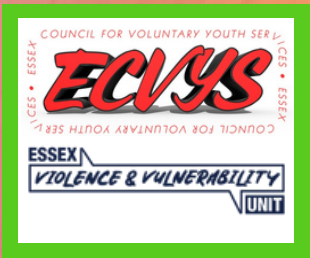




# 2024-2025 VVU Youth Voices LISTENING PROJECT 'Youth violence & feelings of safety in local communities'



This is the sixth year the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) have commissioned a listening project to enable young people from across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) to share honestly and openly about how safe they feel in their communities, and what they think could be done to help them feel safer. The VVU are committed to hearing these views, because it helps to inform their work and make sure that anything delivered is always as relevant as possible.

The listening project takes place through face to face discussions and activities with young people, and the main insight is collected through youth leaders, who are already known to the young people through participation in local youth clubs/groups/activities.

The variety of groups that take part in this project is part of its beauty, and the project is accessible for any group to take part.

Because each area of Essex is very different, we have formed an Essex-wide report to give an overview of young people's views, and local reports so that the VVU and others interested in keeping people safe, can gain local insight from a young person's perspective.

This report does not claim to be based on factual information. However, the insight gained is just as valuable as it is pure and honest. Views will be imperative to creating impactful changes that are relevant for everyone in the community to feel happier, healthier and safer.

This report is compiled by ECVYS, but is the work of local youth organisations, and the voices of Essex young people, to whom we are extremely grateful.

**2,466**

Young people aged 10-25yrs took part in various ways-

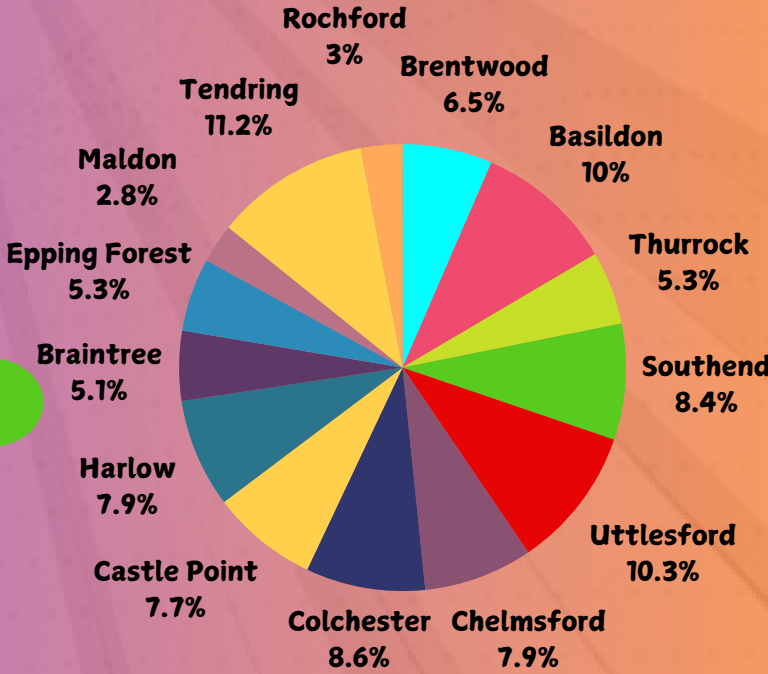
**1168** Young people participated through 'in-depth' discussion and gave comprehensive insight on all the questions at 74 local youth clubs/groups/activity sessions, and through detached youth work. This in-depth work is the glue of our report, and is used to form the Essex-wide report, and the key insights shown in the local reports.

**183** Young people participated via the social media platforms; TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat. Questions asked were limited to those that had a yes/no response. These views have contributed to our Essex-wide report only.

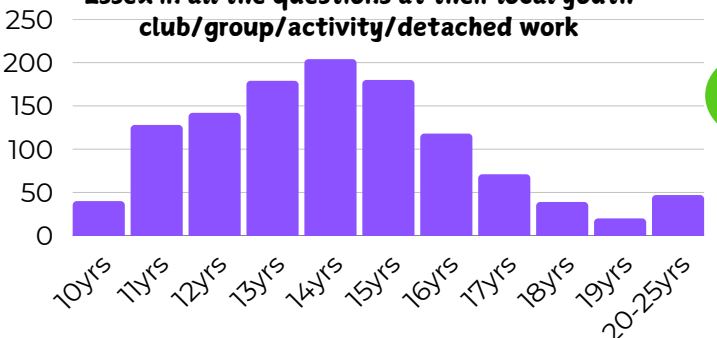
**1035** Young people also got the chance to participate through assemblies and detached work with questions that could mainly had a yes/ no response. This insight has been used in both our Essex-wide report, and in the local reports.

**80** The VVU youth voices conference was themed around safety in Essex and also gave young people a platform to share their views. This insight has been used in our Essex-wide report only.

**Distribution, by area, of young people who took part in all the questions at their local youth club/group/activity/detached work**



**Distribution, by age, of young people who took part across Essex in all the questions at their local youth club/group/activity/detached work**



Gender: Female 54% Male 42% Non-binary 4%

# Who are the 74 Groups that ran the listening in each area?

(Through clubs/ activities/ detached work & youth resource hubs)

## Uttlesford District (P11)

- **Stort Valley Schools Trust**  
(Christian faith group running sessions in Saffron Walden County High School & St Thomas More School)
- **Noo Yu CIC**  
(Tertiary provision, boxing group)
- **1st Thaxted Carver Scouts**  
(Scouts)
- **The Garden Music Project**  
(Open access music club)
- **Hyper Fusion**  
(Performing arts group)

## Braintree District (P41)

- **H.A.P.P.Y Youth Club**  
(Open access youth club)
- **The Outhouse**  
(LGBTQ+ youth club)
- **7th Witham Girl Guides**  
(Girl Guides)
- **The Third Space**  
(Open access youth club)

