

**BBC** Children in Need

# Fun & Friendship

a grant programme for disabled young people

Year 1 Evaluation Report

October 2011



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# Executive Summary

## The Fun & Friendship programme

Fun and Friendship is a BBC Children in Need grant programme, specifically targeted towards organisations working with disabled young people between the ages of 12 and 18. The purpose of the Fun and Friendship programme is to help projects to create and enhance opportunities for disabled young people to meet friends and have a good time as independently as possible.

The programme will provide £3 million to ten organisations from across the UK over the course of three years from 2010 to 2013.

## Purpose of the evaluation

The aim of the independent evaluation is to look at how the wellbeing of the disabled young people taking part in the ten projects has been enhanced as a result of their involvement. The two main questions to be answered by this evaluation are:

1. How has the Fun and Friendship Programme contributed to a change in the wellbeing of the young people who are participating in the ten projects?
2. What factors have had the most positive/negative effects on improving the quality of social experiences for the young disabled people?

For the purposes of the this evaluation, wellbeing is defined against the main programme outcomes:

1. Having fun and a good time
2. Developing confidence and self-esteem
3. Making and meeting friends
4. Being independent

Findings have been analysed and reported by self-reported impairment type: physical disability, learning disability, physical and learning disability (including life-limiting illnesses), Autism/Aspergers and Other. Findings were also looked at by gender and age to identify similarities and differences and where these are noticeable they have been highlighted. Results are not reported by individual projects. This is because each project works with such different groups of young people therefore a direct comparison is not possible or desirable.

This report covers the first year of the programme (from April 2010 to April 2011) and sets a baseline for the next two years' evaluation.

## Findings on wellbeing

### Having fun and a good time

The majority of young people involved in the programme score themselves highly against the four main outcomes defined for the Fun and Friendship programme. Young people score themselves most highly on the outcome of having fun and a good time.

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## Confidence and self-esteem

To a slightly lesser degree young people report feeling good about themselves (proxy measure for confidence) due to their involvement in the programme.

## Making and meeting friends

Self reports that young people are making and meeting friends as a result of their involvement in the Fun and Friendship programme are also high although to a slightly lesser extent than the first two outcome areas. Outcomes in this area may emerge more fully over the course of the programme.

## Independence

As with making and meeting friends, self reports of increased independence by young people were high although slightly lower than the first two outcomes. The concept of independence was understood differently by young people and included factors such as doing things with friends, spending time away from family and having choice. To unpack the topic of independence additional qualitative research by projects was undertaken and full findings are included in the main report. It is clear that independence means different things to young people.

## Differences amongst young people

The evaluation shows some differences in outcomes according to different impairment groups. Responses from young people with both a learning disability and a physical disability are lower across all of the four outcome areas. Reasons for this are not clear at this stage. Lower scores may be indicative of the additional challenges faced by this group as it includes young people with life limiting illnesses. There are less noticeable differences according to the age and gender of the young people.

## Supporting characteristics of the projects

There are distinctive elements to the Fun and Friendship projects such as supporting young people's voice, decision making and developing skills. These are reported by projects, parents and young people as being particularly helpful in building young people's confidence and self-esteem.

## Findings on barriers and supporting factors

### Factors are both barriers and supports

Young people were asked about a range of factors such as transport, school, family and self esteem, which might impact on their ability to socialise and see friends.

Factors were reported by young people to act as both barriers and supports to socialising. This was true for external factors such as transport, as well as internal factors such as how a young person felt about themselves. Whether a factor was seen as a barrier or supporting factor, or both, depended on individual circumstances and perception. For example, transport was reported as a supporting factor to seeing friends if the young person could get lifts from

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their parent/carers. However, public transport was sometimes seen as a barrier due to inaccessibility or lack of the young person's confidence to use this mode of transport.

How young people and their families/carers navigate barriers and their levels of resilience to cope with set backs could play an important role in the extent to which young disabled people can enjoy fun and friendship.

## **The importance of friendship**

Friendship was reported as a crucially important factor by young disabled people, pointing to the central role friends and friendships play in young people's wellbeing. Many young people taking part in the evaluation said how much they valued and loved their friends. Sometimes young disabled people felt it was important to spend time with other young disabled people who had similar experiences.

A number of young people saw a positive correlation between visiting places such as clubs or leisure facilities, taking part in activities and developing friendships. The central role of visiting places, meeting other young people and having fun underlies the critical role the Fun and Friendship programme can play in supporting friendships.

However, poor access to schools and leisure facilities was reported as a particular barrier by young people with a physical disability. In these cases, poor access acted as a barrier to seeing friends and socialising independently and led to some young physically disabled people feeling socially isolated.

## **Self esteem, confidence and bullying**

How young disabled people felt about themselves played an important role in acting as a support or barrier to friendships. Some young people said they felt confident in themselves and enjoyed life which helped them socialise and make friends. However, a number of young people said they felt stigmatised or isolated by their peer group because of their disability. Experiences of bullying were standard across all impairment groups. This, unsurprisingly, impacted negatively on how young disabled people felt about themselves and their life.

## **Geography and access to resources**

Barriers such as transport were experienced as particularly acute by some young people with less access to resources such as money, or, by those living in remote geographical locations.

## **How projects are tackling barriers**

Projects are already tackling a number of the barriers their young people highlighted. This has included: providing transport to those that are rurally isolated or cannot afford it; training leisure providers to enable disabled young people to better access local leisure provision; working with parents to help build confidence and/or raise their awareness in the importance of fun and friendship for their teenager; and building the confidence and self esteem of the young people they work with.

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## Reflections for Years 2 & 3

Findings from the first year of the evaluation suggest that the benefits of taking part in Fun and Friendship projects may take time to become transferable to young people's social interactions outside of project provision.

Sustainable practices need to be built during the lifetime of the programme so that positive outcomes can be achieved outside of the provision of activities and beyond the lifetime of the programme. As such, r future rounds of the evaluation will seek to understand in more depth the extent to which young people are able to socialise outside of project specific provision, and what support needs to be in place to encourage this.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Fun and Friendship programme

Fun and Friendship is a BBC Children in Need grant programme, specifically targeted towards organisations working with disabled young people between the ages of 12 and 18. The programme runs from 2010 - 2013 and this is the first of three yearly evaluation reports.

The purpose of the Fun and Friendship programme is to help organisations to create and enhance opportunities for disabled young people to meet friends and have a good time as independently as possible. The programme will provide £3 million to ten organisations from across the UK over the course of three years.

## 1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The aim of the independent evaluation being conducted by OPM and Blake Stevenson, is to look at how the emotional and social wellbeing of the disabled young people taking part in the ten projects has been enhanced as a result of their involvement.

The key questions to be answered by this evaluation are:

1. How has the Fun and Friendship Programme contributed to a change in the wellbeing of the young people who are participating in the ten projects?
2. What factors have had the most positive/negative effects on improving the quality of social experiences for the young disabled people?

The evaluation is focused primarily on outcomes for young people and barriers and supporting factors to achieving those outcomes. BBC Children in Need is conducting its own programme evaluation looking at how the programme is meeting wider outcomes such as influencing change at a local and national level and how operational aspects of the programme are working. In addition, individual projects are completing their own self-evaluations of their individual project outcomes and reporting on these on a six monthly basis to the Fun and Friendship team. Where relevant data from the self-evaluations has been used in this evaluation, for example, a review of the six monthly reports has contributed to the evidence base of this report.

This report covers the first year of the programme (from April 2010 to April 2011) and sets a baseline for the next two years' evaluation. The evaluation is both summative and formative in nature. Summative in that it seeks to establish the impact of the project on outcomes for children and young people, and formative, in that it provides learning and evidence for BBC Children in Need and projects on how future activities can increase their positive contribution to the lives of young disabled people.

## 1.3 Summary of projects

This section provides a short summary of the ten projects involved in the Fun and Friendship programme.

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### **The Autistic Society of Greater Manchester (ASGMA)**

The project supports social and learning activities for 12-18 year olds with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as well as independence support and access to holiday activities. The service users themselves decide on a programme of events they want to do several weeks in advance so there are no surprises for the ASD client group.

### **Chestnut Tree House, West Sussex**

Chestnut Tree Hospice provides a holistic package of support for young people with life limiting and life threatening conditions aged 12-18, designed to help them build independence, have fun and live as normal a life as possible. The project involves a youth group and a volunteer buddy scheme.

### **The Children's Society, York**

The project aims to improve the self confidence and skills of disabled young people to enable them to fully access the friends and activities which they identify. The project also aims to try to influence the statutory review to ensure disabled young people are more involved and the 'circle of friends' approach is incorporated to ensure a more person centred process. In addition the project will train local leisure staff and professionals to increase their understanding and confidence of work with disabled young people.

### **Project SiNC, Compass Advocacy Network Ltd, Northern Ireland**

The project aims to empower young people with learning disabilities to access mainstream youth, community, sports and leisure provision and activities based on the development of person centred plans to meet expressed needs. The young people will be supported by volunteers or other people they identify from their 'circle of support' to enable them to access mainstream provision on a long term basis.

### **WAC, Performing Arts and Media College, North London**

The project works with groups of up to 20 young people at a time aged 12-18 years with learning disabilities and/or ASD to manage and run the WAC Wonder Web. Funding from BBC Children in Need provides a programme of workshops led by specialist tutors and industry professionals to build the skill sets of young people to enable them to produce the content for and fun an interactive website, radio show and e magazine.

### **Mencap, Cymru**

The project's overarching aim is to empower young people with a learning disability to create sustainable opportunities for independent leisure and socialising. It will operate by supporting young people from different schools to form groups and build close friendships through collaborating in stimulating and exciting activities to remove barriers to socialising in their communities.

### **Scottish Spina Bifida Association, Scotland**

The project provides one to one support, from an individual support worker, for young people aged 12-18 disadvantaged by Spina bifida and Hydrocephalus. This support enables the

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young people to access social and sporting activities of their choice. Additionally, the project will develop group activities based in the organisation premises. The project aims to break down the barriers to participation in a social life outside of the home faced by young people affected by Spina Bfida and Hydrocephalus. Equally it will promote their independence by ensuring the support required by someone other than the young person's parent/carer.

### **Whizz Kidz, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland**

This project extends the network of Ambassador Clubs for Young wheelchair users in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The clubs cater only for wheelchair users but non disabled siblings will be able to attend. Parents or carers will only be present in exceptional circumstances. Each club will meet in an appropriate venue such as a leisure centre or community centre for six days each year during school holidays for a range of activities determined by the beneficiaries. Two young disabled people will be elected by their peers as a leader and assistant leader of each club, facilitated by the Development Officer. Training will be provided for these young people.

### **The Yard Adventure Centre, Edinburgh**

The project provides opportunities for young people with a range of physical and learning disabilities to participate in social and sporting activities with their peers. This participation will expand their life experiences, enhance their development of social skills and promote self confidence and independence. The funding will support the provision of three clubs for young people between 12 and 18 years.

### **Zinc, Essex**

This is a youth inspired regional project that supports disabled young people, aged 12-18 years, over the course of three years. During 2010-2013 there is a range of one off days, weekend courses, and week-long courses. Disabled young people will also enjoy relevant visits to museums, galleries, theatres, recording studios and other venues and will meet professionals in the arts/media world for to inspire and inform their work. There will be a protected online networking website for participants so they can keep in touch with other participants and exchange ideas.

## **1.4 Reading this report**

This section outlines the key definitions and terms used in the evaluation as well as a description of what the different report sections include.

### **How have we defined wellbeing?**

This evaluation seeks to measure the impact of the Fun and Friendship programme on participants' wellbeing. The definition of wellbeing varies according to personal interpretation and is a highly subjective concept. It is often defined as a combination of a range of different factors such as health, school, community, self esteem etc. Using traditional measures it is likely that on a number of these factors some disabled young people would continually score poorly, for example physical health and mobility. Therefore this evaluation does not use a standardised definition or measure of wellbeing. Instead wellbeing is defined against four specific areas aligned to Fun and Friendship programme outcomes. These areas reflected

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across all of the ten projects.

1. Having fun and a good time
2. Developing confidence and self-esteem
3. Making and meeting friends
4. Being independent

### **How have we defined impairment?**

We have used five main categories for different impairment types:

1. Physical disability (including sensory impairment)
2. Learning disability
3. Physical and learning disability (including life limiting illnesses)
4. Autism/Aspergers
5. Other

When young people completed the survey they were asked to complete some basic demographic information on age, gender and how they would define their disability (selecting from these five categories). If a project worker was using an observation sheet in cases where a young person was unable to respond to a the survey, they were responsible for filling in demographic information based on what they knew of the young person.

Care needs to be exercised when interpreting these categories and using them to describe differences or similarities between different groupings. The categories are fairly broad and include significant differences within the groups e.g. in ability.

This report provides evidence about the wellbeing of young people involved in the evaluation. It also sets out our emerging understanding of the factors that are supporting and limiting positive developments in wellbeing. It draws on primary research conducted specifically for the evaluation. Research tools were designed by OPM and Blake Stevenson and the research was conducted by projects themselves. The evaluation also draws on additional evidence submitted as part of the projects' self evaluation reports, to provide explanatory context to some of the key findings.

This is the first of three evaluation reports. The evaluation will report on an annual basis over the three year programme. The findings in this report provide a baseline and findings are necessarily emerging. The report seeks to suggest questions and hypotheses to be explored in the remaining rounds of evaluation rather than to come to concrete conclusions and impact of the programme at this early stage.

**Section 2** sets out the context from which the Fun and Friendship programme emerged, and explains the rationale behind the need to invest in improving opportunities for fun and friendship for disabled teenagers.

**Section 3** is a detailed description of the methodology and approach used to conduct this evaluation, including a narrative of how outcomes have been defined and measured.

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**Section 4** contains evaluation findings in terms of the wellbeing of Fun and Friendship evaluation participants. This section draws primarily upon findings from a baseline survey conducted in Year 1 of the project with both participants and parents/carers.

**Section 5** contains findings on the barriers and supporting factors which impact on young disabled people's ability to access independent socialising. These findings have emerged from primary research conducted with young people into the question of what helps and hinders them in socialising independently.

