

# Street Games: Understanding the lives of disadvantaged young people

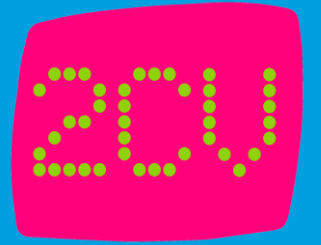
Wave 2: Debrief

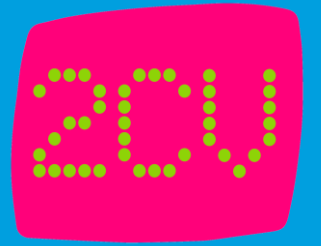
April 2015



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# Introduction and Background

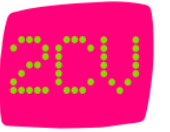


# Background to the Research

- In 2013, 2CV conducted qualitative research for StreetGames to gain a deeper understanding of the lives and lifestyles of disadvantaged young people in London, Cardiff and Manchester as Wave 1 of a two Wave process. While Wave 1 captured the voices of young, disadvantaged urban youth, Wave 2 focused on capturing the voices of those living in non-urban or peri-urban environments. StreetGames wanted to look at the extent to which non-urban centres impacted the lives of disadvantaged young people and how similar or different they were to the youth living in other urban locales.
- In March 2015, we conducted qualitative research in Worksop and Southend-on-Sea. Specifically, we wanted to know:
  - How do they see the world?
  - What matters to them?
  - What are their aspirations?
  - What do they think and why?



# Objectives



## Business Objective\*:

Winning institutional support for doorstep sport, building and sharing knowledge and using this knowledge to drive change and grow sporting habits amongst young people living in disadvantaged towns.

## Research Objectives\*:

To gain a deeper understanding of disadvantaged young people in disadvantaged towns by exploring in depth their:

- Lifestyles
- Behaviours
- Priorities
- Preferences
- Attitudes

To help refine understanding of how to make sport relevant to their needs

1

**Auto-Ethnographies**  
Self-reported interviews,  
video & photo capture  
**16 young people**  
  
*8 Male; 8 Female*  
*6 x 14-15; 5 x 16-19;*  
*5 x 20-25*  
*8 x Worksop; 8 x Southend*

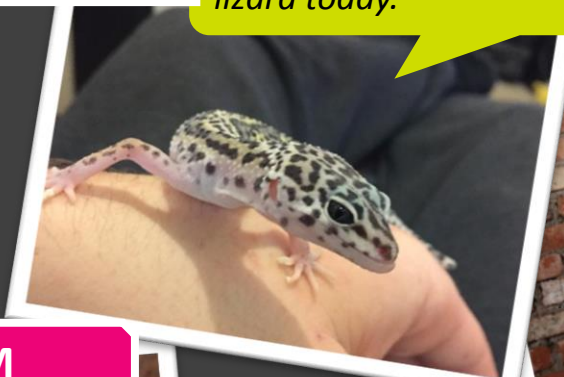
2

**2 Hour Ethnography  
Sessions**  
**6 Young people**  
  
*3 Male; 3 Female*  
*3 x 14-15; 3 x 16-19*  
*3x Worksop; 3 x Southend*

# Auto-ethnographies: Capturing their voices and photos

## PETS

"I bought myself a lizard today."



## RELATIONSHIPS

"This is my beautiful girlfriend."



"This is my grade in Science- I was hoping to get a C but I was three marks off!"



## BOREDOM

## FRIENDS

"Everyone has an iPhone..."



"This is my best friend Ophelia, she is like a sister to me."



"Took my nephew on the train today."

## FAMILY

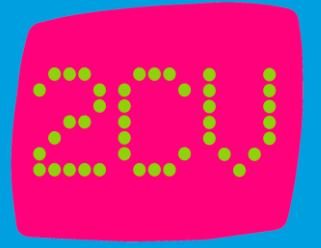
## TECHNOLOGY

## IMAGE



"I bought these at Tesco, I really need to go on a diet"

