

YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLICE RELATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

A: Young people's questionnaire

January 2008

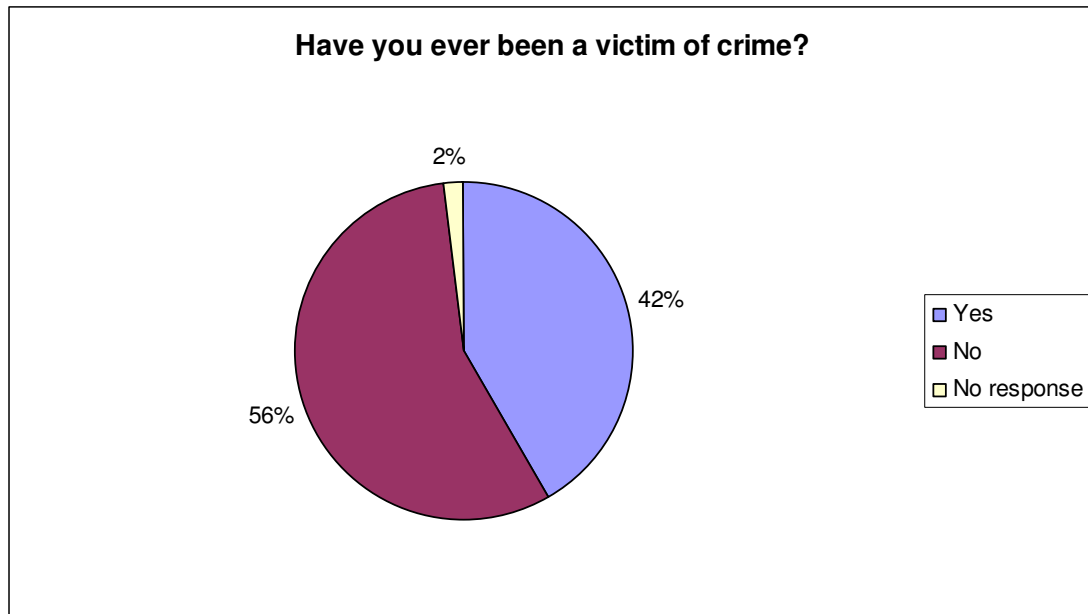
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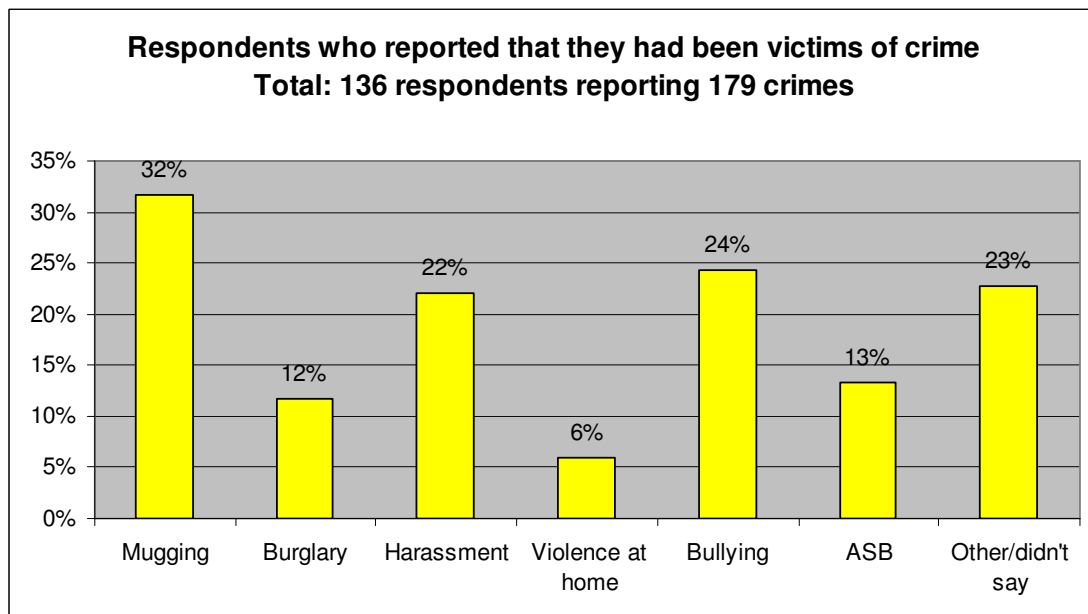
Note on the dataset

One thousand questionnaires entitled "Young People & Police Relations Questionnaire" were distributed by Haringey Community & Police Consultative Group through various channels in March 2006. There were 327 responses, a rate of 33%.

Question 1: Have you ever been a victim of crime? If so what type of crime was it?



A total of 136 respondents (42% of the sample) had been the victim of a crime.



The total number of crimes recorded was 179, with 26 individuals reporting more than one crime. The largest single crime reported was mugging – 32% of those who had indicated they had been victims of crimes had been mugged. Also prominent were bullying (24%) and harassment (22%).

Among the crimes specified by respondents who ticked “Other” were theft, stabbing, drugs, bike robbery, fighting, assault, ABH, sexual assault, violence on the street, rape, GBH.

Question 2: Do you think family interaction has an influence on your attitude towards the police?

Question 2 was a problematic question for respondents. It asks whether family behaviour has an influence on young people's attitudes to the police, but some respondents simply answer with their opinion on the police, and others' written answer appears to contradict their Yes/No choice. "Don't know what you're talking about" one respondent comments succinctly. There often appeared to be an unspoken assumption that any influence family interaction had on one's attitude to the police would be bad.

Some clearly understood that the question fell into two halves, e.g.

No because they raised me to respect adults and I treat them all the same no matter what profession

Yes because they shape my opinions

Others conflated the two as described above. E.g. responses from a sample:

No because I do not get in trouble because I am good at home

No because we are Christians

No because none of my family has been in jail

No because my parents tell me to behave and they respect me and they say that policemen are good

No because my parents tell me to avoid the police

No because my parents say if something is wrong tell us then if it's a bad crime then call the police

[Yes/No boxes unticked] Don't talk to them

Yes because my family doesn't want to get involved with the police, they don't want police coming to the house

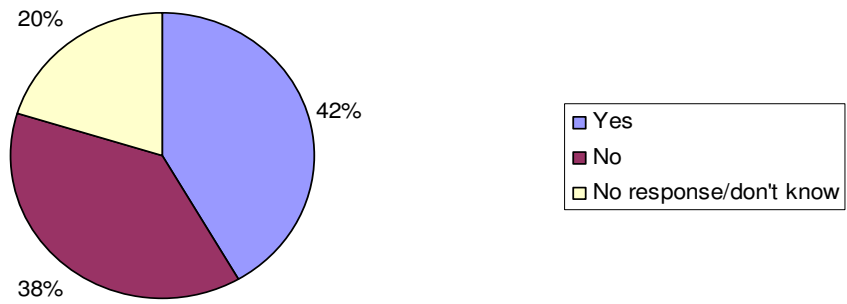
Yes because I respect authority but I am a bit negative to police as well because they can be unfair.

Yes because I'm told it's easier and better to tell the police otherwise it will get worse.

Yes because they teach me to trust [the police] and ask them for help, but if they are mad don't go next to them but take down the ID number just in case.

