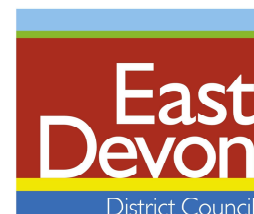


East Devon Youth Survey (EDYs) Phase I: Outline of results for Sidmouth Community College Survey

East Devon District Council, Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 8HL.
Research Officer, Sept 2005.



1 Introduction

This report provides an initial outline of data collected from Sidmouth Community College in the first phase of the East Devon Youth Survey (EDYs). The survey aimed to explore some aspects of leisure affecting young people in East Devon. This survey is being repeated at other secondary schools and the results will be published as they become available.

It was accepted that the term 'youth' could mean a number of age bands, and the term often comes with negative associations. In this part of the study we have taken youth to mean 'young people', specifically those at secondary school in the 12 to 18 year old band, with all their diversities, and hopefully without some of the baggage. This report does not include a survey of literature surrounding the theories of youth, nor a full methodology.

2 Research Background

Initially this research was requested by the Leisure Services division, East Devon District Council to determine sports facility usage and allied issues. Following proposed changes in the Council structure, and interest expressed by the Local Strategic Partnership Officer Group, Transport Group, and the Community Safety Group, the survey was extended to consider other issues affecting youth. The leisure content was required to remain within the survey and formed a dominant component. Health related questions were not included in this survey as it was considered that the survey was already becoming too overloaded, and that the NHS services were already producing survey proposals in this area.

The final survey aimed to look at young people's leisure activities in the broadest sense, taking into account sporting, and non-sporting activities. Other issues were to be considered in line with Government core indicators, and needs of key partners.

3 Methodology

By agreement with Sidmouth College, questionnaires were circulated to all students in their morning tutor groups one day during the first week of February 2005. It was accepted that a questionnaire survey had a number of advantages and disadvantages. The advantages were that the survey could gather data from a large number of pupils and the costs were relatively low, particularly in terms of staff time, and this process could be achieved within the current

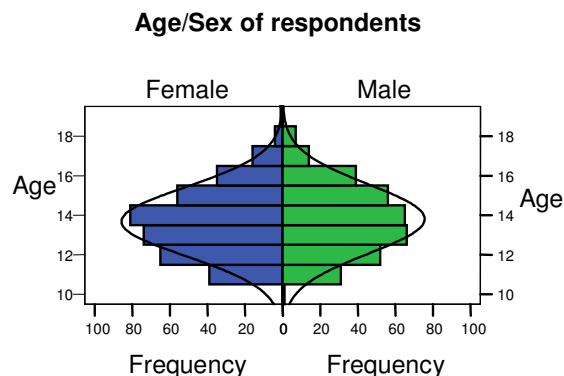
Council setting. Disadvantages included problems with surveys potentially treating participants as a homogenous group, being impersonal, and not allowing elaboration of responses. Some students may have found a questionnaire a difficult way to express themselves, putting them at disadvantage to those who could express themselves more readily. Some elements of the survey were challenging, and the survey was quite lengthy for this type of study. It was however envisaged that the survey was the starting point of a process that would lead to a fuller dialogue later on. A number of open questions were included in the questionnaires to reduce some of the problems associated with this method. Ethical considerations needed to include issues around the age of participants.

The questionnaire was formulated by discussing what was required with members of the Local Strategic Partnership. This was not a process led or heavily involving those who would be surveyed, though the draft questionnaires were circulated at a local youth club, and school, for comment and amendments were made.

4 Findings

4.1 Age/sex

703 (99.2%) respondents entered their age and sex, 53% put themselves as female, and 47% as male. The ratio of females to males was similar to the ratio predicted from National Statistics.



4.2 Ethnicity

Almost all respondents entered their ethnicity. Over 97% stated their ethnicity as white, the remaining were mainly 'other', consisting partly of spurious entries (the 'Jedi' effect). All of the non-white groups were below data protection threshold.

4.3 Disability

Most responded to the disability question, with 3% saying they had a recognised disability. Specific disabilities were not asked for as again, the data revealed would be below data protection threshold.

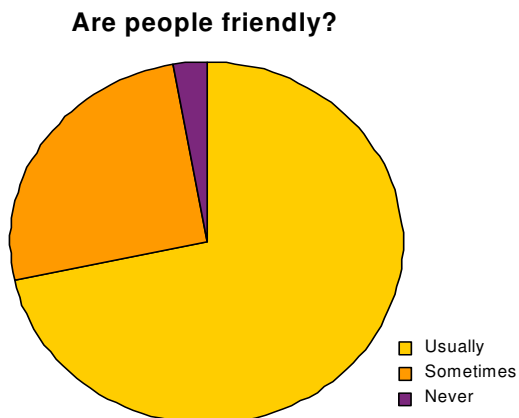
4.4 Town

Just over a half of all students said they came from Sidmouth, leaving a significant proportion coming in from surrounding areas, mainly within East Devon.

