



POVERTY IS BAD! LET'S FIX IT!

A youth-led participatory investigation into poverty, social exclusion and inequality in Shetland

Final Report, 6th December 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



AIM: To explore young people's experiences and perceptions of poverty, social exclusion and inequality, to impact on Shetland's thinking and understanding of these issues.

APPROACH: Youth-led peer research enabling 11 young people (14-23yrs) to:

- design the research;
- conduct field research;
- analyse their findings; and
- work with service providers and decision-makers to generate concepts for action.

IMPACT: The research was innovative and empowering as young people learned about poverty, social exclusion and inequality from their peers and young people and adults learned how to listen to each other and work together.

STAGE 1: TRAINING
Ensuring young people's capability and confidence to design and execute the research.

STAGE 2: FIELDWORK
Supporting young people to generate understanding about poverty, social exclusion & inequality through their existing social networks.

STAGE 3: ANALYSIS
Involving young people as co-analysers of data, gaining their perspectives to make sense of information.

STAGE 4: PLANNING
Bringing young people, service providers & decision-makers together to design concepts for action to address research findings.

Evidence from young people's perspectives.

Young people's realities in terms of key messages generated from the evidence.

Shetland's realities in terms of opportunities for & constraints to tackling poverty, social exclusion & inequality.

Concepts for practical action.

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EVIDENCE: 5 key insights from young people:

1. **Young people feel access to educational, employment and social opportunities is limited in variety, and unequal.**
2. **Young people feel easily pressurised by peers, making it difficult to be individual.**
3. **Young people feel stigmatised because they can easily develop negative reputations which stick in small communities.**
4. **Young people feel uninformed about services which are available to them.**
5. **Young people's feelings of physical and social isolation are exacerbated by poor and expensive transport.**



YOUNG PEOPLE'S REALITIES: 6 key messages:

1. Young people feel the lack of and expense of transport prevents them from accessing opportunities which leads to seeking excitement through alcohol and drugs. Young people feel the lack of transportation and its cost are factors leading to isolation, which can cause mental health and substance abuse issues.
2. Young people find it hard to be an individual due to peer pressure and adult judgement.
3. Stigmatisation and labelling due to the 'Shetland Grapevine' have very negative impacts on young people.
4. Young people feel there are limited career choices.
5. Shetlanders are not aware of poverty on the islands.
6. Young people are not aware of support services.



SHETLAND'S REALITIES:

3 opportunities:

- Use **knowledge** to shape decision-making about policies and spend.
- Use budget cuts to **catalyse innovation** by thinking differently and making new choices.
- Use **people** to take ideas forward by drawing on staff attributes and creative opportunities to involve wide-ranging stakeholders in service planning and delivery.

3 constraints:

- **Bad habits** and a lack of 'can do' culture stifles innovation and creativity.
- **Budget cuts** means more has to be done with less.
- **National level rules and requirements** makes innovation difficult.



CONCEPTS: 6 concepts for action to address the realities:

1. **A2B: get young people to re-design the transport network.**
2. **Mentoring & creating positive role models: mentors to coach young people to encourage and celebrate individuality.**
3. **Positive anti-stigma messages through media: challenge media stigma, print positive stories and demand good conduct.**
4. **Business befriending scheme: secure business support to help young people prepare and apply for jobs.**
5. **'Through the eyes of ...' film and screen stories of**

awareness and promote understanding of

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na call?': (ex-) recipients of support

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT



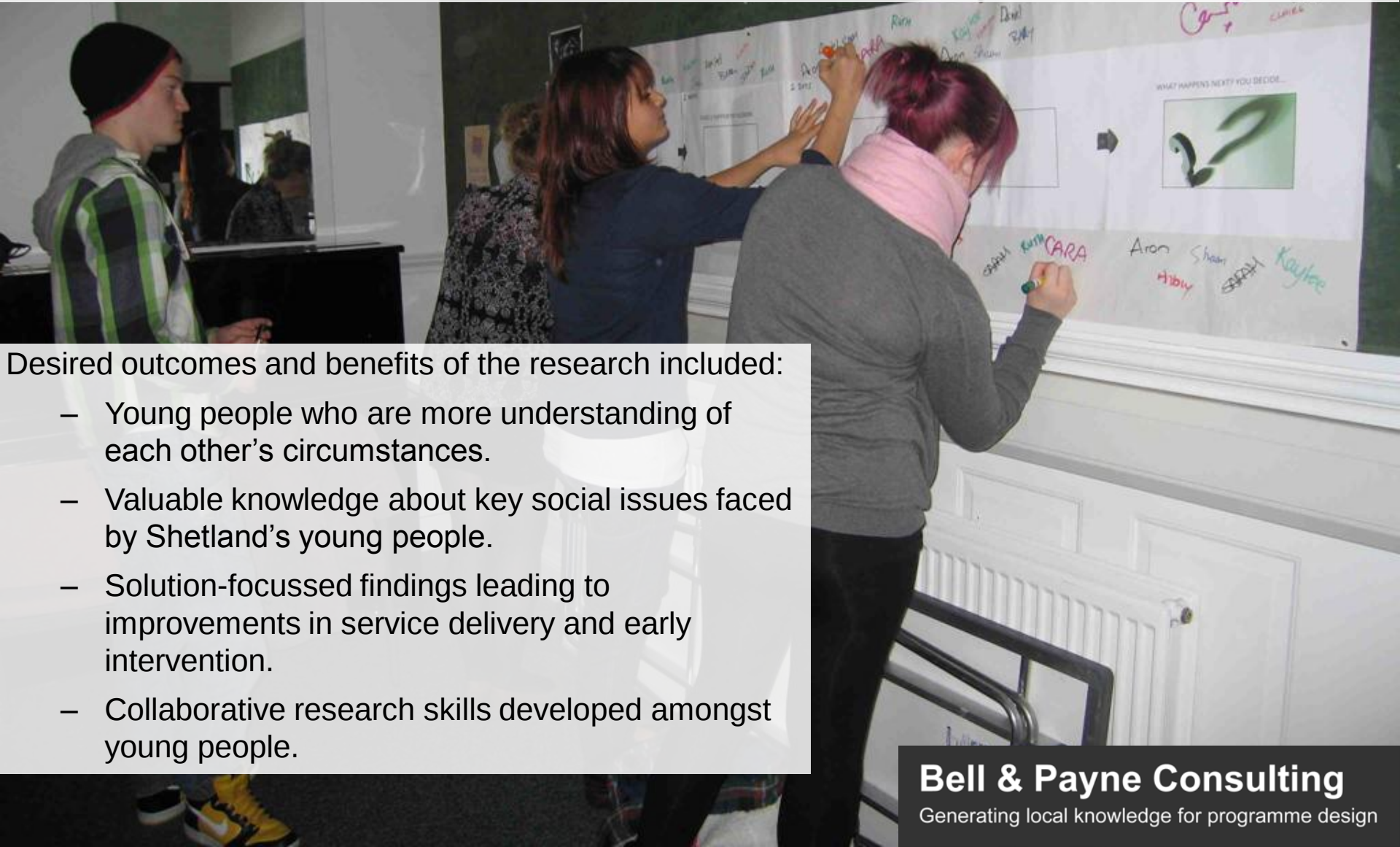
In 2005, the Shetland Community Partnership conducted research into deprivation and social exclusion, resulting in the Fairer Shetland Framework. Fairer Shetland wanted to revisit these issues through new youth-led participatory research.

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BRIEF

Fairer Shetland wanted to explore young people's experiences and perceptions of poverty, social exclusion and inequality to impact on Shetland's thinking and understanding of these issues.



Desired outcomes and benefits of the research included:

- Young people who are more understanding of each other's circumstances.
- Valuable knowledge about key social issues faced by Shetland's young people.
- Solution-focussed findings leading to improvements in service delivery and early intervention.
- Collaborative research skills developed amongst young people.

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APPROACH

We designed and executed a **youth-led peer research** approach to enable 11 young people aged between 14 and 23 years to:

- design the **research agenda** in terms of decisions about research themes and questions;
- conduct **field research** in their own communities including peer interviews and photography;
- analyse their findings including the generation of **key messages** from the research;
- work with a steering committee of service providers and decision-makers to design **concepts for action** to address research findings.



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YOUTH-LED PEER RESEARCH

...working with young people as co-researchers, key informants, co-designers and in co-analysis.

...drawing on youth and child-led research, ethnography, peer-to-peer methods and participatory techniques.



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WHY?

To understand how young people view poverty, social exclusion and inequality from their own vantage point...

...generating a depth of knowledge that is not possible in any other way.

To involve young people directly in an investigation of their lives...

...establishing relationships with young people for future work

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FOUR STAGES...



TRAINING

...ensuring young people's capability and confidence to design and execute the research.



FIELDWORK

...supporting young people to generate understanding about poverty, social exclusion and inequality through their existing social networks.



ANALYSIS

...involving young people as co-analysers of data, gaining their perspectives to make sense of information.



PLANNING

....bringing young people, service providers and decision-makers together to design concepts for action to address research findings.

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REPORT STRUCTURE

During the project, young researchers were often called upon to give steering committee members a 'tour' of their research journey. This report mirrors this 'tour' of the research, moving through the four stages of the project, to reflect the evolving and iterative nature of the process and insights. There are 3 further parts to this report, identified through a colour code:

Research process: including details about the four stages of the research and the impact of the process on young people and Shetland more broadly (grey slides).

Insights about poverty, social exclusion and inequality: including ideas developed during a *brainstorm* about the research; *evidence* gathered during the research, *young people's realities* and *Shetland's realities* (white slides).

Concepts for action: including ideas generated by young people and steering committee members to address key messages from the research (pink slides).

We need all this information up on the wall as we plan services. Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services speaking to Emma Perring, Policy Manager (Poverty & Inclusion), about the workshop display.



