# ROCKER Vourg Westminster COUR CITY, OUR CITY, OUR FUTURE.

Understanding the needs of young people in Westminster in 2023/24

**Report by Rocket Science for Young Westminster Foundation** 

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Introduction from Helen and Yarah

Our City, Our Future 2023 is the third report from the YWF community looking to understand what it is like to grow up in Westminster as a young person today.

This is our most comprehensive study to date and for the first time we look at not only the views of young people through peer-led interviews and focus groups, but also at life for young people through the lens of parents and practitioners working with early years, children and young people.

It reflects our ongoing commitment to listening, learning and sharing knowledge; amplifying the voices of young people on the issues they care most about. Carrying out peer research is an intensive process, however it is also hugely insightful and meaningful. For both the young researchers themselves and our community as a whole.

It was fantastic to hear the peer researchers discuss the impact of holding interviews with their friends and networks, opening up new conversations and learning new skills to grow their confidence in communication. They spoke of feeling heard and of recognising their own power. This group of local young people are changemakers and it has been a joy and privilege for our team to work alongside them. Thank you to all of you, this research is yours.

Our previous Needs Analysis in 2017/18 and 2020/21 have allowed us to harness investment from funders



including the Westminster business community and directly address issues through local collaboration. This report builds upon that work and holds us to account on the policy, funding and programmes already underway. It provides us an opportunity to take stock of our strategy and that of the wider YWF community, ensuring it remains relevant to the issues that young people themselves want addressing.

Whilst we found ourselves struggling and readjusting to the Covid-19 pandemic during our last report, the landscape in 2023 is dominated by the cost-of-living situation. Young people reported feeling less able to socialise and access activities, with families increasingly unable to buy basic necessities. For youth organisations the cost-of-living poses a major challenge around funding including the maintenance, heating and lighting of the safe spaces we know are so important to young people.

The views of young people in the report are varying, reflecting the disparity and inequality that we already know exists in Westminster. Be that through opportunities around employment, with personal networks remaining a key source of work experience, and advice or access to sports, which remain prohibitive to some due to cost. Whilst we may be unable to change some of wider economic factors, we are able to influence how our systems and services support young people and their families and ensure that investment and support is directed where it is most needed. Westminster has a strong Early Help system with the five Youth Hubs and YWF Membership being well integrated into the Family Hubs. We believe that this, coupled with the Future of Westminster Commission's desire to address the ongoing and systemic inequalities in the borough, provides a collaborative foundation from which we can respond to the voices of young people.

The report's findings - although sometimes stark provide us with tangible ways of moving forward through to 2026. The report tells us that more young people are involved in social action than before and we need to harness this desire by continuing to provide the space, time and skills for young people to explore and express their views, alongside facilitating the YWF community to take action based on what they say.

Drawing together the calls to action, we have developed a set of principles to guide our work through to 2026, more detail around these can be found at the end of the report:

- Facilitate and advocate for the time and space for young people to express and explore their views in meaningful ways and the YWF community to respond with action. Recognise that young people consistently feel unable to influence change and challenge organisations to better support and active young changemakers, alongside addressing power imbalances.
- Ensure service design, funding, training and information sharing responds to specific needs of different communities of young people (including different age groups, genders, young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND), young refugees, young LGBT+ people, and care leavers.) Advocate for more person-centred, targeted approaches to reflect the diversity of experience amongst Westminster's young people.
- Better engage with, and support, the wider networks around young people including parents/ carers and schools and continue to sustain the collaborations and joined up system between voluntary and statutory services in Westminster, to enable us to best address the needs of young people.

Young people will continue to be at the centre of our own decision making and we believe they should shape the strategy of decision-makens in Westminster for the future of our city.

- Helen Mann, CEO Young Westminster Foundation



Introduction | !



Volunteering at Fourth Feathers Youth Club in Marylebone was the official start of my journey. At first, I saw it as a place where we go to play with other young people and have fun. I never thought I would be this involved in the Westminster community. Over 2 years later at 18 years old, I am a trainee youth worker, a Young Westminster Ambassador and Peer Researcher and a partner at Pimlico Million. Despite being different organisations, they all have similar goals of providing high quality service and support, promoting a sense of community and inclusion and filling in identified gaps in the community. It is much more than just 'having fun'. Building relationships with young people, understanding the way they behave, encouraging them to engage in personal growth and stepping out of their comfort zone is the reason I continue to do what I do. In so little time, I have grown and learnt a lot! I want to go back to my first line: 'volunteering at Feathers Youth Club'...I've seen how important Youth Clubs are and the huge impact they can have on someone's life. My advice to other young people - they are more than just a place to 'chill'- utilise the places you are at and ASK. Always ASK! Youth Hubs work so hard to implement the work they do and can offer you so much support!

Interviewing young people for this needs analysis, I realised that they KNOW what they want, they UNDERSTAND what's going on and they WANT to make a change. Whether for themselves or for the wider community. They can see how the cost of living has affected their family's lifestyle, they understand how vaping/drugs impacts young people, they

understand the pressure placed on them by the education system and can sympathise with others who are experiencing similar and different issues.

What have I learnt? DONT UNDERESTIMATE YOUNG PEOPLE! All they need is support from the 'olders' to give them the confidence to make the change. Especially in a society where power and decision making often doesn't feel like it sits with young people, we just live with the consequences of those decisions. It's so easy to say, 'stop smoking', '30 minutes activity per day', 'do your homework', 'don't engage in antisocial behaviour', 'find a work experience placement', 'you can have the career you want', but that can mean very little practically to an individual who doesn't know how to get there. Sometimes, without support around how to navigate the world, this can lead an increased sense of pressure. Youth Hubs and organisations EQUIP the young people with the tools they need to help them make a change themselves! Providing resources for them to engage in physical activity, providing career and employment support services, providing a space where they feel comfortable to be themselves and discuss relevant issues, providing a safe environment.

I ask all organisations to prioritise listening to what young people in Westminster have told us in this report when implementing change. Young people have spoken, so now we must take that into consideration and adapt the way we work to help uplift them. Personalise the way you work to meet the needs of those attending your service. They are the FUTURE! Let's help them reach their goals. 'I believe in you; you can do it' will have such a huge impact on an individual. I urge you to support young people in discovering what they are capable of and the power they hold to influence change. This will be vital in continuing to improve our community.

I want to give special thanks to all interviewees and young people who are involved in projects like this and who are using their voice. Yes, you do have POWER. You are CHANGE MAKERS. You are CAPABLE. You should be PROUD of yourselves. Don't underestimate the impact of things you do - yes it may have only been a small amount of your time, but the outcome is everlasting!

- Yarah Al Silawi

Our City, Our Future 2023 Peer Researcher

Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) brings together youth organisations, young people, businesses, Westminster City Council and other partners such as universities, the Metropolitan Police and the NHS to create opportunities for Westminster's 54,000 under 25's.

Together, the YWF community shares a vision for all young people in Westminster to grow up healthy, safe and happy with the best opportunities for brighter futures.

YWF's 80+ members range from large youth clubs to smaller grass root organisations to specialist groups supporting young carers, young people facing homelessness and young people with disabilities; all driven by their passion to enrich the lives of young Londoners.



About Young Westminster Foundation

youth voice in action

The Young Westminster Foundation community believes that young people should be at the centre of our decision making. Collectively, our goal is to work together locally to identify and address the challenges faced by young Londoners in Westminster all the while amplifying the voices of young people on the issues they care about to ensure that they are truly at the heart of the future of our city.

In practice, this means providing the space, time and skills for young people to explore and express their views and ideas alongside facilitating the YWF community to take action based on what they say. We do this through peer research, thematic consultations, the Young Ambassador programme, Young Grantmakers and Under 25 Trustees, as well as advocating for and supporting opportunities to amplify youth voice throughout the YWF community. Established in 2016, YWF's first piece of work was to conduct a peer-led needs analysis, examining the experiences of young people growing up in the City of Westminster. At the time we set out a commitment to undertake a refresh of the needs analysis every three years, alongside a group of local young people. Peer research involves people with lived experience of the issues being studied taking part in directing and conducting the research; empowering people to effect positive change by participating in studies in their own communities<sup>1</sup>.

Our 2018 report, <u>A City Within A City</u>, was updated in the 2020 iteration <u>Our City Our Future</u> which helped to shape the Foundation's direction and priorities in the immediate aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. We used these youth voice findings to influence change in Westminster around policy, programmes, funding and ways of working, the detail around this ongoing action can be seen in <u>Appendix 2</u>'





During 2023, the Foundation has again worked with Rocket Science to conduct an in-depth assessment of young people's needs in Westminster.

This was the first opportunity to understand the diverse experiences of young people in the City's communities recovering from the pandemic, but now impacted also by the rising cost-of-living.

The 2023 project examined the experiences of various communities of young people across the borough, with a particular focus on the different Youth Hub areas<sup>2</sup>, whilst ensuring that the research was representative of the diversity and intersectionality of experiences across Westminster. The research also sought the views of practitioners working with children and young people, as well as their parents and carers' perspectives. We followed a four-stage, mixed-methods research process, testing out new approaches to listening in an effort to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of the project.

1. A scoping workshop with 35 YWF member and partner organisations and young people in January 2023 to gather their insights, understand the current priorities and needs of young people, and to test the relevance of the proposed methodology and research themes.

2. Training 15 young peer researchers who were recruited through YWF's member organisations to co-design the research and interview young people aged 13-25 during the summer 2023.

3. Three focus groups with practitioners working with early years children and young people at Westminster's Youth and Family Hubs, and specialist youth organisations. For the first time, the 2023 Needs Analysis also included a parent/carer survey and a well-being survey for those under 25. Findings from both surveys are embedded within the report. 4. Two sessions with YWF peer researchers and the Westminster Youth Council to reflect on the findings, explore possible solutions, and participate in advocacy training to shape the launch of the findings.

A Steering Group of YWF Members and Partners, including Westminster City Council Early Help, was set up to provide guidance on the methodology, engagement and accessibility of the research and the calls to action.

<sup>2</sup> Strategically placed selected by the Young Westminster Foundation and Westminster City Council, the five Youth Hubs serve young people in specific localities across the borough in the North West, North East and South. Working together, they shape the overall development of youth services in Westminster as part of a model that champions innovation and collaboration.

Respondent Group	Number
Peer research	124 participants
Wellbeing survey	110 participants
Parent/Carer survey	144 participants
ractitioner ocus group	32 participants
Vestminster Youth ouncil focus group ttendees	15 participants

The peer research method and the age group surveyed meant delving into some challenging or sensitive issues would have been unethical. For example, we did not ask young people about their own personal experiences of mental, physical or sexual health or drug use. This is reflected in the findings. To redress this, we spoke to practitioners working with children and young people who provided insights around the experiences of young

A huge thank you to those young changemakers who have made this research possible:				
Aiah Muradi	Zainab Ahnoud	Asia Al-jaff		
Arwa Muradi	Sarah Alsilawi	Kaoutar Semsili		
Mar Thomas	Tahsin Chowdhury	Megan Kwok		
Bidor Mirza	Esther Kanu	Amina Sadoun		
Dalal Mirza	Myra Soni	Arthur Cassagne		

#### **Practitioner Focus Groups**

We held three focus groups with 32 practitioners working with early years, children and young people at Westminster's Youth and Family Hubs, and specialist youth organisations in response to recommendations in the 2020/21 report and from the research Steering Group to carry out listening activities in a range of community settings and lean into the trusted relationships between practitioners and young people.

We are grateful to all the practitioners and organisatio and/or supported their young people to participate i In total, representatives from 22 orga				
Avenues Youth Project	Portman Nursery			
St Andrew's Youth Club	Unfold			
Four Feathers Youth and Community Centre	Diversity Role I			
Family Lives Children's Centre Outreach and Volunteering service	Westminster City Co After Children and C			
Future Men	Mosaic Commur			
Caxton Youth Organisation	Cardinal Hume			
Westminster City Council Family Navigators	Church Street Fa (including Health Visitors, P Nursery inclusion practitioner: as an additional language an specialist)			

Further details about the peer-research element can be found in Appendix 01.

cludina Enalis

people who are accessing specialist services and support and looked to harness and amplify existing youth voice mechanisms within these settings, such as the 'Do I Dare Disturb the Universe' creative writing anthology created by young people at TBAP Beachcroft Academy in partnership with YWF Member Pan Intercultural Arts. You will find some of these poems throughout the report.

tions who gave their time and shared their views e in 1-2-1 interviews, focus groups, and surveys. ganisations were involved from:

School Westbourne Park Family Centre Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust Models 2-3 Degrees uncil Looked Westminster City Council Climate Care Leavers Emergency Team Westminster Youth Council ity Trust Centre **Rise Collective** nily Hub nts, SENCO, Westminster City Council

Integrated Gangs Unit

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#### 1-2-1 Interviews with young people

124 young people aged 13-25 participated in interviews carried out by 13 Young Westminster Researchers across the borough:



Age of survey respondents

13-16 year olds 34% (42 interviews)

17-25 year olds **66%** (82 interviews)





n/a 1% (1 interviews)



Self reported background



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## Reading this report

YWF recognises that whilst the 2023 findings present some changing and emerging needs of young people, there is a strong element of consistency to the key issues and challenges they face. The research builds upon the insight and action following the 2017/18 and 2020/21 Needs Analysis.