Town	Percent
Sidmouth	52.0
Newton Poppleford	10.1
Sidford	7.2
Budleigh Salterton	5.2
Exmouth	4.6
Sidbury	4.2
Otterton	2.2
Branscombe	2.0
Colaton Raleigh	2.0
Beer	1.6
Honiton	1.3
Seaton	1.3

n=692. 6.2% had number from each town below data protection threshold.

4.5 Are people friendly where you live?



When asked "Are people friendly where you live?", from 708 respondents, over 70% said that people where 'usually', around 26% said 'sometimes', and just under 3% said 'never'. This question was asked as a proxy for information on social inclusion.

4.6 School

For this survey all respondents obviously came from Sidmouth Community College.

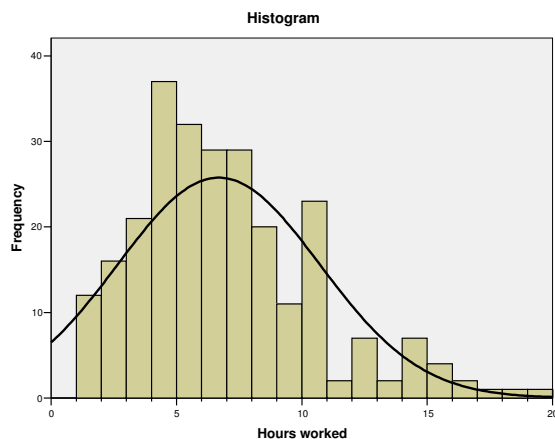
4.7 How you normally get to school?

The main form of transport to school was walking (45%), while 28% used a school bus, 14% got a lift, 7% used a public bus, and 3% cycled. Sidmouth has no train service.

4.8 How you normally get to leisure?

More than half of respondents (53%) said that they walked to their leisure activity, 27% got a lift, 7% used public bus, and 4% cycled. Taxis were the least used mode of transport (less than 1%).

4.9 Jobs



Just under 40% of respondents said they had a job. The mean hours worked was just over 6½ hours per week, with a mode of 4 hours.

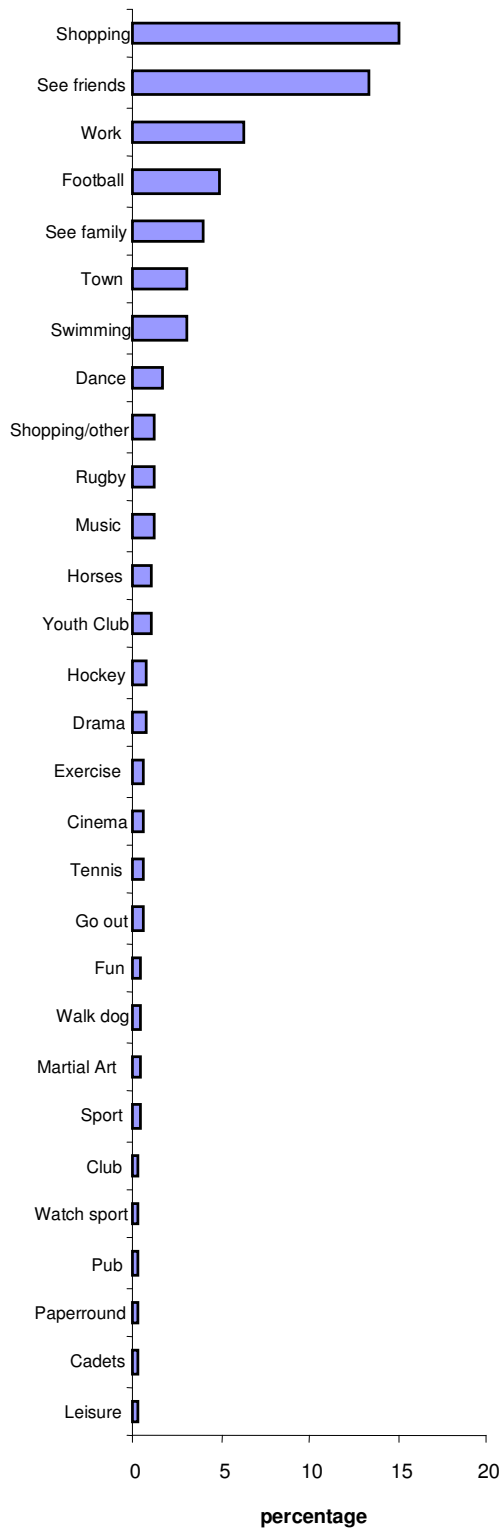
4.10 Frequent Trips

4.10.1 Reason for trips

School journeys were excluded from this section. The most frequent trips were for shopping or to see friends, followed by work or visiting family. For the primary journey seeing friends took precedence over

shopping, while the secondary and tertiary trips the primary activities were reversed.