# Research Headlines





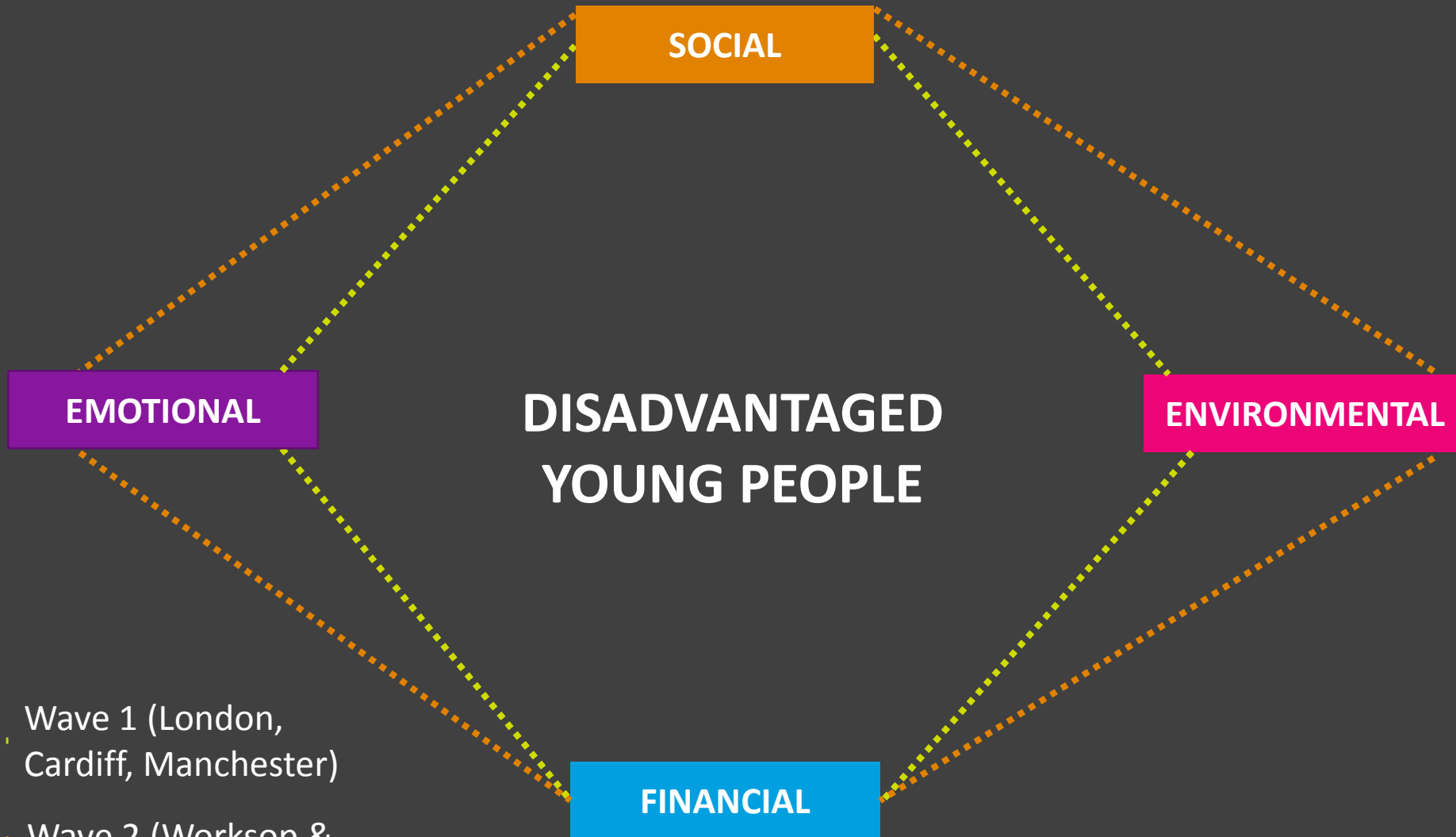
# Headlines

- As before, disadvantaged young people in small towns see themselves as much the same as any other young person in the UK
  - Lack of funds is a focus, but not exclusive to them
  - Strong focus on escapism, enjoyment and fitting in
  
- Also as before, their world view is small, probably more so than their urban peers; they have little insight into the rest of the UK, let alone the world
  - Their physical world is more restricted than that of urban youth, with limited options for entertainment and exploration
  - Transport is often a major obstacle to increasing their options (both expense and infrastructure)
  - Parts of the town are not safe for them to visit; limiting their world still further
  - Social hierarchies and territorial disputes means that existing facilities (eg parks, football pitches, youth centres) are often out of bounds
  
- They often depend on parents who are unreliable emotionally, physically and financially. However, for issues of depression or emotional instability they tend to speak to their friends first. A minority of young people we spoke to received counselling from school therapists

# Headlines

- Lack of money leads to limited financial skills and bad habits (overspending; borrowing from friends)
- Lack of local stores and limited exposure to brands means slightly less emphasis on pop culture and brands compared to urban youth (especially in Worksop)
  
- The physical and social limitations of their world can lead to...
  - Boredom
  - Low mood
  - An increased reliance on friendship
  
- Despite/because of the limitations of their immediate environments, they dream big
  - But their dreams are grounded in reality, and offset by a realistic backup plan
  
- Sport and physical activity offer a potential for escape, release and time spent with friends
  - There is likely to be a real appetite for opportunities to get involved, particularly among young men
  - It seems probable that young people, once interested, will engage in groups

# Mapping barrier differences between Wave 1 and Wave 2



- Wave 1 (London, Cardiff, Manchester)
- Wave 2 (Worksop & Southend-on-Sea)

# Key Differences of Wave 1 and Wave 2 disadvantaged young people



## EMOTIONAL

- Depression and anxiety is commonplace amongst both Wave 1 and Wave 2, but increased physical and social isolation in Wave 2 young people mean that depression appears to be much more commonplace

## SOCIAL

- Unstable family homes and little focus on education result in increased pressure on social relationships for Wave 2 young people

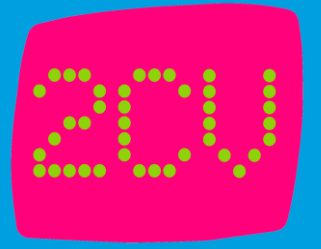
## ENVIRONMENTAL

- Safety and social hierarchies limit where non-urban young people can go (eg parks/clubs)
- Transport is often a bigger issue in getting to/from a place in non-urban centres

## FINANCIAL

- Poor money management is common amongst both groups
- Wave 1 slightly more likely to be employed
- Less emphasis on brands due to low exposure and few stores in some non-urban areas

# A day in the life



# MEET KAYDON, 14

## Southend-on-Sea



### Kaydon, 14

Kaydon wants to be a Scooter professional. He loves to practice 'scooting' outside with his friends. It's not considered a cool sport to do, but he has learned to do a lot of fun, cool tricks (including jumping in the air and doing a 360). This has earned him the respect of many of his peers.

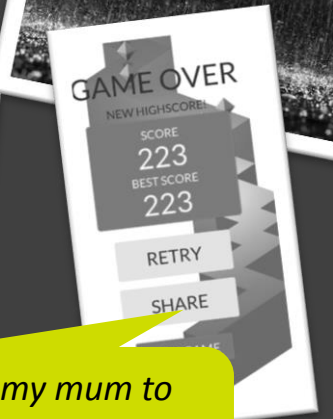
He knows there's a lot of drama at school and he thinks it's best to stay out of it as much as possible. He struggles with boredom sometimes when the weather is too bad for him to scoot outside or in the winter months when it gets dark.