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STAGE 1: TRAINING



...ensuring young people's capability and confidence to design and execute the research...

2 day training workshop. Young people:



Problem solved ethical dilemmas.



Identified interviewees including same age young people and adults.



Made decisions about the research agenda including themes and questions and developed an interview guide.



Built confidence and self esteem as researchers and communicators across age and gender boundaries.



Built relationships with each other.



Developed practical research skills including: interviewing and methods for recording and remembering data.

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[illegible]

- young people's understanding of 'poverty', 'social exclusion' and 'inequality';
- the best and the worst things about being a young person in Shetland.

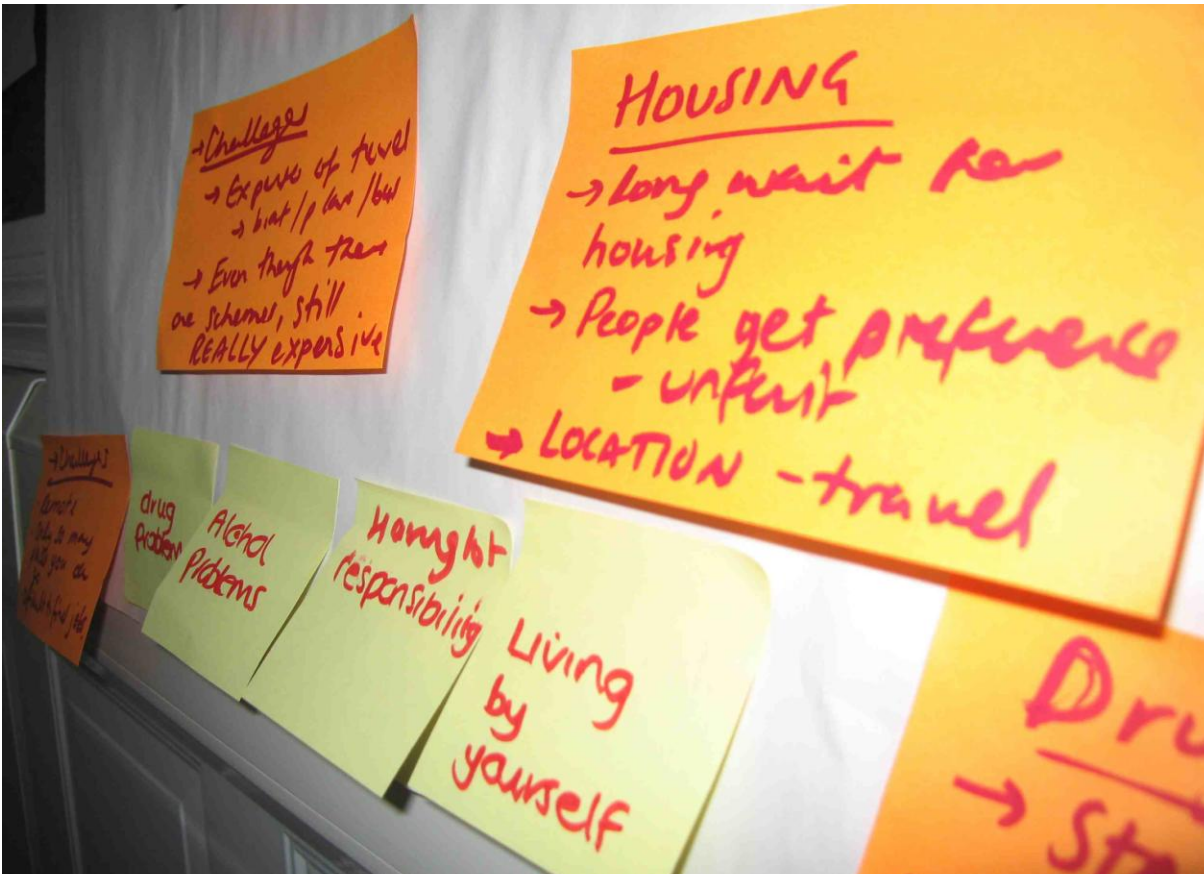
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BRAINSTORM

What young people understand by 'poverty'...

Young researchers felt that poverty is connected to a lack of wealth and material items, and a lack of access to opportunities, especially employment opportunities.

Poverty is being held back. You can't always help yourself – you need someone to come in and support you.



What young people understand by ‘social exclusion’...

Young researchers felt that social exclusion means being excluded from opportunities.

Young people’s sense of exclusion is heightened by the fact that communities are small and ‘everybody knows everybody’. Once gained, a bad reputation is hard to lose and this can lead to social exclusion.

If you walk into a pub, you can tell a ‘soothmoother’ straightaway. It’s just because everybody knows everybody.*

*Soothmoother’ is an historical term dating from a time when people came to Shetland for work, for example, for herring fishing. It derives from the ‘sooth mooth’ (south mouth) of Lerwick Harbour, between Lerwick and Bressay, which is where their boats would arrive. It is now more commonly used to describe anyone that is not from Shetland, but still refers to the ‘sooth mooth’ of the harbour.

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What young people understand by 'inequality'...

Young researchers felt that inequality means differential access to opportunities.

In particular, young researchers felt inequalities in terms of opportunities are most stark between:

- **Shetland and the mainland.**
- **Mainland Shetland and the outer islands.**
- **Incomers (including 'soothmothers' and foreigners*) and Shetlanders.**

A lack of transport and the prohibitive cost of transport is a primary cause of inequality, making it difficult for young people to travel within Shetland, especially to Lerwick where social activities are concentrated, and to the mainland.

Most young people have to go to the mainland to go shopping so we can't buy things we want easily and we feel we don't look as good. There's a lot of people wearing the same thing!

I think inequality in Shetland is definitely transport. It's inequalities in terms of access to transport.

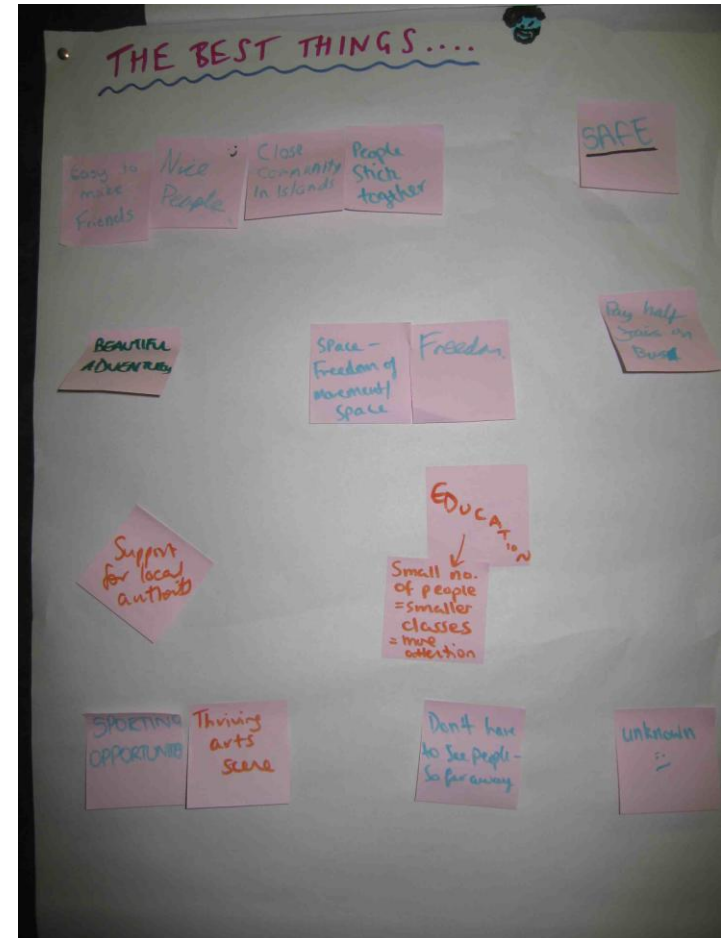
I feel like people automatically judge me because of what my parents do. They'll say "what does your mum do" and I'll say "my mum does baggage handling at the airport" and people will be downgrading me because my mum does that.

*People who come from countries overseas.

The best things about being a young person in Shetland...

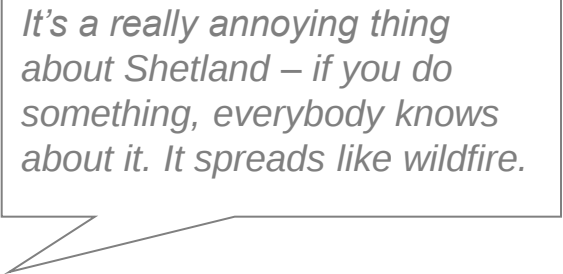
- **Community spirit:** the closeness of communities is a positive aspect of life across the islands which means that people stick together and support each other.
- **Safety and security:** communities are largely safe and young people feel comfortable going out during the day and at night. A few places have a reputation for drugs and crime such as Hoofields and Leaside.
- **Sporting opportunities:** a wide variety of sports are well-catered for and widespread with leisure centres across the islands.

The banter can be really good. Walking down the street, even if you don't know each other, you'll stop and say hello. Everyone interacts.



The worst things about being a young person...

- **Remoteness and isolation:** young people, especially those living outside Lerwick, feel isolated with communities being geographically widespread and inaccessible due to poor transport links and the prohibitive cost of transport.
- **Lack of variety and access to employment:** young people feel restricted in their choice of employment.
- **Limited social opportunities:** aside from sporting opportunities, young people feel social activities are limited, especially outside Lerwick, and inaccessible due to poor and expensive transport.
- **Lack of anonymity:** young people experience considerable pressure to 'be good' to keep their reputation intact and ensure they do not become negatively labelled or stereotyped.
- **Limited social groups:** Shetland is full of 'the same faces' and there are limited opportunities to make new friends and interact with different people.



It's a really annoying thing about Shetland – if you do something, everybody knows about it. It spreads like wildfire.

