

Section 6: Suggested ways forward

Underlying the funding application which led to this *Eyemouth Speaks Out* report and the community research upon which it is based, there was probably a belief that Eyemouth was 'drawing the short straw' in terms of service provision – particularly in terms of facilities for children and young people outside of school hours. Anecdotal evidence suggested that there was a rise in dissatisfaction amongst residents over a number of issues concerning the behaviour of some young people – which was inevitably leading to a lack of mutual respect between the older and younger members of the community. This was only one element of the issues addressed in the research. The findings are based on three surveys and interview responses from over 500 local residents and service providers. They raise important challenges and opportunities for the policy-makers and providers of *community safety, education, housing, health and other community-based services for leisure and recreation* as well as looking at transport, the environment and other issues. Finally, the findings also raise some economic and social issues concerning future employment, shopping facilities and further education opportunities.

In this final section of the report, the aim is to try and draw together some of the challenges and possible options available. If the research process was the 'sponge' collecting in data, this section is the 'mirror' reflecting back some of the main findings. This section, however, is not an alternative to the report as a whole which contains so many lively, colourful and thought-provoking responses from individuals in the Eyemouth community.



The overall picture is not all gloom and doom, by any means. The natural beauty and environmental advantages of Eyemouth make it a pleasant and desirable place to live for many. There is also still an indomitable sense of pride and community spirit exhibited by many with regard to their town and community. But this is balanced by widespread concerns about the quality, quantity and accessibility of many key services and facilities, coupled with the view from the majority of the residents (including young people) that there are problems which should be faced rather than ignored. These challenges are by no means unusual in communities today – and it is important to view the challenges as providing building blocks towards:

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- funding applications for new provision of facilities and services;
- potential re-orientation of existing services; and
- generating ideas on how the old and new High School premises, and other buildings in the community such as the old Dry Dock premises and the Town Hall might be utilised for the greatest benefit of the whole community.

From the views and opinions expressed in the *Eyemouth Speaks Out* community research there is no clear *consensus* across the board, but in the cases of dissatisfaction with current services and with the identification of current problems, there are some clear findings which will be outlined later in this section. The conflicting points of view are readily apparent in the following, very varied resident perspectives on the quality of life in Eyemouth. To some extent, these views may reflect the degree of attachment that residents feel to the place and the community in which they are living. Older people tend to feel the greatest levels of attachment and belonging and are more resistant to change – summed up in the local saying, *'It's aye been'* (always been so). Younger people often feel disregarded and under-valued, and do not see themselves as stakeholders. This can translate into negative attitudes and behaviour.

A typical cross-section of the views expressed in the report are:

'Need for pride and courtesy in our town – reverting to times when residents were close-knit. A more village atmosphere. Eyemouth doesn't really need more housing without more industry.'

'No issues in Eyemouth concern me or ever had in the 50 years I have been here.'

'Yes, leave Eyemouth to the people who have lived here all their lives and actually like the place instead of incomers who come here and then want to change things to suit themselves.'

- '1. Sort out the houses with drug problems.*
- 2. Sort out gangs of youths hanging about.*
- 3. Stop mopeds flying about the streets.*
- 4. Have more entertainment on.'*

'Eyemouth lacks any real initiatives at all, so anything is better than the present situation. I have very young children and worry that the lack of classes (esp. for babies) will be detrimental to their social development.'

'Give young people somewhere to go so they don't need to hang about and make trouble because they are bored.'

As has already been shown throughout this report, the range of concerns and possible ways forward suggested by local people are extremely diverse. The key is that the community does take the opportunity to get its voice(s) heard, as is made clear in the comment written into the *Eyemouth Speak Out* blog site, which reminded residents of a range of recent issues in the town, and how a community deals with them:

'About the dentist – there was a public meeting last year about this. It was advertised in the press and radio. Only a handful of people turned up – about ten. The NHS sent a senior manager to explain what was going on. He was made aware of our concern about the dentist at the school having to move and promised to look into the problem. Unless we make a fuss and, above all, attend open meetings, nothing will happen.'

'The same thing happened about the NHS 24 two years ago – a public consultation, also at the Community Centre, only two people turned up! And Eyemouth was not even included in the NHS 24 area of coverage for several weeks because TD14 was allocated to England!! Only one complaint was received by NHS 24 and that's why it took so long to rectify the error!'

'Who remembers the public meeting when we were all fed up with crazed kids and summoned the police and Deputy Procurator Fiscal to meet the community – the big room in the Centre was packed tight – at least 200 turned up and gave him a real going over. The result – a piss-poor CCTV system, but although we had to pay towards it, it was something.'

'Remember the public demos about the swimming pool – and the march round the town – well, we kept the pool open.'

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And what about the protests about the 'stink' that too got results and compensation from Scottish Water which was wasted somehow.

There was a public consultation with stalls in the square asking for ideas – like this blog – only a few bothered to turn up and nothing came of it.

The lesson – if we don't turn up, nothing gets done. Mind you, not everyone reads the paper and the authorities are sometimes only too happy if no one turns up. For years I have asked for a public notice board outside the Council Office so we can see what 'they' are up to. Minutes – announcements like those above etc.

And who ever turns up to the Council meetings at the Mission? If you have a gripe, best let them know beforehand. Do you know who's on the Council? What powers they have? And that they MUST listen to you. Are they working for you?

Sorry for going on so – but I get mad when people just sit and gripe and do nothing about what bugs them.'

The findings from the various stages of this research in the town, suggest that many residents and indeed a number of young people themselves view the **nuisance and antisocial behaviour** of some young people as attributable to a range of factors including:

- Lack of purposeful activities and places to go for young people.
- Poor parenting.
- Low motivation and self-esteem amongst some young people.
- Nuisance and antisocial behaviour linked to alcohol and drug use.
- Lack of action in prevention, intervention and enforcement from service providers such as education, community learning and development, police and housing.
- Inappropriate role models provided by some adults in the community.