Three 'deep-dives' provide additional hyper-local and/or hyper-specialist insight around the themes of employability, health and wellbeing and serious youth violence.

At a glance, make use of the following key throughout the chapters to hear from different groups:

Young Person (Green), Practitioner (Blue), Parent (Orange)

#### Cost-of-living

85% of young people reported being aware of the cost-of-living situation and 35% said it was a concern. These results highlight the disparity in experiences of the rising cost-of-living, potentially driven by the inequality in the borough with Westminster found to be the most unequal borough in the country<sup>2</sup>. The impact of the cost-of-living-crisis sees young people social-ising less as a consequence of having reduced disposable income and less able to plan for their future.

Practitioners working with children and young people are aware that parents and carers are struggling to manage in the current economic situation which has had knock-on effects on young people's housing, leading to greater overcrowding. Similarly, parents' poor mental health and worries related to the cost-ofliving adversely affects young people's wellbeing and plans for the future. Nevertheless, half of the young people concerned about the issue report they have felt supported around the cost of living and parents recognise the value and variety of free, community-based activities on offer in the borough.

# Education, employment and training

Over half (57%) of young people rated the pressure to achieve education, employment and training success as 'very high', a 10% increase compared to the findings of the 2020 Needs Analysis. The pressure to achieve education, employment and training success appears to be influencing concerns around mental health (See section on mental health findings). At the same time, young people reported a 20% increase in terms of feeling 'very supported' or 'somewhat supported' by their school or college to make decisions about their education, training or employment.

#### Youth voice and action

Almost all (97%) of the young people interviewed had participated in social action in the past year. More young people in Westminster feel empowered to influence change, with a 9% increase on 2020/21. Despite this, around a quarter of young people report they feel unable to influence social or political change, citing their main concerns as crime and safety, the cost-ofliving and tackling racism.

Practitioners working with children and young people also observed that young people were 'hungry' to make their voices heard on a range of issues, but are not always given the space to do so.

## Mental Health

Almost a half of young people (47%) feel that mental health issues are a 'significant concern amongst their peers' up from a third in the last needs analysis. The main factors impacting on mental health relate to doing well at school and in exams, getting a job/having a successful career, and money. Young people aged 17-25 were slightly more concerned about doing well at schools/in exams (60%, n=49), money (49%, n=40) and looks/body image (43%, n=35), whereas 13–16-yearolds were more worried about friendships or missing out on socialising (45%, n=19).

Despite the strong perception that accessing professional mental health support is straightforward, very few report accessing support themselves, possibly because professional help is seen as only for those with serious mental health problems, awareness of waiting lists for services or the perceived taboo associated with accessing help.

# Wellbeing

In general, young people aged 13-25 feel optimistic about their future (80%), are aware of where to seek help if they need it (87%) and are dealing with their problems well (60%) 'often' or 'all of the time'.

# **Physical Health**

For the first time, a significantly higher proportion of young people in Westminster rated vaping as having the most worrying impact on their peers' health (98%); more than smoking cigarettes (86%), drugs (80%) or alcohol (79%). Practitioners acknowledge that vaping has become complicated to tackle owing to its pervasiveness, being easy to hide and the way it is advertised.

Asked about engagement with physical health activities and services, young people cite cost as the main barrier, as well as lack of variety and availability of sport facilities.



# Living in Westminster

Of the local services on offer to young people in Westminster, the most commonly used are local parks (72%), local libraries (56%) and gyms (37%). More young people are now using creative and cultural spaces around Westminster, with museums (86%) and art galleries (82%) being the most visited 'often' or 'sometimes'; this may be a result of the relaxation of covid restrictions, an increase in outreach work by cultural organisations and free sessions in holiday periods. Parents/carers identified the most common ways they find out about services and activities in the borough were through word of mouth, (32%) schools/colleges, (17%) and e-mail (16%). Many practitioners mentioned that parents lack sufficient Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision and support, particularly during the weekends and holidays; practitioners also commented on a lack of information and support for them when working with young people at the pre-SEND diagnosis/referral stage.

# Transport

Over half of young people use the bus (58%) and/or walk (53%). Around a quarter of young people said that relevant and interesting activities and events, and greater awareness of them, would make them more likely to travel around London, whilst 18% would travel more if there was better transport infrastructure, particularly an increase in the availability of rental bikes. Unfamiliarity with other places remains a major barrier to travel, with 17% mentioning this as a deterrent.

# Environment

More than half of young people in Westminster (55%) are aware of the climate emergency and think it is a significant issue in the borough. Asked what can be done within Westminster to improve the environment, young people suggest more environmentally-friendly transport options, using more sustainable energy sources and an increase in bins and recycling points.

# Crime and safety

Young people feel safer in Westminster, both during the day and at night compared to other parts of London. Almost all young people interviewed (89%) feel safe when they are out in Westminster during the day, compared to 73% when out in other parts of London. At night, however, over a third (42%) say that they do not feel safe locally which rises to 64% when out in other parts of London. Young people's main safety concerns are people carrying knives, theft/stealing and people joining gangs. There is a consensus among practitioners that young people are harder to engage as a consequence of ongoing incidents that are occurring in their local communities or within their social circles which result in young people and their parents or carers feeling less safe accessing or traveling to youth organisations.

# Internet and social media

A majority of young people use TikTok (71%), Instagram (66%) and Snapchat (53%). 62% of young people use social media as their source of news. Young people aged 17-25 are more inclined to rate the negative impact that social media has on their lives compared to the younger age group. 54% of young people say that they want to spend less time on social media which is a substantial increase from the 31% recorded in 2020. The main issues associated with using social media revolve around fake or unreliable news, body image pressures and bullying/harassment. In the 2020 needs analysis, only 7% of young people felt that they needed additional support with managing concerns and pressures related to social media. This has risen to 58%.





the Cost of Living in Westminster

The cost-of-living-crisis is expected to push an additional 1.3 million people across the country into absolute poverty and have particularly affected the younger generation<sup>4</sup>.

Among those aged 16 to 25, over half (54%) report that their mental well-being has deteriorated<sup>5</sup>. The combination of economic pressures and precarious financial situations has heightened their sense of vulnerability, increasing worries about future employment opportunities and life chances, with 76% of young individuals nationally expressing concern about their access to stable employment.<sup>5</sup>

Rising prices are the dominating concern for young people with more worried about access to money than any other issues, including environment or crime<sup>6</sup>. This is having an impact on aspirations, with nearly two-thirds of 18–24-year-olds lowering their career expectations and the cost-of-living cited as one of the biggest factors for these financial pressures leading young people to seek any paid work to avoid being jobless<sup>7</sup>.

It is a similar picture in London. Fewer Londoners are reporting having enough money to get by than in 2020. Locally a quarter of parents in Westminster report cutting back on spending for essential food items<sup>8</sup> and 45% more school children were claiming free school meals in 2022 than in 2018<sup>9</sup>.

9 Future of Westminster Commission Final Report

#### The impact of rising costs on young people's lives





The rising cost of living has had a significant impact on young people in terms of their education and future career prospects, housing security and social life. More than three quarters, **85% (n=105), of the young people interviewed reported being aware of the cost-ofliving situation.** Awareness was predictably higher among the older age group (17-25), with more than half (62%, n=51) being very aware compared to 48% (n=20) of the younger age group (13-16).

London Funders, Data insights: Cost of living crisis
 UK Youth, New UK Youth research shows impact of cost of living crisis on young people
 The Children's Society, The Good Childhood Report
 The Prince's Trust / The LADBible Group, Redefining 'Dream Jobs'
 LAO, Westminster



When asked about the impact that the rising costof-living was having in Westminster, young people reported the following:

• 46% of survey respondents said young people and their families are increasingly unable to buy basic necessities, including heating at home.

"I think this is a major concern as many people including myself feel like they are not able to afford their basic livings such as groceries" (20, Female)

"[My] parents can't afford things when we go out, and can't afford to turn on the heating" (15, Female)

• 20% said young people are socialising less as a consequence of having less disposable income and the increases in prices.

"[Young people] are also more lonely as they reduce social time to save money" (21, Female)

"Not many of my friends want to go out anymore as everything is so expensive" (20, Female)

 5% said young people feel like they cannot plan for the future.

"The rising cost-of-living can impact young people in Westminster by limiting their ability to save money and plan for the future. High living costs can make it difficult for young people to put money aside for emergencies, save for a down payment on a home, or invest in their education or career development." (24, Male)

- 58% of those who were in part-time or full-time employment (n=12) said they were having to work more hours to be able to afford basic necessities.
- 15% said rising costs were leading to poorer mental health

"For myself this has made me more conscious about the decisions I make, from daily groceries to larger purchases such as cars. Overall, the rise in general cost has made me much more anxious and stressed." (20, Female)

"This will potentially create stress and anxiety. Instead of living their childhood, young people are now going to be overly stressed about the future and thus create a generation built on fear and stress. This will damage their mental health and have a larger effect on society as a whole." (18, Female)

Young people who cited the cost-of-living as an issue of particular concern (n=44) were asked if they feel well supported during this time and the perceived effects upon their wider community.





16% (7) Very unsupported

23% (10) Somewhat unsupported

41% (18) Somewhat supported

9% (4) Very supported

The Cost of Living in Westminster 2 Half of the young people feel either very or somewhat supported with 39% feeling somewhat unsupported or very unsupported. These results highlight the disparity in experiences of the rising cost-of-living, potentially driven by the inequality in the borough with Westminster found to be the most unequal borough in the country<sup>10</sup>.

Those who said they felt unsupported were asked how support provided for coping with the cost-of-living situation could be improved, young people identified the following:

 26% want more government support, particularly for those on low income and for students

"More awareness or more services in place to help those struggling, provide basic necessities like toilet paper." (20, Female)

"Cheaper things/more vouchers for students." (17, Female) "Cheaper electricity and water bills for those on lower incomes" (18, Male)

More than half of the young people answering this question (56%, n=24) saw the rising cost-of-living impact their wider community:

"Community isn't as lively as people aren't going out a lot as they can't afford to go to places." (20, Female) In the YWF's parent/carer survey, 20% (n=27) of parents mentioning the cost-of-living as the biggest challenge facing young people. This was echoed by practitioners working with children and young people many of whom were aware that parents and carers are struggling to manage in the current economic situation and that this has had a ripple effect on young people.

"Being a parent is a luxury because they are in survival mode – money or clothes, food, child has a school trip, [they have to] make sure they find money." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

The rising cost of living is deemed to have had a direct impact on young people's housing situation, with issues such as overcrowding and poor living conditions being mentioned throughout our consultations with practitioners and the parent/carer survey.

Young people are more inclined to spend their free time outside of the house, practitioners also noted that housing availability, affordability and overcrowding can be especially impactful for LGBT+ young people, young refugees, asylum seekers and care leavers. One specialist practitioner highlighted that some LGBT+ young people they work with, who live in overcrowded housing, at times feel unable to access support services such as online counselling owing to the lack of privacy. Practitioners acknowledged how poor parental mental health can affect young people as they inevitably feel their parents' burdens and anxieties and try to provide reassurance and comfort despite their own need for support.

"If LGBT+ young persons are kicked out of their family house, there's a lack of specialised houses so they end up bouncing around from place to place because they get put up in houses where they might face the same discrimination." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

<sup>10</sup> Future of Westminster Commission, Final Report 2023



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I wonder where you are right now. I hope you didn't let the past catch up with you Out of a wound new joy will start And never fear though it may break your heart. Did you pick the right path? Because you still haven't figured it out Right now, you may ask Cuz... I still haven't found myself And myself means a better version of me. Don't regret anything you do Because it will help you grow My days are numbered, So let's see where life takes you. From the past, present and future.