## Chelmsford District (P47)

- **Kraken Explorer Unit**  
(Scouts)
- **Essex YMCA**  
Galleywood Youth Club & The Y club  
(Open access youth clubs)
- **Zodiac Rangers**  
(Girl Guides)
- **The Outhouse**  
(LGBTQ+ youth club)

## Maldon District (P53)

- **Action for Family Carers**  
(Young carers)
- **Maldon & District CVS**  
Community Gaming Initiative  
(open access games club)
- **Maldon Sea Cadets**  
(Uniformed group)

## Brentwood District (P59)

- **Endeavour Youth Club**  
(SEN group)
- **Doddington Road Community Church**  
(School assembly with year 7)
- **Ingatestone Boys Own Club**  
(Open access youth club)
- **Brennan & Burch, Big Smile Collective**  
(Art youth club)
- **SNAP**  
(SEN Theatre group)

## Basildon District (P65)

- **Gateway Radio Club**  
(Open access youth club)
- **Bar'n'Bus 'Being Me'**  
(All girls group)
- **Chantry Rangers**  
(Girl Guides)
- **Essex Youth Service**  
'Gateway' (SEN group)  
& Friday night club (open access)
- **Maru Kai karate**  
(Martial arts group)
- **Flex Youth Club**  
(Ethnic minority group)
- **Heritage Mix**  
(Ethnic minority group)

## Harlow District (P17)

- **Church Langley Girl Guides**  
(Girl Guides)
- **Harlow Youth Council**  
(Youth Council)
- **Rainbow Services**  
(Alternative education group)
- **Essex Boys & Girls Clubs**  
(Respect project)

## Epping Forest District (P23)

- **Youth Unity**  
(Limes Farm, open access youth club)
- **Epping Forest Youth Council**  
(Youth Council)
- **Action for Family Carers**  
(Young Carers group)
- **Bancroft Lions Youth Cricket club**  
(Cricket club)

## Colchester District (P29)

- **Tiptree Youth Project Outreach**  
(Open access youth club)
- **Essex YMCA**  
Myland Youth Club & The Hythe youth club (open access youth clubs)
- **The Outhouse**  
(LGBTQ+ youth club)
- **The Underdog Crew**  
(SEND)
- **St Annes Youth Club**  
(Open access youth club)
- **YAK, Firstsite**  
(Youth art group)

## Tendring District (P35)

- **Teen Talk**  
(Open access youth club)
- **Mistley Kids Club**  
(SEN club)
- **The Outhouse**  
(LGBTQ+ youth club)
- **Tendring CVS**  
(SEND)
- **2nd Frinton Guides**  
(Girl Guides)
- **The London Bus Theatre Company**  
(Drama group)
- **Walton Youth Club**  
(Open Access Youth Club)

## Rochford District (P71)

- **KAOS Youth Club**  
(Open access youth club)
- **Bar n Bus:**  
(‘Being Me’ all girls group, & detached youth work)
- **The Megacentre**  
(Wellbeing group)

## Castle Point District (P77)

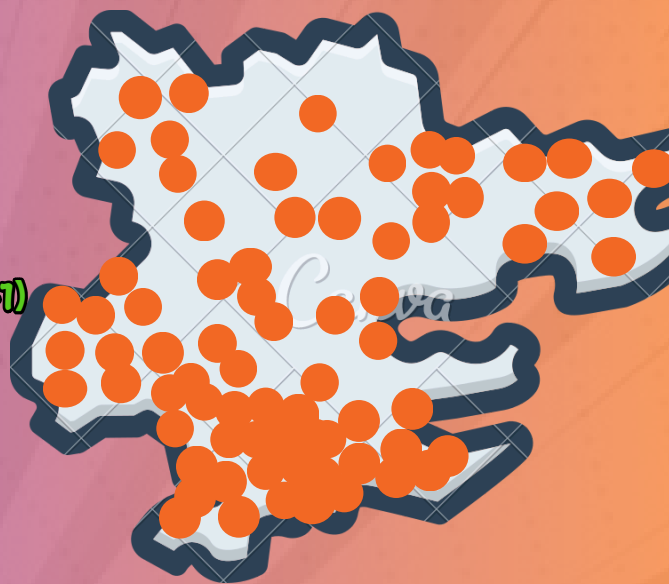
- **Yellow Door**  
(Open access youth club)
- **2nd Hadleigh Guides**  
(Girl Guides)
- **Canvey Island Boxing Club**  
(Essex Boys and Girls Club)
- **ATF**  
(Sports outreach)
- **TrustLinks & Yellow Door**  
(Next level; performing arts group)

## Thurrock (P83)

- **Seabrook Rise Youth Club**  
(Open access)
- **Riverview Charitable Trust**  
(Open Access)
- **Thurrock Youth Cabinet**  
(Youth Council)
- **Orsett Fire Cadets**  
(Fire Cadets)
- **Arts Outburst Express**  
(Art group)
- **Super Social**  
(SEN group)