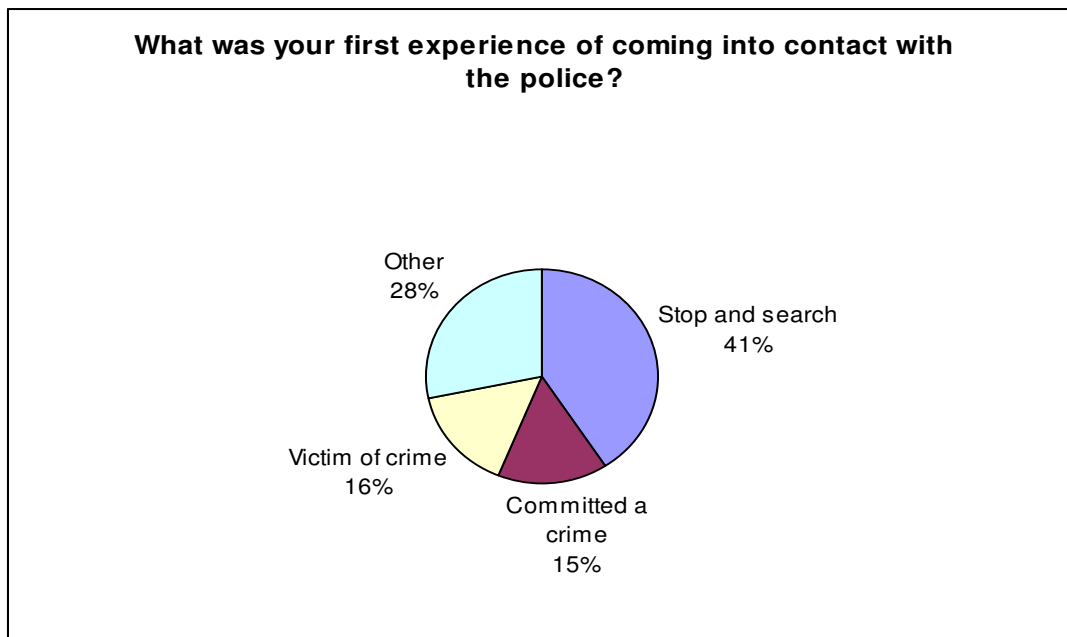
The total figures were as follows. Please note however that, in the author's opinion, the amount of confusion evident in the responses was sufficiently large to devalue the data collected.

Do you think family interaction has an influence on your attitude towards the police?



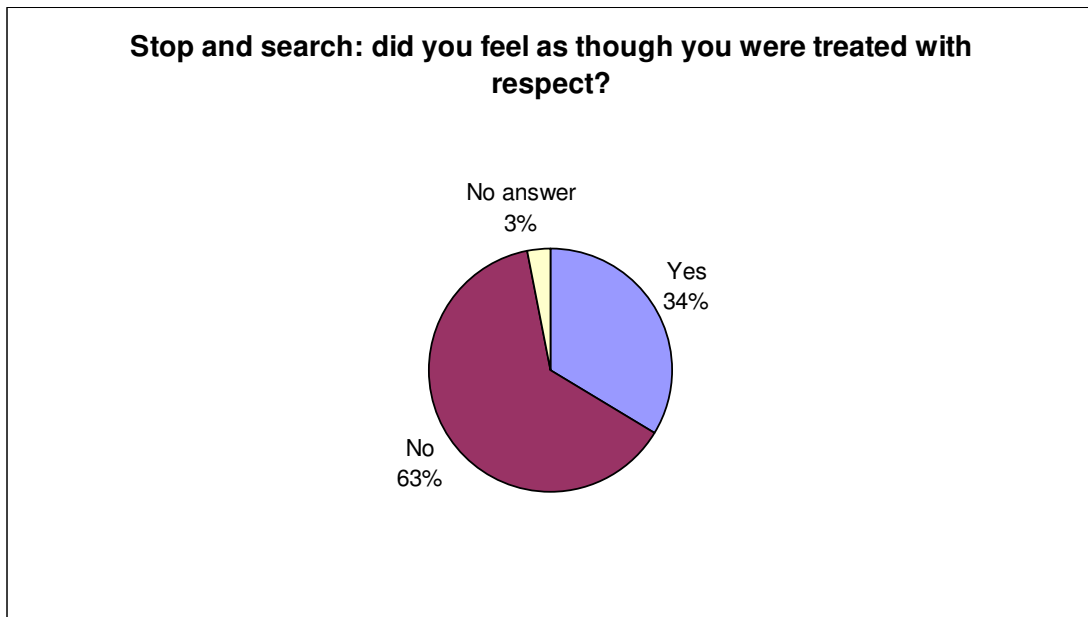
Question 3: What was your first experience of coming into contact with the police? Did you feel as though you were treated with respect

Out of all respondents, 95 had not come into contact with the police, or did not respond to the question. Of the remaining group, by far the largest cause of contact with the police was a stop and search – also affecting 95 young people (being 41% of those who had come into contact with the police). Other respondents had come into contact with the police because they had either committed a crime (15%) or been the victim of a crime (16%).



Part (b) of this question formed one of the most interesting points of the data sample. Respondents' feelings towards the police varied dramatically depending on the circumstances into which they had first come into contact with them.

Stop and search



Well over half of those who had been stopped and searched (63%) did not feel they had been treated with respect. Here is a representative selection of comments from this group:

They stop people for nothing and search them

They told me to lift my hands like I was a criminal, they took pictures of me and handcuffed me

They pulled me and shouted and I thought they were being racist

No reason for the stop search

He was grabbing me with force

They got me against the wall and showed me no respect when they searched me.

There are hundreds of people in the world doing crimes and he has stopped me.

They try say I had drugs and I told the woman I didn't so she took me to the back of the van and smack me so I walked off.

Because all I was doing was walking down the street and I felt like I done a crime.

They only stopped me because of how I looked like.