RESEARCH THEMES

RESEARCH THEMES

POVERTY IS BAD... LET'S FIX IT!!

1. CAUSES OF POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION
AND INEQUALITY AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE

KEY ISSUES LINKED TO POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION
AND INEQUALITY WHICH ARE AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE.

2. 'SHETLAND COMMUNITY.'

3. REMOTENESS + ISOLATION (INCLUDING TRANSPORT)

4. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

5. SUPPORT FOR + AWARENESS^① ABOUT
POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION + INEQUALITY
AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE

* WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES +
PERCEPTIONS (thoughts, feelings....)

Following the brainstorm activity, young researchers identified the themes which they felt were important to focus on during their research:

1. Awareness and causes of poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst young people.
2. Key issues linked to poverty, social exclusion and inequality which are affecting young people, including:
 - the Shetland community and the 'Shetland grapevine';
 - remoteness and isolation;
 - employment opportunities.
3. Support for poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst young people.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

THINK ABOUT OUR RESEARCH AIM !! EXPERIENCES + PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION + INEQUALITY

1. WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE THINK ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF POVERTY, SOC EXCL. + INEQUALITY IN SHETLAND?
2. WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE + NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE 'SHETLAND COMMUNITY' ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES + PERCEPTIONS OF POV, SOC EXCL. + INEQUALITY?
3. WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S ~~EXPERIENCES~~ EXPERIENCES + PERCEPTIONS OF REMOTENESS + ISOLATION AND HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ON POVERTY, SOC EXCL. + INEQUALITY?
4. WHAT ~~ARE~~ DO YOUNG PEOPLE THINK + FEEL ABOUT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SHETLAND + HOW DO THEY IMPACT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES + PERCEPTIONS OF POV, SOC EXCL. + INEQUALITY?
5. ARE YOUNG PEOPLE AWARE OF POVERTY, SOC. EXCL. + INEQUALITY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?
→ ARE YOUNG PEOPLE AWARE OF SUPPORT FOR POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCL. + INEQUALITY IN SHETLAND?

Young researchers subsequently developed the following research questions:

- What is young people's level of awareness about poverty, social exclusion and inequality in Shetland?
- What do young people think are the main causes of poverty, social exclusion and inequality in Shetland?
- What are the positive and negative effects of the 'Shetland community' on young people and how does it impact on their experiences and perceptions of poverty, social exclusion and inequality?
- What are young people's experiences and perceptions of remoteness and isolation and how does this impact on poverty, social exclusion and inequality?
- What do young people think and feel about employment opportunities in Shetland and how does this impact on their experiences and perceptions of poverty, social exclusion and inequality?

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- What awareness do young people have about

STAGE 2: FIELDWORK



...supporting young people to generate understanding about poverty, social exclusion and inequality through their existing social networks...

2 weeks fieldwork. Young people:



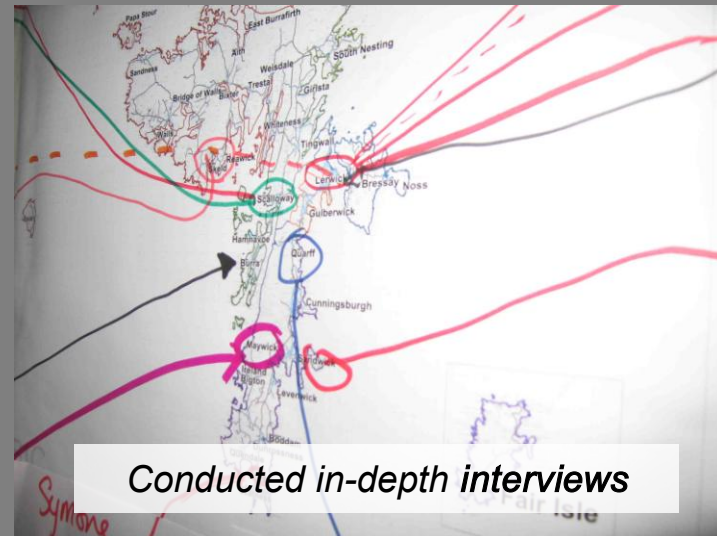
Attended group mentoring meetings



Received one-to-one support from peer mentors



Captured images of poverty, social exclusion and inequality



Conducted in-depth interviews

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INTERVIEWS

Young researchers identified people to interview including a range of ages, genders, ethnicities and geographical locations, and young people with contrasting backgrounds and experiences.

In total, young researchers interviewed 55 people, including 19 boys, 20 girls and 16 adults.

Ward	Boys aged 14-18	Boys aged 19-22	Girls aged 14-18	Girls aged 19-22	Men	Women	Totals
North Isles	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
North	5	2	3	3	2	2	17
West	2	0	3	0	2	1	8
Central	2	0	2	0	1	1	6
South	2	2	4	1	1	4	14
Lerwick	2	0	2	0	1	1	6
Totals	15	4	16	4	7	9	55

PHOTOS



Young researchers captured images, from in and around their own communities, of what 'poverty', 'social exclusion' and 'inequality' mean to them.

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MENTORING



Young people attended group mentoring to:

- continue building research capacities through group problem solving activities;
- encourage iterative learning about research themes and questions.

In addition, young people received one-to-one support from two peer mentors through regular phone calls and meetings.

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STAGE 3: ANALYSIS



...involving young people as co-analysers of data, gaining their perspectives to make sense of information...

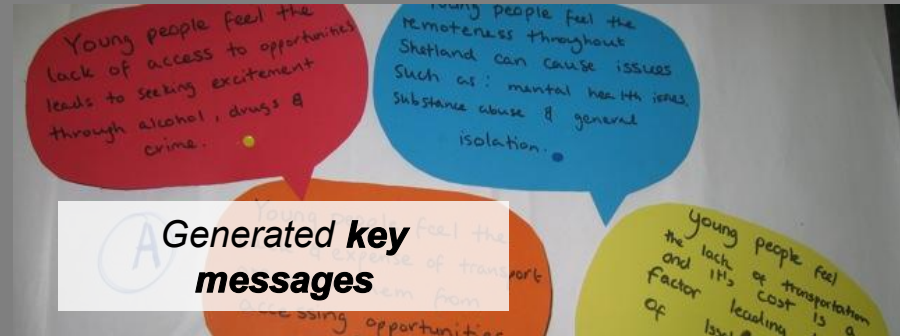
2 day workshop. Young people:



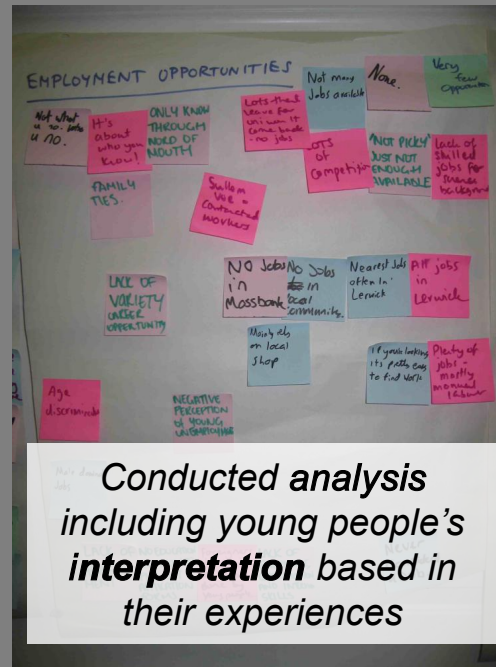
Identified case study stories



Created a photo gallery of images of poverty, social exclusion and inequality.



Generated key messages



Conducted analysis including young people's interpretation based in their experiences



Evaluated their experiences of doing research

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ANALYSIS



Young researchers worked in pairs to debrief from their interviews and capture the evidence they gathered for each research theme, including stories collected during interviews. Discussions with young people ensured sense-making was grounded in local interpretation based on young people's experiences.

Youth-led analysis was followed by further grounded thematic analysis by the research team. This involved searching for topics and patterns in the data which are grounded in the subjective meaning actions, observations and conversations had for the actors. The evidence generated through analysis is presented in terms of five key insights on the following slides.

EVIDENCE

Young people feel access to opportunities is inadequate

Insight 1

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Young people's access to opportunities is unequal

Young people feel access to **educational**, **employment** and **social** opportunities is unequal because of the following factors:

- **Identity:** for example, gender, age and whether you are an incomer or a Shetlander.
- **Geographical location:** in terms of where you live in Shetland.
- **Reputation:** in terms of how you are perceived by others in the community.

These factors are explored in the following slides.



Young people's access to opportunities is unequal

Identity:

Young people feel that access to opportunities, especially job opportunities, is highly unequal depending on age, gender and whether you are an incomer or a Shetlander. For example:

- Young people feel pigeon-holed according to their gender, with boys typically becoming joiners, fishermen and oil workers, and girls going into teaching, care work or working in a shop.
- Young people feel discriminated against because of their age, arguing they get overlooked for jobs, including Saturday jobs because they are young.
- Aside from jobs in fish farming and the oil industry, where people are often brought in to Shetland to fill specific positions, incomers often feel overlooked when applying for a job because jobs go to Shetlanders with personal contacts.
- Incomers find it hard to fit in to existing social groups and activities in small communities which can initially seem 'cliquey'.

However, young people feel that social activities are often inclusive to people of different ages and genders, for example, in small schools young people of different ages play together and attend community functions together.

There is a lot of unemployment for young people in Shetland. It stands against you if you are young.

If there is someone who is a Shetlander, they get the job instead of an incomer. Soothmothers are a group that face social exclusion.