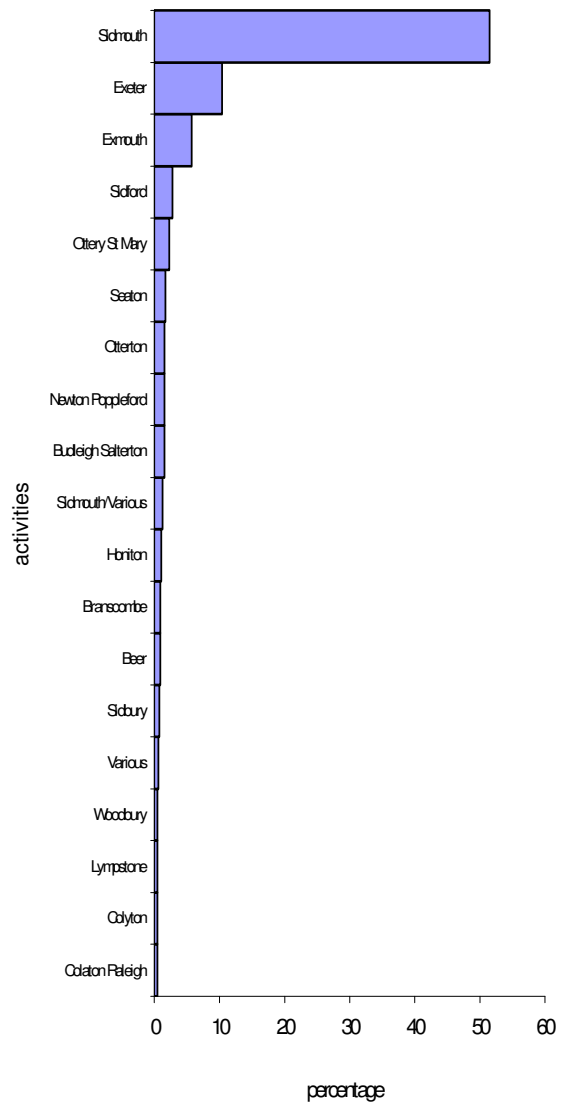
All trips - most frequent activities



4.10.2 Destination

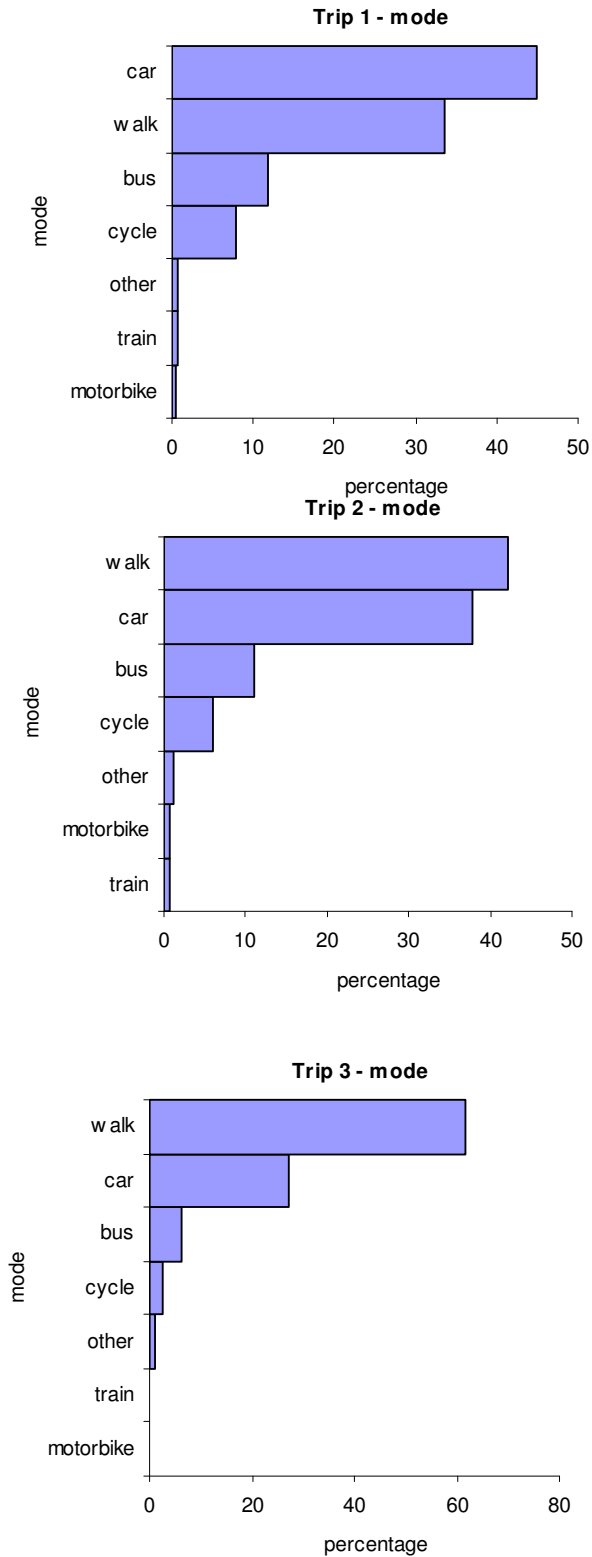
The majority of trips students made were local to Sidmouth, followed by Exeter, Exmouth, Sidford, and the main East Devon towns. Of those travelling to Exeter, 51% went by car, and 43% by bus. No other breakdown of data has been made for destinations by mode of transport, or locality of respondent.

