



Child Friendly Gloucestershire Survey

Final results

Introduction

Following the 'launch' of the questionnaire on Tuesday 14 April 2020, we have received 601 responses.

The majority of the responses have come from 11-13 year olds (45%), with more girls completing it than boys (76%). We have received the biggest number of responses from Gloucester (55%) whilst Tewkesbury has sent the lowest number (3%).

The 'promise' that most resonated with the young people who completed the survey was 'You will get a good education and be given the skills you need for modern life'. Whilst the areas that most concern them are safety and fairness and equality.

In the free text sections, mental health and equal access for all are the two main concerns.

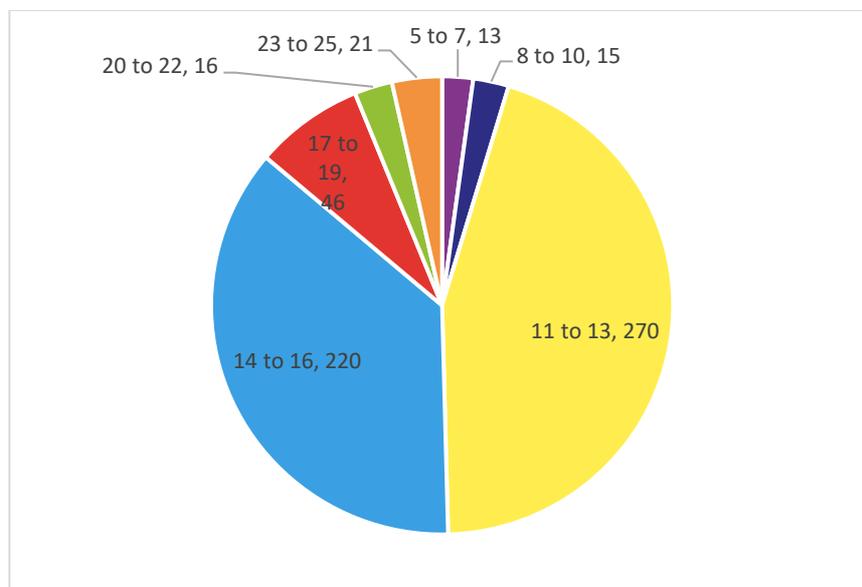
Mental health is increasing, online is becoming bigger and more uncontrollable and things need to pick up with times. Sometimes it's very much those who can't afford things get more offered to them but don't take it and those with working parents who would have to pay may not be able to afford it

Many teenagers suffer with mental health issues and many won't show it, if we say we're fine sometimes we are not, it is hard to make teenagers come out of their shell and talk to people about their feelings. Just saying "you can talk to this helpline or a responsible adult" - although it is good to have - is something we are scared to do.

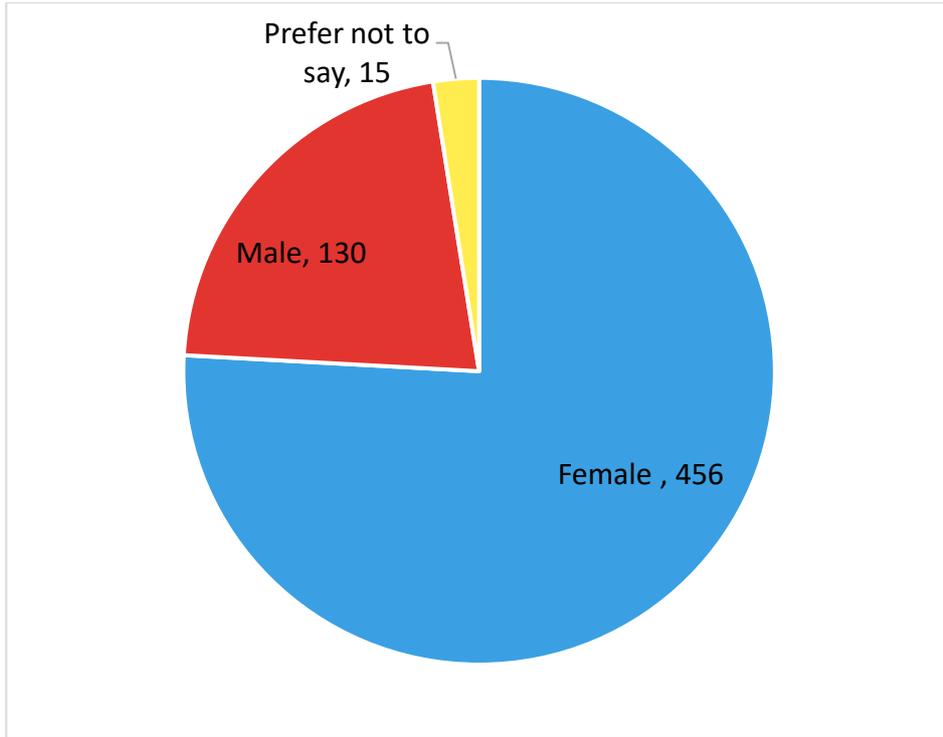
I think that the leaders have of Gloucestershire should know that people need more help with mental health because people are not able to live their life with out being scared or disturbed.