Nationally, across the UK, it is increasingly being recognised that nuisance, antisocial behaviour and crime are neither simple to control nor explain the causes of. In one of the latest practical advice publications, *Tackling antisocial behaviour in Scotland* (Anderson *et al.*, 2008, Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Chartered Institute of Housing) it suggests that a multi-agency partnership, joined-up approach is a necessity since:

'A wide range of different types of complex support needs are commonly associated with households involved in antisocial behaviour including the following:

- *Domestic violence and other forms of physical or sexual abuse.*
- *Mental ill-health.*
- *Out of control children.*
- *Drug dependency.*
- *Alcohol problems.*
- *Physical disabilities.*
- *Learning difficulties.'*

The funders of the research were hoping that the findings would help to create greater 'community cohesion'. That's quite a tall order. What the research has shown is that members of the community do have some concerns and potential remedies in common. As was stated in the Introductory Section 1, there are no 'quick-fixes'. What appears to be needed is a mixture of new provision especially for young people, so that they can become more creatively occupied in their leisure time, coupled with more proactive responses to community safety and high profile environmental issues such as **litter** and dealing with **dog fouling**. Litter was regarded as the most serious 'problem' in the resident survey and dog fouling was the most frequently commented about problem from residents.

The very scale of comments is staggering – 1,972 plus the interviews and 'conversations'. On one question alone (Question 9 on the adequacy of local service provision), the following, Table 6.1 shows the number of write-in replies to the community surveys. And that is only a small part of the total data collected!

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	Shops	Public transport	Doctors and medical services	Dentists	Schools and nurseries	Further education	Community learning and development	Policing	Housing services	Social work services	Borders Council services	Welfare benefits services	Employment advice and information
Adults	139	90	104	171	34	76	48	178	86	54	118	48	24
Young people	22	15	3	7	0	3	0	10	3	3	6	1	0

Table 6.1: Write-in responses to Question 9: Local services

Figure 6.1 compares the range of problems seen as relatively serious by householders and young people from the two surveys (292 householders and 58, 14-18 year olds). As was pointed out in Section 5, the young people saw problems as being of more uniform importance. What particularly concerns young people is drugs, vandalism, the use of alcohol and parking. Certainly this was supported by the write-in comments received from both age groups. What has created the situation in which these problems exist, or possibly made it worse, based on the survey evidence seems to be:

- A lack of facilities for young people.
- An absence of police on the beat.
- A perceived deterioration in behaviour and civic pride, respect and responsibility.
- Alcohol and drug use.

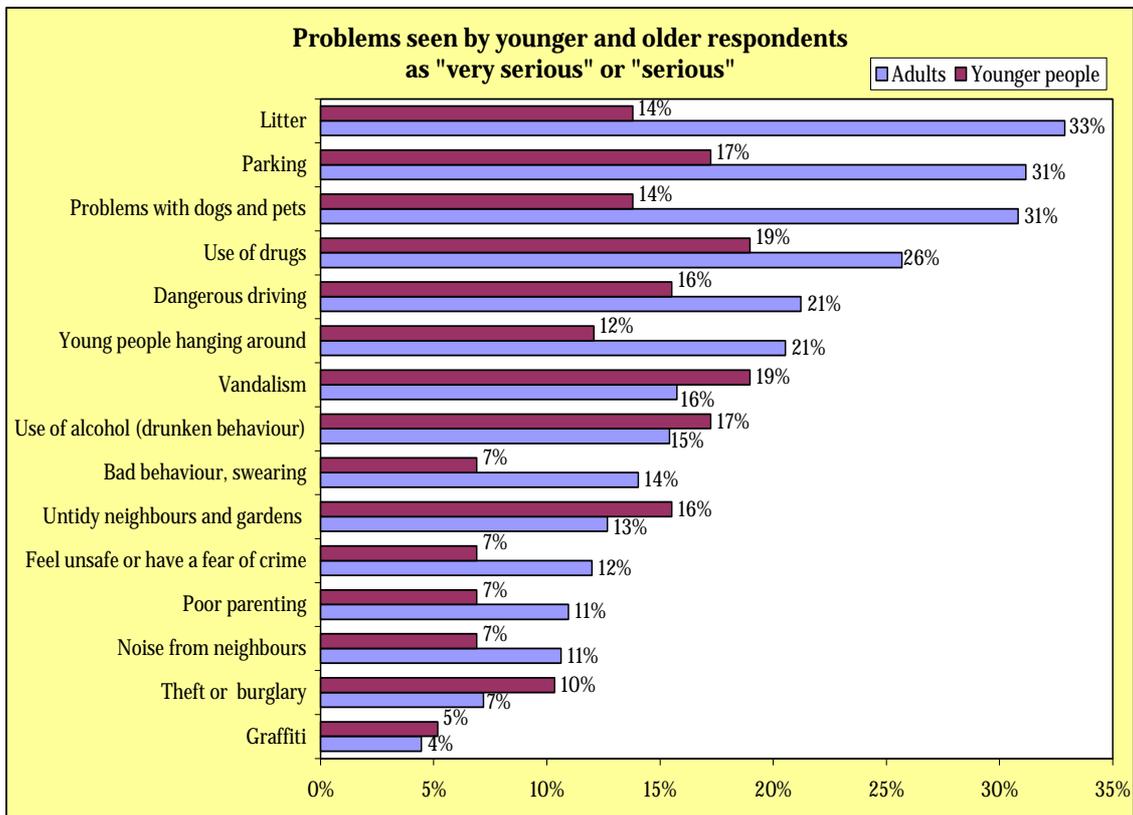


Figure 6.1: More serious problems as prioritised by householders and 14-18 year olds

