

REACH

Raising Aspirations
for young people
in St Helens



Public Health
England



St. Helens Council

Reach Delivery & Aims

Reach aims to support young people to grow up to have a life where they experience fulfillment, not just focused on academic achievements, job roles and careers, but fulfillment in what they as an individual would like to achieve, who do they want to be?

Vibe have worked across St Helens, engaged with 6 High schools within the area of Parr, Newton and Sutton, with the overall aim to raise the aspirations of these young people.

Reach sessions were delivered in two parts:

Part 1: Consulting with young people to explore the meaning of aspirations, what their hopes and dreams are and what they feel are the barriers that might stop them from achieving.

Part 2: Solution focused workshops delivered by youth workers delving into the young people's identified barriers, the workshops facilitated the young people to put forward solutions they see will help them in finding ways to overcome these barriers.



- Supporting young people to explore aspirations
- Identify the barriers to aspiration
- Focus on solutions to raise aspiration

PARTICIPATING HIGH SCHOOLS

6

CONSULTATION
SESSIONS HELD

8

SOLUTION WORKSHOP
THEMES

32

16

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

120

DELIVERY HOURS
FACE TO FACE



ICEBREAKERS

YEARS

1058

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED

7,8+9

INVOLVED

SEND

REPRESENTATION



Through the consultation sessions, young people shared their understanding of "Aspiration ", exploring their wants, their future, ambitions, goals, hopes and dreams.

Young people worked with the youth workers to identify and share their goals and dreams, though their developing years and beyond education. Themes within their goals have been summarised below.

"To have lots of money"

"To have a good career"

"To have a family"

"To drive a good car"

"To pass my exams"

"To have a nice house"

"To be famous"

"To have kids"

"To get married"

"To be healthy"

"To play football"

"To be my true self"

"To travel the world"

"To be loved"

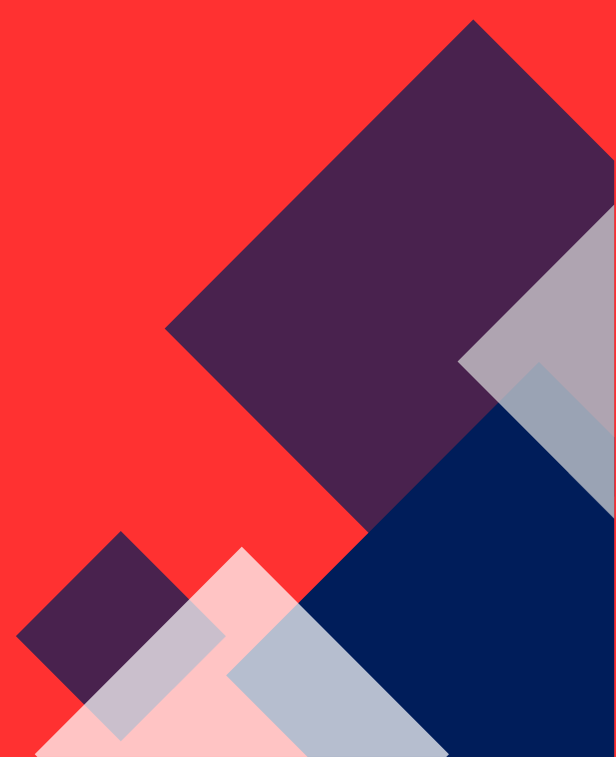
"To learn to drive"

"To get a pet"

"To be happy"

"To make a new friend"


GOALS



The Barriers to Aspiration



What's stopping you?

The second part of all consultations lead young people through a series of activities to help them identify what they feel are the barriers to young people growing up in St Helens to fulfill their aspirations.

The following slides capture in their words the 16 barriers identified by the young people of St Helens, their youth voice demonstrates what they see as the challenges they face to reach their goals.

Time

- Not having/making the time to dedicate towards achieving my goals.
- Being caught up with other tasks and not focusing on my future.
- Never being able to strike a balance.
- School or other activities taking time away from sports/skills practice.

My Location/Area

- St Helens doesn't provide enough opportunities for young people.
- Limited access to services and no safe spaces for young people.
- Unsafe streets and crime.
- St Helens are one of the most deprived areas in England.

Money

- Not being able to afford things, e.g. transport.
- We feel we can't access opportunities without money.
- Cost of living is going up and we won't be able to afford to survive.
- Need money to provide for our basic needs.
- Can't afford to pay for school trips
- No money to join sports clubs

My Age

- Being too young to get work experience in what I want to do.
- Having to make choices at an age when I am unsure about what I want to do.
- Not being old enough to get a job yet.
- When leaving school, competition, going up against people older and wiser than me.

Discrimination

- Not having the same opportunities as everyone else.
- Can't do certain things because I am a girl or a boy.
- Language barriers stopping people from working/achieving.

Mental Health

- Mental Health issues stop me from reaching my full potential.
- Having anxiety or depression, long waiting list for support for young people.
- Not being able to access help to support my mental health.
- Poor mental health makes me think negative and that I can't do things.

Peers

- Other people telling me I can't.
- Friends pressuring me.
- Having poor role models in my life.
- Fear of being judged by others.
- Bullying.
- Teachers tell me I am not good enough or I won't achieve my targets.

Physical Health

- Physical health can stop me getting a job I want.
- People with disabilities might not have as many opportunities.
- Injuries or illness.
- Being a full time carer stops me from achieving.
- No focus on importance of my physical health, costs too much to go to gym classes

Self Handicapping

- Lack of self confidence.
- Having low self esteem.
- Poor Body image.
- Overthinking or having a negative mindset.
- Always believing I can't.
- Avoiding activities, Fear of failure

Motivation

- Having low motivation and not wanting to get out of bed in the morning.
- Being lazy and not working towards my goals.
- Not being able to focus on the things I want to achieve or in school.

