and many would actively seek out another individual before helping. This was seen as a way to mitigate false accusations of impropriety.

*"You would need to make sure there are two of you"*

*"If I was to help a girl in the street, I'd make sure there was someone else with me"*

*"The natural reaction is to help [someone who is distressed] but I would have to ask someone to come and help out. It's such a terrible world that we have to consciously think that."*

The gender issue was one of the most common topics of debate in the focus groups in relation to helping young people. Other more general issues raised by participants which might affect their willingness to help included:

- A fear of teenagers carrying knives and other weapons;  
*"You have to think about your own safety"*
- A reluctance to get involved when young people have been drinking due to their volatile behaviour;

*"If they are full of booze then there are more dangerous"*

*"Kids before drink are very friendly. Afterwards they are a complete nightmare."*

- An apathy to challenge young people because of a perceived lack of discipline or consequences (for example, some had the attitude that thought why should they risk intervening if the police do not).

There were also differences in the likelihood of helping children or young people depending on whether the survey respondent did or did not currently have formal contact with children and young people. For each scenario in the survey, people who had formal contact with children were more likely to intervene than those who had no formal contact.

## 4. Working and volunteering

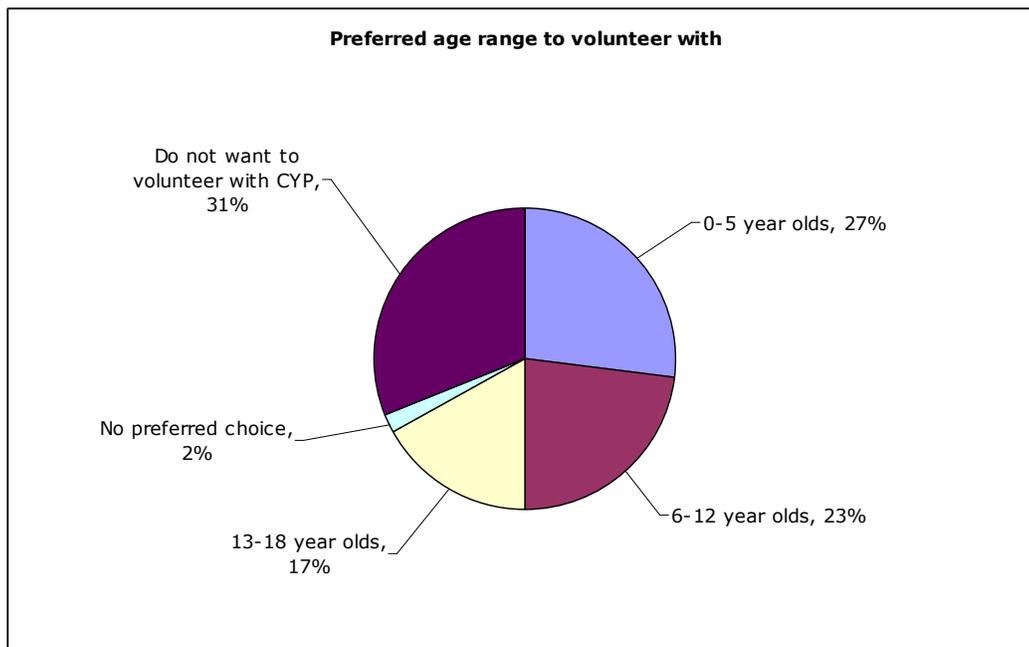
In section 2 it was shown that 12% of men and 22% of women who participated in the survey had some sort of formal contact with children and young people, either through their job or a voluntary activity. If activities for children and young people are to continue and be successful then new people will need to be convinced to get involved.

This section looks at all participants' willingness to work with children and young people, barriers that prevent them from doing so and attitudes towards child protection issues.

### 4.1 Willingness

Survey respondents were asked if they were to volunteer, which age group would be their preference. Figure 21 presents the preferences for all survey respondents.

**Figure 21**

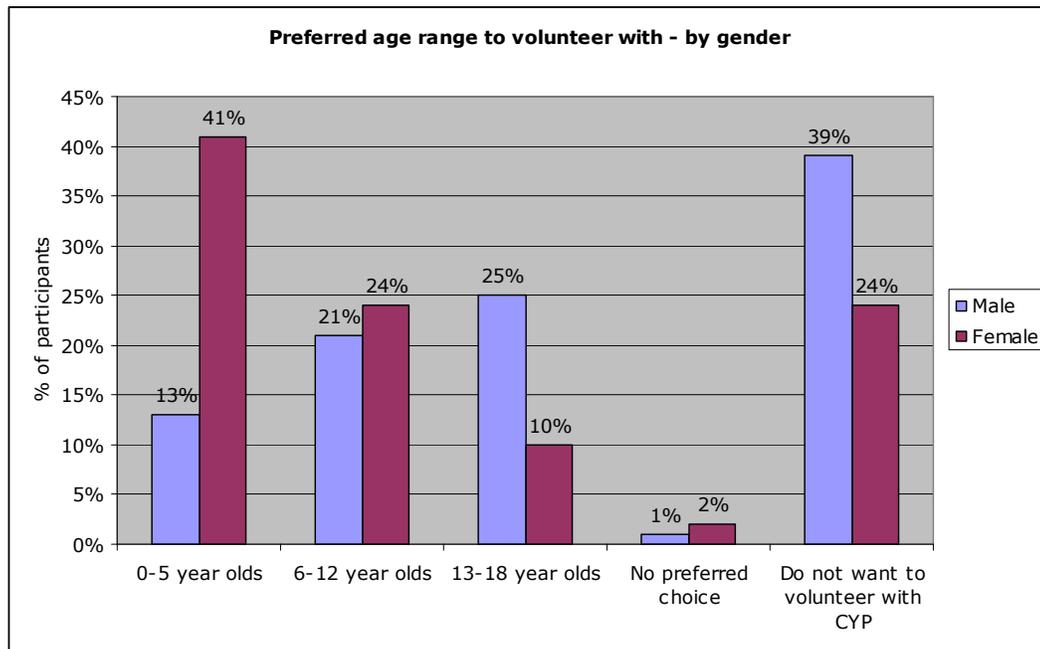


Just under one-in-three (31%) said that they would not want to volunteer with children and young people. 69% said they were willing to volunteer with children and young people. However, only 4% of those who currently have formal contact with children and young people said they would not want to volunteer with them, as opposed to 37% of those who do not currently have any contact.

The majority of those who would volunteer with children and young people expressed a preference for a particular age group, with only 2% of all participants expressing no preference. Working with young children aged 0 to 5 was the most common preference (27% of all participants), followed by older children aged 6 to 12 years (23%) and teenagers (17%).

Interestingly however, there was substantial variation in preference depending on the participants' gender, as shown in figure 22.

**Figure 22**



Men were much more likely than women to say that they did not want to volunteer with children and young people: 39% of men as opposed to 24% women. Many focus group participants suggested men were more reluctant to get involved with children and young people because they fear being accused of child abuse. Women were considered to be much less susceptible to these accusations.

Women expressed a much higher preference to volunteer with young children than men: 41% of women said they would like to work with children aged up to 5 years old as opposed to only 13% of men. Many focus group participants felt that this was due to the traditional gender role of women being responsible for child care and women's "maternal instinct". Several participants also suggested that being involved with younger children requires more physical contact (lifting, changing nappies, etc.) and this is generally perceived to be inappropriate for a man, but acceptable for a woman.

