



2022 KERRY YOUTH CONSULTATION



Report on a consultation with young people in Co. Kerry carried out by
Kerry Children & Young People's Services Committee &
organisations working with children & young people in Kerry.



INTRODUCTION



About Kerry CYPSC

Kerry Children & Young People's Services Committee (Kerry CYPSC) was established in 2010 under the aegis of Tusla, The Children & Family Agency.

Its purpose is to connect all the key agencies in Kerry that work with children, young people & families so that they can work cooperatively & collaboratively to improve services & supports for children & young people in the county.

Kerry CYPSC is made up of 23 member organisations & is guided in its work by the five national outcomes from the 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures' National Policy Framework for children & Young People in Ireland.

The Committee works to include the voices & opinions of all its stakeholders when developing its plans & carrying out activities. Key stakeholders include children, young people, parents & relevant agencies/service providers in the County.

In its work to include the voice of children & young people in Kerry, the CYPSC is informed by the Irish Government's Youth Participation Framework which is based on the child-rights model of participation, known as the 'Lundy Model'. The Framework's vision is 'participation with purpose' which is that when children & young people are involved in decision-making, their views are listened to, taken seriously & given due weight with the intention of leading to an outcome or change.

About this Youth Consultation

In 2021, Kerry CYPSC began an annual youth participation & engagement process. The aim of this work is to:

- Amplify the voices of young people in Kerry;
- Have young people's views inform the work of Kerry CYPSC & other organisations/services for children & young people in Kerry; &
- Promote examples of youth participation initiatives taking place in Kerry.

This youth participation process involves:

1. Annually collecting, sharing & giving due weight to the views of children & young people in Kerry.
2. In line with the Lundy Model, following up on the consultations by providing feedback to & also gathering feedback from young people regarding the emerging themes, how their views will be used & how the process could be improved.
3. Gathering & sharing examples of good practice in youth participation in Kerry from member organisations.

As part of this process, a follow-up, independently facilitated focus group was held with young people in Tralee in Sept '22. This involved informing participants about emerging themes & asking for their views on how the results could be shared & how the process could be improved in future.

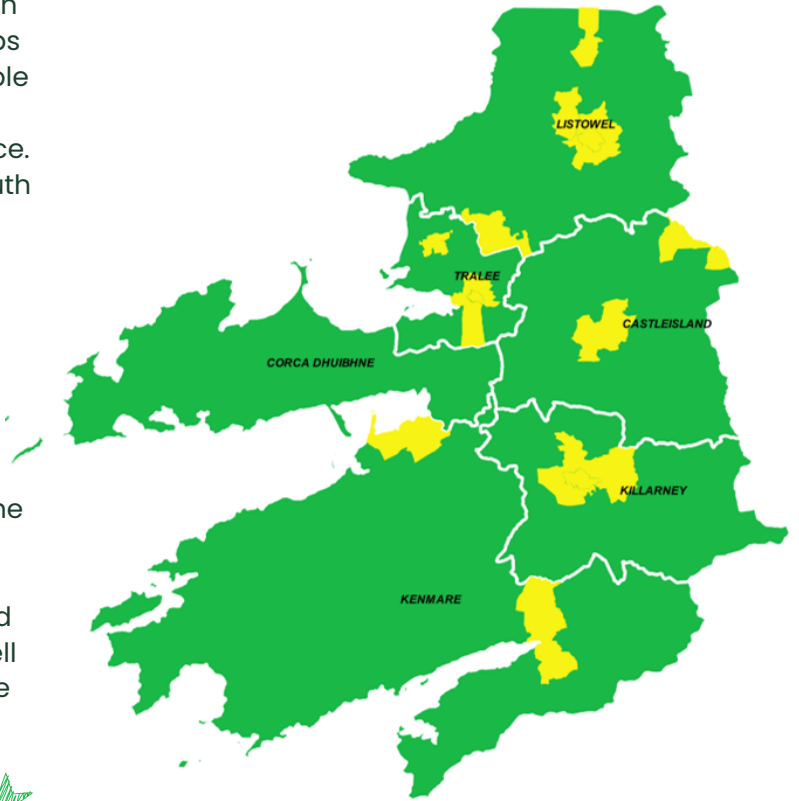
Participants were happy overall with the process & the consultation questions & they generally agreed with emerging themes. They suggested sharing the results of the consultation in schools & widening participation in future by giving young people in schools the opportunity to take part in the consultation as well as those in youth groups.