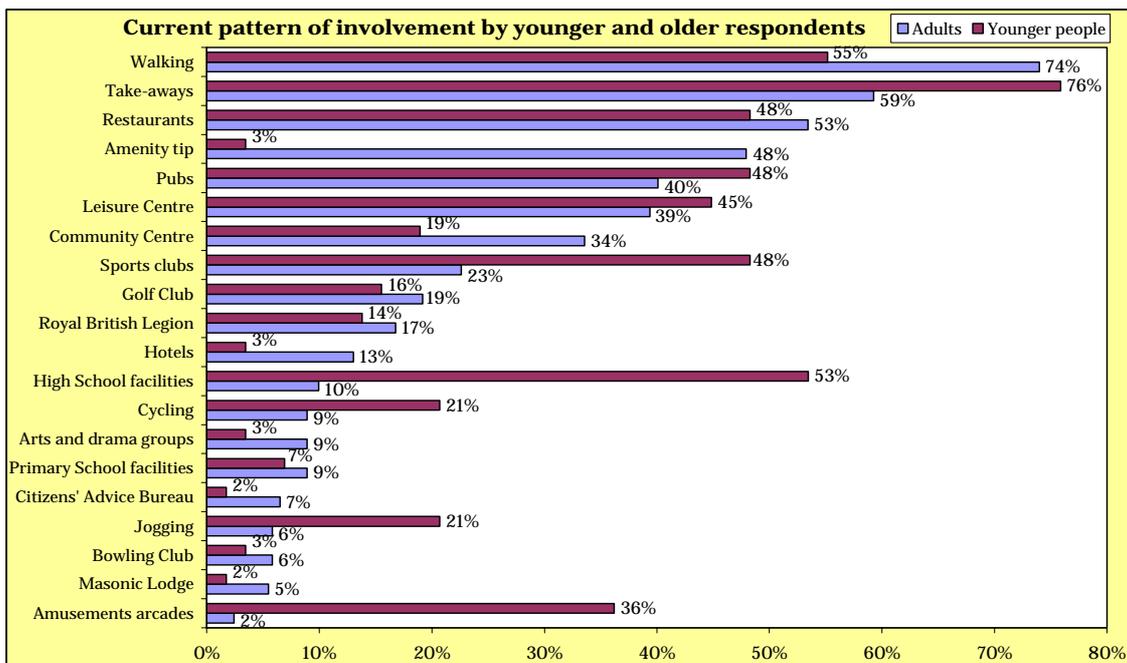


Figure 6.2: Comparison of current use of activities and facilities between older and younger people

Current activities and use of local facilities are shown in Figure 6.2, which again compares householders' responses with those of young people. Whilst it is unsurprising that adults and young people's use of take-ways is similar, the fact that a higher percentage of 14-18 year olds (48 per cent) use local pubs than adults (40 per cent) is not an expected finding. However, it is supported by findings from the Nicol's 2007 survey included in Section 5. It is also backed up by the report from Borders Drug and Alcohol Action Team which reveals: 'Local statistics indicate increasing numbers of young people, and at younger ages, attending the A&E department of the BGH for alcohol-related accidents and illnesses. They also demonstrate steadily increasing numbers of young people being referred to local services for under 18s (Reiver Project) for drug and alcohol problems' (reported in *Berwickshire News*, 5/3/08). More positively, young people do seem to be active in sports clubs (48 per cent) and 45 per cent use the Leisure Centre.

Community safety issues and youth provision

A recent note written to the *Eyemouth Speak Out* Blog site reads:

'I am 22 years old and have a child ive recently went back 2 work but can not get childcare for my child who is under the age of 2 years why is this i dont want 2 travel to and from berwick! As for things 2 do for young people in Eyemouth We need a big leisure centre built with everything in it from ice skating to dance club etc sumthing for children and teenagers to get off the streets and do something with there life no wonder there is so much vandalism and anti social behaviour!'

In many ways, this is probably a very typical expression of general frustration, from a younger perspective.

Community safety, policing and local issues

From the findings in Sections 2, 3 and 5 it is clear that Eyemouth reflects a national trend showing that residents report that:

- There is greater fear of crime, intimidation and antisocial behaviour.
- Community policing is not adequate.
- Their area is deteriorating.
- Kids hanging around are perceived as a threat.
- Behaviour and respect is on the decline.

Typical of the comments from residents were:

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'More visible police presence. Would like a crackdown on speeding in Albert Road and Northburn Road, cars drive too fast in these areas.'

'But – we do think there is a real need for a more obvious and more frequent police patrolling presence on the streets.'

'Need extra policing in troubled areas to sort out, e.g. drugs.'

'A harder line on known drug users and parents and on drunks leaving pubs at 2am, NOISY!'

However, many residents have also made the connection between their perceptions of problems and the need for actions that are not all negative and about stopping and preventing behaviour. So, as well as calls from both householders and young people for more CCTV and police on the street/beat to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour, there are also many suggestions for positive interventions to provide young people with somewhere they can go. Diversionary activities – sports and leisure activities – and places for them to meet and in turn meet with supportive adults have all been identified by residents, service providers and business people. Many have also pointed out that Eyemouth lacks enough community spaces where young and old can interact together.

The actual range of suggested initiatives from householders and young people is shown in Figure 6.3.

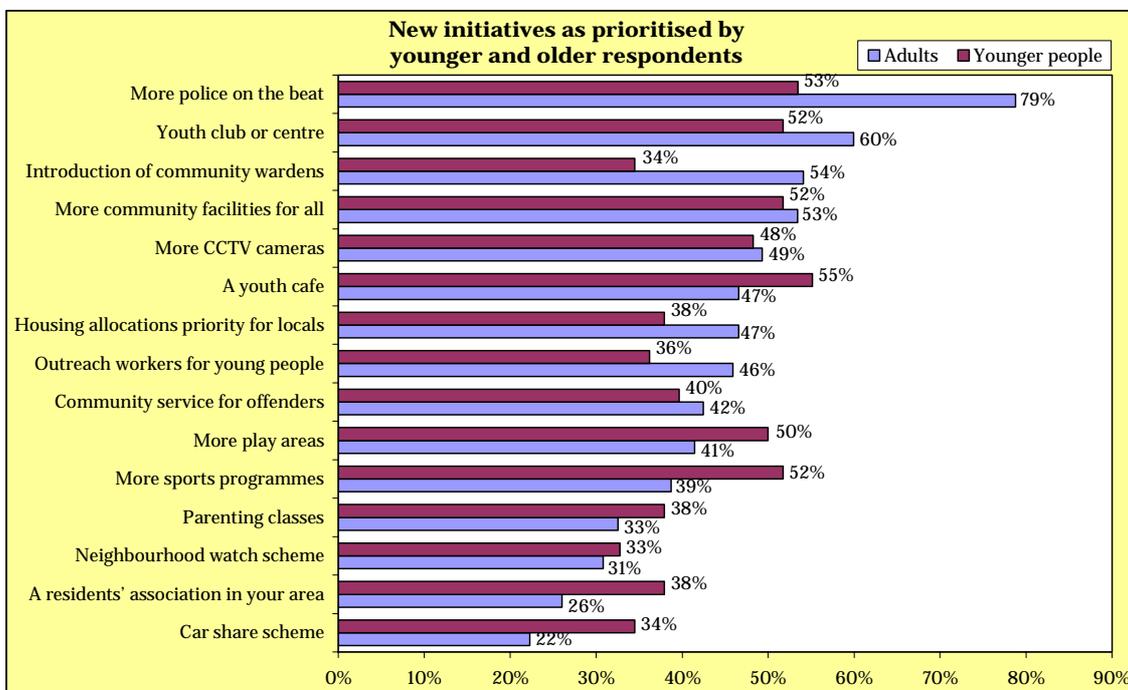


Figure 6.3: New initiatives as suggested by householders and 14-18 year olds

From the findings it is not possible to point to a single way forward. What the findings indicate is that preventing antisocial behaviour from occurring would be better for everyone than trying to react to its effects. Figure 6.7 shows that the police were *not meeting the needs* of 72 per cent of householders (and 45 per cent of young people's). More people wrote in about policing than for any other service (178 householders and ten young people). Responses focused on the need for:

- more proactive action on drugs and anti-social behaviour,
- more police on the beat,
- the introduction of community wardens,
- better manning of the local police station and telephone contact,
- coupled with more CCTV cameras.

