



# **Tackling Serious Youth Violence in Lambeth**

Community Listening Campaign

Thematic Analysis Report

March 2020

High Trees Community Development Trust

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## Foreword

There have been many reports written by well intentioned ‘experts’ on serious youth violence, the root causes and its impact on our communities. However, the research has often lacked the key component: ‘the active participation and involvement of the communities, particularly, young people’.

Lambeth has historically suffered from high levels of serious youth violence. At the time of writing, we witnessed a significant rise, which threatens to return the borough to the peak levels last seen in 2009 to 2012. Lambeth has suffered the highest volume of serious violent crimes in London over the last 10 years, with over 7000 victims of youth violence. It particularly impacts on black people, who make up almost half the victims of serious youth violence (47%) but who only make up a third of the population in Lambeth.

Last year, serious violence against young people became an unfortunate regular feature in the media. According to ONS figures, police-recorded knife crime increased by 71% between 2014 and 2018, and the number of murder victims aged 16 to 24 rose by 45% in the year to March 2018 (ONS, 2019).

Sadly, too often, when these stories are no longer in the media spotlight, it leaves communities feeling traumatised and powerless to affect change.

To address this issue, in January, we commissioned High Trees Community Development Trust to conduct a research. The purpose of the research was to get the insights of local communities, particularly, young people's perspective on youth violence in Lambeth.

We wanted to understand not just what communities think are causes of serious violence, but also what they identify as the solutions and how their suggestions align with Lambeth Council's existing “Serious Youth Violence” strategy.

As Community Organisers, rooted in our local communities in Lambeth, we are well placed to understand the relationship between the Council's policies and local impact and to broker meaningful conversations between communities and the Council.

We also believe that the only appropriate response to youth violence is one that involves the whole community and works from the ground up.

By listening to the needs of our local community on these issues, we hope the research achieves these broad aims, makes an impact locally and strengthens the voice of our local community to speak truth to power. Furthermore, the challenge is to take the findings from our local work to develop a strategy, which is grounded in an effective genuine community-led approach to tackling serious youth violence.

We would like to say a big ‘thank you’ to all who took part and shared their thoughts in this research, and also, to **Lambeth Council for their financial support.**

**Ros Griffiths**  
Community Consultant

**Margaret Pierre**  
Community Consultant

## Introduction

Between the 8th and 13th January 2020, Community Researchers from High Trees Community Development Trust conducted street interviews in central Lambeth on serious youth violence.

The research was designed to encourage open and frank conversations, in order to gather feedback and proposals on the causes of, and possible solutions to, youth violence across Lambeth.



Throughout the course of the research, we spoke with over 80 people, over a third of whom were young people aged 24 and under.

After a brief summary of our findings, we will present our data for each question of the 5 questions in turn.

First, we will provide a general overview of how answers are spread across a set broad category. The answers within each category will then be broken down into more specific themes, to paint a more detailed and accurate picture of the views of the participants. After repeating this process for the isolated answers from young participants, we consolidate this presentation of data with a qualitative summary complete with direct quotes from the interviews.

The answers participants gave to the last two questions, focussed around their vision for action and ideas for action, diverge greatly. Superficially, these answers may seem to conflict, and provide contradictory recommendations for the Council's 'Tackling Violence Against Young People' strategy. But this is only if we search for an easy answer.

The reality of youth violence is complicated, and deeply woven into Lambeth residents' perspectives in diverse ways. The inter-generational experiences and trauma received from youth violence, as well as the many and compound factors behind its perpetuation, create many divergent insights about what needs to be done.

In this report we share the key findings of our research, alongside recommendations for communities, social/private sectors, Lambeth and other statutory agencies.

## Summary of findings

Here is a brief summary of the answer's participants gave for the 5 questions around youth violence.

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### **“How do you think young people in Lambeth are perceived?”**

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Most commonly, participants answered that young people are perceived negatively. Perceived involvement with dangerous activity, violence, or drugs trade were cited by some participants in their answer, as well as lacking respect for others. Among young participants, the most common answers were around perceptions of the suffering young people experience. These answers primarily cited the discrimination against young people, due to their age, social class, colour of their skin, and a media narrative of youth violence.

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### **“Have you or your family been impacted by youth violence? if so, what was the most significant impact?”**

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There was a broad range of answers for this question. Some participants had been directly impacted by youth violence, having witnessed or experienced an attack themselves. Others had experienced bereavement and injury to their loved ones. The peer researchers also spoke to participants who self-reported involvement in youth violence, or association with those who were. Some participants had vicariously experienced youth violence from their extended social group. Others answered they were impacted by self-restricting their social behaviour to contend with the threat of youth violence. The remaining participants answered they had not been impacted.

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### **“What do you think the root of the problem is?”**

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The response rate for this answer was particularly low, meaning our findings do not represent the data set. Bearing this in mind, answers for this question were primarily service-focussed. Adverse impact from Government legislation, the lack of support for parents, and council funding to youth and community services were identified by some participants as the root of the problem. Answers from young participants were evenly split between a deficiency in services, including the police, schools and youth clubs. and their environment. Many environment-focussed answers claimed poverty and financial problems laid the conditions for youth violence, and some the normalisation of violence and lack of job opportunities.

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**“If anything was possible what would Lambeth need to be like for young people to thrive?”**

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Over half of answers claimed that statutory services need to be improved for young people to thrive. This included providing youth centres and activities, and providing job opportunities. An even greater proportion of young participants held this view. Overall, participants also claimed that schools, police services, and the holistic service system needed to be improved. Over a quarter of answers claimed that the community needs to be strengthened. Answers included organising community events for people to physically come together, provide peer mentors and role models to young people, and supporting parental involvement in their children’s lives.

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**“What can be done together with young people to reduce youth violence?”**

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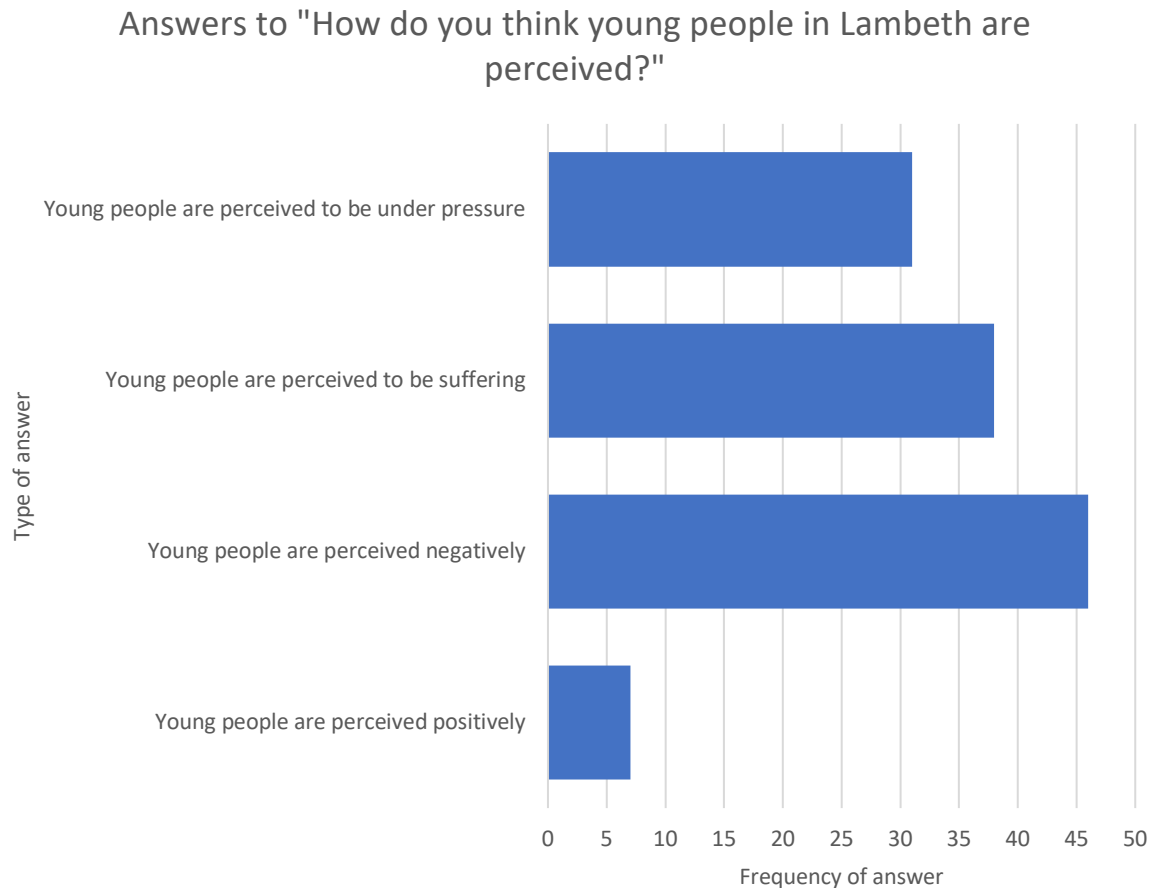
Overall, there was a near even distribution across answers that gave service-focused approaches, and those that focused on community as a way to work with young people to reduce youth violence. However, the majority of young participants gave service-focussed answers. Service-focussed answers included providing safe activities and spaces for young people, as well as youth mentoring and support, improving the police service, and ensuring schools supported young people and communicated with their parents.

Community-focussed answers primarily considered building a sense of community. This included the black community coming together to co-create solutions to reduce youth violence, as well as answers about the wider community coming together for this end. Some participants claimed that efforts to reduce youth violence need positive and visible role models for young people, while others claimed that the reduction of youth violence is young people’s responsibility.

## Answers to “How do you think young people in Lambeth are perceived?”

### Overall response

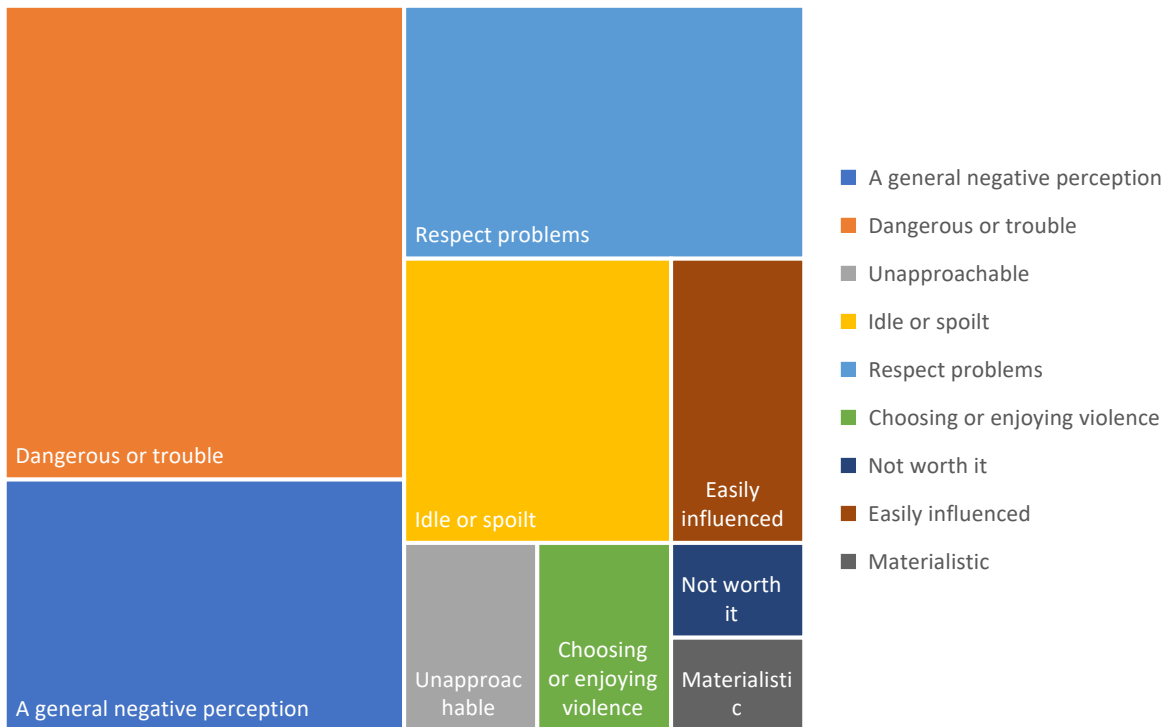
122 answers were given by 70 participants over the course of three listening campaign sessions.



These answers can be split into two categories. First, those focussed on whether young people are perceived positively or negatively, ‘good or bad’. 43.4% of answers fell into this category, with 5.7% claiming that young people were perceived positively. The remaining 37.7% claimed that young people were perceived negatively.