They had no valid reason to search me

I was stop for no reason

[They stopped me because] I am from Tottenham

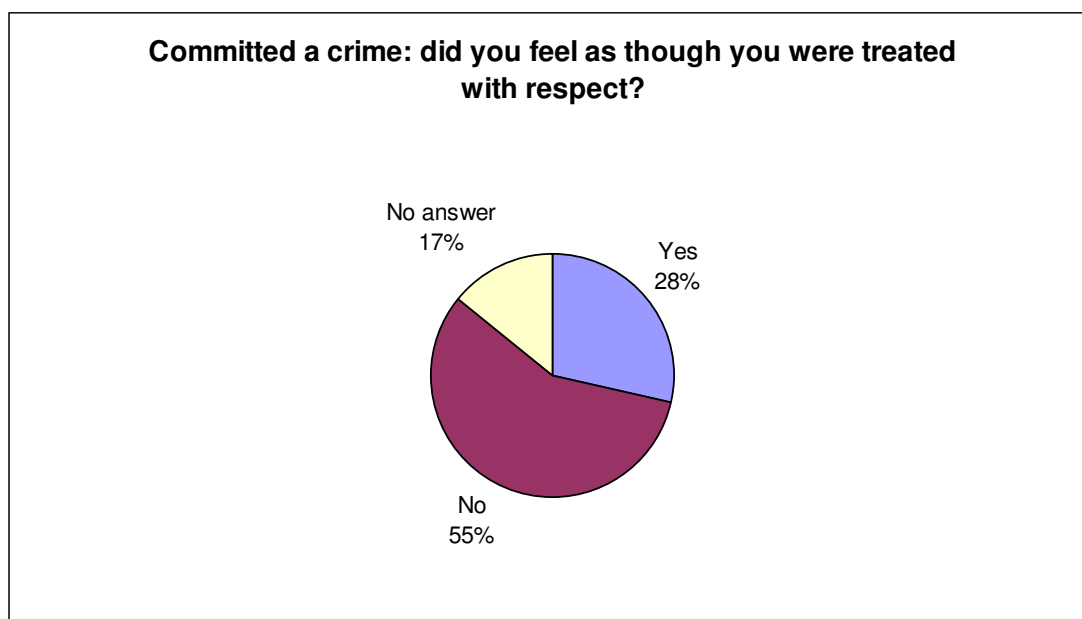
I didn't do nothing wrong

They think just because some children steal we all steal

Other respondents who had been stopped and searched indicated they had been treated with respect (34%). A recurring theme in their comments was that the police had been calm and explained their actions – “they told me why they was searching me and they talk to me calm and cool” one respondent reported.

To summarise, respondents who had been stopped and searched were, on the whole, unhappy with the level of respect shown them by the police.

Committed a crime



Of those respondents who had committed a crime, 55% (20 respondents) felt they had not been treated with respect. Their comments foreground unnecessary violence, racism and perceived unfairness as concerns:

They didn't let me explain even though they told me to explain

They put me in hospital

They were rude and racist

They swore at me four times

The police officer was roughing me up for no reason

They treated me like a thug

They didn't give me a chance to talk

They bang on my door and run up in my house and arrest me by force

The police officers were racist to me

They were being rude and shouting when I was calm

However, those who had come into contact with the police in committing crimes were not universally negative about them – 28% (10 respondents) felt they *had* been treated with respect. Their approval of the police’s attitude tends to mirror the concerns expressed by the other part of the sample, revolving around fairness and calmness:

Nobody is rude and they respect my opinions

They don't shout

Police treat you in the way they should

They treated me with respect

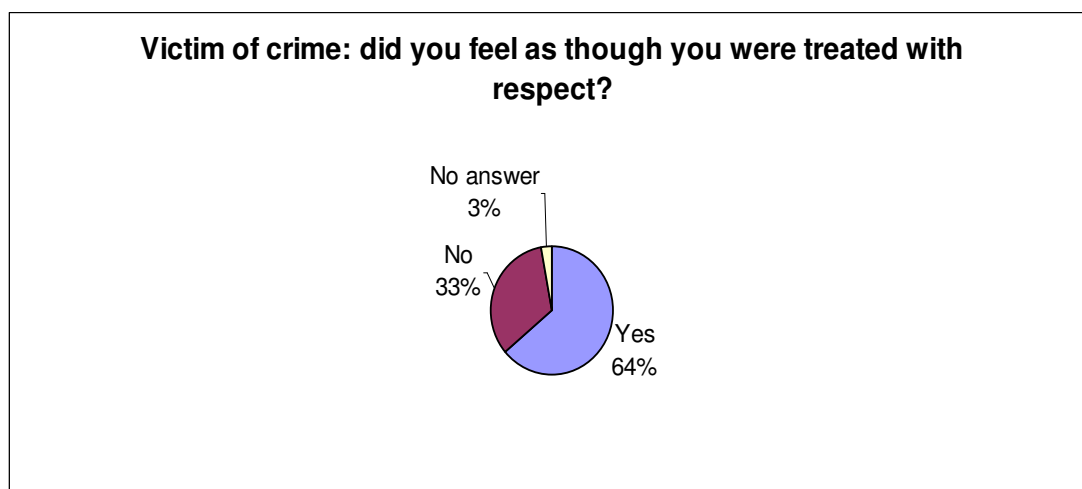
They trying to help me understand the importance of not stealing and spoke to me with a mature manner

They were very polite and calm towards the situation.

And one respondent felt they had been treated with respect given that, as they engagingly and simply put it, “I did it”.

To summarise, respondents who had committed a crime were, on the whole, unhappy with the level of respect they had been shown by the police.

Victims of crime



The majority (64%) of those whose contact with the police had arisen from their being victims of crime felt they had been treated with respect. A range of representative comments is as follows:

They tried as much as possible to prevent this happening again

They treated me with respect

They were kind to me

They listened to what I had to say

The police was very kind and talked to me in a smooth voice and asked me good questions

The police was on my side all the way

They asked me how I was and made sure I was ok.

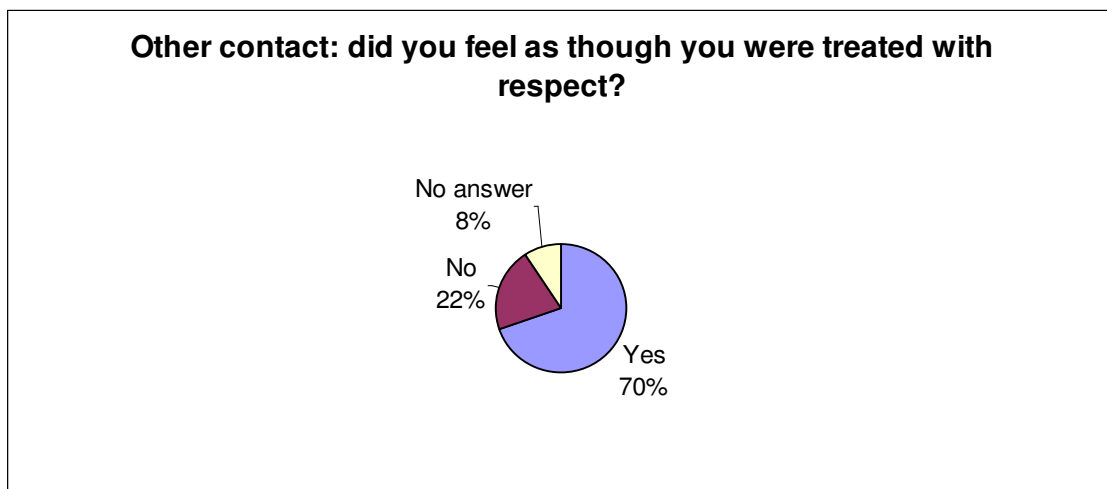
A third (33%) of the crime victims did not feel that they had been treated with respect. Please note that this percentage is artificially depressed by the fact that some of those who had indicated they were victims of crime misunderstood part (b). They took the question “Did you feel as though you were treated with respect?” to refer to their treatment by the criminal rather than the police, which would obviously make the answer “No”. This misunderstanding was clear from the comments made by these respondents, describing how the crime had occurred. However, other crime victims’ concern about the lack of respect they perceived to be shown them by the police was genuine:

They treated me like I was hopeless

They were not even paying attention to what happened and just left

To summarise, respondents who had been victims of crime were, on the whole, happy with the level of respect shown to them by the police.

Other



This group showed the highest level of satisfaction (70%) with their treatment by the police.