**Section 6** provides a synthesis of findings, implications of these for Years 2 and 3 and draws conclusions based on these.

The **Appendices** can be found in the adjoining document to this report and include copies of all the research tools used within the evaluation, specifically the questionnaire on wellbeing, observation sheet, parent/ carer questionnaire and the tool exploring barriers and supporting factors.

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## 2. The importance of fun and friendship

This section sets out the need for a focused grant programme such as Fun and Friendship to address the barriers to independent socialising for disabled children and young people. It draws on a review of the literature conducted by the University of Birmingham which was commissioned by BBC Children in Need to inform approaches to proactive programmes.

Having fun and developing friendships are central to the personal development of all young people. Developing and maintaining friendships are crucial in supporting young people to develop social and emotional skills, as well as to gain knowledge and practical experience of their environments. Friendships also support young people to express themselves as individuals and experience a new level of self-determination.

The importance of fun and friendship applies equally to children and young people with disabilities, and is enshrined in international human rights law. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup> Article 7 states that:

*'Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.'*

However, a number of barriers stand in the way of disabled children and young people accessing opportunities to have fun and develop friendships. These barriers mean that disabled children and young people may spend more time with their families and become increasingly isolated from others, missing out on important opportunities to develop socially. This is a particularly acute challenge for disabled teenagers, who struggle to access opportunities for independent fun and friendship at a time in their lives when the need to have autonomous experiences can become very important. For teenagers, friendships are largely developed in spaces such as leisure and community venues, which can, as discussed below, be highly inaccessible to those with disabilities.

While there are practical barriers, some of which are specific to the child or young person's impairment type, there are also societal and attitudinal barriers which must be navigated. Disabled children and young people can often experience the world as hostile and excluding, and they as well as their parents identify issues such as fear of rejection, isolation hostility and being stared at as key barriers to mainstream inclusion. Other attitudinal barriers are far more subtle. Within services, there is still perceived to be an overriding focus on disabled people as those who need to be cared for, rather than on people who need to have fun and enjoyment. This can lead to the creation of services which, while safe and supportive, are not necessarily supporting young people in building fun and social opportunities.

Practical barriers identified by children and young people as well as their parents include a lack of access to suitable transport, and a lack of appropriate facilities within leisure venues. A lack of information (and specifically information in an accessible format) with regards to local provision, is also noted as a limiting factor. And finally, providing opportunities for disabled children and young people to socialise requires extra resources; a skilled workforce and a high ratio of staff to children, which are not always available. Aiming High for Disabled

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<sup>1</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008. Available online at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disabilities-convention.htm#>

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Children identifies a number of challenges in this area<sup>2</sup>. For example, disabled children with physical impairments may need additional support to enable them to take part in play activities, while children with autism may need support in interacting with others.

The Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) consortium campaign<sup>3</sup> has worked in the UK since 2006 to raise the political profile of disabled children and their families in central and local government and in 2008 produced a report with disabled children which identified the top three things that they thought would produce better play and leisure opportunities. They were:

- **Better attitudes from staff, adults and other young people**  
*"I don't want to feel like a nuisance or somebody different. I just want to do everything that everybody else does"* Indeed, wider social attitudes are generally identified as presenting a greater barrier to disabled people's participation than physical accessibility<sup>4</sup>.
- **Better access to places, so that they can join in**  
*"I can't just say to my mum, 'I'm going out now' like a normal teenager. I have to say 'I'm going out on Saturday' so she can help me sort things out."* The lack of access to some social and leisure facilities continues to be restrictive in some places, with children with mobility and visual impairments often denied equal access to facilities. Research by disabled children's charity Contact A Family, for instance, found that over half of families with disabled children had to travel out of their local area to get to leisure facilities<sup>5</sup>.
- **Better transport to get to places**  
*"It doesn't matter how good things are, if you can't get there in the first place, what's the point?"*<sup>6</sup> Transport may act as a barrier either through a lack of services, particularly affecting disabled children and young people in rural localities, and in terms of how accessible it is to use<sup>7</sup>. The financial means of families with disabled children also affect their access to transport and to opportunities for socialising. Recent research confirms

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<sup>2</sup> [Aiming High for Disabled Children \(AHDC\): Better support for families](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/healthandwellbeing/ahdc/AHDC/), DCSF, 2007. Available online at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/healthandwellbeing/ahdc/AHDC/>

<sup>3</sup> EDCM is run by four of the leading organisations working with disabled children and their families: Contact a Family, the Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and the Special Educational Consortium. Between them, the campaign partners represent over 770,000 disabled children and young people in the UK. For more information, see <http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/home.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Opportunities for Fun and Friendship for Disabled Children and Young People: A Focused Review of the Literature, Mason et al, University of Birmingham, 2008

<sup>5</sup> Everybody here? Play and leisure opportunities for disabled children and young people, Contact A Family, 2002. Available online at: <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/leisure.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Going Places! Every Disabled Child Matters, 2008. Available online: [http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/campaigns/participation/going\\_places.aspx](http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/campaigns/participation/going_places.aspx)

<sup>7</sup> Opportunities for Fun and Friendship for Disabled Children and Young People: A Focused Review of the Literature, Mason et al, University of Birmingham, 2008

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that disabled children and their families are more likely to live in poverty than non-disabled children<sup>8</sup>.

Within this context, there is a clear need for the type of targeted funding provided by this BBC Children in Need grant programme. The funding enables organisations, families and young disabled people to explore ways in which to resolve these challenges, and to support disabled children and young people in accessing opportunities for fun and the friendships to which they are entitled and from which they can significantly benefit.

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<sup>8</sup> Prevalence of childhood disability and the characteristics and circumstances of disabled children in the UK: secondary analysis of the Family Resources Survey, Blackburn et al. *BMC Pediatrics* 2010, 10:21. Available online at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2431-10-21.pdf>

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## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Methodological considerations

This chapter sets out in some detail the methodology used for this evaluation. In designing this evaluation we have paid particular attention to the following considerations:

- **Responding to the diversity of the Fun and Friendship Programme:** The ten projects which form this programme cover a wide range of impairments. Because of the diversity of the young people involved, not only in terms of the type of disability they experience but also in terms of their ages and backgrounds, the evaluation needs to be highly sensitive and flexible to different needs. For example, all communication and research methods have been tailored according to the needs of the range of young people to support their involvement and meaningful engagement in the project.
- **Supporting the voice of young people:** Supporting project participants to express their views on the impact of the programme is central to the success of this evaluation. Therefore we have designed research tools that can be adopted for use with different impairment types and communication needs. We have worked very closely with each of the sites, firstly to identify the communication needs of their young people, and then to support them in adapting research tools to best suit these needs.
- **The need to produce tangible learning on an on-going basis:** This evaluation seeks to provide valuable and tangible learning throughout the course of the three year programme to help projects reflect upon their successes and challenges and to learn from each others' experiences in delivering opportunities for independent socialising for disabled children and young people. Producing learning is central to our approach and the evaluation team have been and will continue to play an active role in the learning events throughout the three year programme.

### 3.2. Design and stages of year 1 evaluation

#### Evaluation framework

During the initial stage of evaluation design, different research methodologies were considered in order to devise the best approach in light of the important challenges and considerations laid out above.

The overall approach, as set out below draws together sources of evidence from different stakeholder groups: young people engaged with the projects, parents/carers and project staff in order to build up a robust and detailed assessment of the impact of the programme over the course of its three year life span. It combines research undertaken directly by OPM and Blake Stevenson, as well as research undertaken by project staff, who have received training and support from the evaluation team.

#### Mapping outcomes

As stated in the introduction, this evaluation seeks to measure the impact of the Fun and Friendship programme on participants' wellbeing. Wellbeing is a highly subjective concept and for the purposes of this evaluation is conceptualised within the programme outcomes for young people. These are:

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1. Having fun and a good time
  2. Developing confidence and self-esteem
  3. Making and meeting friends
  4. Being independent

To ensure each of the projects' objectives and outcomes were adequately reflected within the evaluation, project plans were analysed and individual project level outcomes mapped against the four main areas of the evaluation. The output from this stage was a clear map of how project level outcomes align with the four programme-level outcome areas. These four areas, taken together, form the conceptual framework for wellbeing and the evaluation.

Following this process a bank of indicators and associated questions were developed. There were a number of fixed summary questions (five in total covering the four outcome domains) which all projects asked their young people and parents/carers and also a range of supplementary questions under each of the outcome areas which projects could choose from. In this way the evaluation allowed for measures that were both fixed but also flexible.

### **Building relationships with projects and young people**

In order to design a range of research tools that would support the communication needs of young people across the ten projects, the evaluation design phase involved in-depth engagement with each individual project. Engagement also provided the opportunity to support staff in how best to undertake the data collection.

At the initial site visit project workers were asked to comment on how best to be responsive to communication needs amongst the young people and asked to give recommendations for how best to adjust the set of draft research tools developed so far. Similarly the views of young people were sought, where possible in order to be able to consider their preferences for completing research and engagement exercises.

Subsequent to the initial site visit, the set of research tools was adjusted according to the feedback and then presented back to the projects at a follow up visit, during which project workers were supported in how best to collect data from their young people.

## **Sampling**

Our sample aimed for 12 young people and their parents/carers to take part in the evaluation from each of the projects. In all, 111 young people took part. Some projects were not able to recruit 12 young people in January 2011 when the fieldwork started as they had not recruited sufficient numbers of young people to their projects by this time.

Young people taking part in the evaluation were chosen with the aim of being broadly reflective of the profile of young people taking part in each of the projects, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and disability type. Projects were asked to provide monitoring information about the demographics of young people taking part in each of their projects. The evaluation team then used these to create a bespoke sampling framework for each project. In cases where young people face multiple disabilities, the primary disability affecting the young person was considered for the purposes of sampling criteria.

The table below shows the overall numbers of participants taking part in the Fun and Friendship programme, and the profile of Fun and Friendship participants in terms of gender.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Male	239	58
Female	173	42
Total	412	100

**Total number of participants taking part in the Fun and Friendship programme in Year 1**

The table below sets out the profile of the Fun and Friendship participants, by impairment, who took part in the evaluation research. Young people were asked to select the category which best defined their impairment. In cases where young people were not able to answer this question, and when observation sheets were used, the project worker filled in this category.

<b>Impairment</b>	<b>Physical disability*</b>	<b>Learning disability</b>	<b>Physical and learning disability**</b>	<b>Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/ Aspergers</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>No. of survey respondents</b>	11	26	24	34	5	100
<b>No. of observation sheets completed</b>	1	1	9			11
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>111</b>

**Total number of participants taking part in the Fun and Friendship evaluation in Year 1 displayed by self-reported impairment**

\* This category includes young people with a sensory impairment.

\*\* This category includes young people with life-limiting illnesses.

The tables below show the profile of Fun and Friendship participants, by gender and by age, who took part in the evaluation research.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Male	67	60
Female	44	40

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Total	111	100
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**Number of participants taking part in the Fun and Friendship evaluation in Year 1 by gender**

Age	No.	(%)
10-13	40	36
14-15	32	29
16+	29	26
No response	10	9
Total	111	100

**Number of participants taking part in the Fun and Friendship evaluation in Year 1 by age**

As far as possible the sample taking part in the evaluation reflects the profiles of young people taking part in the Fun and Friendship programme overall. However, in one case a project was unable to meet the specified sampling profile due to challenges in recruiting participants. Given that this was only one case it should not affect the extent to which research responses are able to reflect perceptions of the Fun and Friendship participants overall.

## Data collection

The methods for data collection for this evaluation are:

- An **annual survey** either self-administered or completed with a project worker with a sample of **young people** across all ten projects exploring their experiences and outcomes. One hundred surveys were completed in Year 1;
- **Observation sheets** completed by parents or project staff where young people are unable to answer the survey questions. Eleven observation sheets were completed in Year 1;
- An **annual survey** with a sample of **parents/carers** exploring their experiences and observations relating to outcomes for their young person;
- A semi-structured interview into the **barriers and supporting factors** to independent socialising with the same sample of young people (n. 100). Respondents rate on a scale whether a factor is a barrier or a supporting factor or both and why this is;
- Follow up **qualitative research** within the projects exploring a particular theme in more depth e.g. independence<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> This research is currently being carried out by projects and will be reported on in due course.

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- A desk review of the **projects' six monthly** and **yearly reports** completed by project staff as part of their self evaluation.

### **Survey of young people**

This research tool is designed to provide evidence to answer the primary evaluation question: *How has the Fun and Friendship Programme contributed to a change in the wellbeing of the young people who are participating in the ten projects?* It aims to support participants to articulate ways in which the project has impacted upon their wellbeing, in relation to the four outcome domains.

The survey contains a list of questions about outcomes which the projects intend to work towards and asks the young people to rate the extent to which they agree that these outcomes have been met in their case.

The survey was designed to accommodate the needs of the young people across all of the projects. It contains a set of summary questions that are consistent across all projects. We also produced a 'question bank' of questions under each outcome area. Project leads were then asked to select questions which align most closely to their own planned activities and intended outcomes. In this way an approach that balanced the need for standardisation and flexibility aimed to be achieved.

### **Survey of parents and carers**

We designed a survey to be completed by the parent/carer of the young person taking part in the evaluation. The survey asked the five summary questions about outcomes asked of the young people across all projects as well as asking about barriers and supporting factors to socialising.

### **Barriers and supporting factors tool**

The second tool, designed for use with project participants provides evidence to answer the second key evaluation question. *What factors have had the most positive/negative effects on improving the quality of social experiences for the young disabled people?*

This tool is consistent across all projects, asking the young people to rate how supportive or how limiting a range of factors is in allowing them to see their friends and have fun. The tool allows for open-ended responses too so young people can say why a factor is particularly helpful or not.

### **Analysis of project reports**

We undertook a desk review and analysis of project reports using relevant data to contextualise and illuminate the findings on outcomes and barriers/supporting factors.