*"It's the maternal instinct"*

*"It's not appropriate for guys to be changing nappies"*

Men were much more likely to want to volunteer with teenagers (25%) than women (10%), and this was their favoured age group – despite this being the least popular overall. Several reasons for this consistently emerged in the focus groups:

- It was seen as more acceptable, in the sense of traditional gender roles, for men to work with older young people as working with younger children (e.g. childcare) is perceived to be more of a woman's role;

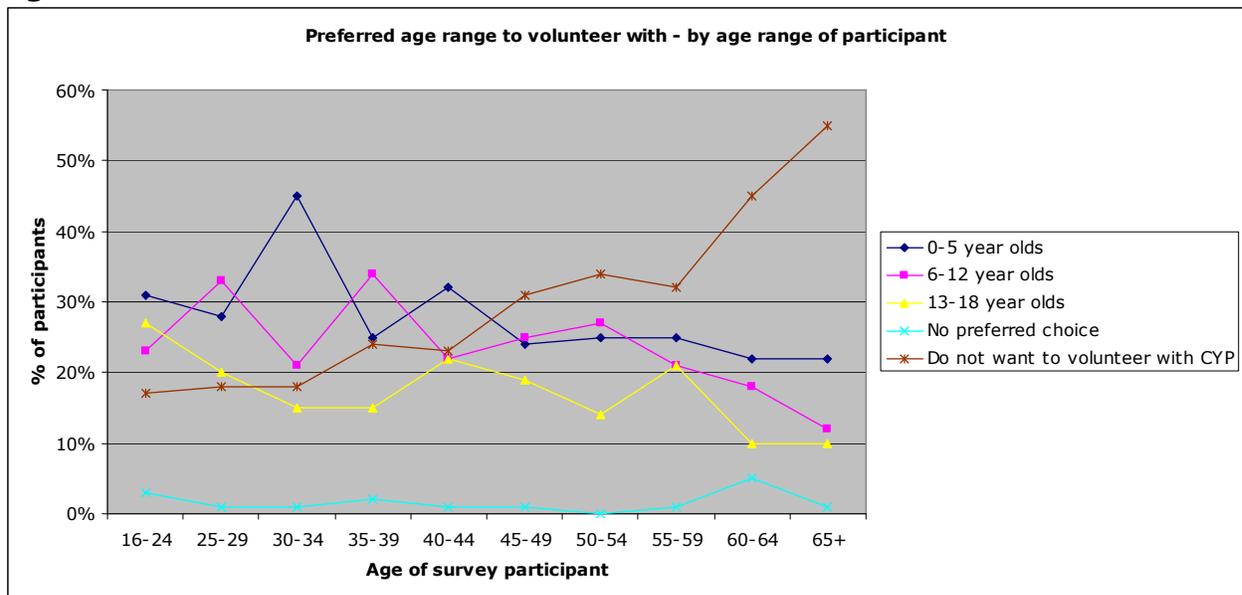
- Linked to this, men are not generally perceived to have skills in caring for younger children or the ability to relate to them, instead being more able to relate to those who are maturing into adults; and
- Men are perceived to have more specific interests and experience, and are suited more to teaching or coaching young people in particular skills or activities (e.g. sport).

*"They are beginning to mature and you can talk to them on a man-to-man basis."  
 "Men tend to be more into sport and activities, and that is something they can share."*

Broadly the same proportion of men and women expressed a desire to work with older children, aged 6 to 12 years.

Figure 23 shows the preference for working with the different age groups of children and young people, broken down by the age group of participants.

**Figure 23**

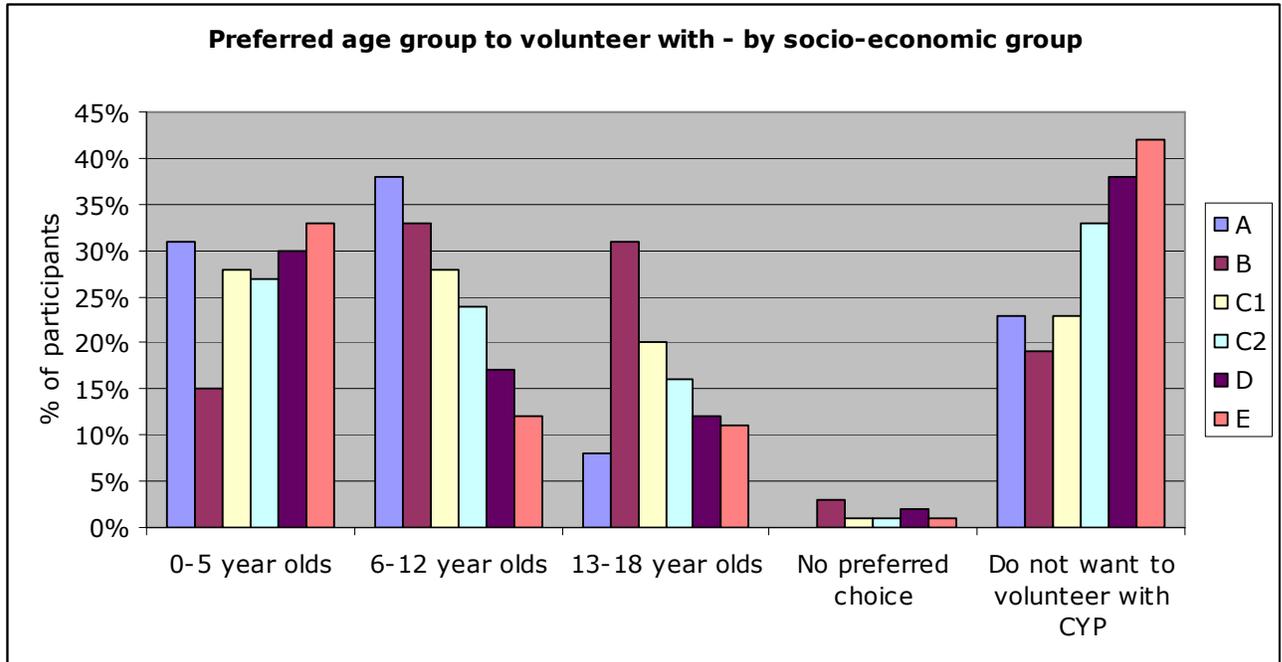


This analysis shows several interesting trends:

- People are more likely to say that they do not want to volunteer with children and young people as they get older, a trend which accelerates particularly quickly for those above 60 years of age;
- Teenagers are the least popular group to work with, except for those aged under 30 years of age;
- There is a particularly high peak in desire to work with young children (0-5 years) for those aged 30 to 34 years.

Figure 24 also presents the volunteering preferences of people from different socio-economic groups for particular age groups of children and young people.

**Figure 24**



There are some clear trends apparent in this analysis:

- People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to say that they do not want to volunteer with children and young people than those in higher groups;
- People in higher socio-economic groups are more likely to say that they would like to volunteer with 6-12 year olds than those in lower groups;
- People in socio-economic group B are much more likely to say they would like to volunteer with teenagers than 0-5 year olds. This is in contrast to all other socio-economic groups, where the reverse is true.

As an introductory exercise, focus group participants were asked to generally about what first comes to mind when think about the different age ranges. The type of responses were very consistent across the focus groups and gives an interesting insight how people perceive children and young people, and what will be at the front of their mind when thinking about working or volunteering with children and young people. The responses tended to breakdown as follows:

- 0-5 year olds (pre-school children) were generally described in terms of their vulnerability and need for constant care and attention. They were also described in terms of their need to learn.
- 6-12 year olds (primary school children) were mostly described in relation to their personal and social development, in terms of a time for making new friends, developing their own personality, starting to express their own feelings and desires

and being influenced by a wider range of factors (e.g. the media, consumerism, peer pressure).

- 13-18 year olds (secondary school children / teenagers) were most commonly referred to in negative terms: as perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, being involved in gangs, drinking, being intimidating and lacking in respect.

Survey respondents were also asked to state their reasons for expressing a preference to work with a particular age group. Tables E to G show the most common reasons for expressing a preference for a particular age group, while Table H shows the reasons stated for not wanting to volunteer with children and young people at all.