*"I love going to the skate park after school with my friends."*

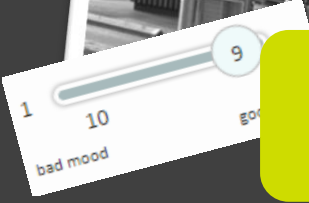
*"The best part of my day was making this magazine cover in photography class!"*



*"I had to walk really far to school in the rain today."*

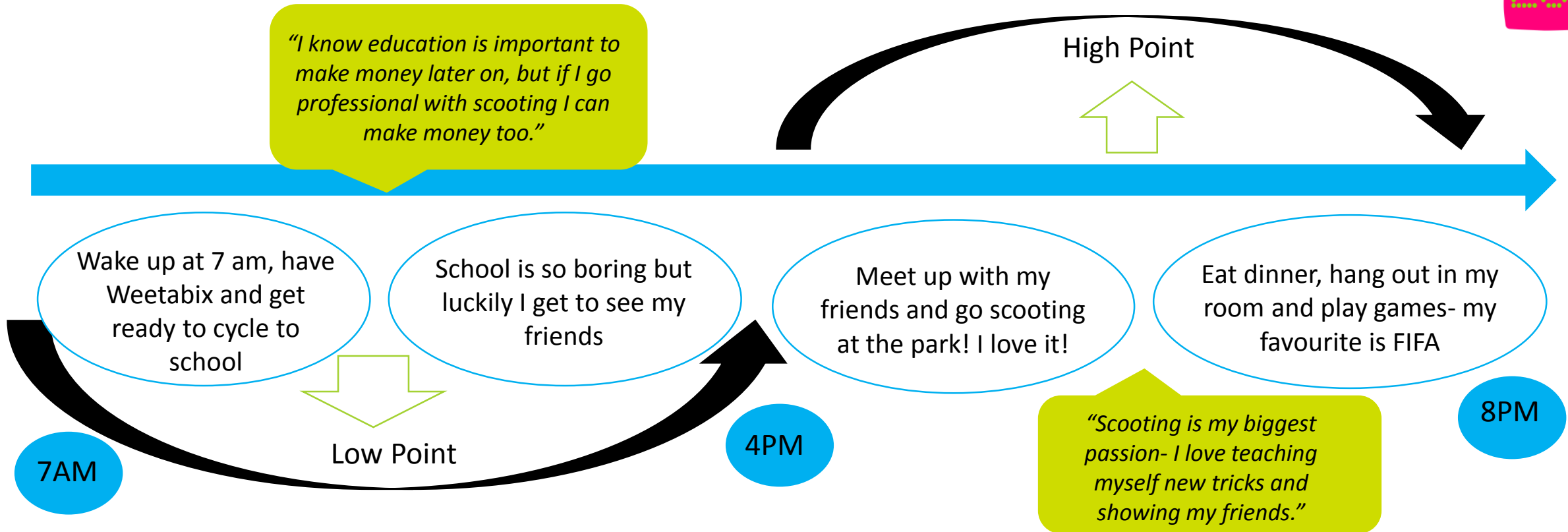
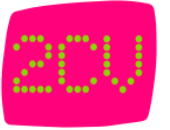


*"The worst part of my day is having to come home in the dark- I much prefer being out."*



*"I had to wait for ages for my mum to finish shopping but the good news is I beat my high score of my game."*

# A day in the life of Kaydon, 14



*"My family and friends are most important to me, so I see my future being here."*

*"A lot of the younger kids look up to me cos I can do so many tricks on my scooter, it feels good."*

*"I upload a lot of my scooting videos on YouTube, one time I got over 100 likes!"*

## MEET SABRINA, 16 Southend-on-Sea

### Sabrina, 16

Sabrina's day to day activities are structured almost completely around her friends- even planning lunch breaks with friends to their favourite places. School is by far the worst part of her day.

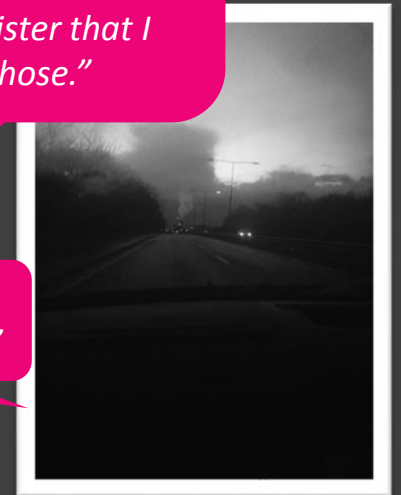
She struggles with depression sometimes, but her friends are always there to listen and help her through. She finds it particularly stressful if she fights with her peers. Her dream is to be an actress one day.

*"I got into an argument with a boy in my group today, which made me feel really sad."*

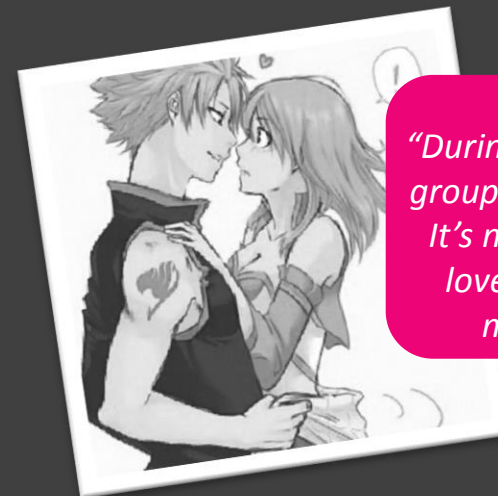
*"Haven't seen my friend in a week! I've missed her!"*



*"Me and my best friend went shopping for our prom shoes- she is the sister that I chose."*