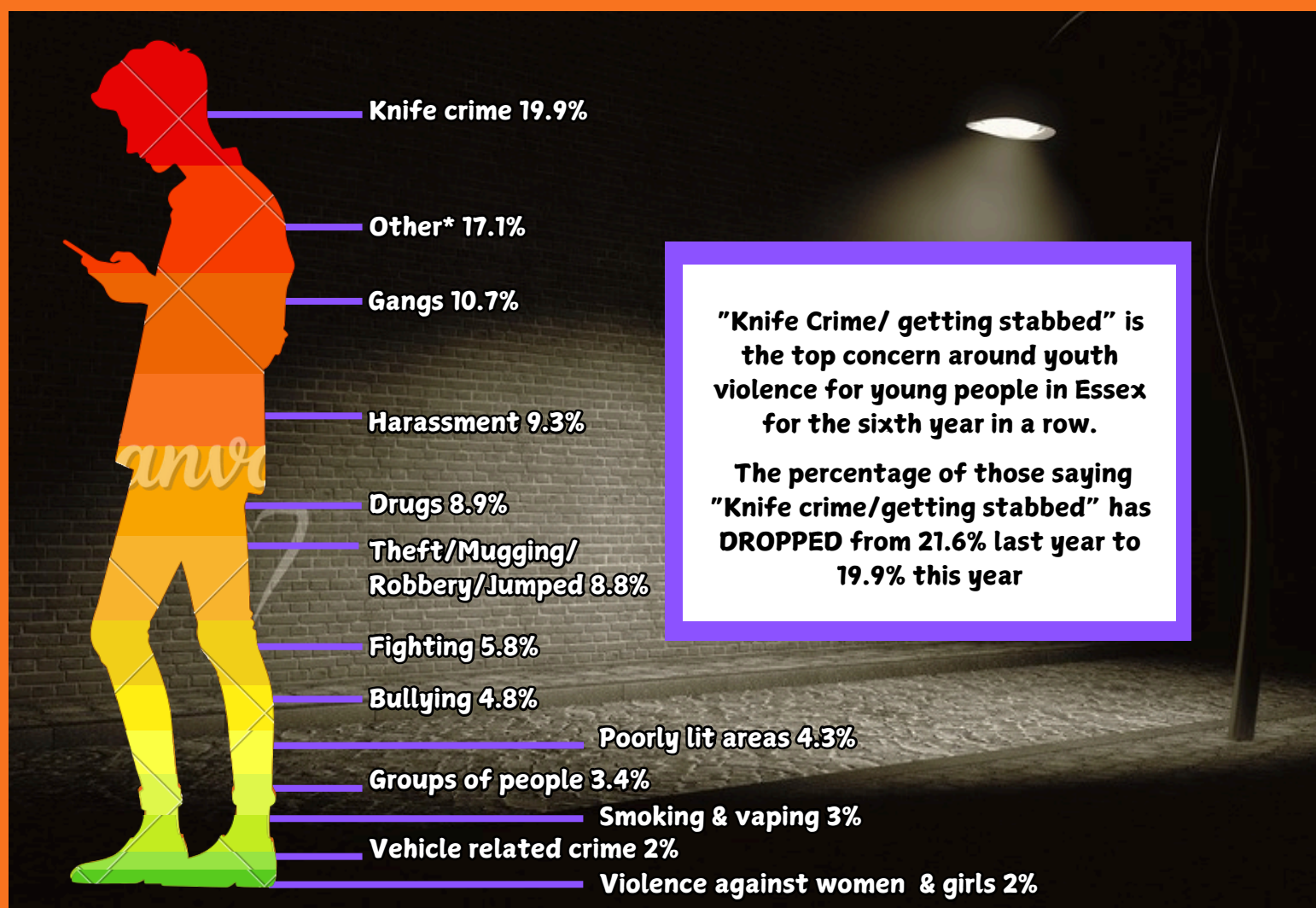
## Southend (P89)

- **South Essex Community Hub**  
(SEN group)
- **Bouldering Together**  
Indirock & Trustlinks  
(Open Access)
- **Southend United**  
(Football club)
- **Southend YMCA**  
(Detached youth work)
- **Southend TEENS Group**  
(7th day Adventist faith group)
- **Garon Park Youth Club**  
(Open access youth club)





# What is the biggest concern for young people in Essex around youth violence in their local area?



\*The 'Other' category incorporates examples such as: global affairs, people throwing fireworks, threats, lack of trust in others, 'Roadmen', discrimination, violence in school, drunk people, online abuse, being alone, and kidnap

The percentage of young people saying "Gangs" has increased from 8.8% last year, to 10.7% in 2024-2025

One of the top concerns this year is "**Harassment**". This is not something that has previously been too much of a worry for young people.

Within the group that mentioned "harassment", almost 60% specifically mentioned harassment involving men or boys.

Concerns around "**Drugs**" has remained exactly the same, with 8.9% of young people giving this answer.

The percentage of young people saying "**Mugging/being jumped/robbery**" has almost HALVED compared to last year.

The young people that stated "global affairs", were referring to the discriminatory and homophobic views and policy changes that are happening in the USA. They explained that they are worried about policies threatening inclusivity and equality.

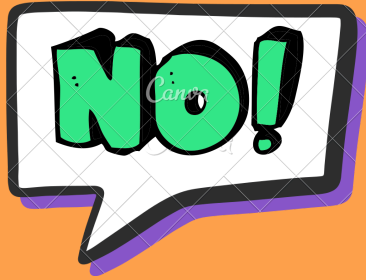


Six year comparison of young people’s biggest concerns around youth violence in Essex