Who was involved in the consultation process?

In late 2021 Kerry CYPSC's youth participation working group asked organisations & groups working directly with children & young people to facilitate focus group discussions with children & young people in their area/service. Participation was voluntary for both the youth organisations & for the children & young people.

In total, **22 organisations & groups facilitated discussions with 253 young people aged 4 to 24** across County Kerry between October 2021 & March 2022.

The map across illustrates the location of the young people who took part in the consultation process. The lists below summarise the organisations that facilitated discussions on behalf of Kerry CYPSC, as well as the ages & locations of the young people they engaged with.



CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

253

Number of young people in Kerry involved in the consultation process

4 - 24

Age range of young people involved in the consultation process

22

Number of organisations/groups that facilitated discussions with young people & reported back to Kerry CYPSC

Organisation: Castleisland FRC
No. of y.p.: 17 **Age-range:** 13-18 years
Location of young people: Castleisland

Organisation: Kerry Diocesan Youth Service
No. of y.p.: 12 **Age-range:** 14-17 years
Location of young people: Tralee

Organisation: Key Youth Justice Service, KDYS
No. of y.p.: 3 **Age-range:** 13-18 years
Location of young people: Killarney

Organisation: KDYS – Killarney (UBU)
No. of y.p.: 8 **Age-range:** 10-14 years
Location of young people: Killarney

Organisation: KDYS – Listowel
No. of y.p.: 12 **Age-range:** 10-17 years
Location of young people: Listowel, Ballylongford

Organisation: KDYS – Lyreacrompane
No. of y.p.: 11 **Age-range:** 10-16 years
Location of young people: Lyreacrompane

Organisation: KDYS – Brosna
No. of y.p.: 5 **Age-range:** 10-12 years
Location of young people: Brosna

Organisation: Shannow FRC, Abbeydorney
No. of y.p.: 13 **Age-range:** 6-19 years
Location of young people: Listowel, Abbeydorney, Ardfert, Tralee, Lixnaw

Organisation: Kerry College of Further Education
No. of y.p.: 15 **Age-range:** 17-22 years
Location of young people: Across Kerry

Organisation: Drug & Alcohol Service, Tralee
No. of y.p.: 1 **Location of young people:** Tralee

Organisation: Home School Liaison Coordinators (TESS)
Age-range: 5-18 years **Location:** Kenmare, Tralee

Organisation: Ballyspillane FRC, Killarney
No. of young people (y.p.): 24 **Age-range:** 8-13
Location of young people: Killarney

Organisation: South Kerry Dev. Partnership
No. of y.p.: 23 **Age-range:** 4-17 years
Location of young people: Killorglin

Organisation: Munster Technological University
No. of y.p.: 6 **Age-range:** 17-24 years
Location of young people: Across Kerry

Organisation: LCA Youthreach, Tralee
No. of y.p.: 17 **Age-range:** 16-21 years
Location of y.p.: Tralee, Killarney, Ardfert

Organisation: Coláiste Gleann Lí, Tralee
No. of y.p.: 6 **Age-range:** 15-18 years
Location of young people: Tralee

Organisation: Killarney Youthreach, Killarney
No. of y.p.: 14 **Age-range:** 15-19 years
Location of young people: Killarney

Organisation: Colaiste na Ríochta, Listowel
No. of y.p.: 10 **Age-range:** 12-18 years
Location of young people: North Kerry

Organisation: Tralee Youthreach, Tralee
No. of y.p.: 15 **Age-range:** 15-19 years
Location of young people: Tralee

Organisation: Jigsaw, Tralee
No. of y.p.: 4 **Age-range:** 16-24 years
Location of young people: Kenmare, Tralee

Organisation: Kenmare FRC
No. of y.p.: 12 **Age-range:** 13-17 years
Location of young people: Kenmare

Organisation: Comhairle na nÓg, Tralee
No. of y.p.: 25 **Age-range:** 13-18 years
Location of young people: Across Kerry



CONSULTATION QUESTIONS



The three consultation questions were:

What are you happy about in terms of services* & supports for children & young people in your area?

