



**HUMBERVPP**  
Violence Prevention Partnership

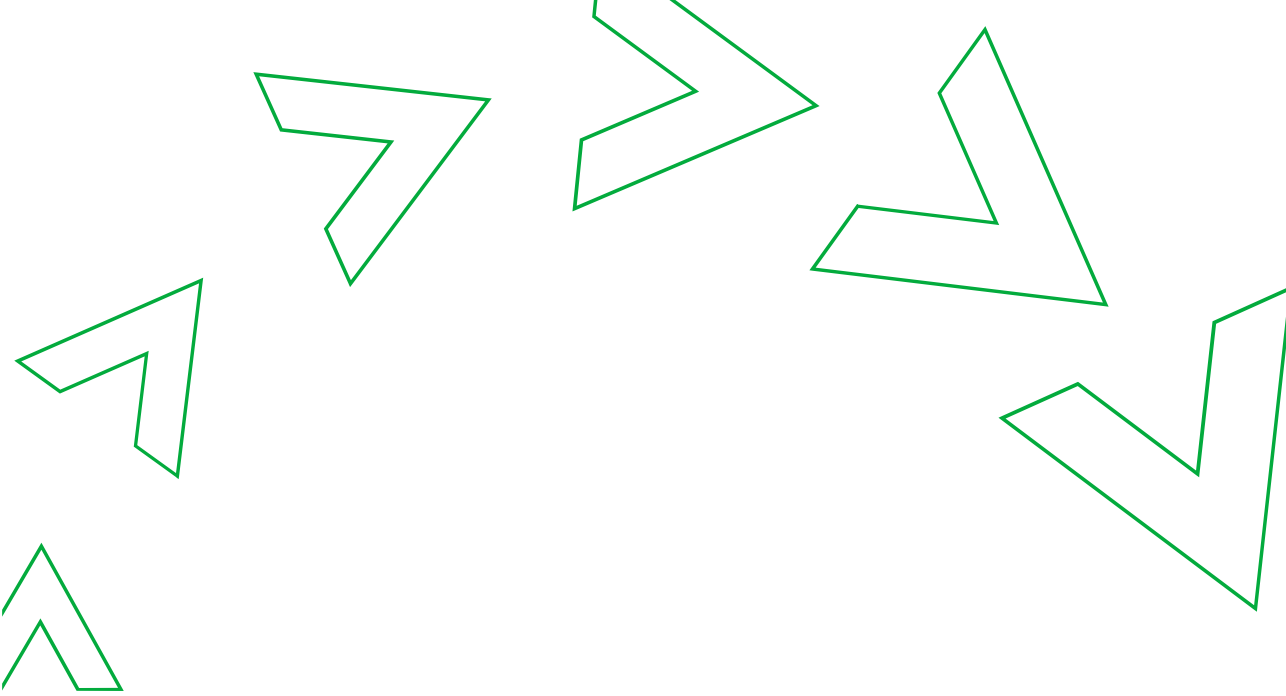
# YOUTH VOICE EXERCISE PRODUCED WITH YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE TEAMS

Produced by John Gilbert, Eski  
with support from Microsoft Copilot  
using anonymised data

Created with thanks to children and young people who have participated  
and the work of the Youth Justice Service Teams in  
East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire



➤ **SHARED 30TH MARCH 2026**



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# Methodology

Qualitative data was gathered from young people across the Humber region to understand their experiences, the factors shaping their involvement with the Youth Justice Service (YJS), and their views on what could prevent young people entering the justice system. The approach draws on direct youth voice, using semi structured exercises applied consistently across areas, and includes the perspectives of young people aged roughly early teens to late teens. Data was collected during January and February 2026.

**The work spans four local authority areas:**

- East Riding of Yorkshire (6 young people)
- Hull (5 young people)
- North East Lincolnshire (8 young people)
- North Lincolnshire (9 young people)

## Data Collection Approach

### 1. Mixed-method outreach model

**Data was gathered through a combination of:**

- **Primarily:** Youth Justice Service trusted adult workers speaking one to one with young people they already supported. Some discussions included parents and carers where appropriate, reflecting a family centred approach used by YJS staff.
- **Secondarily:** Eski researchers attending supervised youth sessions to engage young people individually, in settings where they already felt safe and supported. These sessions were typically run by trusted adults (e.g., youth workers, YJS staff), who helped identify young people willing to take part.

This dual approach ensured that young people participated in contexts where trust, safety and familiarity were already established, an important factor given the personal and sometimes sensitive nature of the topics being discussed.

### 2. Individual, semi structured conversations

**Across all four areas, researchers and YJS workers used the same semi structured framework made up of five core exercises:**

1. **"A normal week"** – exploring daily life, routines, and where time was spent.
2. **"Looking back, not blaming"** – identifying early moments of challenge, change, or missed opportunities for support.
3. **"Help that helped / help that didn't"** – understanding effective and ineffective interventions from the young person's perspective.
4. **"If you were in charge"** – generating ideas for prevention and early help.
5. **"Advice to others"** – gathering insight into what young people believe would help peers and what adults should do differently.