Case study: Getting a job, *narrated by Symone*



Jim* is a joiner by trade and, until recently he had a good job, earning good money, which he enjoyed. He had started out as an apprentice joiner, working his way up and eventually securing a full time position. However, recently, Jim was made redundant. He initially went 'on the dole' but hated that fact that he wasn't earning. He felt worthless, and just wanted to get any job he could so he'd be doing something. The problem was that he lives in a remote area and the lack of buses means it's difficult for him to get to a job further afield. He doesn't drive and can't afford either to learn to drive or buy and run a car. So, he began working in a restaurant for a while which he hated. He eventually found a slightly better paid job at Sullom Voe Terminal (oil and liquefied gas), which he is able to travel to because he gets lifts with friends. But, Jim calls it a 'dead end' job: he doesn't enjoy the work and doesn't get paid very well. He feels angry and frustrated because he wants to be doing joinery - the job he loves; that he is skilled at, rather than settling with something that is simply second best.

*All names have been changed.

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Young people's access to opportunities is unequal

Geographical location:

Young people complained that educational, employment and social opportunities are greater in some areas of Shetland than others, making access highly unequal and dependent on where you live. This is exacerbated by poor transport links and the prohibitive cost of transport.

In particular, opportunities are greater in Lerwick and for young people living in the South Mainland, where transport links are better, and limited in local communities, especially those in the north and west. For example:

- Many small communities are unable to support Saturday jobs for young people because there are few local services, e.g. Mossbank.
- Social activities, for example, Maddrim Media, are concentrated in Lerwick and often held in evenings when there is no transport available for young people living elsewhere.

Some interests are also better catered for than others, for example, sporting opportunities.

All the jobs are in Lerwick but, in other places, it's just the local shops, for example, Mossbank. People can't find work near by so they need transport to get to work, and that can be really hard.



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There is a lack of variety of opportunities for young people

Young people feel there is a lack of variety of educational, employment and social opportunities.



There is a lack of variety of opportunities for young people

Educational opportunities:

Young people feel that educational opportunities in Shetland are limited but improving, with an increasing number of training colleges and higher education opportunities.

Placements, experiences, volunteering. There needs to be more. But these opportunities are impacted by money; by who you know. Not everyone can do, or make the most of, these opportunities.

The lack of education options is getting better. There's the Anderson, Bridges, Shetland College, the Fisheries College. It's changing. There's not copious amounts of them but it's getting better.

There is a lack of variety of opportunities for young people

Employment opportunities:

There is a perception of youth unemployment caused by a lack of variety of job opportunities. Many young people argue that they “are not picky” when it comes to finding a job, but that it’s difficult to find a job which matches their skills, qualifications and interests.

In particular, young people feel that:

- They are not exposed to different career options but feel pigeon-holed to apply for jobs according to the opportunities where they live, their gender, and what their parents do.
- They do not receive sufficient support with application forms, CVs, giving presentations and interview techniques which would give them access to alternative employment opportunities.

There's a lack of variety. There might not be any jobs you want to do or there might be jobs available but not for your skills.



There is a lack of variety of opportunities for young people

Social opportunities

Young people feel social opportunities for certain interests are limited. In particular, there is a wealth of sporting opportunities (e.g. athletics, sailing, football and fencing) and opportunities in the arts (e.g. Shetland arts, Maddrim Media).

There's three fencers from Shetland who are in the top twenty in the UK.

We have leisure centres. There's a hall and a pool at each centre.



Young people feel easily pressurised

Insight 2

Young people find it difficult to be an individual

Young people find it difficult to be an individual because of pressure, especially from peers and parents.



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Young people find it hard to be an individual

Young people feel considerable pressure to 'fit in' and 'be the same' as everyone else. Pressure comes mainly from peers and parents and is exacerbated by the fact that communities are small and opportunities to join different social groups is limited.

Being different, for example, dressing differently, being lesbian or gay, or simply behaving differently can lead to being labelled and stigmatised which can, in turn, result in isolation from peers and exclusion from social opportunities.

It's just like a circle for teenagers. You can't be yourself in a group. You have to do what they do.

Drinking is a real problem up here. Young people think it's okay to drink because they have been brought up with it.

You can be different but only in the 'right' ways. You can't piss off the teachers in a place where they are your neighbours, even your mum or dad.

Shetland is an adult-run place. Young people are not respected. You've got to do things the same way as adults.

Young people have to follow in the footsteps of their parents. Parents dictate young people's lives. It's hard for young people to do what they want to do.

It's the influences that affect your future. If your parents are doing something, like using drugs, you are more likely to do it.

When you are growing up in Shetland, you don't have space to be yourself. You might be brought up to believe something, like you're brought up to be a Christian. You may not be forced into it but it's just what you feel you should be doing.

Limited social groups enhances peer pressure on young people

Young people feel that the limited number and diversity of social groups, especially in small communities, exacerbates peer pressure, for example to drink alcohol, smoke, and take drugs.



Limited social groups enhances peer pressure on young people

Opportunities to join different social groups are limited because communities and class sizes are small. Consequently, young people feel easily pressurised into participating in activities they are not always comfortable with, for example drinking alcohol, smoking and taking drugs. Participating in such activities can lead to further exclusion, for example, from jobs, because they have gained a negative reputation which is hard to shake off.

However, young people who had spent time away from Shetland, for example at university, argued that this:

- Gave them more confidence to be themselves when they came back to Shetland.
- Provided opportunities to make new friends when you return to Shetland.

There's not the same sense of pressure if you've been away. You get more confidence when you're put in a situation where you're not the only person. You start from scratch. You can just be yourself, where you get nae pressure from the community.

I've been back properly a month now. I've met so many new people!

It's so easy to fall into something like that. You might get pushed out of a popular circle for not doing it.

Because everyone knows each other, if there is peer pressure on one group, it just shifts from one to the next.

By the time I moved to the Anderson, I wanted to get away. There's only so much of the same people you can take!

Young people feel stigmatised

Insight 3

Young people can easily gain negative reputations that stick

Young people can easily gain negative reputations that stick because communities are small and 'everybody knows everybody'.



Young people can easily gain negative reputations that stick

Young people feel that 'doing one thing wrong = disaster'. In small communities, where 'gossip spreads like wildfire', it is difficult to keep information private and, once gained, a bad reputation is hard to lose. Negative reputations ultimately lead to feeling:

- Permanently labelled.
- Excluded from opportunities, such as getting a Saturday job, attending youth clubs, and friendship groups.

Negative reputations are gained by:

- Participating in 'bad behaviour which is frowned upon by the community, even if it is also encouraged (e.g. drinking alcohol)
- Being associated with someone who has a bad reputation.
- Living in a place which has a bad reputation

Mossbank, Sandveen, Hoofields have reputations for hard drugs, plus places with lots of money, like Whalsay.

It feels like people are condescending towards us on the hill where I live.

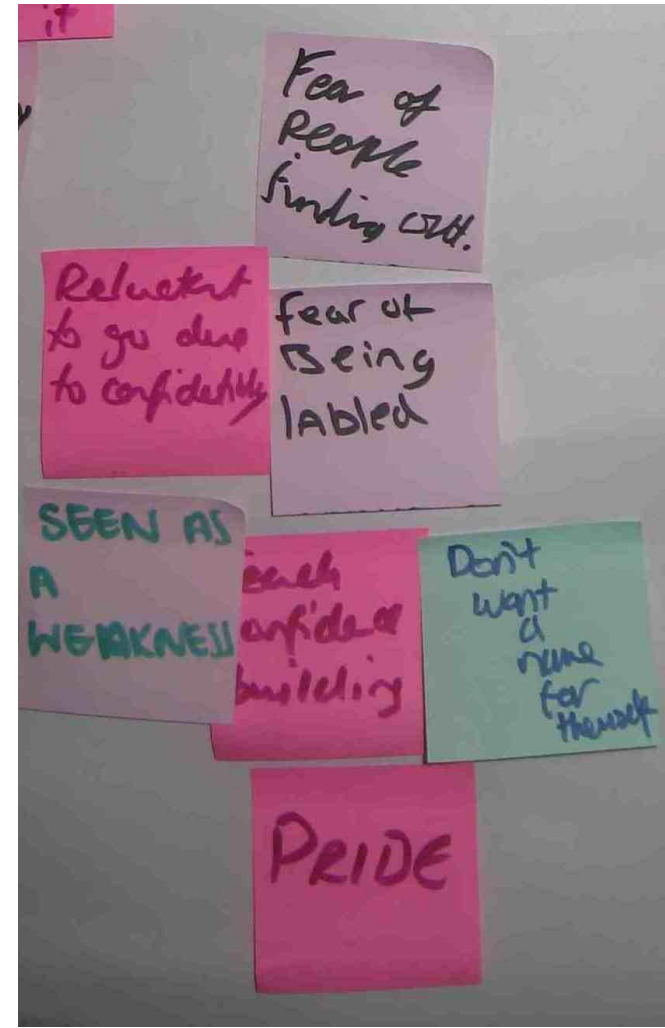
Gossip. That's a massive problem. If you're name's know, you've got a bad reputation.

Shetland acts tolerant to young people drinking but then when you are caught you are in big trouble. The fiddle-box carriers are encouraged to drink!.

It's a close knit community. If someone says you were going around with someone with a bad reputation then you get labelled like him.

Young people fear stigmatisation if they use services

Young people fear they will be stigmatised if they use support services by being labelled as 'poor', 'not coping' or 'a trouble-maker'.



Young people fear stigmatisation if they use services

Young people fear stigmatisation if they use support services by being labelled as 'poor' or 'a trouble-maker' which can, in turn, impact on access to opportunities.

This is exacerbated by the lack of anonymity which makes people reluctant to use services because staff involved in service provision might be friends or neighbours.

Consequently people keep their problems well hidden because they are embarrassed about 'not coping' and do not want to be seen as a failure in a small community where gossip spreads easily.

Young people don't have the power to speak out about what they believe. Older generations can be quite outspoken. If they see you getting help in a small community, everyone will know.

People are good at covering it up, keeping it hidden because they are embarrassed. They are proud. They don't want to accept help.

