

# AGENTS FOR CHANGE

CHALLENGING NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

## ARE YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF CONTROL?

Agents for Change is a group of young people aged 11-18 who are challenging the negative perceptions of young people in our local area (Tufnell Park). We gather for meetings weekly to discuss what our criteria is and how we are going to make a difference in our communities. We have conducted interviews and surveys to find out what people think of youths. We found that there was a real mix of answers, ranging from 'lovely' to 'yobs'. We are going to have a poster campaign and we have a website.

We aim to change as many minds as possible by showing that most youths are normal, hardworking students. We feel it is a great injustice that young people are represented negatively in the media and in society and are determined to make a difference.

Please visit our website, and post comments! We hope you agree with our cause, and spread the word about us.

**"YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DO A LOT MORE TO IMPROVE THEIR REPUTATION"**



## WHO ARE WE?

Two teachers at Acland Burghley School Mr Hamdi and Mr Coleby have set up a group aiming to change how people see the youth in our community. Students in various year groups have been participating in this group every Tuesday since January and are progressing more and more towards their target every week.

**"NOT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BAD PEOPLE"**

### What we do?

We've discussed the problems we have in our community and put them in order of importance. These problems include: Litter, Drugs, negative perceptions of estates and Gangs. The aim of this group is to fight the

negative stereotypes of the youth, which will be done by investigating and reporting.

### What we have learnt?

We have learnt skills related to digital media like web design, film editing and camera work. We have also learnt about journalism and the importance of how we write to interest the reader. A journalist from the Camden New Journal has been mentoring us. We have also learnt a lot about the perceptions of young people in our community and there is a lot of positive opinions. There are also some negative one's and that is what we need to try and change.

continued on page 2





# YOUTH CLUBS? THANKS BUT NO THANKS.

## ARE ADULTS RIGHT ABOUT WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED?

Agents for change asked the people of Camden what they thought our community could do to improve the perceptions of youths. Many of the adults we asked suggested that the community should provide more youth clubs for young people. However when we asked some of the students at Acland Burghley School we found that young people don't use or want youth clubs, but would prefer to play football or just have somewhere to gather outdoors because they don't like the feeling of being cooped up indoors and having set activities to complete.

## We are online!

We really want to spread the word about our project. Please visit our website where you will find interviews, video and more information about our project.

[www.agentsforchange.net](http://www.agentsforchange.net)

# ARE WE AS BAD AS YOU THINK?



We conducted interviews, surveys and questionnaires to find out what the good people of Camden think about young people. I found that although they had a great deal to say, the majority of the answers we got were, in fact, positive and innocent, despite us reassuring them to be as honest as possible to ensure the validity of our research. Maybe, we are looking at things in the wrong way.

Is there a chance that influential entities like the media have not only made us think that young people are completely surrounded by negative stereotypes, but that these stereotypes are widely accepted by our communities.

Being a young, bi-racial girl growing up in Camden, I have the opportunity to get to know a wide range of people, regardless of age, race or

ethnicity. Most of my friends are my age and over, and although some of them may seem tough or threatening, once you get to know them, they are good, honest, civil members of our society. They're not gangsters or thugs or yobs; they are brothers and daughters and cousins. They are just people.

continued from front page

## "ITS AN UNFAIR LABEL ON A NEW GENERATION"

### What are our next steps?

We spent a whole Monday devoted fully to our group. In this time we edited our interviews, edited the website and we also prepared many things relating to where we want the group to be in the future. We also discussed how we could help the group evolve so it becomes bigger and bigger.

Watch this space and check out our website, we would love to hear more of your views.

I think, in order to challenge the 'negative stereotypes' that we believe we are given, we must first stop and ask our selves if those stereotypes and labels are actually as common and prominent as we think.

# Q and A

We asked two members of staff at Acland Burghley School to reflect on their own childhood and also give us their thoughts on how young people are perceived, along with

some of the challenges they face.