### **Analysis and reporting**

This evaluation does not seek to make comparisons about the relative effectiveness and impact of projects on outcomes for young people due to the diversity of the different individuals the projects are working with. Rather, the evaluation seeks to report on the overall impact on wellbeing of the Fun and Friendship programme on those young people taking part in the evaluation.

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Analysis of data was predominantly conducted on the basis of self reported impairment type across the following categories:

- physically disabled young people
- learning disabled young people
- young people who had both learning and physical disabilities
- young people with Aspergers and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

As previously noted, caution in interpreting differences across these groups needs to be exercised as the groupings are broad and numbers of young people within the different groups are fairly small.

Cross tabulations have been run according to gender and age to identify if there are any differences relating to these variables. With a couple of exceptions (which are reported on) there were no noticeable differences emerging at this stage relating to age and gender in the survey. However, it is worth noting that the age range of the projects spans 12-18 where there are likely to be significant differences in terms of interests, issues and experiences facing this group. For example, independence may become increasingly important as a teenager grows towards the age of 18. How age could have an effect on outcomes and wellbeing issues will be explored in more depth in the qualitative research.

We also investigated whether it was feasible to analyse findings according to ethnicity. The overall sample for the evaluation totals 111 and out of that total there are 20 young people that define their ethnic category other than White British. Consequently, there were not enough respondents from black and minority ethnic groups to conduct an analysis by ethnicity.

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## 4. Findings on wellbeing

This chapter presents findings relating to the four outcome areas that together constitute 'wellbeing'. These outcomes are:

1. Having fun and a good time
2. Confidence and self esteem
3. Meeting and making friends
4. Being independent

Our findings draw primarily from the surveys of young people, together with observation sheets completed by parents and project staff where young people are unable to respond to the survey questions. The report also considers the findings from the surveys completed by parents, which both complement and contrast the voice of the young people themselves. Findings are based on self-reports and caution should be exercised in this respect.

Our analysis highlights salient differences in outcomes across different impairment types. We also report notable differences in outcomes according to the age and gender of the young people.

Overall findings in relation to wellbeing are presented below, and these are followed by more detailed findings in relation to each of the four outcomes in turn.

### Key findings: Wellbeing

- The majority of young people score themselves highly across the four wellbeing areas. This view is supported by high scores from parents/carers across the four areas. Young people tend to score themselves most highly on the first outcome of having fun and a good time. Young people also score themselves highly on feeling confident and good about themselves as a result of being part of the project.
- Outcomes relating to making and meeting friends and independence are still high but score less highly in comparison to the first two. This may mean that outcomes are harder to achieve in these areas or take more time to realise.
- There are some differences to the extent to which the four areas of wellbeing are scored by different impairment groups. Responses from young people with both a learning and a physical disability are less high across all of the four wellbeing areas. This group includes young people with life limiting illnesses. Lower scores for this group could be indicative of the additional challenges faced by this group.
- Young people with learning disabilities are especially positive about the perceived benefits of the programme. This group tends to give comparatively high scores across all of the outcome areas. Caution should be exercised in drawing firm conclusions from this, given that young people with learning disabilities may be more likely to respond positively

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<sup>10</sup> The tendency for people with learning disabilities to respond more positively than non-learning disabled people in research has been noted in this study: Rapley, M and Antaki, C (1996) A conversation analysis of the 'acquiescence' of people with learning disabilities', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 6(3), pp. 207-227.

in research and evaluation contexts in general<sup>10</sup>.

- There are less noticeable differences according to age and gender of the young people.

Young people and parents were asked to say whether they disagreed, agreed or were neutral on the following questions:

#### **Having fun and a good time**

- “I have fun and a good time when I come here”
- “When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time.”

#### **Confidence and self esteem**

- “Being part of this projects means I feel more confident and good about myself. “
- “Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves.”

#### **Meeting and making friends**

- “I have made new friends at this project.”
- “This project means I can spend more time with my friends.”
- “My son/daughter/young person has met and made friends by being part of this project.”

#### **Being independent**

- “This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do”.
- “This project helps my son/daughter/young person do more of the fun things they want to do.”

The table below shows the aggregated responses from the 100 young people that answered the survey and their parents/carers to the wellbeing questions. More detailed tables showing the responses broken down by outcome area can be found in the Appendix 1.

<b>Impairment type</b>	<b>Disagree / Strongly disagree %</b>	<b>Neither agree/ Disagree %</b>	<b>Agree / Strongly agree %</b>
Physical disability (young person)	5	11	83
Physical disability (parent/carer)	0	8	92
Learning disability (young person)	2	2	96
Learning disability (parent/carer)	1	3	96
Learning and physical disability (young person)	7	15	78
Learning and physical disability (parent/carer)	3	10	87
ASD (young person)	2	13	85

ASD (parent/carer)	5	15	80
Other disability (young person)	4	0	96
Other disability (parent/carer)	5	10	85

The table shows high aggregated scores across all impairment groups for young people and parents/carers. The report now considers the findings in more detail.

## 4.1 Having fun and a good time

To understand the extent to which young people are having fun and a good time as part of their involvement in the ten projects, all survey participants were asked to give a score on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being 'strongly agree' and 1 being 'strongly disagree') to signal how far they agree with the statement:

*"I have fun and a good time when I come here".*

Parents of participants were also asked to give a score, on the same scale, to indicate their agreement with the statement:

*"When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time."*

### Key findings: Having fun and a good time

- Participants in the Fun and Friendship programme report that they have fun and a good time when they attend the project. This indicates young people and parents/carers enjoy the provision offered by the projects.
- Young people with learning disabilities report that they have fun and a good time to an even greater extent than other groups of young people. Conversely, those with both a physical and a learning disability were less likely to score themselves as highly on this particular outcome.
- Self reported high scores to begin with sets a high standard. High scores could indicate a number of things: scores may reflect the fact that young people had limited opportunities or experience of fun and friendship before being involved in this project; they may reflect excitement at the beginning of a project; and, also be an indication of the quality of provision.
- We would expect the scores to fluctuate over the three years for a number of reasons. Scores could easily go down in year two when the novelty of the project has worn off or when possibly some friendships do not work out. Changes in scores will need to be explored carefully making use of project self evaluation reports and qualitative research.
- It will be important to explore in Years 2 and 3 whether having fun and a good time extends beyond the provision of the project, thereby having a more sustainable impact on young people's wellbeing.

Responses from young people themselves about the extent to which they have fun and a good time when taking part in the ten projects are, in the main, very positive indeed. The mode calculated from all evaluation participants is 5, indicating the extent to which young

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people are already, in year 1, enjoying the provision that is offered to them in the ten projects. Only one young person disagreed with the statement, while four (out of the total of 100 respondents) gave a neutral response (i.e. a score of three, indicating that they neither disagree nor agree that they have fun and a good time at the projects).

For those young people who were not able to respond to the survey questions, our evaluation draws on evidence submitted by project staff through observations. This supports the conclusion that these young people are also having fun and a good time taking part in the Fun and Friendship programme. For example one project staff member said of a young person:

*“She really enjoyed the time that she spent at youth group, taking part in activities with a great big grin on her face.”* Observation sheet, completed by project staff

Project staff note that in the case of some of the young people they work with, the strongest indication they have that they are enjoying themselves is that they participate as opposed to opting out, as in the example below:

*“She takes part in the craft and sensory activities. If she wasn't enjoying herself she would have refused to co-operate.”* Observation sheet, completed by project staff

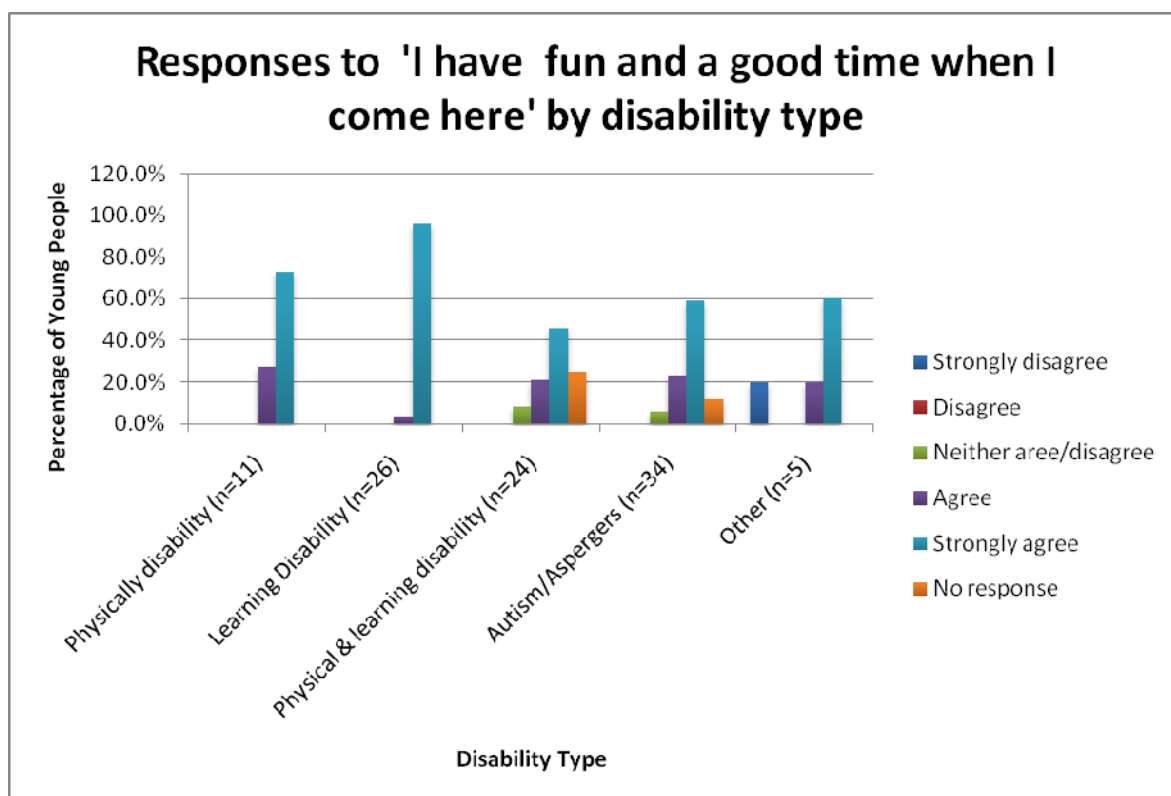
However, observation sheets also point to the fact that for some young people, their enjoyment of activities may initially be hampered by anxiety experienced when away from parents/primary carers:

*“Enjoyed it at the start, but maybe a bit anxious because mum isn't here.”* Observation sheet, completed by project staff

There is a suggestion that for the most profoundly disabled young people with complex needs, having fun and a good time away from their home may be more challenging. This may be related to their reliance on primary carers. However, this group of young people may have more experience of respite care than other groups of disabled young people. Having fun is an outcome that is enthusiastically reported by many participants. It will be interesting to see whether this outcome is achieved or takes longer to achieve for the most severely disabled young people.

Learning disabled participants appear to enjoy the provision offered by the Fun and Friendship projects to an even greater extent than young people with other impairments. Indeed, those with a learning disability were most likely to give a score of 5 for this question. Almost all (96%, n=25,) of the 26 young people with a learning disability gave the highest score for this outcome. Meanwhile, those with both a learning disability and a physical disability were least likely to give themselves the highest score on this outcome, with just less than half (46%, n=11) of the 24 young people in this group doing so.

Figure 1 below illustrates the differences by impairment type.



**Figure 1: Responses to 'I have fun and a good time when I come here', by disability type**

The overall message that the majority of young people are having fun and a good time as a result of their involvement in the Fun and Friendship project is corroborated by opinions of parents, who responded equally positively to questions about whether their son/daughter has fun whilst attending projects. The quotation below from one parent shows the impact of the project on her daughter's level of happiness overall:

*"My daughter's attitude has completely changed. She is so much happier and loves going to the film club and youth club."* Observation sheet, completed by mother of participant

The vast majority of parents/carers across all projects strongly agree that their child/young person has fun and a good time when they attend their Fun and Friendship project. Only two parents (both of young people with ASD) gave a neutral response (neither agree/disagree) to the idea of their young person having fun and a good time.

Some of the projects also chose to ask their young people the additional question:

*"How do you feel when you think about coming to this project?"*

Respondents were given a choice of words to use to respond:

*"Happy", "Sad", "Worried", "Excited", "Scared", "Comfortable"* or they could write in their own word.

Almost across the board, young people responded positively, with only five young people indicating any negative emotion. The most commonly chosen word was 'happy'.

Interestingly, the same finding applies to the young people with learning and physical disability who scored themselves slightly lower in the previous question around having fun and a good time, but were most likely to indicate that they felt happy as part of the Fun and Friendship project. Indeed, two thirds of the young people chose this word to represent their

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feelings at the project. This appears to suggest that while young people with both a physical and a learning disability may not score themselves as highly as other groups, they none the less enjoy the projects and have a good time while in attendance.

## 4.2 Confidence and self esteem

Young people were asked to report on how their confidence and self-esteem is affected by their involvement in the project. Participants were asked to give a score on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being 'strongly agree' and 1 being 'strongly disagree') to signal how far they agree with the statement:

*"Being part of this projects means I feel more confident and good about myself. "*

Rather than using the term self-esteem within the survey question, 'feeling good about myself' was decided to be a more accessible way of communicating this concept to young people. Parents of participants were also asked to give a score, on the same scale, to indicate their agreement with the statement:

*"Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves."*

### **Key findings: Confidence and self-esteem**

- Results from the first year of the evaluation suggest that young people involved in Fun and Friendship are being supported to grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- However, self reports on whether being part of a Fun and Friendship projects leads to feeling more confident are slightly lower than self reports of having fun and a good time. This suggests building confidence and self esteem may be slightly more challenging an outcome to achieve than having fun.
- Young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) tend to be less positive when reporting on their overall growth in confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, their parents also express more reservation in relation to this outcome, tending to score this particular outcome lower than other parent groups.
- Although young people with ASD are less likely than other participants to report feeling more confident *overall*, this group of young people did report feeling more confident around other young people.

