



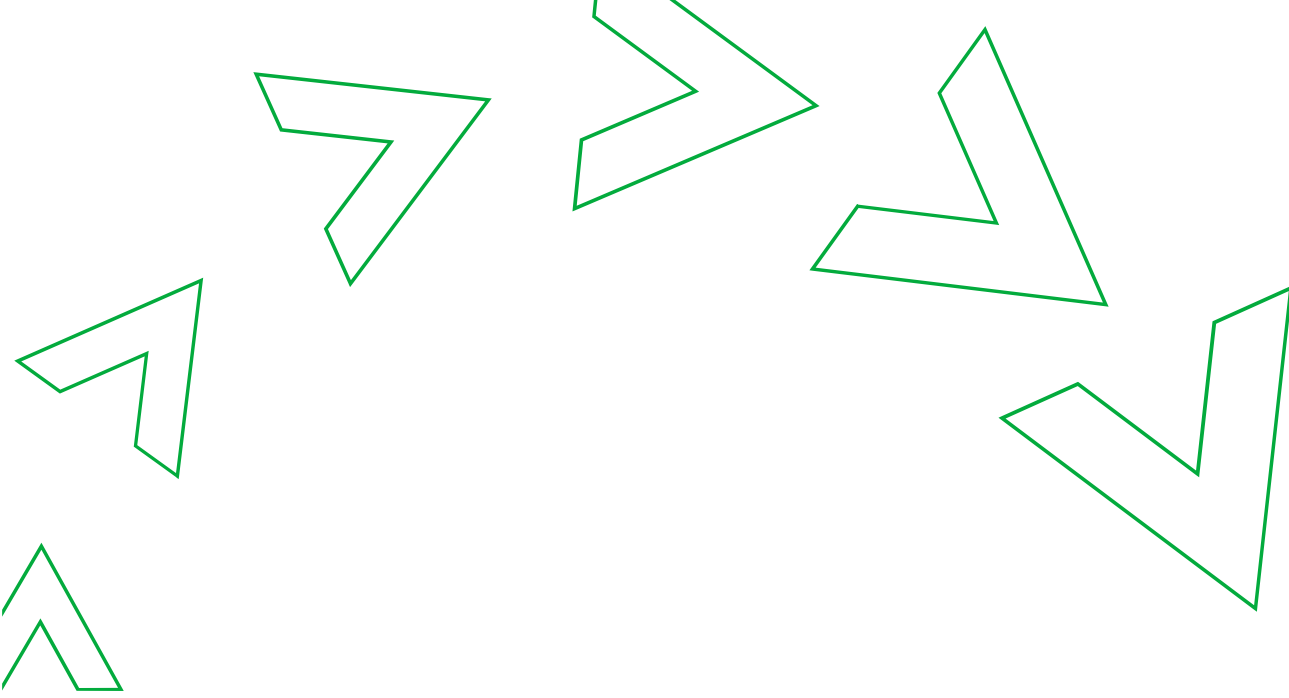
**HUMBERVPP**  
Violence Prevention Partnership

# OBJECTIVE 2: YOUTH VOICE INSIGHTS REPORT

A Synthesis of Young People's Perceptions, Safety,  
and Violence across the Humber (2025-2026)

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# Introduction & Strategic Context

Since its inception in 2022, the Humber Violence Prevention Partnership (HVPP) has led the response to reducing violent crime in the region. Driven by a public health, “child first” approach, the Humber VPP commissioned this research to support work on strengthening how youth voice informs violence prevention strategy, commissioning and delivery across the region.

This project isn’t about collecting more youth input; it’s about joining up what’s already there by bringing together the vital youth voice activity already ongoing in the region, which engages and advocates for young people, including around experiences of safety, crime and community.

This work is not about duplicating or re-running engagement, but about collating different voices, insights, and demonstrated methods of work from across locations, sectors, and communities with the aim of driving genuine, system-level change in how the Humber VPP embeds young people’s voices in violence prevention work.