**Table E**

Reasons for choosing 0-5yrs	%
1. This age group is easier to handle / deal with; not as much hassle / trouble / hard work	36%
2. They are just the right age / I (would) like (working with) this age group	14%
3. They are fun / interesting / full of life	12%
4. They will listen to you (without answering back); you have their attention	10%
5. They are not cheeky (like other age groups)	8%
6. I have (had) more experience / work(ed) with this age group	8%
7. I am more used to this age group	6%
8. Have (a) (grand)child(ren) in this age group; had them in the past; have a sibling in this age group	6%
9. General negative of non-preferred group (they cause more of a problem, harder to control, too cheeky, etc)	5%
10. They are interested in learning; eager to learn (new things)	5%

**Table F**

Reasons for choosing 6-12yrs	%
1. This age group is easier to handle / deal with; not as much hassle / trouble / hard work	27%
2. They will listen to you (without answering back); you have their attention	12%
3. I have (had) more experience / work(ed) with this age group	12%
4. They are interested in learning; eager to learn (new things)	8%
5. Have (a) (grand)child(ren) in this age group; had them in the past; have a sibling in this age group	8%
6. General negative of non-preferred group (they cause more of a problem, harder to control, too cheeky, etc)	8%
7. They are just the right age / I (would) like (working with) this age group	7%
8. Can relate to this age group more; have more in common with them (e.g. sports, music)	7%
9. They understand things better; can get the message across to them	7%
10. They are not cheeky (like other age groups)	6%

**Table G**

Main reasons for choosing 13-18yrs	%
1. Can relate to this age group more; have more in common with them (e.g. sports, music)	22%
2. I have (had) more experience / work(ed) with this age group	14%
3. This age group is easier to handle / deal with; not as much hassle / trouble / hard work	11%
4. They are closer to my age / in my age group	8%
5. They understand things better; can get the message across to them	7%
6. They (have a / are) more mature (attitude) / older	7%
7. They require more contact with adults; they need you more / need the support; more vulnerable	7%
8. Have (a) (grand)child(ren) in this age group; had them in the past; have a sibling in this age group	5%
9. I am more used to this age group	3%
10. They will listen to you (without answering back); you have their attention	3%

There are a lot of similarities in the most common reasons for preferring to volunteer with those aged 0-5 years and with those aged 6-12 years:

- The most common reason, by far, for preferring both age groups is to do with people's perceptions about how easy children of these ages are to deal with. Some perceive very young children easier to work with than older children and young people, while others indicate a perceive pre-teens to be easier to work with than younger children and teenagers.
- Another common factor for preferring these groups is having a general negative perception of the other groups (e.g. they cause more of a problem, harder to control, too cheeky, etc).
- Feeling more confident about being able to hold the attention of these age groups is also a reason for those preferring to volunteer with either young children or pre-teens.

The common factor which is more unique to those wanting to work with younger children (0-5 years) is a perception of them being fun, interesting or full of life.

Being able to understand things better and get the message across to them is also a differentiating factor for those wanting to work with 6 to 12 year olds as opposed to younger children, although this is also a reasonably common factor for choosing to work with teenagers.

Many of the common reasons for preferring to work with teenagers are different from those wanting to work with the younger age groups. Being able to relate to them and having things in common with them was the most popular reason for wanting to work with teenagers. Similarly, being closer to the adults' own age and being more mature were also uniquely common factors. Also particular to wanting to work with teenagers as opposed to the other groups was a feeling that people in this age group are more

vulnerable and require more support and contact with adults in comparison with those of a younger age.

**Table H**

Reasons for not wanting to volunteer with CYP	%
1. (Getting) too old now; not at my age	24%
2. Not interested; don't want to get involved	23%
3. Not enough time; too busy	15%
4. Deal(t) with them enough at home / work	7%
5. Don't care for young people; don't like them	5%
6. Too much hassle / trouble	4%
7. Not fit enough / not in good health	4%
8. No respect; they don't listen or do what they're told	4%
9. Don't know	3%

The most common factors for not wanting to work with children and young people were mostly personal; related to the desire, capacity or ability of the individual to get involved in volunteering.

The main reason expressed for not wanting to volunteer with children and young people was a feeling that they were too old. This is congruent with the finding that people are less likely to want to volunteer with children and young people as they get older – particularly once they reach pensionable age.

What being 'too old' means was explored at the focus group targeted at the over 60s. There were several underlying issues why people thought they might be 'too old' to work with children and young people, which included:

- A lack of knowledge or experience in the activities and interests of young people – and consequently a belief of having little to offer them in the way of support (e.g. unable to relate to their interest in computers);
- A concern about not being able to 'keep up' with young people physically (e.g. run around after them or playing sports);
- A perception that children and young people would not want to be involved with older people;
- A feeling of 'been there, done that' with regards to children and young people in their roles as parents and grandparents, with a desire to indulge their own interests instead (e.g. hill walking); and
- A belief working with children and young people is not a common activity for older people.

60+ focus group participant: *"How would they feel about us? They are interested in football, exercise and computers and we can't offer them any help in those things."*

60+ focus group participant: *"It's the generation gap, I don't think we can connect; we're scared to enjoy their company and they are scared of us."*

Other common factors suggested by survey participants included not being interested in volunteering (23%) or not having enough time (15%). Many focus group participants also stated, irrespective of their desire to work with children and young people, that they would not have enough spare time to commit to a voluntary role.

*"People are too busy working – both parents have to work these days and there's not enough time to see your own children, far less anyone else's."*

Survey respondents were less likely to attribute their reason for not wanting to volunteer to a negative perception of children and young people, than their own personal desire, capacity or ability. 5% said that they did not like young people while 4% expressed an opinion about the lack of respect in children and young people.

Survey respondents were asked what they thought were the main factors which might put people off working with children and young people. The most common reasons identified are presented in table I.

**Table I**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>% of all participants</b>
1. Fear of accusations of harming children	38.2%
2. Fear of teenagers	26.2%
3. Children and young people have too much power / say in what happens	16.0%
4. Not enough time	15.8%
5. Too bureaucratic - lots of forms to fill in first	14.3%
6. Lack of appreciation by children and young people	11.0%
7. A culture of litigation	8.3%
8. Work commitments / work long hours - no time	8.2%
9. I am not qualified	7.5%
10. Work is not valued	7.1%
11. Lack of understanding of children's rights	6.7%
12. Don't know	5.1%
13. Good work not recognised	4.5%
14. Minimum rewards	4.2%
15. Their (cheeky) / (unpredictable) behaviour / attitude	3.8%
16. Kids' lack of respect	3.5%
17. They do what they want; won't do what they are told; lack of discipline	3.5%

Fear of accusations of harming children was the most commonly reported factor people which might put people off working with children and young people, identified by almost two-in-five people (38%). This fear has been a common theme throughout the research, making people wary of having any contact with children and young people, and putting them off working with them. As noted previously, many focus group participants believed the risks of being accused were not proportionate to the potential benefits to be gained from working with children and young people. It was felt that there is a culture of fear and suspicion and this has diluted the enjoyment of the work and freedom to be confident in the role.

*"I'd be worried about accidentally touching them and getting in trouble"*

*"You used to be doing it for the kids, now you have to watch out for yourself"*

*"It's your career and reputation on the line"*

Focus group participants related this fear of accusations very closely to the perceived power of children and young people. This fear tended to be grounded in the belief that some children and young people would want to use accusations as a way to get attention or to manipulate people. There was also a perception that the child's views carry more weight than adult's views in these types of situations, resulting in adults being considered guilty until proven innocent.

*"Teenagers are untouchable... the consequences always come back on the adults. It's madness!"*

*"It only takes one kid who's not getting enough attention to accuse you."*

The second most common reason people might be put off working with children and young people was the fear of teenagers, with just over one-quarter (26%) of survey participants believing this. Given that focus group participants suggested that their first thoughts about teenagers were negative (e.g. anti-social behaviour) it is perhaps unsurprising that people would not want to work with them. Many focus group participants indicated that they would not want to give up their time voluntarily to deal with teenagers who might show them no respect and be challenging to work with. Most would only consider working with children and young people if their input was likely to be appreciated.

*"They are scary. They are streetwise. And they'll push it to the limit."*

*"They swear a lot."*

*"I don't want to give up my time to get cheek. I want to see people get something out of it."*

*"They've got no respect for people in authority"*

One of the main perceived generational differences by the older focus group participants was the belief that young people now consume more alcohol, and this was the main reason behaviour was considered to be worse now than in the past.

Survey respondents were also asked to identify what would encourage more people to start volunteering with children and young people. The most common responses are shown in table J.

**Table J**

Response	% of all participants
1. Don't know	33.6%
2. Financial incentives; more / better pay / rewards	7.8%
3. More training / information (to better understand CYP / learn how to work with them)	7.5%
4. More discipline at home / school; improve kids behaviour / attitude	6.6%
5. More / better advertising (the need for volunteers / what they're needed for)	5.1%
6. Less rules and regulations; less political correctness	5.0%
7. Reduce fear of intimidation / chances of accusations; more safeguards / security / protection	4.8%
8. Nothing; don't pressure them; they will volunteer if interested	4.3%
9. More appreciation / recognition / respect for volunteering; show value of volunteering	4.1%
10. More / better facilities / community centres; (affordable) clubs / events available (to keep young people busy)	3.5%

The most common response, from one-third of respondents, was that they did not know what could be done to encourage more people to start volunteering with children and young people. As the table above highlights, responses varied and there were no particularly strong common themes.