Anon, 'Do I Dare Disturb the Universe' anthology, **TBAP** Beachcroft Academy

Education, training & employment

Located at the heart of London, Westminster is home to 53,000 businesses and contributes an eighth of all jobs in the capital<sup>11</sup>. The latest data on young people's education and employment suggest that whilst many benefit from these opportunities, a significant proportion living within the borough are excluded and face considerable barriers to fulfilling their potential.

London continues to outperform other English regions in educational attainment, and Westminster performs even better. In England an average of 69% of state-educated students obtain grades 9-4 compared to 74.3% in London and 81.8% in Westminster<sup>12</sup>. This makes Westminster the fourthbest performing London borough, and the best-performing in inner London.

or nationally (4.9%).

age groups<sup>13</sup>.

There is also a growing skills gap – an estimated 20% of the workforce will be significantly under-skilled for their jobs by 2030<sup>14</sup> - which may worsen owing to the level of underdeveloped speech and language skills resulting from the impact of lockdowns on teaching<sup>15</sup>.

Skills development is one issue highlighted by Westminster's young people who want better access to work experience, apprenticeships and career opportunities alongside a curriculum more reflective of modern culture and society which will better equip them for the transition to adulthood<sup>16</sup>. Westminster Council acknowledge this and have made providing access to high quality education and training opportunities one of their six priority outcomes for the 2023-26 Children and Young People's Plan.

<sup>11</sup> <u>Opportunity London, Westminster</u> <sup>12</sup> <u>Trust for London, GCSE attainment by borough</u> Oxford Learning College, Skills Gap Statistics 2023

<sup>15</sup> I CAN, Speaking Up for the Covid Generation <sup>16</sup> City of Westminster, Children and Young People's Plan 2023-26

Similarly young people in Westminster are more likely to be in employment, education or training than their peers. Nationally 5.2% of 16–17-year-olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared to 3.4% in London and 3.3% in Westminster. Similarly, fewer 18–24-year-olds in Westminster are claiming out of work benefits (2.9%) than in London (5.3%)

However, Londoners are more likely to be in insecure work compared to residents of other regions, as are young people when compared to older

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The Health Foundation, Percentage of employees in insecure work in 2022

#### Pressure to achieve education, training and employment success

Young people in Westminster experience pressure to achieve education, training and employment success. Over half (57%, n=70) of interviewees rated this pressure as 'very high', which is a significant increase of 10% on the findings of the 2020 Needs Analysis. Another 33% (n=41) rated this as 'somewhat high'.

As in 2020, a higher proportion of those in the younger age group feel the pressure to achieve success is 'very high.' Young girls also rate the pressure to achieve success as higher compared to their male peers.

Figure 3. Level of pressure for young people to achieve education, training or employment success by age group (n=123)





Since 2020 when they were last surveyed, there has been a 16% increase among 13–16-year-olds in the perceived levels of pressure to succeed. The added pressure has also been felt in the older age group, although the increase is less steep.

Figure 5. Average scores for young people's level of pressure to succeed, where 1=very low and 4=very high 2020 Needs Analysis 3.23







# Support to make education, training and employment-related decisions

Given high levels of pressure to succeed, it is important that young people are receiving adequate support to understand their education and training options and to plan their future careers. Most (80%, n=98) young people reported they feel 'very supported' or 'somewhat supported' by their school or college to make decisions about their education, training or employment, a 20% increase from the previous research.

Figure 6. Level of support at school or college for young people to make education, training or employment decisions (n=122)



Of those attending school or college, the older age group feel more supported to make education, training and employment-related decisions which most likely reflects the increased availability of career advice and guidance in the latter years of education:

Figure 7. Level of support from school or college to help young people make decisions about their education, training or employment by age group (n=124)



Figure 8. Level of support from school or college by age group, excluding young people attending university (n=94)



Asked about the main sources of advice and inspiration in relation to jobs and careers, more than half of young people (51%) mentioned their parents, carers or siblings, with just under half (47%) relying on their friends. Whilst more young people rely on personal support networks, 40% do use formal or established sources of advice such as from schools, universities or colleges with a similar proportion (39%) using careers and employability websites.



Although the majority of respondents felt supported, the 1 in 5 who felt unsupported said they lacked awareness of employment, education and training pathways:

"There wasn't a lot of information or guidance about apprenticeships for people who didn't want to go to university, so they end up finding jobs." (20, Female)

25% of the young people who are currently in a form of higher education (n=30) said the cost and competitiveness of further and higher education is making it increasingly inaccessible:

"The cost of education, including tuition fees and student loans can be a significant burden for young people. High educational expenses can lead to increased levels of student debt, which can affect their financial stability." (19, Female)

"I will be living in an accommodation next year for uni and the costs are very high. This may prevent students from wanting to go." (18, Female)



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#### Accessing opportunities

Most young people feel it is either 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' to find out about (72%, n=89) or access (67%, n=82) education, training and employment opportunities.

"The best part about living in Westminster is the range of different activities and opportunities open to me which had made my application for Uni much easier and successful" (20, Female).

However, between a fifth and a quarter of young people feel that it is 'very difficult' or 'somewhat difficult'. Employability has been a key focus of the YWF community since 2017 and YWF member 2-3 Degrees deliver the Mastering My Future employability programme, commissioned by YWF. The programme uses workshops, career advice, placement and support young people in their transition into employment<sup>17</sup>.

Figure 10. Ease of finding out about and accessing education, training and employment opportunities (n=124)





Asked how to improve information about and access to education, training and employment opportunities, young people suggested:

#### More in-school advice and guidance regarding future pathways (39%)

"More community fairs, more sessions in school - not just for 16-year-olds- earlier and later on " (21, Female)

"If teachers showed possible career paths, this would show the importance of school and will make people strive for success." (16, Male)

"[Employers] should go to schools and promote opportunities" (16, Male)

13% said they want more opportunities for employment-related learning such as training programmes and work experience

"In the education sector there should be more work experience available for young people and also paid opportunities as young people do not have an income." (16, Female)

"More immersive learning" (21 Female)

"More opportunities so there is less competition" (18, Female)

"[It would be great] if teachers have more resources [to help with] building a CV and the interview process for jobs and more education on apprenticeships" (20, Female) Practitioners working with children and young people reported some of the issues relating to accessing education, training and employment opportunities faced by young people included:

#### Housing instability

"[Young people] are not seeing that their futures are very bright at the moment because there is a massive issue with housing. So, their progression in terms of adulthood is being quite massively delayed and it's having an impact on education, on their aspirations on the way they feel about life and their futures." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

#### Young people not feeling motivated enough

"There's a disconnection caused by Covid, and it has an effect on children in school. They have gone from having to learn all these new social skills because of the social isolation, to children dropping out, not wanting to get out of the house." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

#### Feeling isolated, unseen or unheard

"For the young people who find themselves in the middle in terms of school attainment, they feel isolated because no one is giving them that attention (they don't need that extra support but they're also not going to Russell Group Universities)" (Practitioner working with children and young people)

#### Not receiving the support needed

"They need 1-to-1 support, mentoring, they're missing out on opportunities because they don't have anyone to sit down with them and help, signpost and get them to the next step." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

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In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and the advent of the North Paddington Programme<sup>18</sup>, Paddington Development Trust, Westminster **Council and Young Westminster Foundation** collaborated in jointly commissioning a research project aimed to provide hyper-local insight into the disconnection between young job seekers in North Paddington and the labour market to supplement the broader needs analysis study. We wanted to understand the experience of young people aged 18-25 in the sometimes coined 'forgotten middle' who feel under-supported by and may not be accessing services, with the aim to develop collaborative, young person led solutions and services for the 21% identified in the peer research as feeling unsupported in their choices around education, training and employment.

The research was conducted between late January to May 2023 and engaged 78 18–25-year-olds living in and around the three wards of interest (Westbourne, Harrow Road and Queen's Park) through an online survey, four focus groups and two 1-to-1 interviews. Additionally, interviews were held with 20 providers and professionals in the field and four students from the University of Westminster were recruited and trained as peer researchers following specialist training provided in thematic analysis by the University.

#### Findings from the North Paddington 18-25s Employment Support Needs Action Research

#### Key findings from 18-25s in North Paddington

Young people overwhelmingly reported feeling helpless and confused by impersonal recruitment processes that are perceived as unfair, unkind, and unlikely to lead to a job offer. People described the application process as a 'minefield' and 'stressful' and felt very alone and unsupported at this difficult time.

- 80% of survey respondents looking for entry level jobs would accept as little as £5.28 per hour in order to get some experience.
- 60% rated their motivation to find work highly but 36% of survey respondents reported a negative experience of job hunting. 40% of survey respondents reported having faced discrimination when looking for work.
- 57% were not confident they had the right personal networks, experience or qualities to gain an entry level job. Young people felt that support services could help by further developing relationships and introductions with recruiters in the industry of their choice.
- Participants mentioned the mental toll that repeated rejection from job applications had on them, with some reporting low self-esteem as a result. 27% of survey respondents were either not confident or felt they lacked the necessary skills to get their career off to a good start.
- There was frustration at not being helped to construct a CV or having been taught how to construct a cover letter. Few knew where to get help with this, but most admitted to needing it.
- There was overwhelming demand for greater assistance to access quality work experience and guidance around how to construct a CV or cover letter.



#### Jasmine, 20 years old [extracted from the research report]

Jasmine lives on a housing estate in Westbourne Ward. She was born in the area to first generation Middle Eastern parents. Sixth form and her A-levels were disrupted by Covid-19, and studying at home was difficult as she shares a three-bedroom flat with her mother and five siblings. She had dreams of becoming a lawyer until she met a careers advisor through the school in year 11. The advice she received made her give up on her aspiration to become a lawyer, believing it would be too difficult.

She applied to university and got a place studying a social science. She has regrets over her decision given the debt burden it will leave her with, and she is concerned that she isn't acquiring the work experience she will need to make herself employable after graduating. She is very sceptical about finding a job in the field of her studies and doesn't know anyone who can open doors in the industry. She's worried about facing discrimination when applying for jobs and imagines herself starting her working life in an unrelated, unexciting, low-paid job with few prospects.

Jasmine's decision to go to university was not a result of family or peer expectation, rather the result of just following the herd, and without anyone to discuss alternatives with, such as apprenticeships, she feels let down. Jasmine knew about the Job Centre and Universal Credit but didn't want to be associated with them because of the stigma that she and her peers attach to it. Jasmine was not aware of other employment support services in the area or in Westminster more broadly. Jasmine spoke affectionately about the tight-knit community on her estate where everyone looks out for each other, but she was so affected by the crime and violence that are a routine part of growing up in the area that she dreams of leaving the area permanently to work in Dubai where she says it feels much safer. When pressed she said she would love to stay in North Paddington if only the crime would stop.



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Haiku for Justice

# George Floyd's tragedy, Matters to everyone else. Rights, protest, action!



However, a majority of young Londoners (65.4%) do not feel that their voices are adequately heard, while 30.2% express uncertainty about the level of recognition they receive<sup>20</sup>. Only a small minority (4.4%) feel that their voices are genuinely acknowledged<sup>21</sup>. This was flagged in the previous needs analysis where 96% of respondents had taken part in social action but only 1 in 10 felt they could influence change<sup>22</sup>.

There is a strong belief among young people that they should be involved in city planning, design, and decision-making, with close to 90% agreeing or strongly agreeing that young Londoners should play a more active role<sup>23</sup>. A similar proportion believes it is essential to learn about UK politics, democracy, and citizenship in school<sup>24</sup>.

These statistics indicate a strong desire for engagement, but also point to a need to address this by converting aspirations into practical actions that genuinely empower Westminster's young people.

<sup>2</sup> YWF, Our City Our Future

vous voice vous voice action social action

Youth social action has the potential to yield significant benefits for young individuals, their communities and the wider public<sup>19</sup>.

artnership for Young London, Levelling up London: Improving London to meet the aspirations, needs and rights of young people thership for Young London, Levelling up London: Improving London to meet the aspirations, needs and rights of young people

<sup>9</sup> I Will movement. Bridging divides by showcasing youth social action

Partnership for Young London, Levelling up London: Improving London to meet the aspirations, needs and rights of young people <sup>1</sup>Partnership for Young London, Levelling up London: Improving London to meet the aspirations, needs and rights of young people

# Social and political issues

When asked about the social and political issues they were most concerned about, 40%, n=50 of young people surveyed in Westminster cited crime and safety. The other two main issues mentioned were cost-of-living (35%, n=44) and tackling racism (25%, n=31):



#### Influencing change

Young people in Westminster feel relatively empowered to influence change, with 18% (n=22) feeling that they could greatly influence change in relation to the social and political issues that they care about. This is an increase on the previous needs analysis (9%, n=9). Since 2020, there have been several initiatives aimed at providing young people with greater voice. These include the YWF Young Ambassadors programme and Westminster Youth Council, Youth Advisory Boards at a number of YWF Members and peer research projects such as the Young Londoners Research Project at The Avenues Youth Project, funded by the GLA<sup>25</sup>. However, a guarter of participants (25%, n=31) still feel that they are unable to influence change:

Figure 12. Young people's ability to have an influence in creating change in social and political issues (n=123)



# Participating in youth social action

Almost all (97%, n=119) of the young people interviewed had participated in social action in the past year. The following graph details the types of social action that young people engage in, with the most popular being volunteering, raising awareness on social media and supporting their friends, peers or family members:

Figure 13. Taking part in social action activities in the last year (n=123)



voices heard on a range of issues, but are not always given the space to do so.