Apparently £200,000 is being provided for a new CCTV system in the town centre. Inspector Neil Milne (see Appendix B) made it clear that it is the Scottish Borders Council who would have

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to fund community wardens in the town, and that beat policing is not possible without an increased budget.

From the interview, Inspector Neil Milne said:

'In an ideal world we'd have community police officers, walking the beat and getting to know people better. The reality of the situation is that we cover an expansive area and officers must have ready access to vehicles to allow them to respond to emergencies. We have to work within budgetary constraints and at present I cannot justify police officers walking around the area on a regular basis due to other demands they must be able to respond to emergencies quickly.'

Alan Dearing asked about the potential for using community wardens in Eyemouth.

Neil Milne said: *'This is not in our control...Scottish Borders Council are the employers of the community wardens...I'd welcome them in Eyemouth. They are designated in Kelso and Gala at present, the situation may be reviewed.'*

- However, given that there were more negative comments about policing than any other service provision, it is hoped that the Borders police service and the Scottish Borders Council will seriously reflect on the major issues highlighted by the people of Eyemouth.

Youth work and facilities

The most appropriate way to re-introduce more youth work provision into the town appears more contentious. There are a range of opinions. Some would like the Dry Dock to be re-opened, 'as it was before'. However, many feel that a 'clean sheet of paper' approach is more appropriate. With the opening of the new High School premises in 2009 this may offer more sports and other community facilities for all age groups – but there are concerns about the costs for use. There might also be possibilities for running youth work sessions in parts of the old High School building which will be retained (see interview with Michael Cook in Appendix B).

It seems unlikely that the existing Community Centre or Leisure Centre will be able to provide a base for regular informal youth work sessions. Meanwhile, since no youth workers are operating in the town it seems logical to perhaps start by employing outreach youth workers to meet with young people in the town, get to know them, and start to work with them to develop new services. What work with young people that does still exist in town is all relatively activity-based and membership-focused, rather than providing less formal or organised 'drop-in' leisure facilities, which in the words of many local young people would be, *'somewhere to hang out'*, *'be with my friends'* and *'get away from the parents/house'*. This seems to be at odds with the focus of Community Learning and Development work in the Borders which is on 'purposeful activity' and 'accredited learning' (see Els Nicol interview in Appendix B).

There are also particular challenges in youth work similar to running any other type of community provision, or even running a pub, such as:

- Should we try to cater for everyone, or focus on those with particular needs, perhaps the most disaffected?
- What should we do about catering for groups of young people who do not want to spend leisure time in one another's company?

The need for small, more personalised provision for different groups of young people came up in a number of survey comments and in interviews. Regional councillor, Michael Cook suggested:

'With the Dry Dock there was also the issue that it was losing focus and became detached from the funding that was linked to outcomes such as drugs or sexual health work...kids do want to hang around which is fair and proper...just standing around is not unlawful, but the Dry Dock was run in the centre of town and when I talked with a group of S5 and S6 young people at the last Safe T in the Park event about going to the Dry Dock, one lad laughed and said that he wouldn't go because it didn't cater for him or his 'type' – meaning that they didn't like those who were using it – or didn't want to hang out with them...it's about choices of what young people want to do.'

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Dr Alan Mason observed:

'Young people are all different from one another, maturity etc. – need smaller units where they can go that offer flexibility – need to get to know them and listen to what they want.'

David McNeil, a shop owner in the town centre, reinforced the view that the Dry Dock had become generally unpopular with many residents, saying:

'...the Dry Dock was a disgrace...We live here over the shop, so we saw it...Swearing, more were outside than inside...all the numptees...Parents want to take more responsibility for youngsters.'

What is apparent from past experience in Eyemouth, is that there needs to be at least medium-term funding in place for youth work provision in the town if it is to reduce the current polarisation of young and older people. It is important that such funding overcomes past problems with youth work staff having to constantly fund-raise to secure their own future.

From the findings (see Sections 3, 4 and 5 and in the Appendices), it seems worthwhile to explore funding in order to provide a staged programme towards the provision of staffing/funds to enable:

- The commencement of a programme of re-engagement with young people in Eyemouth using detached youth workers in conjunction with the use of small youth shelters or youth pods which can be relocated (Note: *The youth pod is a totally self contained youth facility, located in areas targeted as causing concern and which is capable of being moved to other areas. The pods are specially manufactured steel cabins, and can vary in size from approximately 9 metre by 3 metre upwards. They are vandal-proof and take electricity from a mobile generator or mains electricity from a nearby council or community building. The Youth Pod Scheme came about in April 1997 as a result of an idea based on innovative work by the Youth Strategy Unit of 'G' Division, Greater Manchester Police led by PC Martin Hague. See for example, Darlington's review of the use of youth pods: www.darlington.gov.uk/.../Documents/Corporate%20Services/Democratic/PPCP/Youth%20Pods%20Final%20Report.pdf).*
- The establishment of a skate park/BMX cycle track which has previously been a focus for youth involvement.
- Development of a programme of mini-bus trips away from town possibly for all the community or for young people.
- A large caged football/multi-use sports area (though this may be available at the new High School). A substantial number of residents, young people and those interviewed suggested more sports facilities as being needed – especially for football and other ball games.
- Sports and leisure activities co-ordinated between service providers such as the Leisure Centre, the schools and the sports groups (see Henry Gray, Leisure Centre interview in Appendix B).
- Address transport issues for young people, especially those who live in the outlying villages.
- Provision of more arts and music events both for young people and on a 'whole community' basis.
- Re-use of the Dry Dock on a new basis perhaps focusing on counselling and alcohol and drugs advice, potential use of the new High School or the old premises for youth work (and similarly link up with local church facilities – see Rev. Malcolm Muir's interview in Appendix B), and potentially work towards the establishment of a purpose-built youth centre, which was suggested in many of the write-in responses.

Social housing landlords

Given that the research was largely supported by housing providers, it is important to look at how the findings relate to their services. Forty-seven per cent of the household respondents felt that housing services were not meeting their needs. Eighty-nine people made comments in this section, but there were many more comments on housing issues raised throughout the surveys and interviews.