## **The particular focuses for analysis in this report are:**

- Insight that young people have already shared about safety, harm, confidence in public spaces, and experiences of violence (e.g., consultations, reports, campaigns, creative outputs)
- How organisations currently involve young people in shaping their work
- Recommendations from young people and practitioners about how ongoing youth voice could be strengthened and sustained across the system

Findings will directly shape how HVPP plans and prioritises future activity, commissions interventions, and ensure that violence prevention work is consistently viewed through a youth voice lens. This is an interim report (V.1). A final output will be shared so that partners across the Humber can benefit from a clearer, more connected understanding of what young people are saying and what is already working.

Objective 2 serves as the analytical core of this initiative, transitioning from the mapping of organisations (Objective 1) to synthesis of what young people and youth work practitioners across the Humber have said.

This report acknowledges a critical piece of feedback from our local youth: consultation fatigue. By reviewing existing insights, we aim to ensure that every board meeting, focus group, and survey response, results in tangible strategic change rather than further duplication of effort.

# Research and Report Objectives

The primary purpose of this Insights Report is to provide the Partnership with a clear, evidence-based narrative of youth voice regarding safety and violence in the Humber. The project seeks to:

## **Map existing youth voice activity across the Humber, including:**

**Identification and creation of a directory of organisations and groups currently engaging young people. This would include detailed mapping of organisations and groups currently engaging young people in the Humber area, including:**

- Their areas of interest (e.g. health, community safety, violence and preventing it, open spaces, activities and provision for young people etc)
- The engagement mechanisms they use (e.g. advisory groups, forums, surveys, creative outputs) and their coverage (e.g. numbers of young people, age range, genders)
- Direct contact information for their coordinators.
- Develop a repository of existing outputs (e.g. reports, videos, campaigns)
- Identify and target any gaps in representation or engagement

## **Review existing insights gathered from young people, particularly those with lived experience of violence or from underrepresented communities, to:**

### **Summarise in a single report:**

- The key themes, ideas and concerns from the breadth of youth voice about safety and violence related issues across the Humber
- Identify any gaps in understanding or representation and opportunities for further research

# Methodology

The insights contained within this report were gathered by reviewing the outputs of 40 organisations and groups identified in the Objective 1 directory. Whilst most of the activity in this phase took place between November 2025 and January 2026, we recognise that youth voice on safety and violence is ongoing across the Humber.

The HVPP will continue to update the resources openly available and accept further contributions to both the directory and repository.

Work in progress versions of the directory and illustrative map have been shared along with this interim report.

To ensure the findings in this report are representative and relevant, a mixed-methods research design was employed over the two-month period. In further phases of this project we will triangulate data by cross-referencing of professional expertise with the direct experience of young people.

## 3.1 Data Collection Streams

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- 1. Practitioner Interviews (n=40):** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 youth work practitioners across the Humber. These professionals represent the "front line," offering insights into long-term trends, systemic barriers, and the evolving nature of youth voice in their specific localities and fields of expertise.

Youth work practitioners act as trusted intermediaries; established and trusted relationships allow capture of honest, unfiltered insights that traditional 'outside' researchers might miss. By engaging with professionals across the Humber, we have tapped into years of observation and thousands of hours of youth engagement.

- 2. Qualitative Youth Voice:** We analysed impact data and a significant volume of anecdotal responses from young people indirectly through practitioners as intermediaries. This included direct quotes, annual and project-specific reports, and creative feedback.

## 3.2 Reach and Representation

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**Efforts were made to ensure the data captured the "breadth of youth voice" across the Humber:** Geographic Coverage: Inclusion of voices from Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire, and North East Lincolnshire.

### 3.3 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

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All anecdotal data and interview responses were treated with strict confidentiality. We acknowledge that while 40 practitioners provide a strong professional sample, the "anecdotal" nature of some youth feedback represents a snapshot of the scope and range of youth work ongoing in the Humber region.