"They are hopeful and hungry – they come with a high level of 'We want more', they just don't know where to access it from but when it is put in front of them, they are keen to get involved" (Practitioner working with children and young people)

"Once they are given the space, they want to talk about issues and get involved" (Practitioner working with children and young people)

Nevertheless, two practitioners working with children and young people commented on a perceived danger of young people seeing or being exposed to discriminative views regarding the LGBT+ community, racism and equal rights which can dent a person's optimism for joining a movement for change.



According to a recent longitudinal study by the NHS, one in six children aged 7 to 16 now face mental health challenges, which is up from one in nine in 2017 and one in ten in 2004<sup>26</sup>. Recognising the significance of addressing mental health issues early in life is crucial, given that approximately half of these issues manifest by the age of 14, rising to 75% by the age of  $24^{27}$ . Despite this awareness, many young people and their families still encounter difficulties in accessing timely and appropriate support<sup>28</sup>.

Between 2017 and 2022, rates of probable mental disorder have

increased among young people aged 7-16 from approximately 1 in 8 to more than 1 in 6<sup>29</sup>. For those aged 17-19, rates increased from 1 in 10 to 1 in 4. These trends have been reflected in Westminster CAMHS activity, particularly post Covid and the Council estimates that approximately 85% of young adults (aged 18-25) with diagnosable mental health conditions are not accessing local support<sup>30</sup>.

#### Scream

I scream with no sound I want to say something, but I can't I feel the burn inside My anger feels like a moth dancing In my stomach I search for light Whilst in the dark.

Anon, 'Do I Dare Disturb the Universe' anthology, **TBAP Beachcroft Academy** 



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> NHS Digital, Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2022 - wave 3 follow up to the 2017 survey <sup>27</sup> Local Government Association, Children and young people's mental health: An independent review

into policy success and challenges over the last decade <sup>28</sup> Royal College of Psychiatrists, Hidden waits force more than three quarters of mental health

ents to seek help om emergency services BMA, Mental health pressures in England

Scrutiny Task Group, Improving the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people in Westminster Interim Recommendations and Briefing - Scrutiny Task Group

#### Prevalence of and concerns about mental health issues

Young people in Westminster perceive mental health issues to be common amongst their peers and more common now than in 2020/2021. Whilst a third of young people surveyed in 2020 felt that mental health issues were 'somewhat common' amongst their peers, this has now risen to more than half.

The survey did not ask about young people's personal experiences of mental health given the sensitivities of using a peer research method.

#### Figure 14. How common are mental health issues for young people in Westminster (n=124)



The change in perceptions amongst young people reflect the raised awareness of mental health as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also a steady increase in prevalence, with one in five 18–24-year-olds classified as experiencing "severe distress" in a December 2022 survey<sup>31</sup>.



Practitioners working with children and young people had concerns around young people's increased anxiety citing how young people in the lower age group are particularly struggling with their resilience and confidence levels when faced with obstacles:

"We've got a focus on supporting young people to manage their emotions, the tendency seems to be them not being able to manage them in a healthy way, there's a lot of self-harm going on at the moment." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

"Especially with younger ones, 8-13, their resilience and self-assurance levels have gone right down, they don't bounce back as quickly as they used to in relation to incidents that might happen to them e.g., if a teacher tells them off on a morning, they'll come to the youth club on the evening still upset about it. Without giving them an avenue to get it all out and point out how they can do it better next time, they will hold onto it and go home with it." (Practitioner

<sup>31</sup> UCL, One in five young adults experiencing severe distress in England

# Factors impacting mental health

Young people most frequently identified doing well at school and in exams (59%, n=73) and getting a job/having a successful career (51%, n=63) as their main worries. Other factors identified by over 30% of young people included 'money' (44%, n=55), 'friendships or missing out on socialising' (40%, n=49), 'looks/body image' (38%, n=47), and 'family life' (31%, n=39):



Coming out as LGBTQ+ to friends/family 5% (6)



Figure 16. Main worries for young people in Westminster by age group

Figure 17. Main worries for young people in Westminster by gender



Young women were significantly more concerned about doing well at school/in exams (63%, n=54), money (49%, n=42) and looks/body image (45%, n=39). While findings for employment were similar between genders, young men were more worried about friendships or missing out on socialising.

# Access to mental health support

Half of Westminster's young people feel that it would be 'somewhat easy' to find out about and access mental health support should they need it, with a smaller proportion of them rating this as 'very easy' (21% and 15%, respectively).



Despite the perception that mental health issues are common amongst young people and that accessing professional mental health support is straightforward, few reported accessing support themselves.

Peer researchers noted that there is a perception amongst young people that professional help is only for those with serious mental health problems, and there appears to be something of a taboo around accessing these services possibly due to the associated stigma of using them, which was also highlighted by young people in the 2020 needs analysis. When asked how they deal with a difficult or stressful situation:

- 44% said they talk to family, friends or teachers
- 36% said they take time out for themselves or engage with activities to take their mind off it

"I take time for myself and try not to think so deeply about the situation" (15, Male)

"I take some time off and isolate myself so I can just relax" (20, Female)

Asked what could improve access to relevant services and information, young people recommended:

32% want more education within school on mental health issues and services. While services and initiatives exist such as a Council pilot scheme in schools<sup>32</sup>, and the Council's We Got U campaign<sup>33</sup>, young people want to see more.

# Wellbeing survey findings

A new addition to the 2023 Needs Analysis consisted of trialling a young people's wellbeing survey that was distributed to schools, the Youth Hubs and youth organisations in order to understand better young people's feelings and wellbeing and scope out whether such a survey can be implemented in Westminster's schools and youth organisations on a yearly basis.

The aim of the survey was to provide young people with an accessible opportunity to participate in research without taking part in an in-depth one-to-one interview.

In total, 110 young people filled out the wellbeing survey, with ages ranging from 6 to 25 years old, and most young people being 17. 50 (45%) young people self-identified as Male, 43 (39%) as Female, 1 as Gender Fluid and 16 choose not to disclose their gender.

There were several schools, youth clubs and youth organisations that young people mentioned they attend, with Caxton Youth Club, St. Andrews, 2-3 Degrees, Westminster City School, The Avenues Youth Project and Cardinal Hume being the most mentioned.

The survey measured young people's wellbeing through three distinct lenses: 'My self', 'My feelings' and 'My life' and had age-appropriate questions for 13–25-year-olds and under 13's.

Under 13's (n=37) findings around their sense of self reveals that 54% (n=20) are 'often' or 'all of the time' aware of what to do when facing problems, 81% (n=40) feel good about themselves and only 19% (n=7) lose their temper. Local initiatives such as Our City may contribute to their awareness of what to do when facing problems.

#### Figure 19. Under 13's feelings of self (n=37)



Looking at 13–25-year old's sense of self (n=60), most felt that they are able to think clearly (68%) and feel good about themselves (72%) 'all of the time' or 'often'. However, a higher number of young people felt that they were not able to cope with all the things that they needed to do 'all the time' or 'often'.

Figure 22. 13-25s feelings of self (n=60)



In terms of their feelings, young people under 13 years are overall happy and calm, and rarely express worry. However, 44% (n=16) of respondents feel stressed 'often' and 'some of the time'.

#### Figure 20. Self-rating of under 13's feelings (n=37)



When asked about their feelings, young people are overall feeling nervous and stressed (50%), angry (37%) or upset (37%) some of the time. However, 30% of participants mention feeling upset about something that has happened to them unexpectedly 'often' or 'all of the time'.



Rarely

None of the time





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Westminster records the biggest life expectancy gap between residents in its poorest and most prosperous wards of any borough in the country. This amounts to a gap of 18 years on average for male residents and a gap of 12 years for all residents<sup>35</sup>. The Council is committed to halving the gap by 2035.

In this context the health challenges faced by some young people are systemic.

Obesity in children and young people is recognised as "one of the greatest long-term health challenges currently faced in England"<sup>36</sup> with more than one-in-ten Year 6 pupils registered as overweight<sup>37</sup>. The rates of obesity in Westminster are substantially higher with 46.9% of children in Year 6 identified as being overweight or obese.

As of August 2023, Westminster is ranked fourth highest amongst unitary local authorities (n=147) for new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among the under 25s and the borough's young people are around five-times more likely to report a new infection than the average young person in England<sup>38</sup>. These challenges are compounded by decreases in detection rates for chlamydia amongst 15-24 females in 2022 and a decrease in the rate of HPV vaccination for 12 and 13-year-olds<sup>39</sup>.

There has been a reported drop in drug experimentation amongst young people both nationally<sup>40</sup> and within Westminster<sup>41</sup>. However, vaping is becoming an increasing concern amongst those working with young people.

Current and regular vape use amongst 11–15-year-olds in England rose from 6% and 2% in 2016 to 9% and 4% in 2021<sup>42</sup>. The increased prevalence and availability of cheap disposable vapes is seen as a factor in this rise.

House of Commons Library, Obesity statistics

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Future of Westminster Commission

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Office for Health Improvement and Disparity. Obesity Profile, 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> UK Health Security Agency. Summary profile of local authority sexual health – Westminster, 2023

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Sexual and reproductive health profiles, 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> NHS Digital, Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021
<sup>11</sup> National Drug Treatment Monitoring System

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

#### 6.2 Drugs, vaping, smoking and alcohol

A significantly higher proportion of young people in Westminster rated vaping as having the most worrying health impacts for their peers (98% n=119) compared to smoking cigarettes (86%), drugs (80%) or alcohol (79%). This finding was consistent across both age groups; 13–16-year-olds show a tendency to be 'more worried' about alcohol, drug use and smoking cigarettes compared to 17-25-year-olds who mainly rated these aspects as "somewhat worrying".

The substantial increase in young people's concerns about vaping since 2020 seems to be a direct result of the rise in both the popularity and the commercialisation of vaping devices amongst younger consumers.

Figure 25. Young people's worries around health (n=124)



Figure 26. Average scores of young people's worries around health by age group, where 1 = not at all worried and 4 = very worried







The topic of vaping was discussed among practitioners working with children and young people, with the majority echoing that it has become complicated to tackle and prevent owing to its pervasiveness and the way it is being advertised.

There is a sense vaping is becoming a major issue amongst young people owing to its high prevalence within all age and demographic groups, yet one that few know how to address. Practitioners felt that young people seem relatively unconcerned by the possible health consequences of vaping and were perceived to vape out of a desire to conform with their peers.

This discrepancy between practitioners' experiences and the large proportion of interview participants' rating vaping as their highest health concern suggests young people are more open to talking about the health impacts of vaping with their peers compared to professionals.

"They see it as a flavoured little pipe: it's popular, it's commercialised, they don't see vaping as smoking." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

"It's the constancy of it, they don't know what they're taking either. It's easy to hide it and you can't smell it long term." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

## Improving physical health

Young people feel that it was highly important for them to have access to a variety of physical activities, with 89% (n=110) feeling able to access local green or open spaces, and 81% (n=100) feeling able to access sporting or exercise facilities.

Yes, I feel able to access this

No, I don't feel able to access this

#### Figure 28. Access to physical activities (n=124)



#### Figure 29. Barriers to accessing activities or facilities (n=52)

Young people highlighted several barriers which prevent them from accessing physical activities or facilities. Out of the 52 young people who did not feel able to access these services, a major barrier cited was cost, with 60% (n=31) mentioning that the activities they wanted to do are too expensive. Other main barriers mentioned are a lack of availability (29%, n=15), and difficulty travelling to them (21%, n=11).



When asked about physical health activities, services or information young people said:

 27% of young people said they wanted greater access to facilities or activities. However, cost was a barrier to engaging in activities, particularly gym memberships, and there should be affordable options for young people. Suggestions included providing more outdoor gyms.