Despite this, there were strong themes throughout the focus groups about what would and does make working of volunteering with children and young people attractive. People suggested that they do (or would) find volunteering rewarding where:

- Individual relationships are developed between the adult and child or young person;
- The adult can watch the child or young person's personal and social development, and play a role in this; and
- The contribution of the adult is valued and appreciated by the child, young person or group.

*"It could be good if you get a good group of kids"*

*"I worked for a few years with teenagers and thought it was a great experience"*

*"The people that do [volunteer], their life is more rewarding."*

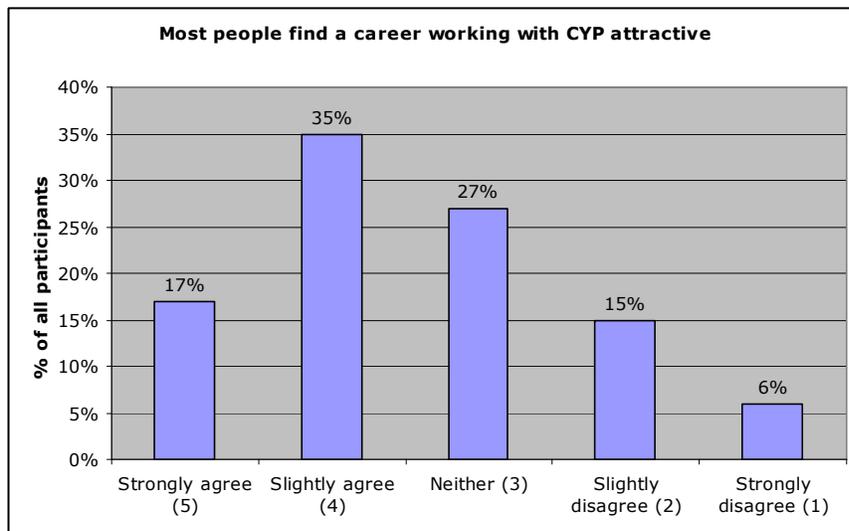
## 4.2 Attitudes and beliefs

Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

- Most people find a career working with CYP attractive
- People who work with CYP are putting themselves at risk of allegations
- People are more inclined to work with CYP now than they used to be
- The regulations put people off working or volunteering with CYP
- People who work with CYP may get sued

Responses were on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The distributions of scores for each statement are shown in figures 25 to 29.

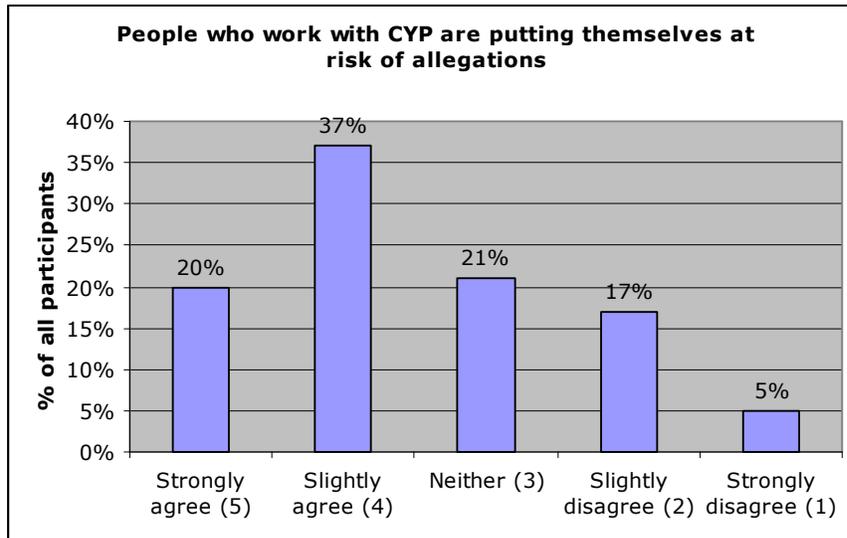
**Figure 25**



Mean = 3.41

Over half of participants (52%) agreed with the statement that most people find a career working with children and young people attractive. 21% disagreed while 27% were more neutral. Focus group participants saw the attractiveness, as noted above, in supporting the development of children and young people, developing relationships and being appreciated.

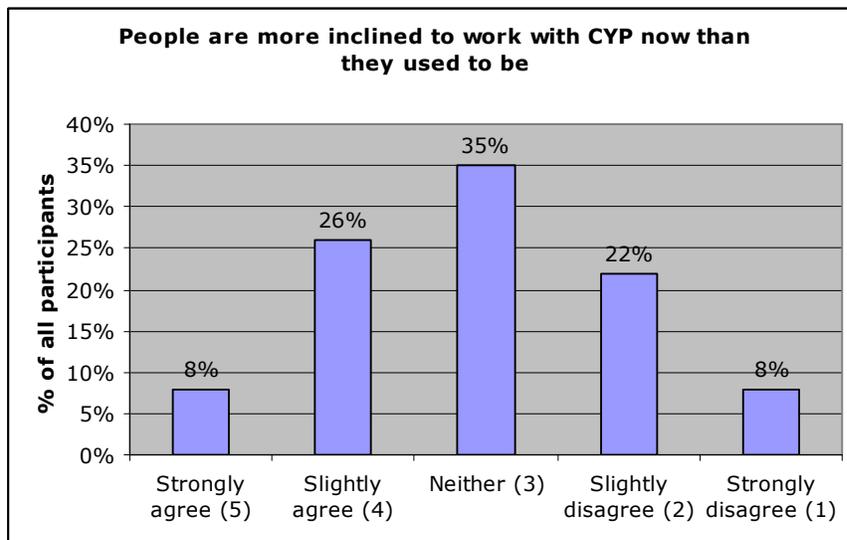
**Figure 26**



Mean = 3.5

The majority of people (57%) agreed that those who work with children and young people are putting themselves at risk of allegations, with 20% strongly agreeing with this statement. 22% disagreed with this statement while 21% neither agreed nor disagreed.

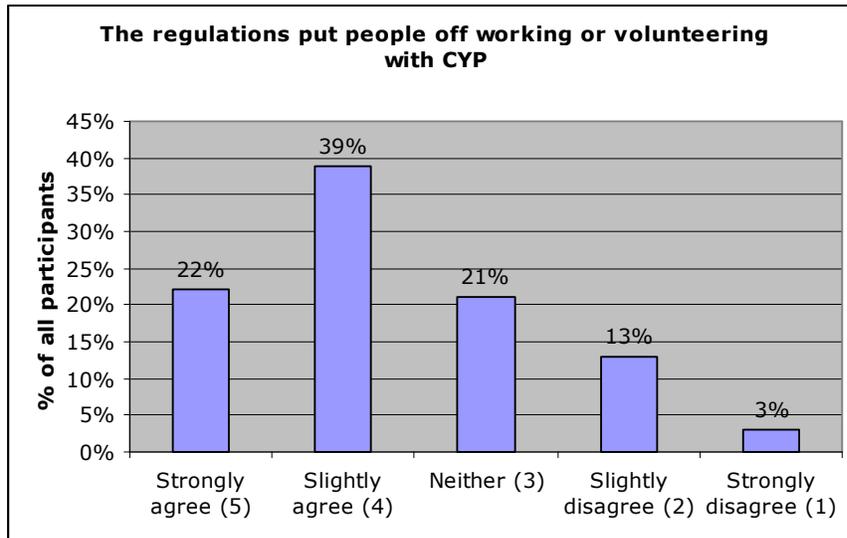
**Figure 27**



Mean = 3.05

The majority of people (35%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that people are more inclined to work with children and young people now than they used to be. Other participants were almost equally split: with 34% agreeing that people are more inclined to work with children and young people now and 30% disagreeing. Only a small proportion of people had particularly strong views either way on this statement.