Year ..... Area name	2019-2020 613 young people took part )	2020-2021 379 young people took part	2021-2022 761 young people took part	2022-2023 1553 young people took part	2023-2024 1434 young people took part	2024-2025 2466 young people took part (across all areas, & various platforms)
Uttlesford	Being ignorant of dangers	1.) Getting stabbed 2.) Robbed/ mugged 3.) Assaulted 4.) Gangs 5.) Sexual assault 6.) Kidnapped 7.) Attacked with weapons 8.) Drugs		Peer pressure & violence	Drug dealing/taking	Harassment
Harlow	Gangs		Drugs	Gangs	Knife crime/ stabbing	Knife crime
Epping Forest	Getting beaten up or assaulted			No consequences for violence	Getting robbed/ mugged	Poorly lit areas
Colchester	Getting stabbed		Knife crime/getting stabbed	Fighting	Knife crime	Knife crime
Tendring	Getting stabbed/ knife crime		Harassment & knife crime	Poorly lit areas	Youth violence	Fighting
Braintree	Drugs			Knife crime	Drugs	Groups of boys on bikes
Chelmsford	Getting stabbed		Getting stabbed	Knife crime	Being attacked	Knife crime
Maldon	No safe spaces			‘Hear say’ about violence	People carrying weapons AND vaping	Gangs
Brentwood	Gangs			Roadmen	Knife crime/ being stabbed	Violence/being attacked
Basildon	Gangs		Knife crime/ getting stabbed	Knife crime & getting stabbed	Knife crime	Knife crime
Rochford	Anti-social behaviour / criminal damage			Drugs	Drugs/ drug related crime	Gangs
Castle Point	Getting beaten up			Knife crime	Knife crime/ being stabbed	Knife crime
Thurrock	Youth violence at a younger age		Knife crime/ getting stabbed	Knife crime	Knife crime/ getting stabbed	Gangs
Southend	Getting stabbed		Knife crime/ getting stabbed	Getting stabbed	Gangs	Knife crime



**Are young people in Essex worried about being exploited by a gang in their local area?**



**56%**  
of young people  
said they were  
**NOT** worried

This year 27% MORE young people than last year, said they are NOT worried about being exploited by a gang in their local area.

The majority of young people in 7 of all 14 of the Essex areas said that they are NOT worried about exploitation.

(Last year this was only 2 areas in Essex)

An additional 183 young people also answered this question via social media. Their responses changed this percentage slightly from 59% down to 56%.

Only 55 out of the 183 who answered online said they are NOT worried about being exploited by a gang.

**Do young people in Essex feel safe when they are out with their friends in their local area?**

**65%**

of young people  
said they **DO**  
feel safe



This year sees a lower percentage of young people saying that they do feel SAFE in their local areas when out with their friends, but the majority of young people still feel safe. Last year 76% of young people said they felt safe when they were out with their friends.

Consistently in our reports, young people's responses to this question are dependent on who they are with, where they are and if it is light or 'well-lit' in the areas outside.

An additional 183 young people also answered this question via social media. These responses lowered the percentage from 67% saying that they DO feel safe, down to 65%

**In the last year, have young people from Essex experienced violent crime either as a victim, a witness or have they taken part in it?**

**As a Victim 82% said NO**

**As a Witness 65% said NO**

**Someone who took part 95% said NO**

**ALL of these figures have improved since last year-**

**In the 2023-24 project:**

**78% had NOT been a victim**

**48% had NOT been a witness**

**93% had NOT taken part**

**These results include the young people that took part via social media platforms**

**The responses to these questions vary across the different areas of Essex. Overall, these statistics show progress since the last report**

**When comparing the percentages from the different areas, Brentwood had the HIGHEST in regards to young people witnessing and being a victim of violent crime-**

**60% have been a witness**

**38% have been a victim**

**Colchester had the second HIGHEST percentages-**

**49% have been a witness**

**35% have been a victim**



**\*What helps young people feel SAFE when they are out with their friends in the local area?**

**BEING AT A YOUTH CLUB/ ORGANISED ACTIVITY**

**BEING WITH FRIENDS**

**HAVING A PHONE**

**STAYING AT HOME**

**TRUSTED ADULTS**

**SAFETY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

**POLICE PRESENCE**

**PUBLIC AREAS**

**WELL-LIT AREAS**

**CAMERAS/ CCTV**

**KNOWING THE AREA**

1. Being with friends/ safety in numbers 27.4%
2. Having a phone 14.6%
3. Well-lit areas/ being out during the day 12.3%
4. Knowing the area/ staying close to home 11%
5. Being at youth clubs and organised activities 9.3%
6. Being with/having trusted adults close by 8.9%
7. Being in public spaces like shops 4.9%
8. Having a police presence 4.1%
9. Cameras & CCTV 3.6%
10. Safety management strategies 2.2%
11. Staying at home 1.7%

'Being in large groups of friends' is always a top priority for young people to help them feel safer.

Last year the top answer was "Being with friends"

This year young people mentioned Ring doorbells, location apps for phones and having plans for quick exits in case of emergencies, within the safety management category.

Over half of the young people that mentioned safe spaces specifically mentioned being at a youth club.

**\*What makes young people feel UNSAFE when they are out with their friends in the local area?**

**KNIVES**

**GROUPS OF PEOPLE**

**CERTAIN AREAS**

**BULLIES**

**DRUNK PEOPLE**

**SKETCHY PEOPLE**

**BEING FOLLOWED**

**DRUGS**

**GANGS**

**BEING ALONE**

**MEN/ BOYS**

**POORLY-LIT AREAS**

1. Poorly-lit areas 31.7%
2. Groups of people 12.1%
3. Men/ boys 10.1%
4. Being alone 7.9%
5. Sketchy looking people/people with hoodies/balaclavas 7.5%
6. Being followed or approached by strangers 6.9%
7. Certain areas (alleyways, underpasses, open spaces like parks at night) 5.9%
8. Gangs 4%
9. People on drugs, or smelling drugs nearby 3.9%
10. Drunk people 3.6%
11. No phone/ bad phone signal/ low phone battery 2.3%
12. Knives 2.2%
13. Bullies 2%

Young people consistently say how important street lighting is in helping them to feel safe.

Parks, and open spaces designed for children and young people, are the very spaces they do not feel safe in when it is dark. Early evening is often the time that young people want to 'hang out' in parks.

"Men/boys" making young people feel UNSAFE has MORE THAN DOUBLED since last year.

\*The word clouds for the Essex-wide report only show the comments made the most. The reports for each area of Essex give more detail, and a complete breakdown of all answers given.