"I would like to access the gym, but it is too expensive." (21, Female)

"Even though I go to the gym it could be a little cheaper or have discounts for students." (19, Male)

"[I wanted to] join my local football club but there was a monthly pay which I wasn't able to afford." (15, Male)  9% said they want greater variety and availability of sport facilities

"More organised events in public spaces so more people can get involved and engage young people." (18, Female)

10% said they want more organised sport and sport events

"Football pitches - I enjoy playing football but at times I can't as it is closed." (13, Male)

"[I want to] play football on a grass pitch." (16, Male) "More running, local football group, training facilities for football."(13, Male)

 6% said they want activities only for certain groups:

"Gym should be open for younger [ages] as well - most are for 16+ ... should have a place for under 16s." (21, Female)

"Girls only swimming" (18, Female)

"Bigger female-only gym access" (18, Female)

#### 6.4 Information and advice about sex and relationships<sup>43</sup>

Most young people feel the information and advice they receive about sex and relationships to be somewhat helpful (59%), 18% found it to be 'very helpful'. Only 4% (n=3) of young people found the information and advice 'not at all helpful' and 12% (n=8) 'somewhat unhelpful'. 7% of young people reported that they had not received any information or advice.

Figure 30. Helpfulness of information and advice about sex and relationships (n=68)



#### 6.5 Accessing sexual health support in the local area

Most young people surveyed feel it is easy to find out about and access sexual health support, and yet **over a third of young people (40%, n=26) still feel it is somewhat or very difficult to access support.** 

Figure 31. Ease of finding out and accessing sexual health support (n=66)



Practitioners working with children and young people voiced their concern that there is a lack of healthcare support for young people around their physical health, with available information and resources being unclear:

"They [young people] get pushed around from agency to agency, get pushed back from GPs for simple requests and the appointments are difficult to book. Their needs are not taken seriously." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

	18% (12)		
			59% (40)
12% (8	)		
(5)			

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manity 8 spaces living in Wesminster

#### My world

In my mind nation I like singing and dancing Back flipping and spins It's the type of thing for me Thought provoking poetry. Think outside the box. Believe in myself. This can be more successful. Push yourself even further. Till you reach the finish line.

Anon, 'Do I Dare Disturb the Universe' anthology, TBAP Beachcroft Academy

54,000 under 25's live in Westminster; with Queens Park (8.3%), Westbourne (7.9%), Church St (7.6%) and Abbey Road (7%) wards home to the largest proportions of children and young people<sup>44</sup>. However, the 2021 census revealed that Westminster has a declining population of children and young people e.g., the number of 5-11 year olds has fallen by 17% since 2011. Whilst Westminster City Council's Strategy and Intelligence Unit have flagged that the younger population will not be growing older in the borough<sup>45</sup>, we do not yet know the effect this will have on services.

The Future of Westminster Commission found considerable evidence of the important contribution voluntary and community organisations make to the quality of life for residents, such as local food banks and the Community Champions<sup>46</sup> particularly serving under-resourced communities. Westminster is also home to several long-established youth clubs, including the world's oldest youth club St Andrew's, which are well attended and the Council's Children's Services have been



rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted<sup>47</sup>. YWF and Westminster Council have worked closely to support and grow the borough's youth offer by rolling out a new Youth and Family Hub model which brings together youth clubs, statutory services and specialist providers with the aim of better coordinating services and improving life outcomes for local young people<sup>48</sup>. Between September 2021 and August 2022, 1,954 young people accessed one of the 5 Youth Hubs in Westminster<sup>49</sup>. Registration data from one of the Youth Hubs, Avenues Youth Project, shows a 163% increase in the number of young people attending between 2020 to 2023.

To ensure young people are aware of the borough's offers, YWF, along with Young K&C, maintain the Our City webpage, which advertises free and low-cost activities for young people. The Holiday, Activities and Food Fund, advertised through the Our City site, funded 7107 places and provided over 45,000 meals<sup>50</sup>.

Alongside mainstream offers, with the national percentage of pupils

with SEND steadily increasing since 2016, a priority for Westminster Council is to ensure that SEND services are accessible and fit for purpose. Feedback on current SEND services is poor and across England families are facing long waiting times for support and trust in the support system is falling<sup>51</sup>. In Westminster the council has rolled out a strategy for supporting young people with SEND which focuses on giving them greater rights and information, spaces to provide feedback, and involving them more in planning and decision making<sup>52</sup>.

While young people in the borough engage with youth-centred services, the same has not been true with Westminster's abundance of cultural offers. The last needs analysis identified that over half of the borough's young people were not making use of museums, galleries or theatres. YWF has since worked to address this through initiatives such as the Cultural Connections pilot programme which provided 300 West End tickets to young people who attended youth clubs in Westminster<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>44,45</sup> Westminster City Council, Census 2023
<sup>46</sup> Future of Westminster Commission, Final Report 2023

- <sup>46</sup> Future of Westminster Commission, Final Report 20 <sup>47</sup> Ofsted, London borough of Westminster
- <sup>48</sup> YWF, YWF Model of Youth Provision in Westminster
- 49 YWF Youth Hub Data
- 50 YWF HAF Data

<sup>51</sup>Department for Education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan

<sup>52</sup> City of Westminster, Our strategy for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2021-2024

<sup>33</sup> YWF, Cultural Connections

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#### Young people's spare time

Young people most frequently see or talk to friends (59%, n=73), watch TV shows or films (52%, n=64) and use social media (44%, n=55). Compared to 2020, young people report a reduction in social media use and an increase in time spent seeing or talking to friends.

#### Figure 32. Access to physical activities (n=124)



The following graphs show areas of similarity and difference in use of spare time for males and females and young people of different ages. More than 50% of young women and men watch TV shows/films and see or talk to friends, and over 40% use social media. More young men exercise (43%, n=16) and play video games (35%, n=13) compared to young women who tend to read books (31%, n=26) and cook (25%, n=18) more.

Figure 33. Spare time activities by gender (n=123)







#### Accessing local services and activities

Of the local services on offer to young people in Westminster, the most commonly used are local parks cited by 72% (n=89) of young people. Over half (56%, n=69) of those interviewed use a library and 37% (n=46) have accessed a gym.





Asked what they would change about local youth services, young people mentioned the following:

26% want services to be more accessible

"Available all year around and not just specific holidays" (17, Female) "Choosing times that are more accessible for people, and if events happen more weekly than monthly." (20, Female) "I would make them available all year around as opposed to just in summer or holidays so everyone can enjoy them." (17, Male)

 21% of survey respondents want more affordable services

"It should be more affordable especially because of the cost of living" (15, Female)

"I would make them cheaper" (18, Female)

15% want greater variety

"More youth and sports clubs" (16, Female)

"More variety of activities and services" (16, Female)

"One thing I would change is the messaging [that] these activities are using. Rather than [...] being purely 'fun', they could focus on raising children's confidence for example." (20, Female)

Practitioners noted a lack of SEND support for parents on weekends and holidays, as well as insufficient information and support for working with young people pre-SEND diagnosis/referral.

"There is no support for weekend activities, services kick in at your breaking point, it should be beforehand. The threshold is very high." (Practitioner working with children and young people) Parents/carers identified the most common ways they find out about services and activities in the borough. Most commonly this was through word of mouth 63 (32%), schools/colleges 34 (17%), and e-mail 32 (16%).

Further feedback from the parent/carer survey and practitioners working with children and young people demonstrate how parents and young people are often unaware of the support services available, or are under the impression that the activities are costly, missing out on family activities which become fully booked in advance. Parents also cited the challenge of moving around with children in a busy urban environment. This can lead to parents either preventing or deterring young people from engaging with youth services, which has the knock-on effect of limiting their exposure to activities and support that might be available to them at little or no cost.

"It's either because they thought it stopped over Covid or because they feel isolated from their community. Some do not get out of their local area; they sometimes can't believe that the activities that we offer are free and available." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

"My family find space - particularly the lack of safe outdoor space - to be an issue.

The children's playgrounds are often crowded, and it is a challenge to keep track of 2+ small children in public spaces with gates that open onto busy roads. As a result, we often feel isolated.

We found Pimlico Toy Library's summer scheme in Churchill Gardens school playground perfect family fun as the space to play was vast so the children were able to play calmly, there was a secure gate so the children were safely enclosed and the activities provided were high quality, fun and provided the sort of play we don't have access to at home e.g. basketball, climbing wall, mud kitchen, water/sand play, t-shirt printing!" (Parent) Despite these challenges, the parent survey revealed the appreciation many parents in Westminster have for the 'community-based' children's and youth services in the borough, in particular those made available through the Holiday Activities and Food programme<sup>54</sup>.

"There are so many free, great activities which is so friendly to all the families living here. I feel so grateful living this area!" (Parent)

"There is so much available in Westminster. [...] Happy Lizzy summer club provided my son with amazing activities that we wouldn't have been able to afford [...] like Kayak, skateboarding, oxygen trampolining, hot meals, and food boxes to take home. I can't express my gratitude enough to Happy Lizzy and team for the best summer holidays [...] for my little ones." (Parent) Westminster has a large range of creative and cultural spaces including theatres, music venues, museums and art galleries and compared to the previous Needs Analysis more young people are now accessing these.

This may be a direct consequence of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and more young people being able to take part in group social activities, but also the roll out of local initiatives to engage more young people in these activities such as the Cultural Connections pilot  $^{55}$ .

<sup>54</sup> YWF, 2,736 Young people take part in holiday activities this Spring in Westminster <sup>55</sup> YWF



Figure 37. Average comparison between Needs Analyses of young people's use of local cultural spaces, where 1=never and 4=often



For those who are still not accessing cultural venues, the main reason was that they felt they did not match their interests:

"I haven't found any interesting music venues and I don't think theatres are exciting." (16, Female) "I put never for art galleries because I feel like it not portrayed for my age group. Typically, you would think older people go to art galleries not young adults." (20, Female)

"My friends won't go [to] places like art galleries as we'd rather be in parks, coffee shops or local markets" (20, Female)





Active travel modes, such as walking or cycling, make up the largest share of journeys in London (42%) and a higher proportion of journeys than in other regions<sup>56</sup>. The Zip card provides free and discounted travel on London transport for young people aged 11 to 15. However, public transport costs are rising which impacts those outside this age  $bracket^{57,58}$ .

Research shows that young Londoners are passionate about sustainable urban development<sup>59</sup>. They express a desire for London to become a more sustainable city through changes in transportation infrastructure, including further pedestrianisation of streets, the implementation of Ultra Low Emission Zones and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and a green revolution in transport, including more cycling infrastructure and affordable, accessible public transport for all<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> Department for Transport (2023) National Travel Survey 2022: Mode share, journey lengths and trends in public transport use

57 BBC News (2022) London Underground: Tube and bus fares see biggest hike in a decade. BBC News. 14th February [Accessed: 05/09/23]

- <sup>18</sup> Transport for London (2022) MD2937 Appendix 2: Fares from 1 March 2022
- TfL Advice to the Mayor

<sup>60</sup> Partnership for Young London, Calling for Change: Young Londoners' views on a sustainable. future for their city



# How young people travel within and outside of Westminster

Young people were asked how they typically travel around Westminster and London. Over half of young people use the bus (58%, n=72) and/or walk (53%, n=66). There has been a substantial increase in the number of young people using the train 37% (n=46) compared to just 5% (n=5) in the 2020 needs analysis.



2020 Needs Analysis

#### 2023 Needs Analysis

**Community and Spaces** ര







Young people recognise that Westminster is well connected, but suggested the following would make them more likely to travel around and explore different parts of London:

 26% said relevant and interesting activities and events, and awareness of them would make them more likely to travel

"If there were walking tours available in the parts of London people want to explore which can be fun and an informative way to explore different parts of the city" (24, Male)

"If there were new and fun events in different places I would more likely want to travel to attend these events" (19, Female)

 18% said better transport infrastructure, particularly an increase in the availability of rental bikes, would make them more likely to travel

"If there were more accessible bikes around. Typically, when I go to find one, they're all being used" (20, Female)

"If there were more bike parking areas this would make me want to cycle more around different areas of London. The lack of secured parking areas for bikes has meant that at time I cancel plans because I don't like using any other form of transport." (17, Female)

#### "More cycle lanes" (16, Male)

 14% said more affordable fares would make them more likely to travel

"Cheaper train tickets- 16–17-year-olds for free?" (17, Male)

However, unfamiliarity and fear of other places remains a major barrier to travel.