*"Driving home in the rain makes me feel depressed."*

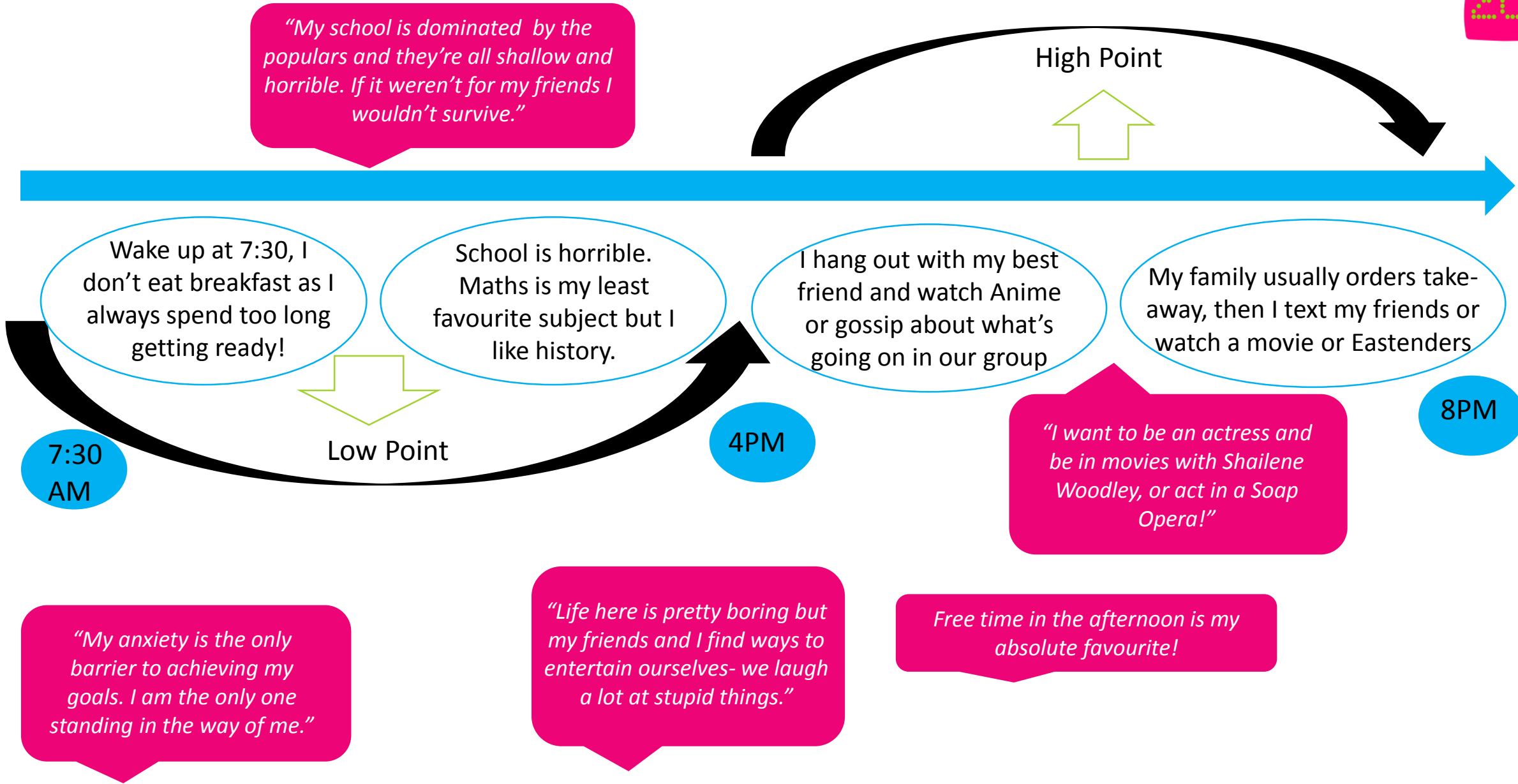


*"During school, me and my group went and got lunch. It's nothing special but I love these guys to the moon and back."*

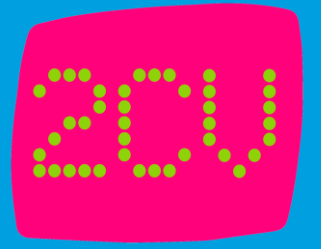




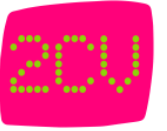
# A day in the life of Sabrina, 16



# How they spend their time



# School: all the time and pressures with no clear benefits for their future




## PRESSURE TO 'FIT IN'

- Schools are ruled by the popular kids
- Physical violence as way of establishing social status is common
- Looking cool by wearing certain brands, particularly Nike shoes and Supdry jackets is important

## PRESSURE TO NOT 'FAIL'


- They don't quite understand the value of school and just want it to finish as soon as possible
- No clear link between school performance and their future job opportunities
- Tend to not feel education will benefit them much in the long run



*"Even the teachers are scared of the students..."*

## PRESSURE TO 'SURVIVE'

- Physical violence as way of establishing social status is common
- Often the goal is to just blend in and survive by getting through the day unnoticed
- Emphasis on 'playing dumb' even if they enjoy it



*"There's this girl in my class who I know is really clever but she just acts ditzy because she thinks it's cool."*

*"To be popular you basically have to be really terrible to everyone and show that you're not afraid of anything."*

*"I just don't see the point of school, it doesn't matter if you're clever, it matters if you're strong and dominant."*

Nearly every young person we spoke to said school was the worst part of their day

## Friends are the 'new' family

- **Unstable home environments can compound dependency on friends.** Many come from complex, fractured families; they feel they cannot confide in their parents about important matters, so friends take on this role (eg support network, borrowing money from friends)
- **Friends can counteract their boredom.** Many hang out with their friends after school every single day; with no specific aim- just to be together
- **Having and not having friends shape their identity.** Arguments or falling out with friends can also be a critical factor in anxiety and depression