**Figure 28**



Mean = 3.65

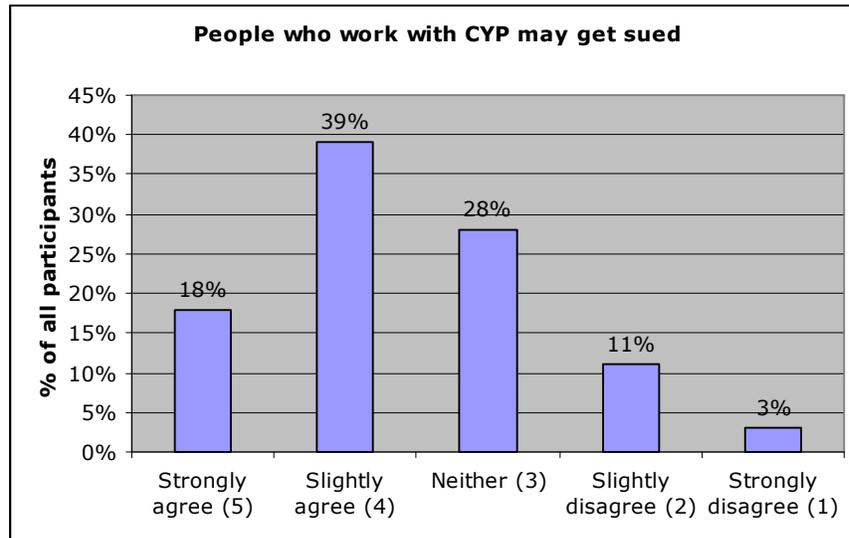
There is a very high level of agreement that the regulations put people off working with children and young people. 39% mildly agreed with this statement, while 22% strongly agreed. Only 16% of people disagreed.

Some focus group participants believed that fun has been taken out of working with children and young people because of the vast amount of regulations, policies and procedures that have to be followed. This was commonly not in relation to the regulations regarding disclosures (which most people considered to be a good thing), but the regulations which affect the practicalities of working with them such as health and safety and risk assessments. It was suggested that the lists of “do’s and don’ts” have taken the fun out of working with children and young people and placed a restriction on the ways in which adults can work with them.

*“If you were playing football with them and someone got hurt, you’d have to fill out a form.”*

*“In the past you could do anything with them, now you have to follow loads of procedures... there has to be the right number of people, there has to be a risk assessment...”*

**Figure 29**



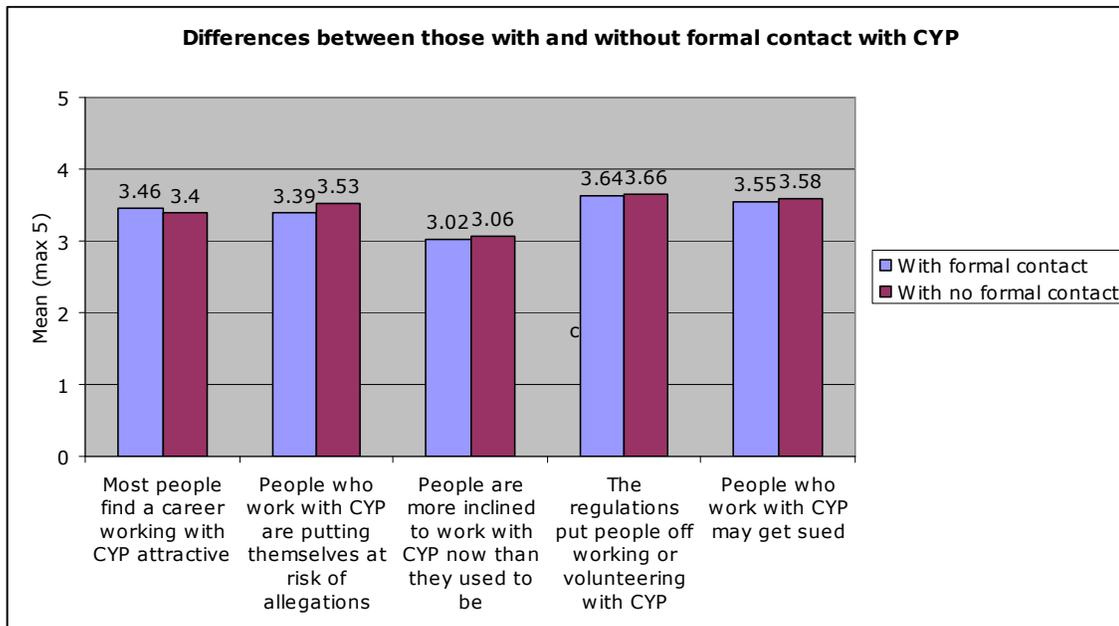
Mean = 3.61

Similarly, the vast majority of people (57%) agree that those working with children and young people may get sued, while only 14% disagree.

*"You lay a finger on a child and that's assault"*

Figure 30 shows the mean score for each of these statements about working with children and young people, comparing the views of those who currently have some sort of formal contact to those without any.

**Figure 30**

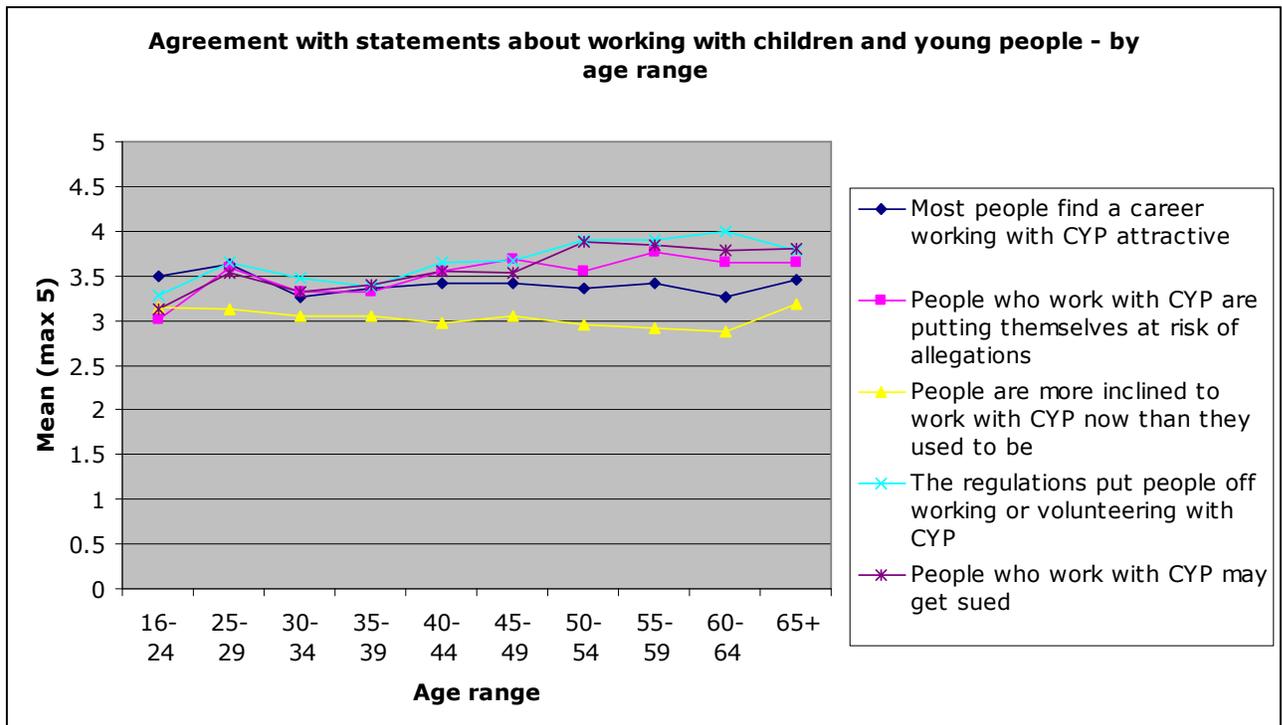


There is little, if any, difference in the views of those who currently have formal contact with children and young people with those who do not. People with no formal contact with

children and young people are more likely to agree with the statement that people who work with them are putting themselves at risk of allegations; although the differences is very small indeed.

Figure 31 shows the mean score for each of the statements about working with children and young people across the different age groups.

**Figure 31**



This analysis shows slight differences in attitudes between the different age groups. As age increases, people were slightly more likely to agree with the more negative statements about working with children and young people, namely:

- People who work with children and young people are putting themselves at risk of allegations;
- The regulations put people off working or volunteering with children and young people; and
- People who work with children and young people may get sued.