These exercises encouraged reflection, narrative sharing, and direct recommendations in young people's own words. The structure ensured cross-area comparability, while still allowing conversations to follow the young person's pace and direction.

### 3. Settings and modes of engagement

Discussions took place in trusted, youth-friendly environments, including:

- YJS buildings
- Community youth centres
- Supervised group sessions with breakout spaces for one to one conversations
- Family homes (where YJS staff conducted individual or joint parent–young person discussions)

This enabled participation from young people with a wide range of needs, levels of confidence and communication styles.

### 4. Participant Identification

Young people were identified through:

- YJS caseworkers (for individuals currently working with Youth Justice)
- Youth workers (for those in community settings known to be vulnerable or at risk)

Workers used their knowledge and relationships to select young people who were willing to contribute and who could reflect on experiences linked to youth justice involvement, vulnerability to exploitation, or harmful behaviours.

### 5. Sample Size and Composition

A total of 28 young people participated across the four areas:

Area	Number of Participants
East Riding of Yorkshire	6
Hull	5
North East Lincolnshire	8
North Lincolnshire	9

The sample includes young people with diverse experiences; those who entered the justice system for a range of reasons (e.g., online offences, violence, antisocial behaviour, peer involvement) as well as those at risk of entering the system but not yet formally involved.

## 6. Ethical considerations

- Young people took part voluntarily.
- Trusted adults were present or nearby to ensure emotional safety.
- Questions focused on lived experience and reflection, not on the legal specifics of offences.
- No recording equipment was used (based on the nature of the field notes), protecting anonymity and reducing barriers to honest sharing.
- Data was pseudonymised or summarised to protect identities.

## 7. Limitations

- The sample size is modest and not representative; findings reflect the experiences of the young people who participated, not all young people in each area.
- In some areas (e.g., North East Lincolnshire), data includes group dynamics, which may influence how openly individual young people speak.
- Some young people provided very brief responses, limiting depth for certain individuals.
- The data reflects a specific two month period (Jan–Feb 2026), and experiences may shift over time or with seasonal patterns.

## 8. Findings

Data gathered has been anonymised and is held on a secure SharePoint system. Anonymised data has been uploaded to Microsoft Copilot with a range of data aggregation exercises run to ensure that we are reporting on themes rather than one-off outlier comments.

This has been checked by a human member of the **Eski** team. This is an internal stakeholder version of the report for the **Humber VPP** and **Youth Justice Partnership**.

# Key Findings

## 1. "A normal week" – daily life, boredom and risk

### Key themes across Humber

School/college as the main structure – but often experienced as boring

#### There are two general group:

1. One group spend more time out of home than in and meet what they call "wrong crowds" who strongly shape what happens.
2. A second group who spend a disproportionate amount of time at home, in bedrooms, online and on phones/gaming and find themselves in trouble through online contacts and influence.
  - Boredom + energy = seeking excitement (sometimes crime or antisocial)

### Illustrative quotes & examples:

#### Hull

"I was attending school/ college Monday–Friday. I spent the rest of my time at home, gaming or with my friends... I was bored when I was at home. I probably would have said that school was boring but looking back I would have been very bored if I wasn't going to school."

"Before YJS... it was mainly partying, just showing off... because they were 'bad kids' I used to make myself look like a 'bad kid' as well... I didn't really have a routine... I'd just get up whenever, I'd go out."

#### East Riding

#### One young person describes a highly structured week:

"Monday – school/gym and then home... Tuesday – school/rugby/nana's house..." but still frames it around school plus activities rather than anything pro social being offered by wider services.

Several East Riding young people say they mainly spent time in their bedroom or at home (e.g. "Bedroom"; "pretty normal just playing on my games... in my room normally").

## North East Lincolnshire

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"Going to school in the day and with mates in the evening."

**One boy is banned from an area for dangerous motorbike riding;**

he now rides in the town centre and "enjoys the rush of knowing it's dangerous... has nothing else that comes close to it in terms of adrenaline and fun."

## North Lincolnshire

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"I spent most of my time in my room on my X-box... I was only attending school 3 to 4 hours a day... There isn't much to do in Scunthorpe."

"An average week is stressful and boring... Most bored at school. Feel safest at home."

"An average week would generally just be me and my friends hanging out... I had unlimited time. There wasn't anything that took up much time. There was never really anything much to do."

"I was bored outside of school. I'd do anything to make it fun... Smashing bottles, hanging around with older kids... Riding around on my bike, causing trouble."

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## Summary for Question 1

Across Humber, a "normal week" is dominated by school/college + home, with bedrooms, phones, gaming and hanging around with friends being the default. Boredom is a repeated theme, and where there are no positive outlets, some young people actively seek excitement or adrenaline in risky activities (e.g. motorbikes, "causing trouble").

# Key Findings

## 2. “Looking back, not blaming” – when things started to go wrong

### Key themes across Humber

- Gradual slide, not “one bad day”
- Peers and “wrong crowds” as turning points
- Unrecognised mental health, neurodiversity and bereavement
- Family dynamics (arguments, splits, money tensions)
- Many feel adults didn’t notice – except for the odd trusted teacher or parent

### Illustrative quotes & examples:

#### Hull

“Things started going wrong around the age of 14. It wasn’t a ‘one day thing’ but it got worse over time... If I’d logged off when I saw the pictures of younger children then I wouldn’t have ever got in trouble.”

