

# Appendix

## Belfast Youth Forum



### Young people's views on poverty in Belfast

A pilot study

Research by: Belfast City Council Youth Forum



**POVERTY  
IT'S NOT  
A CHOICE**



**Belfast  
City Council**

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## Our research objectives:

We want to find out what young people living in Belfast think about poverty:

- How they view poverty in the city;
- What they think it means to be living in poverty;
- How they think poverty impacts children and young people, families and communities; and
- What actions they think government could take to end poverty.
- For ethical reasons, none of the activities used in our focus group ask young people directly about their own experiences, the questions are asked in third person or scenarios are used.

The Belfast Youth Forum (BYF) will use the information gathered to raise awareness of poverty in Belfast and to work with Belfast City Council to offer ideas and actions that decision makers and policy makers can take to help end poverty in our city.

## Focus Group Activities

Our focus group lasts for 1 hour and there are 3 parts to the session:

### PART 1

Saying Hello!  
Ice breaker  
Ground Rules & Ethics

### PART 2

Activity 1: Thought Wall  
Activity 2: Walking Opinions  
Activity 3: Balloon Exercise

### PART 3

Feedback  
Next Steps for our project  
Poverty Factsheet

**There are 6 young researchers needed to run a focus group:**

2 x Facilitators  
1 x Time Keeper  
2 x Note Takers  
1 x Activity set up person

## Part 1 (15 minutes)

### Saying Hello!

**Purpose:** Saying who we are and defining subject area

**Material needed:** Script, sticky labels, markers, flip chart with research objectives on it.

**Time:** 5 minutes

**How it works:**

1. Introduce yourselves and tell the group a little bit about the BYF (see focus group script).
2. Explain briefly the aim and objectives of research and why you are doing the project (see script).
3. Ask participants if they have ever taken part in a research project/group discussion in school (or elsewhere) before;
4. Ask all the participants to tell us their name (ask them to write it on a sticker and wear it).

### **Ice-breaker: Skittles introductions**

**Purpose:** to get to know a little more about the group and get them to relax

**Material needed:** Skittles, flipchart paper with pre-written skittle colour and corresponding question

**Time:** 5 minutes

#### **How it works:**

Each participant and the facilitators to choose up to 3 skittles but don't eat them yet.

When the group have all chosen some skittles, tell them that each colour of skittle corresponds to a fact that they have to tell us about themselves. The more colours they choose, the more facts they have to tell us.

#### **The facts for each colour are as follows:**

**Purple:** favourite hobbies

**Yellow:** favourite subject in school

**Green:** favourite shop

**Orange:** If I could be a superhero I would be...

**Red:** favourite band/singer

Each person says their name and shares one fact for each colour of skittle they have.

### **Ground Rules & Ethics**

**Purpose:** Setting agenda and framework for focus group

**Material needed:** Flip Chart, markers

**Time:** 5 minutes

#### **How it works:**

Explain that this will be the group contract for the focus group to which everyone sticks to.

1. Start off with making a suggestion by yourself, e.g. on confidentiality.
2. Ask the focus group participants to make suggestions
3. Record this all on Flip chart.

#### **Ground rules should include the following issues:**

- Confidentiality, only BCC research and policy staff will have access to the recording.
- Anonymity, we will not use any names in the report

- Right to withdraw consent at any time;
- Respect for each other's opinions;
- No right or wrong answers – just opinions/experiences;
- Truthfulness since research would be worthless otherwise;
- Participants' right to receive a feedback;
- Focus groups will be recorded? (one you have decided if this is written or audio)

## Part 2 (35 minutes)

### Activity 1: Thought Wall

**Purpose:** to explore what young people think the term poverty means (perception of poverty)

**Material needed:** Flipchart paper with 3 columns drawn saying 'Poverty' / 'IS living in poverty' / 'Is NOT living in poverty' & markers

**Time:** 15 minutes

#### How it works:

Split the group into smaller groups and give them each a coloured marker. Ask them to take a flipchart and write down what they think poverty is. ( You can help them by asking- 'what are all of the things you think of when you hear the work 'poverty')

(3 minutes)

Now ask them to record in the middle column how they think they could tell if someone in Belfast is living in poverty and in the last column how they can tell if they are not.