At the time of producing this interim report, we have continued to approach organisations and practitioners who have not directly engaged.

For the purposes of this report, the insights presented in Objective 2 were gathered indirectly via intermediaries. Data was sourced through the practitioners who deliver direct services and interventions across the Humber leveraging existing relationships to ensure that the findings reflect the authentic views and concerns of young people.

## The key themes, ideas and concerns from the breadth of youth voice about safety and violence-related issues across the Humber

Drawing on the engagement that youth work practitioners have with diverse groups of young people through surveys, forums, creative projects, outreach and advisory structures, common findings reflect young people's lived experiences as a demographic, rather than their individual experiences. The findings are intended to inform the strategic priorities of the HVPP.

### Safety as a Daily, Place-Based Experience

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Young people consistently report that they do not feel safe in their communities, as an everyday experience rather than as a response to a specific harm or event. Across multiple engagement routes, young people identify specific locations where they feel unsafe, including parks, bus stations, town centres and poorly lit streets.

For example,

Findings from the **Adolescent Lifestyle Survey** and **Humberside Police Lifestyle projects** highlight recurring fears about travelling through public spaces after dark, particularly on routes to and from school and youth provision

Young people involved in **Operation Lifestyle** reported concerns about safety on public transport and in town centres, with some choosing project themes focused on improving local environments to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Girls engaged through **North Lincolnshire Youth Council** reported heightened anxiety when travelling alone, particularly on buses and in isolated areas.

Conversely, safe spaces such as **Room 42** (Hull Care Leavers Hub), **Humber YMCA youth clubs**, and **The Trin** were repeatedly identified as places where young people feel protected, supported and able to speak openly. In general youth settings the safe place was viewed as what young people wanted with activities sometimes being incidental.

**Implication for VPP:** Violence prevention must be understood as a **place-based issue**, linked to environmental design, transport, and sustained access to safe youth spaces.

## Violence Framed as Protection and Survival

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A strong and common theme across the Humber is that young people often understand violence, including weapon carrying, as a form of **self-protection rather than aggression**.

Young people engaged through **Beats Bus** reported carrying knives because they felt unsafe without them, particularly when moving between neighbourhoods or when involved in informal economies. Discussions during Beats Bus screenings such as No More Knives, No More County Lines revealed that young people perceive violence as a necessary response to fear, exploitation and peer pressure.

Similarly, insights captured through **Humberside Police Lifestyle** projects show that some young people view violence as unavoidable within their local context.

**Implication for VPP:** Prevention approaches focused solely on enforcement risk overlooking the underlying drivers of fear, insecurity and survival.

## The Role of Social Media and the Digital Environment

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Young people consistently describe online spaces as key drivers of offline harm. Engagement through **Compass GO surveys**, **Beats Bus discussions**, and **Operation Lifestyle** digital pilots highlight how conflict frequently begins or escalates on platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok.

Young people report that online arguments, bullying and threats often spill into schools, neighbourhoods and public spaces. Beats Bus participants specifically noted that social media makes conflict inescapable.

At the same time, **Operation Lifestyle** demonstrated that digital-first engagement can be effective when designed with young people, replacing traditional logbooks with video submissions. However, youth voice across services also highlights digital poverty as a barrier, reinforcing the need for blended engagement approaches.

**Implication for VPP:** Violence prevention must integrate **digital harm and online safety** as core components.

## Trust, Authority and Consistency of Support

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Young people's sense of safety is closely linked to whether they trust adults and institutions. Engagement with **the majority of respondents** highlights that trust improves where young people experience consistent, respectful relationships. All four local authorities highlighted the importance of trained and skilled staff to facilitate the building of relationships, which in turn allow insight into the informal, genuine ideas and concerns of young people, rather than the performative discussions that can arise from a formal discussion space.

**ReFresh** and **Room 42** emphasised the importance of having adults who have "lived experience" to engage with and support young people effectively. **Police Cadets** report valuing youth-led budgets and open discussion spaces, while **Humber Youth Action Group** members emphasise being treated as 'experts by experience' and are paid for their contributions.