There is very little difference in attitudes across the age groups with regards to the statements about the attractiveness of careers working with children and young people, and people's inclination about working with children and young people.

There were no major differences in attitudes between participants from the different socio-economic groups, with only one exception: people in group A (professionals) were more likely (mean 2.5) than other groups (means between 2.9 and 3.2) to disagree with the statement that people are more inclined to work with children and young people than they used to be.

### 4.3 Child protection issues and regulation

Participants were asked whether they were aware of various issues related to child protection. Table K shows the proportion of all participants who were aware of each issue.

**Table K: Awareness of child protection issues**

Area	% of participants aware
1. Dunblane	90.9%
2. ASBOs - Anti-Social Behaviour Orders	88.7%
3. Tagging	86.5%
4. Disclosure checks	69.7%
5. Soham	65.0%
6. POCSA - Protection of Children (Scotland) Act	61.8%
7. Thomas Hamilton	58.5%
8. Dispersal Orders	49.2%
9. Bichard	9.8%
10. None of them	0.5%
11. Don't know	0.2%

Dunblane was the most commonly known issue, with almost 91% of people aware of it. Interestingly however, much fewer people (56%) were aware of Thomas Hamilton, the man who committed the crime.

There was also a very high level of awareness (over 85%) of ASBOs and tagging, although less than half were aware of Dispersal Orders. Between 60% and 70% of people were aware of POSCA and Disclosure checks.

People were less aware of the Soham murders (65%) than the Dunblane shootings, despite these being more recent. Very few people (less than one in ten) were aware of the resulting Bichard Inquiry.

People who did have formal contact with children and young people tended to be more aware of all these issues than with no formal contact, although the percentage difference was very small in each instance.

Focus group participants were asked about their attitudes towards child protection regulations. The majority of people believed the regulations with regards to disclosure checks were appropriate. However, people did object to the practical difficulties of getting disclosures, such as having to have several disclosures for different organisations and the length of time that they take to process. A few people thought that they were overused: with disclosure checks being required in situations which children and young people are unlikely to be at risk from an adult (e.g. helping out on a school trip). Some people also had misconceptions about the information that would be revealed through a disclosure process and may stop them from working with young people. One individual was concerned that she would have a criminal record because of receiving parking tickets.

*"The government legislation has gone crazy. You need a different disclosure for each thing! They want so much information, it's a real hassle."*

Many people did object to policies and procedures which are perceived to be unnecessarily restrictive and those that overtly suspect all adults of being paedophiles. The most common example of this was restricting people filming or taking photographs of children in public situations (e.g. school plays).

*"You can't even take your camera to kids' things now. It's gone too far and over the top"*

*"They seem to be going over-the-top with stopping you from filming kids"*

*"A lot of it isn't done with common sense"*

*"There has to be rules and regulations but it has gone too far the other way"*

## 5. Summary and conclusions

The five objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore adults' attitudes towards contact with children and young people
2. Explore adults' attitudes towards helping children and young people
3. Explore adults' attitudes towards working with children and young people
4. Explore the reasons behind decisions to have/not have contact with children and young people
5. Explore ideas around alleviating anxieties about working with children and young people

### ***Common themes***

Overall, there were some consistent themes across all areas of the research. These were particularly in relation to:

- The fear of accusations of harming children and young people;
- The reluctance of men to have contact, help or work with children and young people for fear of suspicion of their own motives;
- The fear of teenagers; and
- The perceived power of children and young people.

Firstly, the fear of accusations of harming children was the main barrier identified by both survey respondents and focus group participants in terms of having contact with children and young people or working with them. It was also identified by focus group participants as one of the main reasons they would hesitate to help a child or young person in danger or distress in the hypothetical scenarios. When this issue was unpicked in the focus groups, there appeared to be three factors underpinning this fear:

- A fear that young people might use accusations as a way of getting attention or manipulating adults (for example, in order to force them to buy alcohol);
- A belief that because of the seriousness of accusations, adults will be considered guilty until proven innocent, and the support provided to the accused will be minimal; and
- A belief that being accused of harming children was one of the worst accusations imaginable, and one which your reputation might not recover from despite them being unfounded.

From this research it is not clear where these fears have originated from, as only 1 in 10 people were personally aware of situations involving false accusations, although a much higher proportion were aware of stories from the media. It is likely that these stories have increased people's perception of the incidence of false accusations. This in turn may have had an effect on the perceived risk of having contact or working with children and young people. Focus group participants strongly suggested that even a small risk of being accused of harming children and young people is likely to outweigh the potential benefits of having contact or working with children and young people.

The reluctance of men to get involved in activities for children and young people was the second main theme emerging from the research. It was shown that almost twice as many women currently have formal contact with children and young people compared to men. The same is true of willingness to get involved in the future, with almost 40% of men not wanting to volunteer with children and young people as opposed to less than 25% of women. Focus group responses indicated that this was strongly linked to the fear of accusations, with people more suspicious of men who want to work with children and young people. It also appears that traditional gender stereotypes and cultural acceptability have a role to play, with women being much more likely to want to work with and care for younger children and this role being considered unusual or even unacceptable for men to play. The fear of being accused of paedophilia is quite clearly at the forefront of men's minds when considering whether to have contact with children. This fear was so strong that many focus group participants said it would make them think twice about approaching a lost child to help them, despite a relatively high proportion of people saying they would intervene in the survey.

Thirdly, the fear of teenagers was one of the most commonly identified barriers to having contact or working with young people. Further exploration of this issue in the focus groups uncovered that this fear was rooted in both people's own experiences of having contact with teenagers as well as their portrayal in the media. Many people described teenagers in a negative way, focusing on 'bad' behaviour. However, there was an acknowledgement that only a minority of young people were 'bad', yet people still felt intimidated by groups of young people because of their general boisterous behaviour, without this necessarily being intentional. The majority of people's bad experiences of teenagers tended to be in unstructured environments with groups, for example, meeting groups of young people in the street. People who did have positive contact with teenagers, or saw the value of working with teenagers, tended to describe this in terms of participating in more structured environments, for example, in a sports team. They saw the benefit in being able to relate to them on a more adult level and see them develop. However, many people generally perceived teenagers to be 'more cheeky' or lacking in respect, and this resulted in it being difficult to see the value of having contact or working with them.

Fourthly, a common issue emerging from both the survey and focus group responses was the perceived power of children and young people. On further exploration this seemed to be related to the perceived lack of power the police and other authorities had to deal with poor behaviour in children and young people. There was a perception that children and young people are aware of the restrictions imposed on police and other authorities, for example, not being able to physically restrain young people for fear of accusations of assault, and therefore push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This was also related to the first theme in the case of accusations, with a perception that the views of children and young people carry more weight in these situations than the views of adults.

### ***Looking forward***

Despite some of the rather negative feedback from adults about the fears of coming into contact, helping or working with children and young people, there are some positive messages emerging from the research.

While only around 5% of people were currently involved in volunteering with children and young people, 69% of people said they would be willing to consider it in the future. The barriers that stopped people from taking up opportunities were more personal than

related to negative views of children and young people. Many adults felt that they just did not have the time to commit to a voluntary activity.

Many people did feel that working with children and young people would be an attractive opportunity, but were reluctant to get involved because of the procedures involved. People acknowledged the need and importance of ensuring people are suitable for working with children and young people, though the provision of disclosure checks, but felt that other 'interfering' procedures had removed the fun and spontaneity of working with them. These included over-protective health and safety measures and the bureaucracy of paper work.

People who would like to volunteer with children and young people wish to do so for a wide variety of reasons and expressed individual preferences for the age group they would like to be involved with. Additionally, the benefits of working and volunteering with children and young people were commonly identified in the focus groups as related to supporting the personal development of the child or young person. Encouraging the development of positive relationships appears to be key to a rewarding experience.

Overall, however, the fear of accusations and the concerns about being labelled a paedophile appear to be the main concerns preventing adults having contact, helping or working with children and young people. This will be a difficult barrier to overcome, as it will require a change of people's hearts and minds to feel that contact with children and young people is normal and rewarding, rather than something clouded in suspicion.

