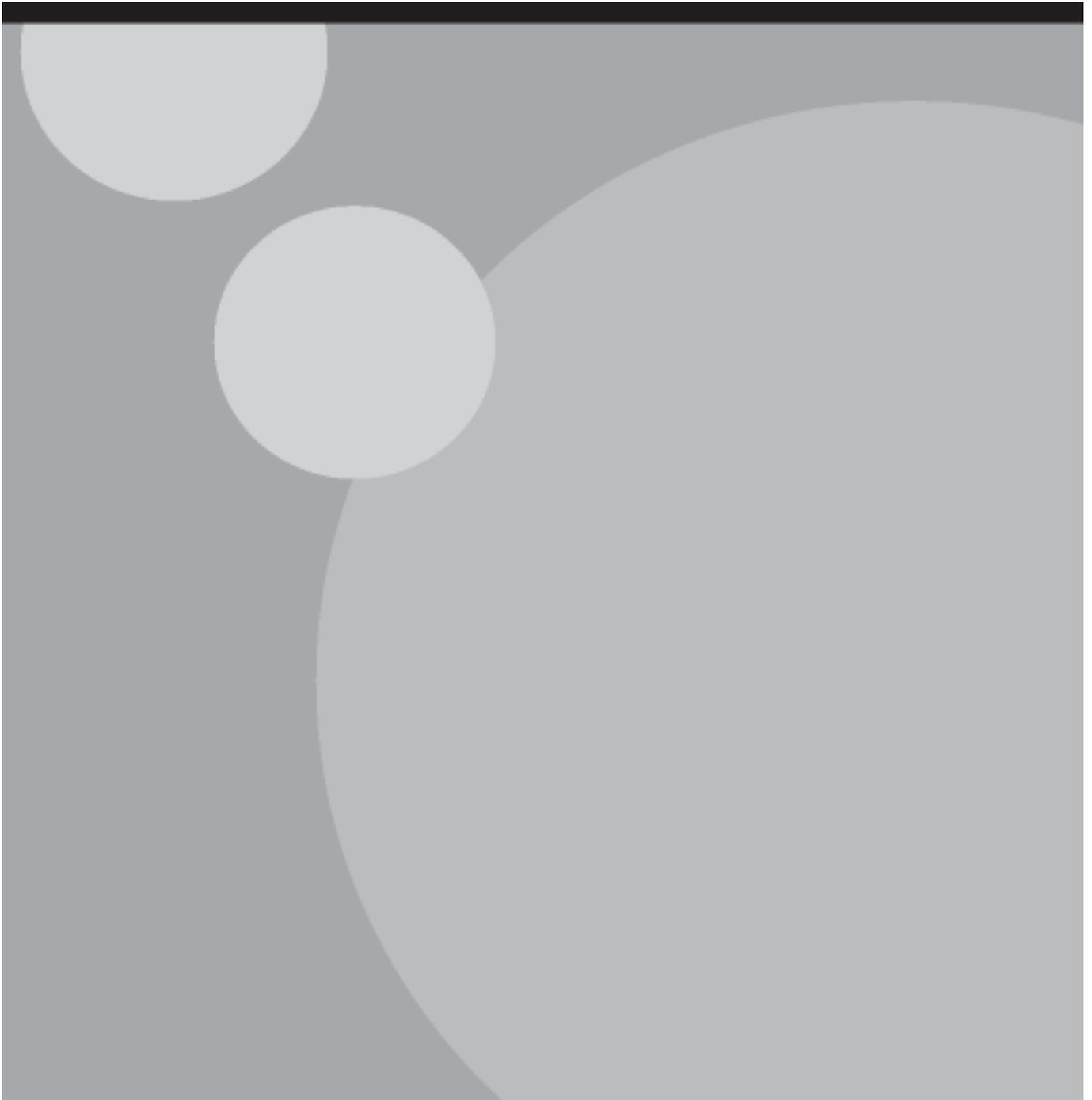




Inspiring Communities

Customer insight research report





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TNS-BMRB
June 2011
Department for Communities and Local Government

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Executive summary

The Inspiring Communities programme, sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government, has been designed to raise the expectations and aspirations of young people, in order to help them to maximise their potential. The programme, which is aimed at 11 – 14 year olds, aims to mobilise community-wide action to support young people and to help them develop and succeed. The overall objective of the programme is to improve the educational attainment of young people within 15 deprived neighbourhoods.

TNS-BMRB was commissioned to undertake customer insight research to understand the barriers and motivators of young people towards education. The research assessed the attitudes of young people, their parents and those in the wider communities, in terms of their aspirations, and any barriers to achieving them. Further, young people's perceptions of school and work were examined, including their views on the value of education and training; a wide variety of positive and negative factors which influenced young people's perceptions and views were explored.

Opportunities and resources available to young people in each neighbourhood were also considered.

The research design incorporated three key elements: an initial stage during which a series of four friendship based mini-groups of young people and two focus groups with parents; the second stage comprising an ethnographic research exercise with children and their key influencers; and a final stage comprising depth interviews with teachers, local business representatives, community workers, local authority representatives and third sector workers. Each of these elements was undertaken in all fifteen areas.

The research identified ten top level barriers to achievement and three main types of 'influencer', who could be conduits to driving ambition in young people in their areas.

The ten barriers were often interlinked with one or more of the other barriers; each had different levels of resonance in the fifteen areas. The barriers were:

- Lack of a roadmap and destination:
"I don't know what I'll do, or how to get there"
- Lack of self confidence to stand out and break from a negative comfort zone:
"Better not to try than to try and fail"

- Actual geography and time/cost to cover distance:
“It costs time and money to ever leave”
- Perceived geography – perceived time/cost to cover distance:
“But that’s five miles away!”
- Economic deprivation:
“We can’t afford it”
- Lack of ‘people precedent’ – role models:
“I’m not like that and I don’t know anyone like that”
- Personal space/safety – the space to think outside of ‘now’:
“Future? ‘Now’ is enough to worry about!”
- Parental passivity or active discouraging:
“Mum says it’s not worth it”
- Disconnect with (academic) education:
“Why should I learn French?”
- Ethnicity – cultural duties to stay close to home:
“I am needed by my family”.

Across all of the fifteen areas the source of problems for many young people related to personal well being and the social norms which they found themselves facing. Beyond this, a complex picture emerged of the barriers facing young people and the challenges facing the projects in helping to overcome them.

This research has shown that a real challenge for the Inspiring Communities projects is not only to find a way of helping young people to overcome the barriers to achievement, but also to help them break out of negative comfort zones which have become normalised in their minds, and in the minds of other key influencers in their lives. Stakeholders and key influencers need to work together to provide the necessary life skills young people need and to dispel the fatalistic attitudes which many young people had about their futures, all in a manner which appeals to young people.

SECTION 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

In April 2009, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) invited applications from neighbourhood partnerships to participate in the Inspiring Communities programme. A copy of the information pack for applicants can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/inspiringcommunities

Previous government research¹ has shown that, while parents exert the most significant influence on their children's ambition, the environment in which they live, and the other people that make up their community, can also affect aspirations. Therefore, by changing attitudes from within the neighbourhood, the programme would seek to raise the aspirations of children and young people aged between 11 and 14.

The programme was intended specifically for neighbourhoods where low aspirations and narrow horizons would typically obstruct children and young people from realising their full potential. The aim was for 15 neighbourhood partnerships to deliver a programme of activities which brought together new and existing work with young people, their parents and the wider community. The primary aim of the programme was to encourage realistic aspirations among these children and young people and to support them in their education.

The successful neighbourhoods were announced in July 2009 with each to receive core funding of up to £450,000 alongside additional support and funding for certain specified youth-led activities and intergenerational volunteering. The neighbourhood partnerships were located in: Barking and Dagenham, Barnsley, Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bradford, Bristol, Cumbria, Folkestone, Grimsby, Colne, Manchester, Thetford, Rotherham, South Shields and Stoke on Trent.

¹ SETF (2008), Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities analysis and discussion paper, 2008.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081229135344/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/aspirations.aspx

1.2 Research aims

In order to ensure that the development of the Inspiring Communities programme was reliably informed, DCLG commissioned customer insight research in each of the 15 neighbourhoods to explore in depth the attitudes and behaviours of children and their parents. This work was required in order to support the work of the social marketing agency, Forster, who had been commissioned by DCLG to support the programme design process in each of the 15 neighbourhoods and oversee the social marketing strategy. It was envisaged that they would use the findings to inform a tailored social marketing approach for each Inspiring Communities area.

More specifically the research aimed to assess the attitudes of young people, their parents and those of the wider community; how this mediated their aspirations; and any barriers which stopped them achieving these. It also examined young people's perceptions of school and work including their views on education and training, the types of qualifications they pursued and their perceived value.

In addition to this, the research examined other factors which influence young people's perceptions of education and work, including peer groups, the school environment and parental engagement in education and life choices. Any positive pursuits such as clubs or leisure activities and any information, advice or guidance that were available to young people were also investigated in order to assess how these affected attitudes.

Community issues were also important and attention was paid to the effect of relationships between different parts of the community, including inter-generational and ethnicity related issues as well as factors that were associated with social grade and neighbourhood geography. The links with people and places outside of the immediate neighbourhood were also examined in order to gauge the balance of influence between neighbourhood and external factors.

Finally, an examination of the opportunities which are available to children and young people in the neighbourhood, any resources that can currently be drawn upon and an overview of any existing programmes which were considered relevant.

1.3 Report outline

The next section of the report outlines the approach that was used during the customer insight research and provides details of the sample. The third section outlines the findings from this research, focussing on the main barriers to achievement, and how they interlink, and a typology of influencers of young people. The final section pulls together these findings and explores their implications for the social marketing approach at a national level.