What services* are you missing?

If you had a magic wand or superpowers, what would you change to make things better?

**Services might relate to physical & mental wellbeing; education & learning; feeling safe; money & employment; or being connected to your community.*



The 253 young people who took part in this consultation process were asked **three key questions** (see across). It was clarified that 'services' could relate physical & mental wellbeing; education & learning; feeling safe; money & employment; or being connected to their community.

The youth organisation representatives that facilitated the conversations recorded the young people's locations, age ranges & responses on a template document that was provided to them by Kerry CYPSC.

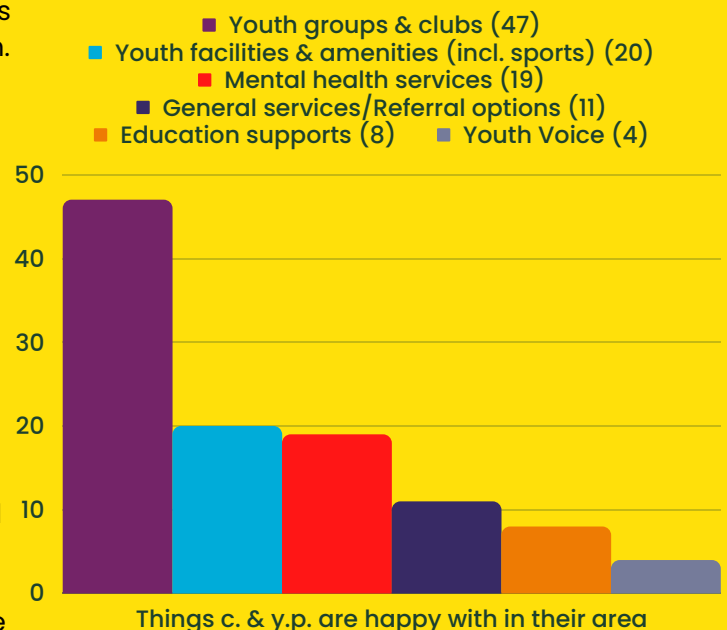
A summary of most frequent responses to each consultation question is provided below:

Question 1: What are you happy about in terms of services & supports for children & young people in your area?

Forty seven young people (19% of respondents) reported being happy with youth-specific groups, clubs or services in their locality that they were engaged with. This included youth organisations such as Kerry Diocesan Youth Service which was mentioned a number of times & Youthreach, Jigsaw, the GAA, Comhairle na nÓg, The Scouts etc.

Twenty young people said they were happy with local facilities & amenities, including sports facilities, especially free ones & amenities in/near Tralee.

Eight per cent (19) participants reported being happy with mental health services they had accessed in the past, particularly services that were free, such as youth counselling. Eleven were happy with services & referral options generally & 8 were happy with educational supports in their community. Four participants were happy having the opportunity to use their voice & three could not identify anything they were happy about in terms of services & supports for children & young people in their area.



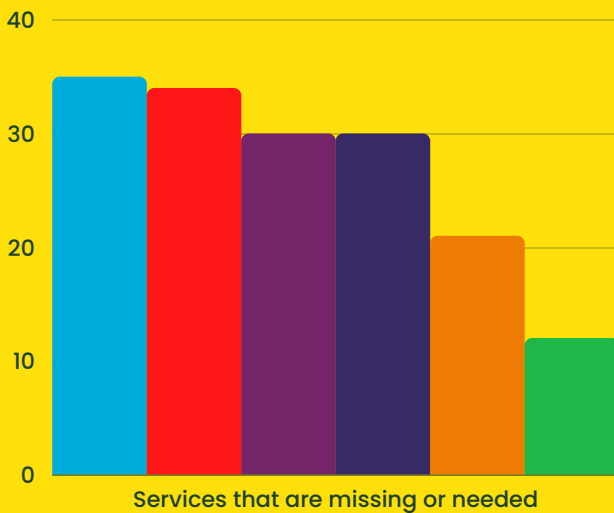


CONSULTATION QUESTIONS contd.