**North Lincolnshire Youth Council** members highlighted that they had a negative impression of the police because they felt that they were negatively stereotyped as troublemakers and further communicated that they did not know how to report crime.

Conversely, young people across multiple services expressed frustration when projects end suddenly due to funding, eroding trust. This concern was raised repeatedly, but most commonly in rural areas and those areas where smaller projects usually run by charitable organisations were the prominent provider of services for young people.

**Implication for VPP:** Consistency, visibility and follow-through should be recognised as protective factors.

## Boredom, Opportunity and Access to Positive Activities

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A repeated message from youth voice is the link between lack of opportunity and increased risk. Young people engaged through local authority and community-led **Youth Clubs**, the **Iron Foundation**, and **Tigers Trust** consistently link boredom to spending time in unsafe spaces. Projects frequently focus on improving the local offer in terms of providing sports activities, educational provision, and creative outlets, precisely because young people feel there is "nothing to do" that is affordable and local. It was universally noted that **transport was a particular** and ongoing barrier to young people accessing support and provision.

**Positive Activities** practitioners explained that this is particularly problematic in the rural communities of North Lincolnshire, with few community buildings available for young people. Several organisations direct outreach work into harder to access communities by use of buses which can target these areas, but this has limitations.

**The Trin** and others report a direct **reduction in anti-social behaviour** in communities where young people consistently engage with these activities.

Sports-based programmes delivered by Iron Foundation and Tigers Trust were developed or adapted in response to youth feedback, including the creation of girls-only sessions where young women felt excluded from existing provision.

**Implication for VPP:** Youth provision should be viewed as preventative infrastructure.

## Mental Health, Trauma and Hidden Harm

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All organisations shared the common concern that mental health is presenting as a serious concern for many young people and at an increasingly younger age, as both the effects of COVID-19 and the increasing consumption of social media.

Insights from **Barnardo's Let's Connect**, **Compass GO**, and **Beats Bus** highlight high levels of anxiety, stress and hypervigilance. Youth service practitioners at **North Lincolnshire Council** described fear around online bullying and anxiety around identity and self-image.

**Hull City Council's Connexions** service and **East Riding Council Young Carers** report the presence of additional external pressures on young people from schools, the cost-of-living crisis and caring responsibilities. Several youth clubs specifically cite hunger as a factor for young people accessing services.

Beats Bus practitioners and youth centre practitioners noted that music and creative expression are often the only safe routes for young people to process trauma related to violence, racism and exploitation.

**Implication for VPP:** Trauma-informed practice must underpin all violence prevention work.

## Young People as Part of the Solution

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Despite the challenges described, young people consistently express a desire to be involved in creating solutions.

Examples include **Room 42's Action 4 Us board**, where care leavers meet directly with decision-makers, **Volunteer Voice** shaping community priorities, and **Operation Lifestyle** participants designing their own community projects.

**HYAG** members have designed award-winning NHS websites and co-produced resources used across services.

Young people value **seeing tangible change**, such as improved activities, adapted services or visible environmental improvements.

**Implication for VPP:** Youth voice should remain a core violence prevention strategy.

## Summary of Key Messages for the Humber VPP

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**Across the Humber, young people tell a consistent story:**

- Safety is shaped by place, relationships and access to opportunity
- Violence is often rooted in fear, protection and survival
- Digital spaces play a critical role in escalating harm
- Trust, consistency and wide-reaching youth provision are protective factors
- Young people want to be partners in prevention, not passive consultees

# Data-Specific Gaps in Understanding and Representation and opportunities for further research.

(based on the Humber youth voice evidence collated)

## Young people outside structured provision

### What the data shows

The majority of youth voice evidence comes from:

- School-linked provision (Barnardo's Let's Connect, Compass GO)
- Organised youth settings (YMCA, The Trin, Tigers Trust)
- Specialist services (Voices Mean Choices, Youth Justice, Room 42)
- Engagement methods are largely opt-in or referral-based

