

The No/Yes * delete as applicable social intervention.

The aim of the intervention was to firstly highlight the fact that the young people felt there were 'Too many no's, and not enough yes's' in their daily experience. This not only restricted their physical activities and movements, but also their dreams and imagination – their response to earlier questions of mine about their dreams for Efford was – that's all we can do – dream. Secondly the intervention aimed to make the young peoples presence more visible through the T-shirts, the slogan – No/yes *delete as applicable drawing attention to their position at the time of being the subject of adult decisions. Thirdly their asking of the questions to adults was three fold – this passed ownership of the project to them, related the question very directly to them as the subject matter and started some intergenerational communication. The project also aimed to mobilise and motivate as well as include them in the master planning process.

It is hoped that the Tshirts will continue to permeate Efford as a question.

The young people were very competent in engaging the adults of Efford, who were receptive to talking to the young people and answering the two questions – Is it Yes/No (to young people being where they like to be, doing the things they like to do)? And When can No become Yes?

Of the answers collected the general response was overwhelmingly yes (94%). There were practical ideas about them needing a place to go and things to do and that the environment should become safer for them, and then things would be perceived as better. This is no doubt true and will improve Efford.

However, of greater interest to the ongoing social situation and tying in directly to the idea of young people being restricted and their desire to live their own lives, and not have things decided and provided for them that is thought they want but may not, is that the yes was more often than not conditional, for example, Yes, if..., Yes, but..., Yes, as long as... Yes, within reason. This points towards a social dialogue to be had surrounding young people and their use of public spaces. The response to the second question when can no become a yes points to even more material for community dialogue.

It is a complex situation; on the one hand their presence needs to be accepted in public places, but on the other their behavior needs to be acceptable to everyone to be a welcomed part of the public sphere. The crux of the matter would seem to be who is deciding what is acceptable – and it would appear that the young people don't have much say at the moment.

Jayne Murray

Deleted No = 122

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Q. Is it no/yes?

No. What will you be doing in a shelter?

No to a shelter.

No, because being in places you want to be might be a bad place to be.

No, they'll get into trouble.

No, they frighten too many people.

No, they get too naughty.

No.

No.

No.

No.

No.

Yes, if

Yes, if they have a separate youth area.

Yes, if they are supervised.

Yes, if they behave themselves.

Yes, as long as

Yes, as long as they're with an adult.

Yes, as long as they're not too noisy.

Yes, as long as they are not causing trouble.

Yes, as long as they don't break things.

Yes, as long as it doesn't interrupt other people.

Yes, but

Yes, but it's not for me to say, all my kids have grown up.

Yes, but a curfew for young people.

Yes, but not out late at night.

Yes, but there's a time and a place.

Yes, but it depends what sort of fun it is. I'm all for kids having fun, but unfortunately it's the minority that wreck it.

Conditional Yes

Yes, depending on age.

Yes, with supervision.

Yes, not late at night though.

Yes, within reason.

YES

Yes.

Yes. What it really needs is someone who cares.

Yes to us having fun.

Yes.

Yes because it's a positive answer.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes. It would make it better if we had the right situation to help us improve.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes – there's not enough youth centres and everyone moans that there's nowhere to go.

Yes.

Yes, you're only a child once.

Yes, get the kids out of the house!

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes, to keep them out of trouble.

Yes.

Yes, because they're kids.

Yes, they need to express themselves.

Yes, there needs to be somewhere for the kids to go.

Yes. Do what you want.

Yes – you're only a child once.

Yes, because I was young once and used to do the same things.

Yes, freedom not victimisation

Yes, because I am allowed to be a child.

Yes, because I want fun.

Yes, kids need somewhere to go.

Yes, because there was nothing to do when I was a kid.

Yes, because I was a kid once.

Yes, I haven't got a problem with the young people. If you treat them reasonably they'll treat you the same – it's like anyone.

Yes, should enjoy life.

Yes.

Yes, they need things to do.

Yes because they're kids.

Yes, they need places to go.

Yes, because they need things to do.

Yes, keep them off the streets.

Yes, give them something to do.

Yes, because that's what life's about when you're a kid.

Yes they need something to do.

Yes, there's nothing for them.

Yes.

Q. When can no become a yes?

When there is something good for children to do.

When they start behaving.

When they behave themselves.

When they come with an adult.

When they make it safer here.

When they've got somewhere to go.

When they don't wreck everything.

When children stop intimidating adults.

When there's no trouble and a few moaning people will be happier.

When they have enough activities.

When there's somewhere to go and something to do.

When everyone gets behind it.

When they change their mind.

When we all stick together.

Today.

When they look at the safety needs.

When they start doing things for kids.

When the police go.

When it's right.

When there's respect from both sides.

When there's connections between people.

Now.

With respect from both sides.

When a child has a voice that can be heard.

When they have things to do.

Today.

When they're not causing trouble.

When people get fed up of kids on street corners.

When the police go.

When they behave.

If you show them some interest.

If they behave – it's give or take.

When they show some respect.

When can no become a yes – when they have earned it.

When there are connections between the age groups.

When the police stop harassing them.

When they start to behave themselves.

When they co-operate.

When they have things to do.

When they provide things for them.

When the social behavior improves.

When things get done around here.

Personal thoughts
Working in Efford
Jayne Murray

I found working in Efford to be one of the most positive experiences I have had during my working practice.

Largely this was due to the open mindedness, support and cooperation of both the Heart of Efford Partnership, Shillam + Smith, and the young people whom I engaged with. There was an unquestioning will to make things happen.

This rare situation allowed me to create a piece of work that has developed my practice within the public realm and social situation.

The concept of 'delete as applicable' was able to happen because people in Efford, Shillam + Smith and Plymouth Arts Centre were not concerned with a prescriptive outcome. Rather they wanted some way of involving young people and improving the place where they live that responded to what was happening in Efford at the time. I was able to think laterally and explore different strands because of this.

The concept moved on somewhat from my original proposal of a spatial transformation to become a social intervention. All those involved seemed to recognise that this was the most appropriate way forward (the development of ideas being a good thing) - and it would work most effectively to 'make a difference'.

The work had a strong visual, physical and at the same time ephemeral presence - and people picked up in different ways on how it worked, but significantly the value of the idea was recognised – the idea was the most exciting thing and not the objects that were produced. This for me was the most exciting thing, both to generate and then witness.

Working alongside other artists who are well versed and experienced in the production of art in the public realm provided a stimulating, challenging and reassuring environment in which to discuss ideas.

And working without a lack of preconceptions from the people of Efford was liberating. The work would not have been possible without this.

Being fully supported in an open and discursive environment created by the particular partnership of individuals and organisations, allowed me to make what I consider to be one of the turning points in my practice.