Trip 1 - most frequent destinations



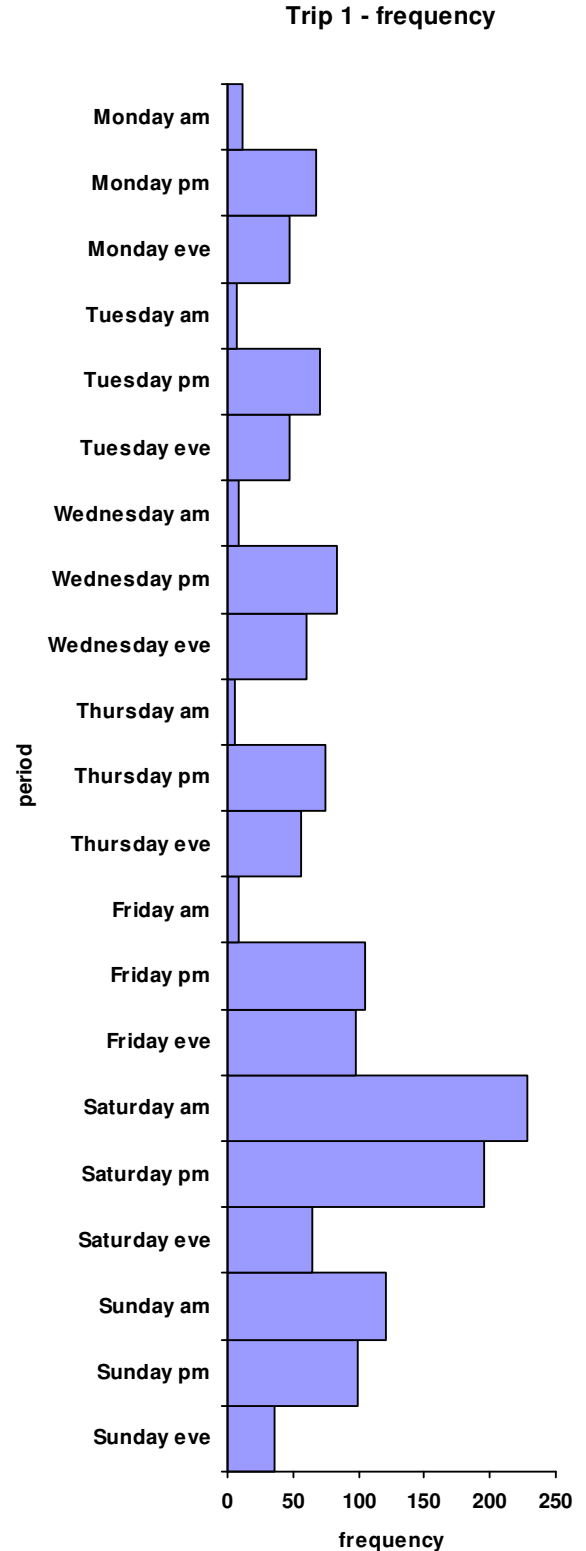
4.10.3 Mode of transport

For trip 1 the majority of respondents said they went by car, while trip 2 was mainly walking, closely followed by car, and trip 3 predominantly by foot.



4.10.4 Time of travel

Most trips were made on Saturday mornings, the greatest number of trips was closely followed by Saturday afternoons, with fewer trips made most evenings. Not surprisingly, the smallest frequencies



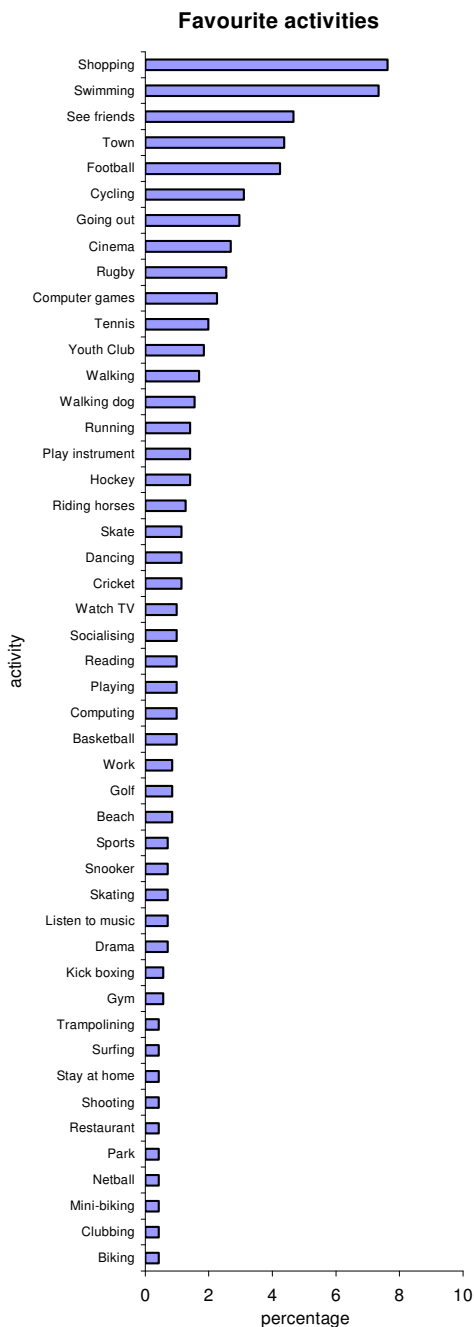
occurred on weekday mornings, presumably coinciding with term time attendance at school. The frequency patterns for trips 1 to 3 were similar. The school journey was not included in this section.