### What is missing

Very limited direct evidence from:

- Young people not in education and not linked to Connexions or Youth Justice Services
- Young people who do not attend youth clubs or activities

### Why this matters

The dataset may under-represent:

- Young people most embedded in street-based peer groups
- Those experiencing violence or harm but avoiding services

### Opportunity for further research

- Purposeful detached research activity (not specific programme delivery)
- Practitioner or peer-led conversations in informal spaces (streets, parks, takeaways, bus hubs, online)

## Geographic gaps

### What the data shows

Strong evidence from:

- Hull / Grimsby / Cleethorpes / Scunthorpe / East Riding towns via councils and partnerships
- Repeated references to town centres, transport hubs and estates

### What is missing

Little specific youth voice from:

- Rural villages in East Riding
- Coastal communities outside major towns
- Smaller settlements with no named youth provision

### Why this matters

Safety concerns in rural / coastal areas may differ:

- Isolation rather than crowd-related fear
- Transport scarcity rather than transport harassment

## Opportunity for further research

- Place-based listening exercises in rural/coastal communities
- Further addition to the map, directory and repository.

## Demographic depth

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### What the data shows

#### Some strong cohort-specific insight:

- Care leavers (Room 42)
- Young carers (ERYC)
- Victims of CSE/CSA (Voices Mean Choices)
- Justice-involved young people

LGBTQIA+ inclusion appears in Community VISION data

### What is missing

#### Inconsistent or absent data on:

- Ethnicity (beyond anecdotal references to racism in Beats Bus work)
- Disability and neurodiversity outside NHS-linked settings

### Why this matters

#### The current evidence base cannot robustly answer:

- “Who feels least safe?”
- “Who is most excluded from prevention activity?”

## Opportunity for further research

#### Targeted focus groups with:

- Disabled and neurodivergent young people
- Young people from minoritised ethnic communities

Create standardised demographic capture across youth voice activity

## Gaps in understanding violence pathways

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### What the data shows

#### Clear evidence that:

- Young people feel unsafe
- Some carry knives for protection (Beats Bus, Positive Activities)

Strong and multiple statements about fear

### What is missing

#### Limited insight into:

- If, how and when fear becomes action
- Key “tipping points” (events, spaces, peer dynamics)

## Opportunity for further research

#### Journey-mapping with young people who have:

- Considered carrying a weapon
- Chosen not to, or stopped

## Digital harm

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### What the data shows

#### Repeated references to:

- Social media escalating conflict and causing mental health concerns
- Lack of understanding around staying safe online

#### What is missing

##### Specific detail on:

- How quickly/frequently conflict moves offline

#### Opportunity for further research

- Youth-led digital conflict mapping
- Scenario-based workshops

## Digital exclusion

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### What the data shows

#### Recognition that:

- Facebook/email don't work without parent/carer facilitation
- Digital poverty exists

#### What is missing

##### Data on:

- Who is digitally excluded
- How exclusion intersects with safety and violence risk

#### Opportunity for further research

- Audit of digital access across youth cohorts
- Co-design of hybrid engagement models

## Place-based understanding

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### What the data shows

#### General references to:

- Parks
- Bus routes
- Town centres

#### What is missing

##### Detailed mapping of:

- Exact locations
- Times of risk
- Protective spaces

#### Opportunity for further research

- Mapping exercises
- Time-based safety insights led by young people

## Youth Voice Infrastructure

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### What the data shows

- Youth voice mechanisms are generally strong
- Some examples of influence exist (HYAG, Action 4 Us)
- Incentives and rewards encourage consistent engagement in formal settings

### What is missing

#### Consistent evidence that:

- Young people see outcomes from their input
- Impact is tracked beyond individual projects

### Opportunity for further research

- Evaluation of youth voice feedback loops
- Co-designed methods for “closing the loop”





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