“I’d lost my a lot of family... I see now it was depression... I held all that anger in and then I just burst, went to the wrong crowds. But nobody saw it.”

“School made me look like a bad kid... They told me... that I’m a problem... They put me in isolation when OFSTED came in because they didn’t want them to see me.”

#### East Riding

### Several East Riding young people link things going wrong to who they were with:

“For my offence... if I’d have been with different people it maybe would have been a different situation.”

**Another describes parents splitting as the point when** “things might have turned out differently.” (summarised from the short “mum and dad split up” response).

## North East Lincolnshire

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The boys explicitly discuss morality gradients: dangerous motorbike riding is seen as acceptable because “it’s not as bad as robbery,” and one argues burglary can be “OK” if people know who did it and get their stuff back.

They also note “there is no deterrent to working with youth justice, people think it’s a good thing.”

## North Lincolnshire

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“Things could have gone bad for me, but it didn’t... People noticed when I was upset and I was helped. Nothing made things worse.” (a contrasting, more positive trajectory)

“An average week was going to school, going out, getting chill and getting in trouble... My dad noticed something was wrong. I didn’t get help... Arguing with my dad made things worse.”

### **A further North Lincolnshire example shows family money tensions as the turning point:**

Things “started to go wrong” when promised pocket money never materialised, while a sibling still got money; frustration at “not having any money” and “not feeling listened to” is central to their narrative.

### **Another young person links difficulties to unaddressed underlying needs:**

“I have other issues... there is bipolar in the family and I have been told I could have ADHD... I was never taught how to [regulate emotions]... Angry people aren’t angry for no reason.”

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## Summary for Question 2

Looking back, young people across all four areas describe slow burn processes – drifting into riskier peers, conflicts at home, unrecognised emotional/mental health needs, and online risks. Some do recall adults noticing (a parent, a teacher, a school), but support often felt late, misdirected, or focused on behaviour not underlying causes. A minority describe early, effective support that stopped things escalating.

# Key Findings

## 3. “Help that helped/help that didn’t” – what actually made a difference

### Key themes across Humber

- Personal, specific, one to one help works best
- Trusted adults and relationships are critical (YJS workers, youth workers, a “good” teacher, specific named staff)
- Enjoyable activities (art, cooking, fishing, boxing, youth clubs) drive engagement
- Group punishments, broken promises, labelling and school sanctions don’t help
- Fear of judgement, nerves and mistrust of “the system” stop early help seeking

### Illustrative quotes & examples:

#### Hull

“Help that is personal and specific.” (listed under “help that helps”)

“Kingston Youth & YJS... The opportunities – being able to get out, do things in a good way... making a safe space to talk... like they’re not just staff, they’re there like a friend to you... like someone who cares about you, has a lot of time for you, like it’s not just on the clock.”

“Alison (YJS Artist)... really enjoyed doing the art as well. The food was great too. I went on to make more food as well you know... it made me enjoy it and try something different, feel a bit more grown up too.”

“When college tutors tell everyone off for the behaviour of a few people” is listed as help that doesn’t help.

#### East Riding

##### **A short East Riding comment summarises the wider joint youth partnership analysis:**

“The biggest insight... was a trusted adult, afterschool activity, somewhere to go and hang out... music/arts is up there but most of all young people said activities based outside of education and SEND friendly were important i.e. inclusivity.” (not a direct youth quote, but a clear theme from East Riding voice work).

##### **Individual young people also highlight community based support:**

“Something/somewhere from in the community” and “Goole youth action is always good I used to [do] the boxing there.”

## North East Lincolnshire

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### **Being placed in a separate unit in school is reported as:**

“Boring at times. Like that there is one to one working, but boring.” – a mixed view where the format (one to one) is appreciated but the experience is unstimulating.

### **Young people strongly value earning money legally as a protective factor and “help that helps”:**

Working after school in construction for “£40–£50 per day” is described as desirable and better than dealing drugs, which they know “would end up badly.”

“Schools don’t help. You can push bad behaviour quite far before it’s a problem. The amount of bad behaviour incidents you can get was like a competition.”

## North Lincolnshire

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“I was offered help. I felt listened to... Anxiety of being judged stops young people from asking for help early. School feel unsafe and off putting.”

“I do not feel listened to... Nerves stop young people from asking for help... Confrontation makes me feel services are not for people like me.”

### **A different young person emphasises practical, constructive help:**

Youth justice supports them to find “positive ways to make some money,” including making flyers for a small dog walking business and jewellery to sell – they explicitly say earlier support to earn money positively would have helped.

### **A further North Lincolnshire young person stresses meaningful emotional support and diagnosis:**

“I don’t really feel like anything has worked to help... Not having a diagnosis has a massive impact as I just feel like I need to know... Talking to people calms me down... Things that don’t help are people that don’t respond to me if I’m reaching out... having so many people around to support but not actually having support makes things worse.”

### **Another young person:**

“Fishing. [A worker] helped me with this activity.” – as something that did help.