4.11 Places used

Sidmouth sports centre and Sidmouth swimming pool were the most common places used for activities from the list given.

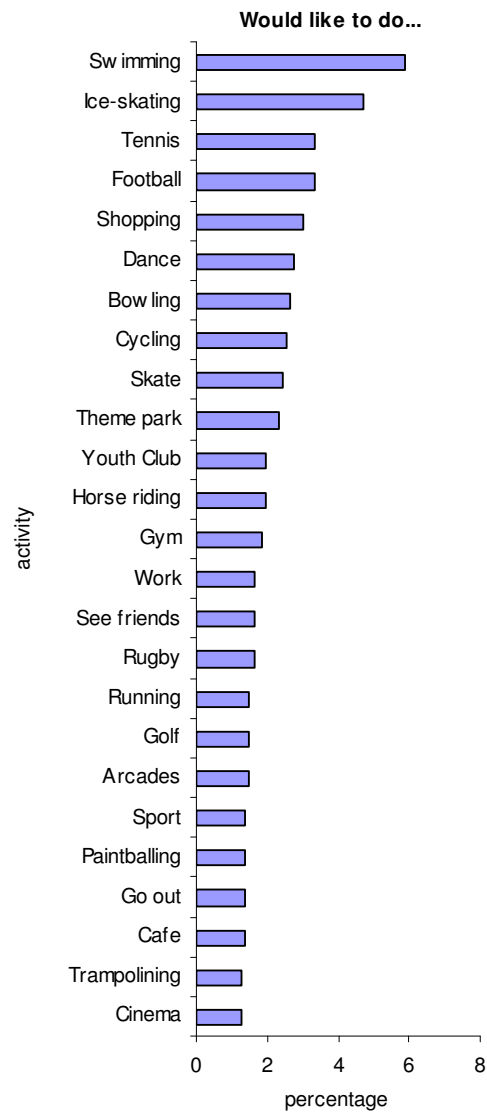
4.12 Favourite Activities

When asked what their favourite activities were, the predominant answers were shopping, swimming, and seeing friends. Shopping was the favoured option for just under 10% of respondents.

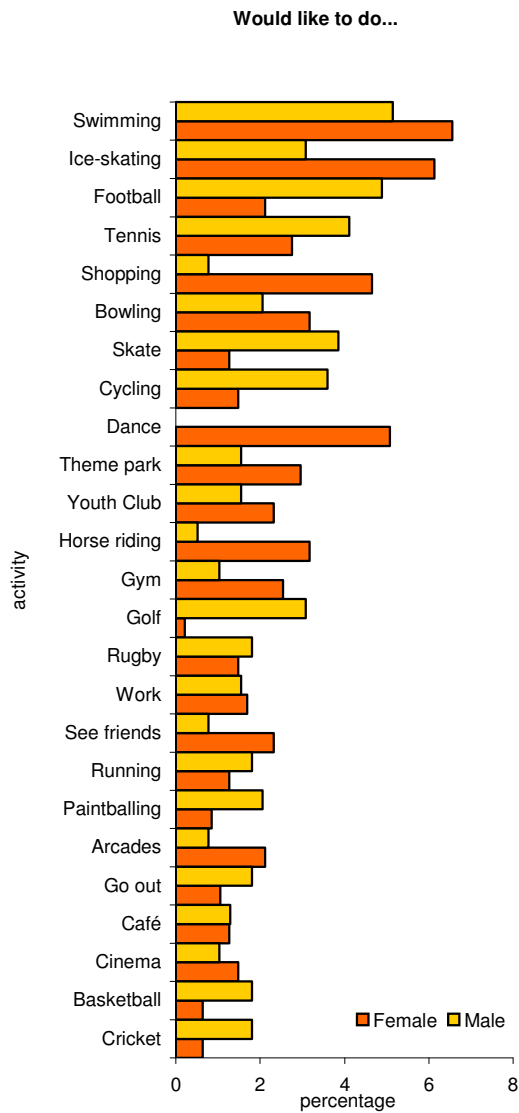


4.13 Would like to do

When asked what they would like to do the most popular request was for swimming, though by only around 6% of respondents. Ice-skating was next, followed by tennis, football and shopping.