SECTION 2

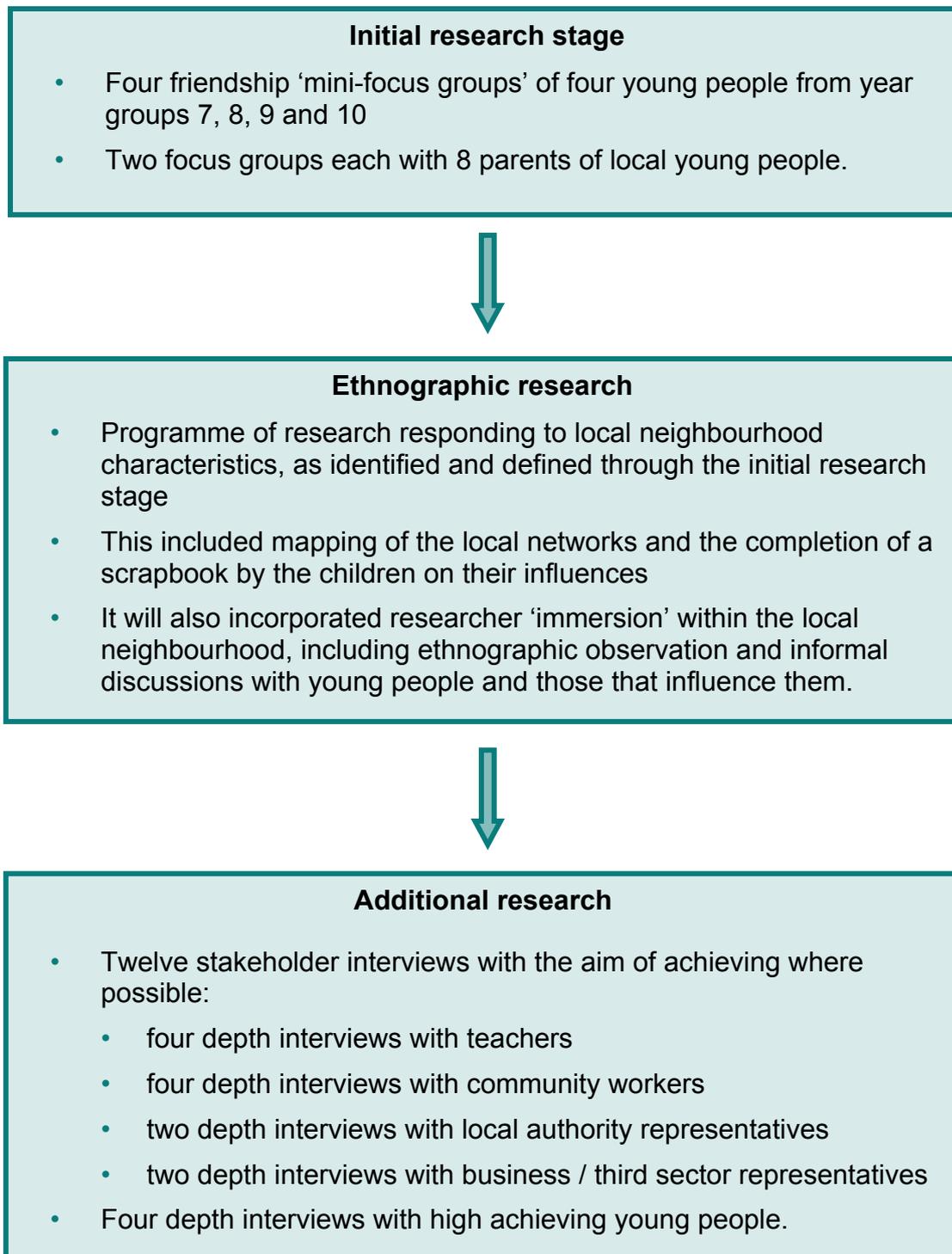
Approach

2.1 Research design

The final design incorporated three key elements within each of the 15 neighbourhoods. The initial stage of the research consisted of a series of four friendship based mini-groups with children and two focus groups with parents. Following this there was an ethnographic research exercise with children and their key influencers. Finally there were follow up depth interviews with teachers, local businesses, community workers, the local authority and third sector representatives. The overall design for each neighbourhood was as detailed in Figure 2.1.

A full breakdown of the achieved sample for all groups and interviews can be found in section 2.3. Copies of the materials used in the research can be found in the appendices. The research was conducted between August and October 2009.

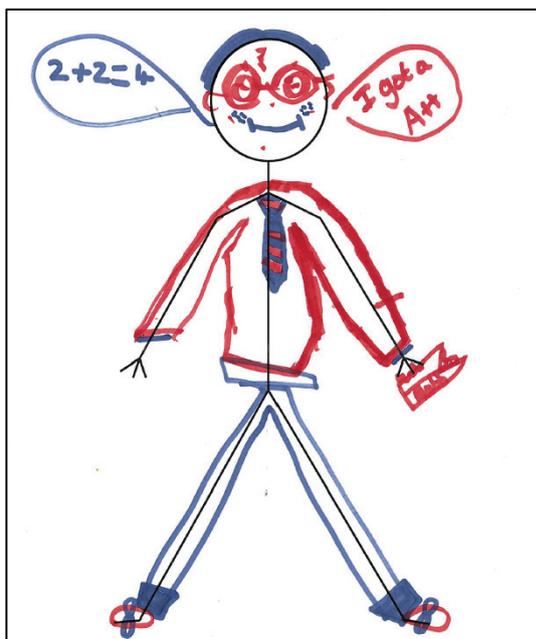
Figure 2.1 – Research design



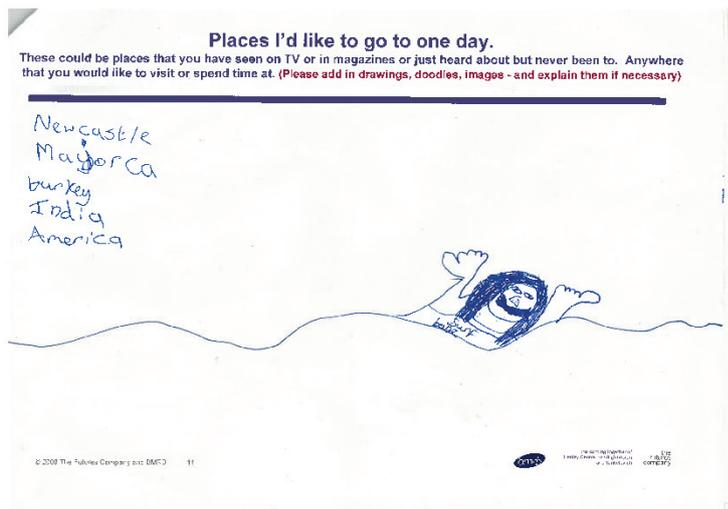
2.1.1 Friendship mini-groups with young people

The initial aim was to conduct a series of four mini groups in each of the 15 areas, with a requirement that there be at least one mini-group for each of the school years from seven to ten inclusive and each group would consist of a friendship quad. However, due to the nature of young people's friendship groups, it was not always possible or advantageous to rigorously adhere to this goal. Instead it was adopted as an ideal with a requirement to achieve one mini-group in each of the four school years with the aim of interviewing 16 children in total.

Young people who attended the local schools that had been identified during the set up stage of this research were recruited face to face by professional recruiters. They were offered an incentive of £40, paid in high street gift vouchers, to take part in both waves of the research. While there were no set quotas on gender and ethnicity, we ensured that there was a representative spread in all areas.



These formal qualitative research sessions explored in a structured and systematic way the norms and networks that influenced the behaviour of young people. A semi-structured topic guide was used in order to allow questioning that is responsive to the issues arising and to ensure that the same issues are covered across all the fieldwork. Special care was taken by moderators to ensure that all participants' views had an equal opportunity to emerge. Projective techniques, such as body maps, were also employed in order to enable participants to relax, open up and express their views easily. The mini-group sessions lasted up one hour and were all undertaken in the daytime and at a venue familiar to the young people.



The final activity for the first wave of research was a pre-task which required the children to complete a scrapbook on their family, friends, community influences, hopes and fears for the future. The scrapbook was designed especially for this project and children were asked to complete before their participation in the ethnographic exercise which followed.

2.1.2 Focus groups with parents

Two evening focus groups with parents were conducted alongside the young person mini-groups. Each of these groups aimed to bring together eight parents in a roundtable discussion used to explore their aspirations and concerns for their children, as well as some of the early emergent themes and findings from the young person's mini-groups.

These parents were recruited face to face by professional recruiters and offered a cash incentive of £40 in order to take part in the two hour session. They were all drawn from the neighbourhood in question and had at least one child in years seven to ten who were attending the local school identified for the mini-groups with young people. While there were no set quotas on gender and ethnicity we ensured that there was a representative spread in all areas.

As with the mini-groups, a semi-structured topic guide was used by an experienced moderator alongside social network mapping exercise which aided discussion.

2.1.3 Ethnographic research with children

The second wave of research with young people involved an ethnographic approach. Undertaken between one and two weeks after the initial mini-group, it offered an opportunity for researchers to watch and observe some of the key activities that children and young people engaged in locally, and also follow up leads from the initial interview and scrap book exercises with regard to community influencers.

An ethnographic exercise was undertaken for each mini-group that was completed during the first stage of the research. The decision on what activity would form the basis of the ethnographic exercise was taken by participants during the mini-group and activities were diverse, ranging from shopping to socialising at the skate park or were part of a more formal pastime such as a drama group or youth club. The exercises lasted between two and four hours.

Researchers observed these activities as well as discussing issues raised at the mini-group stage or in the scrap book, with key people in the group. A proforma was used by all researchers to help them take notes and organise their findings while in the field. Finally, researchers conducted a brief interview with the young people to help verify emergent themes from the research.

2.1.4 Depth interviews with high achieving young people

In order to provide some context to the research with young people a series of depth interviews were carried out with 'high achievers'. In each area, four local children from a similar socio-economic backgrounds to those who took part in the mini-groups, and who were expected to gain five good GCSE results, were recruited in order to act as a comparator to the main cohort.

These children were all aged between 11 and 14 and were identified with help from the local schools.

Having data from both high achievers and other young people allowed comparisons to be made between the norms and networks which influenced behaviour, which in turn showed influencers likely to have negative impacts on the aspirations of young people if they were less prevalent, or absent, among the high achievers.

These participants were offered an incentive of £10 which was paid in high street gift vouchers. While there were no set quotas on gender and ethnicity we ensured that there was a representative spread in all areas. The groups were conducted at the school during normal school hours. A topic guide adapted to a depth setting but similar in its nature to that used in the mini-groups was employed for these interviews which lasted 30 to 45 minutes.

2.1.5 Depth interviews with stakeholders

The final wave of the research involved a series of at least twelve depth interviews with the wider community, particularly the society wide influencers who shape the local environment in which young people grow up. These influencers were those who both directly knew the children involved in the study, such as teachers and youth workers, as well as those who play an important but more distant role, such as local authority representatives, charity workers and local business people.

These interviews were conducted via a mixture of face-to-face and telephone depths depending on availability and preference of the participant. Participants discussed their perceptions of the barriers which they felt arrested the aspirations of young people in the neighbourhood, including the schools, environment, parents and wider community.

At least 12 stakeholders took part in each area; the sample mix was different in each area, ensuring that the appropriate people participated. The achieved sample is shown in section 2.3, below.

A topic guide adapted to a depth setting but similar in its nature to that used in the parents' groups was employed for these interviews which lasted approximately one hour.

2.2 Analysis of findings

All focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed and were then subjected to a content analysis which involved summarising and sorting the verbatim material according to key issues and themes. Researchers also took detailed field notes which they used to complement the data contained in the transcripts. These two sources formed the basis of the evidence reported in the findings section of this report.

During the ethnographic exercise it was not practical to make digital recordings and therefore researchers relied on field notes to form the basis of their data in this exercise. This is a typical method for field based exercises where the researcher assumes the role of a non-participant observer.

