

# Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice

ASA Conference, March 2007

*youth*  
**ACCESS**  
to information, advice and counselling

# Workshop Plan

1. The nature and impact of YP's social welfare problems
2. Is current advice provision meeting YP's needs?
3. What are the barriers to good advice and how do young people want to access advice?
4. Examples of advice services that are addressing YP's needs & the impact of targeted advice
5. What are we all going to do to improve YP's access to advice?

# SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- Young People and Civil Justice: Findings from the 2004 English & Welsh Civil & Social Justice Survey, Legal Services Research Centre, Feb 2007
- Interim Evaluation Report of Youth Access' Rights to Access Project, Jan 2007
- YP's Social Welfare Needs & The Impact of Good Advice: Issues Paper, Youth Access, Feb 2007
- LSC contract data analysed by age

# Incidence of Problems

- 35% of 18-24s reported one or more problems (compared to 33% of over 24s)
- 53% of 23 year olds (peak age)
- 47% of 'socially isolated' YP
- 51% of YP with long-term illness or disability
- 48% of young victims of crime
- 60% of young parents
- 61% of YP living in flats

# Types of Problems

- YP are **more** likely to experience:  
rented housing, homelessness, unfair police treatment, employment, discrimination, mental health
- YP are **less** likely to experience:  
owned housing, consumer problems, divorce
- Prone to severe and multiple problems

# Types of problems - variations

- Amongst socially isolated YP:
  - 13% experienced rented housing problems (*vs 2% of 25+*)
  - 9% experienced homelessness problems (*vs 1% of 25+*)
  - Debt, neighbours, discrimination and personal injury also very high
- Older YP (22-24) more likely to experience:
  - Employment, rented housing and neighbours problems
  - Multiple problems – 7% (*vs 2% of 25+*)
- Younger YP (18-21) more likely to suffer discrimination

# Impact of Problems: Worry & Stress

## Worry:

- 47% of 18-24s with problems spent all or most of their time worrying about them (*vs 38% of 25+*)
- 54% of socially isolated YP

## Stress-related illness as result of problems:

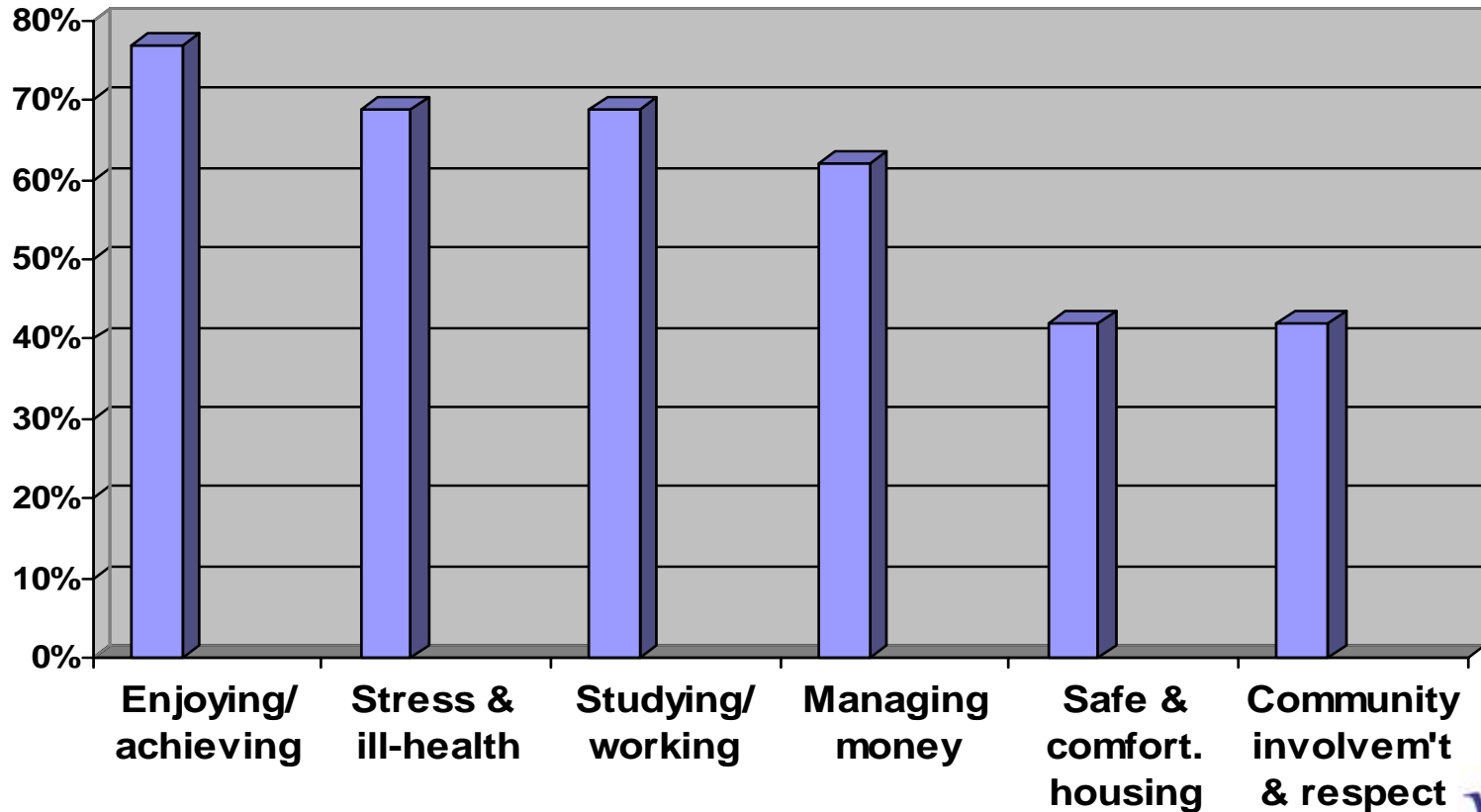
- Socially isolated YP (40%) & younger YP (46% of 18-21s) were disproportionately affected (*vs 27% of 25+*)
- 35% of YP experiencing stress-related illnesses needed GP treatment (*vs 24% of 25+*)