A large number of the correspondents who had come into contact with the police in some other way had had visits from the police at school or in youth clubs. Their opinions were on the whole very positive:

The policeman was teaching us about the safety of the streets

They talked to us like adults

They spoke about how to deal with certain situations

They were kind and understanding

He was not that bad

Respondents who had ticked "Other" also fell between the named categories. They had been questioned, cautioned, or in some way assisted by the police – some had assisted the police themselves. Positive comments were as follows:

They told me what I did wrong and warned me.

[Someone who returned two wallets]: they said well done, most people wouldn't of returned them

The police officer thought I had been attacked: he was really friendly towards me and treated me with respect

Reporting my sister missing: they kept me and my family calm and guaranteed that she will be found and brought back safely.

Another respondent had evidently spoken to a policeman with a good sense of humour and community relations. "Asked him where his gun's at," the respondent reported, "he answered question with respect."

However, 22% of respondents who had come across the police in some other way were not happy with the levels of respect accorded to them:

My brother was arrested and instead of ringing the door bell they broke my front door down

I was blamed for something that wasn't true when my parents were arrested

They were telling me to shut up

It was an incident between two boys: they [the police] think they are too powerful.

Watching me like I did something wrong: I think they are racist, not all of them but some of them

[The police] got on a train: they were rude

To summarise, respondents who had had other contact with the police were, on the whole, happy about the level of respect accorded to them.

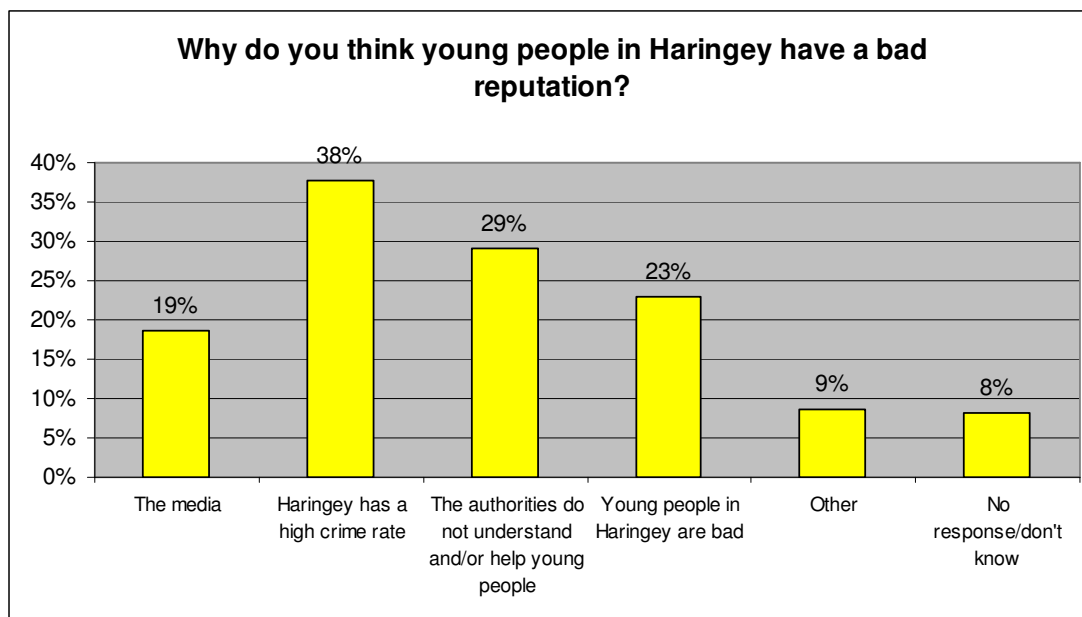
Conclusion

It is clear from the data that relations between police and young people are bad where stop and search is the first point of contact. The same applies, perhaps unsurprisingly, to situations where the young person had been committing a crime. On the other hand, relations are good (again, unsurprisingly) where the police are assisting young people who are victims of crime, and remarkably good where the contact between police and young people has been made in some other way.

In qualitative terms, it is clear from the overall impression given by the data that contacts made through schools and youth clubs make a very valuable contribution to good relations between police and young people.

Question 4: Why do you think young people in Haringey have a bad reputation? Do you think negative labelling of young people can lead to them fulfilling these labels?

Many respondents ticked more than one cause for the bad reputation of young people in Haringey, but the single biggest cause identified was the high crime rate in the borough – 38% of all respondents thought this was a contributory factor.



Among those who ticked “Other”, there were five explicit mentions of gang culture and this implicit mention, “Young people in Haringey feel unprotected so they have to protect themselves”, which reads as if it could possibly have come from inside a gang as an explanation of the roots of gang culture. The same culture may have been in the back of the minds of the perhaps surprisingly large number of respondents (23%) who cited “Young people in Haringey are bad” as a contributory cause to the bad reputation.

Other alternative explanations offered included:

Watch bad things on TV

Their voice isn't heard

Stereotyping

Because there's not much in Haringey for young people to do

Boredom

Nothing better to do

I think they get misunderstood

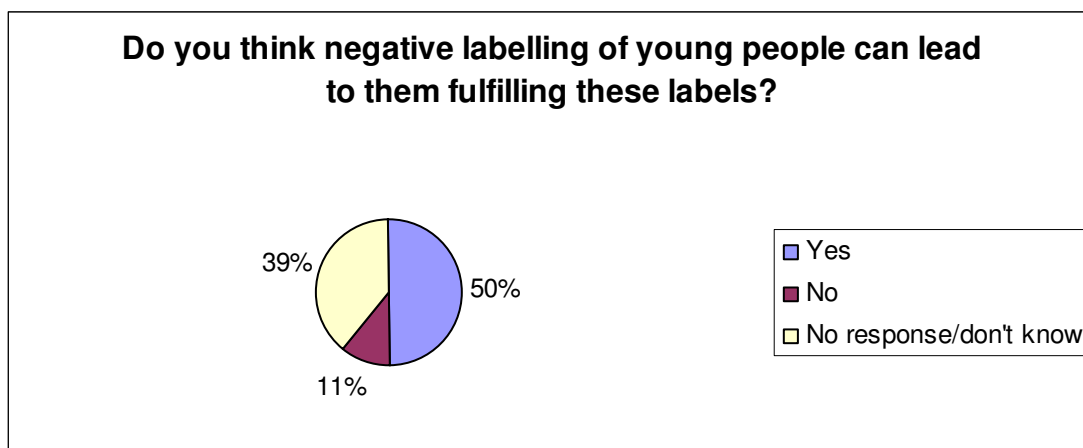
The parents don't care what they do or where they go

Because we're black

Peer pressure

Kids are influenced by music

The other part of question 4 saw the widest agreement across the data set among those who answered it – although it also saw among the highest rates of no response of all the questions. A qualitative assessment of the questionnaire papers themselves suggests that “form fatigue” had set in among the less engaged respondents by this point.



Nonetheless, the ratio of respondents who answered Yes (163 individuals) to No (35 individuals) is still striking. It is also striking that although the question is in many ways just as complex and multi-layered as question 2, which many respondents misunderstood (see above, p 3), question 4 was very rarely misunderstood. Nearly all “Yes” responses were variations on the same theme as follows:

If you're called a failure all your life you will start to live up to this name.