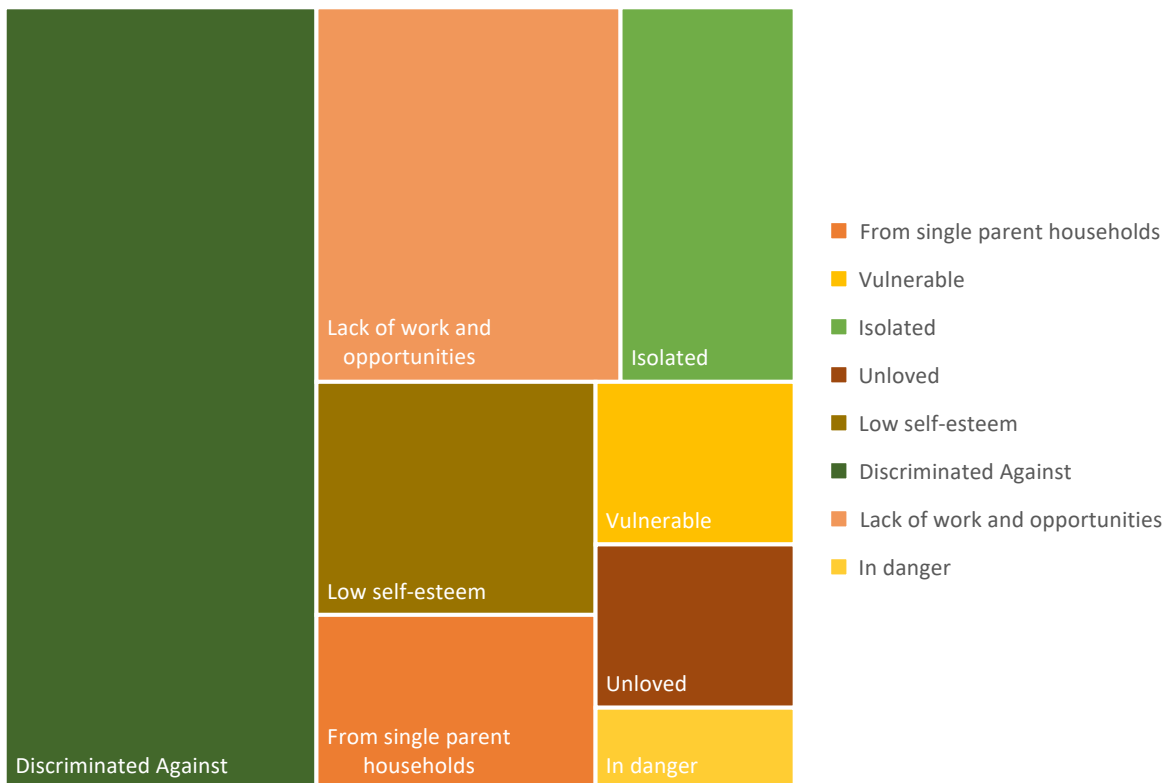
Second, those answers focussed on what can be perceived about young people’s quality of life. 56.6% of answers fell into this category, 25.4% centred around perceptions of the pressures young people face. The remaining 31.2% of answers were centred around perceptions of the suffering young people experience. We will present a breakdown of the types of answers within these two categories in descending order of modality.

### Breakdown of answers "Young people are perceived negatively"



"Young people are perceived negatively" was the modal answer, with 37.7% of inputs falling into this type.

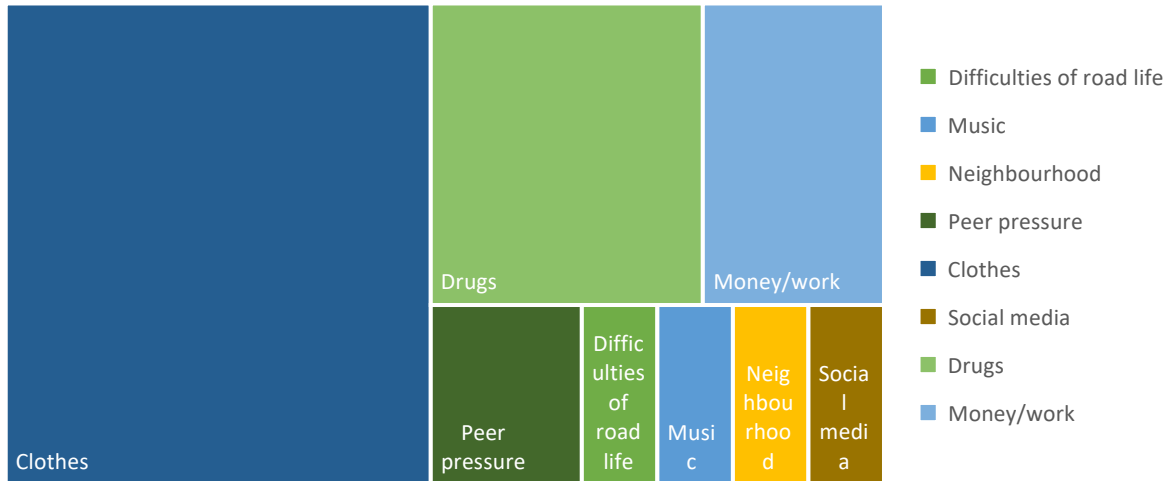
### Breakdown of answers "Young people are perceived to be suffering"





“Young people are perceived to be suffering” was the second most common answer, with 31.2% of answers falling into this type.

### Breakdown of answers "Young people are perceived to be under pressure"



“Young people are perceived to be under pressure” was the second least common answer, with 25.4% inputs falling into this type.

### Breakdown of answers "young people are perceived positively"

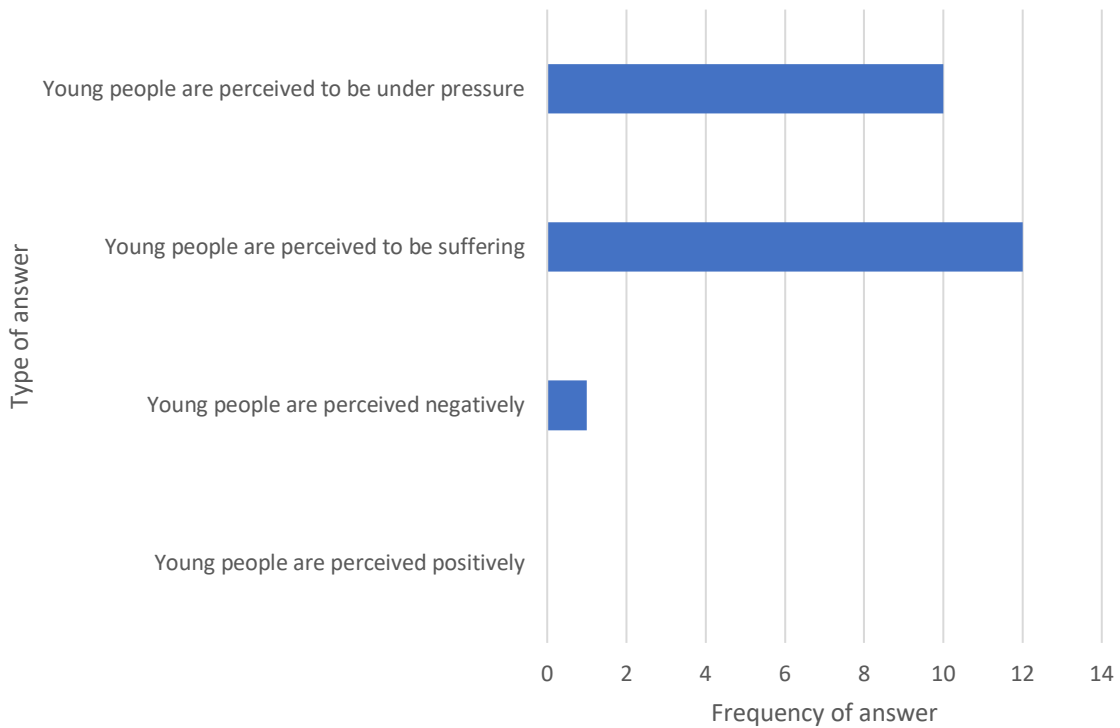


Just 7 participants out of 70 answered “young people are perceived positively”, making it the least common answer. 5.7% inputs fall into this type.

#### Response from young participants

23 answers were given by all 19 participants under the age of 24.

## Answers to "How do you think young people in Lambeth are perceived?" from young participants



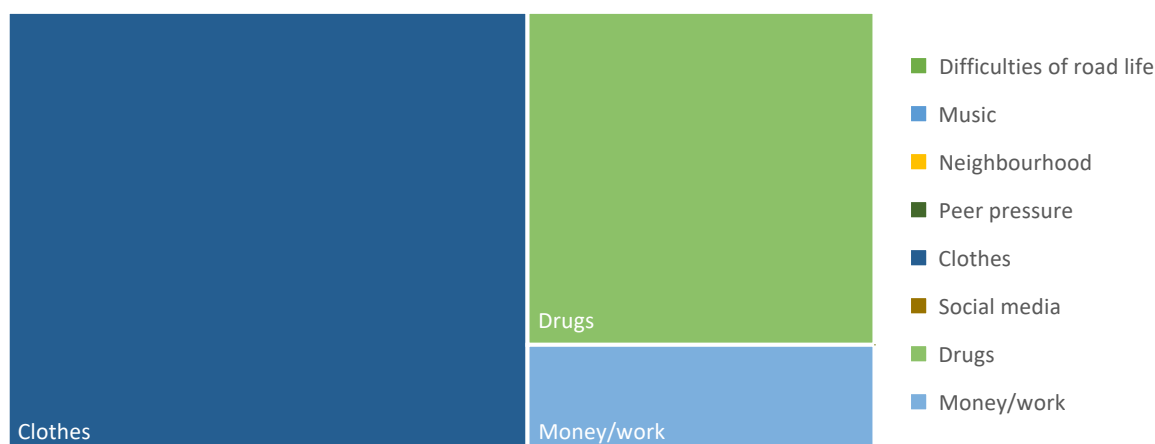
12 answers were focussed on the suffering young people experienced. 10 answers were focussed on the pressures placed on young people. The remaining 1 answer claimed that young people are perceived negatively. We will present a breakdown of the types of answers within these two categories in descending order of modality.

### Breakdown of answers "Young people are perceived to be suffering" from young participants



52.2% answers were focussed on the suffering young people experienced.

## Breakdown of answers "Young people are perceived to be under pressure" from young participants



43.5% answers were focussed on the pressures placed on young people.

The remaining 1 answer claimed that young people are perceived negatively.

Understanding participants' answers to "How do you think young people in Lambeth are perceived?"

Overall, over a third of answers claimed that young people are perceived negatively. Within this

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*They'll get involved in a madness, they'll go out and get 'points' - which is what they call killing someone like it's a game - in order to get that lifestyle. And at this point the kids are just doing what they want*

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category, 32.6% answers claimed that young people are perceived as dangerous or trouble. Some individual participants indicated young people are involved in criminal activity, and present risk to the general public. Related to this were fewer common answers concerning young people being perceived as unapproachable, and choosing or enjoying the violence they experience.

17.4% of answers within this category made general claims that young people are perceived 'negatively' or as 'bad'. Less common were specific claims about young people as idle or spoilt, easily influenced and materialistic. 1 participant claimed that young people are perceived as "not worth it". A further 17.4% answers within this category concerned perceptions of a lack of respect young people have for others. 2 participants claimed that single-parent families, namely single mothers and absent fathers, had created this lack of respect.

Overall, under a third of answers claimed that young people are perceived to be suffering. Over half of answers from young people fall into this category. The most common answer concerned a perception of the discrimination young people experience. Individual participants specified being discriminated against due to age, a media narrative of youth violence, social class, and being black.

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*"Even from young ages the young black boys are looked down on with negativity for no reason. Not just the black ones though, all the young ones just have a negative vibe."*

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Answers within this category also focussed on a perception that young people suffer from social isolation, low self-esteem, a lack of work and opportunities. This was reflected in young participants' answers, which also included suffering from the ongoing threat of violence. Some adult participants claimed that young people are negatively shaped if they come from single parent households, while other participants focussed on the vulnerability or lack of love, they perceived young people to experience.

A quarter of answers overall claimed that young people are perceived to be under pressure, with 43.5% of young participants' answers falling into this category. Over half of young participants' answers concerned the pressure to afford expensive clothes and present themselves in a certain way. Other answers included pressures from "a drug culture surrounding Brixton", and the financial pressures resulting from trying to dress a certain way.

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*"Not well. It's partly the way they dress. If they dress like a gangster then you can't expect not to be treated like one."*

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These 3 types of answer were also most common among adult participants. Some individual answers concerning clothes involved connecting the high costs of fashion to dealing drugs. Others focussed on the barrier certain types of fashion had on approaching and connecting with young people.

Other answers within this category considered perceptions of pressure young people experienced from their peers their local neighbourhood, as well as from the difficulties presented by social media and music orientated around committing youth violence.