“When sometimes at school they promise to help you, but then that doesn’t happen. When I’m doing my work, I ask for help and feel that I don’t always get it, which makes it hard, and then I don’t want to do my work.”

## Summary for Question 3

Across all areas, relational, personalised, activity based support and practical help (especially around money and meaningful activities) are consistently rated as helpful. School based labelling, broken promises, group punishment, and superficial offers of support are perceived as ineffective or harmful. Young people repeatedly mention nerves, fear of judgement, and mistrust of “the system” as barriers to seeking help early.

# Key Findings

## 4. "If you were in charge" – what should be put in place

### Key themes across Humber

- More and better early education – not just about academics, but law, life skills and emotional regulation
- Safe spaces and youth clubs with activities young people choose (music, arts, sport, motorbikes, fishing, boxing)
- More one to one support, trusted adults, and inclusive/SEND friendly provision
- Support available in community settings and schools, starting early (often around 10–11, transition to secondary)
- Clear desire for practical help (legal work, money, life skills) as prevention

### Illustrative quotes & examples:

#### Hull

"What I didn't realise is that if you are watching porn of someone under 18, it doesn't matter how old you are, it's illegal... I think it should be talked about more... It needs to be more than a one-off session at school."

"More one to one option for people. Hire a lot more workers doing things kids would be more excited for, pool tables, music, cooking... It gets us out and away from the bad crowds."

"Make more youth clubs... Just hiring people that seem like regular people, and they want to help because they care."

#### East Riding

**East Riding synthesis highlights:** trusted adults, afterschool activity, somewhere to hang out, music/arts, and SEND friendly and inclusive activities as the core of what young people say is needed – "based outside of education." (not a direct youth quote but summarising their voices)

Individual young people mention emotional wellbeing support and community based provision (e.g. Goole Youth Action).

## North East Lincolnshire

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"I'd give a space for young people to ride motorbikes away from people and where the police don't stop them."

"More youth services."

## North Lincolnshire

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### **Several suggest structured support around transition and life skills:**

"School staff should be more supportive in school, from year 7."

"It should start at age 11."

### **One young person gives a very specific blueprint:**

"Teaching kids it's not just about maths and English, but life skills... Emotional regulation should be taught in school... how to manage money, what life is about. How to apply for jobs and do CVs."

### **A further young person emphasises keeping promises and lived experience:**

"If you could design help...? 'Keeping promises.'"

Would they want support from someone with lived experience? "Yes."

"Age eleven, when I was going into bigger school, I could have had some more help around that age."

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## Summary for Question 4

When asked "if you were in charge," young people across Humber consistently describe practical, early, relationship based support – more youth spaces and activities, education on the realities of crime and online risks, and life skills/emotional regulation teaching. They are specific about timing (often around age 10–12 / transition to secondary) and about the type of people they want: trusted, caring, sometimes with lived experience, and able to keep promises.

# Key Findings

## 5. "Advice to others" – what they'd say to younger selves and peers; what adults should stop/start

### Key themes across Humber

- Don't follow the crowd; choose friends carefully
- Talk to someone early; don't let it get too late
- Find hobbies and positive activities (fishing, sports, work, youth clubs)
- Adults should stop labelling, shouting and "piping up"; start listening, believing and being patient

### Illustrative quotes & examples:

#### Hull

"Don't act like you know it all when you don't."

"DON'T BE A SHEEP AND FOLLOW OTHER PEOPLE... Keep away from the loud crowds. Focus on yourself."

"In the past, I wish I spoke to someone sooner than later... Don't let it get too late."

"Stop – telling someone how they should be. Don't tell them they're a bad kid. Don't single them out. Should – motivate people, lift them up... Build trust... Have patience."

#### East Riding

"Tell myself to not associate with certain people."

#### Advice to adults:

"Stop piping up to the younger generation and not to forget that they were young once."  
Simply "listen a bit more when needed."

#### North East Lincolnshire

"Only fight to defend yourself, don't hit first."

## North Lincolnshire

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“Stay away from people who get you in trouble and have a hobby.”

“I’d tell a younger version of myself it will be okay in the end... It’s okay to make mistakes but you should accept the help you are offered.”

“The advice I’d give would be to talk to someone.”

“My advice [is] to follow your heart not your head.”

“I’d tell me to enjoy life a bit more. You don’t realise what you have until it’s too late. I’d kill to restart life.”

### **Advice to adults:**

“Adults should stop thinking that kids don’t have anything to worry about and start being accepting.”

“Adults should start talking to us. They should stop shouting at us.”

“Adults should learn about patience... It’s not always just about authority and control...They expect too much too quick from children.”

“They need to start listening to kids.”

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## Summary for Question 5

Young people’s advice is strikingly consistent: don’t follow the wrong people, talk to someone early, and find something positive to do. Their messages to adults are equally clear – stop shouting, labelling, and dismissing; start listening, understanding, believing and being patient. In their words, adults need to “motivate people, lift them up” rather than reinforce the “bad kid” label.