# What do young people in Essex think should be done to help them feel safer in their local areas?

1. More/better street lighting
2. More police
3. Free phone charging stations
4. More CCTV/security cameras
5. Safe places for young people to hang out ~ that are inside
6. More trusted adults
7. Help points or free emergency phones
8. More accessible youth clubs ~ including clubs that cater for SEND, that are open more frequently
9. Location phone apps. personal safety alarms
10. Maintaining areas to look nice and improve pavements



From the Youth Voice Day, 80 young people highlighted that they want more; streetlights, police presence, CCTV and free activities for young people" to help them feel safer.

**More street lights** was said by EVERY area and given in the top 3 most frequent responses.

**More police** was asked for by each area, with 10 areas mentioning it in their top 3 answers.

Other suggestions from young people:

- Better phone signal
- Tougher punishments for people carrying weapons
- Better location maps/signage

## What activities would young people in Essex, like to see more available for them to take part in?



These answers vary slightly from area to area but, across the whole of Essex, young people are consistent that any new provision needs to be free or low cost.



Over the past six years we have noticed that young people's answers to this question are very consistent. This year, using this insight, we made the question multiple choice rather than free form.

Young people did have the option to comment and add in anything else. This is important to mention because over half of the young people that chose to give individual comments, specifically mentioned wanting learning opportunities around life skill topics.

If we had included life skills as one of the multiple choice options, we suspect this would have seen an even higher response rate.

# Have young people seen content on social media of \*serious violence?

(Young people answered the question about social media in their youth groups and online)



## 78%

of young people said they had seen content on social media

These questions were answered by 1302 young people, 183 young people via social media

## Which platform have young people seen the serious violence on?



1) TikTok 36%



2) Snapchat 22%



3) Instagram 13%



4) X/Twitter 10%



5) WhatsApp 7%



6) YouTube 6%



7) Facebook 4%



8) Reddit 2%

## Of those young people who have seen violence on social media:

## 41%

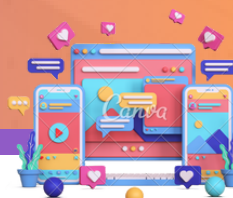
have seen content of people they know – friends, friends of friends or people they know from their local area?

## 87%

have seen content of people they don't know

Exposure to violence online can have a negative impact on children and young people in numerous ways

- It can encourage imitation of violent behaviour
- It can reduce sympathy for victims and normalise violence
- It can make people suspicious of other's intentions



## The definition of serious violence\* given to the young people was:

- Threats to beat up another child or group of children
- Fights involving children or young people
- Sexually violent content or threats (example: images or threats of sexual assault)
- Children or young people carrying, promoting or using weapons
- Children or young people being part of, or promoting, gangs
- Children or young people promoting, or using, illegal drugs
- Glorifying previous attacks on other young people





## KEY OBSERVATIONS, COMPARISONS AND COMMENTS FOR ESSEX-WIDE

**2466 young people from across Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) have voiced their concerns, shared their experiences and offered their suggestions about how safe they feel in their communities, what makes them feel unsafe and how we can help them feel safer.**

These young people have participated in face to face discussions at their youth clubs, in school assemblies, via social media and at the Youth Voice conference.

**Concerns for young people are different in each area and therefore worth a read to ensure needs are met specifically to the young people in that area.**

**Looking at the Essex-wide feedback it shows that there is a REDUCED percentage of young people saying that “Knife crime/getting stabbed” is their biggest concern around youth violence, from 21.6% to 19.9%. However, this was the MOST frequent response this year and has been the top answer consistently for the previous five years.**

**Concerns around “Gangs” has INCREASED from 8.8% to 10.7% in this report and, new to this year, 9.3% of the young people stated that “Harassment” was their biggest worry. ALMOST 60% of these young people specifically mentioned harassment from men or boys.**

The percentage of young people that mentioned “Theft/mugging/getting jumped/robbery” has almost HALVED, from 16.1% to 8.8% this year.

Young people saying “Drugs” is the same percentage as last year, at 8.9%.

**This year 4.8% of young people said that “Bullying” is their biggest concern, an INCREASE of 1.3%. “Vaping” was given as a response by less young people compared to last year, from 3.9% to 3%.**

**Contrary to the increase in the percentage of young people saying that their biggest concern is “Gangs”, this year sees a significant DECREASE in the percentage of young people that said they are worried about being exploited by a gang in their area.  
Last year 71% said they ARE worried compared to 44% in this report.**



**The percentage of young people feeling safe when out with their friends locally has DROPPED by over 10% since the previous report.**

Young people continue to tell us that feeling safe is dependent on it being daylight or them being in well-lit areas, who they are with and where they are in their community.

**4.6% of young people did state that “Poorly lit areas” was their biggest concern.**

**In regards to young people’s ACTUAL experience of violent crime, this year’s feedback shows there have been LESS young people that HAVE been a victim, witnessed it or been involved in violent crime in comparison to last year’s data.**

**4% LESS have been a victim**

**17% LESS have been a witness**

**2% LESS have taken part.**

Young people were asked where they feel the crime hot spots are in their local area and although the feedback varies across the different districts, there are similarities to the previous report, with **parks** being given as a response most frequently at the top of their lists, followed by **town centres** and **public transport stations**.

**This year there was a noticeable increase in the number of areas which mentioned “school”, with Tendring young people putting this at the top of their list for crime hot spots.**





## KEY OBSERVATIONS, COMPARISONS AND COMMENTS FOR ESSEX-WIDE

**Nearly a quarter of the young people across Essex said that they feel safe in large groups of friends, with many of them using the phrase “*Safety in numbers*”.**

The second most frequent response for “What helps young people feel safe when out in their local area” was “***Having a phone***”. Although we categorised it separately, many young people talked about having location apps on their phones, or maintaining communication with parents/guardians as to their whereabouts, helps them feel safe.