The least common were answers claiming young people are perceived positively, with 5.7% of answers falling within this category. Within this category, almost half of answers claimed that some young people are perceived as good, others as bad. The remaining answers claimed young people are perceived as the future, as positively by local people, and, for those young people raising awareness about knife crime, as impressive.

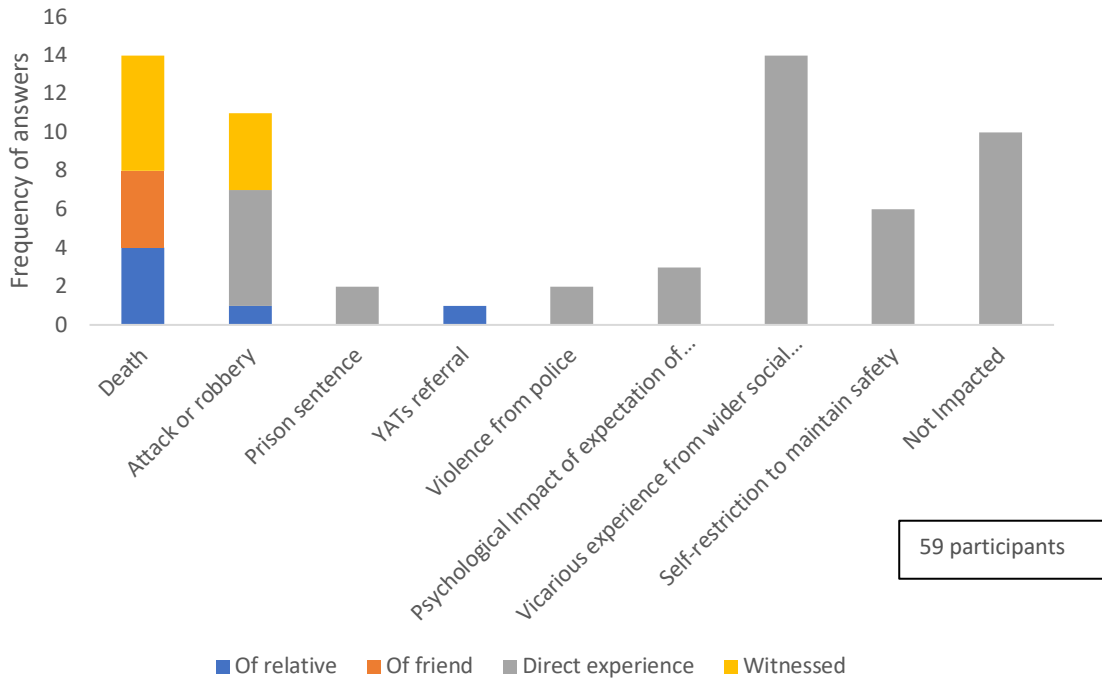
This question was designed to enable individual participants to reach beyond their own perception of young people, and enable them to consider the community's perceptions. This was to stimulate reflection in the conversation, by allowing participants to think about a wider intersubjective perspective, rather than what they already know. However, many of the answers from adult participants seem to remain focussed around their own perceptions. The exact proportion is difficult to determine, as it involves a level of abstract interpretation not conducive to this report's purpose. But it is important to note that this variation in answer type limits the quality of this data set.

Answers to "Have you or your family been impacted by youth violence? if so, what was the most significant impact?"

### Overall Response

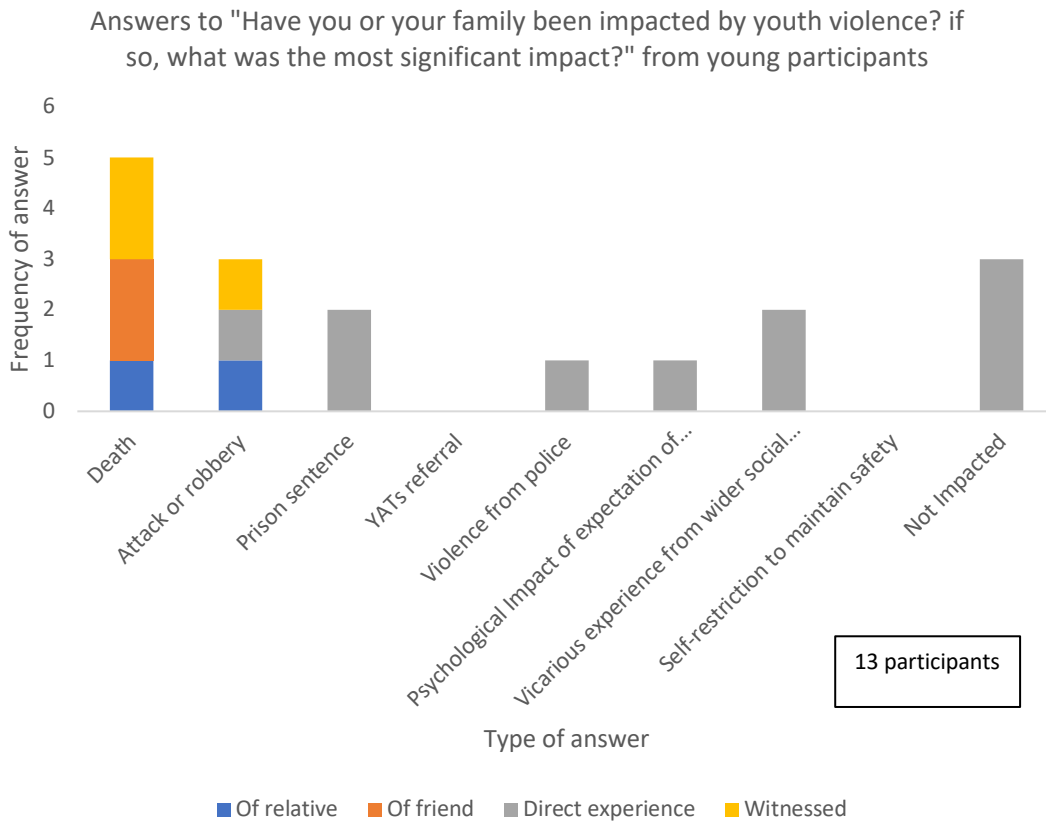
59 of the 80 participants answered this question. As the response rate was particularly low, we must be wary of misrepresenting the answers from 73.8% of participants as indicative of experiences of the entire participant group. While it is important to continue to assess this data, we must keep in mind that this is **not a complete data set.**

## Answers to "Have you or your family been impacted by youth violence? if so, what was the most significant impact?"



### Response from young participants

13 of the 19 young participants answered this question, so we must be aware that the represented data does not represent the experiences of all young participants.



Understanding participants' answers to "Have you or your family been impacted by youth violence? if so, what was the most significant impact?"

The findings for this question must not be misused to represent the experiences of the entire participant group, as just 73.8% of participants responded. But they remain worth considering, in part because of the broad range in participants' answers. This reveals that the impact of youth violence reaches beyond those who have direct experience of it.

23.7% of participants had experienced death, with 6 having witnessed it as a result of youth violence, 2 of whom were young people. 8 participants who responded had lost a friend or relative, 3 of whom were young people.

*"Like the government, and police are just not stopping us for what they're supposed to be stopping us. Like, they're just stopping us to really actually just lock us up. Not for anything else. So it's not really helping the community and helping youths. It's because when they go to cells like, it really changes your mindset. And it can actually like get into your head. So it doesn't really help you innit, it just make us suffer."*

18.6% of participants had experienced an attack or robbery, with 1 adult and 1 young person having witnessed it. 1 participant's son was robbed, and 5 adults and 1 young person had been attacked or robbed. 2 participants had prison sentences as a result of youth violence, both of whom were young people. 1 participant discussed their son's experience with YATs (Youth Offending Team).

Some participants held that the most significant impact of youth violence was not through violence from young people. and 1 adult and 1 young person discussed the violence they had experienced from the police. It was implied that members of the

police service used the context of youth violence in which they operated to commit violence of their own.

3 participants spoke about the psychological impact caused by the expectation of youth violence, 1 of whom was a young person. 6 adults answered that they restrict their movements in pre-emptive protection against youth violence. This involved avoiding activities that normally fall within the sphere of everyday life, such as going to the newsagents or allowing their children to play outside.

23.7% of participants had vicarious experience of youth violence from their wider social environment, 2 of whom were young people. This involved experiences of friends or friends' older brothers becoming involved in gangs and youth violence. 16.9% of participants, including 3 young people, had not been impacted by youth violence.

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*"I think everyone is impacted by youth violence. It's the way it makes you feel about the safety of your kids."*

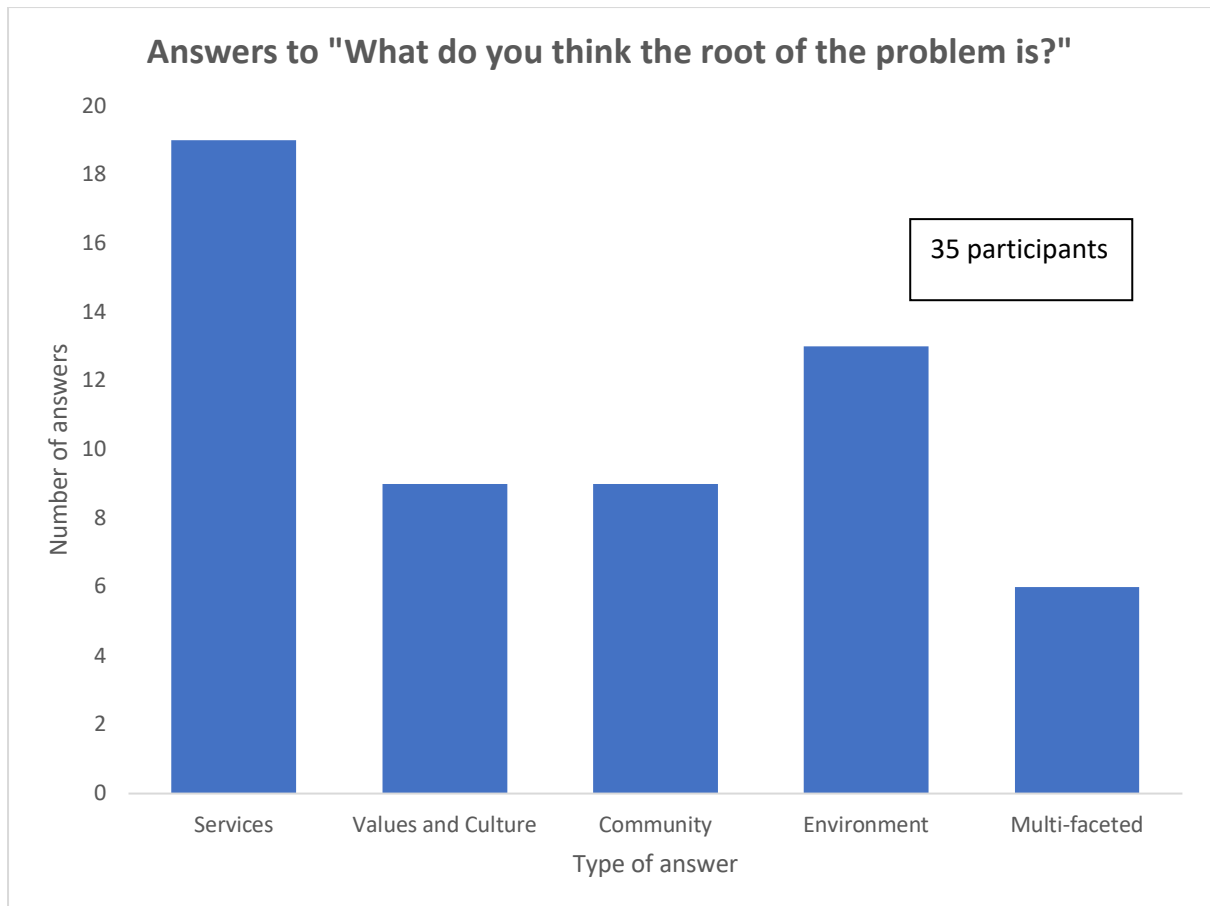
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For each participant who responded, we did not get an exhaustive list of what they experienced, but what they felt was the most significant. This question was intended to canvas the emotional impact of youth violence, according to the perspective of each participant. This provided more insight into how the experience, expectation and environment of youth violence may impact people in the Lambeth community beyond individual instances.