Swimming and ice-skating were both preferred by girls, while football and tennis preferred by boys. Shopping was predominantly a female request, and dancing solely requested by girls. Activities such as skating and cycling were more predominant amongst males.



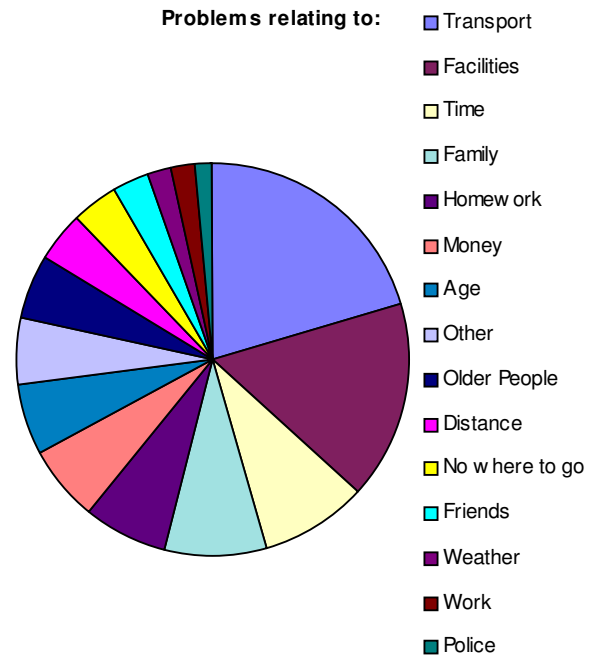
4.14 Problems in doing what would like to do.

406 respondents listed 479 problems they encountered in doing what they wanted. The types of problems were placed into general categories before being ranked by frequency. Outlines of the types of problems encountered have been given for each of the headings.

Of those saying they had a problem around 16% related to facilities. Around a third of the responses relating to facilities said that there was nothing, or not much, for people of their age to do in Sidmouth. Apart from ice-skating no significant sport or activity appeared in the problem section.

4.14.1 Transport

More than one fifth of respondents, to the question on problems, said they had problems doing what they wanted due to transport. The majority who said they had problems were female and/or from outside Sidmouth.



The predominant problem was cost of public transport. It appeared that some thought that it was too expensive to get to places by bus if you were a youth. Those over sixteen had to pay full fare. The next main problems were no availability of transport nearby, or having to rely on parents for a lift. Where services were available there were problems with the frequency of the service, especially in the evening, and from more rural locations.

4.14.2 Facilities

Of those saying they had a problem around 16% related to facilities. Around a third of the responses relating to facilities said that there was nothing, or not much, for people of their age to do in Sidmouth. Apart from ice-skating no particular significant sport or activity appeared in the problem section, more just a general lack of things for young people to do.

4.14.3 Time

Just under 10% of those responding to the question of problems said they did not have enough time. The predominant reason for not having enough time was already being involved in other activities.

4.14.4 Family

Under 10% said they had problems doing what they wanted due to family. The main reason given by respondents for not being able to do what they wanted by family was parents stopping them from doing things. Although most responses were non specific, ie 'parents no allowing me', some said either their parents did not trust them, or they did not trust other people. Other family factors preventing people from doing the activities included domestic duties, or siblings.

4.14.5 Homework

Around 7% of those responding to the question on problems said that homework was an issue. The overall problem appeared to be that they thought that there was too much homework and coursework and that this prevented them from having time to do other things.

4.14.6 Money

Money, or lack of it, prevented around 6%, of those saying they had a problem, from being able to do what they wanted.

4.14.7 Age

6% felt that age was a problem, either from not being able to get into clubs or other activities, use facilities on their own, or with friends, or that facilities in Sidmouth tended to be tailored to older people.

4.14.8 Older people

Around 5% said that older people were a problem, mainly because they seemed to complain about everything that young people did, and telling them, or preventing them from doing things.

4.14.9 Distance

The distance to activities was seen by some as a problem. Either the activities they wanted to do were too far away, in for example Exeter, or that they lived in a rural location away from most activities.

4.14.10 Nowhere to go

The category 'nowhere to go' differed slightly from lack of facilities, though they may be grouped together. Those saying they had nowhere to go appeared to not necessarily to want to do any particular activity, but just have somewhere to go; for example somewhere to go out to, that was warm and dry, and away from home, like a café.

4.14.11 Friends

Problems with friends related to either friends doing other things, getting others into trouble, or not enough of them.

4.14.12 Weather

The cold, dark (not strictly weather) and wet prevented some from going out and doing things.