Support

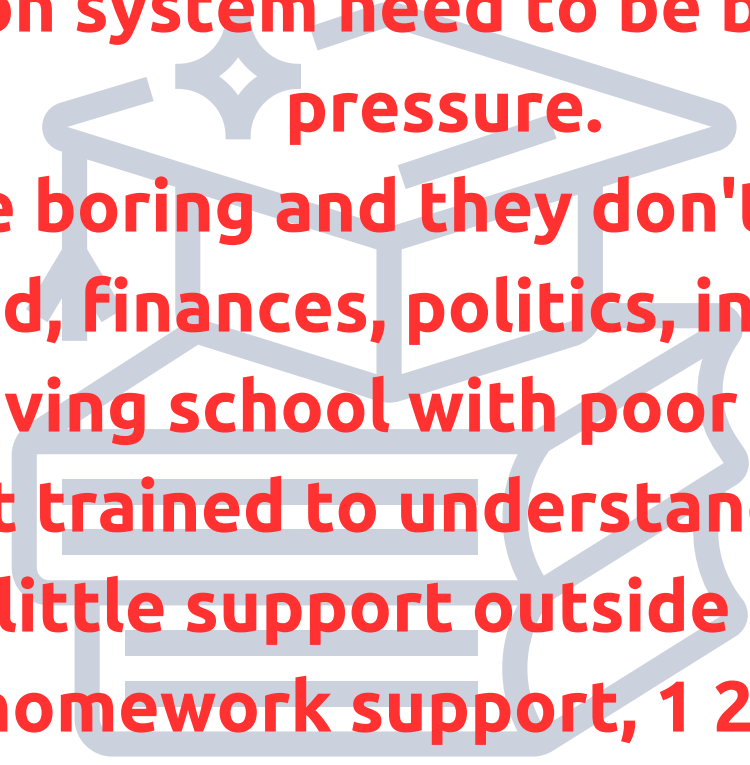
- Not knowing my options or what I want to do and having no support or guidance.
- Lack of services in my area that can help me grow.
- Not having the resources to achieve.
- Advice and support is hard to come by.
- No support from family to push myself.

Quick Wins

- Everyone wants to be a youtuber or Tik Tok famous.
- Influencers and celebrities set unrealistic expectations for us.
- Young people say they don't need school because they will be famous.

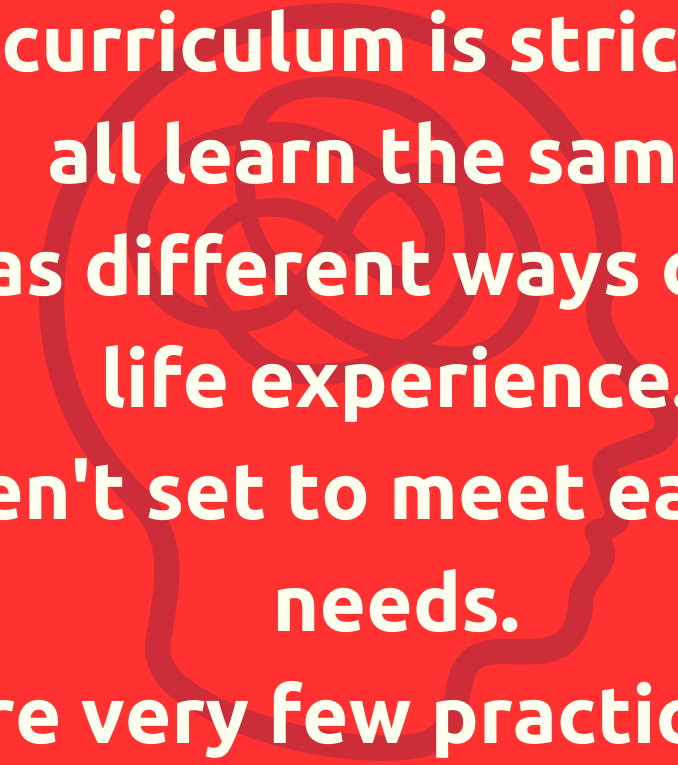
Education

- The education system need to be better - too much pressure.
- Lessons are boring and they don't prepare us for adulthood, finances, politics, insurance, law.
- Leaving school with poor grades.
- Staff aren't trained to understand all our needs.
- There is little support outside of school for learning - homework support, 1 2 1 tutoring etc.



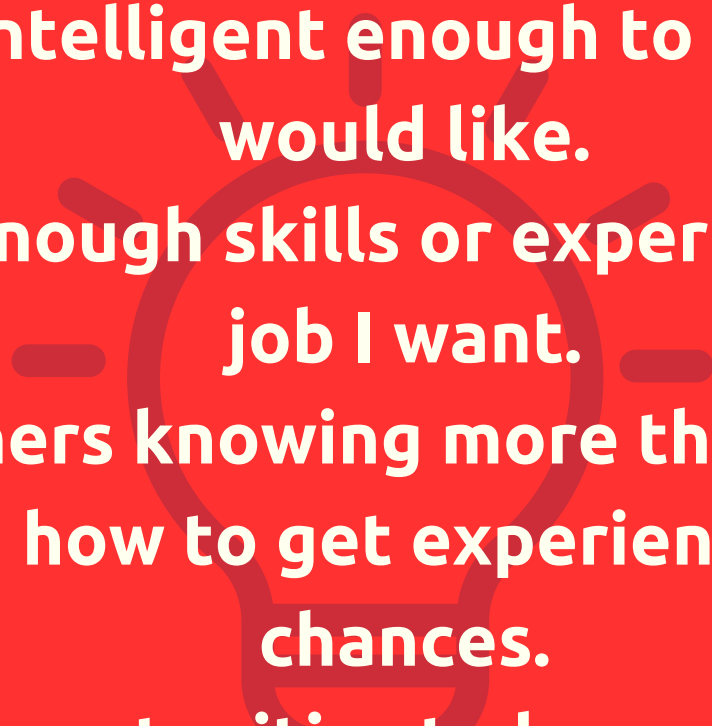
Learning Styles

- The school curriculum is strict and we don't all learn the same.
- Everyone has different ways of learning and life experience.
- Lessons aren't set to meet each individuals needs.
- There are very few practical courses.



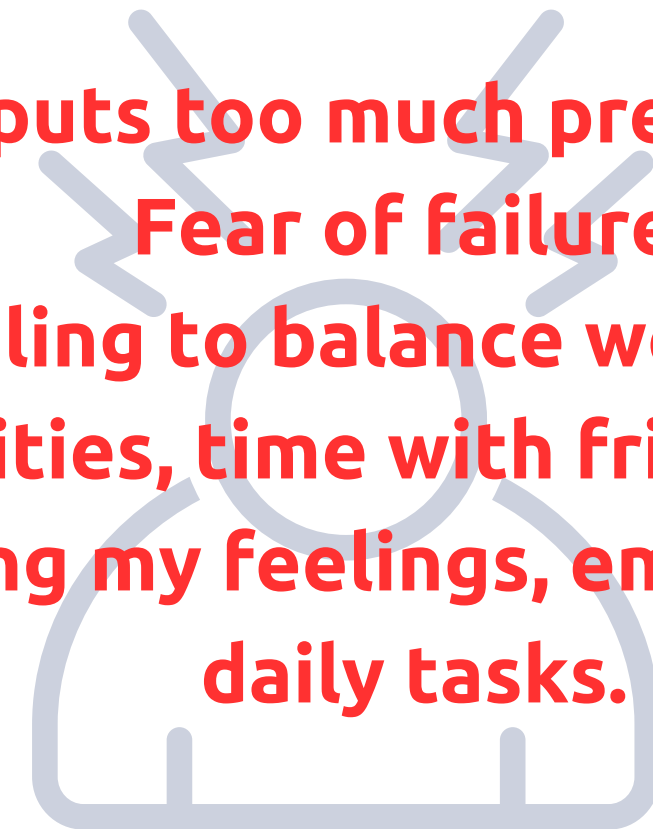
Skills & Knowledge

- Not being intelligent enough to achieve what I would like.
- Not having enough skills or experience to get the job I want.
- Others knowing more than me.
- Not knowing how to get experience or better my chances.
- very few opportunities to become a volunteer



Pressure

- School puts too much pressure on us.
- Fear of failure.
- Struggling to balance work, school, activities, time with friends, etc.
- Juggling my feelings, emotions and daily tasks.