**Q: When you were younger how were you perceived?**

**Ms King:** Fun, cheeky, small, sensitive, helpful, observant, conscientious.

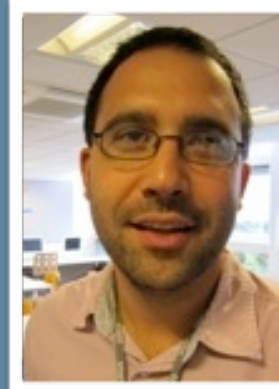
**Q: How do you perceive young**

**people?**

**Mr Hamdi:** Energetic and thoughtful are two words that first spring to mind. Creative and funny as well. Lots of young people are confused as to where they fit in the world.

**Q: As a teacher in a secondary school what do you like to hear about young people?**

YES ■ NO ■



Oliver Hamdi  
Geography Teacher  
Acland Burghley School

**Ms King:**

Someone who achieves their potential and does not mind leading.

**Q: What do you think are the negative perceptions of young people?**

**Mr Hamdi:** Gang violence, disaffected, unemployed, no prospects and drug

addicts.

**Q: What are the main issues with young people growing up?**

**Mr Hamdi:** Lack of sustainable employment, negative perceptions from employers and the general community.

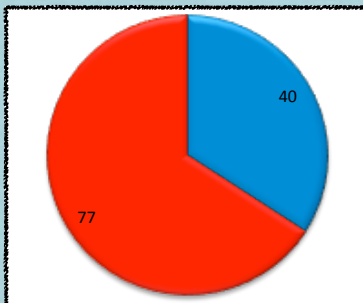
**Q: What do you think would improve the perceptions of young people in our community?**

**Ms King:** To be more polite and to be more aware of other people's needs and a positive outlet for their energies.

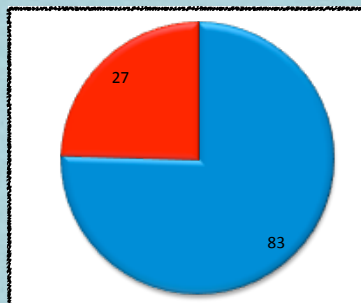
**Q: What could the community and school do?**

**Ms King:** Engaging more with young people and to invest more in a wide range of young people's activities.

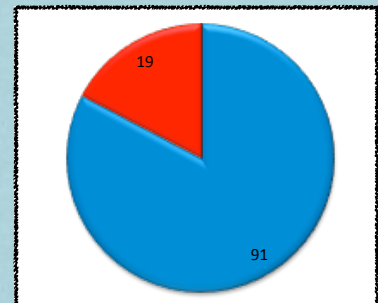
## AND OUR SURVEY SAID...



DO YOU THINK YOUTH ARE REPRESENTED FAIRLY?



DO YOU THINK STEREOTYPING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS AN ISSUE IN THIS AREA?



DO YOU THINK STEREOTYPING HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON SOCIETY?



# What do youths and cabbages have in common?

'Cabbages, yobs and drugs', these are some of the opinions of adults in Camden. We did some research on how adults perceive youths in Camden. We did this because we wanted to know if youth stereotyping affects young people and why they are stereotyped in the first place. We found out that some older people stereotype younger people. They blame them for noise, vandalism, crime etc. They do this because they don't vividly remember their childhood, all they remember is being good so they expect every child to be the same and they don't understand why youths have to be bad.

Many adults argue that there are enough opportunities/activities for young people to fill their time, however the types of activities are not appealing to the youth of today. Overall most of the opinions were helpful, although some were a bit strange e.g. Cabbages . We are not certain what cabbages is supposed to mean but it is still an interesting comment. The opinions will help agents for change continue in their project.

*Your suggestions to help improve the perception of young people*

1. Youth Clubs
2. Voluntary Work
3. Positive Role Models
4. Better Parenting
5. More contact between young and older people
6. Give young people a voice

We asked a sample of Adults in Camden how they would describe young people, this word cloud shows the responses - the size of the word depicts the frequency of its use.