Young people taking part in Fun and Friendship indicate that they feel as though the projects are making a positive impact upon their levels of confidence and self-esteem. When asked how far they agreed that the projects had supported them to feel more confident, participants responded highly positively, with an average score across all projects of 4.4 (out of a total possible 5), and a mode of 5.

Over half of all respondents (55%, n=55) gave a maximum score of 5, and only 13% (n=13) of young people scored a 3 or less. The fact most young people report the positive impact their involvement in the project has on the way they feel about themselves underlines the important role projects have in building confidence and self-esteem for participants.

Evidence from observation sheets shows the incremental growth in young people's self-esteem and confidence through their involvement and interaction with project staff and other young people. The quotation below shows an example of the growth in confidence for one young person with physical and learning disabilities:

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*“She has begun to engage with other young people when they speak to her. She has developed confidence to be able to ask others for help with tasks.”* Observation sheet, completed by project staff

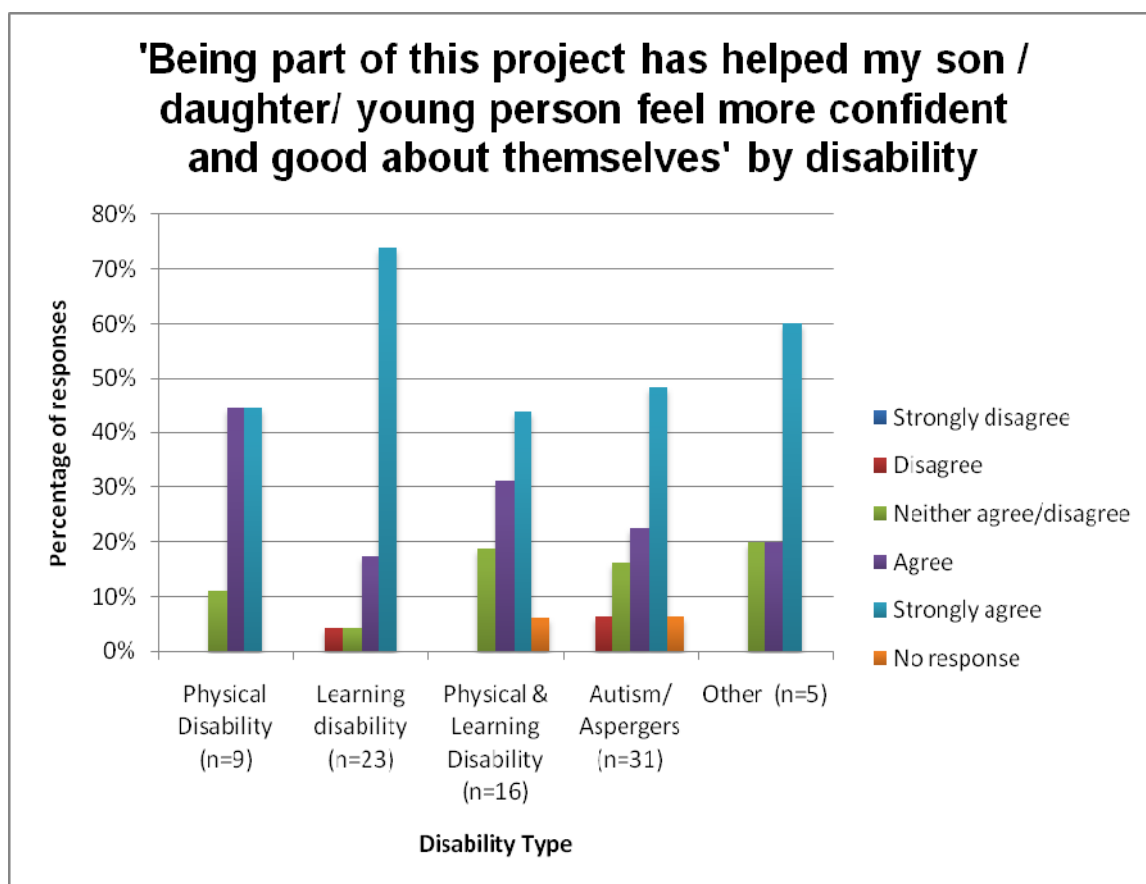
This demonstrates very clearly the importance of building confidence which, in turn, can support young people to be able to interact with others and achieve a greater degree of independence from carers.

However, there are greater levels of participants who chose not to answer this question (just over one tenth, 11%, n=11) within the survey, and higher numbers of neutral and/or negative scores (i.e. 3 and below) compared to the outcome related to having fun. This could indicate that changes in confidence and self-esteem may be more challenging to achieve than providing young people with a good time, and will require a greater time span to emerge more fully. These scores may also suggest that understanding and self assessments of confidence and self esteem may be harder for young people to make, than those about fun.

The perceptions of parents/carers corroborate the findings relating to confidence and self-esteem. Just under nine out of ten parents/carers (87%, n=87) agreed or strongly agreed that the Fun and Friendship project helps their young person to feel more confident and good about themselves. Parents were also asked in an open question to identify any significant changes in their young person since they had been attending the project. The most commonly noted difference amongst parents, across all impairment types related to increased confidence and/or self-esteem.

Analysing feelings about confidence and self-esteem by the different impairment types yields some important differences. Young people with learning disabilities most strongly agreed with the statement, with eight out of ten (81%, n=21) in this group giving themselves a maximum score of 5. Meanwhile, young people with ASD were most likely to neither agree nor disagree with this statement, potentially showing the challenges that they have in feeling confident and also in identifying their own levels of confidence.

Looking at differences in responses from parents, as represented in Figure 2 below, these findings about differences by impairment type are once again supported:



**Figure 2: Parents' responses to 'Being part of this project has helped my young person feel more confident and good about themselves' by disability type**

Amongst parents of young people with learning disabilities, almost three quarters (74%, n=17) strongly agreed that their young person's participation in Fun and Friendship had resulted in increased confidence. Amongst parents of young people with ASD, the figure was lower at just under half (49%, n=15). The reasons for this difference are not clear at this stage. Differences could be for a number of reasons. They could be based on young people with ASD, and their parents, engaging more critically with survey questions and assessing outcomes in a more measured way. Another possible explanation is that increased confidence for young people with ASD has not fully transpired at this stage or is less easily recognised.

### Feeling confident amongst other young people

There is an interesting caveat to the findings around confidence for young people with ASD. An additional survey question, chosen by five of the projects asked young people to either agree or disagree with the statement:

*"I feel more confident being with other young people than I did before I came here."*

In response, participants could say "yes", "no" "maybe" or "don't know". Looking specifically at the responses of young people with ASD, two fifths of the group (41%, n=14) responded positively, which was the highest out of any impairment group. This might be explained by looking at the context of projects for young people with ASD. The self evaluation reports submitted by one project working with young people with ASD highlights that for some young people with ASD attending a specific project for young people with ASD can often be the first

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time they have socialised with other young people with ASD. As a result, the self evaluation report suggests young people can feel comparatively more confident in these settings. It is possible that when answering this particular question, participants were drawing on experiences socialising with peers. However, there is not strong evidence at this stage, that the confidence felt by participants with ASD within their projects is translating to a wider sense of confidence and self-esteem. Whether these benefits translate to a wider environment and how projects can assist with this may be an interesting research topic for Year 2 or 3.

## The role of projects in building confidence and self-esteem

The self evaluation reports completed by projects provide evidence of some of the ways in which projects work to support growth in young people's confidence and self-esteem.

### Young people's participation

The Fun and Friendship programme places a high emphasis on young people's voice and decision making being at the centre of how projects work and develop. There is evidence that a number of the projects embrace these principles. This is one way in which projects can build young people's confidence and self esteem, by valuing their voice and opinions. Indeed the Yard's self evaluation notes:

*"Staff have observed that many of the young people's self confidence and social skills have improved through having their own club and deciding what they want to do."* The Yard, self-evaluation, May 2011

Other projects tap into participants' preferences through alternative routes, such as questionnaires. Chestnut Tree House has used this mechanism which their self evaluation report suggests gives *"the young people decision-making powers."*

### Skills development

A number of the projects include a more overt focus on developing young people's skills, helping young people to realise their own capabilities and grow in confidence and self-esteem. The WAC project at the Performing Arts and Media College in North London has focused heavily on developing media skills. As part of this, young people have been given opportunities to use their skills in practical settings and show case them to other people. For example, young people from WAC have acted as 'roving reporters' at events and award ceremonies. The project reported how this has helped them to build confidence in social interactions and has boosted self-esteem.

*"Real improvement in confidence, with each external visit building experience in different social contexts, and behaving appropriately in these wide range of settings."* WAC project self-evaluation, May 2011

## 4.3 Making and meeting friends

Participants were asked both about the extent to which they have made new friends as part of the programme, and the extent to which they have been able to spend more time with their existing friends. Participants were asked to give a score on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being 'strongly agree' and 1 being 'strongly disagree') to signal how far they agree with the following two statements:

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*“I have made new friends at this project.”*

*“This project means I can spend more time with my friends.”*

Parents were also asked to comment on the outcomes around friendship. They were asked how far they agree with the statement (again, using a 1-5 scale):

*“My son/daughter/young person has met and made friends by being part of this project.”*

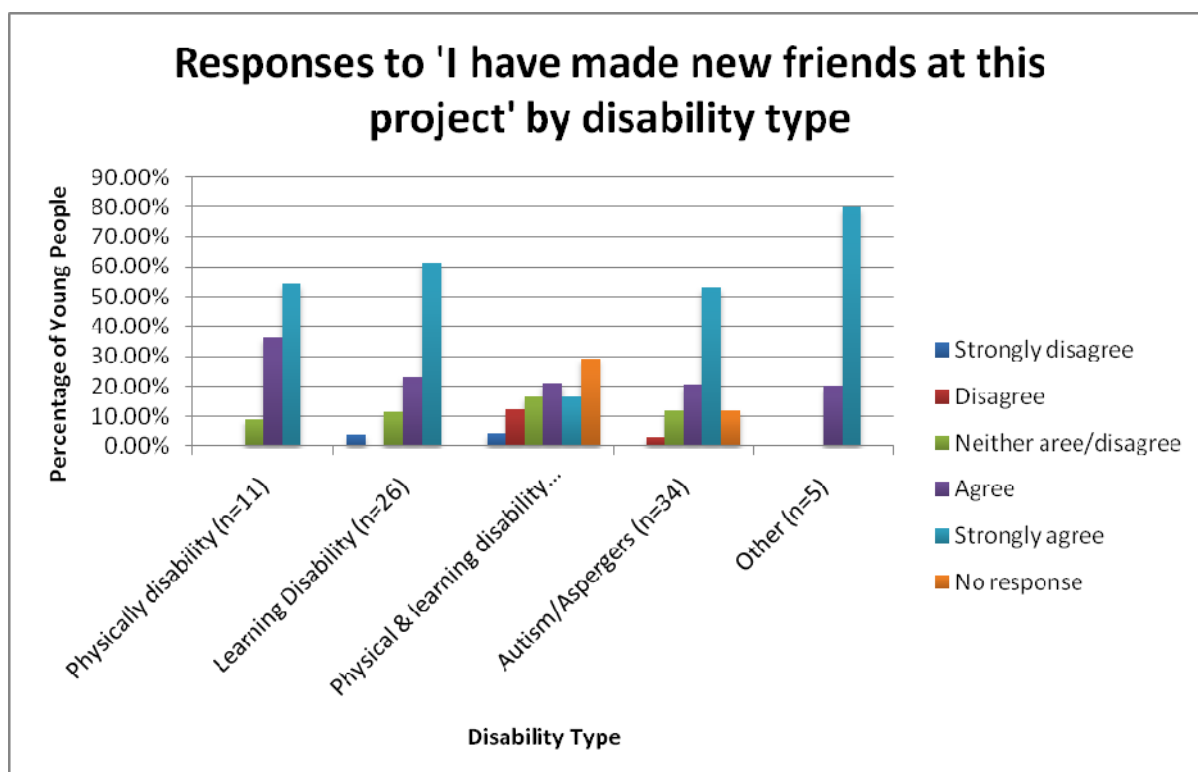
#### **Key findings: Making and meeting friends**

- At the time of this research the majority of young people report having both made new friends and spent more time with existing friends as part of their involvement in the projects.
- Young people with both learning and physical disabilities are less likely to feel as though they have made new friends as part of this programme, indicating the additional challenges in meeting this outcome for this group. This finding is corroborated by data from parents.
- Young people are less positive about the impact of the project on helping them spend more time with their friends overall. Self reports are higher for young people being able to spend more time with friends at the project.
- These findings could suggest that the friendships developed by young people through taking part in Fun and Friendship projects are, at the moment, largely limited to contact with projects. Furthermore, findings could suggest that friendships may take time to become transferable to young people’s lives outside of project provision. More in-depth qualitative work on how friendships form and develop could be beneficial to shed light on this matter.

### **Making new friends**

Young people were asked to indicate how far they felt they have made new friends at this project. The majority of young people scored this question highly, with a mode across all participants of 5, on a scale of 1-5. Survey responses from parents support these findings. Overall, parents strongly support the idea that their young person had made friends at the Fun and Friendship project, with over four fifths of all parents surveyed (83%, n=83) agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Looking at the responses to this question by impairment type (as set out in Figure 3 below) reveals some interesting questions about the limitations experienced by certain groups of young people. On the one hand, young people with a learning disability scored themselves most highly on this outcome, with the majority of this group (62%, n=16), agreeing strongly that they had made friends as a result of being part of this project. Similarly, those with physical disability also scored themselves highly, suggesting that they have been able to form new friendships with other young people on their projects. On the other hand, less than one fifth (17%, n=4) of young people with a physical and a learning disability agreed strongly with the proposition, and 17% (n=4) of this group neither agreed nor disagreed.



**Figure 3: Responses to 'I have made new friends at this project' by impairment type**

The lower scores given by young people with physical and learning disabilities may well be reflective of the greater number of challenges faced by this group in socialising independently. Differences could also relate to the difference in outcomes achieved by different projects.