# Appendix

## A1: Survey demographics

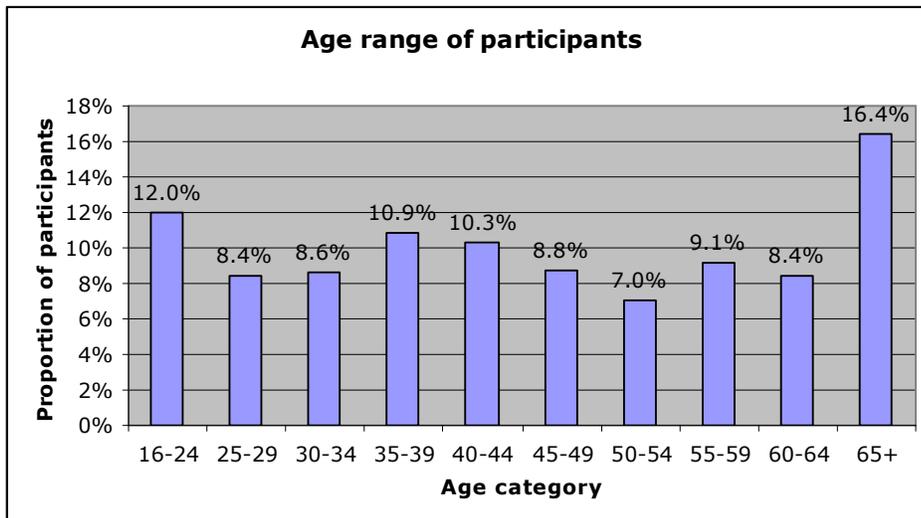
1,093 adults across Scotland were interviewed by George Street Research in February 2007 to explore their attitudes towards young people in terms of:

- Working with children and young people;
- Helping children and young people; and
- Contact with children and young people.

The sample was designed to be reflective of the Scottish population as a whole, and results are weighted to take account of any under-representation in the sample.

Figure 31 shows the age range of participants, while figure 32 shows the gender breakdown.

**Figure 31**



**Figure 32**

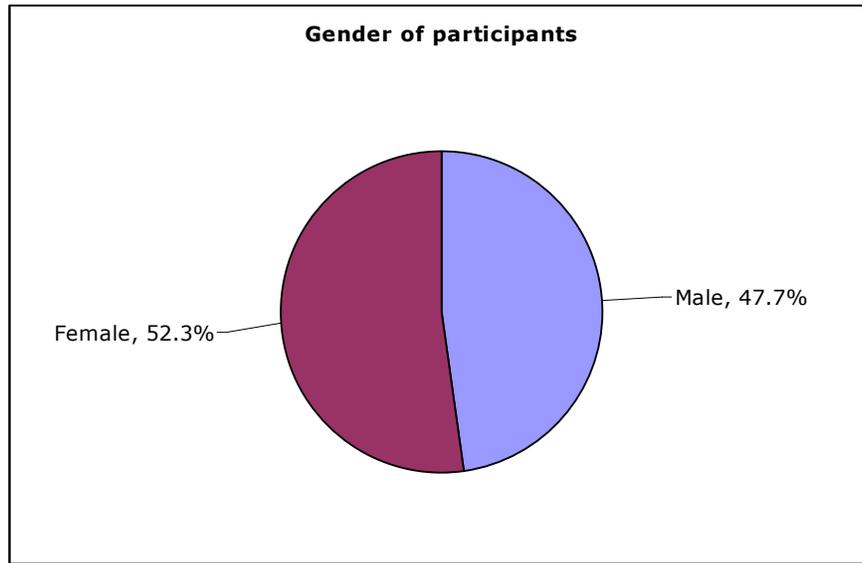
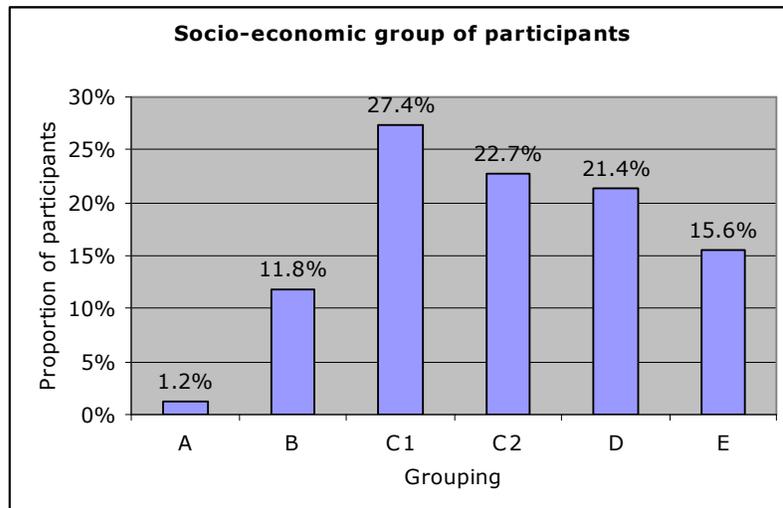
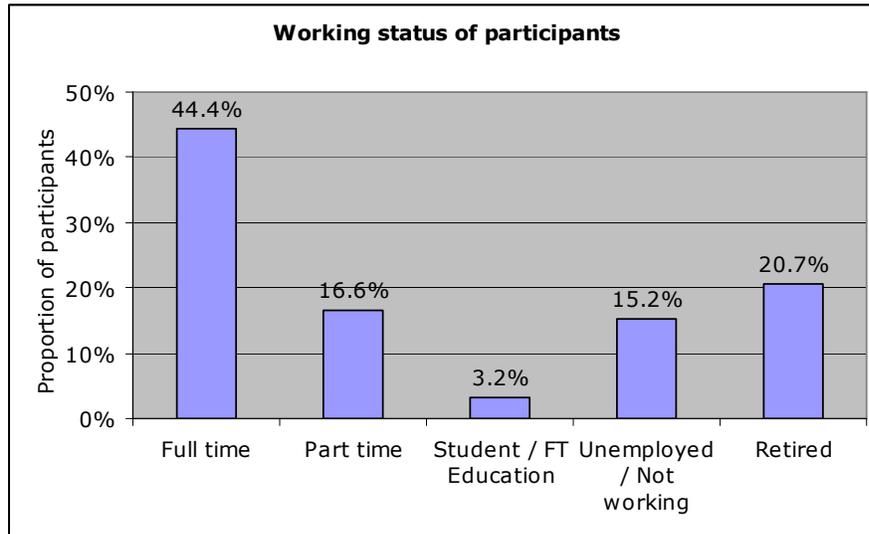


Figure 33 presents the socio-economic group of participants, categorised into A (professional), B (managerial and technical), C1 (skilled non-manual), C2 (skilled manual), D (partly skilled and unskilled) and E (dependent on state and casual workers). Figure 34 shows the working status of participants.

**Figure 33**



**Figure 34**



## A2: Focus group participation

Area (type of area)	Demographic group	No. of attendees
Aberdeen (City)	Mixed group of adults	9
Castle Douglas (Rural)	Mixed group of adults	8
Dundee (City)	Those aged over 60 years	10
Edinburgh (City)	Women only	9
Glasgow (City)	Men only	10
Kirkcaldy (Town)	Parents of school-age children	7

### A3: Survey questions

**George Street Research  
Consumer Omnibus February 2007**

This questionnaire is the property of George Street Research Limited, 24 Broughton Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3RH. Telephone 0131 478 7505.

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Respondent's Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

. . . . .

Postcode . . . . . Telephone Number . . . . .

Interviewer Name . . . . . Interviewer Number . . . . .

Date of Interview . . . . . Respondent ID Number . . . . .

Point Number . . . . . Start Address . . . . .

**CLASSIFICATION**

**Age**

- 16 - 29 1
- 30 - 44 2
- 45 - 59 3
- 60 + 4
- Refused 5

**Occupation of HOH/CWE (write in below)**

.....

.....

**Qualifications/responsibilities (write in below)**

.....

.....

