



# Qualitative Data Hope Hack Overview Report

Understanding the Humber Region from a Youth perspective



 April 2024

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Different than expected    Good and good improvement  
Scaryfineok    It was fantastic    Good  
Happy    Usefulinformative    engaged  
**it was good fun interesting**  
engaging    hopefulSafe happy proud  
Intrigued    helpful informative and educational  
Satisfied, happy, and engaged I loved it

**“People always say if you want to change the world you have to change your behaviour. However, we don’t want to change the world, we want to change our future. Everyone should be allowed to achieve their aspirations.”**



## 1. The Background

Hope Hacks have been designed by the **Hope Collective**, an organisation formed to support the campaign for Damilola Taylor, a 10-year-old boy who wrote of his hope to change the world, shortly before his untimely death in 2000. The Hope Collective honour this legacy and aim to establish real change that enables the UK's most vulnerable communities to be free from poverty, violence, and discrimination. They do this by working with young people so that they can create long-term change, amplify their voices, and focus on their hopes for the future.

Other Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) across the UK have organised these events for their specified area, giving young people the chance to collaborate with each other in workshops to generate ideas on solutions to a key issue in the community.

The ideas and solutions from the hacks are also incorporated into a national report, written by the Hope Collective, to create the biggest needs assessment into; what young people think a fairer society looks like, what the current challenges are for young people, and what solutions would drive long lasting change. That assessment will allow the government to hear the voices of young people and be used in decision-making and policy.

Between February 2023 and February 2024 Humberside Violence Prevention Partnership (Humber VPP) held four Hope Hack events, one in each local authority area of Humberside. The locations for the events were based on both their centrality within the local authority, and areas identified as known density crime areas. These were Bridlington – East Riding, Grimsby – North East Lincolnshire, Hull – Kingston upon Hull, and Scunthorpe – North Lincolnshire.

This report focuses on the qualitative findings from the events, which further support the Humber Violence Prevention Partnership's (Humber VPP) Strategic Needs Assessment and helps inform our future work, contributing to our understanding of what young people think would be the greatest solutions to problems in our local community.

## 2. How we delivered the Hope Hacks in Humberside

### 2.1 The agenda

The Hope Hacks were promoted to schools, colleges, alternative education provisions and local community groups, with the key demographic initially being young people aged 16 – 25. However, the lower age limit provided some difficulties for schools in terms of releasing the students during their final year of GCSE level examinations. Therefore, the decision was made to open the invite up to young people aged 15, or in year 10 of secondary education. Approximately 310 young people attended the events, with the largest attendance being in Bridlington, which was predominantly attended by two local schools.

The Hope Hacks hosted a range of guest speakers, such as **Lucy Beaumont** comedian and campaigner; **Paul Spence** – PAUL for Brain Recovery; **Ross Bennett** – Commercial Director, Engaging Education; **Abdu Abubakar** – Tigers Trust; **Andrew Smith** – Humber Modern Slavery Partnership. **Beats Bus** and **Hull FC** delivered post-lunch energisers to increase engagement in the second half of the day. A wide range of partner organisations, VPP and OPCC staff were on hand to facilitate in the topic groups or support with the running of the events. The agenda for each Hope Hack was the same, as outlined below:

Fig 1. Hope Hack agenda

<b>Registration</b>
<b>Welcome: Hosts</b>
<b>Guest Speaker</b>
<b>Introduction to Hack Workshops</b>
<b>Move to breakout rooms</b>
<b>Hack Workshop (part 1)</b> Icebreaker activity Research discussion
<b>Break for Lunch</b>
<b>Post-lunch energiser</b>
<b>Hack Workshop (Part 2)</b> Sunflower activity Build on ideas Prepare to present group ideas
<b>Gather in main room</b>
<b>Presentation of ideas</b>

Local media students and volunteers from **The Warren Youth Project** also supported with photography during the day, capturing the activities in the workshops and the final presentations. It is important to note here that consent was acquired prior to any photographs being taken.

A great deal of consideration was given to the wellbeing and diverse needs of young people who would be attending these events, including having a designated wellbeing area at each venue which was stocked with mindfulness activities and fidget resources. Attendees were reminded that they could access these areas at various points throughout the day.

## 2.2 The topics

The events involved the participants working in smaller workshop groups to discuss what fairness looks like in their community. The workshops covered 7 key themes, which were initially aligned to those set out by the Hope Collective, they were:

- **Mental health & Wellbeing**
- **Anti-poverty**
- **Race & Diversity**
- **Media**
- **Gender**
- **Access to opportunities**
- **Community safety.**

However, following the first Hope Hack in Hull, the Humber VPP launched an online survey to consult with young people across the Humber region to establish what issues and topics were most important to them. This consultation identified the following 7 issues, which subsequently formed the topics at the Bridlington, Grimsby and Scunthorpe Hope Hacks:

- **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** The provision of support for young people.
- **Community Safety:** Features of the community that ensure young people feel safe.
- **Youth Voice and Influence:** Ensuring young people have a voice and ability to influence policy.
- **Diverse Experiences:** How 'who you are' affects how safe you feel.
- **Sports and Activities:** What activities works best and how we ensure inclusion.
- **Life Skills:** Real world learning, education and support.

- **Aspirations and Opportunities:** Goals, career ambitions, hopes for the future.