You get labelled if you get support!

Shetlanders are not people who will put themselves forward. They just deal with it.

Integrating into 'Shetland life' can be difficult

As an incomer, integrating into the 'Shetland way of life' can be difficult, leading to feelings of stigmatisation and exclusion.



Integrating into Shetland life can be difficult

Young people have mixed feelings about the ability of incomers ('soothmothers' and 'foreigners') to integrate into Shetland life. Shetland is generally perceived as quite cliquey, making it difficult for incoming young people to fit in and become accepted.

Labels such as 'soothmother' or 'English' are used negatively and lead to feelings of stigmatisation and exclusion. However:

- Some communities are more inclusive than others because of the larger numbers of incomers living there, e.g. Brae and Sumburgh.
- Some young people feel accepted in small communities. Having opportunities to get involved and contribute to the community is important to make incomers feel integrated.

As soon as you come from England it's different. If you're from Scotland it's okay but if you're from England or somewhere else, it's harder. I still get called English even though I was born in Shetland!

It's hard for people who are not true Shetlanders to get into a community.

I interviewed a lot of incomers. One had an English accent but she was born here but because of her accent she has found it harder to be included. Just because of her accent! But another one who was born elsewhere but came to live here when she was young sounds Shetland and she found it easier. We don't realise how much it affects people. We think it's a joke.

Incomers can join them [the Up Helly Aa] but they can't join a squad. It makes you feel included in Shetland life, it's a big deal.

I don't have any family up in Shetland apart from my parents and my brothers, but I feel like I could phone up other people in the community and ask for help.

Case study: finding work when you're an incomer, *narrated by Kaylee*



Craig moved up from the south when he got kicked out of the house by his mother. He came to live in Shetland with his auntie and uncle in Scalloway and hoped to find a job to support himself. However, three weeks after arriving in Shetland, Craig was still unemployed and his mother called to say that he should come home if he can't find work. By this time, Craig didn't even have enough money to get the bus into town. He eventually managed to get a lift into town with his uncle, but quickly discovered that nobody wanted to employ him because they don't know who he is or know of his family. He returned to his auntie and uncle's house and they explained to Craig that people here are not very welcoming to new faces. Craig returned to his mother down south for a while, but came back to Shetland two months later. He is still looking for a job.

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Young people feel uninformed about services

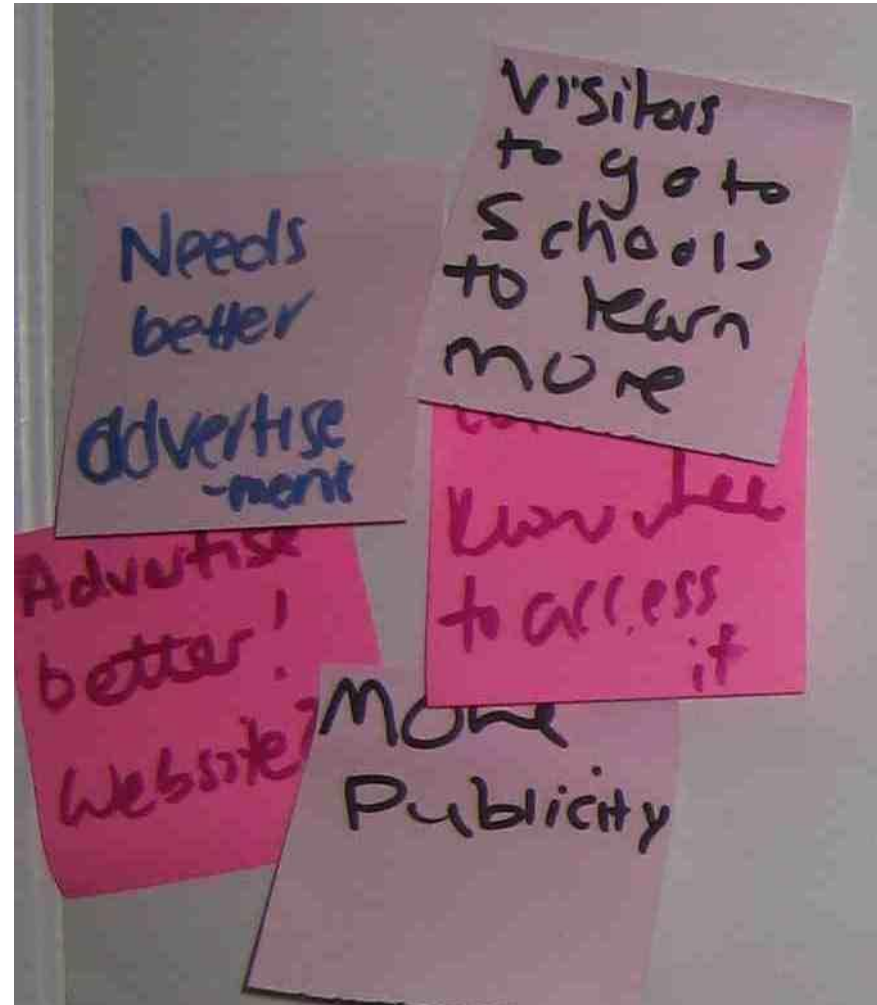
Insight 4

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Young people have limited knowledge about support services

Young people have limited knowledge about support services which are available to them.



Young people have limited knowledge about support services

Young people could identify a range of support services but frequently knew little about them. In particular, young people expressed a desire for better advertisement about services through schools and online.



When I talked about support in my interviews, no one could say anything because they didn't know any services. If they brought the information into schools, young people would be aware of it.

A lot of people in alternative education are more aware of services because there is advertisement there.

Young people feel physically and socially isolated

Insight 5

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Isolation is exacerbated by poor and expensive transport

Physical and social isolation amongst young people is exacerbated by poor and expensive transport.



Isolation is enhanced by poor and expensive transport

Physical and social isolation is attributed to:

- the lack of public transport in terms of poor transport links;
- the high cost of public transport and fuel.

In particular, feelings of isolation are heightened amongst young people who:

- do not yet drive, or who are unable to easily obtain lifts from family and friends;
- live in the North Isles and the West Mainland where transport links are especially poor.

We spend a lot of time hanging around Lerwick waiting for buses. You need money to do stuff when you are hanging around waiting for a bus.

The South Mainland is the best area for transport because the airport is there. You can get into Lerwick from most places, but you can't get between them and you can't travel in the evening.



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Local opportunities make young people feel less isolated

Local opportunities, for example youth clubs, make young people feel less physically and socially isolated.



Local opportunities make young people feel less isolated

Whilst social opportunities based in local communities are limited, those that do exist are vital for making young people feel less physically and socially isolated.

In particular, young people feel that:

- Sporting opportunities are well catered for across the islands, with community leisure centres proving popular.
- Local youth clubs are an important way to connect with friends and feel included in local communities.
- Local community halls are well used and inclusive to all kinds of people.

We need more things to happen outside Lerwick because even if people can travel more easily, the cost can still be prohibitive.

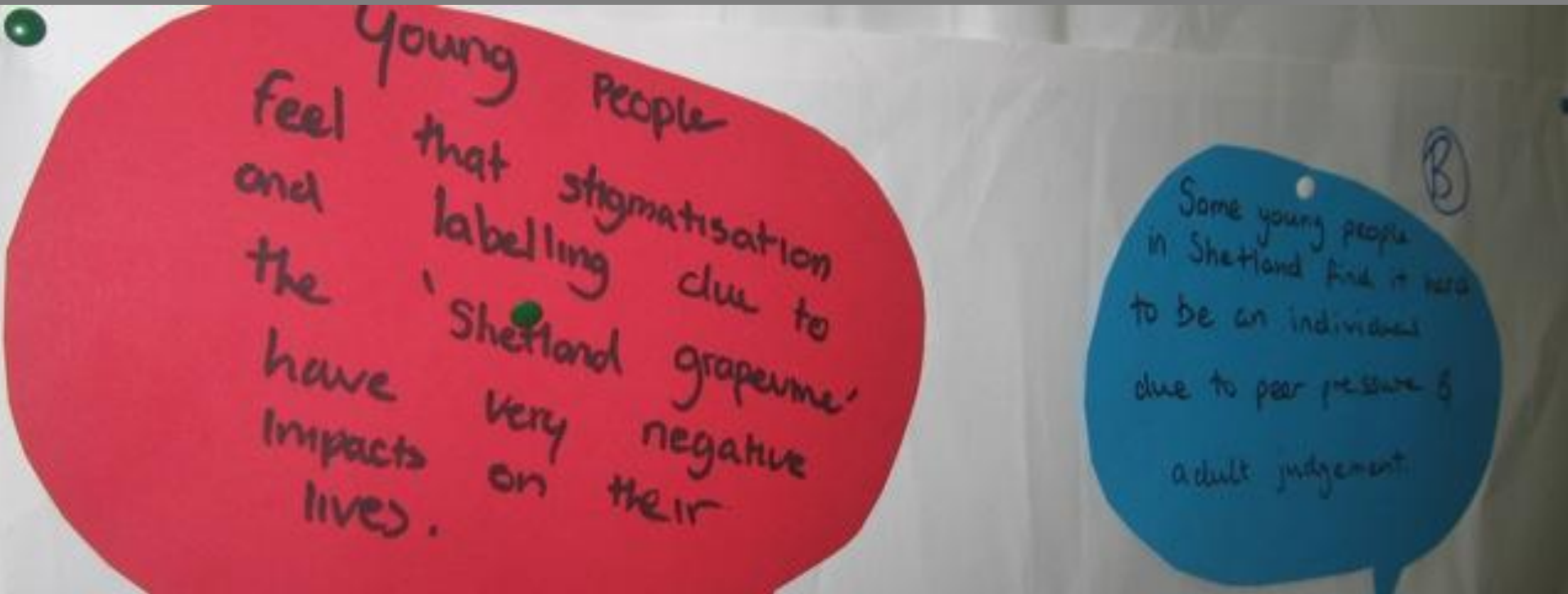
Sport-wise you've got great opportunities, but if you're not into sport there is a lack of opportunities.