**Sex**

- Male 1
- Female 2

**Socio-economic group**

- A 1
- B 2
- C1 3
- C2 4
- D 5
- E 6

**Working status**

- Full time (30+ hours) 1
- Part time (8-30 hours) 2
- Student / Full Time Education 3
- Unemployed / Not Working 4
- Retired 5
- Refused 6

**Internet Access**

- None 1
- At work only 2
- From home - dial up 3
- From home - broadband 4





**Q5. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, slightly agree, slightly disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.**

		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree or disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
A	Most people find a career working with CYP attractive	1	2	3	4	5
B	People who work with CYP are putting themselves at risk of allegations	1	2	3	4	5
C	People are more inclined to work with CYP now than they used to be	1	2	3	4	5
D	The regulations put people off working or volunteering with CYP	1	2	3	4	5
E	People who work with CYP may get sued	1	2	3	4	5

**Q6a. If you were to choose to volunteer with Children and Young People, which group would you choose? Mark, in order the respondents choice- 1,2 or 3 or NONE**

AGE	CHOICE
0-5	
6-12	
13-18	
NONE	

**Q6b What is your reason for giving your answer?**

.....

.....

.....



**Q7 What do you think puts people off working with children and young people?  
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTI-CODING PERMITTED.**

Fear of teenagers	1
Lack of understanding of children's rights	2
Children and young people have too much power / say in what happens	3
Fear of accusations of harming children	4
Friends will think I am weird / pervert	5
Wouldn't know how to access volunteering opportunities	6
Too bureaucratic – lots of forms to fill in first	7
Lack of appreciation by children and young people	8
A culture of litigation	9
Work is not valued	10
I am not qualified	11
Not enough time	12
Work commitments – work long hours – no time	13
Low level of training – need for training	14
Good work not recognised	15
Minimum rewards	16
Expensive – costs too much	17
Other (Specify)	18
.....	
.....	

**Q8. What would encourage more people to start volunteering with children and young people?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Q9. In relation to the following scenarios, how likely would you be to intervene?**

**READ OUT EACH SCENARIO**

		Very Likely	Quite likely	Not sure	Probably not	Definitely not	Refused
A	A 7 year old girl is alone in the street and crying	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	A group of teenage girls (around 14 years old) are pushing another teenage girl around who looks quite scared	1	2	3	4	5	6
C	A 14 year old boy is at a train station with no staff. He is being chatted to by a 40 year old woman he does not seem to know.	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	A child aged 9 is left alone after an activity you have helped to arrange. No-one has come to pick them up. It is dark. Neither of you has a phone. You have a car.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	A child around 6 asks you to help them get down from a climbing frame in the park	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	Two teenage boys (about 15 years old) are pushing a boy of a similar age who looks quite frightened	1	2	3	4	5	6
G	A young boy aged 5 or 6 is alone in the street and crying	1	2	3	4	5	6
H	A child of around 2 years old is running along the pavement beside a busy road and there is no adult carer in view	1	2	3	4	5	6
I	A teenager, around 15, has lost their mobile phone and wallet on the train	1	2	3	4	5	6
J	A girl of about 14 is on her own at a bus stop and is being chatted to by a man in his 40's who seems to be a stranger	1	2	3	4	5	6



**Q10. In the past 6 months, where have you had any ad hoc contact with children or young people?**

In the street	1
On public transport	2
At school	3
In sport or leisure facilities	4
In a shopping venue	5
With children of friends or family	6
In open spaces (e.g. parks, playgrounds)	7
At creche or play facilities	8
None	9
Other (specify)	10
.....	
.....	

**Q11. What do you think puts people off having any contact with children and young people?**

**DO NOT READ OUT. MULTI-CODING PERMITTED.**

Fear of teenagers	1
Lack of understanding of children's rights	2
Children and young people have too much power / say in what happens	3
Fear of accusations of harming children	4
Friends will think I am weird / pervert	5
Too bureaucratic – lots of forms to fill in first	6
Lack of appreciation by children and young people	7
Other (specify) .....	8

**Q12. What could be done to reduce the barriers that may exist for adults to be able to have more positive contact with children and young people?**

.....

.....

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**Q13. Which of the following are you aware of?**

Disclosure checks	1
Soham	2
Bichard	3
Thomas Hamilton	4
POCSA – Protection of Children (Scotland) Act	5
ASBOs – Anti-Social Behaviour Orders	6
Dispersal Orders	7
Dunblane	8
Tagging	9

**Q14. Do you personally know?**

		YES	NO
A	An adult who has been unjustly accused of harming a child	1	2
B	A child who has been harmed by an adult	1	2
C	A child who has made a false accusation against an adult	1	2

**Q14. Have you heard about any of the following in the media?**

		YES	NO
A	An adult who has been unjustly accused of harming a child	1	2
B	A child who has been harmed by an adult	1	2
C	A child who has made a false accusation against an adult	1	2

I would like to reassure you that George Street Research operate in accordance with the strict code of conduct of the Market Research Society. Nothing said in the course of this survey will ever be attributed to you personally, when we report the findings. If you have any queries regarding this research you can contact the Market Research Society (0500 396 999) or Melissa Scott (quote ref: 5315) at George Street Research (0131 478 7505)

**CHECK CLASSIFICATION, THANK AND CLOSE**

**Declaration** - I declare that this interview was conducted by me with the above named respondent in accordance with survey instructions and MRS code of conduct.

Signed .....

Date .....

## A4: Focus group aide memoire

### 1. Contact with children and young people

- What form of contact, if any, do you currently have with children and young people? (from in the street to at work, excluding role as a parent as we will already know this)
- What's your attitudes towards / what comes to mind when you think about:
  - Children aged 0-5 years (pre-school)
  - Children aged 6-12 years (primary school)
  - Young people aged 13-18 years (secondary school)
- What positive experiences (if any) have you yourself had of contact children and young people?
- What negative experiences (if any) have you yourself had of contact children and young people?
- What role does the media play in creating positive or negative perceptions of children and young people?
  - How does this impact on your own view of children and young people?
- Some people in the survey suggested children and young people have too much power and influence. Do you agree or disagree with this? What power / rights do you see young people having / not having?

### 2. Helping children and young people

*We will give them a **hand out** showing the results of the survey to each scenario. We will ask them to consider if they would respond in the same way. We will then ask the following questions in relation to the scenarios – they can pick up on whatever scenario they like (take a sheet for recording views against each one):*

*Thinking about the **top 5 scenarios** then the **bottom 5**:*

- Why do you think people might want to offer help in these situations?
- What might prevent them from helping in these situations?
- Why do you think people are unsure about offering help in these situations? What might the consequences be?
- Has anyone had any personal experience or heard any stories (positive or negative) about helping a child or young person in a potentially dangerous situation?
- How much are children and young people part of the community you live in? (ask for examples)
  - Do people in your community take responsibility for children and young people? (participate in activities, stand up to anti-social behaviour, etc.)

### 3. Working and volunteering with children and young people

- If you were asked to volunteer, would you? (not just specifically with CYP) Why? Why not?

- Would you see working or volunteering with children and young people as an attractive opportunity? Why?
- What do you think might put people off working or volunteering with children and young people?
- Men are much less likely than women to say they would want to volunteer with children and young people – why do you think this is?
- Men were more likely to want to work with teenagers, while women the 0-5 year olds – why do you think this is?
- Teenagers were the group people least likely to want to volunteer with – why is this? What perceptions exist about teenagers? (*check out the media influence, also how people view groups of yp*)
- Most people in the survey said that people that volunteer or work with children and young people put themselves at risk of allegations or might get sued. Do you agree? What makes people think this?
- Most people in the survey said that the regulations put people off working with children and young people. Do you agree? Where does this belief come from / are you aware of the regulations and procedures involved?
- Do you know the meaning of the following terms? (If so, please describe)
  1. Dunblane
  2. ASBOs - Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
  3. Tagging
  4. Disclosure checks
  5. Soham
  6. POCSA - Protection of Children (Scotland) Act
  7. Thomas Hamilton
  8. Dispersal Orders
  9. Bichard
- People were asked if they knew:
  - An adult who has been unjustly accused of harming a child
  - A child who has been harmed by an adult
  - A child who has made a false accusation against an adult.

Show people them the results. What do you think about these figures? Do you think the stories of false accusations and people unjustly accused of harming children puts people off working or volunteering with them?

- Any final comments?

#### **Specific questions for over 60s group**

- Older groups – perception of childhood, youth, what is it now, how is this changed? Compare and contrast
- Why they less likely to volunteer with CYP? Would they be more likely to volunteer for other ages, e.g. older people?
- Many people suggested they are 'too old' to volunteer with CYP – why do they think that? Is their perception wrong – e.g. strenuous activity or excuse.