Question 2: What services are you missing?

- Youth facilities & amenities (incl. sport) (35)
- Mental health services (34)
- Dedicated youth spaces/youth clubs (30)
- Local services (incl. transport & health) (30)
- Education & employment supports (21)
- Safer & cleaner locality (12)



When asked what services they were missing or were needed, 35 participants (14%) mentioned that there was a lack of facilities & amenities for young people to be active in their area, including sports facilities. Twelve percent raised the lack of safe, dedicated indoor & outdoor spaces for young people where they could hang out with friends such as youth cafes/clubs, & safe outdoor spaces

Approx. 13% spoke about the lack mental health services, particularly a lack of youth-friendly accessible & free or affordable mental health services in their area & a similar number talked about the lack of services for young people in their area or difficulty accessing those that exist, due to their location & lack of transport or waiting lists. Specific services that were identified as missing included ADHD, autism, addiction & LGBTI supports.

Approximately 8% of participants were missing education & employment supports including exam supports & affordable CV/interview supports. A number of young people also would like their locality to be safer & cleaner with less vaping, drugs & anti-social behaviour/bullying..



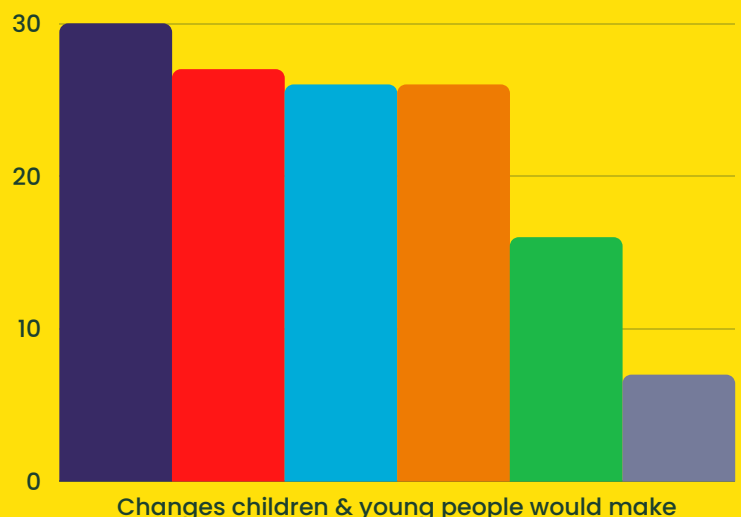
Question 3: If you had a magic wand or superpowers, what would you change to make things better?

When asked what they would change to make things better if they had a magic wand or superpowers, participants wanted to make changes in relation to many of the issues that they identified as missing.

Approx. 12% would improve or increase services for young people generally, including improving information on existing services. Nearly the same number would improve or increase mental health services specifically. Around 10% would increase facilities & amenities for young people, including sports facilities, & a similar number would improve education & employment supports including training in life skills, education reform & more extra-curricular classes.

A number of young people also talked about how they would improve their local environment through things like more policing/better lighting, more bins/less littering & cycle lanes.

- More/better access to services incl more info (30)
- More/better mental health services (27)
- Youth facilities & amenities (incl sport) (26)
- Education & employment supports (26)
- Safer & cleaner locality (16)
- Financial supports/lower costs (7)





OVERVIEW OF EMERGING THEMES



Analysis of the young people's responses shows **four key overarching issues/themes that young people are focused on & concerned about in County Kerry** at present. These summarised below & outlined in more detail in the pages that follow.