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Four issues dominated the responses:

- There were a large number of write-in comments about neighbour disputes and antisocial behaviour not being resolved by the social landlords.
- There were a number of requests for more affordable housing to be built.
- Issues of maintenance and neglected gardens were raised.
- Housing allocation policies and practices were criticised by a number of respondents to the community research. A substantial number of residents favour a return to housing allocations which prioritise applicants with a 'local connection'.

This final point matches the findings in very recent research (Livingston *et al.*, 2008) which states: *'The evidence is that it might be beneficial to give greater priority to applicants with local area connections in social housing allocations since this helps to strengthen existing networks'*.

The local MSP, John Lamont said in his interview (included in Appendix B):
'I share concerns (about allocations)...dozens of people have talked to me...it seems the pass system, the priority system...across everywhere, tenants not being allocated appropriate properties, it's the same in Kelso...Tenants told me that after 40/45 years in their flat, they now had more troublesome neighbours, two 17 year olds, who may have less respect.'



'A possible change is a move back to a 'local connection'...we need transparency, need locals to see how the system works, include a local dimension (in the housing allocations process) again.'

As has been seen in Section 3, there was a high level of concern about housing allocations made to people with serious social problems such as drug and alcohol dependency, who appear then not to receive adequate support and supervision. There is also evidence that housing policies can also create a neighbourhood mix that may actually contribute to community conflict and lifestyle clashes, rather than improving the situation. This may simply be caused by putting young tenants next to older residents without consideration for lifestyle problems caused by noise, visitors, pets etc. At a national level, the use of probationary-style 12 month Short Scottish Secure Tenancies for tenants who have an ASBO or may pose risks, is being promoted under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The key in such cases appears to be in developing close partnership working between housing associations, social work, education, police and (assuming they exist!) youth workers in the local area. In other parts of the UK housing associations have:

- Established their own community wardens' service, or co-funded wardens with the local police. The evidence suggests that this would be welcomed and a visible deterrent and a positive measure.
- Funded or co-funded youth facilities or youth workers as a means of providing diversionary activities which ease problems of fear of crime and actual incidents of antisocial behaviour, graffiti and vandalism.

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There are also questions raised about whether enough support is given by the landlords – local housing associations – to people who are victims of antisocial behaviour, especially where it involves drug use. This was made very clear in both resident responses throughout the community research and in the case study in Appendix C.

Community facilities for the whole town

Since there are signs of a divide between younger and older members of the community, a central, 'whole community' place to meet, to share experiences and socialise was much in demand judging by survey responses, especially in the write-in comments. Film screenings and more arts and sports events gained very popular support from young and old (see Figure 6.4).

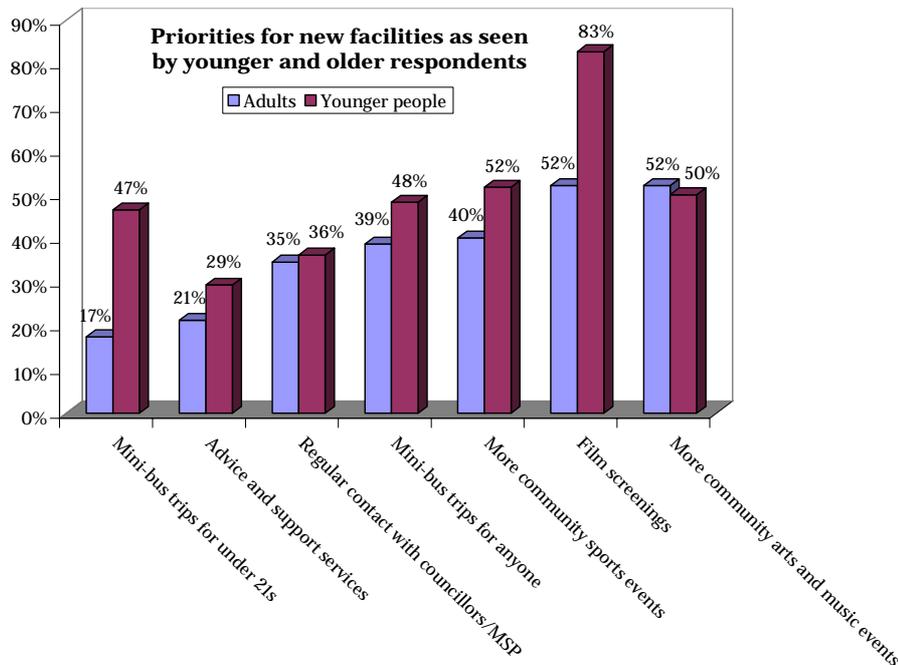


Figure 6.4: Comparative support for specific new facilities

In particular there was strong support for the re-opening of the Town Hall, or the establishment of a similar space as a central community space. The history of this venue is long and bit complicated. But once the building had been allowed to drift into closure and disrepair, a couple of rescue attempts were mounted. The most recent appears to have been by a steering group working with the then East Berwickshire Partnership. A report was produced by Ray Hooper Associates which concluded that it would cost in the region of £100,000 to make it safe and water-tight and at least another £600,000 to turn it into 'a meaningful and usable venue' (from *Note of Eyemouth Town Hall Public Meeting, 30/4/04*).

In regional councillor Michael Cook's opinion, it is unlikely to be re-opened. Others do not agree and it still could be the focus of fund-raising and community action. Michael Cook suggests that:

'With the new school coming on tap it is likely that the Town Hall will not be a public meeting place again. The local authority, the SBC, own it. In the longer term it is likely to be disposed of or used for something different... There was a research report commissioned which concluded that it was difficult to raise capital to make it a sustainable project... it just didn't stack up.'

In his view, the old and new High School premises are likely to be the focus of future events (see also John Lamont's interview in Appendix B). However, the research found that there is widespread concern about community access to these facilities and the cost of hiring spaces. Therefore it is important that the whole community is consulted on the issues surrounding future use.

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Berwickshire News reported the Town Hall dilemma on 5/3/08:

‘Scottish Borders Council (SBC) own 800 properties that it uses to deliver its services, of which Eyemouth town hall – currently not fit for use – was singled out by Mr Drummond-Hunt as needing the most work done to it. Work will start on the external structure of the building but this will be limited by the hall being a category B listed by Historic Scotland. Mr Drummond-Hunt told the Berwickshire News: “It is a building in need of substantial repair.

This year we are planning a substantial amount of work to the property and are open to long term uses for it. Any changes need to be agreed by Historic Scotland and you need a lot of justification for them. It is also very difficult to make changes to the external appearance. It is a big challenge and we are really open and flexible to any ideas.”