2.3 Sample profile

A total of 685 respondents took part in the research. The achieved sample is shown in the tables below:

Table 2.1 - Achieved stakeholder interviews

Area	Community worker	Local authority rep	Local business/3rd Sector	Teacher	Total Stakeholders
Barking & Dagenham	10	1	0	1	12
Barnsley	2	5	2	4	13
Blackburn	4	3	2	3	12
Bolton	5	4	1	4	14
Bradford	7	0	1	5	13
Bristol	4	5	3	4	16
Cumbria	4	3	3	2	12
Grimsby	5	2	2	4	13
Kent	3	2	1	4	10
Lancashire	8	4	1	3	16
Manchester	5	1	3	3	12
Norfolk	4	2	2	4	12
Rotherham	4	2	2	2	10
South Tyneside	5	2	2	3	12
Stoke-on-Trent	6	3	1	3	13
Total	76	39	26	49	190

Table 2.2 - Achieved interviews with parents and young people

Area	Parent	Year Group 7	Year Group 8	Year Group 9	Year Group 10	High Achiever	Total Parent/Child
Barking & Dagenham	17	2	3	5	4	4	35
Barnsley	8	4	4	4	4	4	28
Blackburn	15	4	4	4	4	4	35
Bolton	14	4	3	3	2	4	30
Bradford	16	4	4	3	5	4	36
Bristol	12	3	2	2	3	4	26
Cumbria	17	4	4	2	4	4	35
Grimsby	17	4	4	4	4	4	37
Kent	15	4	5	4	4	4	36
Lancashire	12	4	3	3	4	4	30
Manchester	14	4	4	4	4	4	34
Norfolk	16	4	4	5	4	4	37
Rotherham	14	4	4	4	4	4	34
South Tyneside	12	4	4	4	4	-	28
Stoke-on-Trent	20	4	2	2	2	4	34
Total	219	57	54	53	56	56	495

SECTION 3

Findings

The findings from the fifteen areas were analysed separately, to give information at the local level. This allowed Forster, the social marketing agency, to work with each community in the most appropriate manner.

The findings from the fifteen areas were brought together to give a national overview, which are reported below. Specifically, the findings are reported at two levels:

- barriers to achievement
- typologies of influencers in children's and young people's lives.

The barriers are important to consider, as these represent particular challenges for the projects, going forward. Further, the barriers allow consideration of the potential 'exchange' to young people to achieve the greater educational attainment – for example, what have they got to give up either socially or culturally; what are the time as well as financial costs.

Each barrier will be discussed, including the research team's perceptions of the challenges that the barriers throw up in terms of exchanges which might need to be made. In each area the balance and importance of the barriers vary, and area reports provided detail at a local level.

The typologies of influences are a starting point for how the projects might begin to engage young people. Again, the areas differed and the area reports went into detail at local level.

The findings are reported in detail below.

3.1 Barriers

There were ten top level barriers to achievement which emerged across the fifteen areas. These were:

- Lack of a roadmap and destination:
"I don't know what I'll do, or how to get there"
- Lack of self confidence to stand out and break from a negative comfort zone:
"Better not to try than to try and fail"
- Actual geography and time/cost to cover distance:
"It costs time and money to ever leave"

- Perceived geography – perceived time/cost to cover distance:
“But that’s five miles away!”
- Economic deprivation: *“We can’t afford it”*
- Lack of ‘people precedent’ – role models:
“I’m not like that and I don’t know anyone like that”
- Personal space/safety – the space to think outside of ‘now’:
“Future? ‘Now’ is enough to worry about!”
- Parental passivity or active discouraging:
“Mum says it’s not worth it”
- Disconnect with (academic) education:
“Why should I learn French?”
- Ethnicity – cultural duties to stay close to home:
“I am needed by my family”

These ten barriers relate to national level macro trends, issues relating to local infrastructure, social issues and issues relating to self/ego, as shown in the diagram below:



However, the barriers also overlap issues, so, for example, the barrier labelled ‘Education Disconnect’ is a challenge at national level, via the curriculum, at the level of local infrastructure in terms of local schools, and at a social level, for example through parents’ rapport with schools.

The barriers had different levels of prominence in each of the fifteen areas; for example, in rural and/or isolated areas actual geography was more of a barrier than in urban settings. The table below shows the significance of the barriers in each of the fifteen areas:

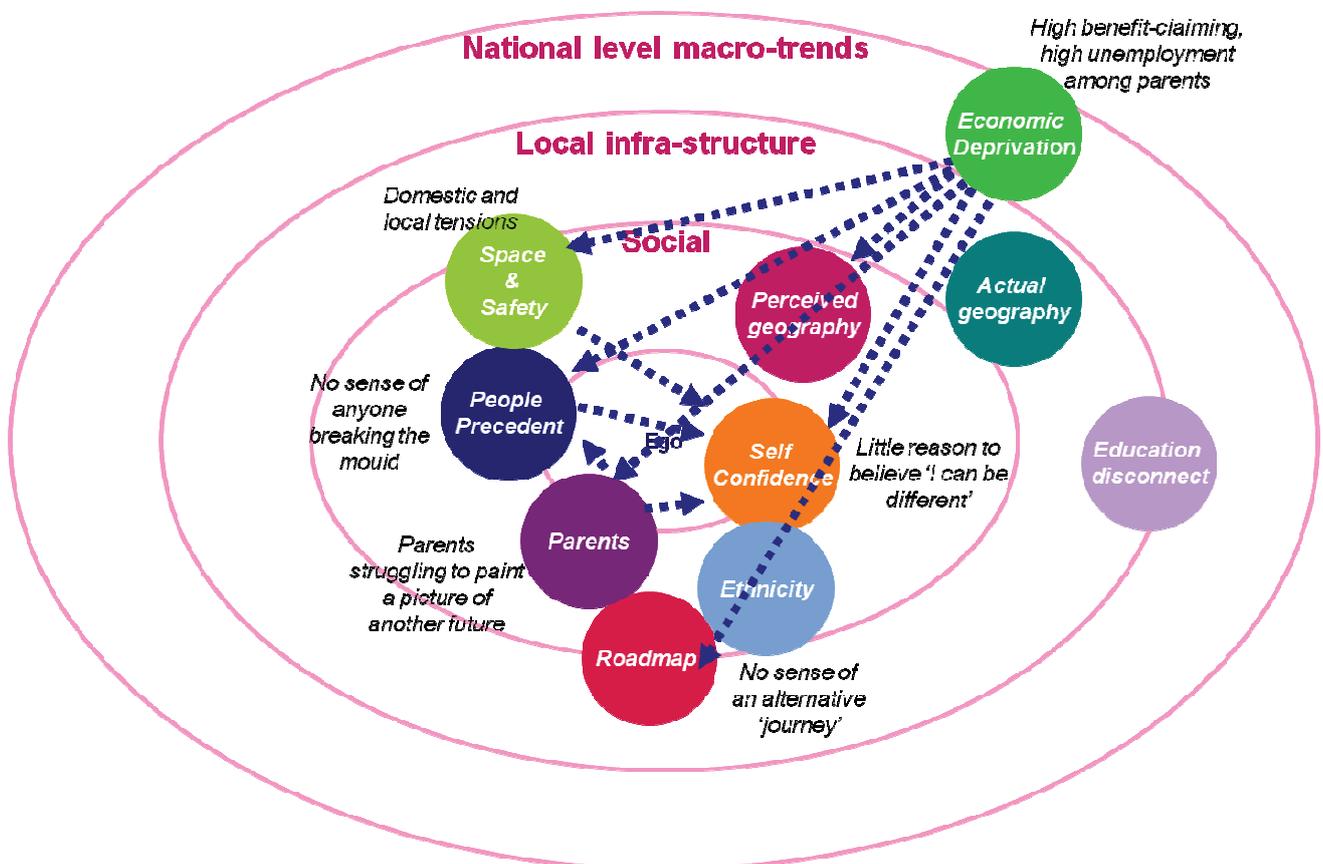
Area	Top level barriers									
	Roadmap	Self confidence	Actual geography	Perceived geography	Economic deprivation	People precedent	Space and safety	Parents	Education disconnect	Ethnicity
Barking and Dagenham	***	**		**	**	***	***	**	*	
Barnsley	***	***		**	*	***		***	***	
Blackburn with Darwen	***	***	**	**	**	**	*	***	**	
Bolton	**	***			**	***	*	***	**	
Bradford	*				**	**	**	***		***
Bristol	*		***	***		**	**	**	**	
Cumbria	***		***	***	*	**	*	**	**	
Kent	***	*	*	**	***	**	*	**	***	*
Lancashire		***	**	**		***		***		
Manchester		***				***	**	***		
Norfolk	*	**	***	**	**	*	**		*	
NE Lincolnshire	**	**	*	***	***	**	*	**	***	
Rotherham	**		***		*	***	*	**	***	*
South Tyneside	*	*		***	***	**	***	**	*	
Stoke on Trent	***	**	*	***	**	***	*	**	**	*

Key:

***	Very significant barrier
**	Significant barrier
*	Minor barrier
	Not a barrier

However, across all of the areas the barriers which related to social issues and ego showed the greatest impact, with the source of problems for many young people relating to personal well being (the ego), and the social norms which they found themselves facing. These are soft, emotional issues, rather than hard, infrastructure ones. These types of barriers tended to feel more immediate, and be more influential on young people, raising a challenge for the projects in considering how to address them, especially given the natural tendency to see infrastructure barriers as the starting points for interventions.

Not only do the barriers cross the different levels of issues, they are also highly interrelated, with barriers feeding other barriers – as shown below:



A complex picture emerged of the barriers facing young people, and challenges facing the projects in helping to overcome them. The barriers and their inter-relationships with other barriers and with macro, local, social and ego issues are discussed below in more detail.²

3.1.1 Roadmap

This barrier relates to both social and local level infrastructure issues. Not knowing what they wanted to do, or if they did, how to attain their goal, made success feel unattainable for young people.

This lack of a roadmap for young people led to feelings of apathy about education and success. It was clear that young people found it difficult to be inspired about their 'journey' if they could not envisage different 'destinations'. It was often the case that where young people could not see a future for themselves, well mapped paths such as joining the armed forces or the police come into play. For similar reasons, ambitious but highly arbitrary 'Cinderella' futures, such as becoming a footballer or pop star, filled the gap, however, these later become too easy for young people to abandon, but with no alternative plan in place.

The High Achiever young people were different, in that they were more positive about their futures. They might not know what they wanted to do, but had little doubt that they would do something, and saw doing well at school as the road to achieving this. Among the high achievers who had a career in mind there was a roadmap for achievement – for example a young woman who wanted to be a nurse knew that she would have to do well at school to get into a nursing course in higher education.

The clear difference between the High achievers and the other young people was that the idea of achievement had been normalised for them; they talked about their futures and with friends, parents and wider family, and their ambitions were reinforced by the social norms surrounding them.

The **challenge** for the projects is to find a way to hold up roadmaps for alternative futures to an audience with few pointers, and only hazy ideas about end destinations.

3.1.2 Self confidence

This barrier relates to both ego and social issues. Most particularly a fear of stepping away from their comfort zone impeded young people's ambitions. Where the familiar social norm was not to be inspired, stepping away from this was rarely something young people felt they could do, as it requires a great deal of self confidence to do so.

Parents were often not self confident, and therefore could not pass confidence on to their children.

² Where barriers interlink this is shown by referring to other barriers' titles in italics – e.g. *Parents*

Any hesitation displayed by young people to step away from their comfort zone was often reinforced by a 'negative comfort zone' – that is, powerful social pressures in close-knit communities which had little people precedent. In these circumstances standing out could be perceived as being disloyal by young people, who thought that they risked losing their local bonds.