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KEY MESSAGES



Young researchers worked in pairs and small groups to generate key messages from the evidence. Key messages are presented below as **young people's realities** in terms of experiences and perceptions of poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S REALITIES

Young people feel the lack of and expense of transport prevents them from accessing opportunities which leads to seeking excitement through alcohol and drugs.

Young people feel the lack of transportation and its cost are factors leading to isolation, which can cause mental health and substance abuse issues.

Key message 1

Young people in Shetland find it hard to be an individual due to peer pressure and adult judgement.

Key message 2

**Stigmatisation and labelling due to the
'Shetland Grapevine' have very negative
impacts on young people.**

Key message 3

Young people feel there are limited career choices in Shetland.

Key message 4

Shetlanders are not aware of poverty on the islands.

Key message 5

Young people are not aware of support services.

Key message 6

STAGE 4: PLANNING



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...bringing young people, service providers and decision-makers together to design concepts for action to address research findings...

1 day workshop. Young people and steering group members:



Built relationships with each other for working together in next steps



Signed up to be involved in next steps



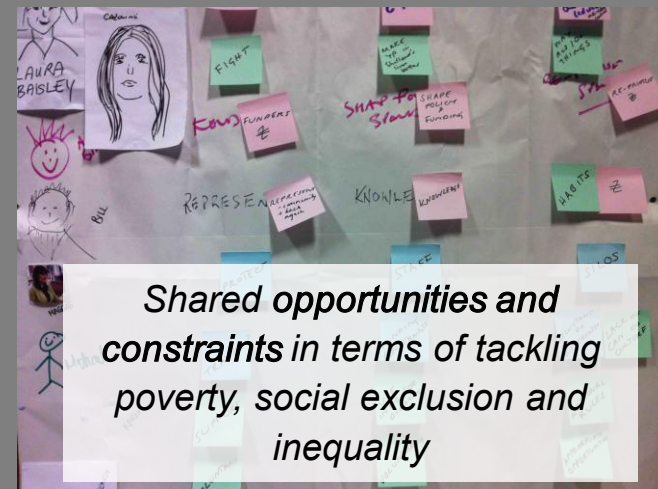
Presented key messages to convey young people's realities about growing up in Shetland.



Generated concepts for action to tackle research findings



Celebrated the project

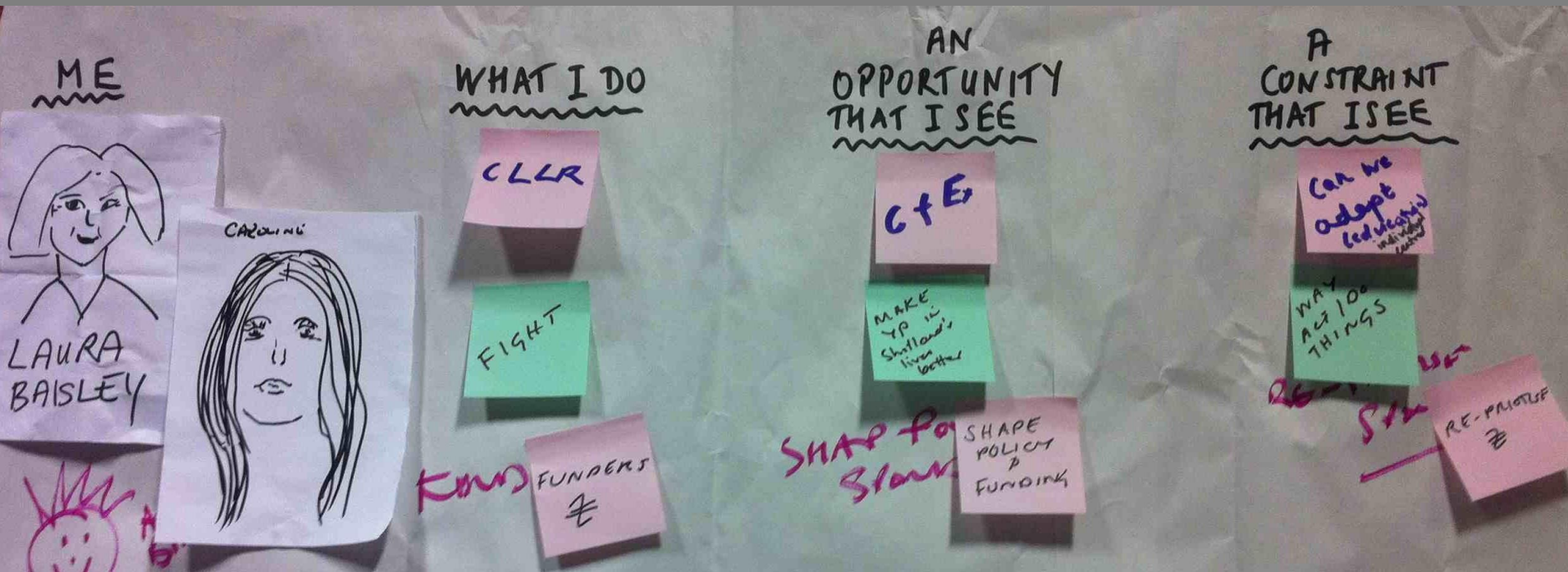


Shared opportunities and constraints in terms of tackling poverty, social exclusion and inequality

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS



Steering committee members were invited to present:

- one opportunity they see in their work in relation to poverty, social exclusion and inequality;
- one constraint they face in their work in relation to poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

Opportunities and constraints were grouped into themes during analysis and are presented below as ***Shetland's realities***.

SHETLAND'S REALITIES

Knowledge: use knowledge to shape decision-making

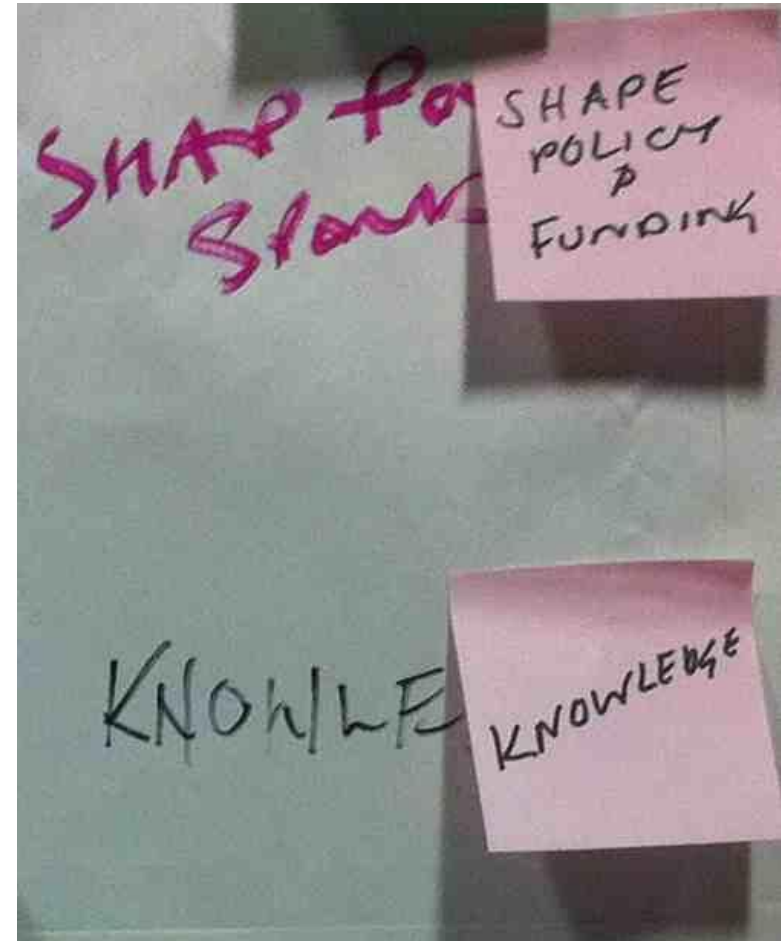
Opportunity 1

Knowledge generated through the youth-led research, in addition to existing knowledge of local planners, service providers and decision-makers is a powerful asset which can be used to:

- Shape and reprioritise policy and spend.
- Ensure services are rooted in evidence drawn from service users' perspectives.

In particular:

- Knowledge needs to be continually generated to ensure it is current and relevant to changing situations.
- People need to be willing to use knowledge and take it forward.



Money: use budget cuts to catalyse innovation

Opportunity 2

Current funding constraints present opportunities to innovate because they force decision-makers to look at things differently and make new choices. In particular:

- Use current funding constraints to think about the use of resources differently, e.g. sharing resources.
- Involve wide-ranging stakeholders in designing services to inject fresh ideas into service planning and delivery.

We need to stop thinking in boxes and do things differently.
Hazel, Finance.



People: use people to take ideas forward

Opportunity 3

People are an important asset for addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality because they can take ideas forward and move them into action. In particular:

- Draw on the commitment, enthusiasm and flexibility of many service providers and decision-makers.
- Create new opportunities for volunteering to involve people in service planning and delivery.

An opportunity I see is my staff. The flexibility and commitment of staff who are willing to do anything to work with the community and protect the community.
Maggie, Environmental Health.