Mr Drummond-Hunt’s statement received support from Eyemouth Town Council Provost Douglas Younger, who believes Historic Scotland should loosen their regulations on what can be done to the hall. He said: “I am dismayed that for the last 10 years we have not been able to use the town hall

but because it is a listed building there is little we can do. It is not the council or town council’s fault. “I believe with an ever growing population we should have a town hall. The longer it is unoccupied the more damp becomes a problem.” ‘



Blocks to participation

In terms of what were seen as ‘blocks to participation’ in Eyemouth (see Figure 6.5), lack of information is a key issue – one which both older and younger people in the town identified and agreed upon. That can be summed up as: *how* local people can find out about services and facilities (communication and availability of local information); *what* is being provided (facilities, groups, meeting times etc.); and *where* these take place – if at all (adequacy of facilities).

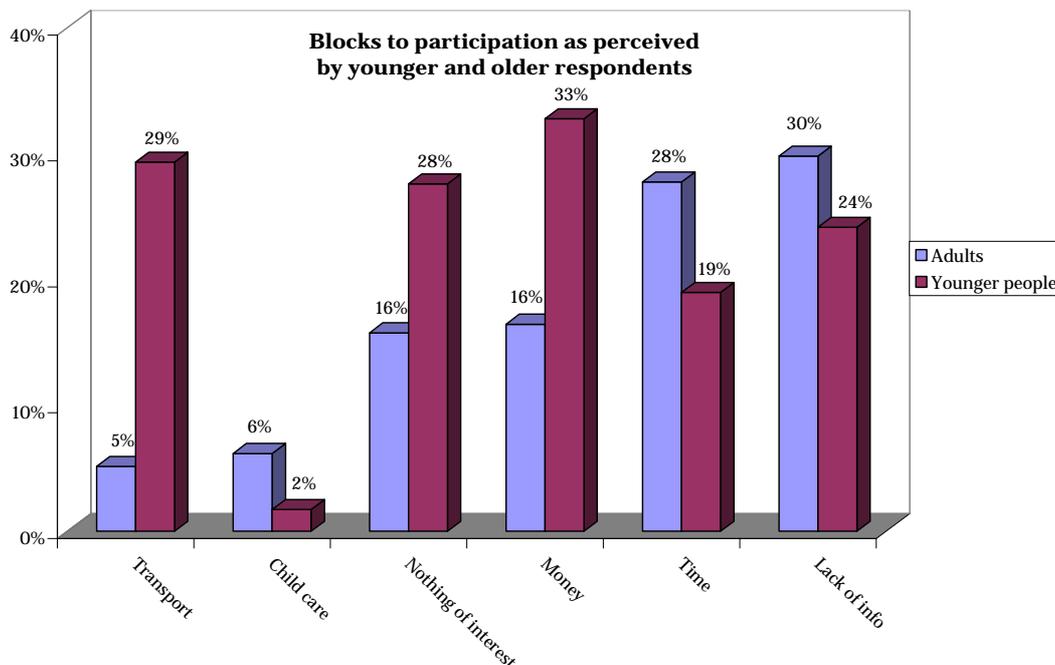


Figure 6.5: Comparative blocks to participation

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Suggestions for better communications included:

- Producing a Community Resource Handbook of local groups and what's happening, possibly keeping it up to date on the web and putting print-outs on show at key points such as the library, schools, Community Centre, Leisure Centre and medical practice.
- Putting up a new community noticeboard with a lot more information on it than the existing one near the library.
- Ensuring that information about the town and regional council and councillors are a lot more visible

Health provision

The Medical Practice

A total of 172 adults and 41 young people thought that the doctors/medical centre services were meeting their needs, compared with 95 adults and 10 young people who thought that they were not satisfactory.

There were 104 write-in comments from adult residents and three from young people particularly focusing on:

- The doctors' opening times, which were unsatisfactory for many who work, because of there being no surgeries in the evenings or at weekends.
- Waiting times for appointments, particularly with the most popular doctors, often being between two days and two weeks.
- Why the local medical practice no longer provided out-of-hours services (This service is now provided by NHS 24).

A very typical write-in comment was:

'Wait too long for an appointment other than emergencies. Out of hours/weekend cover – local GPs not available, too long to wait or journeys difficult to nearest health centre – especially for children and elderly.'

There were also very specific issues raised by older people with special needs. These focused on emergency cover, access to hospitals and ambulance services.

Many of the issues raised in the community survey were discussed with Dr Alan Mason the GP budget holder for the Eyemouth Medical Practice (see Appendix B).

Dr Mason: 'There are perceived access problems...we do as much as we can...It's the same day for urgent appointments. We are serving 6,300 patients across our surgeries in Eyemouth, Co'path, Ayton and Coldingham...The budget for doctors and nurses is based on this number of patients.' (Note: there are six doctors and over 20 practice and health staff serving the practice area).

'Our contract with the health board is to provide cover from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Out of hours is no longer part of the contract. Our earliest appointment can be 8.30 a.m., 9 a.m. is normal, and the latest is ten to six. We also offer telephone access – today I phoned back to six patients.'

As with policing, many of the issues are linked to Scottish government budgets and policies. At the time of compiling this report, the GP ballot in Scotland had just taken place and it seems likely that most medical practices will make limited extensions to their appointment times.

Dentists

As was indicated from the dissatisfaction rating of 72 per cent of adult respondents, this was a service provision (or lack of it) that motivated the local population to 'speak out'. It also produced some interesting commentary on the www.eyemouthspeakout.blogspot.com site. A combined total of 192 individual comments were made about access to dental services in Eyemouth. They almost all made very similar points.

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A very typical response that was sent in to the web-blog site highlights the central problems: that of a long waiting list to gain access to an NHS dentist, and a future dentist service located remotely in Coldstream:

'I go to the NHS dentist at Eyemouth High School, and I am not very amused that this dentist (the only one that I can get in to) is moving to Coldstream. There's no public transport to Coldstream from the area, which is going to make life extremely difficult for anyone who cannot drive, the elderly, or anyone in general. Dentist situations are bad enough as it is without this.'

The other major issues were that many residents had to travel as far as Edinburgh to access a dentist, and/or the costs of private care.

Scottish Borders Council

Fifty-four per cent of adult residents felt that the SBC services were meeting their needs. With the SBC having responsibility for many of the most visible services, key provisions that residents commented on were:

- Lack of parking, or problems with parking regulations being enforced, particularly for disabled spaces.
- The cost of Council Tax and its value for money in terms of service provision.
- Inadequate dealing with dog fouling and litter.
- Poor maintenance of roads, pavements and street lighting.
- Problems with refuse collection and with the amenity tip.