Youth Friendly Facilities & Safe Spaces

Safe indoor & outdoor youth-friendly spaces are widely lacking across the County, according to participants, especially for older teens. While a small number of participants reported being happy with facilities in their areas (particularly those in bigger towns), the lack of or need for informal, youth friendly indoor & outdoor spaces & facilities to hang out with friends, have fun & be active was mentioned by about a third of participants. This included amenities like skate parks, basketball courts, safe parks & playgrounds for both younger children & teens, & youth cafes/centres. A number of young people don't feel safe hanging out in parks at present & are looking for more policing & lighting for outdoor spaces where young people hang out. Some young people pointed out that this lack of spaces to hang out with other children & young people in safe & constructive ways, can & was leading to other problems among young people like bullying, anti-social behaviour, mental health issues & addiction.

Mental Health Services & Supports

Over a fifth of participants highlighted issues with mental health services specifically, e.g. suitability &/or accessibility (in terms of location, waiting lists or referral criteria) of mental health services for young people in Kerry. A small number of participants were happy with their experience of mental health supports when they had been able to access them, but most highlighted the need for more or improved mental health services, or the need for more youth-friendly information on & treatment by existing services.

Access to & Information about Services

Some young people were happy with the services available in their areas including educational supports (those in urban areas mostly), however many felt they were missing information on existing/available services, or couldn't access them easily due to their location/lack of transport, lack of knowledge on the services & eligibility criteria, or waiting times. This was particularly the case for mental health services and non-school based education supports.

Youth Groups/Clubs/Activities

Lots of good experiences with youth groups were reported (partly representative of the fact that this consultation was undertaken through youth groups). However there is still a need for more organised youth groups/clubs & activities for young people to get involved in (besides sports activities or clubs) in the County.



OUTCOME 1: ACTIVE & HEALTHY PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

”
I need to play with my friends because that's what makes me happy.

”
There isn't a lot to do if you aren't into sports so I would have more things like that for the ones that don't do sports they can be part of other groups.

”
There is nowhere for young people to hang out in the Kenmare area after school hours/weekends.

Youth Spaces, Facilities, Amenities & Activities

There is a strong need for more indoor & safe outdoor spaces & amenities for children & young people to hang out & play together

- Highlighted as 'preventative' – supports young people's physical & mental wellbeing & can reduce negative behaviours/habits
- Youth clubs/groups are great but not available/open all the time & not everyone wants to go to them.
- Some parts of Kerry don't have youth clubs/cafes or anywhere for young people to hang out & be active.
- Some interested in organised activities/classes that are alternative to sport (e.g. cookery/music/art/life skills/tours/art/walking/gardening)
- Some interested in non-organised spaces to just 'hang out'/play including outdoor spaces:
 - Free spaces to play sports (e.g. basketball hoops) or skate parks etc
 - Need to be safe – children & young people feel unsafe in some parks due to vaping, drugs, bullying/aggression.
 - Playgrounds should be only for younger children
 - More spaces for older teens only are needed
 - More outdoor lighting for safety & shelters for winter nights



”
There are very few activities available for young people.. not enough investments in this area. This would possibly reduce crime, laziness, and drug-related activities...which many times are coming from boredom.

”
Youth Café - discounted prices, place to hang out, play games, meet others. Could have a room for study/homework/free wifi.

”
More events on weekends related to music, fitness, educational talks, art displays - could be held in town square/town park & Areas for 16 - 18 year olds only..

”
They could create a pot of money so they could get facilities like a skate park, sports facilities, a slip way off the pier for swimming & rowing



OUTCOME 1 contd.: ACTIVE & HEALTHY PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

I think Ireland lacks in services for mental health, which is an increasing ongoing issue amongst children & young adults, especially after covid.

Provide confidential mental health supports & 24/7 supports for children in need.

I feel they (one mental health service) don't live up to the expectations they portray. e.g. very short appointments, 10 to 15 minutes

Mental Health Services

Children & young people need better, more targetted & more accessible mental health services & supports:

- Low cost/free & flexible
- Time/access: shorter waiting lists & either more dispersed or centralised/one-stop-shop services with transport options
- Geographically accessible (transport to services or more localised/dispersed services)
- Dedicated for/suitable for young people (age appropriate & not mixed with adults) e.g. young person only ward for inpatients.
- More youth friendly services:
 - information on existing services available to young people
 - information on how to access them/how eligible
 - more youth friendly information & treatment by staff
 - more information, patience & clarity in explanations of conditions, medication or treatment options
 - less medicating of young people quickly & for long periods



(I would like) a service to help kid's self-confidence. I know there is a lot on mental health, but prevention is very important.