Throughout REACH, teachers were invited to share their voice on the topic of barriers that young people are facing to raising their aspirations, these have been captured below; they were captured by Anonymous input on MS Forms

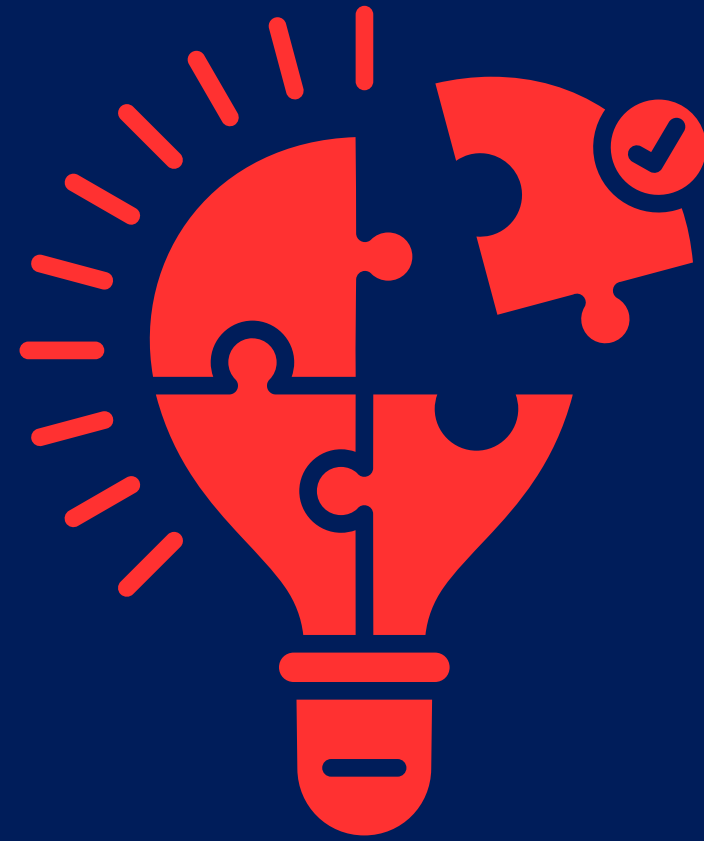
"Increasingly we are finding students struggling with the financial pressures they are facing at home, due to affordability they have less opportunities to take up the offer of school excursions that can offer them new experiences"

"Many of the young people I teach come from backgrounds where it is normal not to work, their parents and grandparents have never worked and this the culture at home, raising aspirations within this cohort is a challenge as you need to get the whole family on board"

"I have been in the teaching profession over 20 years, since the lockdown I have seen a real decline in young people planning for their future beyond education, its a concern to me as many are not considering fulfilling their choices made outside of school."



Solutions Focused



Workshops

Reach - part 2: following the consultation sessions, all the Young people took part in a series of workshops designed to help them explore solutions to the barriers they are facing and capture their ideas. The workshops were designed around barriers identified by each cohort.

Neil Rigby



**Young Peoples
Development
Manager, at St
Helens Chamber**

At the start of the solution focus workshops, young people were briefed on the finding of their data from their consultation sessions, a short video produced by Neil Rigby was shown to them explaining what employers are looking for in a person, skills, attributes and experience alongside academic qualifications. This message was to get the young people to focus on what they can be doing outside of school to support them getting closer to achieving their dreams.



Barrier - lack of opportunity to gain skills outside of school or not focused on academic achievement.

Workshop 1: Skills Pool



This workshop aimed to discuss with the young people ways in which they can enhance and build on their skills.

Identified ways to learn new skills:

- **Gain experience**
- **Courses/learning**
- **Learn from peers**
- **Study/read**
- **Extra curricular activities**
- **Volunteering:**

Through volunteering the young people said they could build social skills, employment skills, and prepare themselves for adulthood.

Young people would like to see more volunteering opportunities across St Helens, and for volunteering to be easily accessed by them- through a possible directory listing the opportunities where they could sign up.



The solution focused outcome from the young people, they would like to see volunteering opportunities across all professions, long term placements, not just 2 weeks work experience, as they identify this as a good way to gain new skills.



Barrier - School curriculum not suited to all learning styles.

Workshop 2: Learning Styles

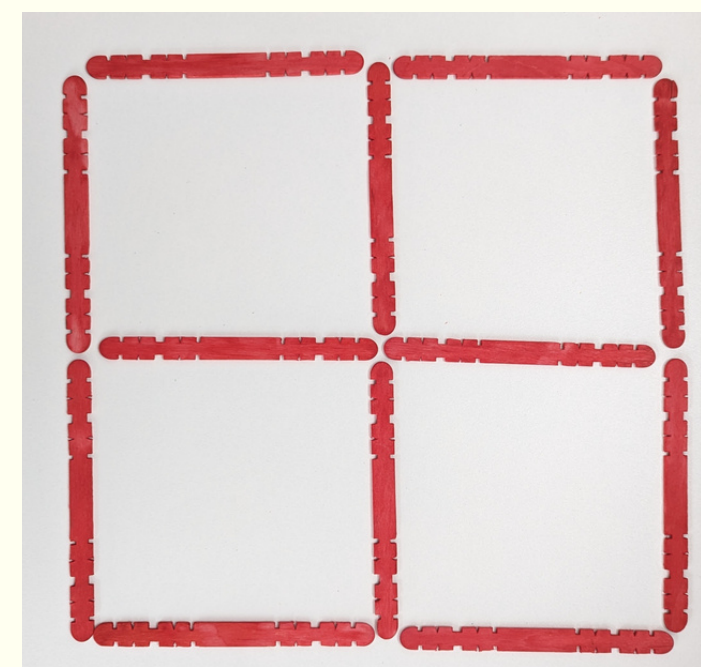
The purpose of this workshop was to explore each individual's way of working when solving a problem, following a puzzle we discussed who took lead, who sat back and thought it through and who used trial and error. Young people discussed their different ways of learning and how not everyone solves a problem or completes a task in the same way, young people were able to understand and value that people can approach work differently and often get the same result, with different teaching methods offered this would support more learning styles.

