

YOUTH VOICE

SAFETY
(Jan/Feb)

Introduction

Supported by Young Harrow Foundation, during January, six community groups have carried out research with young people to understand their needs and perceptions specifically around **Safety**

The group includes:

- My Yard (poverty)
- Harrow Carers (young carers)
- Wish Centre (mental health / self-harm)
- Centre for ADHD Autism Support (SEND)
- Ignite (exploitation / safety)
- Watford Cedars Hub (physical activity)

The research is to inform the work around the Children & Young People Integration Strategy being delivered by the Harrow Borough Based Partnership.



Who are the Young People



3 young people, ages 13-17
Ethnicity: Asian, White



5 young people, ages 13/14
Ethnicity: Black, Asian



7 young people, ages 14-17
Ethnicity: White, Black, Mixed, Heritage



6 young people ages 13/14
Ethnicity: White, Black, Asian



8 young people ages 13-17



8 young people ages 9-16

The Headlines

01 Housing

There is a link to housing conditions and feeling of safety at home.

02 Hotspots

Harrow Bus Station and town centre repeatedly came up as an area that young people do not feel safe.

03 VAWG

Violence against women and girls. was a frequent topic arising from the discussions. Many girls have had negative experiences particularly on public transport. Boys seemed to acknowledge and agree that Harrow can feel unsafe for girls (while also acknowledging their own risk of violence).

04 SEND and School

For children and young people with SEND – school is a unsafe place. Many talk about bullying, fighting, and violence / threats that spill out after school.

Young Harrow Foundation Reflections

There is a general awareness of serious violence incidents in Harrow among children and young people. This seems to be a cause for concern for some young people, and almost normalised. Much of their information seems to come from peers. It raises the question of how how Family Hubs work with partners to be an opportunity for promoting safety messages and help agencies / authorities to take more control of the narrative – e.g. Harrow is generally a safe borough and what measures are being taken to improve safety.

It was surprising that the topic of safety was particularly triggering among some of the groups. Many of the young people engaged with the research had personal traumatic experiences which were unknown by even the young people's trusted youth worker. This indicates that this topic is not often discussed, there is not a culture of openness and discussion in the same way there is around topics like mental health. How can the Family Hubs model be used to support this.

My Yard



01

It was clear from the interviews with young people living on the Grange Farm Estate, that there is a connection between their feeling of safety (at home) and their housing conditions. For example, when asked about feeling safe at home - some mentioned they don't feel safe at home because there are vermin / mice in the home. Others cited a broken lock on the door. Others mentioned the antisocial behaviour / rough sleeping on the estate makes them feel unsafe at home.

03

When asked about whether bullying is a problem, many agreed it is. Many had experiences themselves, or had witnessed bullying.

02

Some of the girls raised issues with feeling unsafe on public transport in particular. Also walking around Harrow. Some have had negative experiences which have left them frightened or intimidated.



04

It is clear that children are aware of local major violence incidents (e.g. stabbings). They cited that they hear about it at from peers at school. It impacts how safe they feel in Harrow. It raises the question around what what communication is happening with young people from official agencies to promote safety in Harrow.

Quotes from Young People

A teenage boy, last Month, was going to school and someone stabbed him up, in front of Harrow bus station.

Sometime my friend was wearing a skirt to school and she felt bad because she didn't wear shorts and someone looked up her skirt, and she kept saying why didn't I wear a shorts. She was crying and got taken out of the lesson for the day.

Something like that, but way worse, happened to me in school as well. But I don't want to talk about it.

Yes I feel safe travelling to school – because it's five mins down the road. I feel safe on the bus if I'm with my friends, but not on my own. Once when me and my friends were on the bus there was men staring at us.

You know how my flat had a broken door, but when they fixed it it had no lock so anyone could break in.

(I feel unsafe at home) because there are mice in the flat sometimes. At night, if I need the toilet, I'm too scared to go because of the mouse!

I don't feel safe in Harrow because there is always something alarming happening.

I felt unsafe when the downstairs door was open to anyone, and anybody could walk into the block.

People take pictures of others without them knowing and post it online.