Questionnaire findings in more detail:

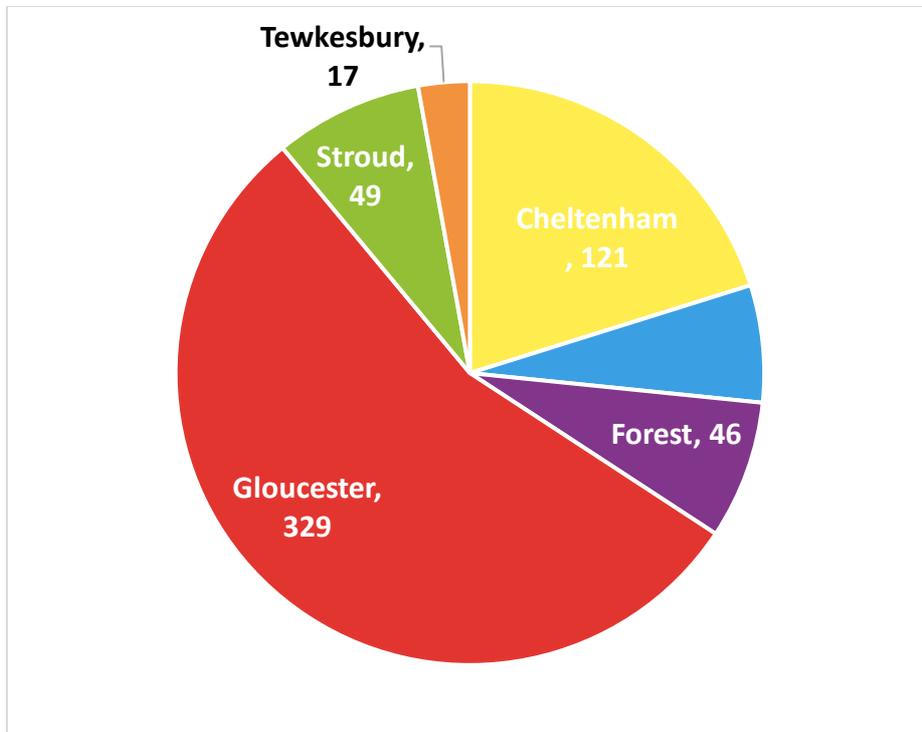
Age ranges:



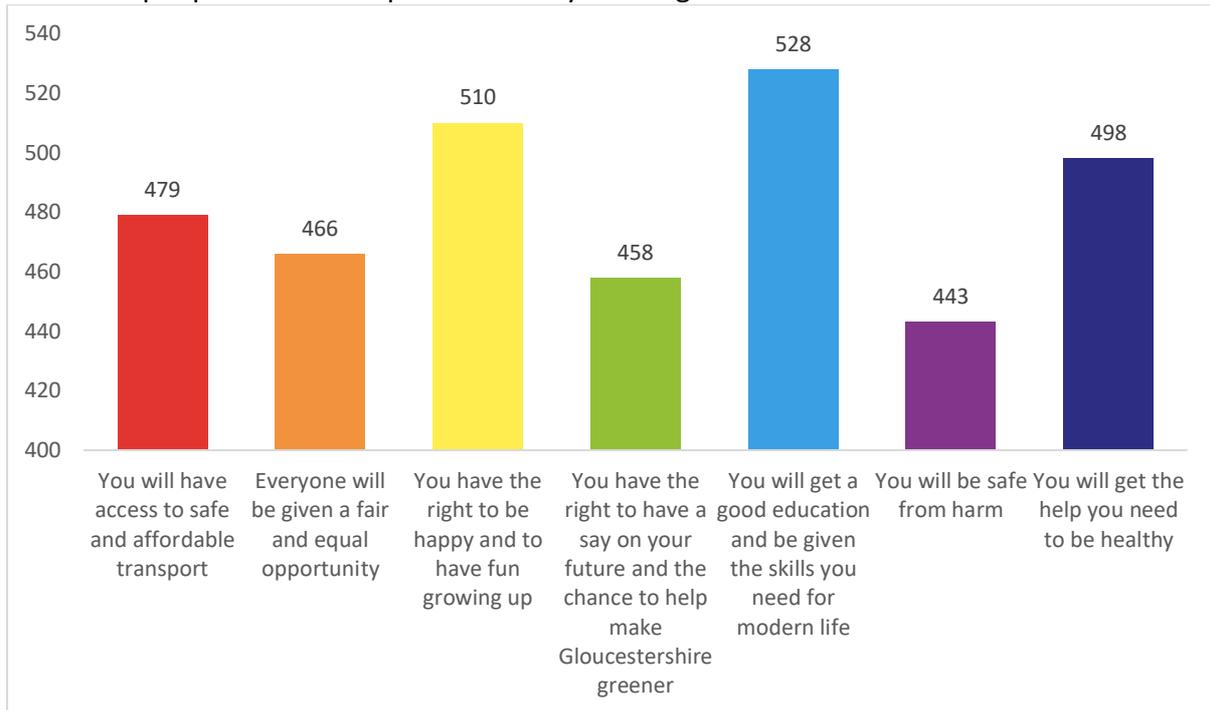
Gender:



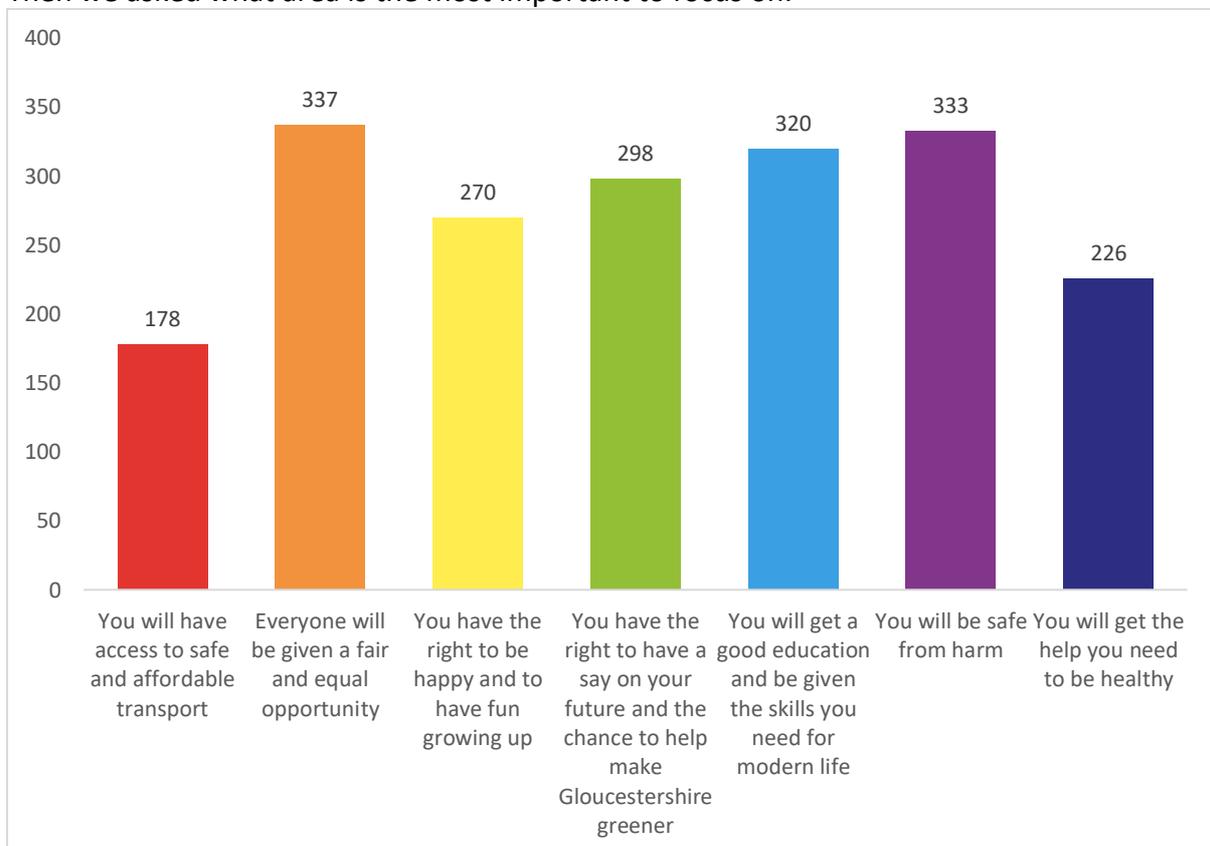
Where they live:



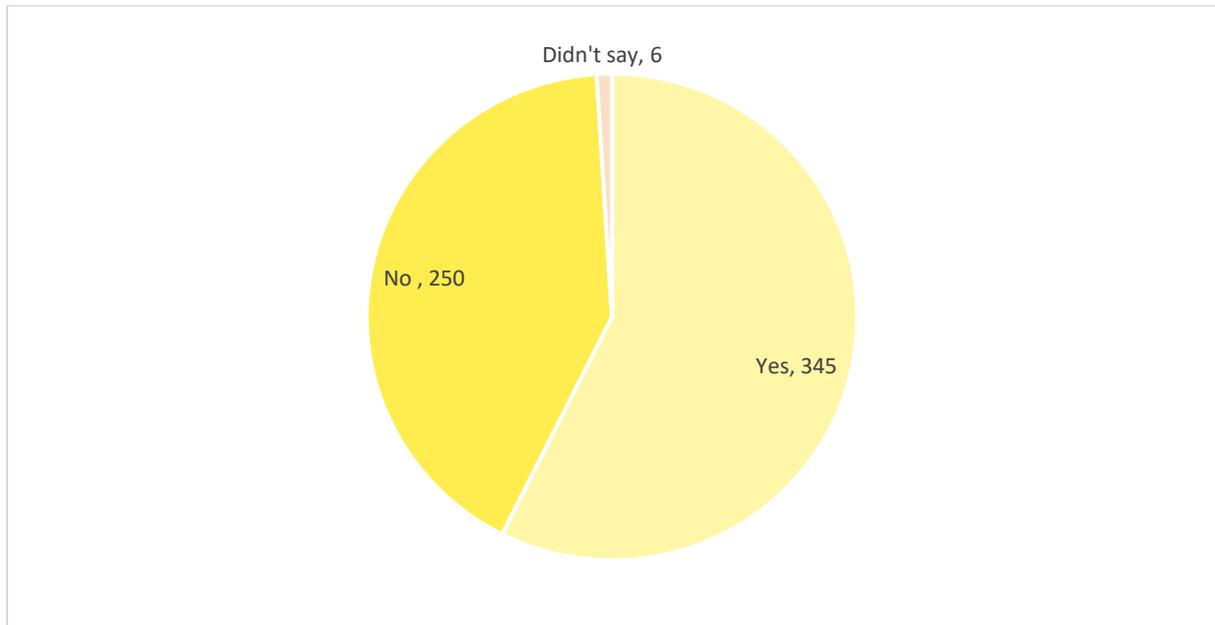
We asked people to tick the 'promises' they most agreed with:



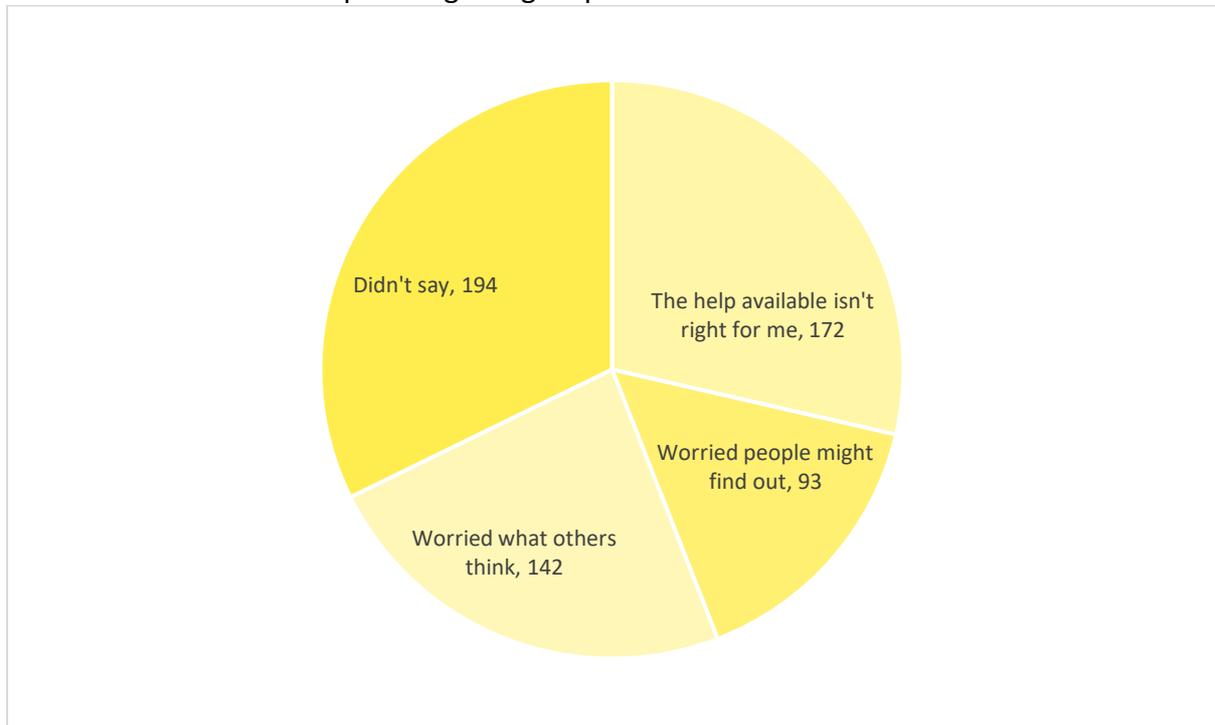
Then we asked what area is the most important to focus on:



We asked if they knew where to get support if they were struggling with their mental health:



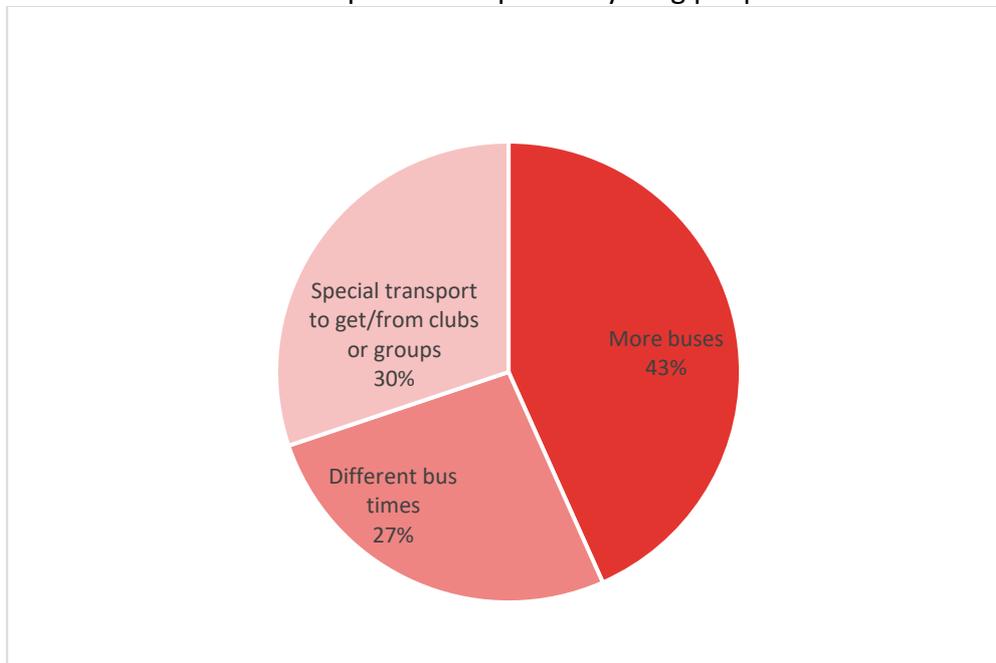
We asked what would stop them getting help:



A focus on: Transport

"I can't afford it an my parents don't drive so I walk a lot of places but things for my age tend to start later I'm unable to go because of walking home late."

We asked what we could do to improve transport for young people.