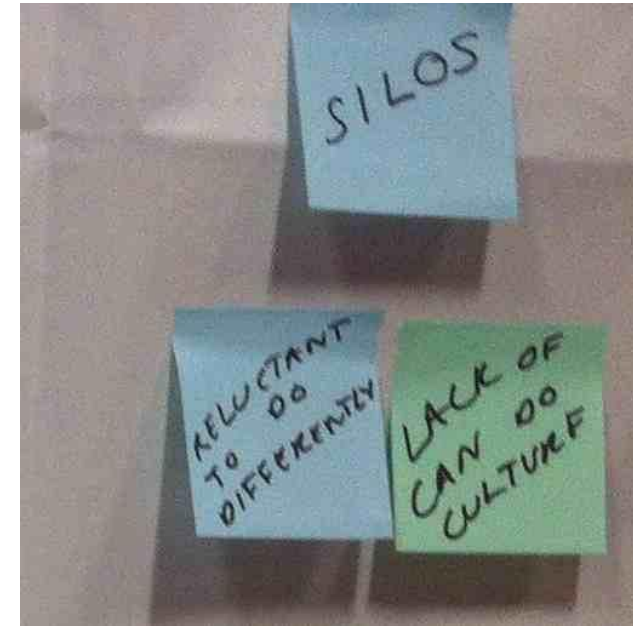
'Bad habits'

Constraint 1

Bad habits mean there is a habit of doing things one way and a common reluctance to do things differently. This lack of 'can do' culture ultimately stifles innovation and creativity which is needed, especially in this time of budget cuts within the public sector.

There is too much of a common reluctance to do something different. We never actually try. The objectives and needs don't change, so how do we deliver? Through innovation, creativity, collaboration, a different use of resources, sharing resources. Michael, Transport Planning.

We are getting stuck in our little boxes.
Maggie, Environmental Health.



Budget cuts

Constraint 2

Budget cuts directly impact staff and services meaning that more has to be done with fewer resources.

A constraint we face is money. It's dull and regrettable but we need to think of things we can do with less. Bill, Councillor and the Shetland Charitable Trust.

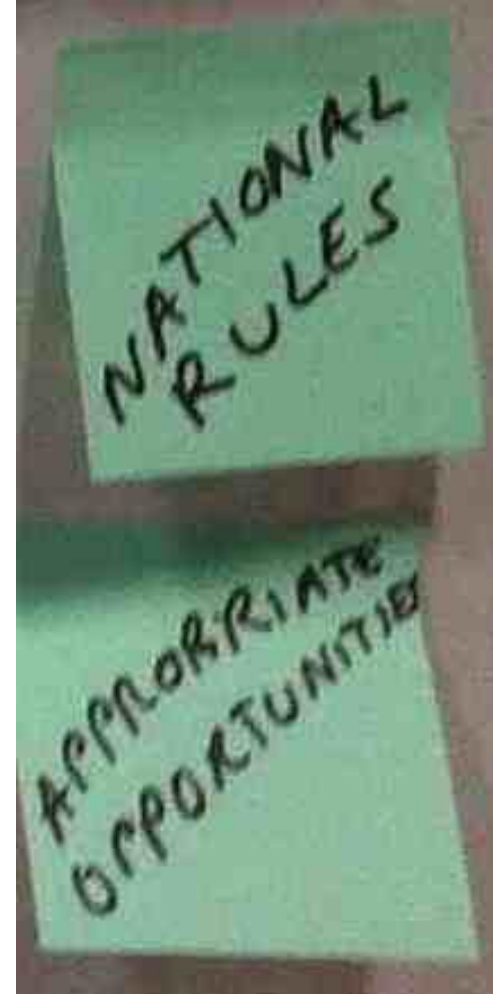


Rules and requirements

Constraint 3

Rules and requirements at the national level put pressure on service planners and deliverers to do things in a certain way that which means:

- It takes a long time to get things done.
- It is difficult to get people to work differently.
- It is difficult to innovate.



CONCEPT GENERATION



Young researchers and steering committee members worked in small groups to generate concepts for action to address key messages from the research:

- Groups were given one key message and tasked with working up a practical concept for action based on young people's and Shetland's realities.
- Worksheets helped groups move from knowledge to concept development by: identifying desired outcomes in relation to the key message; generating ideas, working up one idea into a concept; and action planning next steps.

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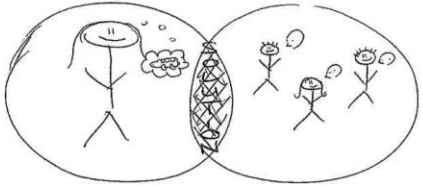
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CONCEPTS

A2B, concept 1

Involving young people in re-designing transport services in Shetland by establishing a working group of young people and transport planners which is focussed on young people's needs, to:

- Reduce isolation amongst young people and enable social inclusion.
- Increase awareness and understanding about the impact of transport fare structures.
- Increase accessibility to opportunities offered across Shetland.

Name: INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN DESIGNING/REDESIGNING TRANSPORT SERVICES IN SHETLAND	
Short description (briefly explain what it is)	What makes it valuable (briefly explain why it's important)
ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP INVOLVING /CENTRING AROUND YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS. & TRANSPORT.	- REDUCES ISOLATION - ENABLES SOCIAL INCLUSION - AWARENESS OF & UNDERSTANDING OF IMPACT OF FARE STRUCTURE. - INCREASE IN CONFIDENCE FROM INVOLVEMENT & INFLUENCE - IMPACT ON OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED ACROSS SHETLAND
A simple visualisation (using words or drawings sketch the concept)	
 GROUP: A&B LEAD: ELAINE PARK	
What happens next? MEMBERSHIP Decide on group size	

Mentoring and creating positive role models, *concept 2*

Recruit mentors to support and coach people experiencing poverty, social exclusion and deprivation to build their confidence, draw out their skills and help them find opportunities to use them, to:

- Encourage individuality and allow young people to 'be themselves'.
- Recognise and celebrate unique skills and abilities amongst young people.



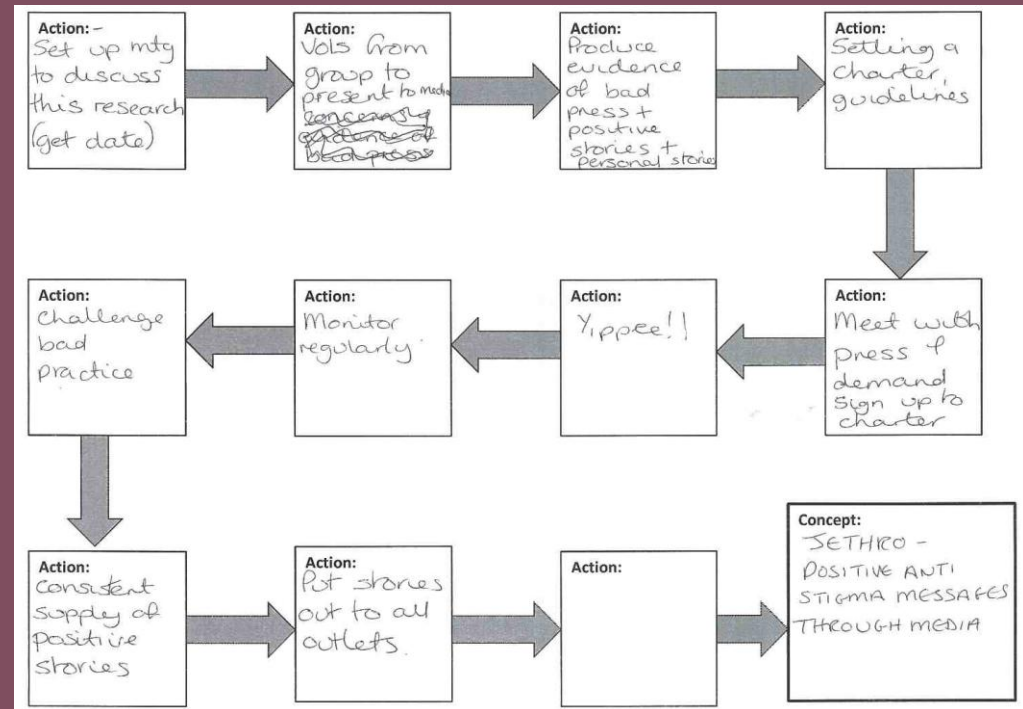
Positive anti-stigma messages through media, *concept 3*

Encourage positive anti-stigma messages through the media by:

- Challenging media who produce negative words and stories about young people who face poverty, social exclusion and inequalities.
- Writing and printing positive stories about young people.
- Ensuring the media sign up to a charter agreeing to good conduct in regard to the stigmatisation of young people through print.

Positive anti-stigma messages aim to:

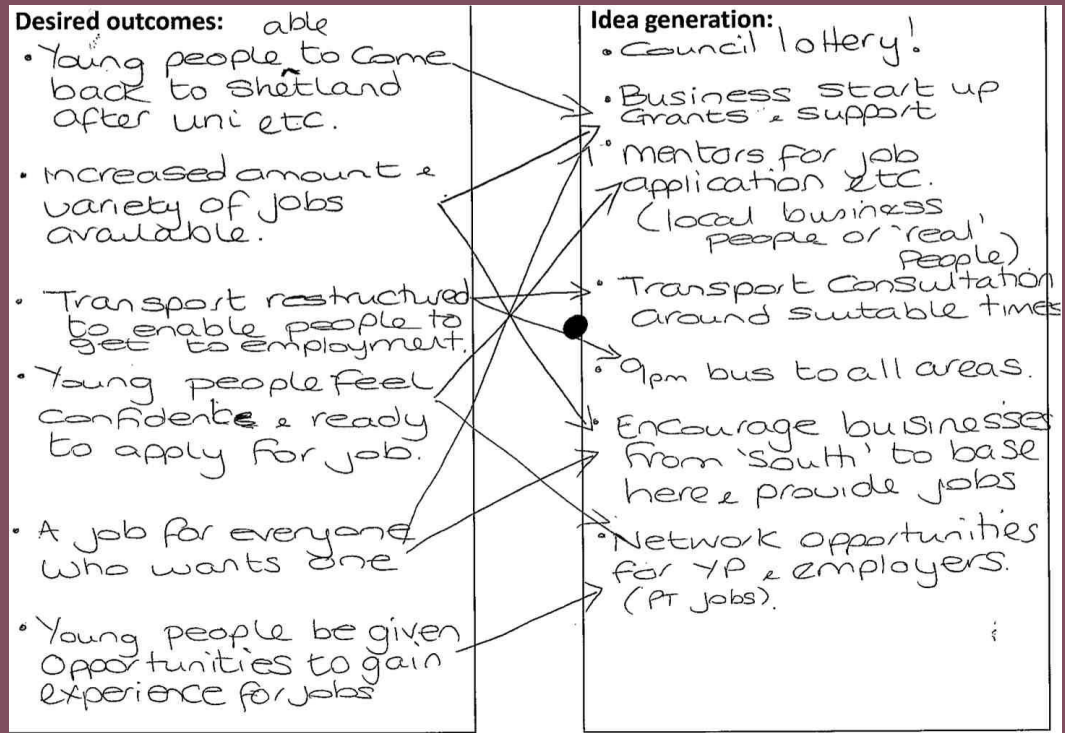
- Raise awareness about the damage labels cause to young people.
- Encourage individuality amongst young people.
- Promote positive attitudes towards young people.