They don't feel like they're given a chance

Some might not be able to do certain things even if they're good because they've been labelled negatively, so they most of them end up being bad.

If someone's always telling you that you're negative you will start acting negative

People have a reputation to keep up

If you keep on telling a child he is bad he will soon believe that and live that reputation.

The stereotype of young people may become very tiresome causing them to implement their label's actions

Because if they are told negative things they will ask "What's the point, the people already think I'm going to be that" so they fulfil it.

When you tell them they are something they start believing it.

They think if they're going to say these things about them then they might as well do it.

Expected to be bad. No standards.

If you label someone badly, they wouldn't feel good and would feel the need to live up to the bad label/name.

If young people keep getting negative comments they will think nobody cares about what they think

Sometimes because they might think that no-one understands them and no-one cares and they might think well they think we are bad so let's show them bad.

One "Yes" respondent was less understanding of their peers, however: "Young people like listening to crap!"

The "No" respondents, although fewer, also showed common thinking in their answers, which were along the following lines:

It is what you want

If you've committed a crime and people put you down that shouldn't make you commit another crime

Talk is cheap. Do what is right.

They can choose not to.

We are individual

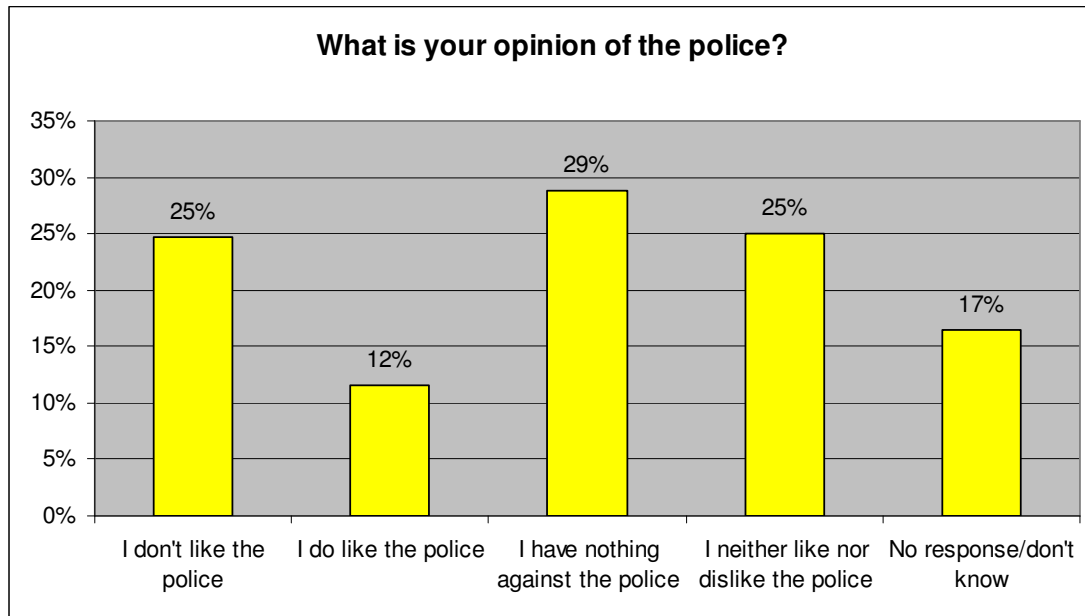
We are better than that

Some "No" respondents also identified extremely sophisticated background causes of negative stereotype fulfilment ("Crime rate is going down but media representatives are pretending it's rising") and others thought the reality was more pragmatic ("People do bad things often to get money" – this respondent had come into contact with the police through committing a crime.)

The degree of common ground in these answers suggests that negative stereotyping and the knock-on effect on personal action is a commonly discussed concern among young people in Haringey.

Question 5: What is your opinion of the police? Why do you have this opinion?

A few respondents ticked more than one answer to this question, indicating their mixed feelings on the subject.



A perhaps predictably low number (38 individuals) actively liked the police. Their proffered reasons were, on the whole, impersonal and societal in nature rather than grounded in a personal experience:

They save lives

They stop crime

Because they are there to protect and serve

Because they do their job

They put their life at risk for us, cleaning all the bad gangs

Because they're trying to help so we should try to help them

They make me feel safer

They've always treated me well

The number of respondents who referred to the police saving lives suggests there is a strong tendency to see the primary purpose of the police as dealing with extreme violence.

A quarter of respondents actively disliked the police, and their reasons on the whole obviously arose from personal contact. Perceived racism in particular was a strong theme (see below, p 18):

Because they search people when they don't need to

They arrest you for nothing - I was walking and they jumped out of an undercover car

The police are sometimes violent

They don't really listen to little kids; the only time is if their parents are there, then the police listen

Sometimes they are racists and uncaring. Most black people are not scared to stay stuff to the police now.

Because they sometimes stop people for nothing

They like to disrespect the black man

Because they are too quick to react and don't take time to understand the situation

Being sometimes racism can occur and police can be uncaring to black people

Because they get on my nerves, always staring at you when you do anything

They don't treat you with respect

They are rude and racist

They stop and search people for no reason

They think all black people are bad

The police are mostly racist, as soon as they see a black child with a hood they automatically think trouble which is racist

They always seem rude staring like you're holding dope or crack

They don't like black people

They are racist

Because they always come up to me asking questions

More impersonal reasons offered for dislike of the police were as follows, often revolving around the police's perceived use of their authority:

Because they are sometimes useless

They think they rule the world

Because they got a badge they feel they can do whatever they want

One answer demonstrated an institutional dislike of the police, regardless of personal experiences: “Sometimes they can be rude and at times they can be kind, but I don't like them”.

The comments made by those who ticked one of the two “neutral” answers are particularly interesting. Taken together, the numbers of respondents who were in some sense neutral towards the police is high (176 individuals), however their comments highlighted the complex reality behind their responses. Those who had nothing against the police were on the whole the most genuinely neutral and often expressed a lack of any sort of relationship with the police:

I don't know them and they haven't offended me before

Because sometimes if I done nothing and they question me I'm angry, but if they done nothing I'm fine.

I have never done anything bad for the police to get me

Because they help in a time of need but can also be very annoying

They haven't done anything to me, but I don't know them

They're just doing their job

One respondent who had nothing against the police demonstrated an admirable detachment in considering the police perspective: “Because they do whatever they can to help. Even if they are arresting me.”

The other “neutral” group however, who neither liked nor disliked the police, had genuinely mixed and sometimes strong feelings, often rooted in personal experiences. Many of them were extremely pragmatic and showed a strong empathic ability to see the police as a set of individuals, rather than a group of people with the same characteristics:

Because they would arrest me, disrespect me and swear at me but on the other hand if my dad was getting robbed on the road and I was not there they would help him, so they cancel each other out.

They might not be good people or bad people, they might just be in the middle.

They can be fair and unfair

Sometimes policemen can respect you but sometimes they pick on innocent people

I have mixed feelings because not all police are nasty or racist so you can't really be sure

Because without them there would be a lot of death but police are the ones that commit crimes

Because they help sometimes but they stereotype against non-whites

They are normal people like us

Police are annoying and rude sometimes, but also can be helpful and listen

Because they help to stop crimes of the streets of London but not all the cops are clean

The police has not harmed me but sometimes I dislike them when they harm people who sometimes has not done anything wrong.