However, looking at observation sheets completed for individuals with both learning and physical disabilities that could not complete the survey, there are some obvious signs of development in terms of social interaction, which underline the fact that these young people have benefitted from the provision offered by the Fun and Friendship programme, but not always in a way that would be characterised as “making new friends”. Project staff note that young people who are severely limited in their communication abilities have demonstrated their interaction with other young people in various ways. For example, through “happy expressions”, “learning to say hello by waving” and most obviously by participating and joining in with games. These indicators are particularly interesting given that some of these young people were originally more resistant to being in group settings:

*“She comes across as being comfortable and relaxed when she attends the club nowadays, and less anxious around other young people than what she was on the first day.”* Observation sheet, project staff

Responses from parents in relation to the outcome of making friends also corroborate the above findings by impairment type. Parents of young people with a learning disability were also the group most likely to strongly agree with this proposition, with 65% (n=15) giving the highest score of 5 in response to this question. Meanwhile parents of young people with a physical and a learning disability were most likely to respond negatively to this statement, with almost a third (32%, n=5) either disagreeing or unable to disagree/agree. Similarly, over a quarter (26%, n=8) of parents of young people with ASD gave a score of three or less in response to the proposition that their son/daughter has made friends as part of this project.

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Parents were also asked to respond to the question:

*“Have you noticed any difference in your son/daughter/ young person since they started coming to this project?”*

And then to explain what difference if any they had noted. Parents of young people with ASD were most likely to mention their young person being more sociable and outgoing, or being better at interacting with young people. This response indicates that while parents of young people with ASD may be more cautious about reporting new friendships as an outcome at this stage, many parents are already noticing changes in their young person which could suggest that friendships are more likely to develop in the future.

## Spending more time with friends

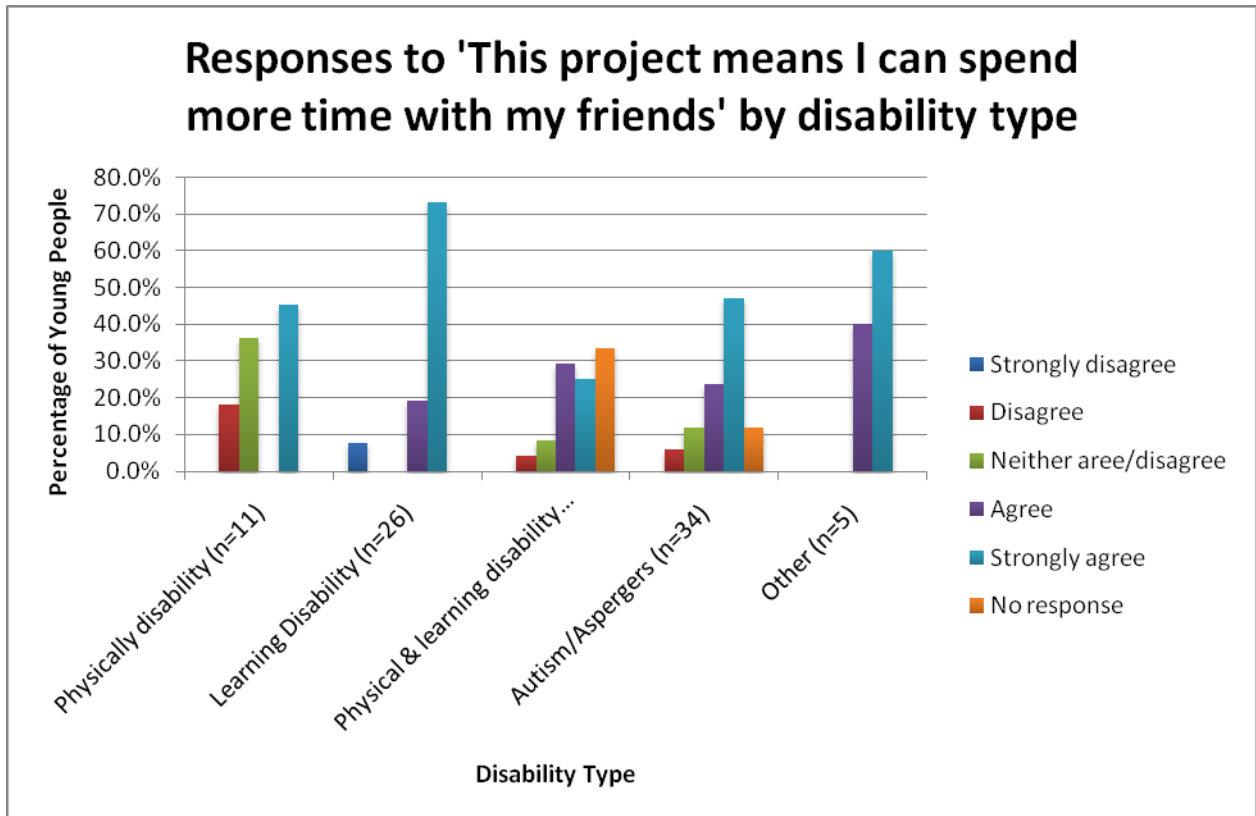
Self reports from young indicate they are able to spend more time with friends as a result of taking part in the Fun and Friendship projects. Asked to score this statement on a scale of 1-5, the mode was 5. Whilst the survey data does not state how this was achieved, it is likely that young people spend more time with friends, either because they spend time with their friends at the projects, or else because the projects have supported them to socialise independently outside of the projects. In order to sustain the positive impacts of the Fun and Friendship programme, it will be important to encourage the latter outcome. There is already some evidence of this, reported by projects’ self-evaluations. For example, the Scottish Spina Bifida Association report notes:

*“We are pleased to see that new friendships have been established outside of school and that the young people themselves are initiating communication and social interaction with their peers “* Scottish Spina Bifida Association, self evaluation report, May 2011.

In the future the evaluation will seek to understand in more depth the extent to which young people are able to socialise outside of project specific provision, and what support needs to be put in place to encourage this.

However, it is important to note that a converse outcome is possible, with young people possibly finding it harder to spend time with their friends as a result of their involvement in the project. Overall, one fifth of young people (20%, n=20) responded either neutrally or negatively to this question, indicating that they do not necessarily spend more time with friends. This could be because attending the project has made no difference to this outcome. It may also be that for some young people, the commitments of the Fun and Friendship projects could detract from time that they have to spend with other friends. It could also signal that at this stage, young people do not define other young people at the project as their friend(s).

Looking at how far young people have been able to spend more time with friends overall as a result of taking part in Fun and Friendship, there are some interesting distinctions according to impairment type, as set out in Figure 4 below:



**Figure 4: Responses to 'This project means I can spend more time with my friends', by impairment type**

As the above graph indicates, this outcome is particularly prevalent amongst young people with a learning disability. This group gave a significantly higher positive response to this question, with almost three quarters (73%, n=19) strongly agreeing with the proposition, compared to just over half for young people with ASD and with a physical disability (47%, n=16 and 46%, n=5 respectively). It may be that the higher 'no response' scores for people with a physical and learning disability to this question mean they did not understand the question or it was not meaningful to them. It could also mean that this group is less likely to see other young people at the project as their friends.

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## 4.4 Independence

The evaluation explored the concept of independence in two main ways. Firstly, through the survey of young people and parents/carers. Secondly, through projects undertaking qualitative research with the young people engaged with their project.

### Key findings: Independence

- Young people on the Fun and Friendship programme conceptualise 'independence' in a wide variety of ways. The qualitative research shows independence can mean: doing something for oneself; personal space; and making choices.
- At the time this research was carried out the majority of young people and parents taking part in the survey reported that the projects help them 'to do more of the things that they want to do'.
- Young people with ASD were more likely than other young people when answering the survey to report they felt the project helped them do more of the things they wanted to do. However, differences in responses between groups may be to do with the degree to which all of the young people understood this survey question.
- Of all the four outcomes, independence was the most challenging to measure and report on through a survey-style methodology and therefore qualitative research was also undertaken by the projects.
- The qualitative research showed that peer support such as buddies and mentors and developing young people's confidence and self esteem through taking part in activities helped young people to become more independent.

### Survey findings

To understand how far young people are progressing towards a greater level of independence as part of their involvement with Fun and Friendship, survey participants were asked to give a score on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being 'strongly agree' and 1 being 'strongly disagree') to signal how far they agree with the following statement:

*"This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do".*

Independence is a complex concept and difficult to measure. The word is likely to mean different things to different people. This may be particularly the case for young disabled people who may be less accustomed or able to do things completely on their own in certain cases. Therefore 'doing things that I want to do' was chosen as a proxy for independence; one which could resonate more with the young people across all of the projects.

Some projects, which were more confident that their young people could relate to the term, 'independence', also chose to ask the question of their young people:

*"What does independence mean to you?"* and

*"Does being at this project make you feel more or less independent?"*

### Doing more of the things I want to do

The majority of young people reported that taking part in their Fun and Friendship project has enabled them to do more of the fun things they want to do. Young people across all

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impairment groups most commonly gave themselves a 5 (a mode of 5). This finding suggests that, as a result of the Fun and Friendship programme, young people have more opportunities to exercise choice in terms of their free time.

However what the survey results do not illuminate, at this stage, is whether young people are doing more of the fun things that they want to do solely as part of the Fun and Friendship projects, or outside of the projects as well. This question is explored in more depth in the next section of analysis below.

Observation sheets for young people with more profound disabilities attest to the ways in which their independence is being developed in similarly meaningful ways:

*“He is using picture cards to participate more fully in making choices about the activities he does.”* Observation sheet, completed by project staff

*“She has taken part in activities to the best of her ability with help from a buddy. Because of her limited mobility she needs help to take part in activities, but she enjoys feeling and choosing materials and colours she wants to use.”* Observation sheet, completed by project staff

These quotations underscore the importance of understanding independence, not just in terms of ‘doing things for one’s self’, but in having as great a degree of choice and control as possible. A point supported by the qualitative research undertaken by projects.

Looking at how the different groups of disabled young people respond to the question of growing independence, once again, young people with a learning disability are most likely to respond highly positively. Nine out of ten (89%, n=23) people in this group gave themselves a score of five in relation to this question, while the remainder (11%, n=3) gave a score of four. None of the young people with learning disabilities gave either a neutral or a negative response. In comparison, 15% (n=5) of the ASD group responded neutrally to this proposition, not agreeing or disagreeing with it and 55% (n=19) strongly agreed with it. One possible interpretation of this difference is that young people with ASD are in many cases capable of doing things the fun things that they enjoy, on their own. Yet, as a project worker explained during a visit from the evaluation team, where young people they work with may need support from projects is in doing more of the things that they enjoy with other people, thereby helping to develop social skills and interaction.

### **Different meanings of independence**

Six projects asked their young people to select what being independent means to them within a set of options:

- more time away from my family;
- doing things with my friends;
- learning new things;
- having more choice over my life;
- being able to get around;
- other.

There was a wide spread of answers given in response, with no one definitive option emerging strongly. The most common response to this question, given by over a quarter of respondents (26%, n=28) was ‘Doing things with my friends’. Survey responses suggest this

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was particularly important for young people with both physical and learning disabilities, who were most likely out of all the groups to give this response. This reinforces the importance of projects focusing on supporting young people to build social relationships that are sustained outside of the projects and independent of family/carers, where this is possible. This response was closely followed by 'More time away from my family' which was given by just under a quarter of all participants (23%, n=25) and 'Having more choice over my life' (20%, n=22). The breadth of the concept 'independence' and the many ways in which it may be understood, may make it more challenging for young people to understand how far they have developed in this regard, as outlined below.

Following on from the question about what independence means to them, the survey asks participants whether they felt more or less independent as a result of being at the project. Interestingly, a very high percentage of the young people (more than two fifths: 45%, n=45) did not answer this question. This may point to the fact that participants struggled to make an assessment on this question. However, amongst those who were able to give a response, 8% (n=8) chose "not sure" and 8% (n=8) indicated that they felt the same in terms of their level of independence. This could indicate the more extensive challenges associated with supporting young people to develop independence. Only one young person indicated that they felt less independent as a result of the project.

Comparing the survey data on independence from different groups of young people, it is interesting to note that there is a more positive response to the question of independence from those young people with ASD. Indeed, over half of those with ASD (53%, n=18) reported feeling more independent and this was the highest proportion of any of the impairment groups, followed by those with learning disabilities at 42% (n=11).

It is also interesting to note that boys were more likely to report feeling more independent as a result of being part of their projects (43%, n=29), compared to girls (27%, n=12). Without more in-depth exploration of this topic it is hard to know why this would be the case, but it raises the question about the impact of Fun and Friendship for girls and boys. This is an area for possible further exploration through years 2 and 3 of delivery and evaluation.

## Findings from qualitative research

### Getting to grips with independence

Given the high proportion of no responses to one of the survey questions on independence and the different ways young people conceptualised independence, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the achievement of greater independence from the survey data.

For these reasons, the evaluation team and the Fun and Friendship programme team asked projects to conduct some more in-depth qualitative research within each of their projects over the months of August and September 2011. This took a more open-ended and exploratory approach to the topic of independence and the findings are reported below.

### How projects did the research

Following on from analysis of the survey information gathered in January/February 2011 the evaluation team asked each project to explore what independence meant for their young people through gathering qualitative evidence. The evaluation team left it flexible as to what kind of evidence would be gathered, providing each project with support and suggestions.

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The ten projects presented the evidence they had gathered at the Learning Event held in Edinburgh in September 2011 and this section of the report provides a summary of the main findings.

The projects used a variety of methods to gather evidence from the young people they work with. This included:

- reflective diaries and a “Big Brother” Diary Room
- drawings and animations
- animations the young people had made around the subject of independence
- films showing the young people engaged in some of their activities for example musical activities
- drama to explore independence
- one to one interviews reflecting on a young person’s journey

Overall the evidence provided a rich testimony to the ways in which independence has been supported through the Fun and Friendship programme and highlighted some of the issues facing young people as they move towards independence.

### **Views and feelings about independence**

Independence and what it means is as diverse as the young people themselves. Young people spoke about it or expressed thoughts on independence in a number of ways.