Through set activities, the young people discussed their topic, focusing on key issues and identifying solutions. They were provided with data and headlines from both national and local sources to support their discussions.

Fig 2. Examples of national research, headlines and statistics.

### Group 1: Mental health and wellbeing (G)

## SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN WOMEN AND GIRLS

**37%** of girls aged 11-21 say they compare themselves to celebrities

**'I Finally realized that owning up to your vulnerabilities is a form of strength. And making the choice to go to therapy is a form of strength.'** Lizzo

**90%** of teenage girls say they are unhappy with their bodies

Social factors that may affect Women's mental health:

- Women are more likely to be unpaid carers at home - for children & parents
- Women often have several roles within the household
- Women are more likely to be lower paid than men
- Women are more likely to have concerns about their own safety

**10-15%** of women will report an experience of depression after giving birth

**Young women (aged 16-24) are more likely to report psychological distress than young men**

**Teenage girls (aged 16-17) are the most likely to worry about their own mental wellbeing**

If You're a friend of someone with a mental health problem, the most important thing is to show them that you're still their friend and you care about them

The most valuable support you can provide is just being there to talk and listen

friendship is a crucial element of protecting our mental health. Friends can keep us grounded, help us get things into perspective and help manage life's problems

**MICHELLE OBAMA**

"Family, too often, the stigma around mental health prevents people who need help from seeking it. But that stigma doesn't make any sense. Whether an illness affects your heart, your arm or your brain, it's still an illness, and those should be the only distinctions we should make. Clear that getting help isn't a sign of weakness - we should ensure that people can get the treatment they need."

Sources: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/statistics/men-women-statistics>  
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/friendship-and-mental-health#text=friendship%20is%20a%20crucial%20element>

### Group 2: Community Safety (G)

## CONFIDENCE IN POLICE AND AUTHORITIES

**70%** of Humberside residents said that they are confident in the police

Only **19%** of teenagers who were victims or witnesses of violence had reported the instance to the police. However, where this involved a weapon, **43%** reported to the police

**26%** of teenagers say they want to see more police activity and visibility

When modern Policing was founded in the UK in 1829, it was done so under the idea of 'policing by consent' meaning that the power of police is given by public approval as opposed to being given by the state

**"...The power of the police to fulfil their function and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect."**  
 Peel's 2nd Principle of Policing

A snap poll of 16-25 years olds found **92%** of people didn't report when their drink was spiked

**YOPE Youth Panel Report** highlights urgent need for more action to improve trust between the police and young people

### Levels of Trust in Public Institutions

Institution	Percentage
The NHS	80%
Courts and Legal systems	68%
Education system	66%
Social care services	42%
News/ Media	32%

**Revealed: Trust in politicians at lowest level on record**

**63%** of people surveyed saw politicians as merely 'out for themselves'

### Group 7: Aspirations and Opportunities (G)

## YOUTH VOICE

The Youth Voice census is a yearly, online survey that asks young adults about their experiences of study and employment to better understand the barriers faced by young people. In 2020 over 60,000 people downloaded the survey across the UK.

Young people continue to say they **feel unprepared for their futures** with **17 groups** agreeing with the statement

**32%** of young people looking for work felt their biggest barrier was anxiety

**56.6%** of young people looking for work felt their biggest barrier was a lack of work experience

**Low pay and personal and qualification requirements are reported as the biggest factors that stop people applying for entry level jobs**

Students that believe they understand the skill employers want

People aged 19+ who believe they can write a CV

People aged 19+ who believe they can prepare for an assessment centre

People aged 19+ who believe they can prepare for an interview

People aged 19+ who believe Employers are supportive of hiring young people

**The top three qualities young people look for from Employers:**

- Fair Pay
- Training & development opportunities
- A good reputation

**For those in work**

**56.3%** of young people feel they are paid fairly for the work they do

**59.9%** agree that they have been given enough training to do their job well

**50.4%** rated their Induction as good

**29.7%** of young people rated career advice in secondary school as 'good'

**59.1%** of young people received one instance of work experience during Secondary school

### Group 4: Diverse Experiences (G)

## IMPROVING EQUALITY

**"We are all in the same box and we need allyship!" - 'oung person - Hull Hope Hack**

Public support for Trans policy action is strong, for example **62%** of the public believe that conversion therapy targeted at Trans people should be banned

**10%** of the British Public believe that the most important quality for men to aspire to having is treating all people equally

**"I want to change the idea of being called 'Other' - Young person, Hull Hope Hack**

Since 2015, the average recorded amount of time that fathers spend looking after their children has increased by **18%**

As of 2022, the UK ranked **22nd** in the world for Gender equality, having closed **78%** of the gender gap in terms of economic participation and opportunities, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment

Given the current progress rate, it is estimated it will take **132 years** to reach full gender parity across the world, with current parity standing at **68.1%** worldwide

Since Mohamed Salah joined Liverpool F.C., hate crimes in the Liverpool area dropped by **16%** and anti-Muslim tweets by fans **halved**

The Clooney Foundation for Justice fights for human rights across the world, such as protecting minorities from war crimes

**"I don't like the term BAME... it feels like you're either White or BAME"**

**"Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities"**

**Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome to be successful, rather than giving everyone the exact same thing and expect that that will make people equal"**

**"Students would prefer to focus on the specific issues faced by specific ethnic groups, and move away from using the term BAME" (BAME: Black and Minority Ethnic)**

Sources: <https://hullunion.com/news/article/BAME-rep-group>  
<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Missions/18707/Equality-versus-Equity>  
[https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/polling\\_on\\_trans\\_people.pdf](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/polling_on_trans_people.pdf)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/dec/25/number-of-stay-at-home-dads-in-uk-up-by-a-third-since-before-pandemic>  
[https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGI\\_2022.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGI_2022.pdf)

The workshops were facilitated by staff from the Humber VPP and a range of external partners, sourced from both local and national organisations, who provided guidance and structure, ensuring all members of the group felt included and encouraged to participate.