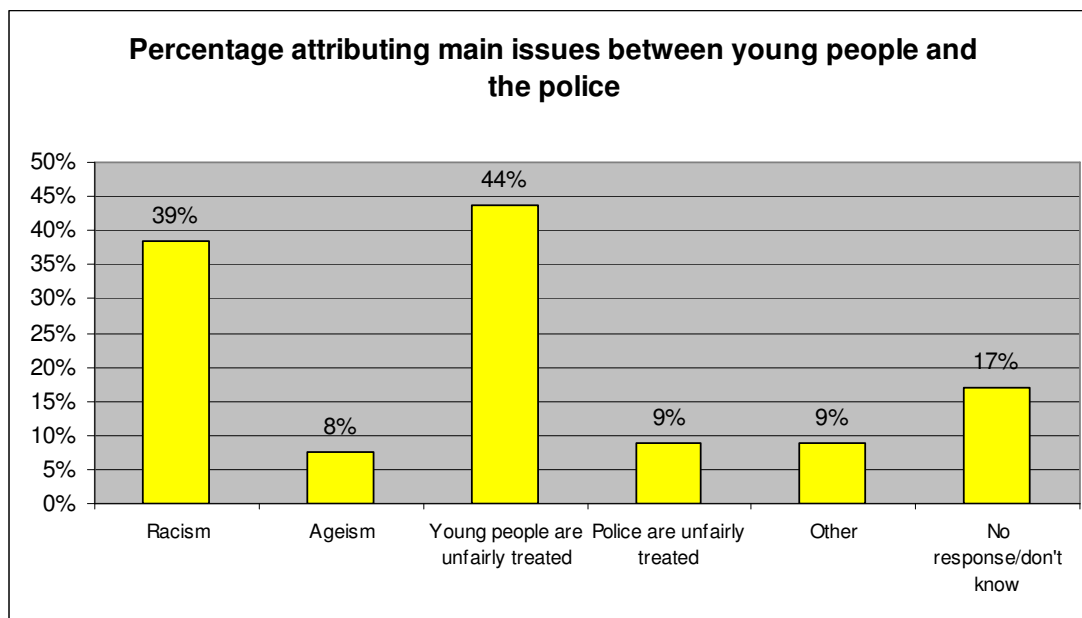
Some are okay, but I have met other ones

In summary, personal contact with the police seems anecdotally more likely to result in a bad or mixed opinion than a good one. It is striking that even respondents who had recorded a good experience with the police elsewhere in the questionnaire very rarely cited this as a reason for liking them. One of the explicit mentions of a good opinion resulting from a personal contact gave the following reason: “Police always help, I know this because of PC Griclance [sic]”. The rest of the questionnaire shows that this comment refers to a school visit.

Respondents who liked the police were more likely to defend the police’s existence in broad terms of their importance to society as a whole, whereas if they disliked or partly disliked the police, a personal experience had often prompted that opinion. Even where personal experiences appeared to be good, there was a consensus among respondents that the experiences of others were likely to have been bad. This suggests a low standard of expectation that the police will behave well to individuals, and possibly a willingness to accept stories about bad behaviour from the police less critically than stories of good behaviour.

Question 6: What do you think are the main issues between young people and the police?

The consensus was very strong on this question. As for question 5, very many respondents indicated more than one issue, but the vast majority thought that either racism or the unfair treatment of young people or both were to blame:



A selection of the comments are as follows, many of them demonstrating strong and passionate concern with perceived racism and how it impacts on police actions on a practical level:

Police don't do stop and search well

Most of my friends who have been stopped say they were treated unfairly

We don't get treated with respect

People judge us before they get to know us

Because we're young people think they can disrespect us; they have no right to assume we're bad people

There are other big people out there doing crimes but they're always going for the people who don't do crimes

They do not listen to what you have to say

We are targeted even though we are not doing anything

Young people get stopped and searched because they are wearing hoodies - unfair or what?

Adults seem to think that every and anything young people do has got to be something bad.

The police don't know what it's like to be young in this society that we live in.

The police don't believe young people.

The police just want to arrest someone so they'll approach you if you're a black youth and ask you lots of questions.

Most white police love to be racist and us and black people can't do anything about it

The police want to do right but sometimes do wrong and act suspiciously to black people

One time I was walking with my friend and the police stopped us and didn't search him because he was white

Some police see a group of black boys and assume something illegal is going on

I've witnessed racism with my friend and police before and it wasn't nice.

Black people are mostly stopped and searched as they are believed to be criminals

They think that if you're black and young you're committing a crime

When you get shifted the police beat you up in the back of the van with their black bats

A black person is more likely to be stopped than a white person and they don't trust young people

I find they think if you are black then you are trouble

They act slower if a black youth was assaulted

Most of the people they stop and search are black

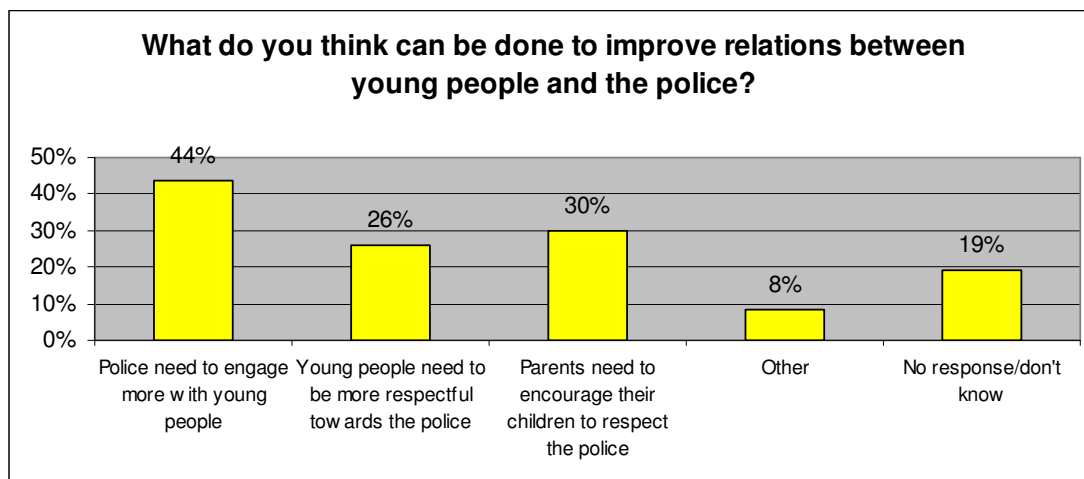
Most people think this because if there's a group of white boys and a group of black boys every black boy would get searched but like 2 or 3 white boys will get searched out of the group.

Some police are racist and treat young people different to others.

A lot of young people in Haringey think the police are racist

Question 7: What do you think can be done to improve relations between young people and the police?

This was another question which received multiple responses – in fact, it showed the most frequent incidence on the questionnaire, with the 327 respondents generating a total of 414 responses between them.