## Answers to "What do you think the root of the problem is?"

### Overall Response

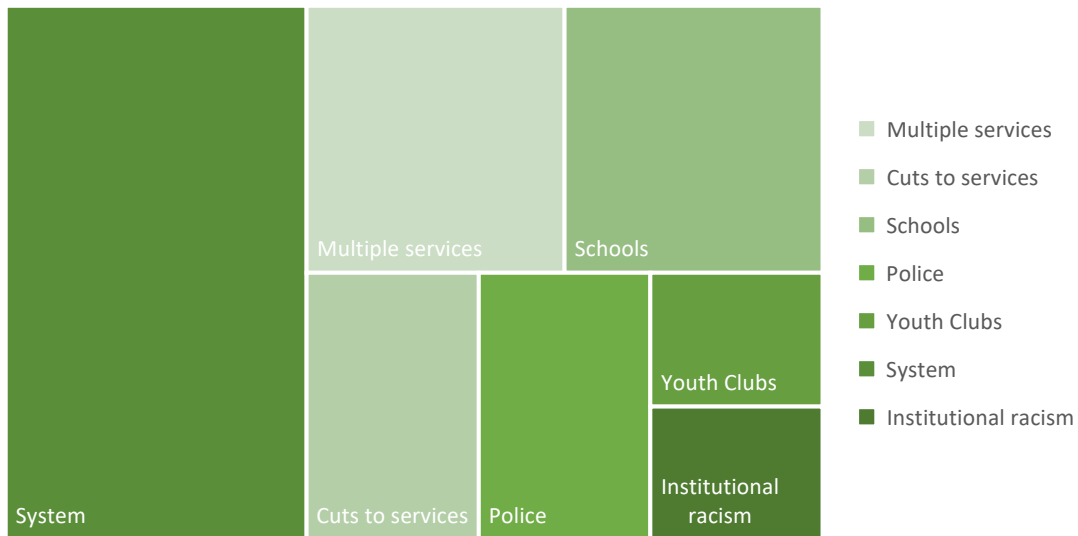
35 out of 80 participants answered this question. As the response rate was particularly low, we must be wary of misrepresenting the answers from 43.8% of participants as indicative of the views of the entire participant group. While it is important to continue to interpret the 56 answers given, we must keep in mind that these are not part of a complete data set.



The most common answer to “what do you think the root of the problem is?” was focussed on statutory services and community support. 35.7% of answers fell into this category. 23.2% of answers claimed the social environment young people grow up in is the root of the problem. 16% of answers argued that issues within local communities were at the root of the problem. This was closely followed by 14.3% of answers focussed on the values and culture, or lack of, that young people are exposed to. The remaining 6 answers, claiming that the root of the problem is multi-faceted, have also been represented in the focussed categories according to their content. We will present a breakdown of these sets of answers in descending order of modality.

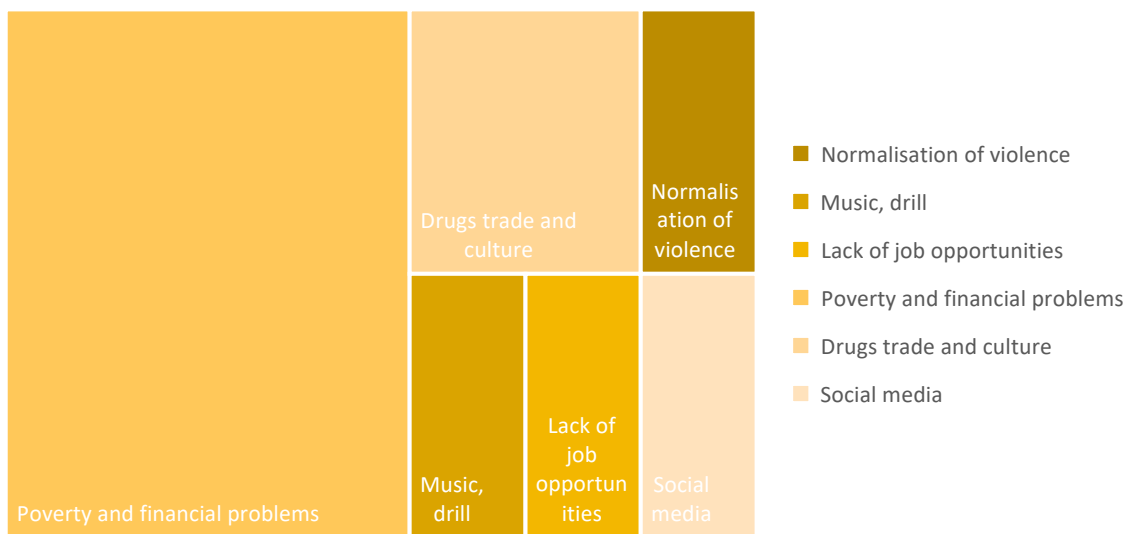


### Breakdown of service-focused answers



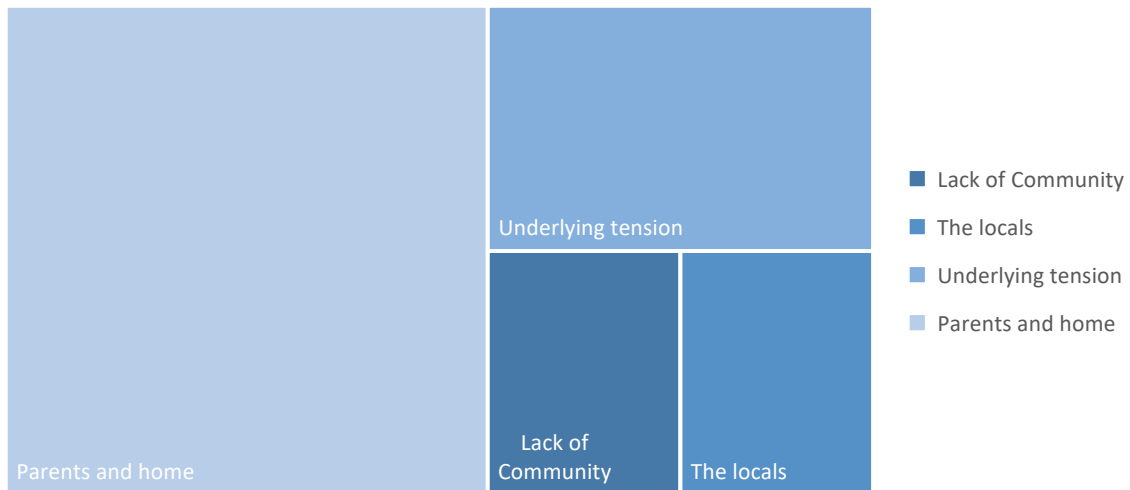
The most common answer to “what do you think the root of the problem is?” was focused on statutory services and community support. 35.7% of answers fell into this category.

### Breakdown of environment-focused answers



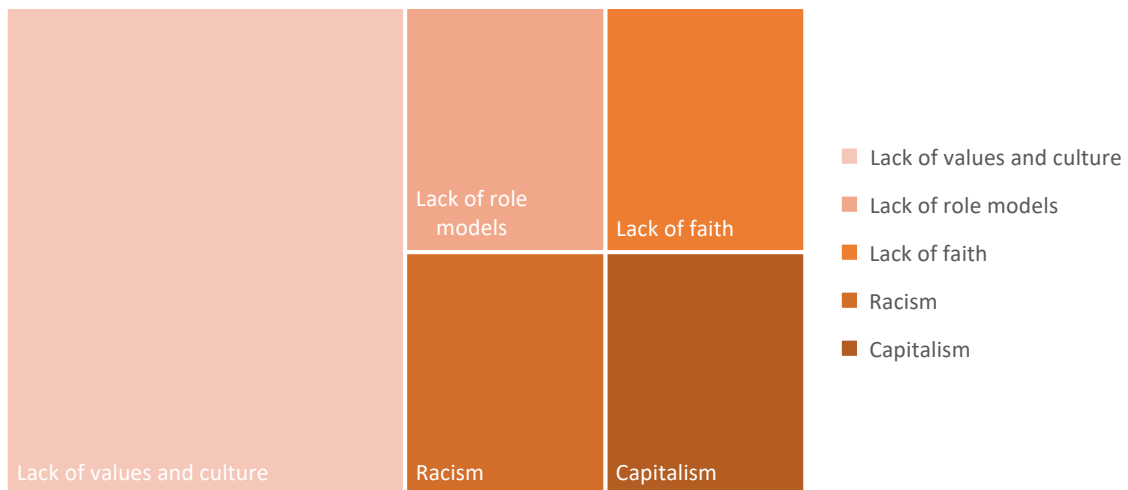
The second most common answer to “what do you think the root of the problem is?” was focused on the social environment young people grow up in. 23.2% of answers fell into this category.

### Breakdown of community-focussed answers



16% of answers argued that issues within local communities were at the root of the problem.

### Breakdown of values and culture-focussed answers



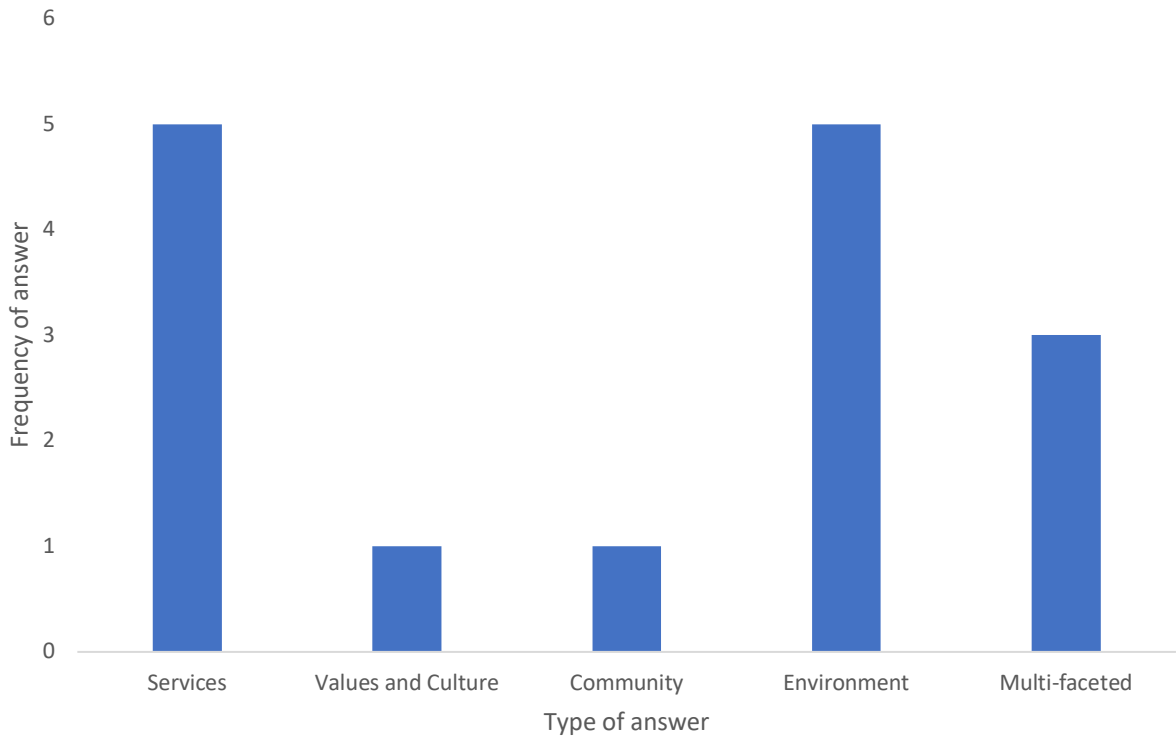
The second least common answer to “what do you think the root of the problem is?” was focussed on the lack of values or culture in young people’s lives. 14.3% of answers fell into this category.

The remaining 6 answers, claiming that the root of the problem is multi-faceted, have also been represented in the focussed categories according to their content.

#### Response from young participants

10 of the 19 young participants answered this question. We must again remain aware that the 15 answers they gave do not represent the views of the entire young participant group.