The result of this barrier was that young people often lacked self confidence, and displayed a tendency not to want to step out – feeling that it was better not to try, than to try and fail.

Many young people lacked a 'can do' attitude – however, the higher achievers did have this, and it appeared to be given by their parents. More generally there was a feeling that doing well meant forfeiting close-knit community bonds.

Young people who were thought by their peers to be doing well at school were described as 'geeks' – and given a 'not one of us' identity – thus often being excluded from their wider peer groups.

The **challenge** posed by this barrier is how the projects can instil self belief into young people, giving them 'permission' to stand apart from their peers. This requires the engendering of a belief that pursuing success and retaining the approval of the peer group are not mutually exclusive.

3.1.2 Actual geography

This barrier relates to both infrastructure and macro trend issues. Geographical isolation was a practical barrier in certain places, with a high trade-off in terms of cost and commitment to regularly leaving these areas.

The geographical barrier related most immediately to issues of infrastructure, with the lack of regular, affordable transport to other centres of employment, training, leisure, diversions and so on being a fact rather than a perception. Distance accentuated the hold of the 'negative comfort zone' and presented fewer opportunities for people precedent, for example, there being a lack of opportunity to see people working in environments outside of their immediate locale. The closure of industries in many areas (a national level issue) have left a void in employment and a skills gap for remaining employment.

A consequence of this barrier is that young people were more likely to 'stay put', being unable to envisage opportunities of life beyond their immediate horizons.

Geographical isolation was also likely to mean that young people had little or no access to leisure, training or diversionary activities, which might have helped to develop their self confidence.

The **challenge** for the projects posed by this barrier is how they can encourage young people in their areas to see journeying further afield as an investment in their future.

Further, the projects will have to consider how they can 'bring the town into the village', and overcome a clear infrastructural fact.

3.1.3 Perceived geography

Perceived geography relates to social barriers, and is the collective area's sense of imagined isolation. This appears to be an especially post-industrial problem, habitualised from a time when local industry made it unnecessary to leave an area to make a living.

Rather than actual geographical isolation, this barrier is a sense which people have of their area being isolated from other places. This is perpetuated by parents and stakeholders, but often to outside observers it did not appear to be a realistic view. The sense of isolation was often selective – for example, a college could be seen as too far away for a young person to attend, but shopping expeditions to the same town which the college was in were frequent. Recreational travel was often limited due to cost. There were cases, however, where cost and distance were not barriers – for example, one young woman had never seen the sea, despite living less than three miles from the coast.

The origins of the barrier of perceived geography lie in infrastructural issues, most especially influenced by the void left by the exit of industries from local areas, and compounded by lack of, or expensive, public transport. Young people's lack of roadmaps and people precedents tended to make the barrier of perceived geography become 'fact'. Furthermore, the views of parents perpetuated the view, and were often the original conduit for the sense of imagined isolation. Teachers could also perpetuate the idea that travel outside the immediate area was difficult, despite themselves travelling into the area to work.

Like actual geography, perceived geography tended to create 'small horizons' for young people, making them more likely to want to stay put and default to their parents' positions, again being unable to envisage life beyond their 'negative comfort zone'. Missing out on leisure and diversionary activities, or simply having access to inspiring sights, meant that young people did not always develop self confidence. It was apparent that when young people had had the opportunity to travel outside their local area, the experiences were very memorable and stirred curiosity about the world beyond their immediate confines.

The **challenge** this barrier poses for the projects is how to tap into young people's curiosity about the world beyond their immediate locale, and to show them that they, too, can travel. Particularly, it will be a challenge to communicate to young people that if somewhere is close enough for a shopping trip that it is also close enough for personal development and success.

3.1.4 Economic deprivation

This barrier relates to infrastructural and macro trend issues. Deprivation is more a fact of the landscape than a specific barrier in and of itself. Financial hardship was ubiquitous, but was often not seen as an immediate barrier.

Clearly, economic deprivation is an unavoidable infrastructural root cause behind many of the barriers which surfaced in this research. In practice, though, it was often less of an overt barrier than might be expected.

The main consequences of economic deprivation manifested on the parents of young people; the views of parents, though, caused by economic deprivation, had direct impact on young people – for example if parents believed that continuing in education beyond the statutory requirement would be too expensive, this resulted in the view being passed on to the young people. The inability of parents to fund activities such as trips and holidays, which might help young people overcome the barrier of perceived geography, also limited their children's horizons.

As a result of economic deprivation young people sometimes came up against a view from parents that advancing in education was simply 'not worth it', or was insurmountably expensive. For these young people there was no understanding of the longer term cost benefit which could accrue from continuing in education.

Parents were often unable or unwilling to trade off their own essentials to provide money for activities for their children, such as trips, holidays, and sports equipment. These sorts of activities could help young people to build their self confidence, broaden their horizons and develop their talents, if parents were able to afford them.

High achiever families often experienced similar material challenges, but without the corresponding lack of ambition. For these families there was no parent barrier, and they tended to encourage their children to have a clear roadmap, and the young people had greater self confidence, making the immediate 'cost of living' a lesser barrier. The parents of high achievers were more likely than other parents to sacrifice spending on themselves to invest in hope for their children.

The **challenge** this barrier poses for the projects is how to encourage parents to see the long term benefits of educational advancement for their children. Further, parents would need to be encouraged to consider cuts to their 'essentials' to provide investment for their children's long term good.

3.1.5 People precedent

This barrier relates to both social and infrastructure issues; it is the only barrier which was found to be of significance across all fifteen areas. A lack of role models was found to have the effect of making success an unknown quantity for young people – they did not know what success looked like.

A long history of unemployment in many areas meant that young people lacked visible examples of working adults, inside and outside their immediate area. The social norm was for adults not to work. Family was important for young people, who often described their parents as their role models; however, often parents were not equipped to offer a roadmap or precedent for their children. At worst, negative role models, for example, gangs, stepped in to fill the void.

Within the social arena there were often few role models for young people to look to for inspiration in terms of employment or success in education. Parents struggled to challenge this, or to offer young people an alternative, as they often had not had role models themselves. The local infrastructures also often struggled to paint alternative pictures of success for young people – as employment opportunities and ‘local champions’ were limited.

The notion that ‘people from here just don’t’ was deeply felt, which required substantial self confidence and praise from others to negate. The security of the group created a ‘negative comfort zone’, leaving which meant risking alienation for young people.

The result of this barrier for young people was that they did not see adults in employment, and struggled to imagine anyone from their area who had ‘made it’ – a common perception was that ‘people from here don’t work’. Many young people found it difficult to name a job which they would like to do in the future.

Young people often described peers who were attaining success at school as ‘geeks’, with the downside of success being that ‘geeks’ did not fit in with their wider peer group. Success for young people tended to be viewed only as academic prowess.

A common theme across the areas was a hunger for role models who did not fit 'mainstream' definitions of success – for example 'cool' teacher, neighbours and 'local heroes'. These role models would need to be local to the areas to be effective, rather than brought in from outside – young people needed to be able to see that others from their area had 'made it'. In one isolated area young people struggled to name local people they could look up to, and were firmly of the opinion that local people did not do well – believing that those in 'good' jobs came from outside the area; however, all but one of the stakeholders interviewed for the project were local people who had left for a period, usually for higher education, and had returned to take up professional roles – making this obvious to young people could help them to realise that local people can and do take up 'good' jobs.

The **challenge** posed by this barrier is how the projects can suggest to young people that there is evidence that people from their area do 'make it'. There is a need to contest the view that 'just to get a job' is a brave aspiration, and broaden perceptions of success for young people as being more than academic prowess and being a 'geek'.

3.1.6 Space and safety

This barrier relates to infrastructural issues. An immediate lack of space and safety often made the future a lesser concern for young people. Housing, space and, at worst, local crime, encroached on young people's ambitions.

Cramped social housing and large families often meant that young people had little personal space, and felt themselves to be 'under the feet' of their parents. Homes could feel disruptive, echoing the parent barrier.

Generic teen boredom and lack of facilities were often cited, yet carried more weight, as the home was often not a refuge for young people. In rural areas physical space was plentiful, but social norms meant that it was often not recognised as being usable by young people. In certain urban areas personal safety was a pressing concern for young people – gang culture and 'no go areas' presented a direct threat to them.

The consequence of lack of space and safety was that young people often felt that they did not have a place, or space, to think about the future, being preoccupied with the here and now.

The lack of place often resulted in 'hanging around in groups', which could lead to confrontations with gangs and exposure to disruptive older role models.

In areas where gang culture was a threat there were young people who simply 'hibernated', avoiding going out, with the consequence that their personal development could be hindered. For instance, one young person asked to draw their world, drew their bedroom. Others felt pressure to join in with gangs, perpetuating negative role models.

The **challenge** faced by projects in trying to overcome this barrier is how to create space and safety for young people, taking them beyond the here and now and how to harness the natural asset of space in rural/semi-rural areas.

3.1.7 Parents

This barrier is based in social issues. Parents' attitudes and abilities meant that many young people had little help from them in driving ambition, whilst others positively discouraged ambitions their children might have. One young woman had an ambition to work in forensic science, gleaned from watching television programmes; however, her mother told her that she should know her limits and that she would work in the local burger bar, as everyone else from the area did. A community worker stepped in to help the young woman to work towards her ambition, but without this intervention and encouragement it is unlikely that she would have moved towards her goal.

Where parents themselves had not done well at school one of two things could happen: either the parents passed on an expectation that their children would not do well either, or they wanted their children to do better than they had. One young person's father had gone to evening classes to improve his maths skills, as he had done badly at school, and he wanted to be able to help her to do better.

The **challenge** for the projects is how to get parents on board, and avoid them perpetuating the 'negative comfort zone', perhaps particularly how to overcome parental negativity, where it exists. Parents are key players in helping their children to see broader horizons.

Parents are also highly involved in educational disconnect, with their own experiences of, and attitudes to, education being extremely important in forming their children's attitudes and views.

3.1.8 Educational disconnect

This barrier relates to social and infrastructural issues. Parental wariness of education was a common barrier to aspiration for their children, together with young people's not uncommon view that education was not 'cool'. Parents' wariness was often driven by their having been unhappy during their own school years, and a discomfort with education's strictures and authoritarian tone. This was exacerbated by the academic nature of much study, with parents often being able to support and coach their children only in non-academic subjects.

Higher achievers had parents who, tellingly, devoted more attention to homework, and had a closer rapport with schools; further, these parents encouraged their children in their ambitions and had a fairly clear understanding of the pathways their children would need to take to realise their goals.

Young people often viewed those who succeeded at school as 'geeks' and outsiders, perpetuating a feeling that to achieve was to forfeit peer approval. High achievers were more likely than other young people to cite students in higher years as being role models, not viewing success as a problem.

Parents viewed some schools as reaching out to them, and trying to include them in their children's education, whilst others were thought to be aloof and judgemental with parents.

As a result of this barrier, young people often saw only limited interest from their parents in their school work. Many parents appeared to be unaware of workloads, and were unable to assist their children with their schoolwork. The disconnect meant that 'working hard at school' rarely went beyond being a shallow mantra. At worst, some parents actively discounted education, feeling that only the basics were needed, and that lack of education had not done them any harm.