The biggest single suggestion was that the police should engage more with young people, and respondents had a number of ideas about how this could be done. Many of these showed a rather charming preoccupation with play and social activities:

They could come to youth centres or just come and see what we get up to or mentor us

Police have to be friends with them so they might stop committing crime

Play with us

They need to stop assuming stuff

Police need to realise we're children

Police can start programs for children

Make them all come to a special club or something

Police should do more stuff with young people

They should talk to young people when they see them

They need to stop “stop and searching” you even if you're not suspicious

Police should walk over calmly and talk to young people

Organise things that will get young people off the streets and give them free things like trainers

Police should go into schools and tell people what would happen if they committed a crime

Visit more youth clubs

Extra curriculum classes for knowledge of the police

Police need to interact with young people

Younger people think the police don't respect them

Social activities

The police need to respect young people and don't always treat them like they've done something wrong.

Activities, football, sports, that kind of thing

When people have youth club police can go talk to them

Undercover police can get to know the youths so they understand them more.

They need to stop stereotyping

The police and children need to show respect to each other.

More youth clubs with the awareness of crime, just have general conversations with the youth. Also have more of an understanding of youth culture.

Police can be more calm and then the young people will also be calm to talk to

Police can go into schools to talk to the young people

Fun fairs

Interact with kids so they can find out why they're so bad. Find out their slang.

Activities that include police and youths

Have meetings with police and kids

You need to make places where young people can hang out and police need to stop following and just be there when people cry for help

Engaging young people with the police through annual school meetings

Many respondents simply ticked all three answers, which tends to suggest a widespread belief in a total breakdown of relations, or ticked "Other" and then commented that progress was needed on all fronts. A large number of comments expressed the need for change on both sides, as follows:

Both police and young people need more respect for each other.

They both should respect each other

The police need to engage with young people and young people need to respect the police.

One respondent also pointed out that: “Most policemen are white. Need to see more different coloured faces in the police force.”

However, significant numbers (30%) felt that the way forward also lay with parental activity:

Parents are a role model to their kids so they need to show their kids how they should treat the police

Talk to your children more

By [parents] respecting them [the police] themselves

Tell your child to respect their elders

By parents themselves being respectful towards them

Parents need to encourage youths to have respect

Some respondents also suggested that police liaise directly with parents:

Police can send letters or tell the parents to encourage their kids to respect the police

More meetings with the police to explain what they are doing

A large number also thought young people’s attitude towards the police needed to change. They supplied some of the following reasons – often mixed with action on the part of the police as well:

By being more calm towards the police

Young people should spend more time with police and not be so rude to them

Police should get youths off the street after 9pm and everyone below 15 if they are not with an adult

Young people need to learn how to respect the police.

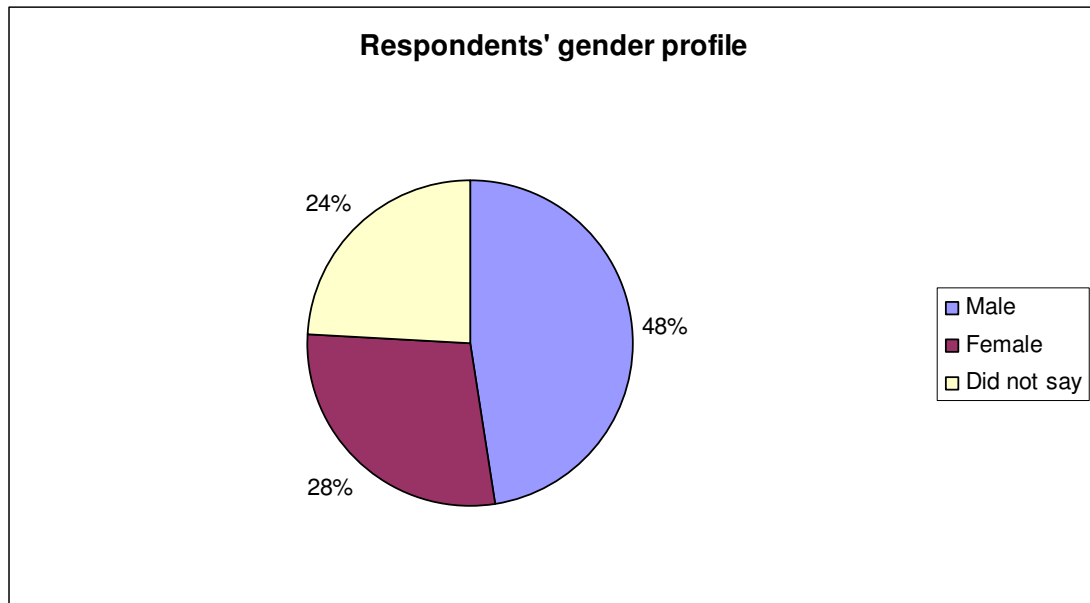
Because if you think about it they are out there to protect you.

Police should get involved in youth centre work and young people should think more about what police do to help

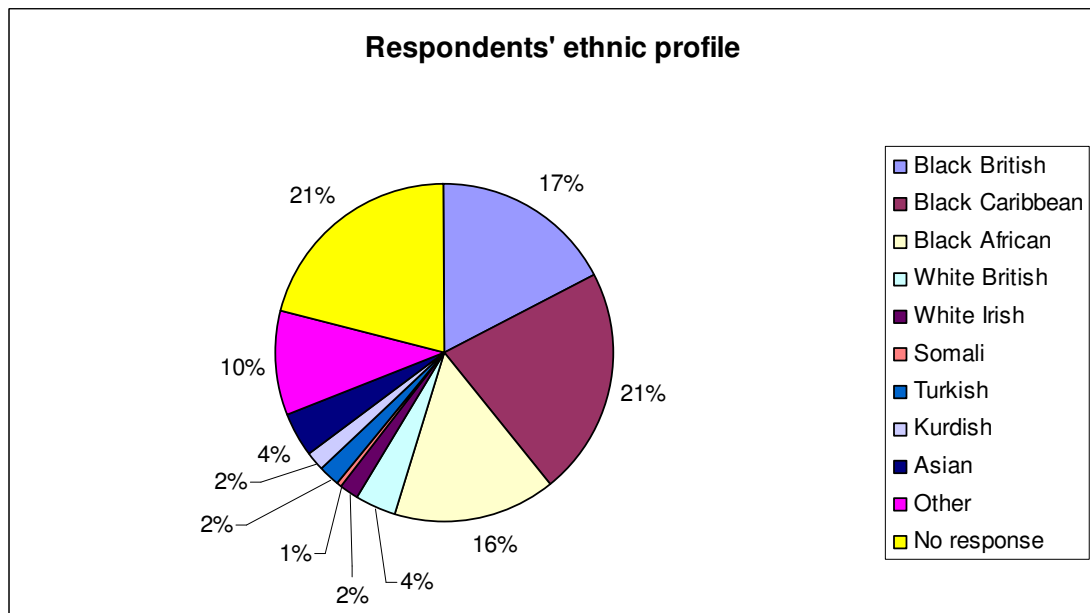
In conclusion, the number of people who felt all avenues should be pursued was high, as revealed by the number of total responses and the universal nature of many of the suggestions made in the comments. There was a strong feeling that social activities and visits to schools and youth clubs were effective in promoting good relations – which was borne out in the positive responses to police school visits in question 3 (see above, p 5).