Young people would like to see:

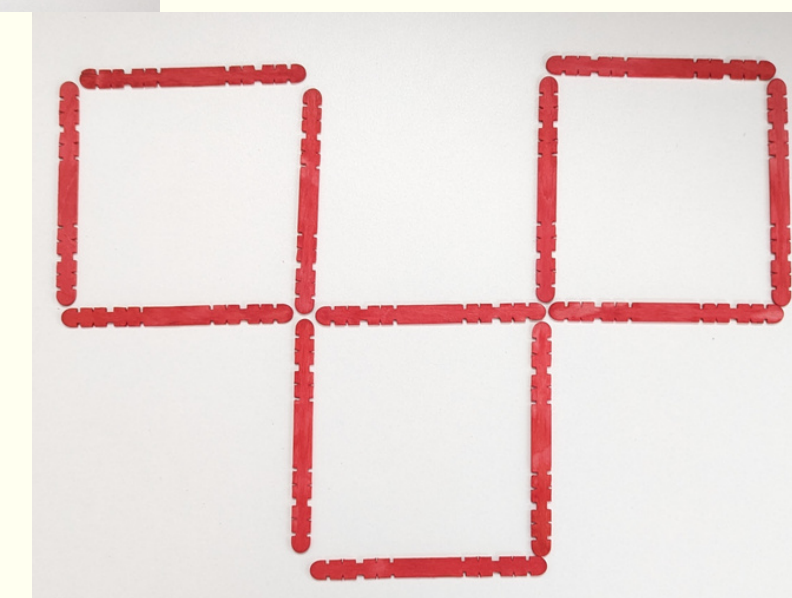
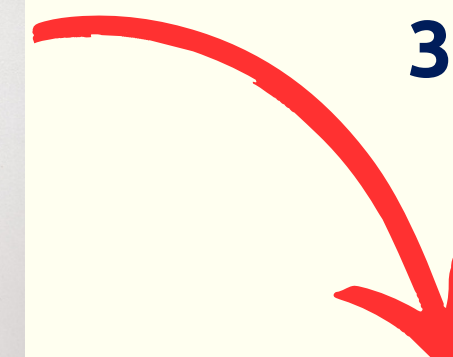
- A more flexible school curriculum offering life skills
- More opportunities on offer at a younger age, eg hairdressing, valeting, laboring.
- More interactive ways of learning
- Training for teachers and teaching support around the individual needs of young people
- More group work to learn from others and support peers
- More practical courses and apprenticeships offered at 16



The solution focused outcome from the young people, they would like to see more flexible ways of learning that suit every individual's needs.



Make 4 squares into 3, with only 3 moves





Barrier - School
curriculum/ structure not
offering enough

Workshop 3: Education

The education workshop looked at designing a dream timetable, discussing what we would keep on the curriculum and what young people think is missing, along with discussing the school day and how it impacts attainment and engagement.

- Shorter school days
- Later start times in school as young people are too tired to engage
- More variety in lesson choices
- Work experience or volunteering opportunities within school times
- Vocational subjects available from a younger age
- more preparation for understanding finances, voting, insurance etc

Dream Timetable
What would you like to see your school offer?

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Period 1 | Re | Music | English | Woodtech (DT) | P.E. Football |
| Period 2 | Pe | Music | PE | Beauty lesson | Science Biology |
| Period 3 | Sh. id work experience | Woodtech (DT) | DT Keyrings | PE (Netball) | Sports studies |
| Period 4 | English | Business | RE | Hospitality and Catering | P.E Football |
| Period 5 | Math | Free Period for instrument practice | Beauty lesson | Health & Social care | P.E Football |

Dream Timetable
What would you like to see your school offer?

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------|---------|------------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Period 1 | Science | Maths | P.E Art | Free time | games room |
| Period 2 | Art | Food/design tech | Science | History | VR experience |
| Period 3 | Maths | History | Drama | Lozer Room | cinema |
| Period 4 | Music | Computing | English | PD | Geography Paint ball fight |
| Period 5 | P.E | english | P-E | Art | P.E |

Dream Timetable
What would you like to see your school offer?

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Period 1 | PE | English | Technology | Maths | G a m e s |
| Period 2 | Technology | Computing | Art | English | English |
| Period 3 | Art | Maths | Geography | Science | Technology |
| Period 4 | Music | Food Tech | English | Technology | Science |
| Period 5 | PSEs | RE | Maths | Computing | History |



The solution focused outcome from the young people, they would like to see a better variety when it comes to lesson options and the option of vocational studies at a younger age.



**Barrier - Peer pressure,
impacting on studies and
influencing personal
choices/behaviours**

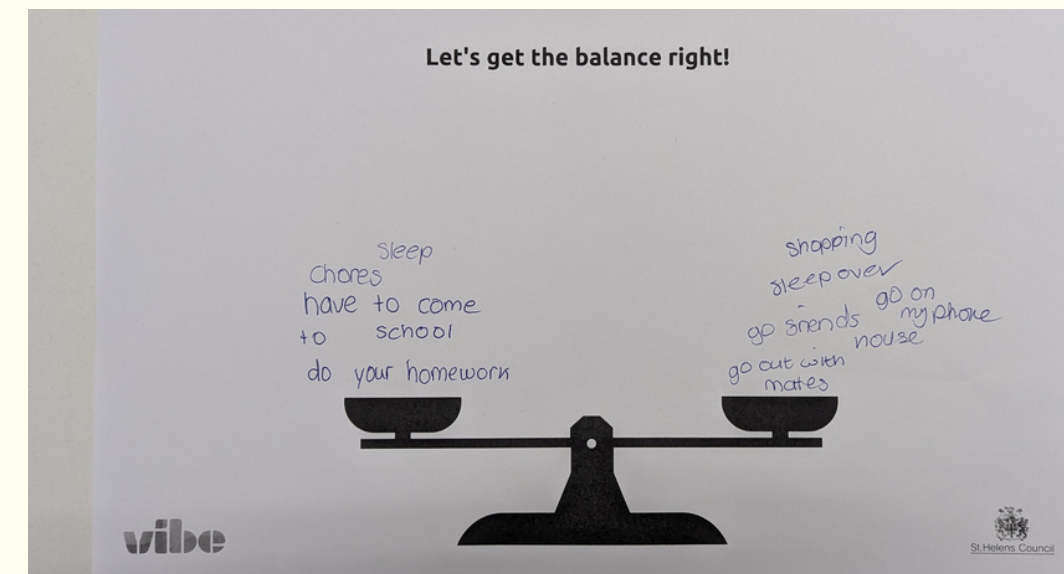
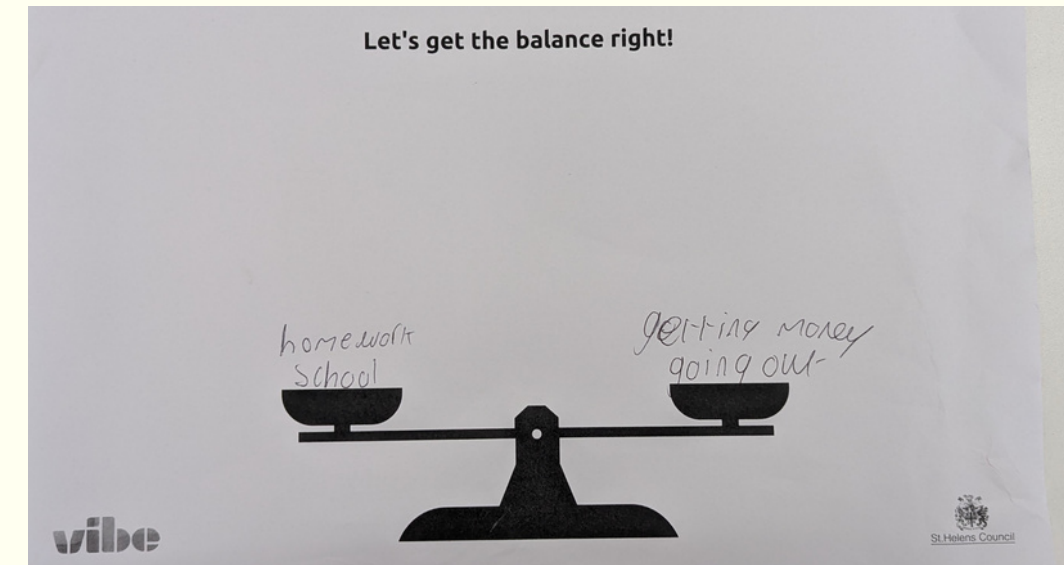
Workshop 4: Peer Pressure