## Answers to "What do you think the root of the problem is?" from young participants



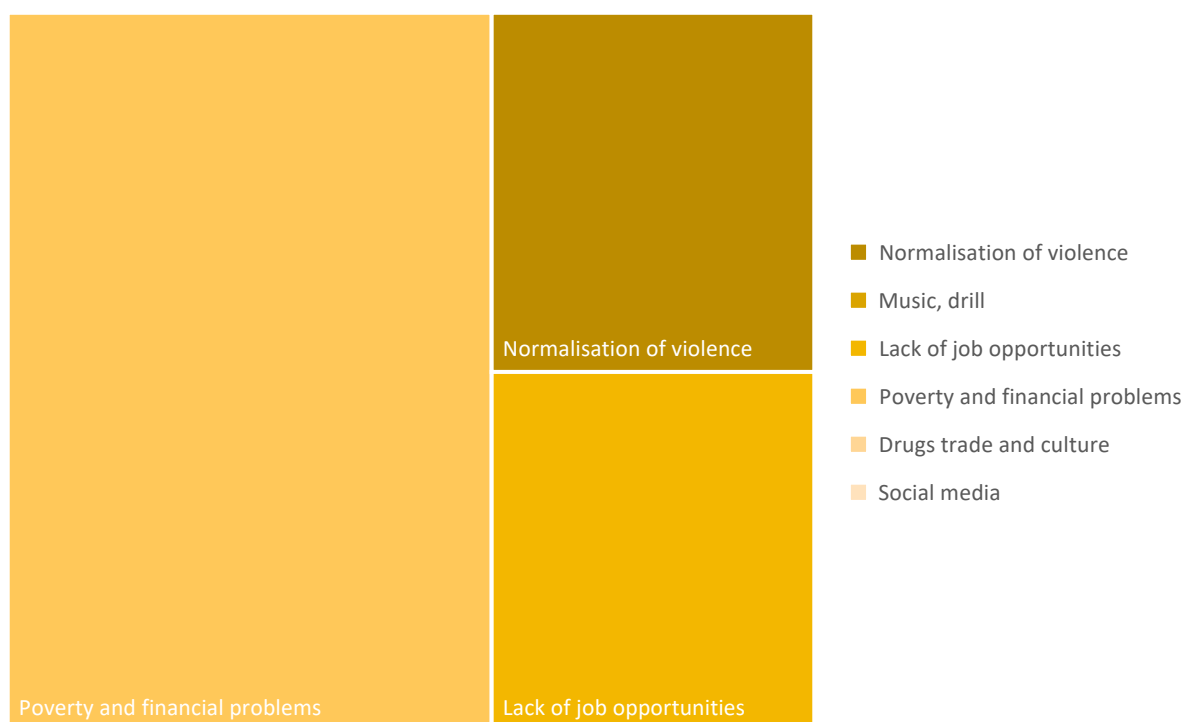
5 young participants claimed services marked the root of the problem, and 5 claimed the root of the problem is the social environment young people grow up in. 1 answer was focussed on issues within the local community, and 1 was focussed on the values and culture, or lack of, that young people are exposed to. The remaining 3 answers, claiming that the root of the problem is multi-faceted, have also been represented in the focussed categories according to their content. We will present a breakdown of these sets of answers in descending order of modality.

### Breakdown of services-focused answers



5 participants argued that the root of the problem lay with statutory services.

## Breakdown of environment-focussed answers



5 participants argued that the root of the problem lay with the social environment young people grow up in.

The 1 answer categorised under issues within the local community, claimed that family issues were the root of the problem. The 1 answer categorised under the values and culture, or lack of, that young people are exposed to, claimed that the lack of good role models were the root of the problem.

Understanding participants' answers to "What do you think the root of the problem is?"

We cannot generalise from this set of answers, as over half of participants did not answer this question. But the insights provided in this data set are worth consideration, as long as we remain aware that they do not represent the views of the entire participant group.

Over half of the answers given were service-focussed. 5 of the 13 young participants who answered fell into this category. Overall, the most common answers were those discussing 'the system'. This phrase is obscure, and whereas two participants explicitly discussed how the national government is responsible, two more did not define what they meant by 'system'. Two participants discussed how the laws made by government have created young people's susceptibility to experiencing violence.

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*"It will never be what it could be, because there's not been enough money, youth centres, or anything to help. Because there's no police, it's not safe."*

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The second most common answers concerned schools and multiple services. Individual answers for schools claimed that lack and support and care from secondary schools, poor funding for primary schools created the conditions for youth violence. Individual answers for multiple services claimed that the lack of support for parents, the lack of council funding to youth and community services, were the root of the problem. Cuts to services, the

quality of police service, lack of youth clubs, and institutional racism were claimed by smaller groups of participants to create the conditions for youth violence.

Among young participants, the most common answers were concerned with services and the environment. Service-focussed answers about the root of the problem were evenly distributed across multiple services, police, schools and youth clubs. A slightly smaller number of answers concerned the system. Most environment-focussed answers claimed that poverty and financial problems laid the conditions for youth violence. Other answers concerned the normalisation of violence and lack of job opportunities.

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*“I can't get most the things I want compared to my friends, because they have like 2 parents. So people resort to like selling drugs, you know what I mean? Trying to provide for their family so, it's hard, you know what I mean? Coming from a community where we live in council flats, and yeah.”*

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Overall, environment-focussed answers were second most common. Over half of these answers claimed poverty and financial problems were the root of the problem. Some participants argued that the stress of housing costs and other financial pressures can lead young people toward trying to earn their income through selling drugs. Other participants argued that the drugs trade and culture have created the conditions for youth violence. Other answers include the normalisation of violence, social media, and the lack of job opportunities. One participant argued music, drill in particular, incited and exacerbated youth violence.

9 answers claimed the community laid the conditions for youth violence, and 9 claimed that the breakdown of values and culture were the root. Community-focussed answers mainly concerned issues with the parent and home environment, with some participants placing an emphasis on single-parent families as producing young people involved in violence. Other participants also argued that the underlying tension, and expectation of violence, perpetuated youth violence. The lack of a sense of community, or problems within the established local community were claimed by some to be the root.

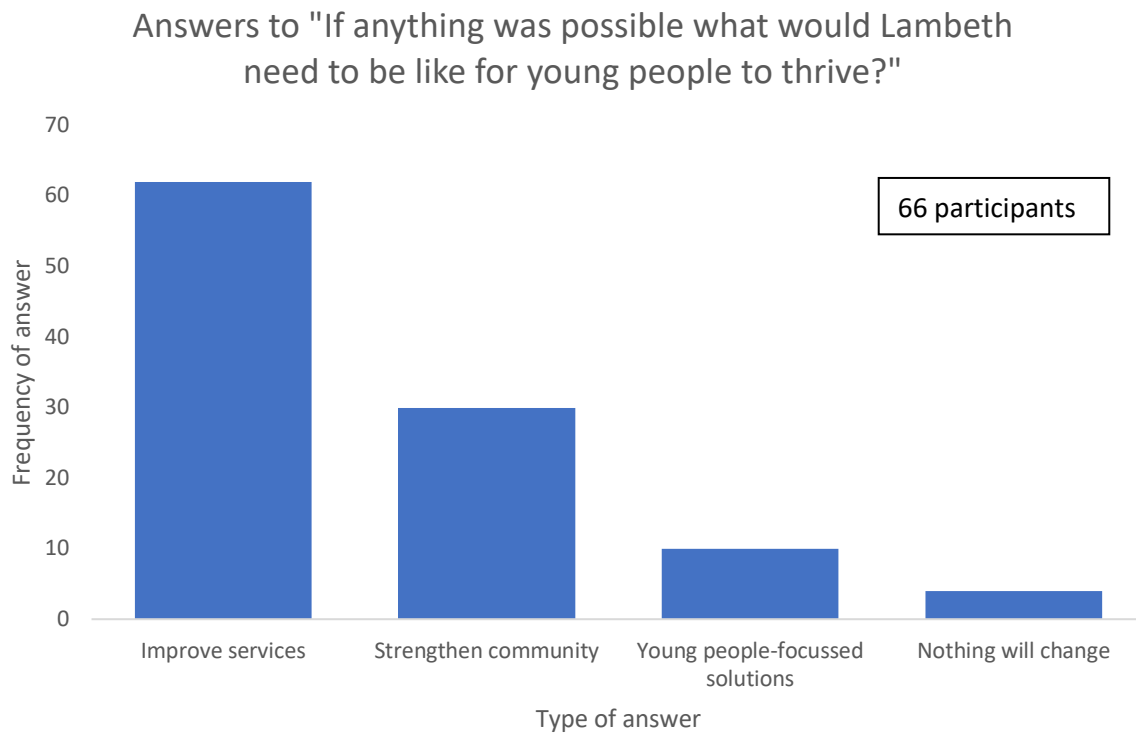
Answers focussed around a breakdown of values and culture mainly pointed toward the perceived moral lacking in young people. Some participants specified the lack of role models for young people as creating this deprivation in values, while others argued the lack of faith, ongoing racism and capitalism were the cause. The 6 answers claiming the root of the problem is multi-faceted have been included in this summary according to their content.

This question was introduced by the peer researchers in order to facilitate the progression of the conversation to address the final two questions. Peer researchers held that this question provides a good interval for participants' reflection, before discussing vision and potential action. They feedback that those participants who answered this question seemed better able to articulate their answers for the remaining conversation. While this data set is the least complete out of the 5, the insights gained are still valuable providing they are not misidentified as representing the entire participant group.

Answers to “If anything was possible what would Lambeth need to be like for young people to thrive?”

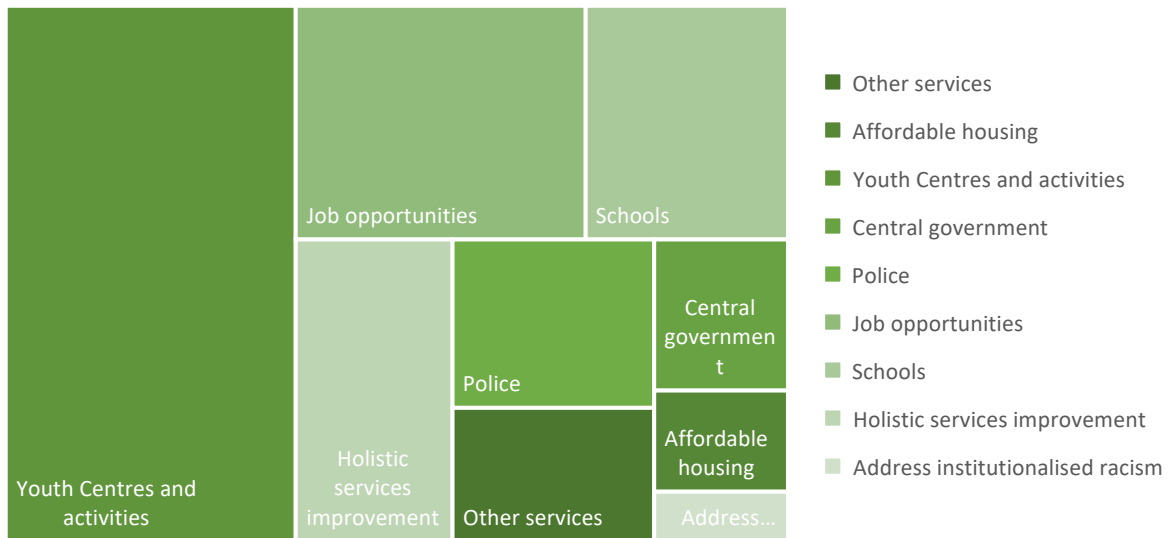
Overall Response

66 Participants answered this question, giving 106 answers. Although the 82.5% response rate is satisfactory for meaningful data analysis, it is important not to misrepresent our findings as indicating the views of the entire participant group.



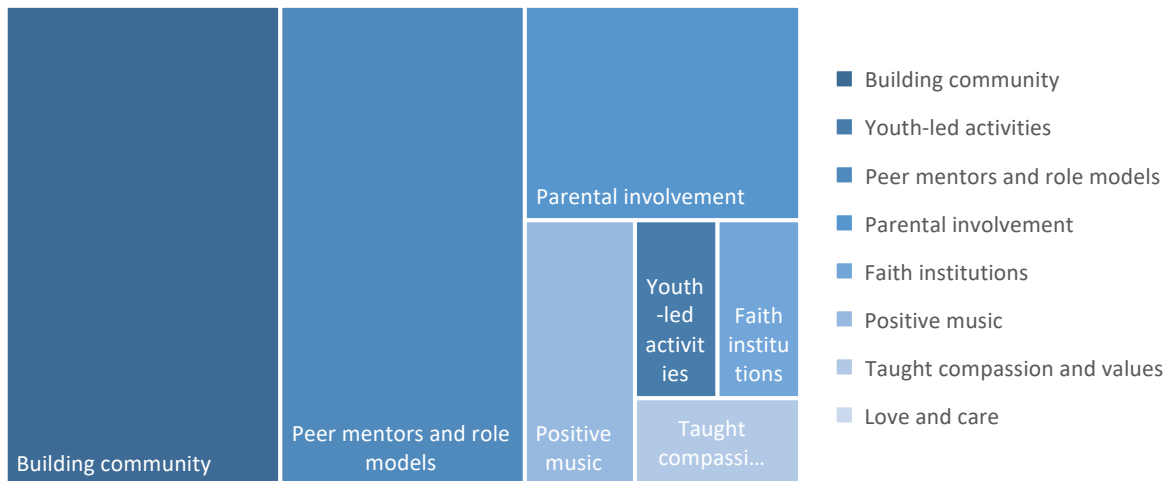
58.5% answers claimed that services need to be improved for young people in Lambeth to thrive. 28.3% answers claimed that the community needed to be strengthened. 9.4% answers called for young people to become more active and involved in the solutions. 3.8% answers stated that nothing will change. We will present a breakdown of these sets of answers in descending order of modality.