# Overall Humber-wide summary

## Across Hull, East Riding, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, the same threads run through all five exercises:

- Unstructured time, boredom and peer influence are common precursors to offending or risky behaviour.
- Emotional distress, mental health and neurodiversity, family conflict, and money pressures appear again and again in the “looking back” narratives.
- Young people are very clear on what helps: trusted adults, one to one, engaging activities, inclusive community based support, and practical help with money, skills and opportunities.
- They are equally clear on what doesn't: punitive school responses, broken promises, feeling labelled or singled out, group punishments, and tokenistic or inaccessible support.
- Their own advice and “if I were in charge” ideas emphasise early, practical, relational prevention – especially around ages 10–12, transition to secondary, and key online and peer risk moments.

# Recommendations from Young People

Based purely on the information provided by the 28 young people (and supporting information from a small number of parents and carer) here are the main youth led recommendations for prevention:

## 1. Provide more positive activities and safe places to go

Young people across all four Humber areas repeatedly describe boredom, lack of structure, and limited things to do as major drivers of risk taking, offending, or mixing with harmful peer groups. They consistently highlight that having meaningful activities, especially those that are fun, hands on, or tailored to their interests reduces harmful behaviour.

### Possible actions

- Increase access to youth clubs and drop in spaces open during evenings and weekends.
- Expand provision of sports, arts, music, cooking, gaming sessions and other enjoyable activities that appeal to different personalities.
- Provide SEND inclusive activities and spaces where neurodivergent young people feel comfortable and understood.
- Develop or support specialist activity spaces, such as designated safe areas for motorbike riding, BMX, skate, or high energy pursuits.
- Offer a range of practical activities (bike repair, fishing, boxing, crafts) shown to engage young people who struggle in school settings.

## 2. Build relationships with trusted, patient adults

Young people are clear that what changed their behaviour was not the “service” but the relationship with a trusted adult. They want adults who listen, understand their lives, are consistent, and don’t judge them.

### Possible actions

- Ensure youth provision includes relationship based, one to one support, not just group sessions.
- Invest in training for staff in patient, non judgemental, emotionally attuned practice.
- Employ staff who feel “like real people” who are approachable, relatable, and consistent.
- Support continuity by keeping the same worker wherever possible across periods of transition.
- Offer family inclusive support, recognising that trusted adults are not always professionals.

### **3. Start support earlier—especially around ages 10–12**

Young people often identify upper primary and early secondary school as the point where things started to go wrong. Early support, especially during the transition to secondary, could have prevented later involvement with YJS.

#### **Possible actions**

- Introduce transition to secondary support programmes focused on wellbeing, friendships, confidence, and understanding new expectations.
- Offer early, light touch one to one mentoring to pupils flagged as struggling socially or emotionally in Y5–Y8.
- Ensure parents and carers have access to early family support before problems escalate.
- Expand access to youth clubs and community activities for ages 10–12, not just older teens.

### **4. Teach practical life skills, emotional regulation and real world education**

Young people want support that actually prepares them for life through managing emotions, money, relationships, conflict, and digital behaviour. They often say that school focuses too heavily on academic work and misses key skills that would help them stay safe.

#### **Possible actions**

- Provide structured sessions on emotional regulation, coping with anger, managing stress, and recognising personal triggers.
- Offer life skills programmes in schools and communities: budgeting, CV writing, job applications, conflict resolution, independent living.
- Deliver repeated, age appropriate education on online risks, the law, and sexual behaviour, not just one off assemblies.
- Include lived experience facilitators, where appropriate, to increase credibility and relatability.

### **5. Improve fairness, consistency and emotional support in schools**

School experiences strongly influence behaviour. Many young people describe being labelled, singled out, or punished inconsistently, while others highlight that school could have helped more. Fair treatment and emotional understanding matter.

#### **Possible actions**

- Review and improve behaviour policies to reduce inconsistent sanctions and minimise the use of isolation for vulnerable young people.
- Ensure teachers and pastoral staff receive training in trauma informed and neurodiversity inclusive practice.
- Develop clear pathways for pupils to access timely emotional support when they feel overwhelmed.
- Encourage schools to follow through on promises of help, ensuring young people are not left feeling ignored or dismissed.

## **6. Create more opportunities for young people to earn money safely**

Earning money is a major motivator for young people. Several described drifting into crime because legitimate ways to earn felt unavailable or inaccessible.

### **Possible actions**

- Expand after school micro jobs programmes (e.g., community gardening, litter picking teams, youth run cafés, bike repair).
- Provide support to develop youth enterprise projects, e.g. dog walking, car washing, craft making, digital freelancing.
- Partner with local businesses to offer part time work tasters for ages 14–16.
- Provide early help to manage family tensions about money, where these are linked to behaviour.

## **7. Offer safe ways to channel high energy**

Some young people, particularly in North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, show extremely high energy levels, confidence, and a need for adrenaline. Without safe outlets, this energy is directed into risky behaviour.

### **Possible actions**

- Develop structured access to high energy activities: motorbike tracks, BMX/MTB trails, climbing walls, sports sessions, adventure days.
- Provide youth workers who specialise in engaging high energy young people.
- Offer competition style activities (e.g., sports leagues, skill challenges) that redirect competitiveness into positive outcomes.