Ways to overcome peer pressure:

- Stand your ground
- Be direct
- Plan ahead
- Remove yourself from the situation
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Be able to say No
- Remember you don't have to do anything you don't want to
- Be confident

The young people looked at striking a balance between what they need to do and what they like to do, this way they can stand firm when up against those who put pressure on them. Avoiding burnout and ensuring essential time is allocated to study away from school.



The solution focused outcome from the young people, they would like to see more education around understanding and respecting your peers goals and dreams, 1 2 1 support for those who are struggling to find the right balance between study and leisure and recognizing the benefits of both in achieving your dreams, and the role it plays in your mental health.



Barrier - young people feel that their financial situation prevents them reaching their aspiration.

Workshop 5: Finances

The aim of this workshop was to look at what young people think is important in line with it's monetary value. Supporting them to understand that money is not always a barrier and looking at way to prioritise spends, to help have funds to access activities that they want to participate in.

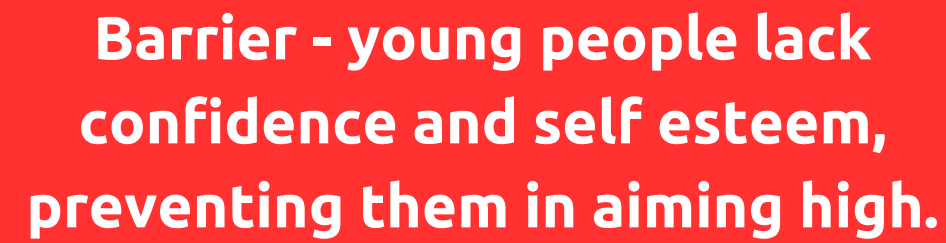
Young people were asked to rank a number of items from most to least important. Each item was given a monetary value and they had to prioritise what they needed within a budget, helping them realise where they can prioritise spends.



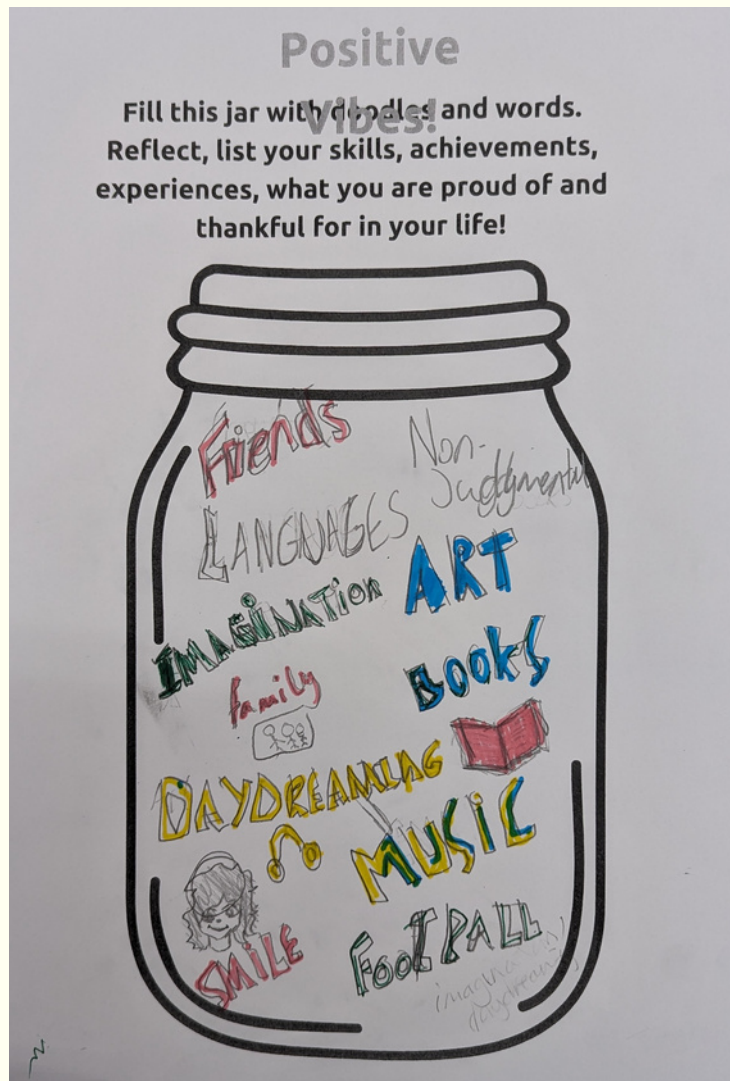
Young peoples priorities were often games, phones, time with friends etc. They discussed how school doesn't prepare them for bills, budgeting and balancing finances when they get older. They feel that understanding money plays a part in them reaching their aspirations/goals.



The solution focused outcome from the young people, they would like to see budgeting on their curriculum or sessions within the community that educates them to deal with money matters. Thwy would like to see increased funding for all students to access activites outside of school, personal annual budget for school trips, sports memberships etc.