It was vital for the workshops to be engaging and to encourage open discussion amongst the group. Therefore, ice-breaker activities were used to make the group feel more comfortable in expressing themselves. Facilitators also used this opportunity to lay some mutual ground rules which focussed on respect for one another.

After brainstorming ideas and summarising their thoughts and opinions, the event concluded with feedback from each group, who presented their collective solutions. The young people were encouraged to use creative freedom, and therefore the presentations were delivered in a variety of formats.

### 2.3 The Hope Trees

Throughout the events young people were encouraged to share their hopes and dreams for the future by hanging them on the Hope Trees that were on display in the venues. These hopes and dreams were a mixture of personal aspirations and more global hopes for future generations. Below is a sample of what young people shared at the events.

**“I hope that it gets easier to get a job as a young person.”**

**“I’d like to join the army as an officer.”**

**“...to get a good well-paying job...that will provide a comfortable lifestyle and allow me to afford everything I want without worrying about whether I’ll be able to eat or not.”**

**“Everyone to be kinder to each other in the future.”**

**“For young people to have a voice: voice their opinions and be heard.”**

**“For all young people to be given the same opportunities.”**

**“I hope to make our area a better and safer place.”**

**“I hope to get into University and achieve my dream of being a paramedic.”**

Fig 3. The Hope Trees



### 3. How we measured the impact

The Humber VPP had attempted to capture feedback via a post-event survey for the Hull Hope Hack, however there was little opportunity to promote this during the event, and as a result, the survey return rate was limited and offered no meaningful insight.

Taking this into account, and with the aim of measuring the impact of these events, the survey was developed further and incorporated into the order for the day. Two surveys were developed using an online application, Slido, which participants accessed via either a QR code or by downloading the app and joining with an event code.

In the surveys we asked young people seven Likert scale questions at the start of the day, which related to each of the topic areas. For example; **“Today/right now, how do you feel about community safety in and around the area that you live?”** At the end of the event, we asked the young people how they felt about that same question after participating in the discussions and hearing all the presentations.

The Slido app also allowed participants to submit questions and comments throughout the day - subject to VPP moderation. However, the use of this feature was limited and not always relevant to the theme of the event.

Analysis of the overall feedback from these surveys showed that young people felt more positive by the end of the event, with the biggest positive difference being in relation to community safety.

A highlight from this data is that 62% of respondents said that they felt more confident about being themselves at the end of the event.

Fig 4. Table of combined survey results

Topic	Start of the day survey: 188 (61%)	End of the day survey: 82 (26%)	Change in percentage points
Community Safety	24% positive	63% positive	↑ 39
Youth Voice and Influence	16% positive	48% positive	↑ 32
Life skills	35% positive	58% positive	↑ 23
Sports and Activities	39% positive	55% positive	↑ 16
Mental Health and Wellbeing	35% positive	51% positive	↑ 16
Aspirations and Opportunity	40% positive	59% positive	↑ 19
<b>Diverse Experiences: Being yourself at work / college / University / Work</b>	53% of respondents said they felt positive about being themselves at school / college / University / work.	We asked respondents whether they felt more, or less confident (or the same) to be themselves after the event – 62% answered that they felt more confident.	↑

The end of event survey also included questions relating to participants' views of the event, which varied depending on how well the event had been explained to the young people beforehand, and their understanding and expectations. For example, some schools had made



the event mandatory for certain year groups, and the young people told us that they were not fully aware of who else would be at the event and what the expectations of them were. This caused some significant distress for a small number of participants, and at one event resulted in a break-away group forming in the wellbeing area. This approach to mandating the event, meant that some young people did not wish to engage or participate in the discussions, and told us that they would not have chosen to come. This provides significant learning for the VPP when organising any future engagement events, in ensuring that young people are well-informed, and that attendance and engagement is voluntary.

We also asked the young people how best we could engage with them in the future, giving them seven options of which they could select multiple options – surveys, face to face groups or forums, newsletters, similar events, social media, other, and not interested. The table below shows the combined results from 78 respondents.

*Fig 5. Survey results – Future engagement*

<b>Surveys</b>	47%	<b>Other</b>	0%
<b>Face to face groups/forums</b>	40%	<b>Not interested</b>	14%
<b>Newsletters</b>	6%		
<b>Similar events</b>	40%		
<b>Social Media</b>	41%		

The VPP would like to thank everyone who participated and supported in the Humberside Hope Hacks, ensuring that the voices of young people influence and inform the work around the prevention of violence, and help us to better understand young people’s views on solutions to issues within our communities.