### Breakdown of services-focussed answers



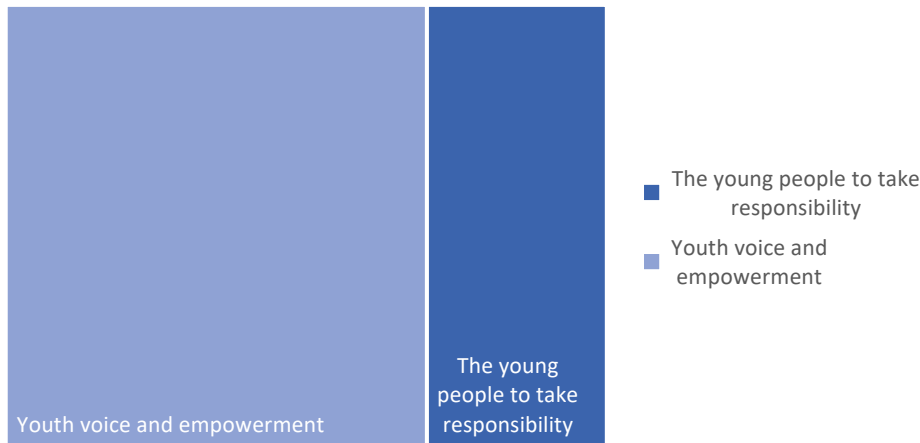
58.5% answers claimed that Lambeth needs improved services for young people to thrive.

### Breakdown of community-focussed answers



28.3% answers claimed that the Lambeth community needs to be strengthened for young people to thrive.

## Breakdown of answers on young people-focussed solutions

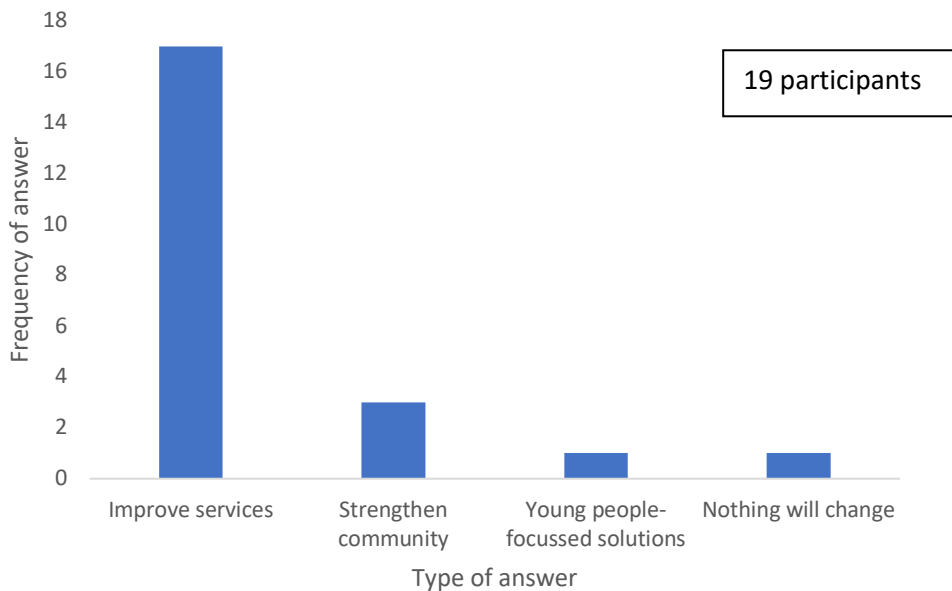


9.4% answers claimed that for young people to thrive, they need to become more active and involved in creating solutions for improving their quality of life.

### Response from young participants

All 19 young participants responded, giving 22 answers to this question.

### Answers to "If anything was possible what would Lambeth need to be like for young people to thrive?" from young participants



17 out of 22 answers claimed that Lambeth needs improved services for young people to thrive. 3 answers claimed that the community needed to be strengthened. 1 answer called for young people to become more active and involved in the solutions. 1 answer stated that nothing will change. We will present a breakdown of these sets of answers in descending order of modality.



### Breakdown of services-focussed answers

- Other services
- Affordable housing
- Youth Centres and activities
- Central government
- Police
- Job opportunities
- Schools
- Holistic services improvement
- Address institutionalised racism



73.7% answers from young participants claimed that statutory services need to be improved for young people in Lambeth to thrive.

### Breakdown of community-focussed answers



15.8% answers from young participants claimed that the community needed to be strengthened for young people in Lambeth to thrive.

There was 1 answer around young people-focussed solutions. This participant claimed teenagers should be included in the ‘Lambeth structure’, involved in decision-making and more active in shaping their community.

Understanding participants’ answers to “If anything was possible what would Lambeth need to be like for young people to thrive?”

Overall, over half of participants answered that statutory services need to be improved for young people to thrive. Almost three quarters of young participants held this view.

Just over a quarter of all participants answered that community needs to be strengthened for young people to thrive, with under a sixth of young participants holding this view. Under a tenth of all participants answered that Lambeth needed young people-focussed solutions, and one young participant held this view.

Of the answers focussed on improving statutory services, over a third specified youth centres and youth activities as needed for young people to thrive. Three participants stated that these need to be affordable, so that parents from low-income backgrounds can help their children access these services. Four participants' claims indicated that youth clubs would reduce young people's exposure to youth violence, and involvement with 'the road'.

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*"So you'd have people that are fighting each other, are literally one road apart. And you, if you had these youth centres, and leaders, and people of inspiration there, to guide them and show them - it could sort of bring the message that: we're fighting against each other, but essentially we're all the same."*

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The second most common answer was providing job opportunities, with over a sixth of answers overall and a quarter of those from young people. Individual answers were focussed around supporting young

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*"There's a complete lack of opportunities for a young person to start working, get skills and confidence, and there aren't the finances from the government to give young people the chance to work in an honest way, to have options."*

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people to find and pursue a career path, and to have a diverse range of skills training and opportunities for work. It was implied that without this service provision, young people have had to resort dangerous ways of earning money in order to meet financial pressures.

nurturing, and education about their heritage. An emphasis was also placed on schools communicating and working with parents to meet a young person's needs. Two participants claimed that a holistic improvement spanning the NHS, council and police services, and one claimed that the community and services need to work together to support young people. Police services improvement, affordable housing and support, and addressing the impact from national government were also specified by individual participants as key in supporting young people to thrive.

Less common were participants' answers about schools and holistic service improvement. Individual participants claimed that young people need to be given mentoring,

The community-focussed answers were overall based on building the community. Participants held that by enabling people from different backgrounds to physically come together, inciting the community to engage with and support its young people, young people would be able to thrive in Lambeth. The three community-focussed answers from young people fell within this sub-category.

The second most common answer was providing role models and peer mentors within the community.

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*"We need more mentors to help young people make the right choices. I don't think there are a lack of options for young people and it's not always the parents' fault."*

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Individual participants claimed young people need mentors who they can relate to, get support and guidance from, and help them access existing opportunities. Other participants claimed that good role models for young people to look up to is key to improving

their own lives. This seemed implicitly connected to a less common answer that there needs to be more positive music for young people to thrive in Lambeth.

Some participants also emphasised that involvement from parents and faith institutions was needed to support young people. One participant argued that it is the parents' responsibility to support young people, and another argued that parents needed more support to raise their children. The least common answers concerned the community at large providing love and care to young people, and teaching them compassion and values.

Just over a tenth of answers involved young people-focussed solutions. The majority of these answers claimed that Lambeth needs to work with young people to identify what can be done to help them to thrive, and to give teens a voice in local decision-making. The minority of these answers argued that young people need to take responsibility for their situation, and the ongoing youth violence. None of the 19 young participants answered that young people should be involved in designing the solutions to help them thrive.

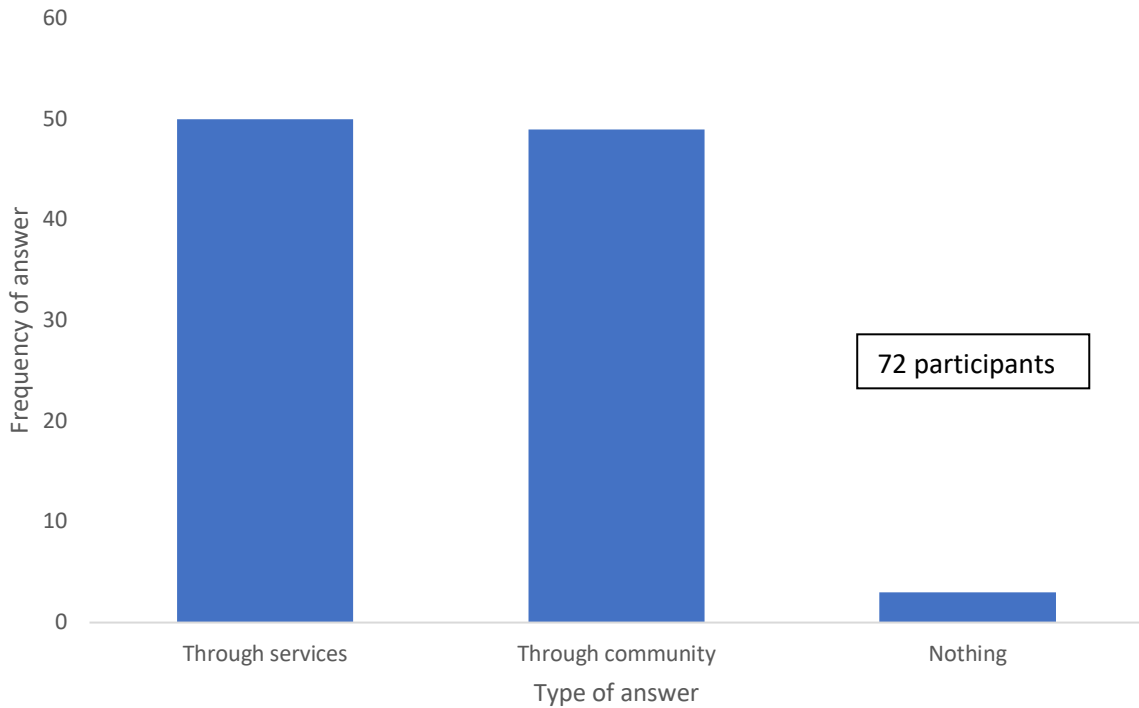
This question aimed to help identify what each participant's ideal future for Lambeth was like. We framed this question around general terms of what participants wanted changed, rather than around what 'should' be done by the Government, institutions or groups with existing financial and political power. The purpose of this was to avoid limiting the scope of answers to only those focussed on what is lacking, deficient, and beyond a participant's power to change. Our question still allowed and received these types of answer, but we also received creative solution-focussed answers, many of which were based around what is possible rather than who is to blame.

## **Answers to “What can be done together with young people to reduce youth violence?”**

### **Overall Response**

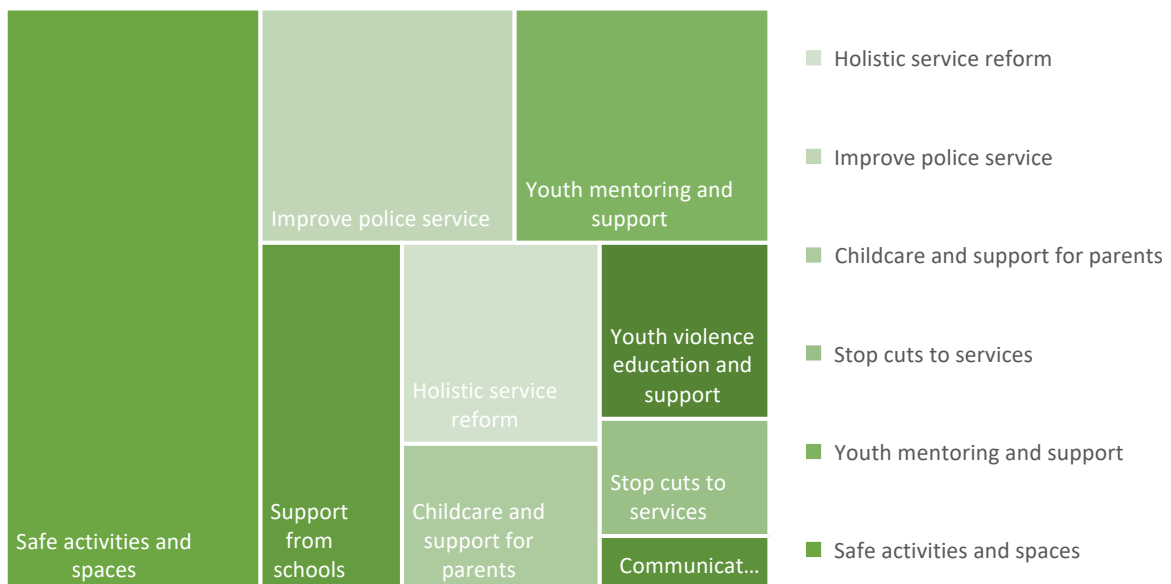
72 of 80 participants responded to this question, giving 102 answers. This 88.6% response rate is satisfactory for meaningful data analysis. But we must remain aware that the views of the 8 who did not answer the question are not represented in our findings.