*"The best part of my day was leaving school and going out with them."*

*"I'm annoyed that I didn't get to see my friends today because of the rain."*

*"I don't really talk to my parents much, my friends are like family to me"*

*"We don't really get up to anything exciting, we just hang out, but it's the best part of my day."*

*"I don't know what I would do without my friends, I think I would just die."*

*"I got in a small fight today with a friend- and now I feel really depressed about it."*

# Escapism and ways to kill boredom are critical

## ALL ABOUT THE DRAMA

- Many become involved in 'drama' at school as a means of entertainment
- Fights, cliques and gossip are common at school

*"I think a lot of my friends start fights just because they're bored."*

*"I'm into learning about mysticism- anything weird that mean life is more than what you see."*

## VIDEO GAMES

- Skews towards boys, but are played continuously all day everyday
- Often comprised of social element (eg friends compete)

## GETTING INTO TROUBLE

- Alcohol and illegal drugs are commonplace
- Sexual activities at young age
- Very high rates of teen pregnancy

**"I'm so bored"**

## FANTASY

- Helps them to escape reality
- Anime and anything mystical are often very popular amongst girls

## TV 'ADDICTS'

- Netflix is often a staple to their evenings
- Binge watch television for 5 hours or more at a time
- Cult-like following of series

*"I'm addicted to 'The Walking Dead' I watched the whole first season in one day."*

*"We were walking for ages until we found someone's garden and decided to eat all the vegetables"*

## 'JUST WALKING AROUND'

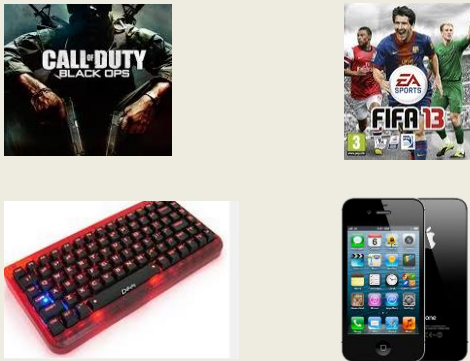
- Often wander aimlessly through city centre, parks or trespass onto private property
- More about being with friends than the actual activity

Many of the young people we spoke to said they viewed this phase of their lives as 'something to just get through' until they grow up

# Slightly less likely to spend money on brands, more on ways to pass time with friends and look good

## TECHNOLOGY

iPhones, Computers, Games



*"I saved up and bought a really expensive key board- it changes colours and everything"*

## FOOD

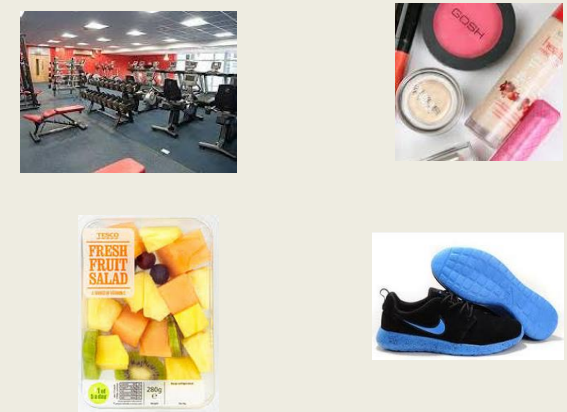
Mostly Fast Food



*"We don't even have a KFC here! That's the one and I only thing I wish we had in Worksop..."*

## APPEARANCE

Gym, Make-up, Diet, Trainers

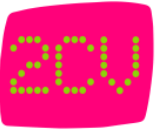


*"We were all going to the gym before prices went up- we want to look fit."*

Shopping for specific fashion brands is important, but not as much as urban areas given fewer shops and slightly less exposure



# Body image and appearance becomes more important with age



- Increased focus on body image as dating and appealing to the opposite sex becomes of interest
- Physical fitness and diet not just about what's fun and convenient, becomes more about 'looking good'
  - Gyms are aspirational for many
  - Boys have a desire to look and be physically strong, as this enhances their social status
  - For girls, it's more about 'looking fit' and being thin
- Slightly more interest in brands and style
  - Clothes and brands can be a status symbol for many
  - Girls begin to prioritise make-up and hair
  - Nike shoes and iPhones staples of identity

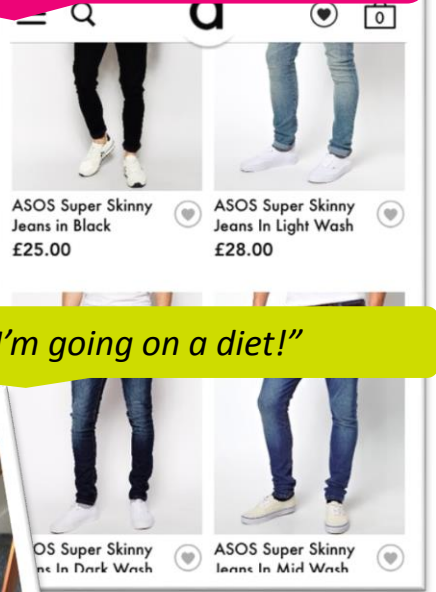


*"Someone scratched my nose in rugby- now I look stupid."*

*"The boys that are big and strong are definitely the most popular."*

*"My dream would be to afford to go to a really good gym and get really fit"*

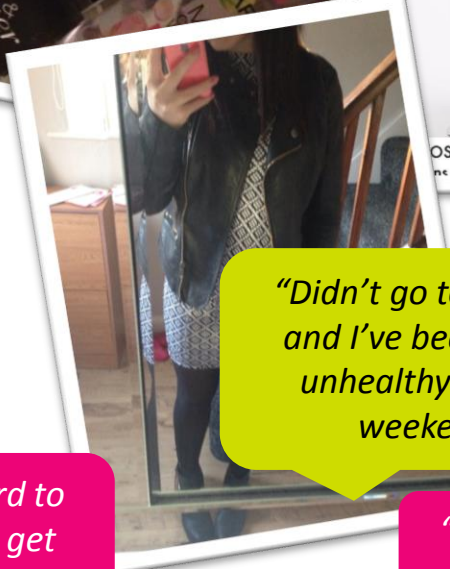
*"14/15- that's the age you really should start going to the gym."*