Business befriending scheme, concept 4

Engage business employers to provide active support to young people with job applications, CVs, presentations and interview techniques through presentations and small working groups in schools, colleges, Bridges, and through SYIS and Youth Services to:

- Ensure young people feel confident to apply for jobs.
- Enable young people to gain experience before applying for jobs.



Through the eyes of...', concept 5

A series of short plays and films based on real stories of people in Shetland and shown across Shetland to:

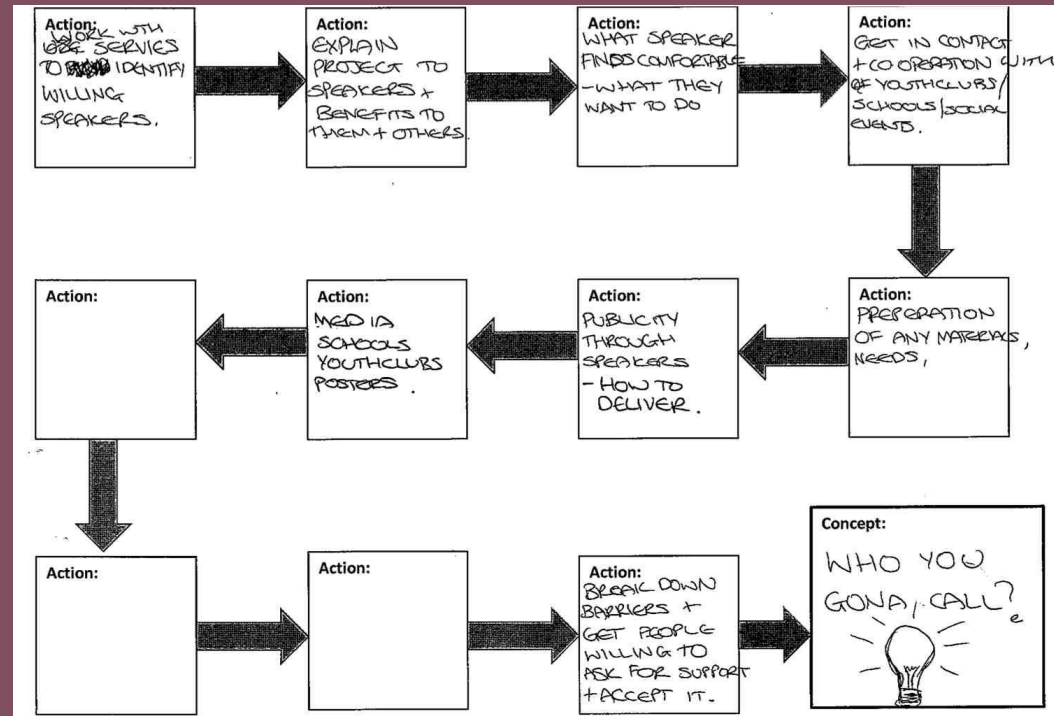
- Raise awareness about the causes and impacts of poverty, social exclusion and inequality on young people.
- Promote understanding about what it means to live in poverty.
- Encourage young people to ask for help and access services.



'Who you gonna call?', concept 6

A mentoring scheme in which recipients and ex-recipients of support share their experiences of receiving support with their peers in small groups based at schools, youth clubs, colleges and community halls to:

- Raise awareness amongst young people about support available.
- Make support services more understandable and accessible to young people, encouraging uptake.
- Normalise support to decrease the stigmatisation attached to receiving support.
- Encourage young people to actively ask for support rather than 'just getting on with it'.



IMPACT

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IMPACT



The research project was innovative and empowering. The impact of the research gathered momentum through the project as young researchers learned about poverty, social exclusion and inequality from their peers and young researchers and adults learned how to listen to each other and work together in meaningful ways. The following slides present the impact of the research, demonstrating the power of a youth-led approach ***on young people*** and ***on Shetland*** more broadly.

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ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Developed confidence and leadership skills amongst young people by enabling them to lead the research process:

- Increased ownership of the process with young people making decisions, giving presentations and leading group work.
- Increased confidence developed amongst young people as researchers and communicators across age and gender boundaries.



ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Broke down barriers and built new relationships by initiating conversations between young people and adults from contrasting life experiences:

- Between young people of different ages, geographical locations, educational abilities, and from diverse backgrounds.
- Between young people and adults.

I enjoyed the way the workshops allowed the team to bond and get to know each other. This really helped the overall project as you felt like a unit when undertaking the work. It kept up your motivation and made you look forward to the next workshop day! Lauren, 21yrs.



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ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Built research skills and capacities amongst young people which they can draw on in other areas of their lives including:

- Designing and planning research.
- Confidently interviewing peers.
- Organising, analysing and distilling large amounts of data.
- Working directly with adults to develop action plans to address findings.

I gained skills such as carrying out a peer interview, how to go about analysing a vast amount of data, how to produce themes from data collected. All of these skills, I am sure, will be drawn upon throughout my working life. Lauren, 21yrs.

I learned how to do peer research and new research techniques. I also learned a lot of useful energiser games which I will definitely use in the future. Sarah, 23yrs.

One of the things that struck me when doing this project was that how getting us to do a simple task, like brainstorming what a phrase or issue meant to you in one word could spark many ideas and lead to formation of something detailed and in-depth having never given it much thought before. I think this is something which I could draw upon in many different situations in the future – stripping issues back to their simplest form – thinking about what they mean to you and from this formulating action plans. Lauren, 21yrs.

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ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Built knowledge about poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst young people by initiating conversations which do not normally happen:

- Exposed young people to experiences and perceptions about poverty, social exclusion and inequality that they had not encountered before.
- Challenged previously held views about young people.

I enjoyed the workshop days, getting everyone's ideas, and thoughts together and the group work. It was good to hear what people thought and how this developed over the few weeks; how it changed and grew. Sarah, 23yrs.

I've got a better perception of different people's situations. Just because it's not something you've experienced before doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Lauren, 21yrs.

I enjoyed watching the young researchers' knowledge grew as they interviewed their participants. Maggie, Environmental Health.

I feel like I've learnt more about what my friends think about things by asking them questions that I wouldn't normally ask them. Shaun, 14yrs

ON SHETLAND

Shifted perceptions about involving young people in service design and delivery:

- Demonstrated the value of working with young people in the context of evidence-based service design, especially the benefits of leading with young people rather than the solution from a service perspective.
- Provided new ideas, methods and approaches for involving young people in service design and delivery in meaningful ways to move from consultation to participation of young people, for example, facilitation techniques.
- Built relationships between young people and service providers, revealing the value of working together on that same level.

I think the activities were really good and it felt much more like engagement, and this is something we should be using more when consulting with young people, rather than just having table discussions. Facilitation skills are important and we should be exploring alternative ways to engage groups to have their say. Brenda, Bridges

I enjoyed the creative atmosphere where ideas were allowed to form, get batted around and improved on. Rod, Housing Outreach Service.

I learned about the value of working together will all ages on the same level. Wendy, Voluntary Action Shetland.

ON SHETLAND

Provided powerful evidence to inform service design and delivery:

- 'Brought issues home' by reinforcing important issues needing attention in terms of service delivery.
- Enabled service providers to see issues in a different light, making evidence powerful and compelling.

It was one of the best days I've had in ages.... I came away with memorable messages from the day which are simmering away as we plan our work. Michael, Transport Planning.

Just because there are services in place to try and deal with a need doesn't mean that they reach all of those who need the service. I knew this already but it was brought home well, especially in discussions around employment and support for young people to gain appropriate skills for gaining employment or choosing a career. Rod, Housing Outreach Service.

ON SHETLAND

Sparked innovation in terms of thinking about doing service design and delivery differently:

- Provided opportunities and ideas for working with young people in ways which ensure young people are listened to and genuinely involved.
- Provided impetus for changing service design and delivery including reviewing the allocation of resources, reprioritising, and changing the way services are planned.

I enjoyed the enthusiasm of all present and the commitment of the steering group to make changes.
Wendy, Community Planning.

I think this project will allow members and staff in the council to understand what young people think better and I think the method in which the project was carried out will be used again in other projects as it is a very effective way of doing research as it is done by the people it is about. Sarah, 23yrs

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Susan Laidlaw, NHS Shetland
Vaila Simpson, Housing Service
Maggie Dunne, Environmental Health Service
Catherine Hughson, Voluntary Action Shetland
Emma Perring, Policy Manager
Bill Manson, Shetland Charitable Trust
Ann Black, Shetland Charitable Trust
Mhari Pottinger, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Barry Callieu, SYIS
Kate Gabb, Children's Reporter
Michael Craigie, Transport
Jason Beeston, Police
Councillor Fullerton
Councillor Smith
Councillor Grains
Councillor Baisley
Councillor Duncan



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