## **8. Reduce stigma, judgement and fear of “the system”**

Young people repeatedly say that fear of being judged, punished, or misunderstood stops them asking for help early. Stigma accelerates problems instead of preventing them.

### **Possible actions**

- Promote non-judgemental advice pathways, including confidential drop-ins and anonymous digital support.
- Train professionals in non labelling language and how to avoid reinforcing “bad kid” identities.
- Review data sharing and safeguarding practices to address young people’s concerns about “things being twisted”.
- Co-design materials with young people that explain support services in simple, reassuring language.

## Summary:

### What young people say would prevent involvement with Youth Justice?

Across the Humber, young people are consistent in saying that prevention means:

- early, relationship based support
- practical activities, not lectures
- fairness and emotional understanding in school
- ways to earn money safely
- trusted adults who listen
- safe outlets for energy and boredom
- reducing stigma and judgement
- real-world learning about emotions, life skills and the law

Their recommendations point clearly towards community based, emotionally intelligent, early intervention models that focus on belonging, opportunity and trust rather punishment.

# Area Summaries

## Young People's Voices – Hull (Summary)

### 1. A Normal Week (Before YJS)

Young people in Hull describe weeks dominated by school/college, unstructured free time, boredom and strong peer influence.

- One young person spent weekdays at college and the rest of the time “at home, gaming or with my friends,” half online and half in person. They described being “very bored” without school structure.
- Another described life before YJS as “mainly partying” and trying to look like a “bad kid” because they spent time with others known that way. They reported having no routine: “I’d just get up whenever, I’d go out.”
- Excitement and adrenaline-seeking (“knowing something bad”) featured in one account.

#### Summary:

Life before YJS featured boredom, identity shaped by peers, and lack of structured activity.

### 2. Looking Back, Not Blaming

Young people describe gradual drift into harmful behaviour rather than a single turning point.

- One young person said things “got worse over time” from age 14, linked to online behaviour that escalated without them recognising the seriousness.
- Another described unrecognised depression, bereavement and emotional struggles, saying they “held all that anger in and then... burst,” with adults failing to notice.
- School experiences contributed negatively: one young person reported being called names by staff, feeling labelled as a “problem,” and being isolated during inspection visits.

#### Summary:

Life before YJS featured boredom, identity shaped by peers, and lack of structured activity.

### 3. Help That Helped / Help That Didn't

Hull young people clearly distinguish between personalised, respectful support and generic or punitive approaches.

#### What helped:

- Personalised or targeted support (“help that is personal and specific”).

- Relationship-based youth work, especially with YJS and Kingston Youth: young people valued staff who “care,” provide time, show respect and create a safe space to talk.
- Activity based engagement such as art and cooking, described as enjoyable, confidence building and motivating.

**What didn't help:**

- Group punishments (e.g., whole-class telling offs).
- School responses that labelled them or singled them out, damaging trust and self esteem

**Summary:**

Effective support in Hull was relational, respectful and activity based; ineffective support tended to be punitive, impersonal or shaming.

## 4. If You Were in Charge

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**Young people described several changes they believe would prevent offending or escalation.**

- Clear, repeated education on the law around online sexual behaviour, as they felt unaware of legal boundaries before offending.
- Stronger online protections, including difficulty accessing harmful spaces such as the dark web.
- More one to one opportunities, more youth workers, and activities young people “would be excited for,” such as pool, music or cooking.
- More youth clubs like Kingston Youth, with staff who feel relatable, friendly and caring.

**Summary:**

Hull young people propose earlier, clearer education, more relational workers, and places offering positive alternatives to harmful peers and boredom.

## 5. Advice to Others

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**Young people in Hull emphasise personal responsibility, identity and seeking help sooner.**

- Advice included not acting like “you know it all” and avoiding being a “sheep” by following the crowd.
- They encourage others to avoid “loud crowds,” focus on themselves and get help early rather than waiting until things escalate.
- They stress that adults should avoid labelling and should instead motivate, build trust and understand where young people are coming from.

**Summary:**

Their advice centres on resisting peer pressure, focusing on personal goals, and seeking or offering supportive, trust based relationships.

# Area Summaries

## Young People's Voices – North Lincolnshire (Summary)

### 1. A Normal Week (Before YJS)

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North Lincolnshire young people consistently describe boredom, limited structure, and spending long periods alone or online.

- Several spent most of their time in their bedroom, on their phones, on TikTok, gaming or alone.
- Some split time between school and being “out with friends,” often with little adult supervision.
- One described a typical week as “smoking, drinking and upset all the time,” using cannabis with peers to cope.
- Others attended school part time (3–4 hours a day), felt there was “nothing to do” in their local area, or were heavily bored at home.
- A young person said they spent most free time “in my bedroom or out in the community,” usually with the same friend..

#### Evidence pattern:

Unstructured time, isolation, and boredom dominate daily life, with limited positive activities or supervision.

### 2. Looking Back, Not Blaming

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Young people described early signs that things were starting to go wrong, often linked to peers, home life, and emotional difficulties.