Parents who found it hard to connect with schools tended to keep their distance from them – only being in contact when problems with their children arose. A polarised 'them and us' perception arose of school staff, with parents often siding automatically with their children, no matter what the issue under discussion was; they often thought that their children had been singled out by teachers unfairly.

Across the areas there was variation in how successful schools had been in engaging parents, with some showing great innovation, and others having more limited success.

The **challenge** this barrier poses for the projects is how to give parents a better grasp of the role education can have for their children, beyond 'work hard or you won't get a job', and that the experience of their children in school is not necessarily the same as their own. Engagement with schools needs to be seen in a more positive light.

3.1.9 Ethnicity

This barrier relates to social issues. It was particularly found in BME families, where young people felt that their family duties could become a barrier to aspirations, particularly if they were expected to stay close to home.

The barrier was driven by parents, and was reinforced by social norms within their community. Young people, in particular daughters, were expected to stay close to home in their educational career. In the longer term, they were also expected to return to the family and in some cases to work in family businesses. This resulted in limiting where some young people could go, and what they could pursue. It should be noted that the young people themselves did not necessarily see this as a problem, rather it just being what young people in their community did; however, there were those who saw this as confining their futures.

This barrier differed from others, in that parents were often engaged with their children's pathways, being keen to provide roadmaps for the young people's destinations in life. Young people in this situation were often more engaged at school than their peers.

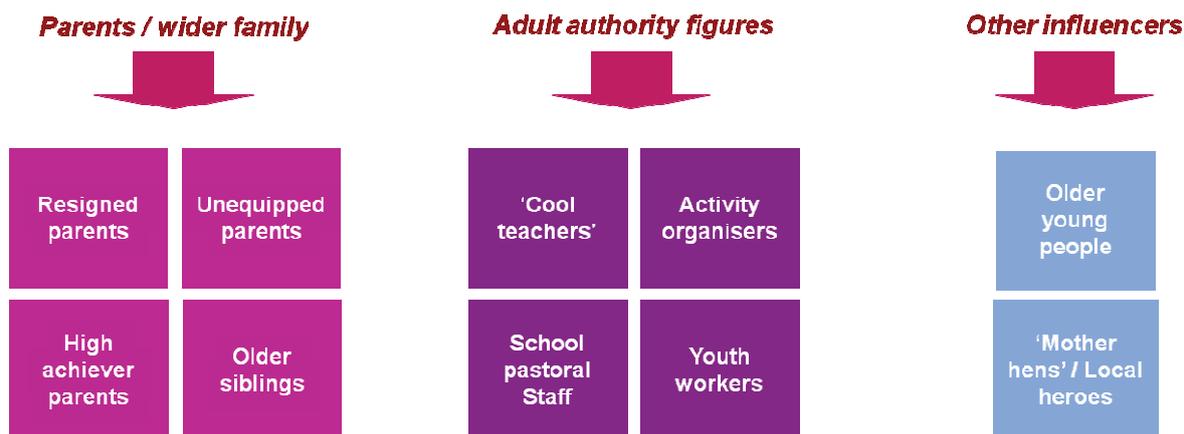
The **challenge** posed by this barrier is to consider how the need to stay close to home can be reconciled with young people's ambitions.

The analysis of the barriers discussed above allowed the formation of typologies of influence, which are described in the next section.

3.2 Typologies of influence

A number of typologies of influence emerged across the fifteen areas. These are important for the projects, as they can be used to consider how to 'get the message' across to the target audience for the projects. It should be remembered that the actual numbers of interviews in each area were relatively small; therefore, this segmentation is an indication, rather than a hard and fast model, suggesting the types of people who might be helpful in engaging young people. Whilst each area had different influencers specific to their locale, it has been possible to bring together the individual area typologies to form meta typologies at a national level. These are discussed below.

Three 'starting typologies' emerged across the areas, each with varying capacity to influence and drive ambition for young people:



Parents and wider families were often cited by young people as being the main influencers and role models in their lives. They fell into one of four categories:

- **Resigned parents** were a hard core of parents who, anecdotally (from stakeholders and young people) appeared to simply not care about their children's aspirations. These parents were reported to find difficulty in making the home a 'space' for their children, often because of domestic issues or alcohol. These parents tended to be disconnected from, and at times antagonistic towards, education and schools. They would be hard to reach, and would likely be reluctant agents for the projects.
- **Unequipped parents** were well intentioned, but struggled to influence their children. They were often ill equipped to help with education, with little guidance (or roadmap) to offer other than 'work hard'. These parents were keen to guide and inspire young people, but their own education and lack of self confidence limited their capacity to act. It is likely that these parents would be willing agents, but would need to be equipped with tools and the confidence to do so, before they could, in turn, support young people.
- **High achiever parents** managed, according to their children, to provide a roadmap and to foster self confidence. They took a close interest in what their children were doing at school and had far lower levels of educational disconnect than other parents. These parents would be the gold standard in acting as agents for the projects. These parents could be used to influence other parents by their positive outlook; simply by them starting activities and being seen to do so, they could provide positive role models for parents. In this way they could support other parents to help their own children.
- **Older siblings** who were themselves high achievers were often admired by their younger siblings, and were well placed to serve as positive influences. They set an example for their younger siblings and acted as role models for them. It should be noted, however, that given the low attainment levels of most of the local areas, older siblings in this category were a relative rarity, however, where they did exist they are important influencers.

Adult authority figures have the potential to be infrastructural influencers for good. It was often the case that the more maverick and apart from official authority they were the more young people trusted them. These influencers would be important channels when parents could not be depended upon. The four categories of adult authority figures were:

- **'Cool' Teachers** who often taught non-academic subjects (e.g. art or physical education) were often noted as being more reasonable and more trusted than other teachers, and hence were more respected by young people. This echoes the common disconnect with academic subjects felt by both young people and their parents. This group is likely to be influential, but they are already fully immersed in their jobs with young people, so might not be able to give much more.
- **Activity organisers** were generally involved in voluntary activities or local activities for young people, often sports related. They were generally from the local area and were noted as being maverick in some way. They would be well placed to act as a precedent and promote the self esteem to young people. There was a sense that coming from the area engendered greater respect from young people.
- **School pastoral staff** (sometimes called Student Services) appear to occupy trusted ground as they are not overt authority figures. This could mean they could win greater trust and respect from young people, and, in some places, help to handle domestic issues as well as school matters. This group would appear to have some traction, but this varies from school to school.
- **Youth workers and outreach workers**, where present, were often respected and were well placed to challenge barriers such as perceived geography and to work with young people on their self confidence. As with pastoral staff, the fact that they are not viewed as formal authority figures meant that they could win trust. Where this group was in place 'on the ground' it is likely that they would be a popular and credible channel.

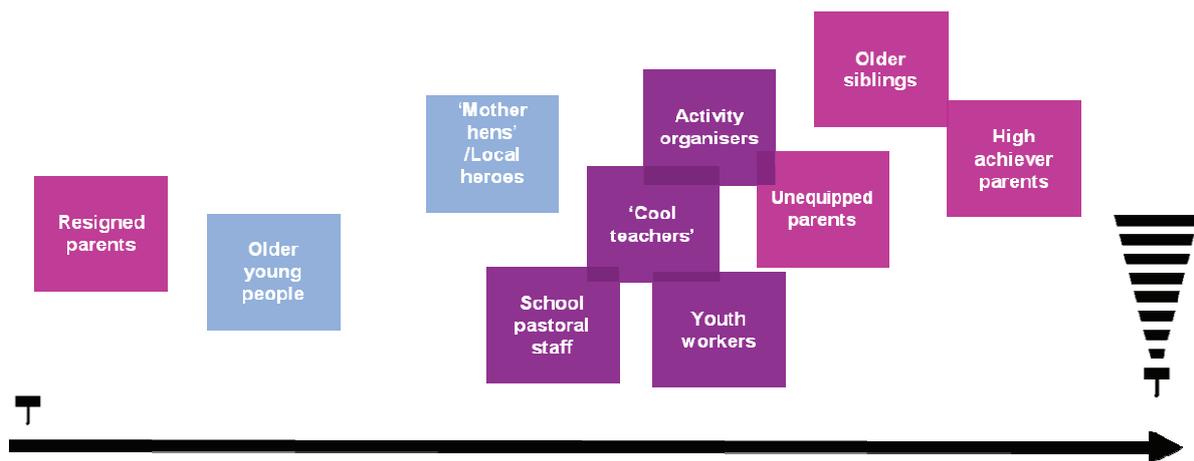
Other influencers tended to be outside of families and the adult authority figures with whom young people came into regular contact; they were likely to be people who were known by reputation.

- **Older young people** were often cited by stakeholders as having a negative influence on young people, for example encouraging underage drinking, smoking and antisocial behaviour. It might, however, be possible to harness the influence that older young people have over their younger peers to seed positive messages, in a similar way to older siblings. This would be a challenging group to engage, but they have the potential to be influential, given the sway they have over young people.
- **'Mother hens' and local heroes** tend to be vocal parents, known for being more savvy and au fait with rights and precedents, for example in dealing with housing

problems and the law. They are often forceful, charismatic and enjoy respect in local neighbourhoods, being keen to 'do right' for their communities. This group would be well placed to broadcast and communicate to young people especially as they are insiders; however, they could be difficult to find – it would require work on the ground to identify this group, as they act outside of formal structures.

As discussed above, the people represented in the typologies have varying levels of influence for young people. Across the board, parents and wider family were the most immediate ports of call for young people; however, parents themselves could act as a barrier for their children's ambitions, so other influencers are important to consider.

The influencers fall onto a spectrum of low to high 'signal strength', reflecting the extent to which each might be used to get the message across to young people and influence them. This spectrum reflects not only people's likely propensity to act, but also their capacity to do so, for example, how much free time they would be likely to have, and how willing they might be to engage with the projects.



These findings represent the barriers found across the fifteen areas, and the challenges they are likely to bring to the projects. The appropriate influencers identified in the typologies could be used in each area to put forward the messages of the projects and to reach and influence young people in a manner which they would be receptive to.

SECTION 4

Conclusions

The key aim of this research was to explore in depth, the attitudes and behaviours of children and their parents in order that a tailored social marketing approach could be developed for each Inspiring Communities area. At a national level, ten key barriers were identified as limiting the aspirations of young people. The neighbourhoods that took part in this research were diverse and therefore, the prominence of each barrier was influenced by this, with actual geography more important in rural areas for example, while space and safety was more of an issue in urban areas.

The lack of appropriate role models was a key issue across all 15 areas, with young people finding it difficult to describe what success looked like without referring to people they had seen on television. This lack of role models who had a physical presence in the neighbourhood made it difficult for young people to imagine themselves in a realistic job or to gain advice on how they could achieve this aspiration.

The absence of a well thought out plan of how to achieve aspirations, a lack of emotional and financial support from parents and inadequate self confidence, limited young people's horizons. The real challenge for projects is to understand how they can help young people overcome these barriers and provide the life skills necessary to break out of these negative comfort zones, when these have become normalised in both their minds and those of the other key influencers in their lives. In addition to this, projects need to be able to provide evidence of people from the local area who have been successful and to reinforce that similar success is a realistic possibility for young people.