Findings reports from each Hope Hack have been produced, outlining the key issues and solutions raised, and can be found in the appendices of this report. The VPP also intends on continuing to work with the young people who attended these events, to co-produce an audio-visual version of the report. All reports will be published on the VPP website – [www.humbervpp.org](http://www.humbervpp.org)

## 4. The Findings

Following the events, the qualitative data was collated and analysed to identify common themes and trends. Although each area has its own unique and pertinent themes, by analysing the data from all four events, we have identified four themes that are shared by across all four areas.

These are: ***Preparing young people for adulthood; Creating safe spaces; Inclusion and feeling heard;*** and ***Education.***

### ***Preparing young people for adulthood***

The young people we have engaged with told us that they do not feel that they have the necessary skills and knowledge needed for adulthood and independent living. They suggested that there is a gap in education in providing basic practical life skills, work experience and financial education.

Conversations relating to financial knowledge featured heavily across all four events, which could be attributed to the current economic climate and their own awareness and experiences of this. These conversations included budgeting, loans and debt, how to pay for bills and what bills will they be expected to pay, and how to get on the property ladder, as some of the issues young people are concerned about. Although it was acknowledged that there is some information and guidance already available, there is a need for this to be aimed at young people, providing basic information without assuming they already have some knowledge and awareness. The groups also suggested that real-world scenarios and teaching could be incorporated into existing subjects under the national curriculum.

Although 'Life skills' was a topic in its own right, the subject was also brought up in multiple other topic groups. Many of the young people who attended the events shared that they do not possess basic practical skills that would enable them to live independently. Participants suggested that workshops and groups could be set up to help teach young people basic life skills, as well as this being an option within the national curriculum.

It was apparent from conversations with the young people that the availability and opportunity for work experience in school and college varies across the Humber and from setting to setting, with some young people not having access to this opportunity at all. This further demonstrates the pressure that has been described by young people, to have their education and employment routes mapped out without having an insight into what that might look like and what opportunities are open to them.

These examples of feeling ill-equipped for living independently demonstrate a vulnerability in our young people, which poses further potential risks of exploitation, and raises questions around how services prepare and support the transition from childhood to adulthood.

### ***Creating safe spaces***

Young people told us through multiple topic groups that they would like there to be more safe spaces for young people to go, socialise, seek advice and support, and take part in activities.

At each Hope Hack, participants gave examples of times when they feel unsafe or locations they know to avoid. These included certain neighbourhoods, parks, and public spaces. However, the perception and experiences of feeling unsafe differed between genders. For example, female participants spoke about being conscious of safety in numbers and feeling safer when they are in

mixed-gendered social groups. They gave examples of being chased by adults, having their drinks spiked, being cat-called and whistled at in the street, and feeling uncomfortable in the presence of people under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Male participants, on the other hand, spoke more about acquisitive crime, drug use, and violence that they had witnessed or experienced. It was also noted that males and females from the same areas had different perceptions on how safe/unsafe a place was.

The subject of safe spaces was raised in several contexts, including within sports and education settings. Young people told us that sports clubs and groups are not always inclusive or tailored to individual needs and interests. For example, young females explained that they would be more likely to join in sports sessions if there was a female-only option, where they could feel comfortable and free from judgement.

Safe spaces in education have been raised in all qualitative pieces of work that the VPP has conducted so far, with many young people calling for education settings to be made safer. Many young people we have engaged with during these pieces of work have described environments where complaints of bullying, discrimination and unfair treatment do not appear to be acted upon or dealt with effectively.

When discussing what a safe space might look like, the young people suggested ideas such as youth clubs or hubs. They stressed the need for these spaces to be inclusive and accessible and where people can feel comfortable and confident to be themselves, somewhere they can go to socialise, to get advice, help others, and to stay active.

Through other pieces of qualitative research, we asked young people their views on why young people might commit crime or participate in criminal and risky behaviours. Their suggestions included examples such as boredom, having nowhere for young people to go, peer influences, and escapism.

These themes and discussions raise further questions about how accessible and inclusive existing youth provisions are, and how they could be improved to ensure that young people have a safe and welcoming environment to access.

### ***Inclusion and feeling heard***

A real positive from these events was the way in which these young people spoke about making communities and services more inclusive and accessible. This was highlighted from the topics they were discussing, right through to the way they listened and responded to each other, enabling those who wished to share their own experiences, to feel supported to do so.

When talking about youth voice and influence, very few young people were aware of the local groups and forums that exist to represent the voices of young people in Humberside. They described feeling that the people who make the decisions about things that impact them have unrealistic expectations of them and do not understand the issues that young people face. For many of the young people who attended the events, this was a unique opportunity to share their views and opinions on topics that are important to them. However, this was not the case for some, who were keen to express their frustrations that they had participated in similar engagement and consultation events in the past and seen very little change or impact. These young people told us that they did not feel their voices had been heard and they had little influence over the decisions that directly impact them.

The groups talked about the different stereotypes that are associated with young people, which they feel are driven by the media and the government, which are damaging and lead to them feeling disengaged and detached from the communities and services where they live. However, they also spoke of their hopes of challenging and changing these stereotypes of young people through positive action and fairer representation.