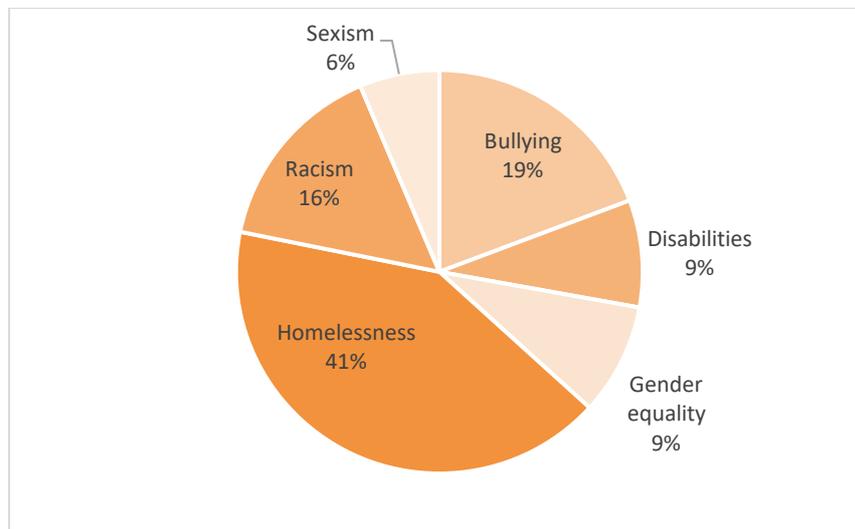
We asked if they had any other suggestions:

- Because we are so out in the countryside, maybe some rent car stations?
- Mini buses for all schools
- A sectioned space on busses for kids to sit without the worry of being near adults they don't know if kids are travelling on their own.
- Kinda like a metro thing
- More help and information for young people when wanting to use public transport
- Community mini buses to take children to clubs and activities
- 16-18 yr olds should come under a child ticket or a slightly cheaper young adult ticket on buses and trains. They're being kept in education but expected to pay the same as a 30 yr old with a career.
- More bus stops (So elderly people do not need to travel far). And the bus stops should be cared for more and renovated slightly as there are cigarette holes in them bus time tables are old in some places.
- Buses in Gloucestershire are no where near reliable enough and the costs are quite high. Bus services are constantly being reduced and this puts people off using public transport. There is no option for student discounts like with cities like Bristol which is quite poor. I am keen to pass my driving test asap so I don't have to use public transport anymore. Connectivity across Gloucester and Cheltenham is really bad and takes way too long on a bus to get there

A focus on: Fairness and Equality

“People assume young people aren't well informed on important issues and sometimes think they are trying to cause trouble”

We asked how we can make Gloucestershire a fair and equal place for all and where we should start....



About half of the respondents said they had been unfairly judged by adults. These are some of the details they gave us.

- Judged by the place I live but I am hard working and want to learn
- I've been told I'm never going to be smarter than them (an adult), told that they know more about something because they are older even if they don't, forced to listen to people who are wrong about things because I'm not allowed to speak up because I'm 'only a child'
- Being told I'm too young to know I'm gay
- Teenagers are told to act like adults but are treated like children. It's paradoxical and seems unfair. For some things, it is a personal issue for inside the home based on parenting tactics. However, other times, it feels insulting and is frustrating and stressful. In example, at school, we are expected to act as adults, learn, revise, do homework, do clubs, be physically fit, get to lessons on time, have what we need, be under constant examination. And yet we can't be trusted to wear our own clothes?
- Adults aren't open to young ideas and problems so they dismiss them and tell us we are on our phones when they created most of our problems like climate change.
- I have often had the experience of being told that I am a vulnerable child then being asked to decide my future as an adult. I have had the direct experience of being in a meeting about my education when I was 14 years old: I asked to be on the email list for the meetings (when they would happen and subject matter) as my parent was currently unable to inform me of them due to addiction issues. The people in the meeting laughed and said I didn't need to be as it wasn't my responsibility and my parent would tell me.

A focus on: Happiness

“A space is enjoyable when it’s a safe environment and your around people that you like.”

The county hosts some big events, we asked how young people could be more involved with these.

- A youth council/voice to hold events for them. Having a specific events venue for the county.
- we could help arrange them
- tell them about them, make them interesting to the age groups, get guides or scouts involved, spread them on social media, make them more financially accessible, maybe a committee
- there could be activities in which younger children could be involved in rather than activities just suitable for older teens and adults
- Young people could be selected to volunteer or steward, and even admin
- Get more transport available for those not in towns or cities.
- Making them more child friendly - limits on alcohol and adult themes
- Schools could partner up with the big events so that young people can volunteer to help out
- Have a youth team that meet with everyone else to have an active role in organising and publicising these events. Ensure this opportunity is available for everyone and that the committee is strong. These efforts should be rewarded