## Answers to "What can be done together with young people to reduce youth violence?"



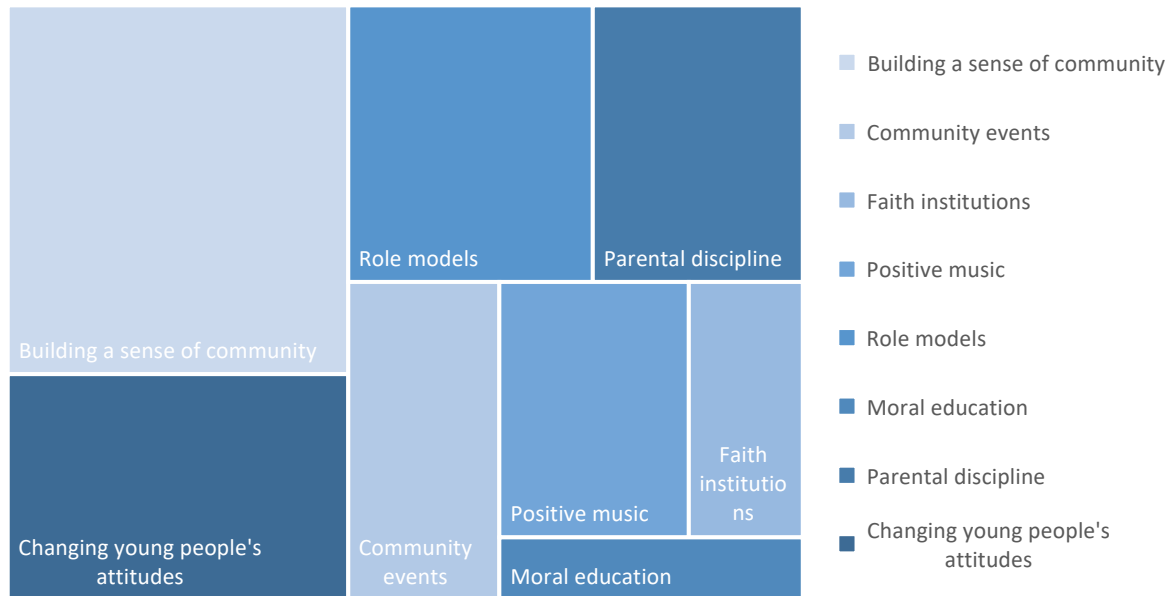
49% answers, given by 43 participants, argued that through improved services we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. 48% answers, given by 39 participants, argued that through community we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. 3% answers, given by 3 participants, said nothing can be done together with young people. The 'through services' and 'through community' categories have similar weightings, with the former having 1 less answer, but 4 more participants than the latter. We will present a breakdown of these sets of answers in descending order of modality of participants responding.

### Breakdown of services-focussed answers



43 participants answered that through improved services we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. This accounts for 50 out of 102 answers, or 49%.

### Breakdown of community-focussed answers



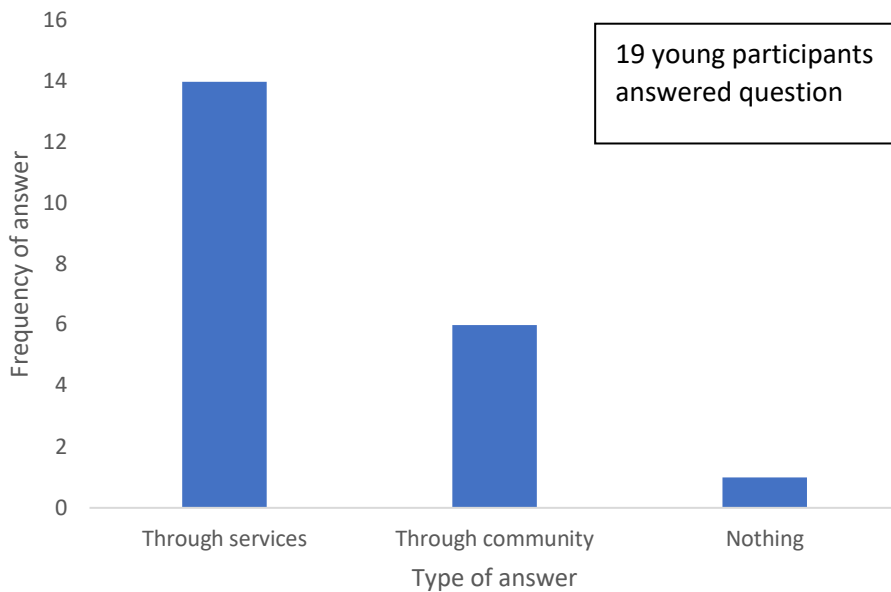
39 participants answered that through community we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. This accounts for 49 out of 102 answers, or 48%.

3 participants answered that nothing can be done together with young people. This accounts for 3 out of 97 answers, or 3%.

### Response from young participants

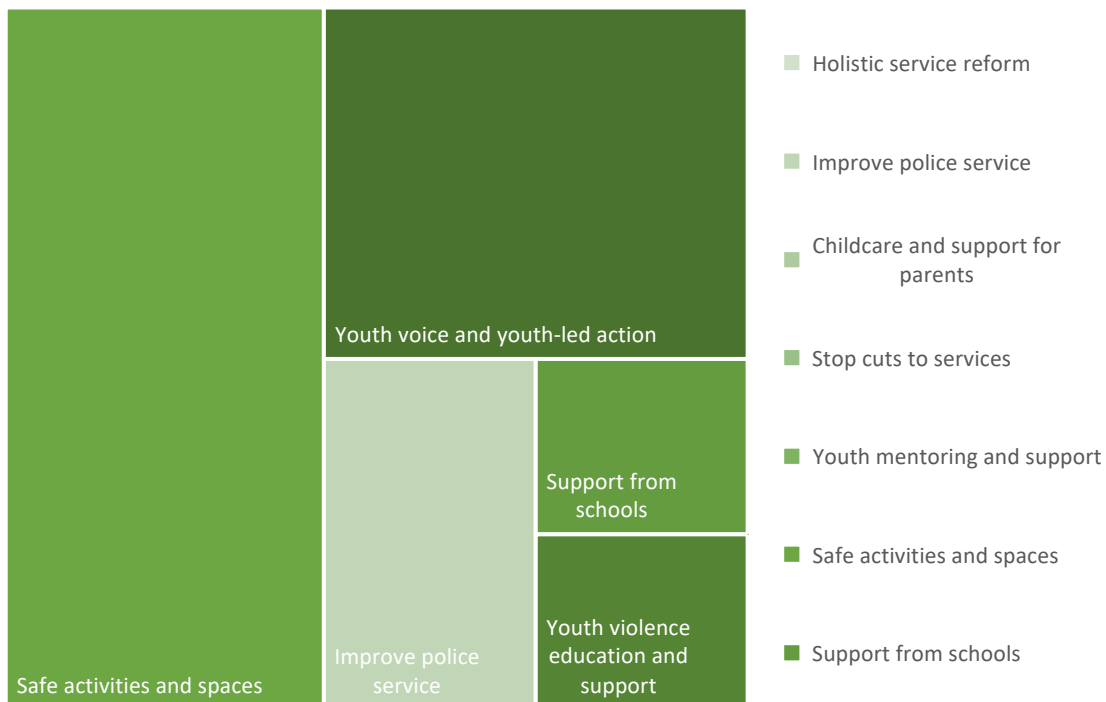
All 19 young participants answered this question, giving 21 answers.

Answers to "What can be done together with young people to reduce youth violence?" from young participants



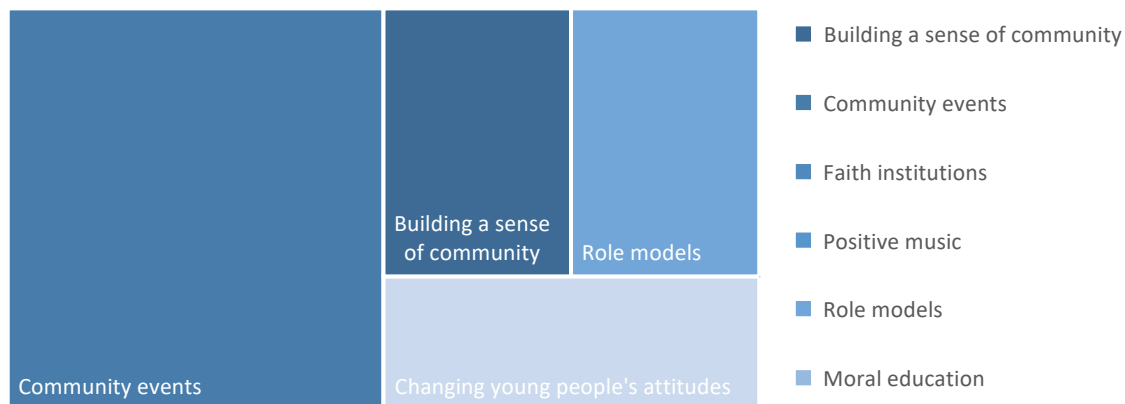
14 answers claimed that through services we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. 6 answers claimed that through community services we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. One answer claimed that nothing can be done together with young people to reduce youth violence. We will present a breakdown of these sets of answers in descending order of modality of participant input.

Breakdown of services-focussed answers



14 answers claimed that through services we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. This account for 73.7% of young participants' answers.

### Breakdown of community-focussed answers



6 answers claimed that through community services we can work together with young people to reduce youth violence. This accounted for 31.6% of young participants' answers.

Understanding participants' answers to "What can be done together with young people to reduce youth violence?"

Overall, participants' answers were near-evenly distributed between solutions focussed around statutory services, and those focussed around building community. However, young participants were over twice as likely to focus their answers around statutory services.

*"Youth centres, and youth centres where people can actually talk to adults, and get mentoring from adults. And to think more about how to talk to youths, and see what their problems are and how to help them."*

The most mentioned service needed for working together with young people was safe activities and spaces for young people. One participant explained that without proper resourcing, youth centres can become very dangerous places for beneficiaries. The vision for safe activities and spaces was also reflected in the isolated answers from the young participants, who then most commonly answered youth voice and youth-led action as part of the solution. Individual participants also claimed improving the police service, support from schools were needed to work together with young people.

Implicitly connected with the overall emphasis on safe activities and spaces, were 6 participants' answers on youth mentoring and support. Music, business, personal development, sports, trade skills, cookery, and mentoring around youth violence were some of the project's participants believed could enable working together with young people to reduce youth violence. They placed emphasis on a consistency in services, relatable mentors, and training and opportunities specific to young people's skills and goals. Related are also 3 participants answers on providing youth violence education and support, to effectively mentor young people through difficult periods and gang-related pressures.

The police service and schools were the second most mentioned services for improvement, within the overall service-focussed set of answers. Individual participants emphasised improving police call response times, communication and integration with the local community, and increasing the physical presence of police officers on the street. Improved school involvement in young people's wellbeing, to support and communicate with parents, was emphasised by individuals. Holistic service reform,

spanning the police, schools, housing, and youth centres, was claimed by 4 participants to be key to supporting young people and reducing youth violence.

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*“We need to break down the barriers between people of different backgrounds, faiths, cultures. We are in this together and we need to work together to fix the issue.”*

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The most mentioned community-focussed answer for working together with young people was building a sense of community. Some participants spoke about coming together as the black community to support each other and co-create solutions. Other participants spoke about the general community, and the coming together of

diverse groups of people to solve the problem of youth violence.

Implicitly related to this, 7 participants claimed that positive and visible role models were key to working with young people. Some placed emphasis on these role models working directly within the local community, whereas others spoke about celebrity or cultural role models. 5 participants spoke specifically about community events, 3 of whom were young people. These answers specified community events for people from different social groups to build relationships and community activities, and festivals celebrating young people and promoting diversity.

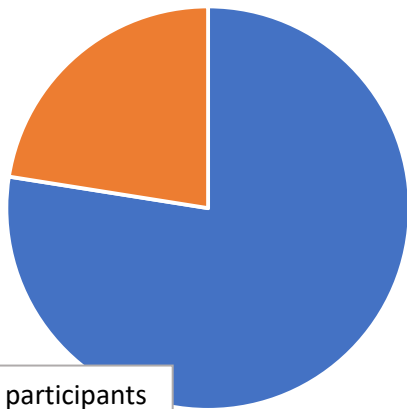
The second most common answer was for young people to change their attitudes. These answers seem to take the understanding that it was in young people’s power to access the services and opportunities already available, and that it was their responsibility.

This final question aimed to ‘softly’ introduce the idea that young people could be part of, and invested in, solutions to youth violence. This question was designed to facilitate participants recognising shared interests and values in young people, as they reflected on what actions could be taken to reduce youth violence. We ensured this question remained sufficiently broad for participants to answer in ways that did not consider collaboration with young people, or that regarded young people as only part of the problem and not the solution. Although some answers conformed to this type, the majority were constructive, positive, and empathised with young people.