Discussions around mental health and wellbeing provided some insight into how young people experience and access support services in Humberside. They described services which cannot meet a multitude of needs and provide advice and information that young people find ineffective and minimising of their concerns and emotions. Many of the participants of these groups shared their experiences of being moved from service to service, having to retell their stories over and over again, feeling that they are not being listened to or heard. On reflection of the discussions that took place, it raises questions about how service providers manage expectations and the transparency of their service provision.

This theme demonstrates that young people feel they are unfairly and inaccurately represented both in the media and in decision making. This presents a risk of young people becoming disengaged, disillusioned and unreachable in the future.

### ***Education***

Education was high on the topics of conversation during the events, unsurprisingly considering the cohort of attendees. Many of the young people were keen to share their own experiences of school and college and make suggestions of how the education system could be improved. When discussing solutions, the young people linked many of the topics back to the education system. For example, including life skills, financial education and politics in the curriculum and schools actively teaching about and celebrating diversity and inclusion from an early age.

The mental health groups explained that mental health and wellbeing support in schools is promoted but not resourced to support it in practice. Young people felt that better practical support in schools to manage stress and anxiety would improve longer term mental health.

A person's experiences of Physical Education (PE) lessons were also highlighted as an indicator for how they might view sport and other activities as an adult. Many of the young people described feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, anxiety and being judged, when they talked about PE in school. They discussed that the types of sports and activities are not always accessible or inclusive for all young people, and there is little understanding or empathy around different abilities and needs.

In addition to these topics, young people told us that they would like the education system to be more inclusive and person-centred in the way young people are taught. They would like to feel safer at school, in the knowledge that instances of bullying and discrimination will be dealt with effectively, and that they will be listened to and treated fairly. Without exception, young people from across all the engagement projects we have conducted so far, have told us that school consequence systems are ineffective and only lead to further disengagement and a breakdown of communication between the young person and the school.

Experiences of college were a direct contrast, with young people describing an environment where they were treated as individuals, with respect, and this made a significant impact on their engagement and attitude towards college and their education.

Education plays a significant role in a young person's life in influencing their perceptions and attitudes towards life as an adult. It is easy to assume that education refers only to schools and colleges, however the young people we engaged with proposed that education should be more inclusive, engaging and creative in its approach. They suggested workshops, training sessions, online applications and resources, and practical learning opportunities that could be implemented outside of a school environment and could make education accessible for a variety of learning needs and styles.

## 5. The Analysis

### 5.1 Mental health & Wellbeing

#### *The issues*

A review of this topic across all four events shows some commonalities in what participants considered to be the issues and, equally, what could be the solutions.

Each area considered the differences in **gendered experiences** of mental health. They identified that social media contributes to and impacts negative influences on women and girls, *“Social media and influencers promote perfection when everyone is not perfect.”* This was not seen to be the case for men and boys, instead, the absence of open and normalised discussion around emotions and mental health was considered to be the dominant factor. *“Men don’t feel as comfortable to open up because of stigma of a man needing to be strong and not emotional.”* *“Male celebrities hide their emotions as the media destroy them for it. It is not spoken about enough and no one is getting the help they need.”*

Aside from gender stereotypes, young people felt that the **stereotypes surrounding young people and mental health are a barrier to them accessing the right level of support when they need it**. Participants shared their own experiences of feeling judged and of their situations not being taken seriously because of their age. *“Young people don’t get listened to because of the stigma of teenagers not being mature enough.”* While others expressed that there is a stigma attached to reaching out for support and advice. *“People make a lot of assumptions when people claim to be struggling with mental health issues. Young people need education on problems that may occur throughout life.”*

It is important to note that all of the participants of the Mental Health & Wellbeing topic groups told us that they feel there is **a lack of mental health and wellbeing support available for children and young people in Humberside, and the support that does exist falls short of meeting their needs**. *“There is limited availability to help. Children need more access to support and health. Waiting lists are extremely long and can cause more problems with a young child’s mental health.”*