Workshop 6: Self Handicapping



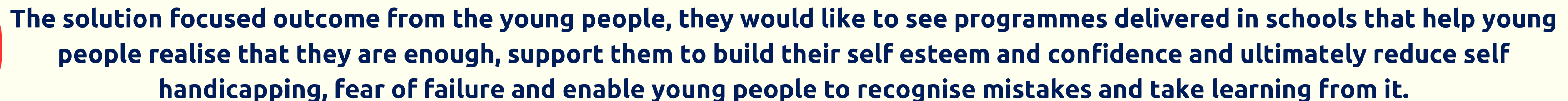
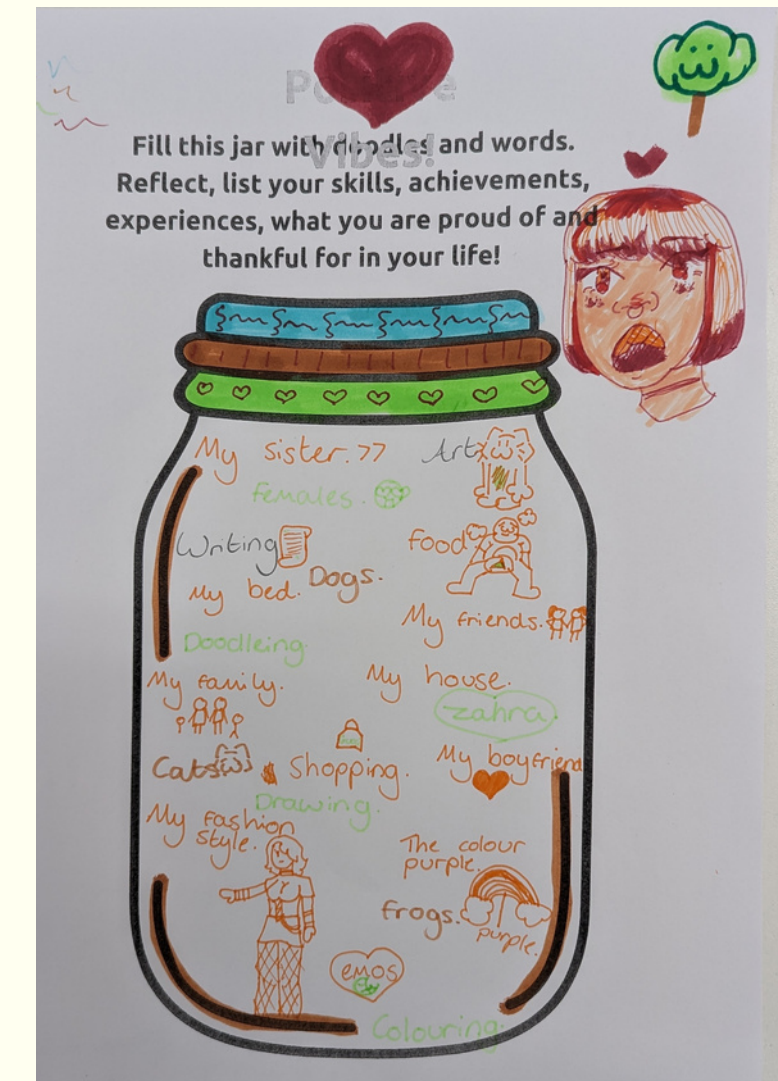
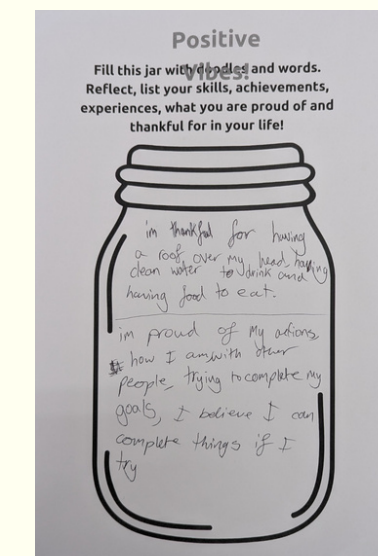
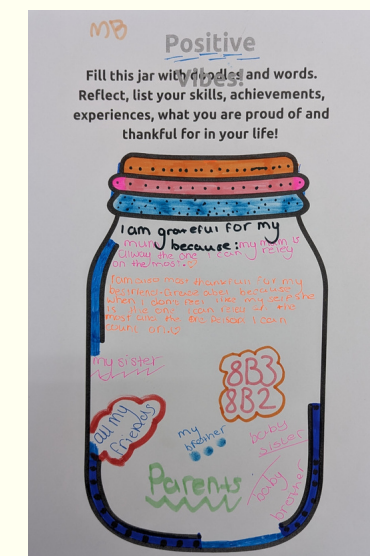
This workshop looked at ways to think more positively about yourself and aimed to make the young people feel good about themselves and how a negative mindset can affect your ability to reach your goals.

The positive vibe jars were filled with the following:

- Things they are grateful for
- Positive affirmations
- Inspirational quotes
- Role models
- Achievements
- People they look up to

They discussed ways to work on being more positive:

- **Say daily affirmations**
- **guest speakers at school talking about their journey**
- **learn to love yourself**
- **Understand what might trigger you**
- **Talk to a trusted person**
- **have time within the school calendar to explore barriers and solutions - parents evening.**
- **Team building days offsite from school**