*"I'm going on a diet!"*

*"Didn't go to the gym and I've been eating unhealthy food all weekend."*

*"Don't know which jeans to buy- a bit of a problem!"*



# They begin to think more about physical fitness and ‘staying fit’

- Playing sports is considered ‘cool’ for boys
  - Football and rugby are most popular
  - Many boys engage in sports as a means of alleviating boredom and getting fitter and stronger
  
- Playing sports is more about the social benefits for girls
  - Sports they can do with friends- going dancing etc
  - More interest in getting fit through gyms rather than organised team sports
  
- Certain sports have stigmas associated with them and are therefore played or avoided
  - Eg football hooligans, skater gangs

*“Some girls at school play netball but there aren’t really many girls who play on any sports teams.”*

*“Before I discovered my talent for scooting I used to get into more trouble at school.”*

*“This is me posing- I want a really toned body, which is why I go to the gym!”*

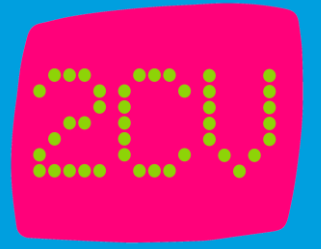
*“This is a picture of my team- I love playing football with my mates!”*

*“I love when we do dance in P.E. I love acting and I feel I can act when I’m dancing.”*





# The limitations of a small town



# They feel they are like anyone else from the UK

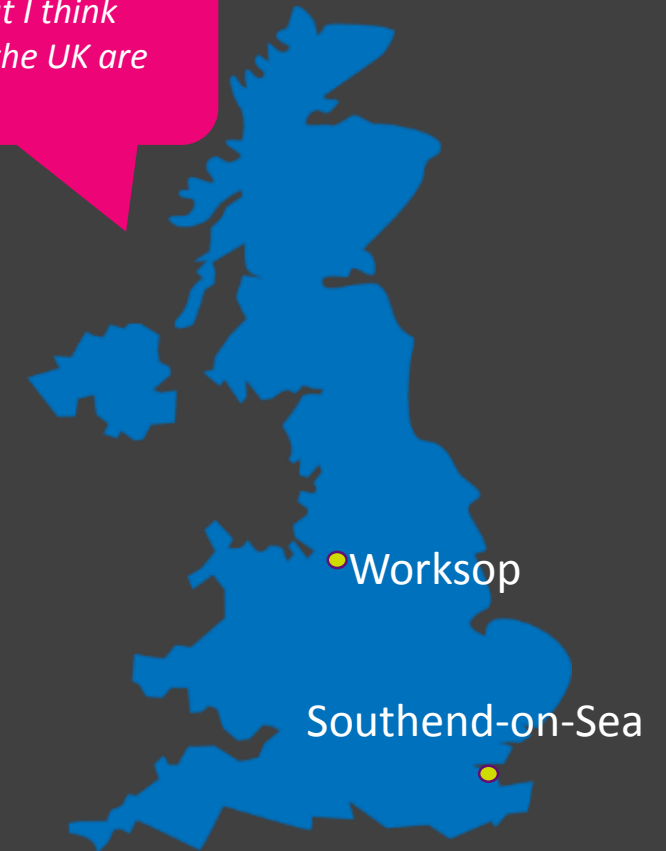
- They have a strong belief that the rest of the UK is very similar to their everyday experiences
  - No awareness that they are in any way disadvantaged
  - No comparison to other people or places outside their community
- They feel that they are like any other young person living in the UK
  - Tend to compare themselves to their other peers, not to other young people outside their community



*"My school is a bit rough, but I think it's like that everywhere in England."*

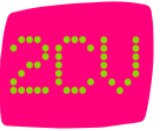
*"I think being a teenager is probably the same everywhere you go in the world."*

*"Where we are from is really boring but I think most places in the UK are like that."*



*"It's boring here, parts are dangerous- but it's not a bad place."*

# But they struggle to imagine life beyond their community



- There is very little understanding of how the outside world operates
  - Almost no opportunity to travel
  - Many have never or very rarely left their hometown
- They want to explore the world, but they are also afraid of the unknown
  - Fear of leaving their family and friends
  - Fear of navigating and surviving
  - They don't know anyone who has left
- Leaving the community not top of mind for most, it doesn't feel like an option

*"This is the view from my window...I spend a lot of time at home."*

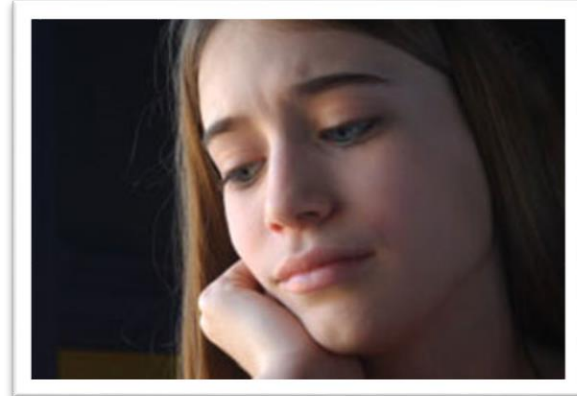


*"I do want to travel but not until I'm older, I would miss my friends and family too much."*

*"I think I will probably stay here in the future, this is where all my friends and family are."*

# For many, there is a strong sense of physical and social isolation

*"It's harder in winter, because I have to walk an hour just to see anyone."*



*"I've just got back from counselling session..."*

**Physical Isolation:**

- Poor transport infrastructure
- Less 'hang out' places than more urban centres
- Unsafe parts of town

They turn to their friends first and foremost for emotional support and rarely spoke to parents about these issues. A minority of young people we spoke to received sessions from school therapists.