If I could change anything it would be the mental health services in Ireland. For all age groups, race, ethnicity etc. Mental health is not prioritised & Covid has made that clear."

I have used mental health services & in my experience it seemed that staff forget they are talking with young people... This can make the experience feel hostile & intimidating.



OUTCOME 1 contd.: ACTIVE & HEALTHY PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

“
My wish would be to have all issues being answered and everyone feeling supported & having the availability to use services to their optimum ability & effectiveness

“
Access to services & knowing the correct service to access, along with extensive waiting time, is very challenging for many disadvantaged families

”
It's not always easy to understand where to go or how to access services. It can be difficult to take the first step.

”
Include more activities & supports for people with ADHD/ASD & cut waiting times. Have centres that you can go in & say I am here & there is no wait time you are just in.

Services Generally: Better Access & Information

★ **Services need to be more accessible (in terms of cost, location & availability) & young people need more information on existing services & supports.**

- Services located where young people are, & more spread out around county (& country), or provide better transport connections within county & between Kerry & main cities.
 - More youth friendly/youth dedicated services so young people feel more comfortable & staff are trained in how to deal with young people - e.g. patience, clear explanations, more time than dealing with adults etc.
 - Wrap-around/one-stop-shop centres with various services in one place - more accessible & less referrals needed
 - Specific services mentioned as needed included: LGBTI, autism, ADHD, addiction, trans gender, occupational therapy.
 - More youth friendly/targetted information on existing services for young people, using things like social media
- ★

“
Many services don't realise the power of social media. It can act as a space for youth voice and can be very effective in raising awareness of what services exist and breaking the stigma of help-seeking.

”
The locations of services in Kerry tend to be based in Tralee & Killarney. Better outreach is key or having services based in other locations around the county would help. Especially important in a large county with a poor transportation system.

OUTCOME 2: ACHIEVING IN LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT & OUTCOME 4: ECONOMIC SECURITY



”
In school there should be a class dedicated to life skills, teach us how to pay bills, our taxes, etc. all skills we require as adults. It can increase feelings of security.

”
Change the education system, it is stressful. The approach doesn't work for everyone.

Education, Employment & Financial supports

”
(I wish) all teachers would be nice.

Young people are looking for more alternative & more affordable education & employment supports, as well as reform of the school curriculum.

- Reform of the leaving cert is needed - it is outdated, doesn't suit everyone & puts too much pressure on students
- There is a lack of free training/guidance on life skills & practical skills in school, such as managing money, starting a business, CV & interview skills
- More choice in third level courses in Kerry
- There is an interest in non-academic courses such as art, cookery, mindfulness etc
- A number of young people looking for more education & awareness raising on certain issues including LGBTQ awareness, anti-bullying, addiction & gambling.
- More free support with homework & college work
- Support for exam stress
- More Home School Liaison services
- More supports for parents are primary level
- Better access to educational assessments
- Public library

”
Free classes are needed, lots of people don't have money to do things (like private activities/classes)

”
There is not enough part time employment in my locality

”
There is a lack of guidance/education around managing finances & CV/interview skills for older young people

”
I would like to see free or heavily discounted classes run through KDYS - providing classes in art, music, drama, debating - especially important for parents who cannot afford these things

”
They should teach us about addiction & about gambling addiction & what to do if an adult in your life has it.





OUTCOME 3: SAFE & PROTECTED FROM HARM

Make Kerry safer

There needs to be better lighting at night & cameras in walkways & paths for safety

I wish I had the money to pay all my mams bills



Safety & Security

I had my bike stolen & nothing was done about it

Some participants don't feel safe in their locality (especially at night & those in urban areas). They are looking for safer spaces & more supports for young people to feel safer in their community.