To promote young people's ambitions and to support them in achieving them the projects must work with young people in each area to understand how far young people are prepared to go to achieve their aims (for example, what they are prepared to give up), and what competes for their time. The local area reports written for this project give insight into the specific needs, resources available and potential solutions for each location.

As previous research³ has demonstrated, parents are the most important influence on young people. This research also found that the parents of children with low aspirations were often ill-equipped to support their children's education or aspirations and frequently did not demonstrate a positive work ethic, with some actively discouraging them from having any ambition beyond what they considered normal. In order for projects to be able to address the disconnection with education for young people, it will be necessary for them to also address the negative perceptions that many of their parents hold.

Young people's perceptions of local geography and actual geographical isolation from the outside world made it more difficult for them to make links with other areas either for work, education or leisure pursuits. Projects need to be able to understand how they can encourage young people not to immediately dismiss the possibility of venturing beyond the local environment just because it is a norm reinforced by others in their family, community or peer group.

Economic deprivation was regarded as an important issue in all 15 neighbourhoods in this research. It was not regarded as an immediate barrier to the aspirations of young people, but was often a root cause behind many of the other barriers, affecting the views of many key influencers such as parents and peer groups. A certain level of hopelessness was engendered by these groups who tended to reinforce negative perceptions about the neighbourhood, education and young people's aspirations. Therefore the challenge was as much about changing the opinions of these other groups as it was about changing the perceptions of young people themselves.

Barriers which affected young people at the 'social' or 'self' level were typically of the greatest influence. This creates a challenge for projects in how to address these issues, as there is a natural tendency for them to regard infrastructural barriers as a starting point for interventions with young people.

Projects need to focus their work not only on the young people themselves but also those individuals identified as key influencers in section 3.2. In order to provide the necessary life skills and dispel the fatalistic attitude that many young people had about their futures these groups need to work together with the project in a manner which appeals to young people.

³ SETF (2008), Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities: analysis and discussion paper, 2008. (www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/aspirations.aspx)

Appendices

- A1 Technical appendix
- A2 Materials for mini-groups with young people
- A3 Materials for focus groups with parents
- A4 Materials for the ethnographic exercise with young people
- A5 Materials for depth interviews with high achievers
- A6 Materials for depth interviews with stakeholders

A1 Technical appendix

Qualitative research

Client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government)
Conducted by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMRB Ltd
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess the attitudes, perceptions, aspirations, of young people and barriers to achievement, opportunities and resources available to them in each of the 15 identified areas. Findings to be used to inform a social market approach provided by another agency.
Universe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in years 7, 8, 9 and 10, Parents of these children as well as local stakeholders (Community Workers, Local Authority Reps, Local Business/3rd Sector reps, Teachers) in specific neighbourhoods in the following areas: Barking and Dagenham, Barnsley, Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bradford, Bristol, Cumbria, Folkestone, Grimsby, Colne, Manchester, Thetford, Rotherham, South Shields and Stoke on Trent.
Sample size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Children • 16 Parents • 12 Stakeholders
Fieldwork period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August to October 2009
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth interviews, mini-groups (Friendships), Focus groups, non-participant observation
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free find
Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash and vouchers
Interviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30
Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured topic guide with stimulus materials
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that the results of this qualitative research are indicative and cannot be projected onto the overall population.

A2 Materials for mini-groups with young people

45108988 v.3

14.08.2009

DCLG Inspiring communities

Children's mini groups

Topic Guide

Time	Session	Topic areas	Tools/Stimulus material
5 mins	<i>Welcome and introduction</i>	<p>We are speaking to young people in your local area - looking at who influences them and their aspirations and ambitions. We are also speaking to other young people like yourselves all around the country.</p> <p>We have been asked to do this by the government - though we work for a private company that is independent/not connected to government. We will meet with them today and again in a week.</p> <p>Will be recording what they say because it is difficult to take notes and listen at the same time – No one outside of the room will know what was said and by whom.</p> <p>There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone is different, has different families and circumstances, different viewpoints, and different dreams for the future. If everyone was the same we wouldn't need to come and talk to you.</p> <p>It's a bit odd to analyse your thoughts in this way and it can be hard to explain what seems obvious. Sometimes you'll need to take a few moments to think about what your thoughts are and this is fine.</p> <p>The main thing we want to try and understand is where you want to be in the future.</p> <p>Ground rules – be respectful - everyone is different.</p> <p>The session will last for about an hour.</p>	

15 mins	Views on area and who they know	<p>Group to introduce the person to their left.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name, age, how long have you known each other <p>What things do you like about living around here?</p> <p>What do you like doing at weekends/the evening or on holidays?</p> <p>Which places in the area make you feel good, where do you like to hang out?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: home, classroom, park, friend's house, shops etc. (Note and refer to these when setting up ethnographic exercise) <p>What things don't you like about living around here?</p> <p>What if you could change things to make it better, what would you improve / change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you could only change one of these things which one would you change? <p>Would you say you were proud to say that you come from [AREA]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / Why not? <p>Do you have many friends locally?</p> <p>Who are your main friends?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you like being with these people? <p>Who do you look up to or respect? Whose opinions do you listen to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: immediate friends/ older siblings/relatives/ other children/ adults/ teachers, People on TV / Films / Sports personalities / music personalities . 	Mapping exercise
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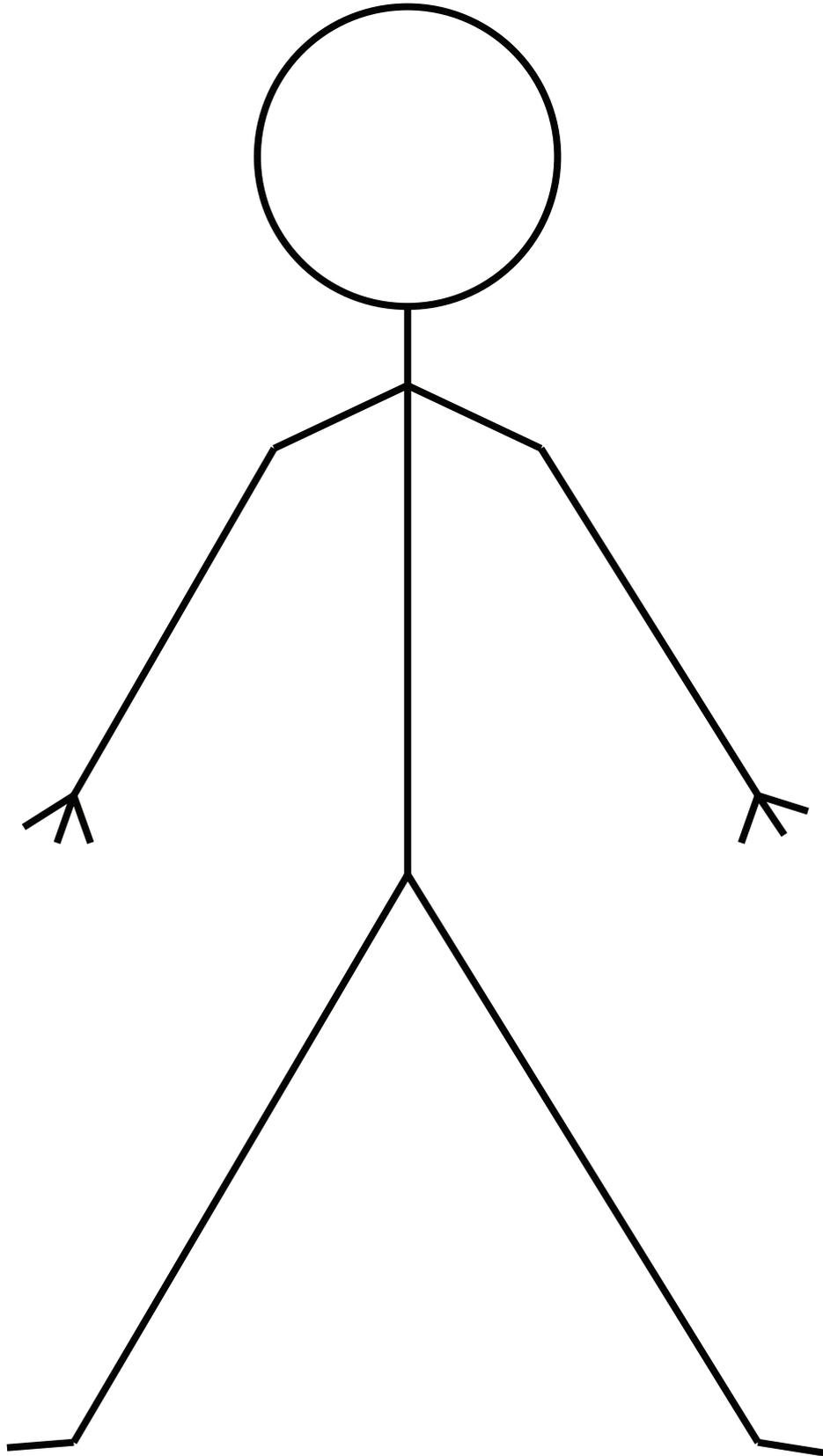
5 Mins to complete exercise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What TV channels / Radio stations do they like? ○ Who are their idols, heroes? ○ What it is that they respect about these people <p>[Task - get them to map a network who they know on paper – get them to mark on the map who they like or look up to and who they don't]</p> <p>Do you know or mix with people from other areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / Why not? 	
25 mins	<i>Views on school</i>	<p>Would you say that you like to learn how to do new things? (Ensure that they don't just think about what they learn at school).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you enjoy / not enjoy? <p>Do you like school? What do you really like; what do you dislike?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why? What is it about these things that is enjoyable / not enjoyable? <p>How important is school to you, compared to other things you do?</p> <p>Do you learn much in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you think you've learnt in school recently? <p>Learning new things can be difficult. What one person finds easy another can find very difficult and vice versa. Would you say that you get the help you need at school in order to learn new things?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do you get enough / not enough support? <p>What do you think of the teachers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you say this? 	Body map