**Social Isolation:**

- Difficult to see friends
- Frequent family problems
- High rates of teen pregnancy
- High rates of crime
- Depression/Anxiety

*"I hate being trapped in the house, there is nothing to do!"*

*"I have depression and anxiety and go to therapy every week."*

*"I've spent the entire day in the house..."*

*"I slept all day so now I'm worried about falling asleep tonight."*

Depression and anxiety are common place and often triggered by compounded boredom and loneliness

# Their world is small and they have few choices on places to hang out

## MONEY

- Money is often an issue to hang out in public places, and even McDonald's can be viewed as a luxury
- *"My friend can't really afford Subway, so we only come twice a month"*

## TRANSPORT

- Public transport is exceptionally poor, so young people must walk everywhere to get around
- *"No one really cycles here because you'll get beat up for your bike or robbed. So we have to walk everywhere..."*

## SAFETY

- Physical violence from gangs and high crime rates mean that certain areas of town are completely avoided at night
- *"My sister won't even go out at night. There were three rape cases in the last couple months."*

*"Me and my friends go to McDonald's that is near to where we live about 45 minutes away. We go here at night as there's nowhere else to go. McDonald's is the only place we can go and keep warm."*



*"In the winter it is harder, we end up going anywhere we can sit together and stay warm."*

*"I once got beaten up because one of the boys in my class found out that I said I don't like his shoes."*



# Social hierarchies and territorial disputes further restrict where they go, what they do and how they get there



Football Pitches & Parks

*"I know that it's best to stay away from the football fields if certain kids are using it."*

*"The guys would steal our ball so we couldn't play anymore."*



Skate Parks

**Gangs and 'tribes' control public areas, including who can use them and when. Physical violence and threatening behaviour is commonplace.**

*"We used to go to the youth club but now it's full of gangs, so now we don't go anymore."*

*"A guy beat me up and stole my bike, so now I walk everywhere."*



Fast food hangouts

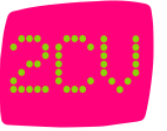
*"I try to avoid certain areas of town because I don't want to bump into the wrong people."*

*"Me and my friends often get kicked out of the skate park, the skateboarders say scooters are a child's toy and get in the way of their skateboarding."*



Youth Clubs & Centres

# Boredom is one of their biggest frustrations



- **Physical isolation and social isolation leads to feeling bored all the time**
  - Tendency to feel that this is a point in their life that they 'just need to get through'
  - Prioritise distractions and things that take them out of the moment
- **They blame boredom for high-crime rates and teen pregnancies**
  - Fear of being sucked into the wrong crowd or getting pregnant which are both commonplace
- **They find creative ways with friends to pass the time**
  - Sometimes involve getting into trouble (eg petty theft, trespassing)
  - Will walk for hours around the town with friends even if they have nothing to do

*"We wanted to play football but the chavs were using it so we decided to just walk around town- we ended up sneaking into a garden and eating all the free vegetables!"*



*"I had to sit through this boring assembly at school."*

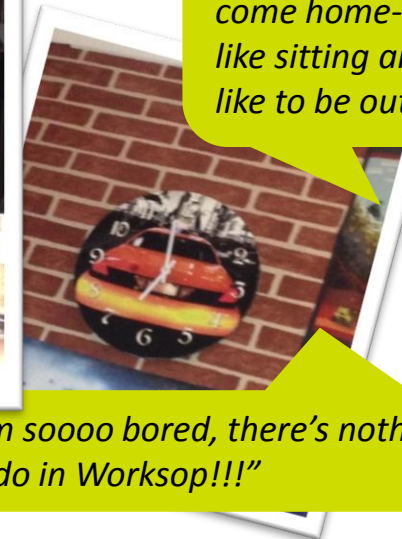


*"The worst part of my day was when I had to come home- I don't like sitting around, I like to be out."*

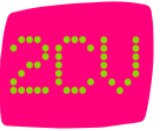
*"I'm planning on getting drunk tonight!"*



*"I'm soooo bored, there's nothing to do in Worksop!!!"*



# They rely on their parents, who aren't always reliable



## For money.

Most young people get money from their parents, those who don't borrow from friends.



## For transport.

Parents with unreliable transport often impact young people's activities, including getting to/from school.



## For entertainment needs.

Young people usually depend on parents for phones and phone plans.



## For family time.

The young people we spoke to enjoy spending time with their family, although they seek guidance from friends.



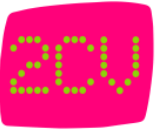
*"I had to walk to school today because my dad's car wouldn't start."*

*"My mum doesn't speak English so she can't help me with my homework very often."*

*"I have a friend who moved out of her house at a very young age, we have to loan her money when she needs it sometimes."*



# Lack of money leads to both positive and negative financial behaviour



## NEGATIVE

- They tend to have poor money management skills

*"Our friend borrowed more than £90 from us, he still hasn't paid it back."*

*"We have to loan our friend money all the time- he's known for being cheap and never paying it back though."*

- They start 'informal borrowing' from friends very young

*"We start borrowing from each other when we are like 10 or 11- especially if parents don't give it to us."*

- Few of them have jobs and rely on parents instead

*"I used to have a part-time job but it was hard so I quit..."*



## POSITIVE

- They 'look out' for each other financially

*"I know he can't afford to go to Subway sometimes, so I will share chips or my drink with him so he can hang out too"*

*"I get the most money from my parents so I end up buying all our footballs."*

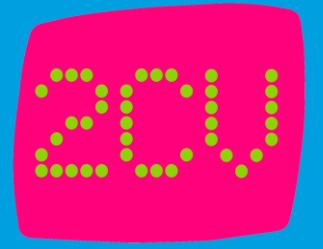
- They sometimes save for short-term goals

*"We all saved up so we could go to the gym together..."*

*"I saved up to buy my new trainers which cost me £120."*



# Dreams and aspirations



# MEET KHLOE, 17

## Worksop

### Khloe, 17

Khloe, 17, dreams of becoming a holiday representative. She wants to leave Worksop, so she and her friends decided to go to college for Travel and Tourism- the one career pathway that would take her to exotic locations.