See Sections 3 and 4 for more specific details.

Environmental issues – Dog fouling and litter

Dog fouling and litter were conspicuous as perceived 'problems' throughout the community survey. Fifty per cent of the householders saw litter as being the major problem in town with parking close behind at 46 per cent, followed by problems with dogs and pets at 44 per cent. At the time of compiling this report, the Scottish Borders Council had recently launched its new dog warden teams. The Scottish Borders Council say that as of the end of January 2008, they had spoken to over 1,000 dog owners, issued 1,880 dog fouling bags and hundreds of leaflets. They had warned over 60 people and issued one fixed penalty notice. A key element of their campaign is to urge the public to contact the Cleansing Team on 01835 825111 and report dog fouling on 0800 376 1030.

- Dealing with dog fouling, litter and at least low level antisocial behaviour should be considered holistically. Joining up existing and potentially new services such as those that could be provided by community wardens to deal with all of these problems might be a reasonable option. Certainly these problems transcend the boundaries of any one service provider whether it is police, Scottish Borders Council or registered social landlords. There are also opportunities for *education* and *prevention* work to tackle the causes of littering and other antisocial behaviour.

Responses to other service provision/providers

A concluding section is not the place to repeat everything that has already been provided in the report. Section 4 provides the detailed findings from the community survey looking at the responses on: *Are local services meeting your needs?* Sections 2, 3 and 5, together with Appendix B, contain the findings from the community and youth surveys and the conversations and interviews with local residents, business people and service providers.

'Age' and 'access to transport' are probably two key indicators as to how residents perceived the adequacy of local services and provision.

In brief, based on findings, issues and concerns in the following areas included:

6. Suggested ways forward

Shopping

Many local people do their 'main shop' outside of Eyemouth using their own transport, or sometimes buses. The community was split very equally on whether current provision is adequate. However, a recurrent view from the community survey was that there is:

'Need (for an) additional supermarket as competition for the Co-Op which is over priced, but the only choice for people without transport.'

Some people specifically hoped that a new supermarket would be built in the area along the lines of a Lidl or Aldi.

Others felt that there is a need for new shops. Young people favoured shops with DVDs and music; older residents suggested clothes shops catering for younger tastes, a shoe shop and better greengrocer's/a cheaper butcher's. Local traders such as David McNeil and Colin Grieve pointed to the need for more business rates support for local businesses.

Public transport

Transport issues are always going to feature in a survey of a rural community. Sixty per cent of the adults and 59 per cent of young people felt that public transport does meet their needs. However, this is not to minimise the problems that exist for people with no access to their own transport.

The main issues that recurred in the 105 responses from adults and young people were:

- Very limited bus services inland through the Borders without going into Berwick first.
- No late night buses (or trains) into Edinburgh/Newcastle.
- Very specific problems for young people living in the villages around Eyemouth. This limits their freedom to enjoy leisure facilities in Eyemouth.
- The need for a very local loop mini bus service in Eyemouth, once or twice per day. Many OAPs and disabled live too far from current bus stops to be able to use existing services.

Schools and nurseries

Only 30 write-in comments were made about schools and nurseries. Many backed up the quantitative data which showed that 78 per cent of adults and 88 per cent of 14 to 18 year old respondents thought that services were meeting their needs. There were no obvious recurrent issues raised in the write-ins, though bullying, wearing of school uniform, discipline and high staff turnover at the High School were all mentioned. However, there were a large number of comments received in the survey with regard to problems in the town which were school-related. There is considerable concern about litter and the behaviour of young people before and after school and at lunchtimes. Here are two very typical comments from residents:

'Young people hanging around in groups, litter, swearing, around the school especially lunchtimes.'

'School children congregating at tennis courts in Eyemouth, drugs possibly involved, blocking pavements and road with aggressive behaviour.'

Further education

Seventy-nine write-in responses were received including three from young people. Forty-eight per cent of respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with present services. The major problems are made clear in the following:

- Young people have to travel to Hawick. A number of people suggested that they should not be so disadvantaged by having to travel so far. Some suggested re-opening Border College facilities in Duns, with provision of satellite groups in Eyemouth.
- Better links with Northumberland and Edinburgh HE and FE provision.
- The need for accredited day and evening courses in the town.

Robin Chapman from the Eyemouth High School (see Appendix B interviews) said:

'Further education is even more important...young people are taking jobs that are not so skilled...it's one and three quarter hours to get to a college, so the numbers going into FE are way down on what they should be...it's a huge issue...in Berwick the old Kwik Save building

Eyemouth Speaks Out

may be a new resource – could work for both sides of the border...too much tit for tat with two funding systems...we could take more young people from Berwick, some do come already.'

Community Learning and Development

There were 48 write-in comments. Sixty-three per cent of the residents thought that Community Learning and Development services were meeting their needs. The main comments indicated that a number of residents:

- Were either not fully aware of what was on offer (an information problem).
- Wanted different courses, possibly run at the High School rather than at the Community Centre.
- U3A and some other current groups seemed popular.

Social work services

Fifty-seven write-in responses were received. The responses covered a number of issues and were a mix of criticism and praise. Issues raised included:

- Lack of locally-based support services for homeless people and others in need.
- More community care for the elderly and young children whose parents are unable to cope.
- Better information about services and support that is available particularly for special needs groups: the elderly, young parents and drug users.

Welfare benefits services and advice

Sixty-six per cent of the adult respondents felt that these services were meeting their needs. There were 49 write-in responses. The issues raised varied, but there were some common themes:

- Proactive targeting of benefits advice for those with specific needs based on age and need.
- More advertising of services from the Job Centre.
- Too much help is given to people using drugs and abusing the welfare system.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau received some positive comments.

Employment advice and information

There was evident confusion and overlap between responses on this service and 'welfare benefits services'. There were only 24 write-in responses. Seventy-three per cent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with services in this area. A number of the responses actually focused on the need for more jobs in the area rather than advice services.

Comments included:

- Problems in getting advice in person rather than telephone referral.
- More job adverts are needed outside of the Job Centre building itself.

Employment and tourism issues

Throughout the community surveys and interviews, many local residents and service providers were clear about the need for new employment opportunities in the town. Ideas and comments focused on:

- More tourism and related jobs making use of the natural advantages of the coast and countryside, for instance through activity holidays using bikes and horse riding.
- More economic incentives to new businesses.
- More support for the fishing industry and its ancillary businesses, which should be located more locally.