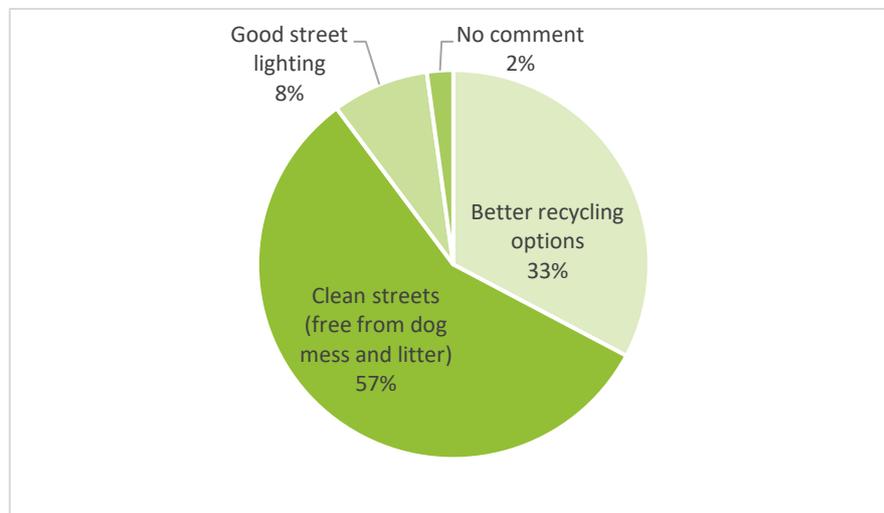
Young people have said they want more safe and enjoyable spaces to meet their friends, we asked what makes a space 'safe' and 'enjoyable'?

- A safe and enjoyable space is somewhere comfortable you can spend a while without worrying about responsibilities, what others think, druggies doing drugs there at night so when you go in the morning there are needles everywhere, access to drinks and food.
- A place where not everyone can just walk in, they have to see that you aren't a dangerous stranger who could potentially hurt children. An enjoyable place is a place where you aren't constantly worrying about your safety.
- A 'safe' space is somewhere that we can hang out and not worry about older people causing trouble or somewhere where we are open to get hurt by random acts of violence. An 'enjoyable' space is somewhere that there are things for us to do such as skate parks, youth clubs, sports centres, etc.
- A safe place could be good street lighting for example podsmead field has no lighting so it is easy to get attacked or fall in a hole and break something. An enjoyable depends on preference and certain likes for example I like gaming so making a games centre where you and your friends could meet to play video games and other stuff would be cool.
- For secondary schools near each other, there should be a hangout place for the two schools to meet at. It would be safe because it's near your school which you should feel safe at and you know that the school and county leaders have set it up. It would make it enjoyable by having some basic rules that are just straight forward and having no unnecessary rules.

A focus on: a greener Gloucestershire

“There needs to be a larger emphasis on it when educating younger generations so that they will in future understand its importance further.”

We asked where we should start to tackle climate change in Gloucestershire.



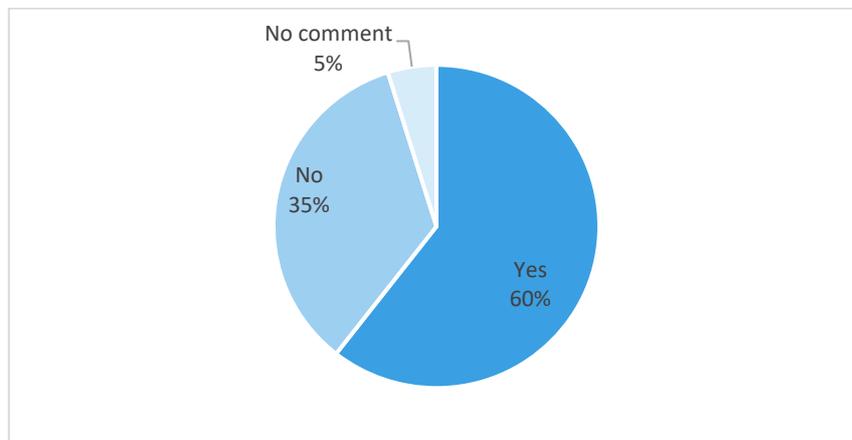
We then asked what other suggestions they had:

- My local park is full of people doing drugs it smells and my youngest sister 5 has almost stood on a needle before kids parks shouldn't be a dangerous place to be, this will also help climate change if local parks are kept nicer people won't travel to go other places less car use less problems
- Be more involved in the races- I live directly next to the racecourse and after just one day the litter is awful, the parks are trampled, but also the porta loos and event organisers everywhere makes it terrible to live there. Its only value is on the economy.
- By tying it into travel and transport. Making mass transport (i.e. buses and trains) easier to access and more affordable, would reduce the amount of carbon emissions coming from everyone feeling their cars are a better alternative. Make buses the most appealing form of transportation for short journeys around the county. Cars should be used to longer less easy to access, individualised journeys mainly.
- Having opportunities to spend time with our community, to do something we all care about like gardening (to be more environmentally friendly) or if its just spending time or getting to know others to make better connections with people around us.
- Have better transport in terms of eco friendly buses, trains, etc. So that people can catch public transport and not contribute to climate change as much as they are right now.
- Maybe introducing recycling at a younger age so children grow up learning about recycling so it becomes part of every day life.
- Get people involved in community projects and dont build an enormous incinerator which no one wants or needs.

A focus on: Education

“Offer more flexible opportunities, offer a reasonable wage - just because we're young doesn't always mean we don't have bills or financial responsibilities.”