**Being in well-lit areas was third on the list and is reinforced by being at the top of the list, with over 31% saying “*Poorly-lit areas*” makes young people feel unsafe. The importance of lighting is repeatedly raised by young people of all ages, and in all areas, in multiple questions, and has been the top concern for the previous five years when asking young people what makes them feel unsafe.**



To help young people feel safer in their communities they asked for more streetlights, more police presence, with some young people suggesting building more positive relations between them and the police, free phone charging stations, CCTV and more safe places for young people to socialise with friends in accessible, supportive and welcoming environments.

Young people echoed this opinion when asked what activities they would like to see more available in their areas, with “***Social chill out spaces***” being said by 15.1%.

This was closely followed by any activities or services provided being “***Affordable or free***”.

**Comment from Youth Leader “All young people agreed that they had felt, or witnessed, the cost of living crisis with their families and commented on more people not being able to afford to do things or clubs”**

Sport activities was a close third on the list with many young people expressing the sense of safety and belonging from being involved in team sports and at organised clubs.

This was the second year that we asked young people if they have seen violent content on social media and it has INCREASED from 71% to 78%

**This year we went more in-depth, and asked if the content involved people they know or people they don’t know. The results on the Essex-wide review showed;**

**41% said the content involved people they DO know**

**87% said the content involved people they DO NOT know**

TikTok and Snapchat were the top two platforms where young people are viewing the violence, the same as last year.

This year’s feedback signals that efforts to make communities safer are making some tangible impact in certain areas, with fewer young people fearing gang exploitation and encountering violent situations on a personal level.

However, there is always room for improvement and being able to provide safe, welcoming spaces for young people to socialise, learn and develop, affordable activities such as sport to offer a sense of belonging and security, opportunities to learn life skills and forge better relations with authorities, as well as better streetlights could be key to encouraging young people to feeling safer, and becoming proactive contributors in their communities.





## 98 Young People took part in Southend

The brilliant youth organisations that took part;



Southend YMCA  
(Detached work)



South Essex Community Hub  
(SEN group)



Southend TEENS Group  
(Faith group)



Garon Park Youth Club  
(Open access youth club)

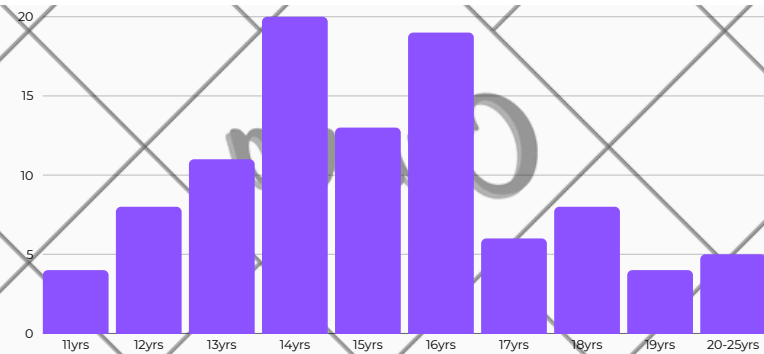


Bouldering Together  
IndiRock & Trustlinks  
(Open access)



Southend United  
(Football club)

Distribution, by age, of young people who took part in Southend in all the questions at their local youth club/group/activity/detached



Gender: Female 32%. Male 66%. Non-binary 2%.

## What is the biggest concern for young people around youth violence in Southend?

Young people's concerns of "Knife crime/being stabbed" has INCREASED by 14% since last year

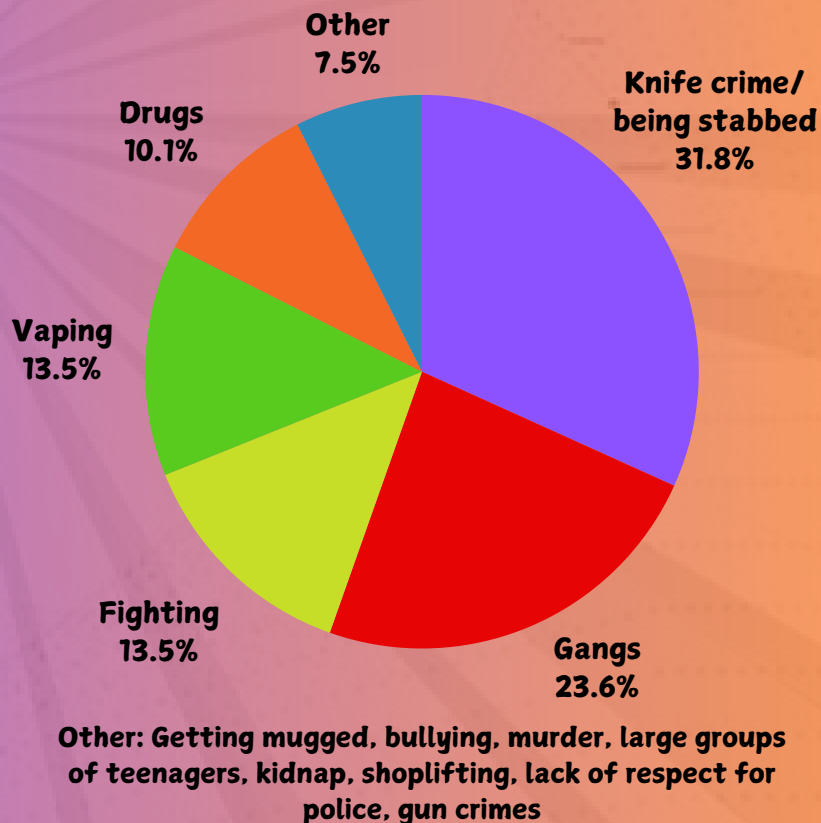
"Our biggest worry is the increase in knife crime"

"The machete fights on the seafront"

"So many people carry knives"

"Young people that grow up in poverty areas are more easily influenced to join gangs"

"The gang fights are really scary"



The same as last year, the top two most frequent answers for "What is the biggest concern for young people in Southend around youth violence" is "Knife crime/being stabbed" and "Gangs", but they have changed places. Last year Gangs was at the top with almost 30% and Knife crime was in second place with 17.8% of the young people giving this response.