Being able to make decisions for themselves was seen by many young people as important in achieving greater independence. For one young person this was about taking charge of and spending her own money. Another young person commented that it is about doing “*what I want to do*” and another echoed this with “*I can be in charge of my own life and do the stuff I want to do*”. For some young people who have very complex conditions “making decisions” may in fact be about exercising choices of a fairly limited nature but these are still important and provide that young person with some independence of mind. Similarly young people without verbal communication can find other methods to make their wishes known such as pushing unwanted items away, smiling and laughing and using Makaton symbols and communication aids.

Several young people spoke about independence linked to growing up and “*feeling like an adult*” and another referred to independence as “*feeling powerful*”. One young person said:

*“I feel I want to be in charge - not bossed about by mum!”*

Growing up was linked for some to planning for jobs in the future and facing the fact that their parents would not always be there.

For some young people being physically independent is always going to be problematic because of the condition they have. But some talked about independence of mind and spirit and how this is important too. There were also examples of what independence can mean when the opportunities for it are fairly restricted due to the young person’s condition. For example, for one young person independence was about “*being in bed, alone, outside the restrictions of any other person*” and another young person echoed this when they talked about “*being able to have my own space*”.

One of the themes coming out of the evidence was of the fears around becoming independent: it can feel scary. For example some young people said they feared travelling on

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their own as “*I might get kidnapped*” or “*I might get lost*”. Others feared what it would mean to be independent and that they might feel alone: others that going out or meeting new people was scary. There are a lot of challenges around the process of becoming independent that most teenagers face. But one young person reflected as follows:

*“Being independent doesn’t mean you have to do everything on your own or straight away”*

Being able to go at your own pace and have some control about the degree of independence was felt to be important. In another project young people and project staff reflected on interdependence and the need we all have for each other.

### **How independence has been supported**

The qualitative evidence showed that many young people have advanced in their own journey in relation to independence. Examples included the young person who has self-travelled to the project for the first time; the boy who states that he is able to attend a club on his own without his buddy now and has had a friend over to his house for the first time; to the young person who can use a manual chair independently; to the visual evidence supplied through the change in expression and behaviour between Day 1 and Day 5 of a Rock School where one young person was nervous and withdrawn on Day 1 and full of gusto taking part in a concert on Day 5.

The importance of peer support on the journey to independence was highlighted. For example the use of peer buddies to welcome and help someone get used to going to a club for the first time, and remaining as their buddy for as long as they need this support. There were several examples of peers supporting each other in various ways throughout the evidence provided and some reflection by young people that friendship is about giving support when it is needed.

The need to develop self-confidence and support self-esteem were highlighted as important on the journey to independence. Music and art activities have clearly played a part in helping interaction between young people as well as the intrinsic fun of doing them and learning new skills, such as swimming, were described as helping develop confidence. Another project highlighted the importance of learning life skills, such as cooking, as being important for the future as well as interactive and fun in the present. Going on trips, even if accompanied, was reported as a big step for some young people towards independence.

Parents had also witnessed the change in their young people. One mother whose child has increased significantly in confidence and independence over the course of the year said:

*“He’s like a butterfly opening his wings - he’ll be flying soon”.*

### **Barriers to independence**

Barriers to independence were expressed around overprotective parents and the very practical problem for some young people with Spina Bifida (that is not often discussed) of continence. Other barriers included being bullied or left out by other young people and the lack of availability of transport.

### **Implications for the evaluation**

In feedback given at the September Learning Event it is clear that the very act of gathering the evidence about independence has been useful and important to the work of the projects

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and has aided interaction and friendship. For example, building the Big Brother Diary Room and decorating it; working out drama sketches which were then recorded; and making the animation films. The projects commented that this has been a useful exercise for them too in working with their young people.

The evaluation will incorporate further opportunities for projects to gather qualitative evidence again next year around a theme emerging from the survey work in early 2012.

# 5. Barriers and supporting factors to socialising and seeing friends

This chapter presents findings from the evaluation about the barriers to independent socialising and the factors that can help and support, as reported by young people and parents/carers. The main evidence sources for this chapter are:

- Findings from the **barriers and supporting factors tool** with young people. This was a research tool which asked young people to rate on a negative and positive three point scale if different factors such as transport, money etc helped or prevented them from seeing friends and socialising and to explain why this was;
- Question 6 and 7 from the **parent/carers survey** which asked about what the top three barriers and supporting factors are for their young person to socialise;
- Six monthly and end of year **project reports**, which have been analysed to provide further insights/interpretation of the data about barriers. The report states clearly when data has come from the reports and not directly from young people or parents/carers.

Feedback from the projects suggests that young people found the barriers and supporting factors tool quite confusing to navigate. As such, our analysis focuses on the overall numbers of young people who rated a factor as a barrier or supporting factor, or both. We have not presented data relating to whether barriers or supporting factors were rated as big or small as these findings may be less reliable. Cross tabulations and analysis has been conducted by impairment type, gender and age. Where there are notable differences these are included.

The table below shows the responses from the young people who completed the tool, who rated a factor as supporting factor or barrier, or both. It should be noted that most of the young people rated a factor as both a supporting factor *and* a barrier.

Internal or external factor	Barrier (n)	Supporting factor (n)
Transport	59	90
School / education	53	82
Visiting places	40	83
Money	34	47
Family/ carer	46	88
How I feel	52	67
Other young people	55	74
What adults will think of me	29	76

People that work here	22	89
Other factors	28	29

All factors were rated by more young people as supporting them to socialise than acting as a barrier. This was most notable for transport, with 90 young people rating this as a supporting factor compared to 59 rating it as a barrier. The qualitative responses given by the young people shed light into how factors act both to support socialising and make it difficult.

The **most commonly identified barriers** by young people were:

- Transport (n=59)
- Other young people (n=55)
- School (n=53)
- How I feel (n=52)

In terms of **supporting factors**, the highest rated were:

- Transport (n=90)
- People that work here (n=89)
- Family/ carer (n=88)

There was some similarity between the barriers identified by young people and their parents/carers. In the parent/carer survey the **top three barriers** identified to fun and friendship for young people were:

1. Attitudes of other young people
2. Confidence/low self-esteem
3. Public transport

There were also some crossovers between the things that young people thought helped them to socialise and what their parents/carers thought. In the parent/carer survey the **top three supporting factors** were:

1. Staff working at projects
2. Confidence/ positive self-esteem
3. Parents or carers/ attitudes of other young people/ attitudes of staff at leisure facilities.

The rest of the chapter presents findings in more detail, with structural factors such as transport, money etc. presented first, followed by factors related to people such as family, levels of confidence and other people's attitudes.

## 5.1 Transport / getting around

Transport included experiences of public transport as well as getting lifts from parents and organisations.

### Key findings

- Transport was seen as both a supporting factor and a barrier to socialising. Overall young

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people were more likely to see transport as a supportive factor than a barrier.

- In contrast, transport was identified by parents/carers as one of the three top barriers to fun and friendship for their young person although the number of parents reporting this was relatively low (17%, n=17).
- Young people reported that being able to get around helped them to build up their independence and confidence.
- Whether parents/carers own a car and are able or willing to provide lifts for their young person makes a major difference as to how much young disabled people can get around and socialise.
- Where a young person lives is critical: young people in rural areas without access to public transport are more likely to feel isolated and find transport a barrier.

## What are the barriers?

The main barrier to getting around young people cited was difficulty in using public transport, mainly buses. Difficulties relating to a lack of physical access were particularly an issue for wheelchair users. Other young people commented on the lack of space in rush hour.

The second most common barrier was that public transport did not go near where they lived or where their friends were so they could not use it to get out and see people. This was a particular problem for young people from projects that covered rural areas such as Project SiNC in Northern Ireland and the Scottish Spina Bifida Association. These projects have directly addressed this barrier (see section on how projects are tackling barriers later in this chapter). Transport was cited as less of a problem by young people based in urban areas such as Manchester and London.

Also common was the problem of having to rely on parents and family members for lifts. Some young people said they 'felt bad' about relying on parents or that when parents were ill or unavailable it meant they couldn't get out. A number of young people also said that they were not confident or not allowed to use public transport alone and that this meant they either did not use it or had to be accompanied.

Lastly, the expense of relying on taxis for transport rather than taking public transport was mentioned as prohibitive. One young person also noted that taxis are not a pleasant way for them to travel since they are not always welcomed by the drivers:

*"I have to fit in with Mum and Dad's plans. Cabs are unfriendly and I have to be accompanied." (Young person with physical disability)*

## What helps?

The overwhelming supporting factor for young people getting around was being given a lift by their parents, family member or carers. This was mentioned by nearly half of the young people taking part in the evaluation as the main factor that helped them to get out. This may account for the difference between young people and parent/carer views. It may be the case that parents/carers see having to provide lifts and transportation for their young person as a barrier, whereas some young people do not see this as a problem.

A smaller number of young people said they were ok using public transport and that having a bus pass enabling free travel was a key supporting factor. Transport provided by school or projects such as the Fun and Friendship projects was also valued. A number of young

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people were keen to make the link between being able to get around and feeling independent and building confidence, with the comment below a good illustration:

*“You can do more when you have transport. You get more confidence from going out.”  
(Young person with physical disability)*

This was particularly the case when they did not have to rely on parents or family members for lifts.

## 5.2 Education and work

### Key findings

- Young people felt school, college or work helped them socialise and see friends with 82 reporting it as a supporting factor. However, 53 young people also reporting it as a barrier. These findings point to the importance of school in providing an environment for fun and friendship. However, findings may also reflect how this environment can present challenges to socialising for young people with disabilities.
- School and college are places where young people told us they get to see their friends. However, there are significant issues with schools being inaccessible for some physically disabled young people.

### What are the barriers?

A number of young people reported they don't get to see friends at school because they are in a different class or there is not much time. Qualitative responses showed that a small number of young people had problems with other children finding, for example, break time difficult.

An issue that arose for physically disabled individuals who use a wheelchair was that schools are often not fully accessible. The response from the young person below indicates the number of challenges faced in school in terms of mobility.

*“Can't go on grass because wheels get stuck, muddy wheels. Lots of steps. Can't access swimming at school.” (Young person with physical disability)*

This meant in one case a young person could not go out at play time to be with his friends and another to comment that they had 'given up' on trying to go on school trips. In these cases young people commented this led to them feeling isolated and left out from their friends and peers.

### What helps?

The overwhelming good thing young people said about school was that it was a place where they saw their friends, as shown in the quotation below.

*‘I like seeing and spending time with my friends.’ (Young person with ASD).*

Just under half of young people taking part in the evaluation reported this. Young people that saw school as a supporting factor liked being able to see their friends regularly in a school-based setting and commented it was sometimes difficult to see them outside of school. A smaller number of young people also said they enjoyed lessons, learning new things and

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getting on in life. Some young people also said they had nice teachers who supported them and this helped them to enjoy and get the most out of school.

## 5.3 Visiting places

### Key findings

- Double the number of young people reported that visiting places helped them to socialise and see friends rather than acting as a barrier (n=83 and n=40 respectively).
- Qualitative responses show many disabled young people are engaged in exciting and fun activities and clubs. The Fun and Friendship projects are valued in supporting access to fun activities and visits to places.
- Physically disabled young people reported inaccessible venues and facilities as the biggest problem. Visiting places was less likely to be reported as a supporting factor by people with a physical disability or a physical and learning disability.
- For young people with ASD, qualitative responses show that lack of confidence may be a particular challenge for this group in socialising.
- A number of young people reported a positive relationship between visiting places, taking part in activities and establishing friendships.

### What are the barriers?

Not many young people commented on what made it easier or more difficult to visit places. Where they did problems were varied with the most common one being the inaccessibility of places, particularly for physically disabled young people. Inaccessibility revolved around not being able to get into places with a wheelchair, or use leisure facilities such as swimming pools and cinemas because they did not have disabled access or facilities such as accessible toilets or changing places.

Aside from physical access, confidence was also a barrier. A small number of people said they felt unconfident or nervous about going to places, as expressed below:

*“I need more confidence to go to these places.” (Young person with a learning disability)*

A couple of young people said they lived too far away or their parents did not have time to take them out. One young person commented that going out took a lot of planning and it was hard to be spontaneous.

### What helps?

Many young disabled people across the impairment groups and projects reported they were busy engaged with activities and going to places. Young people were taking part in a variety of activities and visiting places such as being part of a rock club, football club, going to the cinema, swimming and bowling. A much smaller number of young people said they did not go out at all or as much as they would like.

Respondents said they liked visiting places – it was fun to go to activities and new places. Some young people said they met their friends at leisure places such as the cinema or park whilst others said they made new friends by joining clubs and activities such as football

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clubs. The link between taking part in activities and the possibility of friendships developing is clear.

*'It helps friendship develop. Football group for disabled people is good.'* (Young person with physical and learning disability)

Having helpful staff and accessible venues was valued and being able to travel independently was seen as better than relying on parents.

## 5.4 Money

### Key findings

- Having money was seen as helping young people see friends and socialise, whereas lack of money was reported as a barrier.
- Some young people could not answer the question and comments from parents/project workers suggest this is because they did not have a concept of money or how it was used to support socialising.

### What are the barriers?

Money was seen as both a help and a hindrance depending on how much was available. A small number of people commented that socialising can be prohibitively expensive and that a lack of money can stop you doing things. Young people's comments below illustrate the concerns of young people around money, and their awareness of the cost of supporting them to socialise:

*'If you don't have money you can not do activities'.* (Young person with a learning disability)

*'Can't do much without money. It's quite an important factor, even in terms of petrol'.* (Young person with a physical disability)

### What helps?

A number of young people, such as the individual quoted below, said they got pocket money from their parents or paid by parents for doing chores:

*'Mum gives me pocket money. Not enough!!'* (Young person with a learning and physical disability)

Young people felt money was important, and as illustrated below, were aware of the link between having money and having a greater degree of freedom to socialise and enjoy activities:

*'Helps with transportation/allows me to do the things that I want to do.'* (Young person with a physical disability)

A few young people said they looked after money and were good at saving.