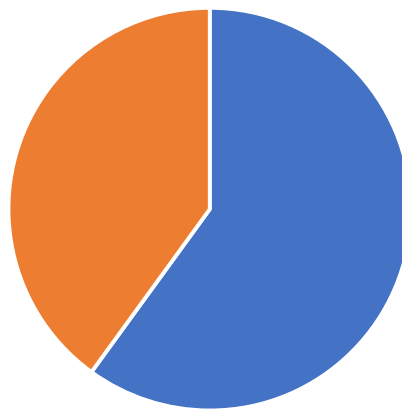
## Participant and researcher demographics

Participants' sex



80 participants

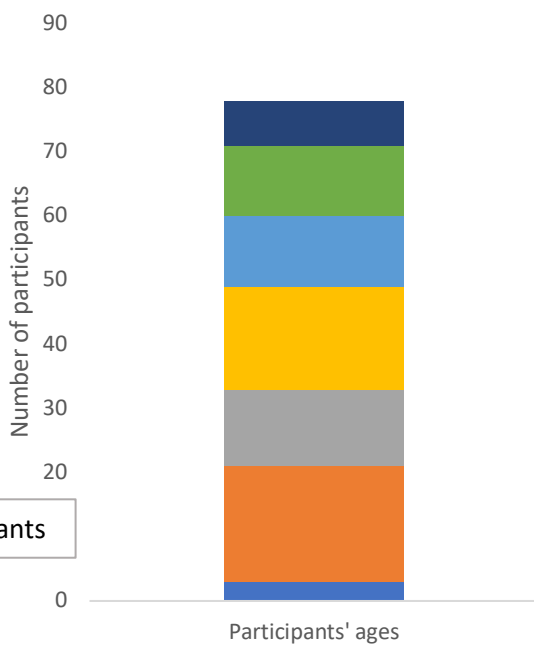
Peer researchers' sex



5 peer researchers

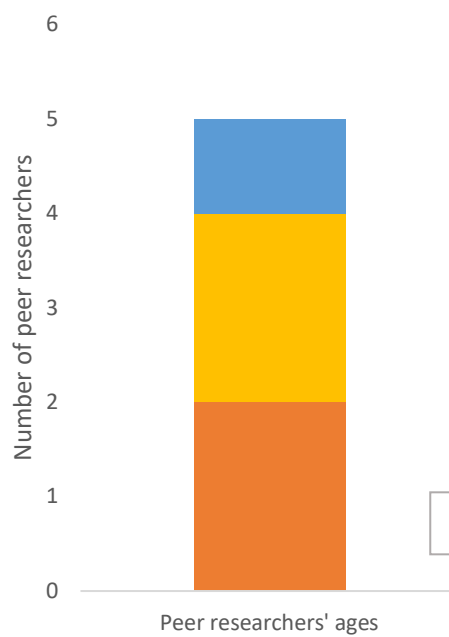
■ Male ■ Female

Participants' ages



78 participants

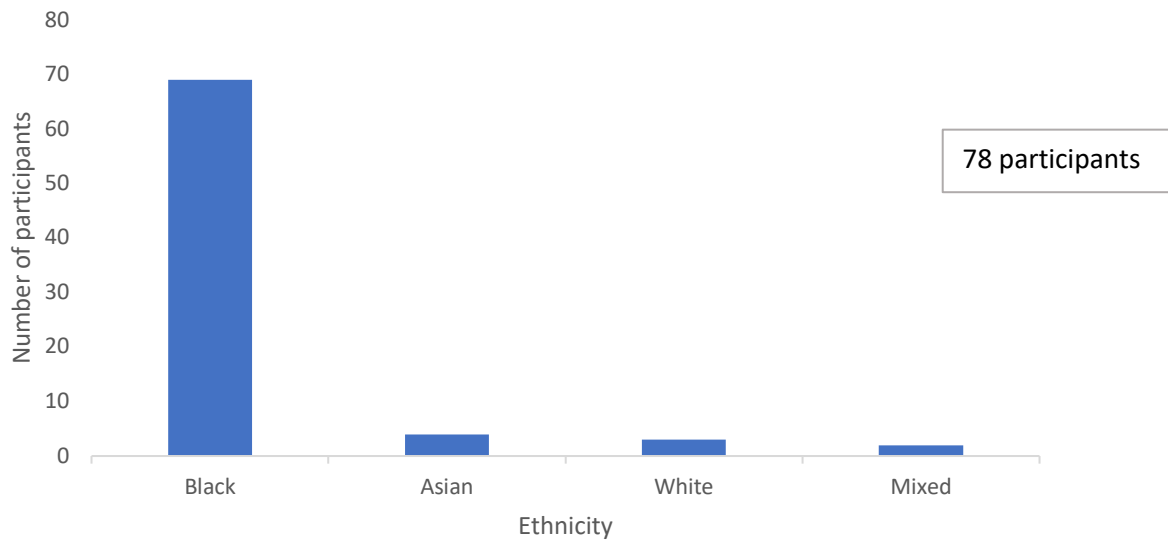
Peer researchers' ages



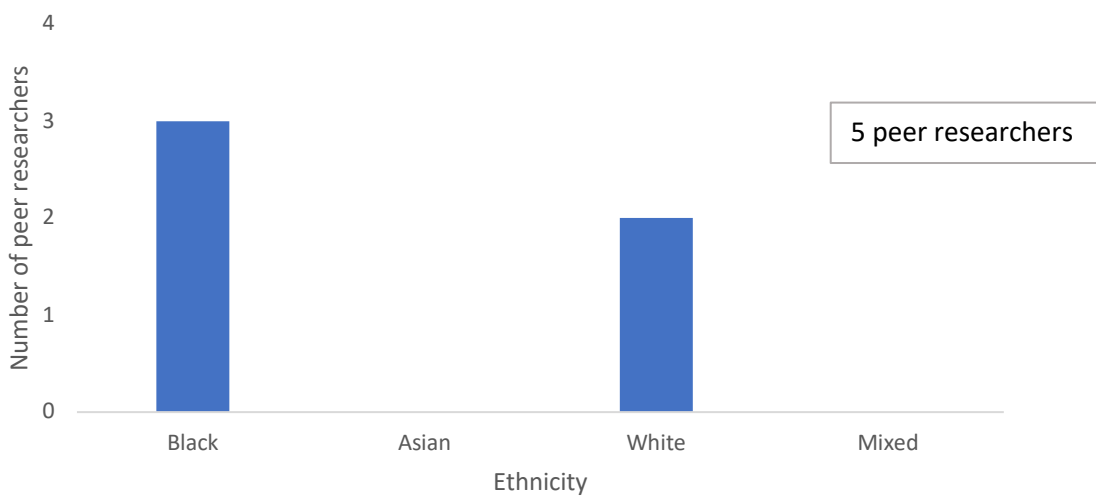
5 peer researchers

■ Under 16 ■ 16-24 ■ 25-30 ■ 31-40 ■ 41-50 ■ 51-60 ■ Over 60

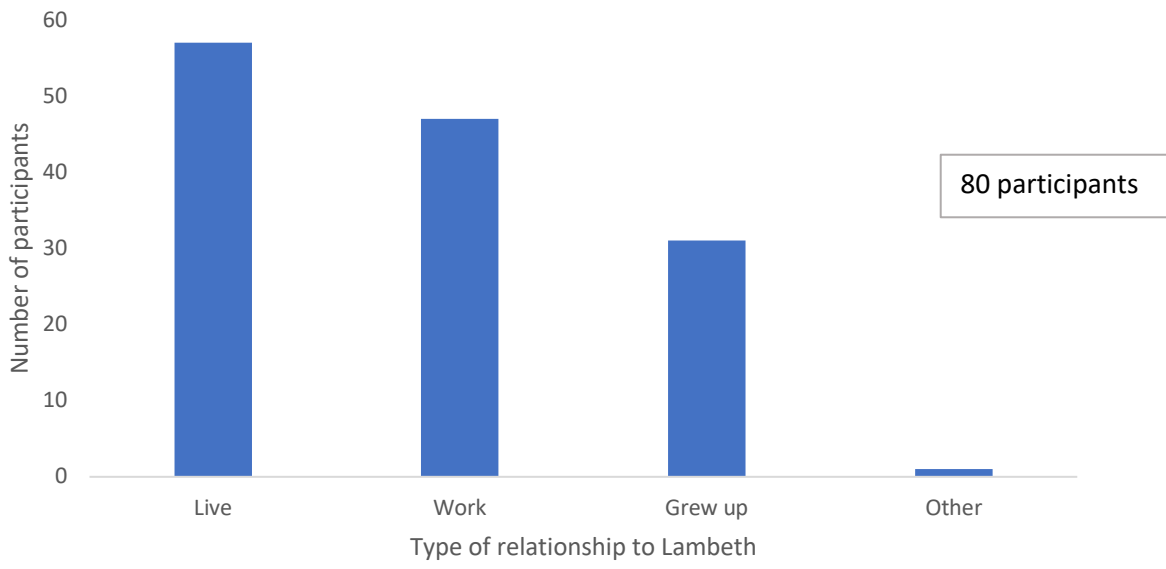
### Participants' ethnicities



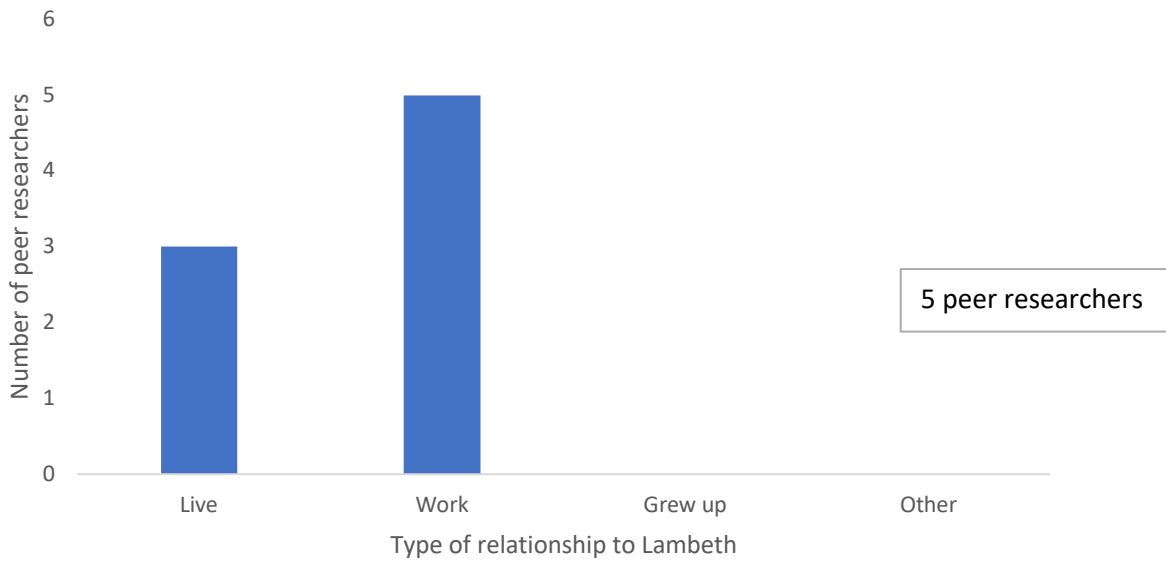
### Peer researchers' ethnicities



### Participants' relationship to Lambeth



### Peer researchers' relationship to Lambeth



## Recommendations

The findings of this research are based on the voices of the 'real experts' in our communities. The following recommendations will help the Council's policymakers and communities to begin the process of effectively tackling youth violence.

1. Lambeth should work collaboratively with communities to develop local forums that co-ordinate activities/services and technology, enabling a joined-up, whole community response to youth violence.
2. Develop Trauma informed mentoring in schools and community spaces, together with culturally appropriate therapists, online mentoring and detached youth work must all form part of the solution. (Young people's mental health across Lambeth is a growing concern)
3. It is important to begin rebuilding trust between the police, communities and young people. (It is still the perception that the police use of Stop and Search powers is already heavy-handed and potentially discriminatory)
4. Develop Family Hubs, with support from corporate partners and employers, which combine various family support services and employment opportunities into a single location.
5. Gather evidence around models of good practice for providing progressive alternatives to pupil exclusions or prison sentences for low-level offences.
6. Develop good quality creative arts and career opportunities that engage young people and set them on positive pathways for the future.
7. Strategies for tackling serious youth violence cannot be a top-down, one-size fits all approach. As far as possible, they should be rooted in local social infrastructure and meaningfully co-designed.
8. Use the Community Conversations model to begin listening to communities and understand how a genuinely community-led approach can be developed in violence hot spots across Lambeth.
9. Change the narrative. All sectors of society should stop reinforcing the idea that young people are the problem.
10. We need to work together to effectively encourage and celebrate the achievements of young people.