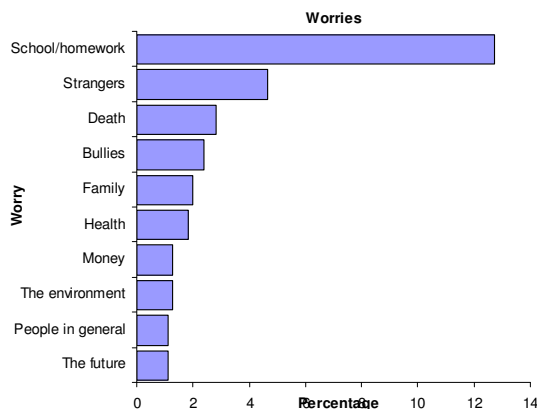
4.14.13 Work

Only 2% said their paid work prevented them from doing the activities they wanted to.

4.14.14 Police

1% complained that the police prevented them from doing what they wanted.

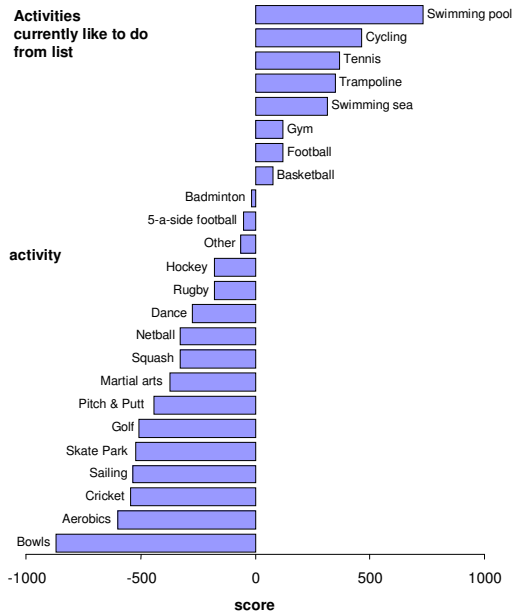
4.15 Worries



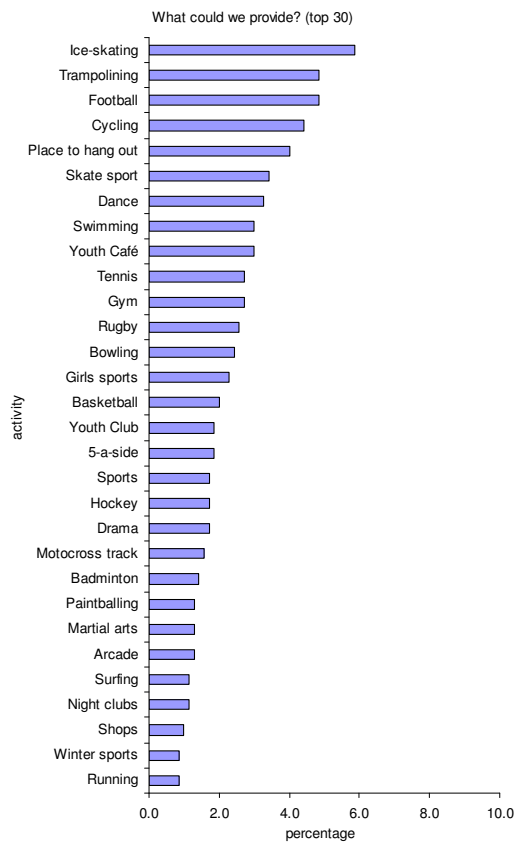
Just under a half of all respondents said that they had a worry. The most prominent worry, around 13%, was to do with school work. The main worries to do with school work appeared to do with the amount of work, the time involved, and also for some worrying about grades. The next most prominent worry, less than 5% of respondents, said stranger danger was a worry. Stranger danger mainly related to fear of some form of attack, including kidnap, by strangers.

4.16 Activities from pre-defined list

We asked about a set of specific physical activities (linked to what East Devon District provides). A scale was applied to the responses to show how likely it was that they would participate. 'Very likely' being scored at 2.7, and 'very unlikely' -2.6.



4.17 Would you like us to provide.....



4.17.1 Ice-skating

Ice-skating was the most requested item in this category, though still only just under 6% of respondents. This category was straight forward in that the request was for 'ice-skating', or an 'ice-rink'.

4.17.2 Trampoline

Again a fairly uniform request for 'trampoline', with a few for a 'trampoline park', lessons or a club.

4.17.3 Where activities would best be provided

When asked where activities could be best provided the answers were mainly by location, though some also included more specific details.

Location	Percentage (%)
Sidmouth	56
Exeter	15
Exmouth	7
Sidford	3
Budleigh Salterton	3
Newton Poppleford	2
Honiton	2
Ottery St Mary	2
Beer	1
Sidbury	1
Seaton	1

4.17.4 How activities can help you and your friends

Out of the 61% of students who responded to the question on how the activities they wished for could help them or their friends, around one fifth said for fitness.