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## 5.5 Family and carers

### Key findings

- Almost double the amount of people reported that families/carers were a supporting factor (n=88) than a barrier (n=46).
- The main positives reported by young people were families/carers supporting them, enjoying spending time together, taking them out and helping them to see their friends by having them over. The main barriers to socialising were parents being seen as too bossy or worried to let their children go out or not having enough time to take them to and from places.
- One in ten (11%, n=11) parents/carers identified themselves as one of the top three supporting factors enabling disabled young people to socialise and see their friends.
- Gender may make a difference. Amongst those young people that said families/carers could act as a barrier, male respondents were more likely to report them as a *significant* barrier than females.
- Age may also influence young people's views. Younger people (13 and under) were more likely to report families/carers as a supportive factor than young people aged 14 and over. One interpretation of this could be that young people want to become less dependent on their families/carers as they become older teenagers.

### What are the barriers?

Perhaps, unsurprisingly, young people's views of their families differed. The downside of being part of a family or cared for was that young people wanted more independence from their parents. Several young people said they were not allowed out on their own or their parents were too bossy or worried about them.

The second most common barrier was that parents were too busy or late back from work. This meant that their children did not always feel they had time for them or they could not get lifts to and from places. Other factors included brothers or sisters 'being annoying'.

A small number of people that felt their carer did not understand them and, as in the quotation below, this acts as a barrier to be able to do the things they want to do:

*'Mum and dad are too bossy. I want to do different things to mum and dad . . . Carers don't always understand me.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

### What helps?

There were far more positive comments about being part of a family and how families helped young people to experience fun, friendship and socialise. In some of their survey responses, as exemplified below, young people recognised the significant contribution made by family members to their daily lives:

*'My family help me with everything.'* (Young person with ASD)

*'They help me out a bit, for example help me prepare for going out.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

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Most comments related simply to families 'helping out'. More specific comments included parents taking their son or daughter to see their friends or allowing them to have friends over:

*'Get to see my friends at weekends because I do not have school and mum takes me to see friends.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

Young people also said that parents often took them to activities or places such as football, the cinema, days out etc. A number of young people said they enjoyed spending time with their family, *"being together and enjoying ourselves"*.

One person said it was good having a carer of a similar age because they had similar interests.

## 5.6 Confidence and self esteem

This question was directed at levels of confidence and self esteem. The phrasing 'How I feel' was considered by projects to be less threatening and more accessible for young people to understand.

### Key findings

- Numbers reporting 'how they felt' as a barrier and supporting factor tend to be more evenly split than other factors with 52 people reporting it as a barrier and 67 as a supporting factor.
- A slightly larger number of young people said how they felt about themselves was a positive thing and helped them enjoy life and socialise.
- However, a number of young people made the link between feeling stigmatised or isolated because of their disability by their peer group, feeling like they 'didn't fit in'. This impacted negatively on how they felt.
- Parents/carers views were decidedly mixed. One in five (22%, n=22) parents/carers reported this as the most significant barrier whilst a slightly lower number (17%, n=17) reporting this as a top supporting factor.

### What are the barriers?

A number of young people said that they felt moody and grumpy at times and for no reason, which may be considered quite typical for teenagers. However, young people (both learning disabled and physically disabled) went on to make the link of feeling down or upset because of their disability, either because they felt they did not fit in or being disabled made them feel shy or lacking in self esteem.

*'I find it difficult to be myself around new people/friends because of my disability.'* (Young person with physical disability)

*'I feel annoyed when people make fun of me at school.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

*'I know I am "different" from other young people at school, I don't read, write or speak as well as others.'* (Young person with a physical and learning disability)

Young people with ASD were particularly aware that how they felt could be a barrier to socialising, in some cases because they knew they were prone to become upset, or else because they knew that they have fairly specialised interests, compared to others:

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*“Sometimes I get upset about things.”*

*“Lack of confidence. Feel as if I don't fit in as my interests are quite unique.”*

This shows how the young people's self esteem is affected by peer relationships and feeling like they don't belong in certain situations. Building confidence in new settings and with new people was felt to be important. This was particularly strongly felt by young people with ASD

Another barrier reported by a smaller amount of young people related to feeling ill because of their disability at times which stopped them joining in things.

## What helps?

A greater proportion of young people said how they felt about themselves helped them socialise and make friends. A number of young people expressed feeling really confident in themselves and enjoying life.

*‘Happy, enjoy singing and music, love dancing. I like the way I look.’ (Young person with a physical and learning disability)*

Feeling good was often linked to seeing friends and doing things they enjoyed. People tended to want to spend time with friends if they felt good and happy in themselves. Seeing friends also helped them to feel more independent. Friends were often seen at school but also at weekends (usually with the help of parents). A number of young people talked about feeling more confident and relaxed in situations and settings they were familiar with.

*‘Once I get used to a new activity or venue and participate better. Better still if mum and dad not there.’ (Young person with a learning disability)*

## 5.7 Other young people

### Key findings

- Participants reported that other young people were more of a supporting factor (n=74) than a barrier (n=55) although only marginally compared to other factors. Participants had varied experiences of young people, with some young people being considered great friends whilst others acted as bullies and persecutors.
- Parents/carers reported attitudes of other young people as the joint biggest barrier to fun and friendship for their young person, with over one in five (22%, n=22) rating this as a barrier. In contrast one in ten parents/carers (11%, n=11) thought the attitudes of other young people were a support.
- Young people's experiences of bullying and being treated differently because of their disability were standard across all the different projects and impairment groups.
- Positive responses show how much participants valued and loved their friends. Young people also told us that sometimes they felt it was important to spend time with other young disabled people who shared similar experiences.

### What are the barriers?

A number of young people across the impairment groups and projects had experience of being bullied by other young people and picked on because of their disability. The quotations

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below provide a sense of the sadness and frustration experienced by young people in response to the way they are treated by others:

*'Some people at school follow me around and make fun and noises at me.'* (Young person with ASD)

*'At school I don't like it when young people tease or bully me.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

*'Young people think that I am younger than I am, they treat me like I am 5, not the age I am. They ask loads of questions about my disability.'* (Young person with a physical disability)

*'When there is no one to play with I feel lonely.'* (Young person with a physical and learning disability)

## What helps?

When asked about other young people, respondents often replied they loved their friends and valued their friendship very much. These quotations show the range of reasons why respondents valued their friendships – from having fun together to providing emotional support:

*'When friends are good listeners and are there for me if I need them.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

*'Friends are really good so when we go out it is really special.'* (Young person with a physical disability)

Some young people also told us that new people can become friends over time and that they get to make new friends through existing friendship circles. A number of young people felt it was important to be with other people 'like me' who shared the same impairment and / or experiences and interests.

## 5.8 Attitudes of adults

### Key findings

- Over double the number of young people reported that what other adults thought of them was more of a supporting factor (n=76) than a barrier (n=29).
- Qualitative responses suggest not all young people understood this question so results should be treated with caution. Where barriers relating to adults existed, they tended to involve contact young people had with people in authority such as teachers and bus drivers.
- Young people were more likely to think of adults as helping them than acting as a barrier. Several young people reported they felt like adults liked them and a few comments suggest some participants saw adults as kinder than their peers.

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## What are the barriers?

A number of young people did not understand the question, or did not relate perceptions of adults around them, to the freedoms they have to socialise and have fun. Other young people commented they were treated well by adults.

*'I have a good relationship with other adults.'* (Young person with a physical disability)

A smaller number had problems with adults they came into contact with and this included teachers, bus drivers, and parents of other children who thought they might not be able to join in with activities.

*'Usually [problems with] teachers - then I do badly at that subject.'* (Young person with ASD)

## What helps?

There were more positive responses about what young people thought adults think of them. This included young people reporting it was not a problem: that adults liked them or they did not care what adults think about them.

*'My teachers think I am a hard-working pupil. My granny thinks I am helpful and thoughtful. Lots of people think I am a good role model.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

There were a few comments that suggested adults were 'kinder' or 'more understanding' than other children their own age. Some young people said that adults did not understand my disability or how they communicated and that this was very frustrating.

## 5.9 People involved in the Fun and Friendship project

### Key findings

- People involved in the Fun and Friendship projects were most likely to be seen by young people as supporting them to socialise with 89 young people saying this was a supporting factor, whilst 22 people also said this was also a barrier.
- This was the most commonly identified supporting factor selected by parents/carers to help their young person socialise, chosen by three out of ten parents/carers (30%, n=30). This suggests parents/carers greatly value the staff and volunteers involved in delivering the Fun and Friendship projects. These findings suggest the projects are viewed by parents and carers as central to helping young people with disabilities to socialise and have a good time.

## What are the barriers?

Of the relatively small number of young people that reported project staff as a barrier to socialising these tended to be from young people with ASD. Comments tended to relate to staff making rules suggesting a dislike amongst some for rules or regulations.

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## What helps?

Many more young people across all impairment groups felt that staff and volunteers working in the Fun and Friendship projects were a big support to helping them socialise. The quotations below illustrate how staff are described as friendly and helpful, supporting young people to see friends and take part in activities:

*'Everyone is nice.'* (Young person with a physical disability)

*'They make it fun and explain what work I have to do.'* (Young person with ASD)

Young people valued staff for helping them to build their confidence. Young people emphasised the importance of staff listening to their choices and preferences and supporting them to follow their priorities:

*'They listen to what I want to do and help me to do it.'* (Young person with a learning disability)

## 5.10 How projects are tackling barriers

Project staff have also identified barriers that prevent the young people they work with access and experience fun and friendship opportunities and a number are working actively to overcome these. The main barriers and responses to these identified in the six month and end of year reports to the Fun and Friendship programme team are:

- **Transport:** young people living in families that are rurally isolated and may be lower socio-economic status which makes transports expensive. In this case, Project SiNC in Northern Ireland, Whizz Kidz and the Scottish Spina Bifida Association have provided transport at little or no extra cost so young people are not prevented from attending.
- **Attitudes of leisure providers:** Mencap, the Children's Society and Chestnut Tree House have all undertaken training and awareness raising work with local leisure providers to enable their young people to access local leisure provision.
- **Parental attitudes:** the attitudes of some parents/carers to allowing or supporting their young person to attend the Fun and Friendship project. Whizz Kidz, for example, use a positive approach to recruiting young people to the Ambassador Club. Many of the projects work closely with parents to build either build their confidence and/or raise their awareness in the importance of fun and friendship for their teenager.
- **Building confidence and self esteem:** all of the projects work with the young people to build their confidence and self esteem. Empowering young people to express choice, make decisions and learn new skills is central to achieving this outcome in several projects.

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## 6. Conclusion and reflections for Years 2 & 3

This is the first of three annual reports for the three year Fun and Friendship programme. The findings to date provide a baseline and it would be premature to provide concrete and final conclusions on the impact and progress of the programme at this stage.

Rather our conclusions and reflections seek to highlight some of the emerging findings and trends and raise important questions for the BBC Children in Need Programme Team, the evaluation team, the Advisory Group and the projects to consider for the programme in Years 2 and 3.

### 6.1 Wellbeing outcomes

Young people score themselves highly against the central outcomes of the Fun and Friendship programme. The highest of these scores relates to young people having fun and a good time, enjoying the provision being made available to them. Young people also report they are growing in confidence and self-esteem through their involvement with the projects.

There are some positive indications that young people are making new friends and meeting up with friends more as a result of their involvement in the programme, however, this outcome is less strongly evidenced through the survey. The survey findings relating to independence are also less conclusive. This may relate to the difficulty of measuring such a complex concept through a survey style instrument. However, the qualitative research conducted by the projects into independence suggest young people relate independence to doing something for themselves, having personal space and making decisions. Qualitative research suggests projects are helping young people to feel independent by providing a space away from family/carers and enabling young people to make choices about what they do.

The high scores from the survey for Year 1 suggest that the programme has started well and it will be interesting to see if, and how, scores differ in Year 2. It may be that those outcomes that scored comparatively lower in Year 1 are more strongly evidenced in Year 2, as they take longer to achieve. Alternatively, it may be that certain outcomes appear to be less well evidenced in the second year of the evaluation once young people become accustomed to the benefits of the Fun and Friendship projects. It will be crucial to use qualitative data from young people, parents and project staff to help interpret survey findings for Year 2 and 3.

### 6.2 Barriers and supporting factors

Factors such as transport, families, other young people and levels of confidence act as both supporting factors and barriers for young disabled people. Personal circumstance, attitudes of parents and young people, access to resources and geographical location all impact on how much factors are experienced as barriers or supportive to young disabled people seeing their friends and socialising. The evidence suggests that the experience of disabled young people is shaped and influenced by a wide range of external and internal conditions such as socio-economic status and levels of resilience.

It is encouraging to see that a number of the projects have already addressed some of the barriers and it will be interesting to see if this makes a difference when the data is collected on this topic next year.

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## 6.3 Sustainability and ongoing impact

The evaluation report raises interesting questions for the programme and projects relating to how the benefits and impact of the programme can be grown sustainably. Several projects are already supporting and encouraging friendships outside of the project environment which offers one model of sustainability.

As the programme moves into Years 2 and 3 it will be crucial for projects and the wider programme team to consider how the positive benefits can be sustained so they are not entirely project-dependent. Being able to demonstrate the value of projects may also prove helpful in securing funding in the future.

## 6.4 Methodological challenges

The evaluation of the Fun and Friendship programme has given rise to some interesting methodological challenges. The evaluation team has taken a flexible and reflective approach. This has meant responding to the diversity of the projects and the young people to ensure an inclusive and meaningful way of evaluating the programme has developed. Programme and project staff and young people themselves have actively shaped the development of the evaluation design and tools.

There are some central issues for the evaluation team in going forward: how to respond to the issue that not all the same young people will be involved next year; how to balance flexibility with the need for some standardisation. The evaluation team looks forward to discussing these with the programme and project teams in the light of this report.

## Appendix 1 – Summary tables

These tables show the break down of survey responses by impairment group and question for young people and parents and carers.