#### *The solutions*

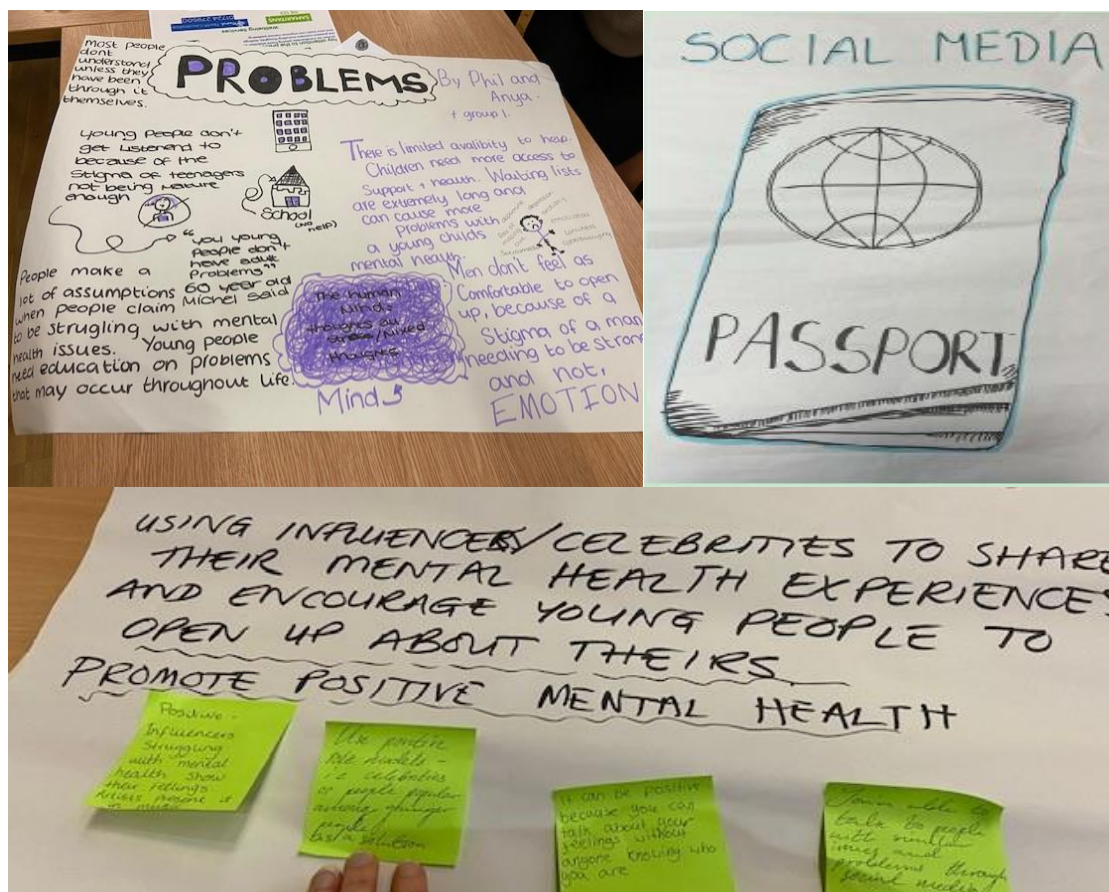
Participants shared their ideas on what could improve mental health services and the wellbeing of young people in Humberside. They acknowledged that mental health support does not lend itself to a one-size fits all approach, and as such, **a person-focused approach** is needed with greater emphasis on the individual’s needs rather than the needs of the service. *“Be person focused – different types of therapy.”* This point is echoed through the range of qualitative products that the VPP has produced during 2023/24, with young people describing a system in which they feel they are “pushed from pillar to post”, where their needs cannot be met by a single service.

Young people, from across a range of topic groups and other engagement projects, told us that schools and other education settings have a lack of mental health support and resource available, and that they would like to see **“more mental health staff in schools and overall mental health facilities.”** There was an acknowledgement that schools are doing more in terms of raising awareness, but that this is not supported by resource and facilities for students.

Young people acknowledged that social media can be both a positive and a negative influence depending on the user and their agenda. They discussed the damaging impact that social media can have on younger people and described a need for **“stronger controls on social media times”** and even implementing **“social media passports”** for stronger accountability and regulation for social media platforms. Participants also highlighted the responsibilities that influencers and celebrities have in championing positive mental health and being honest and transparent in their content.

Establishing environments where young people feel safe and supported was highlighted as a key theme. **“Safe spaces for young people to go and be themselves and do activities.”** They highlighted that these spaces do not have to be formal counselling or therapy services **“more informal services to support young people – youth clubs.”**

Fig 6, 7 & 8 Examples of presentations from the ‘Mental Health & Wellbeing’ topic groups.



## 5.2 Community Safety

### *The issues*

Although the participants' experiences and views on community safety where they live differed from one another, there were two common themes that were discussed across all four events.

Young people felt that **the environment of an area has a significant impact on the level of safety and crime experienced or perceived to exist**. Many of the participants were able to give examples of places and areas that they knew to avoid or where they had experienced feeling unsafe. When asked to describe these areas and the reasons why they felt unsafe, they described run down houses and buildings, graffiti, council housing, litter and fly-tipping, and general signs of deprivation. "There is more litter in Brid than hope." In contrast they gave examples of feeling safe in areas of evident affluence. Young people also spoke about how better street lighting and CCTV would act as a deterrent which would, in turn, make people feel safer.

Participants expressed **low expectations of police response** to incidents of crimes, some of which was as a result of their own individual experiences of being a victim of crime. For example, one group talked about their experiences of having their drinks spiked. When asked whether they reported these incidents to the police, they admitted they had not because "it's so common now that nothing would happen." Others described feeling targeted by police because of stereotypes that are associated with young people or particular areas and communities "I don't think police have respect for the youth and stop people due to stereotypes." "I don't see many police other than around my area."

### *The solutions*

Participants were able to draw on their own experiences and what would have helped them to feel safer, to be able to contribute ideas and solutions to improve community safety. In terms of environmental changes, they suggested improving **street lighting and increasing CCTV** as deterrents. As with participants across other topic groups, these young people suggested opening more **youth clubs** and creating **safer places for them to meet**.

Young people said that they would like to see **more positive engagement from police** and for other **authorities to listen** to what their issues and needs are, without judgement or assumption. Participants in Bridlington in particular felt that their voices are unheard, and that they had been part of similar discussions previously, but they were yet to see any meaningful change.

These groups acknowledged that some young people do commit crime, and that some areas do experience more criminal activity, but suggested that agencies should "work with those who commit crimes to find out why, creating a deeper understanding."