- Several recognised that mixing with certain peers was a key turning point; one boy noted things might have been different if he hadn't hung around with someone “not nice.”
- Emotional challenges were common: young people reported feeling upset frequently, struggling with anger, or having no emotional support.
- Some described family conflict, especially shouting at home, as making things worse rather than better.
- One young person described a slow decline that led to being excluded from mainstream school, with teachers not noticing or addressing underlying difficulties.
- Another noted that people sometimes noticed when things were wrong, but the support didn't come early enough or wasn't the right type.

#### Summary:

Life before YJS featured boredom, identity shaped by peers, and lack of structured activity.

### 3. Help That Helped / Help That Didn't

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#### What helped:

- Young people felt supported when adults talked to them calmly, listened, and checked in.
- Practical, person centred support such as helping set up small positive activities (e.g., dog walking, crafts) was experienced as helpful.
- Feeling liked and accepted by workers was important; helpful adults were those who were warm, consistent and took time to understand them.
- Having someone come to see them regularly was experienced as reassuring and grounding.

#### What didn't help:

- Shouting, punishments, or confrontation, whether at home or school, made behaviour worse and shut down communication.
- Schools were repeatedly described as not listening, not changing anything, and excluding too quickly rather than offering emotional support.
- Some young people felt that services were "not for people like me" when support came from strangers or people who didn't know their family or background.
- Being spoken to in rude or harsh ways at moments of distress created fear rather than support.

#### Evidence pattern:

Relationship based support helps; punitive or distant approaches undermine trust and increase disengagement.

### 4. If You Were in Charge

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#### Young people emphasised the need for activities, emotional help, and supportive adults.

- Provide free activities in every community that match young people's interests at places they can get to easily.
- Make support available from trusted adults, ideally including people with lived experience who understand what they are going through.
- Ensure help is available from all ages, but especially between 13–18, when many felt their difficulties intensified.
- Offer emotional support and opportunities to talk to someone when feeling low or angry.
- Provide practical, enjoyable outlets that young people can choose (e.g., hair and beauty, sports, crafts, youth clubs).

**Evidence pattern:** Young people want accessible, interest led activities and emotionally attuned adults who understand their lived realities.

## 5. Advice to Others

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### Young people shared advice based on what they wish they had understood earlier.

- Learn to control your anger, and try not to bottle up emotions.
- Seek help earlier, especially around food, safety, emotional wellbeing, and feeling comfortable.
- Stay away from friends or peers who pull you into trouble or treat you badly.
- Don't be afraid to reach out for help.
- Their message to adults: stop being rude or shouting when young people are acting out; start listening and understanding instead.

**Evidence pattern:** Their advice emphasises emotional regulation, early support, healthier peer choices and more compassionate adult responses.

# Area Summaries

## Young People's Voices – East Riding of Yorkshire (Summary)

### 1. A Normal Week (Before YJS)

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Young people in East Riding describe a mix of structured routines and boredom driven isolation.

- Some reported predictable routines dominated by school, gym, rugby and home, often centred around family members or a single safe place.
- Others described spending most of their time in bedrooms, at home on games, or using their phones, with little social contact.
- One young person linked where they spent time directly to who they were with, noting that being around different peers might have changed the offence outcome.
- Daily life varied from “arguing” to highly structured physical activity to long periods alone indoors.

#### **Evidence pattern:**

Experiences were split between well structured weekly routines and long stretches of unsupervised or isolated time, often linked to peer influence.

### 2. Looking Back, Not Blaming

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Young people identified several moments where things could have taken a different turn.

- Peer influence was a recurring issue: being with “different people” was seen as a factor that might have prevented getting into trouble.
- Family events, such as parents separating, were mentioned as points where things shifted emotionally.
- A few felt adults sometimes listened, but others said schools “did not care” or treated them more harshly than peers, creating frustration and a sense of unfairness.
- Some described uncertainty or minimal reflection, answering simply “Yeah” or “I’m not sure,” suggesting difficulty articulating or revisiting that period.

#### **Evidence pattern:**

Peers, family changes and perceived unfairness at school were notable early pressures.

### 3. Help That Helped / Help That Didn't

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Experiences of support varied considerably across the six young people.

#### What helped:

- Community based support such as Goole Youth Action (e.g., boxing sessions) was described positively.
- Support from specific trusted workers.
- Emotional wellbeing was mentioned as an important area for support when asked what a "perfect support team" would provide.

#### What didn't help:

- Schools were repeatedly described as inconsistent or unfair, with some young people feeling they received harsher sanctions than others for the same behaviour.
- Several said they were unsure where support should happen or lacked clarity on what support should look like, suggesting low expectations or limited prior positive experiences of services.

#### Evidence pattern:

Trusted, familiar adults and community youth services were valued; schools were commonly identified as unsupportive or inequitable.

### 4. If You Were in Charge

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Young people gave mixed, often brief responses when asked what they would change to help people like them earlier.

- Provide free activities in every community that match young people's interests at places they can get to easily.
- Make support available from trusted adults, ideally including people with lived experience who understand what they are going through.
- Ensure help is available from all ages, but especially between 13–18, when many felt their difficulties intensified.
- Offer emotional support and opportunities to talk to someone when feeling low or angry.
- Provide practical, enjoyable outlets that young people can choose (e.g., hair and beauty, sports, crafts, youth clubs).