Young people with a physical disability											
Outcome area	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree/ disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fun / good time	I have fun and a good time when I come here	-		-		-		3 (27%)		8 (73%)	
	When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time	-		-		-		1 (11%)		8 (89%)	
Confidence and self esteem	Being part of this projects means I feel more confident - and good about myself	-		-		1 (9%)		4 (36%)		6 (55%)	
	Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves	-		-		1 (11%)		4 (44%)		4 (44%)	
Friends	I have made new friends at this project	-		-		1 (9%)		4 (36%)		6 (55%)	
	This project means I can spend more time with my friends	-		2 (18%)		4 (36%)		-		5 (46%)	

	My son / daughter / young person has met and made friends by being part of this project	-	-	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	5 (56%)					
Independence	This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do	1 (9%)	-	-	2 (18%)	8 (73%)					
	This project helps my son/daughter/young person do more of the things they want to do	-	-	1 (10%)	5 (50%)	4 (40%)					
<b>Young people with a learning disability</b>											
Outcome area	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree/ disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fun / good time	I have fun and a good time when I come here	-	-	-	-	1 (4%)	25 (96%)				
	When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time	-	-	-	3 (13%)	20 (87%)					
Confidence and self esteem	Being part of this projects means I feel more confident and good about myself	-	-	-	5 (19%)	21 (81%)					
	Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves	-	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	4 (17%)	17 (74%)					
Friends	I have made new friends at this project	1 (4%)	-	3 (12%)	6 (23%)	16 (62%)					

	This project means I can spend more time with my friends	2 (8%)	-	-	5 (19%)	19 (73%)					
	My son / daughter / young person has met and made friends by being part of this project	-	-	2 (8%)	6 (26%)	15 (65%)					
Independence	This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do	-	-	-	3 (11%)	23 (89%)					
	This project helps my son/daughter/young person do more of the things they want to do	-	-	-	2 (9%)	18 (78%)					
<b>Young people with a physical and learning disability</b>											
Outcome area	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree/ disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fun / good time	I have fun and a good time when I come here	-	-	-	-	2 (8%)	5 (21%)	11 (46%)			
	When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time	-	-	-	-	-	2 (13%)	13 (81%)			
Confidence and self esteem	Being part of this projects means I feel more confident and good about myself	-	-	-	-	3 (13%)	9 (38%)	5 (21%)			
	Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves	-	-	-	-	3 (19%)	5 (31%)	7 (44%)			

Friends	I have made new friends at this project	1 (4%)	3 (13%)	4 (17%)	5 (21%)	4 (17%)					
	This project means I can spend more time with my friends	-	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	6 (29%)	7 (25%)					
	My son / daughter / young person has met and made friends by being part of this project	-	2 (13%)	3 (19%)	2 (13%)	8 (50%)					
Independence	This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do	-	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	7 (29%)	7 (29%)					
	This project helps my son/daughter/young person do more of the things they want to do	-	-	-	4 (27%)	11 (67%)					
<b>Young people with ASD</b>											
Outcome area	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree/disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fun / good time	I have fun and a good time when I come here	-	-	2 (6%)	8 (24%)	20 (59%)					
	When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time	-	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	4 (13%)	23 (74%)					
Confidence and self esteem	Being part of this projects means I feel more confident and good about myself	-	-	5 (15%)	11 (32%)	14 (41%)					
	Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/	-	2 (7%)	5 (16%)	7 (23%)	15 (48%)					

	young person feel more confident and good about themselves										
Friends	I have made new friends at this project	-	1 (3%)	4 (12%)	7 (21%)	18 (53%)					
	This project means I can spend more time with my friends	-	2 (6%)	4 (12%)	8 (24%)	16 (47%)					
	My son / daughter / young person has met and made friends by being part of this project	-	2 (7%)	6 (19%)	6 (19%)	14 (45%)					
Independence	This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do	-	-	5 (15%)	6 (18%)	19 (56%)					
	This project helps my son/daughter/young person do more of the things they want to do	-	1 (3%)	5 (15%)	5 (15%)	19 (66%)					
<b>Young people with other disabilities</b>											
Outcome area	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree/disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fun / good time	I have fun and a good time when I come here	1 (20%)		-		-		1 (20%)		3 (60%)	
	When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time	-		-		1 (20%)		-		4 (80%)	
Confidence and self	Being part of this projects means I feel more confident	-		-		-		1 (20%)		4 (80%)	

esteem	and good about myself					
	Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves	-	-	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
Friends	I have made new friends at this project	-	-	-	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
	This project means I can spend more time with my friends	-	-	-	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
	My son / daughter / young person has met and made friends by being part of this project	-	1 (20%)	-	2 (40%)	2 (40%)
Independence	This project helps me to do more of the fun things that I want to do	-	-	-	-	5 (100%)
	This project helps my son/daughter/young person do more of the things they want to do	-	-	-	3 (60%)	2 (40%)

# Appendices

## 1. Example of outcomes survey for young people



### Children in Need Fun and Friendship evaluation

1. How many times have you been to this project?

- Once
- 2-3 times
- 4-5 times
- More than 5 times
- More than 10 times

2. Has anyone told you about the next session here?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

**S1. I have many chances to take part here**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**Strongly agree**

3. I like taking part in the activities here

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never

4. I've tried things when I come here that I never had the chance to try before

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

**S2. I have fun and a good time when I come here**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**Strongly agree**

5. I spend more time with other young people than I did before I came here

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

6. Since coming to this project I .....

- Feel more confident around other young people

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

- Feel more relaxed around other young people

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

**S3. Being part of this project means I feel more confident and good about myself**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**Strongly agree**



9. When I am here, I can follow my interests

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never

10. What does being independent mean to you? Does it mean.....

- More time away from my family
- Doing things with my friends
- Learning new things
- Having more choice over my life
- Being able to get around
- Or, other (please write in)  .....

10a. With that in mind, does being here make you feel more or less independent?

- More independent
- Less independent
- The same
- Not sure

Why?.....

**S5. This project helps me to do more of the fun things I want to do**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**Strongly agree**

**About me**

*This section can be completed by the young person or project worker on behalf of the young person*

1. Are you a

Girl

or

Boy

2. How old are you?

3. Which of these best describe your background the best?

Asian or British Asian

Indian?

Pakistani?

Bangladeshi?

Other Asian background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

Mixed/dual heritage

White and Black Caribbean?

White and Black African?

White and Asian?

Other mixed heritage background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

Black or Black British

African?

Caribbean?

Other Black background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

White

British?

Irish?

Traveller of Irish heritage?

Gypsy/Roma?

Other White background,  
which is \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you consider yourself to be:

- physically disabled
- learning disabled
- Physically and learning disabled
- have autism or Aspergers
- Other – please state \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Observation sheet used by parents, carers or project workers

Use this observation sheet if the young person who is taking part in the evaluation is unable to take part in an interview or conversation about how they are experiencing the project and any difference it makes.

This may be because their cognitive ability is impaired to the extent that asking questions is unlikely to produce reliable evidence.

In these cases, observations made by project staff and parents/carers about the young person can provide valuable information.

Respondent code \_\_\_\_\_ Date of completion \_\_\_\_\_

### Outcome 1

Ongoing  
involvement

*The young person who I am observing in this project has opportunities to be involved more than once*

Evidence that this outcome is being achieved:

## Outcome 2

**Fun / good time**

***The young person who I am observing in this project has fun and a good time when he/she is here***

Evidence that this outcome is being achieved:

## Outcome 3

**Social skills,  
confidence and  
self-esteem**

***By being part of this project, the young person who I am observing gets to feel more confident, build self esteem and build his/her social skills***

Evidence that this outcome is being achieved:

## Outcome 4

**Make and meet friends**

*The young person who I am observing in this project is able to meet and make friends here, making him/her feel comfortable in the project, and that he/she belongs here*

Evidence that this outcome is being achieved:

## Outcome 5

**Independence**

*The young person who I am observing in this project is enabled to pursue things that interest him/her and that he/she finds enjoyable as independently as possible, helping to build a sense of empowerment and aspiration*

Evidence that this outcome is being achieved:

Any other comments:

**Details of young person**

Girl  or Boy

Age

Which of these best describe the young person's background best?

Asian or British Asian

- Indian?
- Pakistani?
- Bangladeshi?
- Other Asian background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

Mixed/dual heritage

- White and Black Caribbean?
- White and Black African?
- White and Asian?
- Other mixed heritage background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

**Black or Black British**

- African?
- Caribbean?
- Other Black background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

**Is the young person:**

- physically disabled
- learning disabled
- Physically and learning disabled
- have autism or Aspergers
- Other – please state \_\_\_\_\_

**White**

- British?
- Irish?
- Traveller of Irish heritage?
- Gypsy/Roma?
- Other White background,  
which is \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of the observer**

**Name:**

**Relation to young person:**

**Date:**

### 3. Survey for parents and carers – January 2010

Respondent code \_\_\_\_\_ Date of completion \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this short questionnaire which will help us see what difference the project your son/daughter/young person is involved in might be making.

Please ask someone at the project if you are unsure about any of the questions or need help filling it in.

Once you have filled it in please put it in an envelope and hand it to

\_\_\_\_\_

We will use this information along with information from young people at the project to help measure the impact of the work we are doing and make improvements.

Thank you for your time.

**1. My son/ daughter/ young person has a chance to be involved with this project more than once (please circle the number you agree with)**

1

2

3

4

5



**Strongly disagree**

**No!**

**Strongly agree**

**Yes!**

2. When my son/ daughter/ young person takes part in this project they have fun and a good time (please circle the number you agree with)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

No!

Yes!

3. My son / daughter / young person has met and made friends by being part of this project (please circle the number you agree with)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

No!

Yes!

4. Being part of this project has helped my son / daughter/ young person feel more confident and good about themselves (please circle the number you agree with)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



**Strongly disagree**

**Strongly agree**

**No!**

**Yes!**

5. This project helps my son/ daughter/ young person do more of the fun things they want to do (please circle the number you agree with)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



**Strongly disagree**

**Strongly agree**

**No!**

**Yes!**

6. What would you say are the top three things that stop your son/daughter/young person from being able to meet friends, socialise and have a good time as independently as possible?

**Please tick your top 3**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence / low self esteem            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical access to leisure facilities    | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude of staff at leisure facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School / education / work                | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude of other young people          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff that work at projects like this on | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents or carers                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, (please specify below)           |

---

**7. What would you say are the top three things that help your son/daughter/young people to be able to meet friends, socialise and have a good time as independently as possible?**

**Please tick your top 3**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence / positive self esteem       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical access to leisure facilities    | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude of staff at leisure facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School / education / work                | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude of other young people          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff that work at projects like this on | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents or carers                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, (please specify below)           |

---

**8. Have you noticed any difference in your son/daughter/ young person since they started coming to this project?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**9. If yes, please explain what this difference has been:**

---

---

---

---

**9.a If no, please explain**

---

**10. Do you have any other comments?**

---

---

---

**About your son, daughter or young person you care for**

5. Are they a

Girl

or

Boy

6. How old are they?

7. Which of these best describe their background the best?

**Asian or British Asian**

Indian?

Pakistani?

**Mixed/dual heritage**

White and Black Caribbean?

White and Black African?

- Bangladeshi?
- Other Asian background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

- White and Asian?
- Other mixed heritage background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

**Black or Black British**

- African?
- Caribbean?
- Other Black background,  
which is, \_\_\_\_\_

**White**

- British?
- Irish?
- Traveller of Irish heritage?
- Gypsy/Roma?
- Other White background,  
which is \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please tick the boxes which best describe the type of disability they have (you can tick more than one):

a physical disability

a learning disability

a physical and learning disability

autism or Aspergers

other, please write in \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Visual tool for barriers and supporting factors

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?

And what does not help?

### Transport / getting about



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

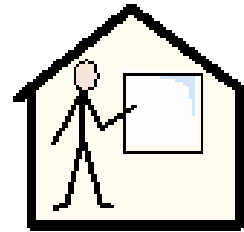
+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## School / education / work



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

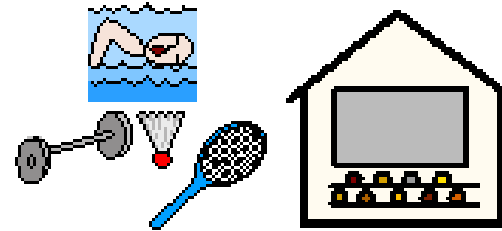
+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## Visiting places I like



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## Family and carers



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

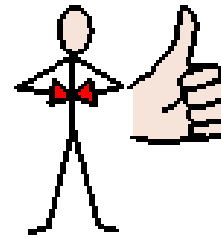
Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?



## How I feel



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## Other young people



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1



Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## People that work here



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## What other adults think about me



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1



Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

## Money



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

What helps you to see your friends and have a good time?  
And what does not help?

**Other things**



Big problem

-3

Medium problem

-2

Small problem

-1

Big help

+3

Medium help

+2

Small help

+1

## 5. Recording sheet for barriers and supporting factors tool

Respondent code \_\_\_\_\_ Date of completion \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this tool is to find out about what helps or does not help young people to meet their friends and have a good time.

Use the tool by going through the visual prompts with the young person and ask them to say or indicate whether the factor helps or do not help. This could be done as a short discussion e.g. 'How about transport round where you live – does that help you to see your friends and have a good time or is that a problem?' Ask the young person to say if it's a big problem, a small problem or somewhere in the middle. Similarly, if there are positive factors ask the young person to say if it's a really helpful thing, quite helpful or a little bit helpful.

Please score according to the numbers below:

- 3

Big problem / barrier

+3

Big help / supporting factor

-2

Medium problem / barrier

+2

Medium help / supporting factor

-1

Small problem / barrier

+1

Small help / supporting factor

Some factors could be both positive and negative for different reasons (See the example below).

Record a score in the minus or plus boxes and comments about why if this is possible in the comments box.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Example – Family and carers</i>	-2	<i>Because they are worried about me going out on my own</i>	+2	<i>Help because they give me a lift to my friends but sometimes they can't take me in the summer holidays</i>
Transport / getting about				
School / education / work				
Visiting places I like				
Family and carers				
How I feel				
Other young people				
People that work here				

What adults think of me				
Money				
Other things that help or don't help				