6. Suggested ways forward

John Lamont, MSP, in his interview (Appendix B) commented:

'Getting jobs for the area has to be a priority... we need a workforce that is highly skilled... The traditional fishing industry has been badly hit by EU quotas... I think that there is still a future for fishing in the area – we need to keep fishing on the monitor, on the radar.'



'We need to attract investment, investment for

tourism...for example there's the Gunsreen House development, the spin-offs are exciting...there's also the risk of the dormitory town challenge which has been faced in recent times in Dunbar. More houses will get built – how will we engage people into the Eyemouth community?'

Adequacy of local services (% of respondents)

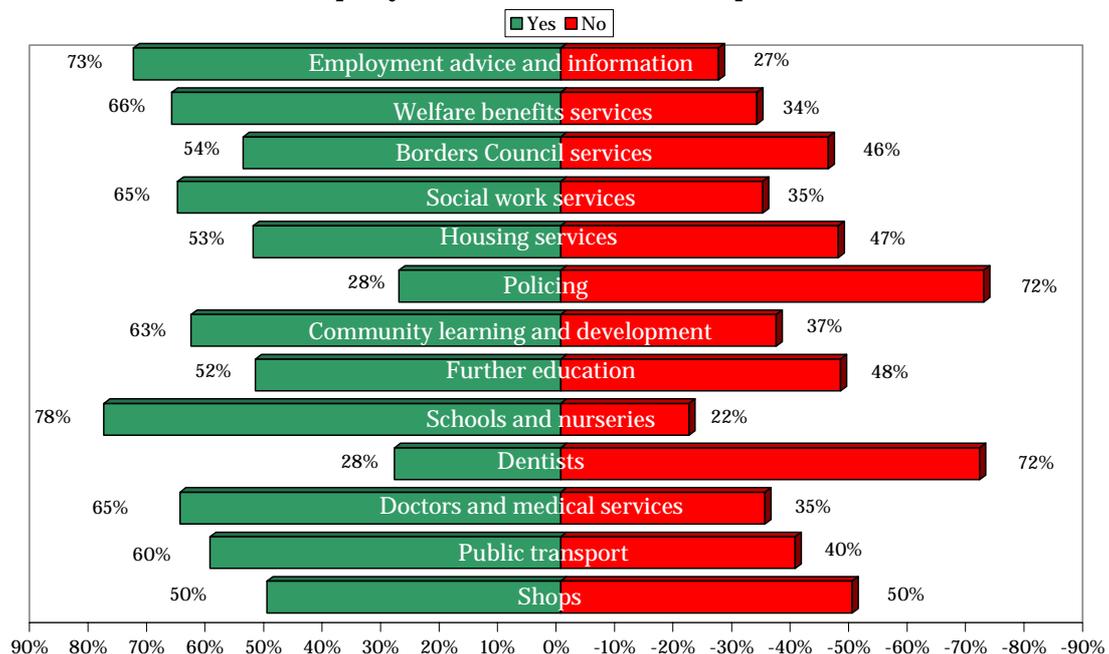


Figure 6.6: Resident perceptions of how far local services are meeting needs

Figure 6.6 shows how the residents of Eyemouth felt about the adequacy of local services and provision.

Younger and older respondents in the community surveys were also given the opportunity to express their opinion on 'other problems' (and challenges). The comparative results are shown in Figure 6.7. As has been highlighted in many sections of this report, it is issues around health, community safety and work: namely drugs, alcohol and employment that feature at the top. Smoking is also seen as an important issue for young people.

Eyemouth Speaks Out

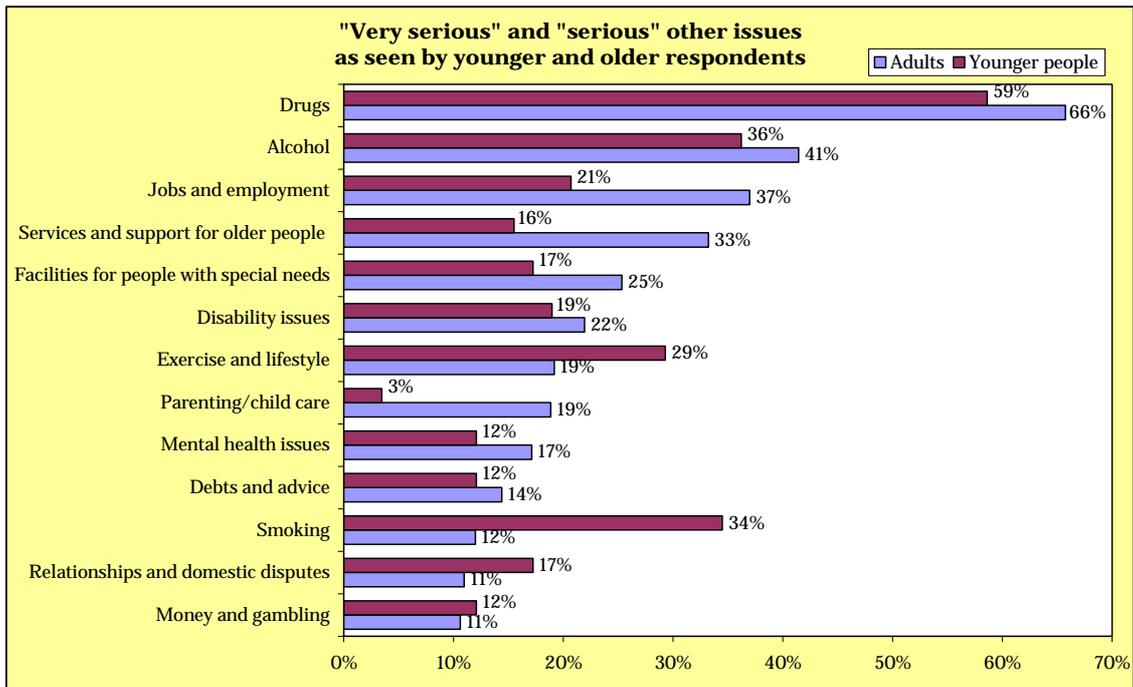


Figure 6.7: The most serious 'other' issues for older and younger people in Eyemouth

And finally!

We really hope that this quite detailed 'snapshot' of the views of Eyemouth people in 2008 will lead to improved services and facilities. It certainly provides plenty of serious food for thought. Let's hope it helps to stimulate debate, funds and action!



6. Suggested ways forward

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