## 5.3 Youth Voice and Influence

### *The issues*

The national and local data and headlines provided for the groups gave examples of the variety of youth councils and forums that exist across the UK. **Many of the participants were unaware of these forums and how young people are represented.** This highlighted a need for more awareness raising and education around these groups, their work, and how young people can get involved. In addition, participants felt that politics and youth voice is neither included nor encouraged within the current education system and curriculum. “Schools should teach about real world and politics.” Whilst many education settings have student councils, the participants commented that these are often “just for show and ineffective.”

Young people expressed that **they often do not feel listened to or consulted on the decisions that directly impact on them** “our opinion doesn’t feel valued,” and as a result “if young people don’t feel heard, they are not going to want to be active citizens.” The groups discussed the stereotypes that young people face, and how these stereotypes may influence how authorities engage with them.

### *The solutions*

Young people told us that they would like **politics and social policy to be included in the curriculum at school or college**, to enable them to make informed contributions to national and local decision making.

**They would like to see and hear more about the groups, forums and councils that are representing them**, and how they can be included in discussions at a local level.

The participants wanted to be able to change and challenge the stereotypes and encourage others to “use their voices to change society’s perception of them.” To support this, young people need to see themselves fairly represented in the media and in local news stories.

## 5.4 Diverse Experiences

### *The issues*

The first Hope Hack in Hull included topics such as Race & Diversity and Gender. Following the Humber-wide consultation, these topics were combined into the topic Diverse Experiences.

The participants of these groups discussed how **experiences of safety can differ dependent on an individual's gender, gender identification, sexual orientation and disabilities**. "I was shocked by how much discrimination there is in regard to disability and employment." "Women and girls don't feel safe." Through these discussions participants identified that safe spaces and environments are perceived differently by females compared with males. For example, when discussing areas which they avoid, especially when walking alone, the female participants described different areas to the male participants.

The young people acknowledged that many of the **stereotypes that people face are a product of learnt behaviour from family or peer influences, and what is portrayed in the media**. Young people described feeling judged by others for the way they are or present themselves. They also told us that they feel there is a lot of pressure put on young people to conform to society's expectations, "pressure to grow up and prove ourselves."

### *The solutions*

**Creating safe environments within communities** was identified as a key solution from this topic. When talking about environments, the young people were not only talking about physical safe spaces, but also creating a culture in which everyone feels safe, comfortable to be themselves and free from discrimination. "We need to be more creative as a society." "I feel like people should make them feel more comfortable in society so they feel like they can speak up." Ideas around safe environments also included more support for victims, stronger regulations and laws, and more positive interactions from police and other authorities.

Participants felt that **change could be brought about through education** at an early age. "Start teaching about diversity at Primary school." "Education needs to start with this generation." They also acknowledged the role that parents can play in forcing this change, by teaching their children about respect for other people, kindness and acceptance. One group added that it is important to "understand why people are angry" and where this discrimination comes from in order to effect change.

Fig 9. Poem written and presented by the 'Diverse Experiences' topic group at the Bridlington Hope Hack

In the realm of youth where dreams ignite,  
Equality's flame burns ever bright.  
Opportunities canvas vast and wide,  
A journey embarked with hope as a guide.

We hope to secure our area,  
To prevent it from getting scarier.  
We do this by strengthening our community,  
To promote upmost inclusion and unity.

Partners, police and teachers too,  
This is our community crew.  
They provide us with safe spaces,  
To make our area the best of places.

Stress, pubs and clubs,  
Peer pressure turns us to drugs.  
We need our friends to release the steam,  
But not so much that it dims our gleam.

Use online areas whilst being smart,  
Protect your info and be careful who you trust from the start.  
Think before you share,  
And always be aware.

To us, safety is key,  
Our ideas, from our eyes, you must see.  
Opportunities must knock at our door,  
For us to get involved and explore.

Please make them accessible and free,  
A place for us, a safe sanctuary.  
Give us opportunities big and small,  
Allow us to chase our dreams and give it our all.

Hand in hand, regardless of origin,  
A unity forged, let prejudice dim.  
For in the embrace of equal chance,  
The future blossoms...

**LISTEN HOPE HACK, THIS  
IS OUR BATTLE STANCE!**

## 5.5 Sports and Other Activities

### *The issues*

The sports and other activities topic was added following Hull Hope Hack and online consultation. The Humber VPP funds and commissions several sports and activity interventions for young people across the region (as do some of our partner organisations), however the participants of these topic groups told us that there are still barriers to overcome and although as a society we have come along way, there is still much to be done to make sports and activities more accessible.

All of the groups highlighted that **gender differences are not always accounted for or understood**. For example, throughout these Hope Hack events and other qualitative projects that have been conducted by Humber VPP, young girls shared their experiences of not feeling comfortable or confident in accessing sports and activities with boys. The main reason for this being that they feel judged, self-conscious and overly aware of their body image. It has also been highlighted that if female-only sports interventions were offered, they would be more likely to attend.

The females in the topic groups also shared that they feel that there is a lack of understanding and empathy from male coaches and teachers about issues that affect young females, and therefore they feel more anxious in approaching them.

Participants of these groups also noted **how few role models there are for people with disabilities or neurodivergences in sport**. They reflected that this could lead people to feel that they would not be welcome, or that sessions would not be able to accommodate their needs.

The cost, location and timing of sessions were also discussed as being barriers for many people.