We asked young people if they were planning on staying in the county after they leave school:



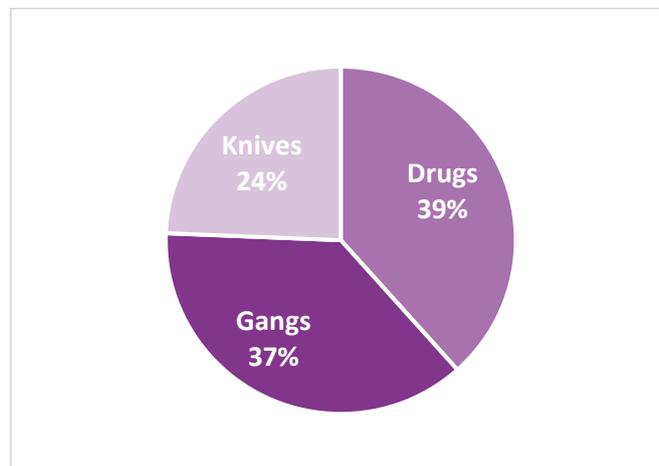
We then asked what more business in Gloucestershire could do to help them succeed:

- Create more training/apprenticeships within the county. There are too many admin & engineering ones and hardly any creative
- Offer more work experience opportunities in the field and even allow young people to visit facilities where this work happens to gain a better understanding of daily tasks and responsibilities.
- Offer more work experience, locally, that doesn't cost £200 - as a child in a relatively poor family, I can't afford that. I'd love to learn and be given the opportunity to begin learning and working early to gain experience, but I can't pay for all that, and the £150 it costs for my school uniform (which quite frankly I do find ridiculous)
- Offer days for you to go and do your job for a n hour or two so you can get an insight into what you want to do or have more talk to people who already do that job
- Organise extracurricular activities or clubs to give us more knowledge on different job opportunities to get inspired
- give more volunteering opportunities for experience. not just for the businesses' reputation.
- Career fair
- Have colleagues (late 20s-early 30s) who will mentor or have a 'catch up' with new apprentices and employees under 25. Making 1-2 meetings mandatory means they won't worry what people think and it gives the organisation a chance to explain what to expect etc without sitting them in just another classroom.
- Offer work experience, more appealing apprenticeships schemes, contact schools to offer a day of looking into an important sector. Offering free training days to attract more young people and assist them in one day having a job.
- Offer apprenticeships in a wider range of areas at a better wage. Offer more entry level jobs or jobs with training - we can't get jobs without experience but we can't get experience without jobs.

A focus on: a safer Gloucestershire

"I think all crimes are disheartening but the one that worries me most is kidnapping and rape."

Based on the recent coverage of County Lines, we asked which of these crimes young people were most worried about:



Other crimes also raised included:

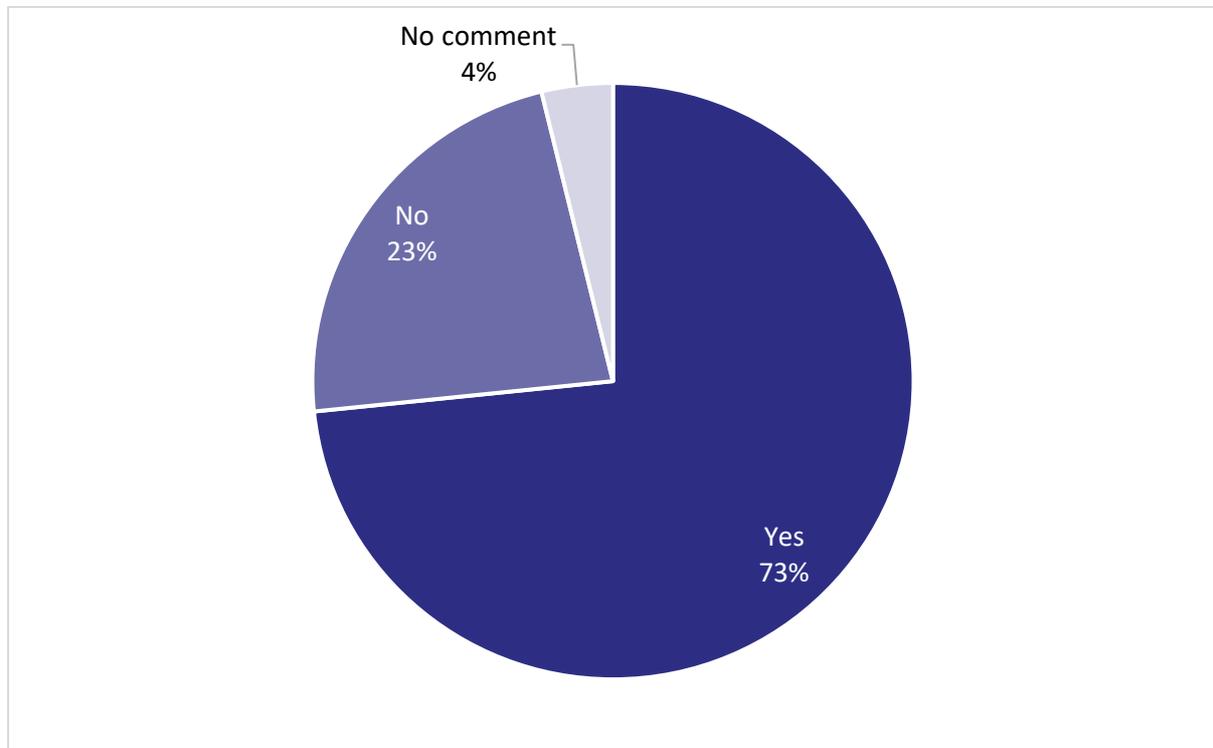
- Abduction/kidnapping
- Abuse
- Burglary
- Murder
- Rape/sexual assault
- Stalkers/predators
- School shootings
- Theft

We then asked what more the police could do to encourage young people to talk to them:

- Be more friendly to younger children
- Police going into Schools, Colleges & University's talking about the issues, usage, dangers, Help and support.
- Have drop in community days or visits to schools
- Offer child friendly numbers for them to ring and for them to say not to be worried if it not that serious
- Have talks in schools more about the risks of drugs/knives etc make it more easier for kids to understand that they can talk to them
- Just talk to people more often about day to day things so that they seem more friendly and more approachable.
- Come into schools more often for talks.
- Having the police come into schools and not just come to talk about internet safety and talk about stuff that kids are genuinely worried about, such as drugs, gangs, sexual harassment etc.
- maybe set up a chatroom onlin

A focus on: a healthy you

We asked if it was true that where you lived could sometimes mean you couldn't access sports clubs/organisations/facilities:



Further comments surround mental health include:

- Mental health is increasing, online is becoming bigger and more uncontrollable and things need to pick up with times. Sometimes it's very much those who can't afford things get more offered to them but don't take it and those with working parents who would have to pay may not be able to afford it
- Many teenagers suffer with mental health issues and many won't show it, if we say we're fine sometimes we are not, it is hard to make teenagers come out of their shell and talk to people about their feelings. Just saying "you can talk to this helpline or a responsible adult" - although it is good to have - is something we are scared to do.

What else do you think the leaders of Gloucestershire should know?

When asked "What else do you think the leaders of Gloucestershire should know?" some of the comments included:

- Teenagers and children in general have no time and need time, you can't find many happy teenagers - basically, try and decrease the amount of pressure and the high expectations in schools... also ban like all the school competition things because my school always gets number 1 and then we brag but I think my school is actually not that good and the only reason it gets number one is because we act in front of the visitors and we get pressured and lose our sanity because of all the stress, exams and expectations. I literally lost my identity, I would rather fail my GCSE'S than lose my health but I've already lost it
- The average teenager cannot do school in the day (which can require us waking up at 6am when in fact hormones in our body make our sleep schedule suited to waking up at 9), followed by homework at home, revision at home, clubs, DofE, work experience, being social, family time, eating, travel time, self care, mental health time, keeping physically fit, all at once! I know at least 20 people in my year in school alone that are cutting themselves, and the ones I've properly sat down and spoken to say they can't do therapy or counselling because they don't have time due to trying to do everything else society puts on us. We will break eventually, like a lot of us already have. We're happy about the quarantine because we finally have time to get to know our own identities and start to figure out who we are and how to properly take care of our mental and physical health. Everyone needs a break sometimes and this is a very welcome one. And one of the worst things is we can't be expected to perform well and do all of this at the same level as an adult would whilst having to be treated like children. It just won't work. Something has to be done. Is it so much to ask that we don't get given homework and instead use that time to revise for the exams that will dictate our futures (they may not actually do that but it certainly does feel like it with the amount of stress piled into them), and then have the rest of the time to enjoy what is reportedly meant to be the 'best time of our lives'? Because trust me if you act my friend who has the word 'pain' carved into her arm with a blade, I don't think she's having a fun time. Apologies for this being so long but do try not to disregard my emotions as simply 'a child wanting to get out of work'. Thank you for taking the time to read this.
- The 11+ system is greatly flawed and I think it should be re examined so that kids can start off with a much fairer chance of succeeding. For kids in areas with very poor education, a grammar school might be their only option if they want to get the job they're after, and these kids naturally might be incredibly smart, but, without the proper help from a parent/guardian they have no chance of succeeding. So many kids are given huge head starts even before secondary school has started, leaving others trailing behind. For a kid who's had very little parental/guardian support, a bad primary education, no tutoring and a hard home life, they'll stand no chance against the kid who's parents want this more than they do, who have given them a year or more tutoring, who were sent to private schools with education often

focused towards this area. The first kid might not even be able to attend the examination if their parents don't help them, and might then attend a secondary school of poor education, and have an incredibly hard time trying to get the same job as their peer who with all their additional help has performed highly, been sent to a grammar school and is on the right track to get the job they want. Neither of the kids had much say in this journey, but all the same, the differences are huge and if the test could possibly be held during a primary school day so that all kids who wanted to could attend it. Making buses and uniform and all of the add ons to a grammar school much more affordable so that kids could get to these grammar schools, and I know this is a very hard thing to change but try and give the kids with no tutoring or private schools a little more help from their teachers, just a couple practice papers perhaps or maybe a lunch time club, which I appreciate is difficult because you would need a teacher willing and able to do this job, but just some alterations to this test could hugely improve the life of a child.

- We are important, our views are important and sometimes we can offer a different perspective on problems and can help solve them. Children don't vote, but our views should form part of any prospective election campaign from MPs to Parish councils.
- A lot of us are interested in politics, and we do understand what's happening in the world. If we were given opportunities to be heard, we might feel more secure in the future that WE'LL be living in, not the adults currently running the country.
- Every child can benefit from support if it is given, not just those that are identified through tests or checklists. Every child should have the chance to access support whether for specified help or unseen difficulties. Everyone can benefit from it, even those that seem 'fine'.
- The leaders of Gloucestershire need to know that young people care passionately about their future. However, they lack engagement with adult decision makers due to a lack of accessibility to communicate the ideas that young people have. Therefore, if the leaders of Gloucestershire want to create a seismic change in the role of young people; they need to give them the structure where their voices can be heard. A youth council in each local authority under a similar structure as Stroud District Youth Council is the most effective way of promoting youth voice in the present and in the future too. Without this there can be no active consultation with young people on a wide variety of areas, thus leaving young people left out of discussions. Additionally, a youth county council made up of representatives from each local authority youth council would be an additional step in ensuring that young people receive their right to have a say on our future.