<p>5 mins to complete exercise</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there good and bad teachers? <p>Do your parents help you with your school work? Do they get involved with the school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Try to get them to give examples of when their parents get involved? ○ If their parents don't get involved why do they think this is ○ Would they want their parents to get more involved? ○ What would encourage their parents to get more involved? <p>How do you think you will do at school compared to other people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Compared to people in their class/ in their school / from other schools / places? <p>Do you hope to pass your GCSE exams?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think you will get good grades? Why / Why not? <p>[Introduce body map – Split group into pairs. What would a student who does well at school would look like? What do they wear, carry with them, hairstyle, general apparel, what do they say, etc...?]</p> <p>What are the differences between you and the drawing?</p> <p>What is similar?</p> <p>Do you learn things out of school, either on your own or with other people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Probe on clubs, activities done outside of school (Scouts, guides, youth club etc.) 	
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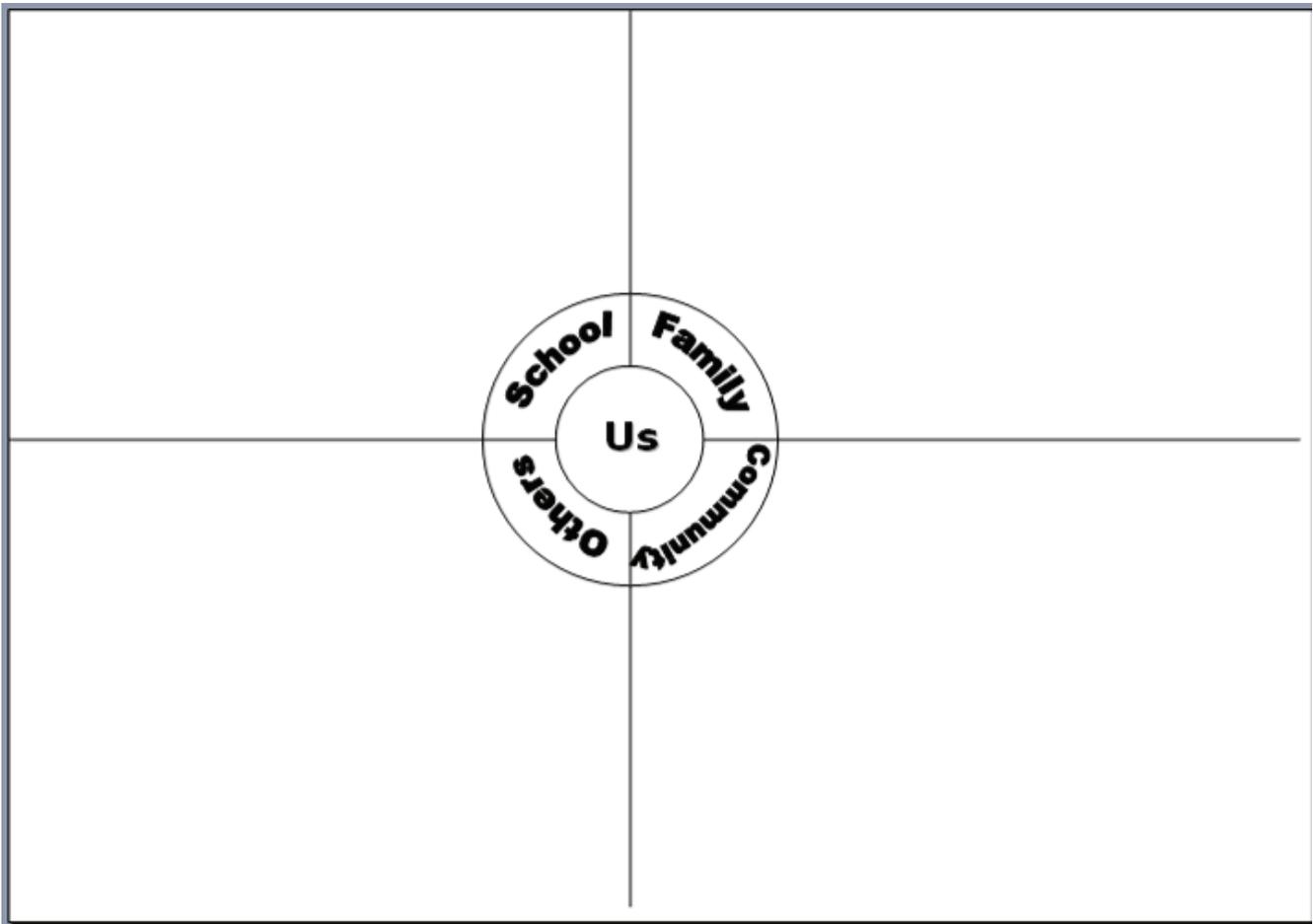
		<p>Do you enjoy learning out of school? Why / Why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is it that makes this more enjoyable than learning in school? ○ PROBE on: environment, 'teacher' other 'students' 	
15 mins	<i>Views on aspirations</i>	<p>What do people end up doing when they get older around here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What sort of jobs? ○ What sorts of people do well? <p>Do you think you will end up doing this or not? Why / why not?</p> <p>Thinking about the people you know, who would you want to be like when you get older?</p> <p>What else might you want to be when you get older?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on: Jobs or opportunities/ study etc. <p>Who or what could help you achieve this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on: Parents, Teachers, Friends, other people in the community <p>What sorts of things do think may get in the way of doing this?</p> <p>What do you think you personally might have do or give up to achieve this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on: Time, friends, social life 	
5 mins	Pre-task and ethnography	<p>Explain we will be back at [date]. We would like to follow them doing something – this could be playing, going somewhere such as a club or just hanging out. We would also like to speak to some people they look up to locally.</p>	

		[Gain agreement on what to do] Hand out scrapbook and explain pre task. Needs to complete when we next meet – will pick it up Thank and close	
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Stimulus - Bodymap



Stimulus - Network map



A3 Materials for focus groups with parents

45108988 v.3
14.08.2009

DCLG Inspiring communities

Parents focus groups

Topic Guide

Time	Session	Topic areas	Tools/Stimulus material
10 mins	<i>Welcome and introduction</i>	<p>About BMRB – independent research agency commission by Communities and Local Government.</p> <p>Research to provide insight for a campaign that will be undertaken locally – basically looking to provide support to young people to overcome barriers to achievement.</p> <p>As well as speaking to parents and children, also interviewing teachers, people from business and charities Discussion will be recorded, but any comments are confidential [gain permission to record].</p> <p>Ground rules.</p> <p>The group will last for 2 hours.</p>	
40 mins	Views on area	<p>Introductions</p> <p>What do you like about living around here? Why do you like these things?</p>	Mapping exercise

		<p>What things do your children particularly like to do in the local area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you think they like to do these things? <p>What things don't you like about living around here?</p> <p>What would you say the major issues facing young people locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Education, employment / jobs, housing, crime <p>How have things changed since you were at school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Local economy, environment, crime. <p>What if you could change things to make it better for young people, what would you improve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why would you improve that? Why is that important? ○ What are the main barriers to making those changes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Cost, time, apathy <p>Would you say you were proud of the living around here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / why not? <p>Would you say that this area is friendly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Would you describe the community as close knit? ○ Do your kids have many friends? ○ Are these friends appropriate? 	
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		<p>Are there good role models for young people locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: immediate friends; older siblings/relatives; other children; other adults; teachers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ascertain who are the key positive influences? Is this the same for everyone? <p>What bad influences would you say there are on your children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you say this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ascertain who are the key negative influences? Is this the same for everyone? ○ Are these influences worse in the local area than elsewhere? <p>[MAPPING EXERCISE: using post its, get participants to highlight influences on their children. 2x2 matrix positive and negative influences; small or big influence]</p> <p>How well is the community linked to other areas / communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Locally, Regionally, nationally ○ If the area is not connected to other places do you believe this is this an issue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / Why not? <p>How important is it to have these sorts of connections?</p>	
5 mins	<i>Break</i>		
35 mins	<i>Views on school</i>	What are your views on the schools and educations services locally?	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Leadership; quality of teaching; resources available <p>What is the school environment like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: culture of learning, achievements academically/ sports, problems (e.g. bullying/ attainment/ cohesion) <p>Do you engage in your children's learning? What helps you to do this? What gets in the way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Time, knowledge, cost(Try to ascertain if any parents are just apathetic) ○ PROBE: Sensitive areas, explore as third person (Be careful) alcohol, drugs, mental health problems <p>Do you engage with the schools more generally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What more could be done to help you engage with the schools more? <p>What qualifications / pathways do you think young people tend to get locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: vocational or academic? ○ Why do you say this? <p>What would you say motivates children to pursue these types of qualifications?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Peer pressure, local employment landscape, local attitudes to learning <p>What could be done to encourage children to do better at school?</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you say this? Why is this important. <p>Are there opportunities for learning things outside of school locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please describe these ○ What is good / bad about these opportunities? 	
30 mins	<i>Views on aspirations</i>	<p>What would you say were the aspirations of most local young people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think these aspirations are realistic? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / why not? ○ Are these aspirations different to the ones that they have for their children <p>What do you expect your children to achieve at school? What would you say the prospects / options were for your children when they grow up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: employment; further education <p>How does this compare to other places locally? What are the differences? What would you like you children to achieve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the perfect occupation for them ○ Why do you say this? <p>What would help and support children to meet their potential?</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: role of young people; peers; parents; school; members of the community; others <p>What would you say gets in way of this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: role of young people; peers (peer pressure); parents; school; members of the community; others <p>What do you think you personally might have do or give up to help achieve this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is this a realistic expectation? ○ What could be done to help make this easier to achieve? <p>Are you aware of wider support and opportunities for young people, such as provided by the council or other organisations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are these? Which ones are you aware of? 	
5 mins		<p>What three things would you prioritise to help young people reach their full potential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on each one: What is it that makes this key to helping people achieve their potential <p>Any other comments</p> <p>Thank participants. Explain what is happening next.</p> <p>Payments and close.</p>	
	Ends		

Stimulus - Mapping exercise



A4 Materials for the ethnographic exercise with young people

45108988 v.1 31.08.2009

DCLG Inspiring communities
Children's mini groups

NOTE FRAMEWORK

PLEASE PUT YOUR NOTES INTO THIS FRAMEWORK, BELOW THE RELEVANT PARTS OF THE TOPIC AREAS.

REMEMBER TO SET OUT YOUR GROUNDRULES AT THE START OF THE EXERCISE. REITERATE CONFIDENTIALITY AND MENTION RECORDING IF YOU ARE RECORDING ANY OF THE EXERCISE.

REMEMBER THE KEY ISSUE: What do you think are the key barriers that children are facing in terms of improving their aspirations.

Group:.....

Activity:

At start of ethnographic exercise.

At the start of the session researchers have found it handy to spend the first 10 minutes without using this note framework. It is important that the children settle into their activity before you start taking notes on what they are doing or saying. If you cant keep this information in your head it might be an idea to have a digi-recorder in your top pocket that you can listen to once the group settles into the activity.

A good way to start the exercise is to ask what they have been doing since you last met and have they thought anymore about the last session?

Tell me about [NEIGHBOURHOOD / AREA] what is it like for things to do? Are there other areas nearby that are accessible to you whether there are other / better things to do?

In an ideal town / area / neighbourhood what would you be doing? How would having the ability to do these things improve your life?

What Is it about [ACTIVITY] that you like? Why do you come here? What is you favorite aspect of [ACTIVITY]? Try to ascertain: do they identify with [ACTIVITY] or the people that go there. How much is it like the rest of you life in the neighbourhood / school? What's different?

Are the other people that come here like you? Why / why not? What makes them similar / different? Are they from the same neighbourhood? What sort of social group do these other people belong to? Why are they here do you think?

Who are the main friends that you associate with at [ACTIVITY]? (Are there other people besides those that took part in the mini-group?) Why do you like being with these people at [ACTIVITY]?

What do you think your other friends, fellow pupils, teachers, parents think about [ACTIVITY]? Do you think these people think this is a positive location for you to hang out? Would they approve of you coming here? Do you think they are right to have this opinion?

Do you like to hang out in other areas in the neighborhood? Where are these? What makes them different from [ACTIVITY]?

Do they come to [ACTIVITY] because they are fearful of socialising in other areas of the community? What / who are they worried about?