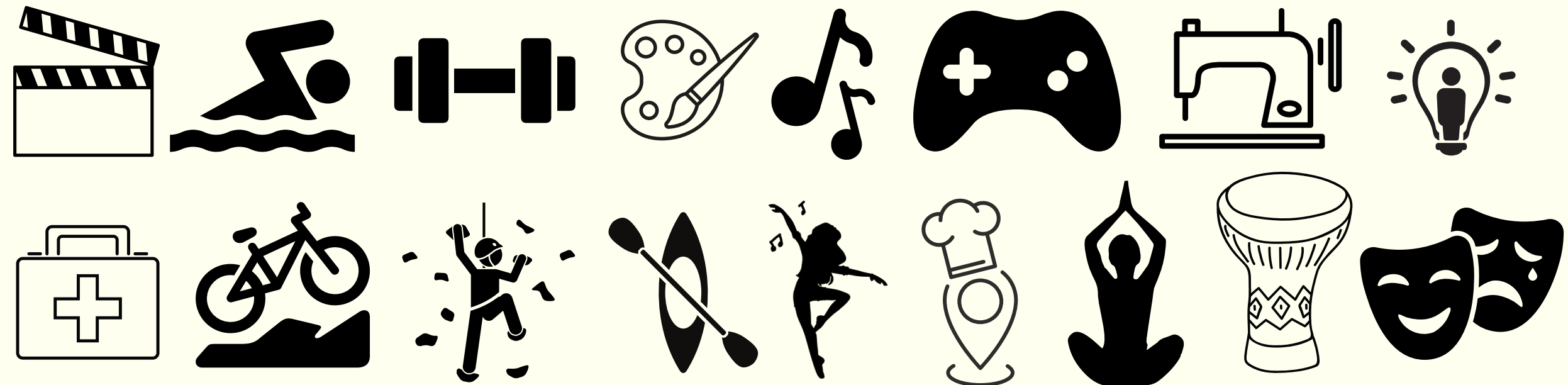
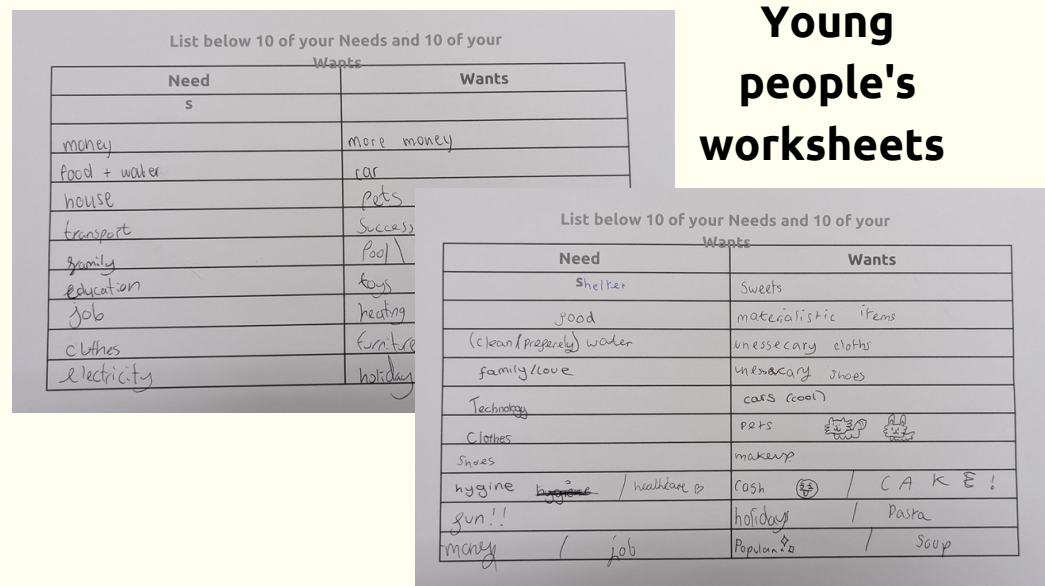


Workshop 7: Health

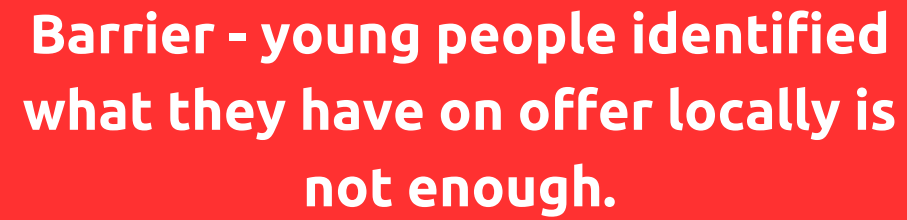


The focus of this workshop was mental and physical health. The young people discussed their wants and needs to live a fulfilled life. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was used to explain to them that when their basic needs are met, they have a strong base to build up their sense of love, belonging and, confidence and self esteem.

The workshop then supported young people to identify what they would like to access that would help ensure that their Physiological and safety needs were met, identify what activities they like to access free to promote better physical and mental health.



The solution focused outcome from the young people, they would like to see more education/support around understanding their Physiological and Safety needs and how when they are met this best supports them to build on their feeling of belonging, self esteem, and self actualization. Young people unanimously would like to see more funding to support young peoples access to activities that promote better physical and mental health.

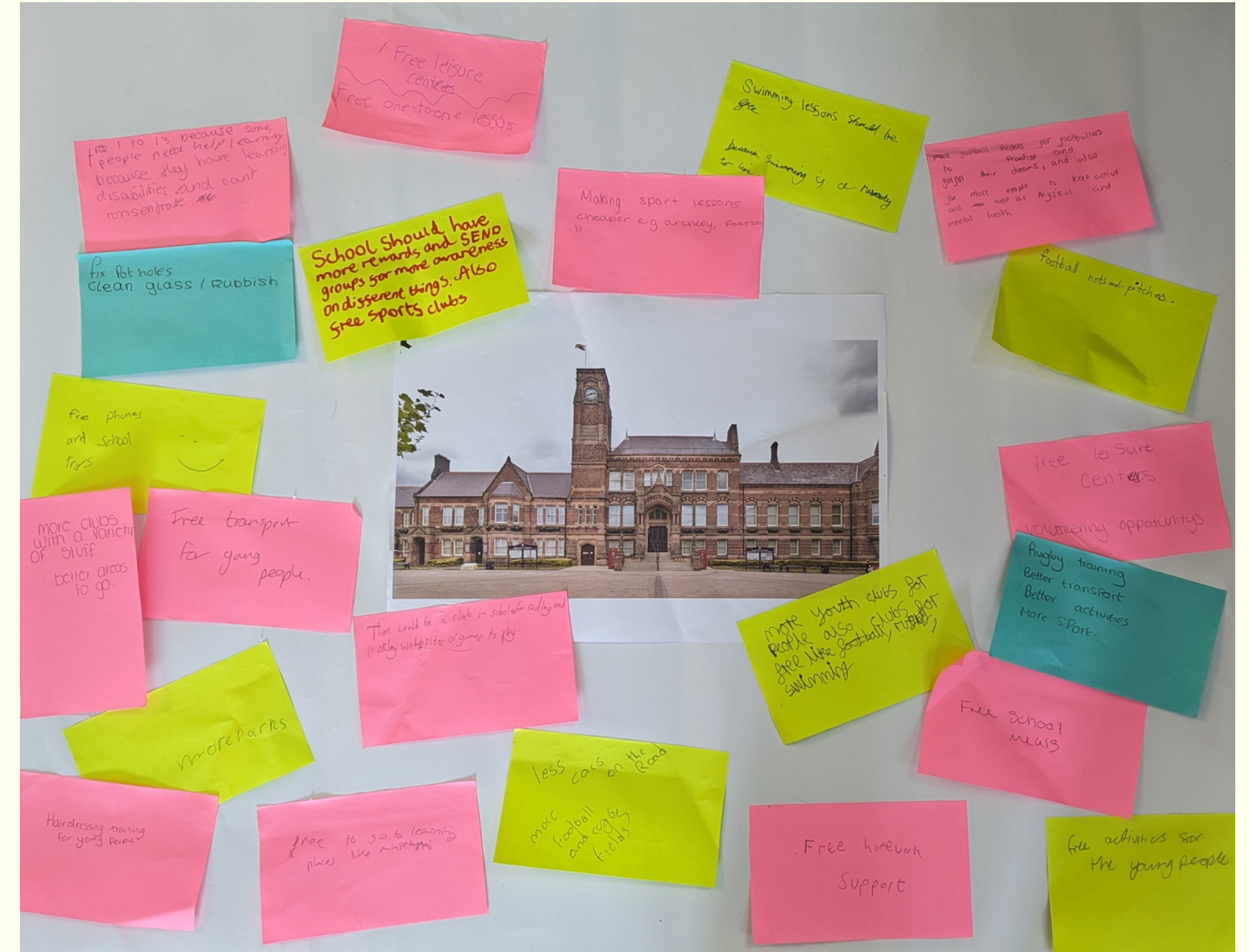
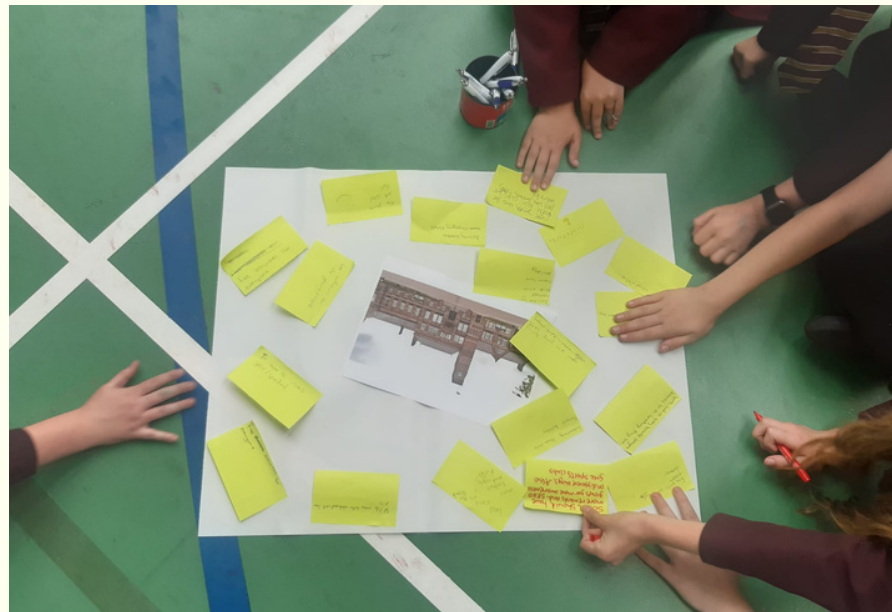