This was referenced by 17% of respondents:

"When I am in other areas of London, I am not aware of where I could get help if I needed it, most importantly during the night." (18, Female)

"Not very familiar with the place and wouldn't know where to go if I needed help." (17, Male)



Since the release of "Our City, Our Future" in 2020, there has been a growing body of evidence to substantiate the existence of a climate emergency.

On average, 2023 will become the hottest year on record, while the summer of 2022 saw temperatures in the UK exceed 40°C for the first time<sup>61</sup>.

Inner London areas with fewer trees and green space tend to experience the most extreme heat in the city. However, despite its central location, Westminster's extensive parks and green spaces offset high temperatures<sup>62</sup>. Central areas of Westminster have also been covered by the Ultra Low Emission Zone since 2019. Whilst the ULEZ has contributed to a fall in roadside vehicle emissions in the borough, these are still higher than Inner London averages.<sup>63,64</sup>

Young Londoners are already taking action to promote sustainability, especially in their shopping for clothing and food, although they also seek clearer information to enable their choices<sup>65</sup>. They prefer to learn about environmental issues via social media and express a desire for broader environmental education, not just limited to recycling<sup>66</sup>.

Westminster Council held a Citizen's Climate Assembly over the summer of 2023 which resulted in several recommendations including funding green initiatives, a focus on renewable energy, and energy efficiency ratings for all organisations operating in the borough<sup>67</sup>.

- <sup>61</sup> Cuff, M. (2023) Why 2023 is shaping up to be the hottest year on record. New Scientist. 16th June [Accessed 06/09/23]
- <sup>2</sup> Friends of the Earth (2023) Maps showing city cooling by trees and green space. 12th July. [Accessed 06/09/23]
- <sup>3</sup> Greater London Authority (2023) Air Quality Monitoring diffusion tube results [2021] [Accessed 06/09/23
- <sup>4</sup> Mayor of London (2020) Central London Ultra Low Emission Zone Ten Month Repor <sup>5, 66</sup> Partnership for Young London, Calling for Change: Young Londoners' views on a sustainable
- future for their city Westminster City Council, Citizens Climate Assembly – recommendations

#### **Climate emergency**

More than half of young people in Westminster (55%, n=68) are aware of and think that the climate emergency is an issue in the borough, with only 9% (n=11) saying otherwise and 14% (n=17) feeling that the question is not applicable to them.

Figure 39. Is climate emergency an issue in Westminster? (n=124)



When questioned in more detail, young people tended to talk about issues such as climate change and pollution in global rather than local terms. Asked what can be done within Westminster to improve the environment, young people suggested the following:

 35% want more environmentally friendly transport options

"Reduce the amount of vehicles in the city" (23, Female)

"Use electric cars and increase price on non-electric cars" (18, Male)

"Lower costs of TfL to reduce use of private vehicles and encourage public transport" (25, Female)

"Invest in further improving public transportation options, such as expanding the bus and tube networks or introducing more eco-friendly buses." (20, Male)







• 19% want to see a switch to sustainable energy sources and materials

"Reduce lighting used in blocks" (25, Female)

"Less use of oil and burning gas" (20, Male)

"less plastic waste" (17, Male)

• 18% want an increase in bins and recycling points. Not only would this help the environment, but, as in 2017 and 2020, young people are aware of the levels of uncleanliness and the amount of litter in Westminster.

"There is a lot of pollution and not a lot of waste management" (16, Male)

"The amount of plastic waste and rubbish everywhere and waste from resident and businesses. There could be more ethical ways of disposing waste." (20, Female)

"Have more recycling bins" (18, Female)

"I would change the way we take care of Westminster. by this I mean I would introduce new cleaning projects such as ensuring each house/ building has a recycling bin" (18, Male)



Total crime in England and Wales decreased by 15% in the year ending March 2023 compared with March 2020, including a drop in robbery offences and those involving knives or sharp instruments. The number of young people cautioned, sentenced or entering the justice system for the first time also fell in the last year. However, knife crime in London increased by 18.6% in August 2023 compared to the previous year.

Knife crime remains a prevalent concern for young people in Westminster. Research into youth violence in North West Westminster carried out by the Helping Hands programme found that young people were mostly worried about knife crime, antisocial behaviour and gangs. Moreover, 33% of the 203 respondents respondents in that study felt unsafe in the area they live in. Carrying weapons was described by young people as necessary for their protection rather than to do harm, suggesting this practice has become increasingly normalised. They feel that the police are unable to offer enough support or protection. Youth clubs were regarded unequivocally as the most important source of support for young people after their family and friends.

Within Westminster, data from London Metropolitan Police shows that as of August 2023, 336 crimes are reported per 1000 of the population, which is the highest among the London boroughs, with theft being the most common .

However, these statistics are skewed by parts of the borough which attract large numbers of tourists and

visitors from other parts of London, particularly the West End and areas with a busy night-time economy. This is illustrated by the five wards with the highest number of crime, each registering high levels of theft, as seen below:

Ward	Number of crimes
West End	2,912
St James's	1,946
Marylebone	300
Hyde Park	260
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	190

The most common types of crime, as well as thefts (n=4,463), were violence against the person (n=919) and public order offences (n=424).

68 ONS, Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023

<sup>69</sup> <u>YWF, North West Westminster Serious Youth Violence Consultation</u> <sup>70</sup> Tableau public MPS Crime Dashboard

City of Westminster, Facts and figures about Westminster



# Engaging young people

Professionals working with young people find that they are harder to engage as a consequence of ongoing incidents occurring in their communities, or within their social circles. They detect high levels of anxiety among young people and parents living on certain estates, and additional efforts are put into working with communities, reassuring them and offering support.

"Give them subtle therapeutic support through engagement itself, there's been anger and fear, we've tried to reassure them and be there for them: provide food, chat with them, give them opportunities to play." (Practitioner working with children and young people)

Practitioners working with children and young people also cite how serious crime incidents can have a ripple effect across the borough and affect the wider community. As a result, young people can become desensitised to such incidents which requires youth workers to ensure young people feel supported and have a safe space where they can come together and discuss their feelings and experiences.

"Young people are becoming desensitised to these things, it's not a big deal for them anymore, that's why it's really important the work that we do. Kids tend to come more; they can be together and be with youth workers who know the young person and talk about it and feel safe in the youth club." (Practitioner working with children and young people)





## Feelings of safety in Westminster

Young people feel safer in Westminster, both during the day and at night compared to other parts of London. The percentage of young people who feel safe where they live is broadly in line with the proportion of adult residents. However, there is a far wider differential between adults (82%) and young people (60%) who report yes, when asked whether they feel safe after dark<sup>72</sup>.

In comparison to 2020, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage who feel safe during the day. However, the borough is perceived to be relatively safe by young people. Their perceptions of feeling unsafe relate to the night-time, rather than the local area itself.

Figure 40. Comparison on young people's feelings of safety in Westminster (n=98 vs n=124)

94% 89% (92) (109) 74% 73% 72% (90) (68) (71) 65% 52% (48) 58% (79) (72) 48% (44)42% (51) 35% (44) 28% 27% 26% a(27) (33) (24) 11% (14) 6% (6) 2020 2023 2020 2023 2020 2023 2020 2023 Needs Needs Needs Needs Needs Needs Needs Needs Analysis Analysis Analysis Analysis Analysis Analysis Analysis Analysis -ờ́--<u>Ò</u>. C  $\mathbb{C}$ Westminster Westminster London London day night day night Mostly feel safe Mostly feel unsafe

The following graphs show feelings of safety amongst those in the younger and older age groups, and males and females.

Figure 41. Feelings of safety by age group (n=124)



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#### Safety concerns

Young people cite 'people carrying knives' as the principal concern (54% n=67) in relation to their personal safety. This was followed by 'theft or stealing' (49%, n=60), 'people joining gangs' (46%, n=56) and 'people using or dealing drugs' (33%, n=40). While there has been a drop in safety concerns across all categories, there is some fluctuation in how young people rank them. Sexual harassment and being followed or ambushed both dropped from the jointsecond biggest safety concerns in 2020 to the fourth and second lowest respectively.



In general, young people aged 17-25 appear to be more aware of safety concerns than 13–16-year-olds with the notable exception that they share a similar level of concern about 'people carrying knives.'



Young men were more concerned about people carrying knives (57% vs 51%) and violence (35% vs 26%) compared to young women, who reported more concerns about people joining gangs (47% vs 41%), sexual harassment or assault (35% vs 22%) and being followed or ambushed (33% vs 16%).

Figure 45. Biggest safety concerns in Westminster by gender (n=123)



Young people remarked on the following aspects of their personal and community safety:

 10% referenced experiences of crime and awareness of high crime rates

"Westminster has experienced incidents of crime and violence, which can contribute to feelings of insecurity." (20, Female)

"There is a lot of crime on the streets of London, and it posed a threat to both my livelihood and my possessions. It is difficult to wear items that could attract the attention of criminals, as such, I have opted to carrying these in my bag as to not put myself in this danger." (16, Male)

"There is a lot of anti-social behaviour, especially in Harrow Road" (15, Female)

"I know many victims of crime" (18, Female)

19% commented on gang activity and knife crime

"There's a lot of gang activities." (13, Female) "It's always been there in Westminster, but there has been an increase in stabbings in the area." (20, Female)

• 17% of young people also suggested that the costof-living and the subsequent impact on finances was leading more young people into crime

"People end up relying on making easy illegal money" (19, Female)

"Some young individuals can be influenced to join gangs or [commit] robbery to keep up with the current prices." (17, Female)

Our focus groups with practitioners echoed young people's own concerns. Their exposure to, or witnessing people being hurt, is regarded as having significant impacts on young people's mental health and learning. The topic of youth violence was also discussed amongst practitioners who felt that more young people are fearful of their peers being recruited into gangs, being robbed or assaulted on the street.



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### Improving safety in Westminster

Asked how safety in Westminster could be improved, young people highlighted the following:

 42% want more police and/or security. While young people in interviews talked about the need for more policing, peer researchers suggest this may be less about the police's physical presence on the street and more about their visibility and long-term relationship building through engaging the community in schools or at youth clubs.

"Improving community-police relations, building trust, providing resources for victim of crimes" (16, Female)

"One way to help young people feel more safe in Westminster is to increase the presence of police officers and other security personnel in the area." (24, Male)

"Better awareness from local authorities, police having local talks about safety and spread information, so people know how to act in situations and more safe places like youth clubs." (20, Female)

#### • 31% want more street lighting (n=43)

"I think if there was more street lighting around the area it would help so the streets are not too dark during the night especially during winter where it gets dark very quickly around 4"

"However, both in Westminster and outside I don't feel safe during the night due to the lack of street lights. Being unable to see where one is walking and also not able to clearly see one's surroundings does indeed spark some fear within me."

"There's not enough lighting in some areas of Westminster like Vincent square, which is very dangerous especially as a woman"







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# The impact of violence through the Helping Hands programme

The Helping Hands Programme is a new community led programme which revolves around creating interventions that are led by the voices of young people and community members who have been directly and indirectly affected by youth violence in North West and North East Westminster.

Working in collaboration with local youth clubs and key partners, the programme gives communities ownership over creating innovative opportunities for the borough, building on the valuable work already being done to keep young people safe.

Through impact mapping sessions, loosely based upon the Anna Freud Centre's Ambit Model the programme has been able to facilitate trusted sharing spaces and create a nuanced evidence base around the impact of serious youth violence in communities and identify the people and places most affected by violence to inform programme, Community Fund and local interventions.

Impact mapping has so far taken place with 71 people at a range of community spaces such as the Stowe Centre, Amberley Youth Club, Westbourne Park Family Centre, Beethoven Centre, Greenside Community Centre and Avenues Youth Project. This includes:

- Young people with direct experience of violence in Westbourne and Harrow Road Wards
- Young people at Amberley Youth Club
- Young people from the Warwick Estate.
- Mothers/mother figures from the Church St Ward
- Practitioners involved in the Helping Hands programmes

#### Primary impacts

All groups identified consistent primary impacts associated with specific events of serious youth violence:

- Family
- Parents
- Friends
- Local businesses
- Schools
- Mentors
- Other young people
- from the local area
- Other members of the local community
- Youth clubs/organisationsReligious and
- Religious and faith-based institutions

### Secondary impacts

The groups then went on to identify the thoughts and feelings associated with these primary impacts which included:

 Lack of police presence and intervention was highlighted in all groups, as was the perception that police officers with limited long-term local relationships were being deployed, leading to a lack of consistency in service.

Policing in the area was considered by some participants to be punitive with young people and community members feeling at times 'unfairly targeted' (Participant) by practices including stop and search. Participants noted a recent increased presence from the Territorial Support Group (TSG) who were described as 'very forceful' (Participant) and 'reactive and ill-informed (Participant).