# Impact of problems - other

- Socially isolated YP far more likely than non isolated and 25+ to suffer: **physical ill-health (25%), loss of home (15%), loss of confidence (25%), personal violence (9%)**
- Non-socially isolated YP far more likely than isolated and 25+ to suffer: **loss of employment (10%), loss of income (24%)**

# Impact of problems: Streetwise Law Centre outcomes monitoring

*The problem I came for help with is affecting:*



# Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice

ASA Conference, March 2007

*youth*  
**ACCESS**  
to information, advice and counselling

# Advice-seeking Behaviour: Where YP go / don't go for advice

- Most likely to turn to informal advisers – friends, parents, youth workers etc.
- Of formal sources, most likely to go to local council
- Half as likely as 25+ to go to solicitor/CAB
  - perception that they will be judged, not get confidential service, not be taken seriously
  - services seen as 'not for me'

# Advice-seeking Behaviour: YP's chances of getting advice

- 58% of YP faced problems without getting advice  
(vs 47% of 25+)
- 50% more likely to have done nothing than 25+
- 70% more likely to have tried and failed to get advice
- Least likely to get advice in key NfP areas of law:
  - Consumer (only 18% obtained advice)
  - Welfare Benefits (20%)
  - Debt (27%)
  - Discrimination (33%)
  - Homelessness (44%)
  - Employment (49%)
  - Rented housing (55%)

# YP's experiences when they do get to a mainstream advice agency

- Less likely to be satisfied with the service (though many of previous negative perceptions disproved)
- LSC cases where client is under 25
  - less time spent on YP's cases
  - result in worse case outcomes

# Advice-seeking Behaviour: YP's preferred modes of access

- Overwhelmingly prefer **face to face advice**
- Far less likely to use **telephone**
- Particularly pronounced pattern for youngest
  - Of **18-21 year olds**: 71% contacted first adviser in person, 29% by telephone
  - Of **25+ adults**: 40% in person; 60% by telephone
- **Internet**: More likely to have access, but far less likely to use it to resolve problems or to obtain the info they needed when they try

# Advice-seeking Behaviour: YP's preferred settings & advisers

- Voluntary sector over Government agencies
- Youth setting over CAB/Law Centre/solicitors – need for informal, holistic approach
- Someone who will understand them, build a trusting relationship and 'go the extra mile'
  - Youth worker with good legal knowledge (50%) *or*
  - Adviser/lawyer specialising in young people (42%)

# Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice

ASA Conference, March 2007

*youth*  
**ACCESS**  
to information, advice and counselling

# The Impact of Targeted Youth Advice Services

(RAP Longitudinal Study + Outcomes Toolkit data)

*High scores on:*

- Feeling less stressed, more confident
- Better understanding of rights and able to deal with other problems
- Improved housing situation
- Feeling safer in their homes
- Better able to manage money
- Improved standard of living, better lives
- Better able to achieve goals, take part in ed. & training
- Better able to do things I enjoy

# The Impact of Targeted Youth Advice Services (cont.)

- Biggest change = involvement in community
- Also,*
- Significant improvements in physical health
    - Healthier eating
    - Reduced drug use, smoking
    - More regular attendance at GP
  - Better relationships
  - 3 YP said no longer get into trouble
  - Accessed other services – counselling, mental health services, Connexions etc.

# ... And if they hadn't got advice?

(RAP longitudinal study)

*YP reported that they reckoned they probably would:*

- be dead (5 out of 27)
- be homeless (several)
- still be self harming, suicidal, very depressed or been sectioned (several)
- have turned to crime to survive
- have had child taken into care or lost contact with child already looked after
- have delayed education

# Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice

ASA Conference, March 2007

*youth*  
**ACCESS**  
to information, advice and counselling

# RIGHTS TO ACCESS PROJECT

Aims to improve young people's access to legal advice through a variety of activities, including:

- Supporting Youth Access Law Centre 'pilots'
- National youth advice training programme
- Promoting good practice and partnership working
- Evaluating effectiveness of legal advice for YP and contribution to Every Child Matters outcomes
- Influencing policy

# Young People's Social Welfare Needs and the Impact of Good Advice

ASA Conference, March 2007

*youth*  
**ACCESS**  
to information, advice and counselling