Although she feels that Worksop is like anywhere else in the UK, she also is frustrated by how dangerous it is. 'Chavs', or people that stir up trouble and violence, dominate many parts of the town. She doesn't feel safe going out at night.

She recently saved up to get a gym membership, but had to cancel after starting rates went up. She wishes she could find a cheaper gym.

*"Most people in Worksop our chavs, we don't want to be that."*



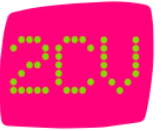
*"There are no good stores here- so we save up and go every couple months to a shopping centre about 45 minutes away"*



*"We all went into travel and tourism so we can travel the world and escape this place. We might return when we're older though since our family lives here."*

*"Some people have big dreams, but most people just want to stay here. My friends and I are different."*

# Dreams can be lofty, but actual aspirations are more realistic and often unclear



## *"What I dream about being..."*



*"I dream of being a chef, which is why I cook and want to apply for a catering course at college!"*

*"One day I'd like to play professional football and represent England."*



*"I made this for Mother's day last year- I'm a trained potter and it is my dream to open my own business."*

*"I took this photo of my friend- it represents my biggest dream because I want to be a sports photographer."*



*"I'd love to be a professional gamer on YouTube!"*

## *"What I think I'll be..."*

*"If I don't become a famous chef, I'd be happy just working as a cook in a restaurant or something."*

*"I know that it's tough to become famous so I'd also be happy to go into sports management or graphic design."*



*"I just want a good job where I can take care of my wife and kids"*



*"My dad says I should get practical skills like being a plumber instead- everyone always needs a plumber."*

They are not sure how to achieve their dreams, there is always a back-up plan

# They are optimistic about the future, a strong belief that life can ‘only go up’ from here

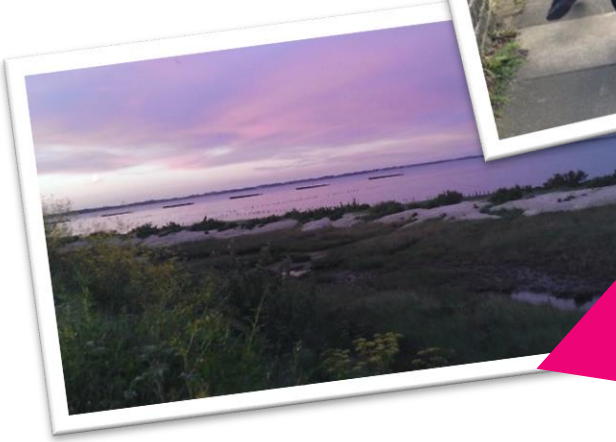
- Like most young people, they are excited to grow up and be able to have some autonomy over their life
  - Leave from unstable parental/guardian homes
  - Complete school/virtually no focus on university
  - Have families and their own independent lives
  
- They have a desire to explore the world, but they also feel tied to their ‘home town’ and feel that this is where they’d raise their own families
  - Friends/family based locally
  - Little understanding of what lies beyond
  - Some fear as no one else they know leaves

*“I’d probably like to travel at some point- but not now- I’d miss my friends too much.”*

*“We decided to go into Travel and Tourism together- this photo represents my biggest dream- to be a holiday rep!”*



*“This photo represents a moment when I made the decision to do what I do now, live with others in community and live in such a wonderful environment that would be fulfilling both physically and spiritually. It was a big step to make for me.”*





## What matters most... in their words



“Family are the most important thing- you wouldn’t exist if it weren’t for them!”

“My dreams, because they push me to do my best at everything I do.”

“The most important things: Fitness, Family and Friends.”

“My phone. My phone goes EVERYWHERE with me and it’s important to me as I use to get in touch with friends/family or to go to social networking sites.”

“Computer gaming, because it’s relaxing and I can speak to friends at the same time.”

“Find happiness, do the things that make you and others smile!”

“Live opportunities... when they come, do it. You might not get another chance.”

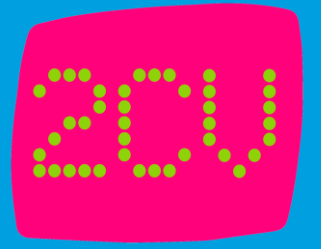
“Love. Because love makes my depression fade.”

“My friends matter most. They are the ones who I turn to when I need advice or help with something that I am not comfortable telling my family.”

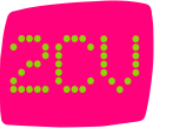
“Music, because it can bring people together.”

“Family and friends- they care about you.”

# Looking to the future



# Charting a way forward



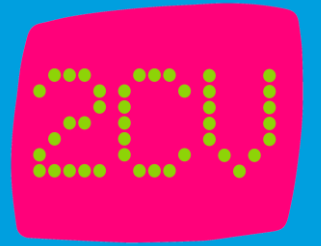
## Opportunities

- They are aspirational about the future
- Young people are looking for *something* to do
- Physical activity is a credible outlet, and an aspiration for many
  - especially for young men
- Young people will go out of their way to take part in the right activity
- They want to take part with their friends; recruiting one should lead to more

## Things to address

- Potential for apathy and inertia
- Possible that the 'wrong' crowd could attempt to 'own' an activity and prevent others participating
- Payment for participation or equipment could be an obstacle
- In some cases, young women seem more resistant to physical activity (particularly team sports) compared to boys





# THANK YOU!

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