The groups reported that they would prefer local neighbourhood policing, and would like to see an increased presence of such officers.

 Some groups spoke of the impact for local businesses and residents in the community, who have direct and frequent interactions with victims of crime and violence, watching them grow up and 'holding safe spaces for them' (Participant).



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 Many spoke about the shared feeling of revenge felt by the community from peers and family members of those impacted by violence, reporting a sense of, 'you hurt us, so we have to hurt you' (Participant).

There have been times where these feelings have been acted on as part of an ongoing cycle of violence<sup>74</sup>.

- Community residents shared that they feel under-represented in spaces which are designed to be 'community-led' and for 'grassroot organisations.
- Practitioners from local organisations spoke of concerns that some programmes offered to young people from bigger organisations were not tailored to the needs of those from the Global Majority and those with first-hand experiences of violence. They called on the Helping Hands programme to identify local organisations who can tailor support.

<sup>74</sup> Cathy Spatz Widom, The Cycle of Violence

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family

FEEL RESPONSIBLE

GRIEF

"he's resting now"

An example of an

In pact May

created by participants of the Warwick Young People Steering Group



feel useless/ worthless

Police







The relationship between young people's use of social media and mental health receives a lot of attention, despite there being no definitive conclusion regarding its impact.<sup>75</sup> In 2022, more than half (53%) of children aged 13-17 believed that internet usage positively affected their mental health<sup>76</sup>; a major contributing factor being the ease in which social media networks allow young people to connect with family and friends.<sup>77</sup>

However, previous research in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea found that young people believed social media contributed to unrealistic body expectations, which was linked to eating disorders.<sup>78</sup> Cyberbullying was also a major concern, with a large majority of those aged 8-17 being bullied online (81%), compared to 61% in person.<sup>79</sup>

There is also growing evidence of the impact that social media and internet use can have on young people's exposure to sexual exploitation. Research published in 2019 found that around 15% of children aged 11-18 had been asked to send sexual images or messages.<sup>80</sup> In London, findings from 2021 suggest that 97% of sexual exploitation referrals to Catch 22 involving children related to some sort of online engagement or social media.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> LSE, The impact of digital experiences on adolescents with mental health vulnerabilities <sup>76,79</sup> Ofcom, Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7780</sup> House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, Impact of social media and screen-use on young people's health

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> City of Westminster, Our Health, Our Wellbeing: young people growing up in Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart charus impact of young people expanded to uplicit <sup>78</sup> Manage Chardon Leader Accombly, Depart Chard

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Mayor of London, London Assembly, Report shows impact of young people exposed to explicit content online, Link

## Impact of social media on young people's lives

Young people in Westminster use a variety of social media platforms, with TikTok (71%), Instagram (66%) and Snapchat (53%) being the most popular amongst participants. In terms of where young people read or find out about the news, the majority use social media (n=78), followed by news apps and websites (n=43), with an even split between the 13-16 and 17-25 age groups.

71% (88) Figure 46. Social media used by young people (n=124) 66% (82) 53% (66) 20% (25) 6% (7) 2% (3) 2% (3) 4% (5) 4% (5) Facebook Twitch Reddit YouTube LinkedIn Twitter Snapchat Instagram TikTok

Figure 47. News sources for young people (n=124)



Over half of young people (52%) rated the impact of social media on their lives as neutral, with 17% of them rating the impact as 'somewhat positive' or 'very positive' and 21% as 'somewhat negative'. There was a slight decrease in the number of young people feeling that social media has a very positive impact on their life (2%) compared to the previous needs analysis (6%).

In the 2020 needs analysis, no young people rated the impact of social media as very negative. This figure leaps to 10% of young people in the current research.

Young people aged 17-25 were more inclined to rate the impact that social media has on their lives as somewhat negative compared to the younger age group. These trends most likely reflect the raised awareness among interviewees of the impact that social media can have on young people, combined with an increase in the negative interactions that young people have directly experienced.



When asked about time spent on social media, **54% of young people responded that they want to spend less time on social media** which is a significant rise on the 31% recorded in 2020.

Figure 49. Social media impact on young people's lives by age group



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Figure 48. Average of young people's perception of social media's impact on their lives,

where 1=very negative and 5=very positive

### Issues associated with the use of social media

Asked about specific issues associated with the use of social media, 40% of young people identified 'fake or unreliable news/information' and 'body image pressures' as main concerns. Bullying and/or harassment (36%) was also recorded by more than a third of respondents:

#### Figure 50. Social media issues among young people (n=124)







Young women were generally more concerned about body image pressures, bullying, racism and sexual harassment compared to young men who demonstrated slightly higher concerns around being sent or seeing unwanted explicit or offensive content online.

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Compared to 2020 when only 7% of young people felt that they needed additional support in relation to social media, 58% expressed the need for support this time around. Those aged 17-25 were more inclined to need support than 13–16-year-olds.

Asked what social media related support could look like, young people suggested the following:

 20% said they want more spaces to discuss their experiences of social media and their concerns, either in schools or youth clubs

"Perhaps support in school, an individual may act as an advisor for students to mention their concerns" (16, Male)

"Talking to family members and friends or youth clubs through guided sessions" (20, Female)

• 17% said they wanted more education on using social media and its dangers

"Campaigns and PSHE lessons like we already have in school" (17, Female)

"Schools should talk about these issues that are concerning for young people and help them manage it out." (19, Female) "Increased awareness on the negative effects of social media [on] mental health" (18, Female)

"Workshops, parents need to be more aware of what their child is looking at and vaguely monitoring the amount of time they spend on their phones and what kind of content they are viewing. For children to learn the dangers of content they could be looking at." (20, Female)

 10% said they wanted greater regulation of social media providers

"Having a certain age limit for young people using social media as other people may take advantage of their vulnerability." (15, Male)

"Social media companies should monitor what is posted to prevent exploitation, and blackmailing, " if you don't do this, I will post this" etc" (16, Male)

"Having restrictions and guidelines to block out hate comment and reduce mental health issues amongst young people." (16, Female)







Internet and Social Media 8 С



The following calls to action are based on findings resulting from the 2023/24 needs analysis.

The calls to action, aimed at YWF, YWF Members and Partners, and YWF Funders will inform YWF's strategy and priorities over the coming years.

In some cases, these build upon calls to action which resulted from previous rounds of this tri-annual research, detailed in Appendix 2.

YWF will report annually each Autumn to the YWF community on action being taken under each finding as part of its Annual Review.



the impact of the cost-of-living Findinc

# **Q1**

A number of young people and their families are unable to afford necessities.

# 02

Young people are spending less time with each other and feel unable to access youth provision owing to costs.

# **Ø**3

Parents' poor mental health related to concerns around the cost-of-living can adversely affect their children.

### Call to action

YWF and YWF Members to improve signposting for young people and families, and awareness of local resources and programmes e.g., North Paddington Foodbank, Abbey Centre Food Bank and Westbourne Park Family Centre Food Pantry and free food available via Holiday, Activities and Food Programme (HAF) during school holidays, time credits programme/local discounts.

YWF to understand the full range offers and highlight any gaps, working with YWF Partners to commission appropriate information services.

YWF to continue to listen and raise awareness of local issues and those young people most affected by the cost-of-living to providers e.g. Westminster City Council Housing.

YWF, YWF Members and Partners, including Westminster City Council, to continue advertising free and low-cost activities and services available on the Our City website.

YWF to work with YWF Partners and Westminster Funders to advocate for additional long-term investment all year round, in addition to the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

YWF to work with Westminster City Council on a marketing campaign which highlights free activities made available by YWF members, with particular focus on the media platforms most commonly used by young people, predominantly TikTok.

YWF to work with Westminster City Council, Family Hubs and YWF Members to support parental wellbeing on issues associated with the cost-of- living.

Calls to Action | 87



# Finding the pla

### Call to action

YWF to consider how to maintain and grow the Our City website and 2-3 Degrees' new Connect Platform and other employability platforms.

Continue to work with Westminster employers and YWF Business Partners to advertise their available opportunities for mentoring and work experience e.g., through Mastering My Future and Digital Dash programmes and advocate for inclusive recruitment and workforce practices for all young people.

YWF to work with YWF Business Partners to raise awareness and understanding of alternative entry-level pathways to employment, such as apprenticeships.

Ensure young people and parents have access to information and services from an early age that support with resilience, decision making and goal setting through commissioning programmes in conjunction with Westminster employers and YWF Partners e.g. Westminster Employment Service.

# ()1

Young people feel increased pressure relating to their future education and employment.

# O2

Young people want more access to employment-related learning, particularly work experience.

YWF to work with 2-3 Degrees, Westminster City Council's Responsible Business Unit, Westminster Employment Service, Paddington Development Trust and YWF Business Partners to develop a framework for identifying a range of responsible employers who offer work experience.

YWF to work with programmes targeting areas of specific need for additional support e.g., North Paddington Partnership and share findings and learnings with partners across the borough.

### Finding

# 03

Young people want to engage in social action and have their voices heard, but do not know how/think they do not have much influence.



### Call to action

YWF to work collaboratively with Westminster City Council Youth Voice Forum and Partnership for Young London to map and promote the spectrum of youth voice/youth social action opportunities available across the borough.

YWF to work with University of Westminster (UoW) to launch a research group based at the UoW as part of The Westminster Centre of Psychological Studies focussed on Young adults' transitions, identities and futures. Support ongoing research into youth voice and provide training for YWF Members around creative and inclusive methodologies.

YWF to work with and support Westminster Youth Council and elected Youth MPs in delivering their manifestos and a new conference series for young people, facilitating more opportunities for YWF Young Ambassadors and the Youth Council to work together on the issues that matter most to them.

YWF will commission anti-racism and diversity and inclusion training for youth workers and practitioners through the Level Up Youth Work Programme.



Vaping is a major concern amongst

young people and practitioners.

### Finding

### Call to action

YWF to work with Westminster City Council and central government to support their call for a ban on sale of disposable vapes to young people.

YWF to work with schools, Family Hubs and YWF Members to encourage honest conversations around vaping and its potential dangers between parents, practitioners, and young people.

YWF to work with Public Health to develop an action plan to address the concerns raised by young people. This should include a twhole-systems approach, working with schools and youth organisations.

YWF to work with partners, including Public Health, around improved messaging using social media platforms where young people receive news and information, predominantly TikTok.

#### Finding



Young people want to partake in physical activity, but cost is a barrier

# 02

The rates of STIs are high and some young people still find support difficult to access.

YWF to work with partners including Public Health and health / education partners to improve messaging and awareness of services on social media platforms.

YWF to work with YWF Members and Prtners to look at increasing accessibility through delivery in community/ places where young people are.



# **()**4

Young people are more concerned about mental health among their peers.

There are barriers to accessing services for mental health which are not fully understood.

### Call to action

YWF Members, Partners and schools work together to consider other opportunities for young people to access sports facilitates e.g., 'open doors' to school and corporate gym facilities on the weekend.

YWF to work with Westminster City Council Active Westminster to find a way to promote free physical health facilitates across the borough e.g., a map of outdoor gyms. This can be made available on the Our City website and incorporated with the free and low-cost activities and services available for under 25s in Westminster.

Further research to deepen understanding of what the barriers are to accessing free provision for both providers and young people.

YWF and YWF Members to provide more education around the benefits of mental health services and improve relationship building and accessibility for young people requiring such services. Map available mental health support across the borough to identify what services are missing.

YWF to listen in order to understand more about the mental health concerns young people are reporting/facing.

YWF to work with YWF Members and Partners (education and health) to ensure that children and young people have access to universal and/ or early intervention/preventative support in non-clinical settings (e.g., youth organisations and schools). For instance, this could include expanding the MIND Mental Health Workers in Youth Hubs to more YWF Members/ Schools.

YWF to commission research that explores the experiences of young people who are accessing local services to understand these barriers to accessing mental health services.

Calls to Action | 91

Health & Wellbeing (cont.)

#### Finding

# 05

Young people want support in relation to internet and social media related concerns

#### Call to action

YWF and YWF Members to explore funding options for bespoke social media awareness and mental health support activities and groups delivered within youth settings.

YWF to look at how to support schools to provide guidance and support for young people around social media

# 06

Parents and practitioners want improved access to SEND support for young people, especially at weekends, during holidays and whilst waiting for a diagnosis or referral

#### YWF and YWF Partners to understand better the need for provision and commission appropriate services.

YWF will look to commission training for practitioners working with young people around supporting SEND young people and those with additional needs through the Level Up Youth Work Programme.