(3 minutes)

Ask the group to feedback each section and discuss what they said

(7 minutes)

Give BYF definition of poverty, discuss with the group the difference between their understanding of poverty and the definition

(2 minutes)

#### BYF definition of poverty:

'When a family lives in poverty this means they don't have enough money to enjoy the things that will give them a decent quality of life.'

#### A decent quality of life means having things like:

- Nutritious food
- Heating & electricity in your home
- Family trips, like to the cinema or amusement parks
- Family holidays
- Taking part in hobbies like football or dance classes
- Clothes that keep you warm in winter
- School trips

### Activity 2: Walking Opinions

**Purpose:** To gather young people's views on the impacts of poverty on people's lives.

**Material needed:** one worksheet each with statements for facilitators and young researchers; pieces of paper representing the choices (Agree, Disagree, Not sure)

**Time:** 22 minutes (2 minutes per question)

#### How it works:

**Facilitator 1:** asks the questions

**Facilitator 2:** makes sure young people understand what side of the room they are standing in and that everyone who wishes to speak gets a chance to.

Each end of the room represents polar opposites "Agree" and "Disagree" and the middle of the room represents "Not sure". The statements are read aloud by facilitator one, and young people are asked to walk to the point in the room according to whether they agreed, disagreed, or weren't sure about specific statements.

Discuss and record the reasons that participants agree/disagree with each statement.

Record the number of people that agreed/disagreed and were neutral. Note takers record people's comments & answers.

	A	N	D
1. There are no children and young people in Belfast living in poverty.			
2. Its peoples own fault they are poor.			
3. Benefits are too generous.			
4. You can't be in poverty if you have a job.			
5. You can't be in poverty if you have a smart TV and a smart Phone.			
6. Children and young people whose family don't have much money can have good lives when they grow up (Why/Why not? Give examples)			
7. There are things that CYP can't do if their parents haven't got much money (Give examples/ discuss what is the impact of not having much money during childhood: how does it affect health, education, play opportunities etc).			
8. Children and young people whose family doesn't have much money are treated differently (By other YP/ Adults Why/Why not? Give examples)			
9. There are situations/experiences where money doesn't matter (Why/Why not? Give examples and ask groups about the things that YP like to do that needs little or no money)			
10. Children and young people without much money have the same opportunities in school (Why/Why not? Give examples)			
11. It's our government's job to get people out of poverty (why/why not? What could government do?).			

### Activity 3: Balloon exercise

**Purpose:** To explore with young people what things they think makes life harder for people living in poverty and what actions they think government could take to help them.

**Material needed:** Drawing of balloon with sandbags, post it notes & pens

**Time:** 10 minutes

**How it works:**

- Give young people will be given post-it notes. Ask them to think of the things that could make things harder for people living in poverty and record these on post-its.
- Now ask them to think of the actions government could take to help people in poverty and record these on post-its.
- Stick post it notes that could help people in poverty on the balloon and the things that make it harder for people in poverty on the sandbags

(5minutes)

Read each of the post it notes that could make it harder for people in poverty and generate discussion on what it is written

**Probing questions**

- Why do you think (post it note) could make it harder for young people?
- Does the government do anything to make life harder for people living in poverty?

(2 ½ minutes)

Read each of the post it notes that could help people in poverty and generate discussion on what it written

**Probing questions**

- Why do you think (post it note) could help?
- Who could give that help?
- What could the Government do to help?

(2 ½ minutes)

- Facilitator's record answers on flip chart around balloon.

**Part 3 (10 minutes)**

**Feedback**

**Purpose:** To evaluate the focus group, to round up the discussion and thank young people for participating.

**Material needed:** pens; dart board sheets, script.

**Time:** 10 minutes

**How it works:**

1. Thank participants for their input
2. Remind participants about further steps in research project and when the results will be out. Give them contact details in case anyone wants to get in touch with us.
3. Read through 'Poverty Fact Sheet' with group.
4. Give each participant a dart board sheet and mark on the board how they felt about:
  - How interesting the session was
  - How much they learnt
  - Length of discussion
  - Tell them they can add comments if they wish. The closer the mark is to the bullseye the better the opinion.

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**Youth  
Forum**



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