#### Evidence pattern:

Young people want emotionally supportive, community based help, but many struggled to define what formal support should look like.

## 5. Advice to Others

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### Young people offered a mixture of reflective and brief pieces of advice.

- Several emphasised avoiding certain people, linking negative peer groups to getting into trouble.
- Others shared messages of self belief (“I’m really brave”) or self protection (“don’t do anything silly”).
- When asked what adults should change, responses included: adults should listen more, stop “piping up”, and remember they “were young once.”
- Some gave minimal or no advice, reflecting either discomfort or uncertainty about reflecting on their younger selves.

#### **Evidence pattern:**

Advice focused on peer choice, emotional reassurance, and adults needing to listen and avoid judgement.

# Area Summaries

## Young People's Voices – North East Lincolnshire (Summary)

**Note:** Unlike the other areas, North East Lincolnshire data is based on interviews in pairs/small groups and note contained subjective comments and observations from researchers. Therefore, there are fewer verbatim quotes and a bias towards “bravado” in many of the comments, rather than reflection from completing work with YJS.

Young people who have worked with YJS provide a notably more positive outlook than those who have not yet completed work. For an accurate comparison, consultations done directly with YJS workers and with young people who have completed working with YJS would be required.

### 1. A Normal Week (Before YJS)

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Young people across both North East Lincolnshire datasets described routines shaped by boredom, peer groups and a strong pull toward high stimulation activities.

- The older boys described school by day and being out with mates each evening, often seeking excitement.
- Dangerous motorbike riding was a defining feature for some, described as the only activity that provided adrenaline or “fun.”
- In the younger group (8–12), there was “nothing to do”, long evenings outside, and no expectation to be home at a set time.
- Hunger was a noticeable theme among the younger ones, with some arriving at sessions very hungry and becoming aggressive when frustrated.
- The two teenage girls said they often slept until 4–5pm and had very limited structured routine; one expressed interest in hair and beauty sessions but only in the evenings.

#### **Evidence pattern:**

Boredom, irregular routines, and a search for excitement—across all age groups—shaped how time was spent..

### 2. Looking Back, Not Blaming

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Young people identified social pressures, fear, and identity concerns as early influences.

- The older boys showed blurred moral boundaries, viewing risky or harmful behaviour (like dangerous riding or even burglary) as less serious than other crimes.
- The two girls described feeling pressured by peers into acting differently from who they were, e.g., hiding interests like art to avoid being labelled a “geek.”

- Both girls shared that loud or aggressive group behaviour was “a front,” masking the fact that individually they are more reflective and reasonable.
- Some younger children showed poor emotional regulation, with immediate lash outs when upset, a sign of early unmet needs rather than conscious wrongdoing.
- Several expressed that it felt “too late to change,” especially the teens disengaged from school.

**Evidence pattern:**

Peer dynamics, identity management, and lack of emotional support were influential long before any formal contact with Youth Justice..

### 3. Help That Helped / Help That Didn't

**The combined North East Lincolnshire data shows a strong divide between helpful relational support and unhelpful or inaccessible provision.**

**What helped:**

- Young people valued youth workers they knew and trusted; trust was described as essential for engagement.
- Boxing was “a hit” for the younger ones before it stopped, showing the value of structured physical activity.
- Teen girls responded well once conversations were one to one, confirming that individual attention reduces peer driven posturing.

**What didn't help:**

- Several said they don't trust the police, with even innocent children running because “the chase is fun,” indicating mistrust and misinterpretation of police presence.
- The older boys reported that school behaviour systems don't work and can become a competition (“how far you can push it”).
- Stopped activities (e.g., boxing) left a gap that nothing replaced.
- Young children with no home boundaries were left with unsafe levels of independence, contributing to behaviours adults then viewed as problematic.

**Evidence pattern:**

Consistency, relationships and engaging activities help; absence of structure, lack of boundaries and ineffective authority responses do not.

## 4. If You Were in Charge

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Young people suggested practical changes centred on safety, stimulation and accessible spaces.

- The older boys proposed a designated safe place to ride motorbikes, away from the public and police interference.
- Young children said they would attend youth groups more often if available and stable.
- Several across age groups were excited about the new Horizon provision opening, especially its gym sessions.
- The girls expressed interest in evening sessions for hair, beauty, or other creative activities because their current routines make daytime attendance unrealistic

### **Evidence pattern:**

They want safe, appealing, accessible youth spaces—and specific activities that channel their energy and interests..

## 5. Advice to Others

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Young people's advice reflects their normalised use of aggression, social pressures and emerging reflections.

- The boys emphasised only fighting “in self defence”—reflecting a worldview where conflict is normal but can be managed.
- The younger children did not articulate formal advice but showed through their behaviour the need for food, boundaries and emotional support.
- The girls emphasised that behaviour in groups is often an act, and that life choices feel “too late” to change—indicating a need for earlier reassurance and identity safe support.

### **Evidence pattern:**

Advice was heavily shaped by group norms; reflections from the girls reveal hidden vulnerability behind outward bravado.



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