NOTE: If appropriate, find time either before or after [ACTIVITY] to ask the children ON THEIR OWN what they thought of the activity? Did they get to say everything they wanted. Did they keep quiet about anything in case others in the group would not agree?

During the activity

Use observational techniques during this part of the exercise making sure that you observe people's body language during the activity. Ask questions if necessary to help gather the required data below. A pertinent question may help confirm your suspicions without revealing what you are thinking. Body language is as important in this exercise as what people are saying.

Who do the children look up to or respect during the [ACTIVITY]? Whose opinions are they listening to? (Compare to notes taken in the mini-group). Who are the most important groups? Other children, adults etc. If at an organised activity they may be following the instruction of an adult but is their behaviour being influenced by others at the [ACTIVITY]?

What is it that they respect about these people? Why are they listening / paying attention to them, why are they doing what they say or what they think they want them to do? Does one individual appear to have control of the other(s). What is the group hierarchy and is this based? Are the participants aspiring to be like the alpha males / females? Why?

DEPENDING ON ACTIVITY (this question is more relevant in organised activities): Do they appear to be learning anything? If so are they look attentive and willing to learn? Are they there to learn or for another reason?

WHAT EVER THEY ARE DOING NOTE: body language, energy levels/passion for the particular [ACTIVITY]

Do the children act differently during the activity compared to when they were in the mini group?
IF YES: What in your opinion is having this affect?

What are the differences between the different children at [ACTIVITY]? Are some more attentive than others? Are these people in the study group?

At the end of the exercise

When you feel the exercise has run its course tell the children that you are going to head off now but that you would like to ask them a few questions before you leave.

(Other than the fact that the observer was there) Was today's [ACTIVITY] typical of what would normally happen during [ACTIVITY]? Why / why not?

Did the observer influence what happened in any way? How would things have normally transpired if the observer wasn't there? INTERVIEWER NOTE: Kids are bound to get up to mischief and are probably less likely to do this while they are being watched by the researcher. Reassure them that whatever they say is confidential and that you are not going to judge them or tell them off.

Do they feel they have learned anything today? What have they learned? Is this contributing to their aspirations (i.e. are they just wasting time?) How is this useful to them? Is it useful in the same way that what you learn in school is useful?

How long do you think you will be doing [ACTIVITY]. Where do you hope to go / what do you hope to replace [ACTIVITY] with once you've outgrown [ACTIVITY]? Are they just doing this activity to fill time until they can get into more mature / adult activities?

How does [ACTIVITY] differ from school? Is it as useful as what they learn in school? Why? Is this a hobby or just something to while away the time? If not do they have anything they would call a hobby?

Do you think teachers could learn anything from [ACTIVITY] to help make school more interesting or support you more? How would this affect how you perform at / perceive school?

Notes pages follow:

Subject:

.....
.....

Notes

A5 Materials for depth interviews with high achievers

45108988 v1

26.08.2009

High achieving children and young people depths

Topic Guide

Time	Session	Topic areas	Tools/Stimulus material
5 mins	<i>Welcome and introduction</i>	<p>We are speaking to young people in your local area - looking at who influences them and their aspirations and ambitions. We are also speaking to other young people like yourselves all around the country.</p> <p>We have been asked to do this by the government - though we work for a private company that is independent /not connected to government. We have been in meetings with them over the last two weeks.</p> <p>We will be recording what they say because it is difficult to take notes and listen at the same time – No one outside of the room will know what was said by whom.</p> <p>There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone is different, has different families and circumstances, different viewpoints, and different dreams for the future. If everyone was the same we wouldn't need to come and talk to you.</p> <p>It's a bit odd to analyse your thoughts in this way and it can be hard to explain what seems obvious. Sometimes you'll need to take a few moments to think about what your thoughts are and this is fine.</p> <p>The main thing we want to try and understand is where you want to be in the future.</p>	

		The session will last for about an hour.	
10 mins	Views on area and who they know	<p>Young person to introduce themselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name, age, how long have you lived in the area <p>What things do you like about living around here?</p> <p>What do you like doing at weekends/the evening or on holidays?</p> <p>Which places in the area make you feel good, where do you like to hang out?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: home, classroom, park, friend's house, shops etc. <p>What things don't you like about living around here?</p> <p>What if you could change things to make it better, what would you improve / change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you could only change one of these things which one would you change? <p>Would you say you were proud to say that you come from [AREA]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / why not? <p>Do you have many friends locally?</p> <p>Who are your main friends?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you like being with these people? <p>Who do you look up to or respect? Whose opinions do you listen to?</p>	Mapping exercise

<p>5 Mins to complete exercise</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: immediate friends/ older siblings/relatives/ other children/ adults/ teachers, People on TV / Films / Sports personalities / music personalities ○ What TV channels / Radio stations do they like? ○ Who are their idols, heroes? ○ What it is that they respect about these people <p>[Task - network map. Moderator is to place network map on table (note – the size will be smaller than the mini group (A3)). The moderator will ask the respondent to map a network of who they know on paper. For ease of completion the exercise can be completed by the moderator with the respondent telling them what to write. As the respondent is on their own they may feel uncomfortable filling in the map which is why the moderator assists here. The respondent will get the moderator to mark on the map who they like or look up to and who they don't]</p> <p>Do you know or mix with people from other areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / Why not? 	
<p>20 mins</p>	<p><i>Views on school</i></p>	<p>Would you say that you like to learn how to do new things? (Ensure that they don't just think about what they learn at school)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you enjoy / not enjoy? <p>Do you like school? What do you really like; what do you dislike?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why? What is it about these things that is enjoyable / not enjoyable? 	

		<p>How important is school to you, compared to other things you do? Do you learn much in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What do you think you've learnt in school recently? <p>Learning new things can be difficult. What one person finds easy another can find very difficult and vice versa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How difficult / easy do you find it to learn new things? Why do you say this? <p>Would you say that you get the help you need at school in order to learn new things?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Where do you get enough / not enough support? <p>What do you think of the teachers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Why do you say this?○ Are there good and bad teachers? <p>Do your parents help you with your school work? Do they get involved with the school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ PROBE: Try to get them to give examples of when their parents get involved?○ If their parents don't get involved why do they think this is○ Would they want their parents to get more involved?○ What would encourage their parents to get more involved?	
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		<p>How do you think you will do at school compared to other people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Compared to people in their class/ in their school / from other schools / places? ○ If you think you will do well, why do you think this is? <p>How well do you think you will do in your GCSE exams?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think you will get good grades? Why / Why not? <p>Do you learn things out of school, either on your own or with other people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Probe on clubs, activities done outside of school (Scouts, guides, youth club etc.) <p>Do you enjoy learning out of school? Why / Why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is it that makes this more enjoyable than learning in school? ○ PROBE on: environment, 'teacher' other 'students' 	
10 mins	<i>Views on aspirations</i>	<p>What do people end up doing when they get older around here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What sort of jobs? ○ What sorts of people do well? <p>Do you think you will end up doing this or not? Why / why not?</p> <p>Thinking about the people you know, who would you want to be like when you get older?</p> <p>What else might you want to be when you get older?</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on: Jobs or opportunities/ study etc. <p>Do you think you will achieve this? Why? Who or what could help you achieve this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on: Parents, Teachers, Friends, other people in the community <p>What sorts of things do think may get in the way of doing this? What sort of things might help you to achieve this?</p> <p>What do you think you personally might have do or give up to achieve this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on: time, friends, social life 	
5 min	<i>Close</i>	<p>Is there anything else they would like to add?</p> <p>Thank and close</p>	

A6 Materials for depth interviews with stakeholders

45108988 v.2
14.08.2009

DCLG Inspiring communities
Stakeholder interviews

Topic Guide

Time	Session	Topic areas
5 mins	<i>Welcome and introduction</i>	<p>About BMRB – independent research agency.</p> <p>Project for CLG as part of their inspiring communities programme.</p> <p>Research to provide insight for a ‘social marketing’ campaign that will be undertaken locally – basically looking to provide support to young people to overcome barriers to achievement.</p> <p>As well as interviewing children and parents, also interviewing key stakeholders locally.</p> <p>Interview will last 45mins- 1 hour.</p> <p>Interview will be recorded, but any comments are confidential [gain permission to record].</p>
15 mins	Professional role and relationship to/ views on area	<p>Can you give me a brief overview of your job and role?</p> <p>[Probe: specific work, activities or initiatives that focus on the study area]</p> <p>Thinking about the area in general, what are your thoughts about [area]?</p> <p>Specifically, what is positive?</p> <p>What is less positive?</p>

		<p>Would you say people were proud of the area? Why / Why not?</p> <p>Do you know many people locally?</p> <p>Would you say that the community close knit? Why / Why not?</p> <p>Is the area diverse? Is it cohesive?</p> <p>How well connected is the community to other places?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Locally, Regionally, nationally ○ <i>Interviewer note: make sure you explore the nature of these connections.</i> ○ If The area is not connected to other places do you believe this is this an issue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / Why not? ○ How important is this?
15 mins	<i>Views on young people, schools and employment</i>	<p>What would you say the major issues facing young people locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: Poverty, education, employment / jobs, housing, crime, Mental health issues, alcohol, drugs <p>How well do you think you understand the needs of young people locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What makes you say this? ○ What could improve your understanding? <p>What are your views on the schools and education services locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: leadership, quality of teaching, resources available

		<p>What is the school environment like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: culture of learning, achievements academically/ sports, problems (e.g. bullying/ attainment/ cohesion)] <p>How well do parents engage in their children’s learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you say this? ○ What more could be done to help parents engage with children’s learning <p>Do parents engage with the schools more generally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you think this? ○ What more could be done to help parents engage with <p>Do you know the patterns of the qualifications which young people pursue – For example what is the proportion of vocational or academic qualifications? What would you say motivates young people to pursue these?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you say this? <p>What would you say the prospects were for young people in this area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: employment, further education ○ Why do you say this? <p>How does this compare to other places locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the differences between [area] and the other places you mentioned? <p>What could be done to encourage children to do better at school?</p> <p>What could be done to generate work or other opportunities for young people in the area?</p>
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15 mins	<i>Views on aspirations</i>	<p>What would you say were the aspirations of most local young people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What aspirations do they have? ○ Do you think these aspirations are realistic? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why / why not? ○ PROBE: Differences between groups <p>What / who helps and supports children to meet their potential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: role of young people; peers; parents; school; other members of the community; others <p>What would you say prevents young people meet their potential? (If not covered in previous question)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: role of young people; peers (peer pressure); parents; school; other members of the community; others
10 mins	Local resources	<p>What resources and support are available to young people to fulfill their potential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE: information, advice and guidance; wider financial resources ○ At the local level / wider a field <p>Do you think that this is well targeted? Why / Why not?</p> <p>Where are the major gaps?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How could these be addressed? ○ Do you think this is likely to happen? <p>Can you identify any other opportunities there locally that could help support young people to achieve their potential?</p>

		<p>What three things would you prioritise to help young people reach their full potential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PROBE on each one: What is it that makes this key to helping people achieve their potential <p>Any other comments</p> <p>Thank and close</p>
	Ends	