Workshop 8: Your Local offer

What would young people like to see available in St Helens:

- **More Police to make St Helens Safer**
- **Youth workers on the streets**
- **Free accessible activities - sports groups, dance classes, gaming groups, art classes, etc**
- **Free phones or phone chargers on the streets**
- **Free gym passes/swimming lessons for young people**
- **Access to mental health services**

- **Free transport**
- **Clean safe areas**
- **Free school meal for all**
- **Outdoor pool**
- **Music events/concerts**
- **Summer school**
- **Homework support**
- **Free 1:1 support**
- **Volunteering**
- **Better productions at local theatre**



The solution focused outcome from the young people, creating their local offer gave them the opportunity to voice the services they see as a priority to help them achieve their aspirations and live a fulfilled life growing up in St Helens.

Feedback



"Big well done to those who delivered in our school - the professionalism and engagement should be commended.

The year 7's really got alot from the experience."

- Cowley College

"Thanks for yesterday, we had a really positive response from those involved the session was fun and engaging for all."

-Sutton Academy

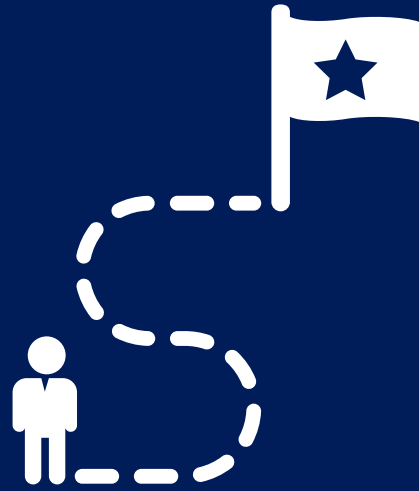
"It was a great opportunity for our students to have a say. The group really got involved and worked together with each other and Vibe"

-Mill Green

"I have really enjoyed this morning, the youth workers really engaged the students and it was great to see them speaking up about their aspirations and the challenges they face."

-St Augustines of Canterbury

Challenges



- All schools were contacted on 24th April 2023, for delivery of programme on a date of their choice from May, to end of academic year. 1 school did not respond despite all efforts to contact them.
- 2 schools who were invited to participate did not commit to dates offered within the timeframe. They ran out of time before end of school year.
- Communication: Schools were contacted by email, phone and in person, replies took a long time from some schools and Vibe were often passed along 3 contacts before being assigned someone to liaise with to book sessions in. Joanne Davis was key in the communication to ensure schools responded.
- 2 schools could not accommodate the planned delivery style of whole year group participation, where this occurred Vibe attended the school multiple times to deliver sessions to each class on different dates/days, ensuring we reached our desired cohort of young people.

Key Findings

Throughout delivery, we noticed certain patterns in conversation and some issues were brought up frequently and more in depth discussions were held:

Top 3: 1.Mental Health 2.Lack of Opportunities 3.Money

1.Mental Health - reported lack of self confidence, low self esteem to anxiety or depression, poor mental health impacting on a young persons ability to reach their full potential.

Young peoples solutions: more/better access to support and services, education around coping mechanisms, better understanding of themselves through skills/self development programmes or learning, peer support groups for young people to meet like minded people and share experiences. Free access to activities to support our physical health will in turn support our mental health.

2.Lack of opportunities - St Helens is lacking youth support, activities, youth centres, things to do, young people on the streets.

Solutions: A better local offer with more free activities for young people to take part in, youth clubs or youth centres as a safe space for yp to go, access to more options and opportunities to gain experience in a variety of fields, more young people engaged and staying off the streets and prevent ASB.

3.Money - Without money young people felt they were unable to access anything that supported them to better their futures, the cost of living crisis is having a massive impact and they felt poverty in their area is a massive issue.

Solutions: Money support and education for young people around budgeting, understanding finances such as mortgages loans and accounts etc added to the curriculum, Increased funding for opportunities for young people eg free activities/youth clubs. More cultural and arts activities commissioned in St Helens such as national theatre tours, exhibition that we/families cant afford to travel to see.

