

What's important to children and young people in Kent? (2008)

Earlier this year, Kent County Council and its partner agencies asked us (the NFER) for a second year, to survey children and young people (aged 7–19) living in Kent. The council and other agencies will be using the results to help plan services for children and young people. Over 45,000 children and young people completed the survey this year. Here is a summary of what they told us.

This is what children and young people told us

Most children and young people feel happy and say that they enjoy their lives and like school or college. They also say that Kent is a good place to live.

Healthy lifestyles

Children and young people have a good understanding of healthy living and most lead healthy lifestyles. However, nearly half of 11–19 year olds say they need more information on how to get advice about relationships and a quarter feel they need more information about sexual health.

Staying safe

Most children and young people say they know how to stay safe, but report particular things in their local area that worry them. Children aged 7–11 worry most about broken glass on the ground and groups of people hanging around. Young people aged 11–19 worry about people carrying knives, people taking drugs, and gangs.



Some 11-19 year olds say they need more information on internet safety.

Around half of the children aged 7-11 told us they have experienced either verbal or physical bullying at some point. As children get older, reports of bullying decrease. Just over a quarter of 11-16 year olds say they have been bullied in the last year. Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying experienced by young people aged 11-16.

School, college and spare time

More than half of the children and young people report that they enjoy school or college and most feel they are doing well. Whilst there, they enjoy seeing their friends, and say that doing practical things and going on school trips are the activities which most help them to learn.

Around a third of young people aged 11-19 would like the opportunity to do more activities in their spare time. Some of the reasons they give for not doing more activities include the cost, lack of good transport links and lack of time.

Making a difference

Many children aged 7-11 say they help other people and are involved in recycling and raising money for charity. Around half of young people aged 11-19 said they would like to help the community by helping someone who is being bullied, raising money for charity or helping a neighbour and many young people are already doing these things.

Their future

Children and young people are positive about their future aspirations. Most young people aged 11-19 say they want to get a job or continue with their education at sixth form, university or college.

What happens now?

NFER have recommended to Kent County Council that more work is done to improve children and young people's perception of safe living. We've suggested KCC and partner agencies further promote activities and funds to ensure children and young people are given more opportunities to participate in and contribute to the improvement of their community. We've also suggested they celebrate the contributions children and young people are already making both at school and in their communities.

The views of children and young people are being used in the development of the Kent Children and Young People's Plan. This will be available later this year on the Kent County Council website (www.kent.gov.uk).