# ()1

Young people at times feel unsafe, especially at night.





# 02

Young people say that areas of Westminster are unclean and pollution-heavy.



### Call to action

YWF to support YWF Members funded via the new community-led Helping Hands programme to respond to insights from young people in the design of interventions to combat violence.

YWF to work with YWF Members and the Metropolitan Police Youth Engagement Team via the Helping Hands programme to facilitate community conversations with the police and visits/relationship building with Youth Hubs.

Work with partners including businesses, Westminster City Council and the Metropolitan Police to understand how to achieve improved street lighting and safer streets.

YWF to work with Westminster City Council Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit to understand better the gendered experiences of crime and interaction with youth justice and violence intervention services.

Promote the community-led Helping Hands Youth Advisory Board to young people who have been directly and indirectly affected by youth violence in the north of the borough.

YWF, YWF Members and Partners to continue to advocate for community-led approaches around violence and crime interventions in Westminster, focussing on improving sustainability and capacity of existing mechanisms as well as focusing on new geographic areas e.g., South Westminster.

YWF to work with Westminster City Council Climate Emergency Team and Citizens Assembly to promote social action opportunities among young people to tackle littering in Westminster.

YWF to commission programmes or projects that support education around local solutions and/or social action for climate change at a community and individual level.

Community & Spaces (cont.) Finding

### Call to action

03

Young people engaged with the wellbeing survey which had a good response rate.

#### YWF to embed the wellbeing survey within Westminster schools annually from Autumn term onwards and review every summer.









Peer Research What did we learn?

#### Peer researcher reflections

Peer researchers reflected that the process was a positive opportunity to meet new people, hear different perspectives of others living in Westminster, engage differently around issues in their community and learn how to use their power to bring about meaningful change. They commented that involvement in the project gave them hope.

While it could be challenging to ask others to commit to taking part in 20-30 minute interviews, peer researchers described a range of skills that were developed through the process of undertaking training and conducting interviews with their peers such as:

- Designing research questions and thematic analysis processes
- Understanding the variety and disparity in experiences of young people and how these changes across different parts of the borough, between different genders and age groups
- Confidence, storytelling and communication
- Leadership
- How to influence change and develop key messaging to target those in power
- Building rapport and making interviewees feel comfortable

### Young Westminster Foundation's ambitions 2023-2026

This report serves as a tool to open a conversation among the wider Westminster community, including YWF's 80 plus member organisations, business partners, Westminster City Council, the Met Police and NHS about the needs of young people and how we can address these together.

Reflecting on these findings, we commit to developing solutions in collaboration with the YWF community. Drawing on the calls to action, we have developed a set of principles which will guide our work through to 2026:

· Facilitate and advocate for the time and space for young people to express and explore their views in meaningful ways and the YWF community to respond with action. Recognise that young people consistently feel unable to influence and challenge organisations to activate young changemakers and address power imbalances.

- Ensure service design, funding, training and information sharing responds to specific needs of different communities of young people (including different age groups, genders, young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND), young refugees, young LGBT+ people, and care leavers.) Advocate for more person-centred, targeted approaches to reflect the diversity of experience amongst Westminster's young people.
- Better engage with and support the wider networks around young people including parents/carers and schools and continue to sustain the collaborations and joined up system between voluntary and statutory services in Westminster, to enable us to best address the needs of young people.
- Ensure access to opportunities and services is affordable and accessible for all communities throughout the year.
- Continue to promote and advocate for the life changing power of youth services, in particular via schools and parents/carers and in collaboration with Westminster Youth Council.

#### Limitations and reflections

Young Westminster Foundation remains committed to conducting peer-researched needs analyses every three years, supplemented by ongoing opportunities for young people to share their views and be involved in decision making. Carrying out peer research is challenging, but it is hugely rewarding and insightful for both the young researchers and our community as a whole.

It was fantastic to hear the researchers discuss the impact of holding interviews with their friends and peers, opening up new conversations and understanding through peer groups whilst supporting them to grow in confidence. This group of local young people are changemakers and it has been a joy and privilege to work alongside them.

Conducting this needs analysis has been a collaborative process from the outset, involving YWF working in partnership with our members and partners to adapt our methodology and engagement. We hope to share our learnings to inform future research and to support other organisations embarking on similar projects. We have already begun this work with the YWF community, via three training sessions for 33 youth workers in the North West, North East and South of Westminster together with The Rise Collective.

The following limitations of the research have been identified, along with mitigations and future recommendations.

- The cohort is not completely representative of Westminster's young population. To mitigate this, we have used external literature and other youth voice activities and consultations such as the Beachcroft Academy Creative Writing Anthology to help frame some of the issues young people face.
- A very limited number of young people said they currently access mental health services, so it has not been possible fully to understand their experiences.

We recommend further research in this area which specifically targets current service users.

- Feedback from the peer researchers identified that the length of the survey meant some young people were less likely to partake and/ or maintain concentration throughout their interview. This was especially the case for younger age groups. The shorter (1-2min) wellbeing survey was trialled this year to mitigate this, and the next needs analysis could consider expanding the focus of the shorter study, making use of other creative and accessible methods and how the interview guide could be shortened.
- Whilst postcode data was collected it was not done in a uniform manner. Future needs analyses should ensure the first 4 digits of a postcode should be collected – this allows for all data to be grouped by area without identifying a young person's address and more robust hyper-local geographical analysis.
- Language and terminology are important. The way certain questions were framed may have shaped responses in a way which limited analysis, such as using 'Youth Hub' and 'Youth Club' interchangeably when young people tend to relate to the name of their particular organisation instead.



Rocket Science were commissioned by Young Westminster Foundation in late 2022 to conduct a wide-ranging youth needs assessment for Westminster. This project was part of an ongoing process of understanding youth needs in Westminster and to update findings from the previous report from 2020, Our City Our Future<sup>82</sup>, which built on the first needs analysis of 2016, A City Within A City<sup>83</sup>. Peer research

A group of 15 young people from Westminster were recruited through youth sector organisations to undertake training.

#### Core research areas:

- Young people's perspectives on life in Westminster
- The impact of the rising cost of living on young people and their communities
- Concerns relating to crime and safety
- The ways in which community services and facilities could be enhanced to meet the needs of young people
- The impact of social media use on young people's lives
- Mental and physical health of young people, including access to services
- Access to education, training and employment
- Awareness of the climate emergency and the environment
- Social and political issues that matter to Westminster young people

### Methods

**1. Recruitment:** Young Westminster Foundation's partner organisations circulated a link amongst young people to sign-up as peer researchers. 13 young people aged under 25 were recruited through the YWF membership to participate in the needs analysis.

**2. Training:** Three training sessions and a round-table discussion were held with the peer researchers between March and September 2023.

The sessions were co-delivered by Rocket Science and covered the following:

Session 1: Introductions; Explanation of the research and their role; Introduction to peer research; Research themes and questions co-design.

Session 2: How to conduct interviews (including tips and tricks); ethics and safeguarding; consent; Examples of good and bad interviews.

Session 3: Roundtable discussion with the then Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr. Hamza Taouzzale around

82 83 research themes. How to conduct and facilitate focus groups, when to use different research methodologies.

Session 4: Advocacy and influencing to bring research to life; who holds power in Westminster; key messages and tactics.

**3. Peer research:** Peer researchers were paid the London Living Wage to conduct 20–30-minute interviews with their peers. Interviews covered topics including life in Westminster; the impact of the rising cost-of-living; health and wellbeing; local services and support; crime and safety; internet and social media; employment, education and training; and youth voice and action.

- Peer researchers captured quantitative data through multiple choice questions and recorded qualitative discussions using open text boxes.
- A total of 124 interviews of young people aged 13-25 were completed and submitted to Rocket Science for analysis.
- 34% of the young people interviewed (n=42) were aged 13-16 and 66% (n=82) were aged 17-25. 69% (n=86) of respondents were female, 30% (n=37) were male and 1% (n=1) of participants selected 'prefer not to say'. 47% of respondents identified as European, 25% as Asian and 17% as African. More details on interviewee demographics can be found in Appendix 2.

**4. Practitioners working with children and young people consultation:** Thirty-two practitioners working with children and young people across different age groups also submitted insights on the themes explored by peer researchers. Practitioners were consulted to ensure that the experiences of young people who may not have been represented in peer researcher findings, such as care leavers, were included.

**5. Peer researcher reflection and co-analysis session:** Young Westminster Foundation and Rocket Science held a reflection session with the peer researchers in August 2023 to analyse the qualitative content and discuss their experiences, the skills gained from participation and their impressions of questioning their peers on pressing social issues.

**6. Analysis and reporting:** Rocket Science produced a final report, including an analysis of the peer research and practitioners' views of working with children and young people for publication in October 2023.

#### 7. Project management:

Three steering group meetings made up of YWF Members and Partners were held during the course of the evaluation to update on the peer researchers' progress and scope out methods of engaging a wide range of young people living in Westminster.





HCTION since City, Our Future Our





Identify young people who face significant barriers to accessing careers advice and employment-related support (e.g., those with long-standing high deprivation levels in Westminster)

Key calls to

action in 2020

Continue to work with local

employability programmes to

facilitate work experience and

paid opportunities with local

employers for those young people who do not have

previous experience



Involve young people in local decision-making through the YWF Young Ambassador Programme

e plans

#### Young Westminster Foundation Response

<u>Ourcity.org.uk</u> hosting vacancies for young people in addition to 2-3 Degrees' new <u>Connect</u> <u>Platform</u>. Both enable employers to advertise opportunities for local talent. 14,000+ young people and families have visited the Our City site since 2021.

Since October 2021, 243 young people from across the borough have participated in the <u>Mastering My Future</u> employability programme with 2-3 Degrees, Unfold and Inspire! involving 22 employer collaborations.

YWF partnered with Paddington Development Trust and Westminster City Council to co-commission a qualitative research study around 18-25 employability in the NW of Westminster. A cross-sector roundtable is planned for December 2023 to co-develop an action plan in response to recommendations for a dedicated 18-25 service.

31 local young people have co-designed the YWF <u>Young Ambassador Programme</u> since 2021 which provides young people with opportunities to meet new people, learn new skills in research and participate in social action projects.

Appendix 02 | 101





YWF, YWF Members and Partners and YWF Funders: Collaborate with young people to address mental health support gaps in the borough

YWF worked in partnership with Mind, WCC Public Health and Westminster's Youth Hubs to recruit and embed mental health youth workers who offer support to young people in non-statutory/non-healthcare settings.

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Improve the accessibility of physical health activities and spaces for sport and exercise Sport, physical activities and wellbeing are a high priority for programmes funded through the Brighter Futures Fund. 83% of funded projects aim to improve physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.



Open up dialogue about drug-use concerns to tailor age-appropriate advice and resources for young people

YWF and YWF Members shaped the Westminster City Council/RBKC 2022 Drugs strategy. Ensuring experiences of young people and youth workers fed into policy and decision making.



Work with YWF Members and Partners to review affordability and accessibility of creative and cultural venues in Westminster, including tailoring activities to young people's interests







YWF Members and Partners: Enhance youth-police relations and supporting young people to make complaints to the police where needed



YWF worked with local cultural organisations, funders and Youth Hubs to design the Cultural Connections pilot programme. With funding and support from Kusuma Trust and Ambassador Theatre Group, 512 local young people were able to take part in theatre visits, workshops and career support in a programme delivered by YWF Member Go Live Theatre Project.

YWF commissioned a community consultation to understand the impact of youth violence in NW Westminster. Since then, YWF set up The Helping Hands Programme to apply a community-led approach to engage young people living in Mozart, Amberley, Warwick and Brindley estates which has to date funded 6 projects. In 2023, the project was expanded to the North East of the Borough.

The Young Westminster Foundation is grateful to the following organisations and individuals who contributed to the findings of the Our City, Our Future 2023 report.

#### **Organisations**

Avenues Youth Project St Andrew's Youth Club Fourth Feathers Youth and Community Centre Future Men Caxton Youth Organisation Church Street Family Hub (including Health Visitors, Parents, SENCO, Nursery inclusion practitioners including English as an additional language and domestic abuse specialist) Westminster City Council Family Navigators Portman Nursery School Family Lives Children's Centre Outreach and Volunteering service Unfold Helping Hands Serious Youth Violence Programme **Diversity Role Models** Mosaic Community Trust Westminster City Council Looked After Children and Care Leavers Cardinal Hume Centre Westbourne Park Family Centre **TBAP Beachcroft Academy** Pan Intercultural Arts Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust 2-3 Degrees Westminster Youth Council Westminster City Council Climate Emergency Team

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02

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