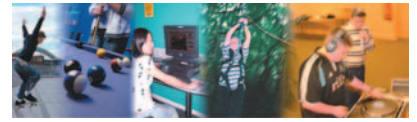


# CHAPTER 1



***summary***

# Summary



The next four chapters provide a detailed insight into the lives of young people when they're away from school and home.

They are revealed as spending a large part of their time and energy in leisure activities. Many are out most nights of the week. They're aware of dozens of ways to entertain themselves and have given many of these options a try.

Their horizons are broad – many are ready to travel more than ten miles for attractions elsewhere and wish they had the means to go even further. Their questionnaire replies show a wide awareness of places they long to visit, across the North and beyond.

But transport is a real difficulty – few use the metro or trains so they are limited by bus timetables, availability of lifts in cars and how far they can walk. Given the chance to travel more, there's enthusiasm for trips to find out more about people and places – holiday swaps, weekends away, trips to theme parks and beaches.

But most of their time is spent closer to home. Here they have unusually close access to some highly popular activities, due to the proximity of the MetroCentre. The cinema, bowling and Quasar Laser are

not often on the doorstep of youngsters – but of course these come at a price. Most rely on parents to dig into their pockets to pay and the majority have less than £10 a week to spend.

Other activities tempt them and might have a greater take-up if the young people have more information and ways to get there: ice skating, go-karting, horse riding, mountain biking are just some of the examples.

The main frustration occurs when youngsters simply want to meet their friends. This is important to many of them, but where do they have to meet? The largest number of answers said "local streets" followed by the school field, parks, the bus shelter and the square outside Whickham Library.

When asked what they'd like as a place to meet, the main plea was for somewhere to sit and shelter from the rain! There was also interest in a range of activities such as graffiti art, a chance to learn about hair and beauty and swapping music.

More than 700 youngsters have given up time to share their enthusiasms and hopes with us all. Dip into their world – and after that, your ideas will be welcome on how to tap into their potential and help them make the most of their neighbourhood and their time.