Young people described the **mandatory nature of sport in education as being a dominant factor as to why people do not access sports activities outside of and beyond school**. They felt that choice and flexibility over the types of activities could improve young people's experiences and perceptions of sport and physical activities.

### *The solutions*

The participants of these groups shared their ideas on how **sports and other activities could be more engaging and inclusive**, "It helps a lot when we're actively involved in the lesson, with discussions and activities rather than just speaking at us." "Work with people who...we know that they might benefit or might want to be involved but don't know how to access."

They continued that they would like sports and activities "to become accessible to all...with no exceptions." This might include **introducing different types of sports clubs, or other types of physical activity and being more creative with what can be offered**. Other suggestions were "More teams for girls outside of school." "Girls are made or expected to act in a certain way, and there needs to be greater understanding from males."

## 5.6 Life Skills

### *The issues*

The participants from this topic were unanimous in their views and discussions across all four events. Young people from these groups told us that they do not feel confident and prepared for adulthood and being independent. This is particularly important given that the cohort of young people involved in these events are on the cusp of adulthood themselves, and therefore they felt closer to this topic than some of the others.

The issues identified by these groups were twofold; **a lack of financial knowledge**, “The majority of young people do not feel confident with money.” and **a lack of practical knowledge needed to live independently**. The young people felt that the education system and national curriculum does not prepare them for the real-world. “Rather than spending time reading Macbeth, I could have learned about different bank accounts, ways to pay a mortgage and car finance...” “Lessons should have more focus on employability and general skills.”

The groups discussed that these skills should also be learnt from parents or carers, “you are influenced by people you know” but reflected that many adults do not have this knowledge either – particularly in relation to financial stability, so they may not always be the most appropriate source of education.

### *The solutions*

The participants felt that the main solution to these issues would be to **introduce financial and life skills lessons into the national curriculum** “Make financial lessons a compulsory part of the curriculum so people can learn crucial skills and wise spending limits and habits.” “Workshops and mandatory lessons in school for life skills.” Some reflected that these lessons or skills could be incorporated into existing lessons, for example, applying a real-world context to mathematics and using situations that young people can identify and relate to.

One group suggested that **workshops could be held outside of formal education**, with the aim of providing people with necessary life skills. These could cover a variety of elements such as social skills, basic practical skills, cooking skills, interview skills etc.

## 5.7 Aspirations and Opportunities

### *The issues*

Although the participants across the four events took different approaches and had different perceptions of this topic, there were some clear themes that could be identified across all of them.

The first of these themes is the role that the education system plays in fostering aspirations and encouraging opportunities. However, young people felt that **schools and education settings could do more to support them in achieving their aspirations and providing opportunities to all young people.** “Preparations and support from colleges and school, for University and College interviews don’t exist.” “Points system is stopping people from pursuing careers/passions.”

Young people from alternative education provisions shared their experiences of the education system “...mainstream schools let people down who have learning needs...” and gave examples of the negative perceptions that people have of them because of the education setting they were in.

The second theme, which is similar to those identified in the Life Skills topic groups, is that **young people do not feel prepared for the real-world and what is expected of them.** The participants expressed that they feel there is an expectation on them “to know it all,” and to know the path they want to take and how to get there, from an early age. Some participants described feeling a “pressure to grow up and prove ourselves,” without having been given the tools to do so. One group commented that “people making the rules don’t have realistic expectations for young people.”

### *The solutions*

To tackle these issues, the participants stressed that **expectations of young people need to be matched with providing them with the tools and opportunities to reach their potential and meet those expectations.** Otherwise, it feels to them that they are being set up to fail. “Prepare young people for the lives they’re expected to live.”

This could be achieved by supporting with interview practice, career days, work experience and trial employment opportunities. Providing practical workshops and online resources could support people to learn how to live independently and thrive. Participants suggested resources such as a life skills helpline or to encourage organisations to create educational resources in understandable and accessible language on topics such as energy bills, council tax, etc., to give people a better understanding.

In terms of formal education, the young people suggested allowing “...school children to learn life skills by giving them in lessons” , and potentially opening up new subject options for GCSE’s. One group suggested that GCSE’s and A-Levels could be less exam-focused as it is “unfair to have everything resting on one exam on the day.”

Fig 10. Image and quote from the 'Aspirations and Opportunities' group at the Bridlington Hope Hack



***“People always say if you want to change the world you have to change your behaviour. However, we don’t want to change the world, we want to change our future. Everyone should be allowed to achieve their aspirations and opportunities.”***

## **6. Next steps**

The findings from this report provide a baseline understanding of how young people in Humberside feel about the areas they live in, the issues they face, and their ideas on how these could be solved. This also gives us a greater understanding of the unique experiences and issues impacting young people in each local authority area, which will support the delivery of more targeted qualitative research moving forward.

The VPP intends on continuing to work with young people who attended these events, to co-produce an audio-visual version of this report, which will be presented to the local schools, colleges, PRU’s and community groups that have participated and engaged with the Hope Hacks.

This report, alongside the findings reports from each area Hope Hack will be published on the VPP website – [www.humbervpp.org](http://www.humbervpp.org)

## Appendix

Hull Hope Hack findings report (March 2023)

Bridlington Hope Hack findings report (November 2023)

Grimsby Hope Hack findings report (December 2023)

Scunthorpe Hope Hack findings report (March 2024)