01

When asked about places they feel unsafe, all immediately said Harrow Bus Station. Other areas included South Harrow Station, Northolt and Watford.

02

Boys said that girls feel more unsafe than boys, but that boys are more at risk than girls. Interesting because boys are often labeled as the perpetrators, but rarely as victims.

03

A key thread seems to be young people speaking to people who look like them or are a similar age and they typically don't trust anything statutory.

04

Boys experience bullying but said girls are more likely to be bullied - particularly by other girls.

05

When asked whether they feel safe at home, one of the boys who is care experienced spoke about a negative experience with a carer.



01

The places young people said they do not feel safe include parks, Harrow Bus Station, Harrow Town Centre. It was raised that young people travel to that location to have a fight.

02

Young people connected crime, particularly burglaries in the borough, to feeling unsafe at home.

03

The boys in this group agreed unanimously that it can feel more dangerous for girls travelling around in Harrow. One talked about a negative experience his sister had in the borough on the bus. Boys feel vulnerable when on their own, and safer when they are with their friends.

04

The group felt that social media has a connection to personal safety. They cited Snapchat is dangerous because of the location sharing element of the app. All of the young people in the group have that app.



Quotes from Young People

I got into a fight with someone at my school, that person called someone else from another school and brought a knife. That person didn't pull the knife on me, but unfortunately a couple of weeks later that person did end up getting stabbed and they are currently in hospital.

There was a story from down the road from my house, some guy posted something on his snapchat something risky insulting someone else, and the person who he was insulting found out where he was and he came with a knife, obviously going to attempt to stab him, but the guy was with his friends so they ran away, but one of his friends tripped and he ended up getting stabbed for something he didn't even do.

Yes definitely it is scarier for girls travelling to school in Harrow. Nowadays you got a lot of groups of boys especially, if you are a reasonably good looking girl you could have a big group of boys coming up to you to ask you questions, in general you will be easier target for theft and other assault crimes.

If you're wearing expensive brands, people would tend to go after you - you're indirectly putting a target on your back.

I travel by bus and I have a sister who is older than me who also travels by bus, couple of days ago she asked by some random man if he could sit next to her on the bus for no reason at all. It was weird and awkward and felt pretty dangerous. It can be dangerous but easier for a girl to be targeted.

Most of the Harrow fights happen at Harrow bus station - people literally travel to the bus station to have the fight there, in general

People from other areas will come to st Georges, from places like Northolt, If you're walking past you might get caught up in something. There's more stabbings around st Georges than anywhere else in Harrow to be honest

01

These young people cited places they feel unsafe in Harrow as: Harrow Bus Station, Wealdstone, Harrow Shopping Centre, South Harrow.

02

These young people cited the reasons they sometimes feel unsafe in these areas of Harrow as - antisocial behaviour, gangs, getting jumped, people getting killed and raped.

03

Social media was cited as putting young people at risk because of personal details being easily identifiable. Also some young people raised the issue of online bullying, one had a personal experience of this.



NOTE

This focus group was triggering for some young people who found it difficult to participate fully because of their own personal experience of being attacked in Harrow. This was an experience the youth workers were unaware of. This in itself is important as it highlights how some young people don't find this experience something they can share or discuss.

Centre for ADHD & Autism Support



01

All the attendees first thought around places they didn't feel safe was school and there was a very animated discussion. The young people talked about that there is a lot of bullying, and fighting at schools. One young female had to be escorted home once by police because of the threat of violence after school.

02

Harrow shopping centre was cited as another place that the group felt unsafe. They felt there is a lot of people approaching them for money / drugs. They felt that they would feel safer with an increased police presence in the two centre.



NOTE

The girls group discussion was very triggering for a lot of the group. Many of them had difficult past experiences, particularly around safety at school. They struggled with the process of discussing this. Some of these experiences were not known to the session leaders at the time. This highlights it is a trauma some young people do not feel comfortable or able to share with trusted people in their lives.

The Wish Centre



01

The young people generally feel safe, but recent stabbings are starting to make them feel unsafe. They also mentioned people doing drinking and drugs in Harrow makes them feel unsafe around Harrow.

02

Once young person has experienced racism directed to her friend on the streets of Harrow.



**For more information contact
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