- Safer parks where children & young people can hang out with better supervision or Garda presence
- Better lighting & cameras on streets
- More follow through by Gardaí in cases of theft, violence or anti-social behaviour
- Reduce anti-social behaviour & bullying, including a suggestion of an app for reporting anti-social behaviour
- Older teens kept out of playgrounds so they are safe for younger people to go to.
- Sexual harassment education & prevention
- Reduce theft
- More financial security/supports
- Lower cost of services & activities
- Housing support & security for young people & their families

I would like better, safe cycling paths



If I had a magic wand I would make it so that you could be comfortable in town. The town is overrun sometimes with rough people who ruin it for everyone else. It's not safe to go into the park later in the day or feel safe going into town by yourself. I would be scared.

More seating in the parks, there is nowhere to sit a lot of the time because the benches are full and there should be someone in the park to keep it safe.



OUTCOME 5: CONNECTED, RESPECTED & CONTRIBUTING

I would like to live in a cleaner environment

(If I had a magic wand) I would invent superspeed because we don't have buses!

Little (services & activities) for people in rural areas. We need more buses."

Public Transport & Environment

More bins & seats in parks

Children & young people are looking for better transport options so they can meet friends or access services, as well as a cleaner environment to live in

- More frequent buses during the day between towns within the county
- More frequent connections to inter-city transport from rural areas so it doesn't take so long to get to services/appointments, e.g. in Cork
- More freedom to go to places like the beach or the park to hang out, by public transport
- More cycling infrastructure such as safe cycle paths
- Cleaner, more pleasant environment to live in - young people would like their estates, their parks & their communities to be cleaner with adequate bins, seating, lighting & more green spaces.

More safe cycle paths & cycleways

Tidy the estate

Buses and trains would be a help to single parents

(If I had a magic wand), everyone would have a car and it wouldn't be so expensive to go places so if you wanted to go to the beach or to Cork you could.

For services that wouldn't be sustainable more rurally, we need transport which doesn't exist.



OUTCOME 5 contd.: CONNECTED, RESPECTED & CONTRIBUTING

“
We need people who listen to us and don't always think the worst of us (teenagers) & don't treat us like a child.
”

“
Make young people a priority - everyone should be treated with equality & respect
”

“
I feel what we are missing are the lack of connection with our community
”

Youth Participation, Equality & Community

Young people are asking to be treated equally, with more respect & understanding by adults & they want to be heard & make positive changes in their communities

- Adults working with children & young people (including service providers & teachers) need to be more respectful, understanding & patient with them. Training is needed.
- Give young people the opportunity to be heard & to create change & influence services & other activities that are aimed at or impact on them
- Reduce inequality & poverty in society & provide supports where needed, especially to those most disadvantaged such as those who are homeless or experiencing poverty
- Young people are missing community connection in their locality & in their schools
- They would like more community activities & have the opportunity to get involved in these

“
I'd like to help people in poverty & homelessness. I think it's becoming a bigger issue that needs to be looked upon
”

“
I would make adults be more understanding
”

“
Young people should be more involved in services because it can help make the services more appealing to young people, it can be easier to reach out to young people. It means staff of services are not working off assumptions & that they can work with young people for direction & guidance.
”

“
I would like to make a place for people to go to get their voices heard because it makes people feel better when they know they are being listened to & Judges would have to listen to kids & you would get to talk to the judge if you wanted to
”

Thank you for taking part!

Thank you to all the young people who took part in this consultation process around County Kerry & also in the follow up focus group where we shared the emerging themes from the consultation with young people & got their views on how the process could be improved next time.

Your views will be listened to & are important to us. We promise to take your opinions seriously & to amplify your voices by bringing your concerns & suggestions to relevant organisations. We will keep you updated on what we are doing with the information you gave us & what progress is being made on the issues raised.



Thank you also to the workers & organisations that facilitated these conversations with young people all over Kerry in 2021 & 2022. It would not have been possible to do this work without your support & cooperation.

This report was compiled by Aoife Collins Coaching & Consulting on behalf of Kerry Children & Young People's Services Committee.



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