Summary of reason given	Percentage (%)
Fitness	21
Fun	20
Socialise	15
Something to do	10
More to do	9
Get into less trouble	6
Somewhere to go	3
Learning	3
Get out more	2
Less boredom	2
Less travel	1
Other	1
Safer	1
Chillout	1

Under fitness respondents said the activities could help them 'get fit', 'get fitter', or 'keep us fit/healthier'. Just under a fifth of statements mentioning fitness, also mentioned 'fun'. Fun was the second most predominant criteria with statements 'we could have more fun', 'get fit, and have fun', or just 'fun'. The grouping 'socialise' brought together a variety of statements, such as 'socialising more and get out', 'meet up with other people', or 'make new friends'.

4.18 How we could ask in future

Around 40% of the students responded to this question, of these 56% said we could do a survey in the future, 27% wished for a face to face discussion, and 6% said "something on the internet" or using computers.

4.19 How would you like to hear the results

From 44% of students responding to the question asking how they would like to be informed, around 30% said 'letters', and 27% 'through school'.

5 Discussion

Far from appearing to demonstrate a homogenised group, the survey revealed, as would be expected, a diverse level of interest and set of interests; from those who say they couldn't care less what we do, to those with specific wishes; to those who have a keen interest in sport, and those who think this is the worst thing to do.

It is significant that almost half of respondents did not come from Sidmouth, with villages like Newton Poppleford having a significant number of young people. As many tended to walk or use a lift they may find difficulties in accessing activities that are invariably elsewhere. Transport was the most cited issue in the section on problems. There may also be associated problems in accessing work for those who wish to work.

Obviously one of the dangers of this type of work is to raise expectations. We all want things to be better, and we can get frustrated by the apparently slow machinations of local authority processes and evermore limited resources. While accepting that much can be done, and much cannot, knowing the difference is only a small part of the issue, communicating and discussing the desires into 'realities' is problematic. One of the striking findings was the couple of hundred and more suggestions for activities, most, obviously, accounting for a small percentage of respondents. When asked for what we could provide, the most popular suggestion, ice-skating, made up just over 5% of the responses. However, once further data is collected, and results extrapolated to East Devon, or say the Exeter catchment, this may translate into a viable number of young people interested in skating, especially if also taking the adult market into consideration. Discussions may look into solutions, such as temporary rinks during summer holidays in key areas, or a more longer term more permanent solution (while also considering environmental impact).

When considering options it is worth looking at the overall 'market', including adults, for viability, however, a number of respondents pointed out that there were not activities for youth. For example, gym

sessions, or pre-school swimming sessions, tend to exclude young people in the area. Some complained that older people, or the police, stopped them doing things, that they could not do the sports activity they wanted, or use certain facilities due to age. In effect, there are not many legitimised spaces for youth, and even those that are, like skateparks, can be a cause of complaint.

Further analysis could be used to look into findings for specific groups, for example differences in responses between boys and girls, or those living in 'rural'/'urban' settings. Any categorisation introduced a risk of bias, as, for example, those associated with using the term 'youth'. Additional analysis may be made of particular activities to determine the time they are usually carried out, area wished for etcetera to tailor some services.

We have also demonstrated that there are driving forces that could be built up. There are many who could take part in activities, lobby for them, or participate in debates and details of setting up. Some may be very simple, for example a very small number of students suggested a cheerleading club; perhaps something that they could organise themselves, on their own, or with assistance.

There may also be a tendency for agencies to focus on activities that appeal to young people that they perceive to be more likely to cause trouble. Additionally some activities may be lobbied for by groups that are more organised and perhaps in a better social situation to articulate their arguments, and get their voice heard (the debate on social capital will not be entered here).

It is hoped that eventually the survey process could more directly involve young people, for example through the school curriculum in areas such as ICT or Citizenship; students could create their own surveys and analyse the data. In areas of Citizenship it may also be possible for debates to be held in schools with local authority staff occasionally participating. Even though this survey was a bit too long and complicated, it was generally well received and demonstrates a commitment for action.

6 Action

The results of this survey will be communicated directly to all LSP partners for discussion and others involved in the initiative, including the school. The results will be posted on the Council website. This is the first survey, its findings will be added to results from similar studies at Kings School and Axe Valley schools for comparison, and for validity. Further surveys may be undertaken at a later date depending on response by partners to the initial stages.

It is also hoped that schools will be able to participate in further discussions or surveys through school councils, part of Citizenship, or ICT (e.g. electronic surveys) curricula, or other activities.

The new Leisure East Devon' Trust will also view the results to determine how they may tailor activities for young people and ensure equality in service.

Acknowledgements

East Devon District Council wishes to thank the students and staff of Sidmouth Community College, especially Martin Long, Citizenship Coordinator and the students who provided comments on the draft questionnaires. Thanks also goes to Sidmouth Youth Club for initial comments and suggestions, and our Local Strategic Partners, Peter Jeffs (East Devon District Council), Danielle Graysmark (Devon County Council Youth), Paul Kelly (Devon and Cornwall Police), and Dominique Holmes (East Devon Primary Care Trust). The Community Safety Partnership kindly donated part of the cost of the survey.