Concerns around "Drugs" has INCREASED marginally from 9.3% to 10.1% this year.

The same number of young people that said "Fighting" was their biggest concern, mentioned "Vaping" which was NOT given as an answer to this question last year.

Positive to note is that "Bullying" was only stated by one young person compared to 6.5% last year.

**Are young people in Southend worried about being exploited by a gang in their local area?**



**54%**

**of young people  
said they ARE  
worried**

**In comparison to the 91% LAST YEAR saying they ARE worried about being exploited by a gang in Southend, this is a 37% DROP!**

**This is still a worry for many young people.**

**Almost half of those that said they are worried, mentioned peer pressure.**

***“The gangs are targeting younger people and they are being forced or bullied to join”***

***“It’s easy for people to be exploited and they often don’t realise. They are offered cool things”***

**Do young people in Southend feel safe when they are out with their friends in their local area?**



**70%**

**of young people  
said they DO  
feel safe**

**This percentage, 70%, has remained the same for this year and the previous two reports.**

**However, for many of the young people this is dependent on them being out in the day time, who they are with and where they are.**

***“We don’t go out late, but in the day we feel ok”***

***“Sometimes I feel safe, just depends on who I’m with and where we are”***

***“I feel safe in the daytime and Southend isn’t as bad as on social media”***

**In the last year, have young people from Southend, had experience of violent crime either as a victim, a witness or have they taken part in it?**

**As a Victim 85% said NO**

**As a Witness 69% said NO**

**Someone who took part 98% said NO**

**ALL of these figures have improved since last year!!!**

**In the 2023–24 project:  
72% had NOT been a victim  
46% had NOT been a witness  
88% had NOT taken part**



**Where do young people from Southend think the crime hotspots are near them?**

- 1) Parks and squares (Cluny Square, Warrior Square & Skate Park, Priory Park, Shobury Park)**
- 2) High Street/town**
- 3) Seafront**
- 4) York Rd/surrounding area**
- 5) Kursaal estate**
- 6) Train station (Southend & Hockley)**
- 7) Hamlet Court Rd**

**High Street and Seafront were mentioned more times than any specific Park or Square. Cluny Square and Warrior Square were the park/square areas young people mentioned the most, the other parks listed were only mentioned by 1 or 2 young people.**



What helps young people from Southend feel **SAFE** when they are out with their friends in the local area?



More than double the number of young people responded to, “What helps young people feel **SAFE** when out with their friends in Southend?”, with comments around being in large groups compared to the next most frequent answers, which were “*Knowing the area*”.

*“Being in a big group of people we know”*

*“Moving in groups”*

Some of the safety management strategies included; “*Having a back up plan*” and “*Knowing where the exits are so we can get away quickly*”

What makes young people from Southend feel **UNSAFE** when they are out with their friends in the local area?



Another area where the most frequent response for “What makes young people feel **UNSAFE** when out with their friends locally”, is about the lack of street lights. Said **MORE** than double the number of times the next most recurrent answer, “*Being alone*” was given.

This feedback is similar to the previous report but last year “*Being alone*” was the most constant reply and “*Poorly lit areas*” was in second place.

In the 2022-2023 listening report, young people’s feedback showed that “*Poorly lit areas*” was the majorities response to this question.

*“Gangs operate here and make us feel unsafe”*

*“We’re scared of rival gangs”*

# What do young people from Southend think should be done to help them feel safer in their local area?

1. More/better street lights
2. More free venues/youth clubs/safe places for young people
3. More local police
4. Free/portable phone charging stations
5. Improve police attitude towards people in a group
6. Tougher penalties for carrying knives
7. Restrict under 13's from being out after certain times
8. Free phone booths/boxes to make emergency calls



In line with the responses from the previous question, young people in Southend said that more street lights, especially in alleyways, more FREE safe places, like youth clubs that are open longer, and more police presence would help them feel safer in their local area.

Other answers included:

SOS bus/people that can help if they need it

Give police better weapons

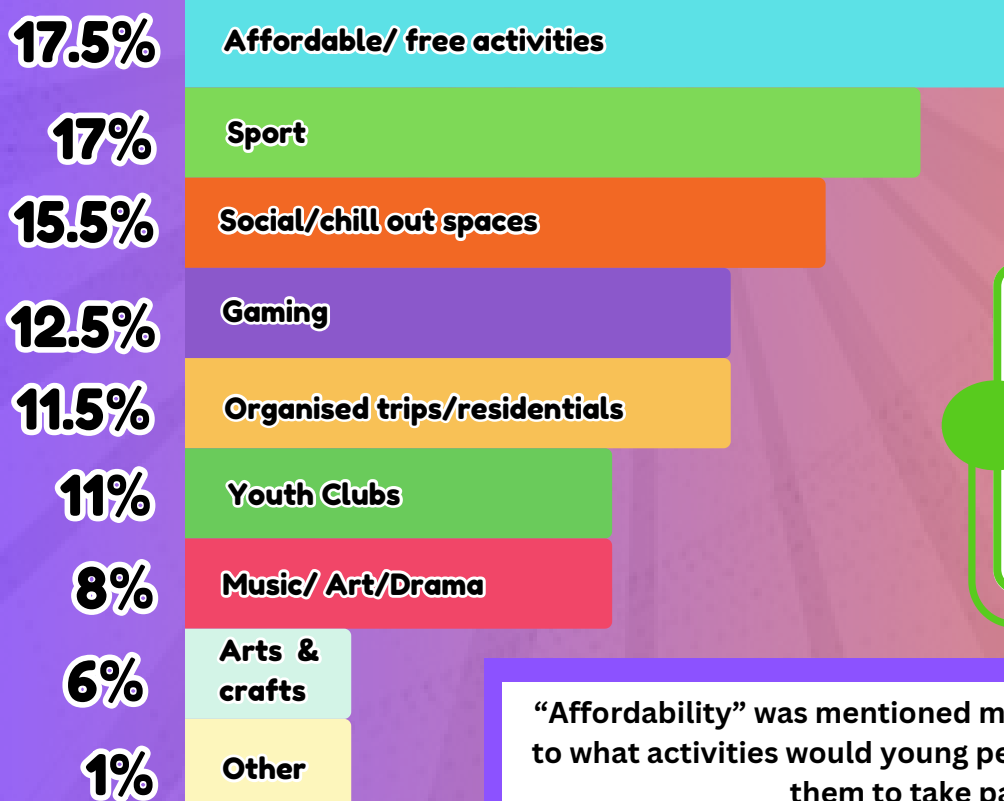
Community safety patrols

Less gangs

Free Wi-Fi



## What activities would young people like to see more available for them to take part in?



**Affordability is the key factor when providing activities for young people in Southend**



“Affordability” was mentioned marginally more times than “Sport” as to what activities would young people like to see more available in for them to take part in, in Southend.

A third of those that said “Sport”, specifically asked for football and multi-sports sessions.

Other recommendations included:

More libraries young people can access

Ice-skating

Under 18's night club

# Have young people seen content on social media of serious violence\*?



## 86%

of young people in Southend  
said they have seen content  
on social media

Fights  
Knife Crime  
Drugs

## Which platform have young people seen the serious violence on?



1) **TikTok** 53%



2) **X/Twitter** 26%



3) **WhatsApp** 8%



4) **Snapchat** 6%



5) **Reddit** 2.5%



6) **Instagram** 2.5%



7) **Facebook** 1%



8) **YouTube** 1%

## Of those young people who have seen violence on social media:

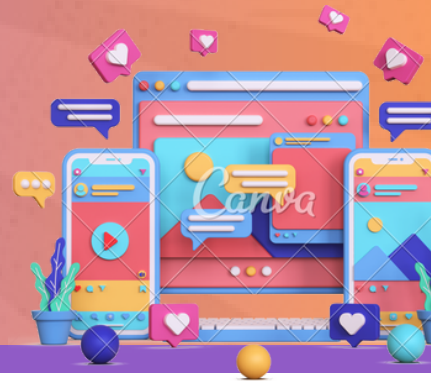
## 16%

have seen content of  
people they know -  
friends, friends of friends  
or people they know from  
their local area?

## 89%

have seen content of  
people they don't know

When asked if they had seen content  
of people they know, 10% of those  
who said they'd seen content chose  
not to vote or said they didn't know



## Comments and Observations

With Southend having the **fourth HIGHEST percentage** of young people saying that they HAVE seen serious violence on social media, 27% of these young people said it involved fighting.

*"There's always fights in the local high street"*

*"Southend seafront is known for fighting"*

*"Fights are planned/organised over TikTok"*

This feedback shows that 50% of content is viewed by young people on TikTok.

23% of the young people that HAVE seen serious violence online said that it involved drugs.

*"Young people promoting illegal drugs"*

*"Kids taking drugs on TikTok and Snapchat"*

Southend has the **LOWEST percentage** of young people that said they have seen violent content that involved people **THEY KNOW**, in comparison to all the other areas.





## KEY OBSERVATIONS, COMPARISONS AND COMMENTS FOR SOUTHEND

**Almost 32% of young people in Southend said that “*Knife crime/being stabbed*” is their biggest concern around youth violence. This has **INCREASED** from 17.8% since last year.**

Concerns around “**Gangs**” has **DECREASED** from 30% to 23.6% in this report, however, it is **STILL** the second most frequent response.

**This year sees a small RISE in the percentage of young people expressing their concerns around “Drugs”, from 9.3% last year to 10.1% this year.**

Feedback from this report shows that “**Vaping**” was mentioned by the same number of young people as “**Fighting**” and it was not given as a response last year.

**37% LESS young people said that they ARE worried about being exploited by a gang locally compared to last year’s figures.**

This question evoked some interesting feedback with some young people saying “**We need to raise awareness about how poverty and lack of opportunities contributes to young people being vulnerable to exploitation and crime**”

**This is the third consecutive year that 70% of young people in Southend said that they DO feel SAFE when out with their friends locally.**

The majority of these young people did say that this is dependent on who they are with, where they are and if it is daylight.

Being in large groups of people they know, and knowing the area were the top two answers for “What helps young people feel safe?”. Young people also mentioned “**Being in safe venues like halls or football pitches**”, “**Street lights**” and “**Police presence**” contribute to a sense of safety in their community.

**These responses were reinforced by young people saying the same things for “What can be done to help young people feel safer”.**

“**Affordability**” was the main factor when young people were asked “What activities would they like to see more available in their area”

**This was also reiterated when young people said “A lack of FREE safe places to go” makes them feel UNSAFE.**



**All the figures around young people’s experience of violent crime HAVE IMPROVED since the last report.**

13% LESS have been a victim

23% LESS have witnessed violent crime

10% LESS said they took part.

**Out of those that took part in the listening project in Southend, 86% of young people said they HAVE seen serious violence on social media with TikTok being the most frequent platform this content is viewed on.**

Out of those that HAVE seen content online, 27% said that this involved fighting, including fights organised over TikTok, and 23% said it involved the promotion and use of illegal drugs.

**Southend feedback did have the LOWEST percentage of young people saying that the violent content they had seen involved people THEY KNOW.**