The respondents' profile

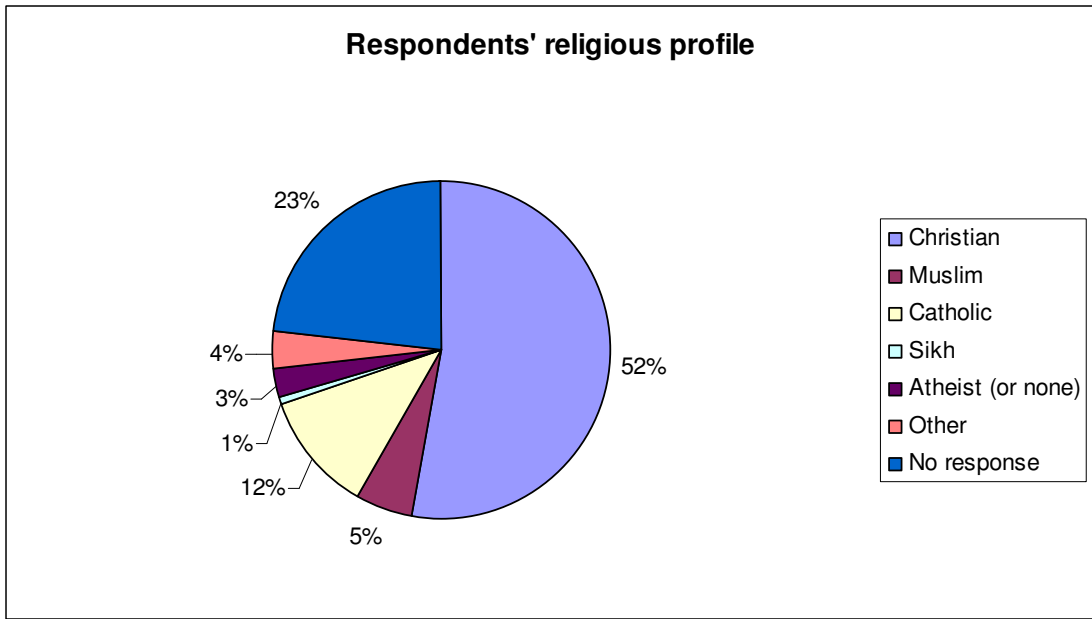
The profile of the data set was as follows:



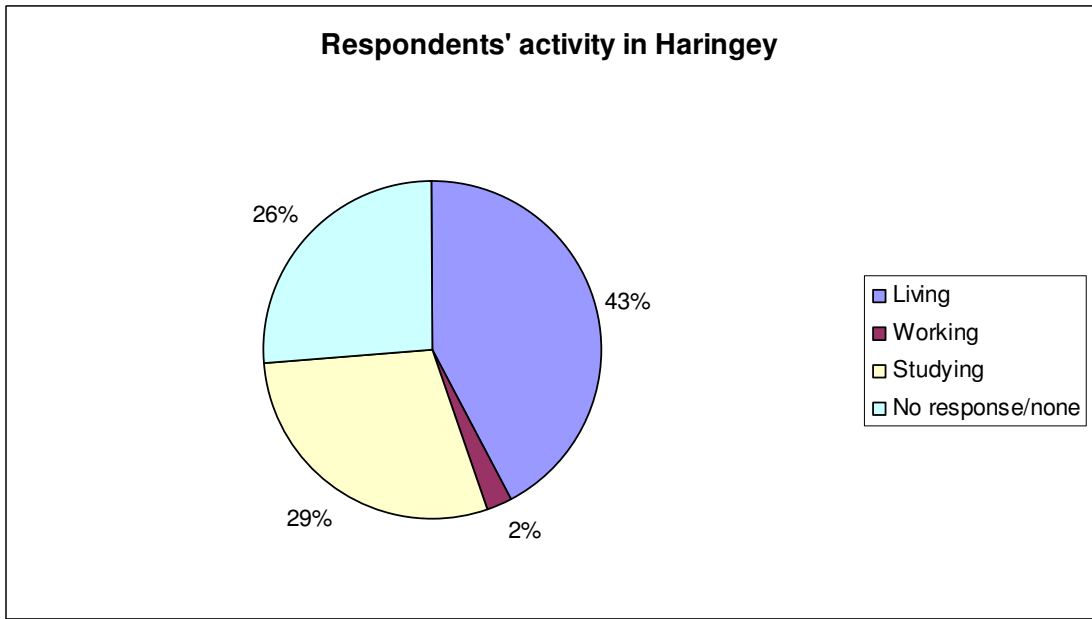
Note: It is particularly interesting, even allowing for the large numbers of respondents who did not give their gender, that so much of the data set was male, given that national statistics suggest young males are less literate than young females and therefore, presumably, less likely to be willing and able to take part in surveys such as this. This skew in data may represent the method by which the surveys were distributed, but could also highlight a genuine strong concern for the issues amongst the young male population of Haringey



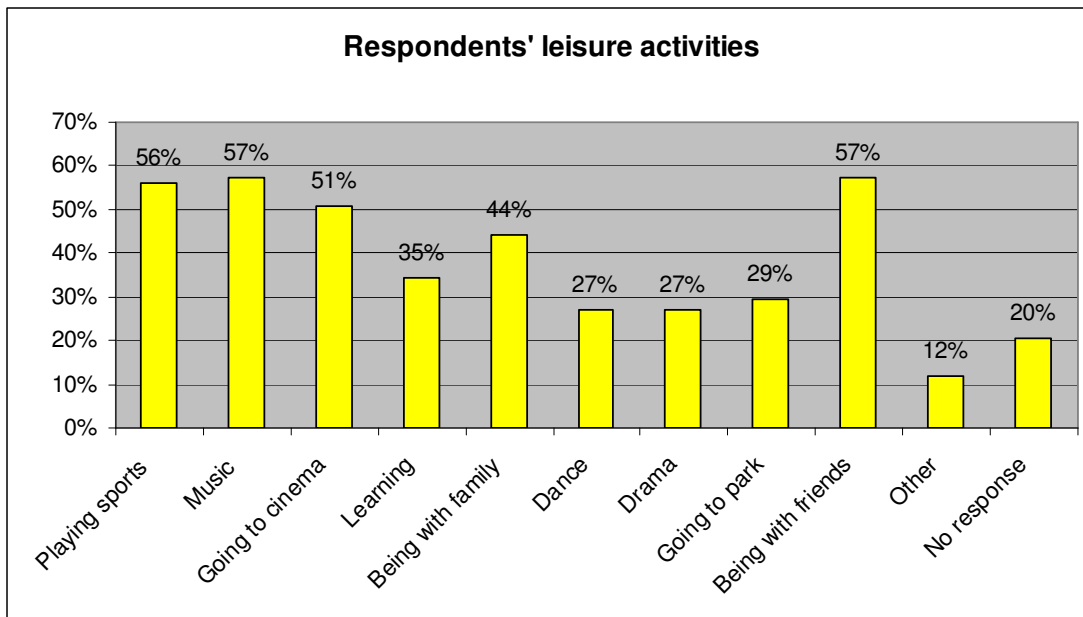
Note: Those who ticked “Other” and specified their ethnicity indicated the following: Albanian, Azerbaijan, Black Irish, British Cypriot, Bulgarian, Colombian, Lithuanian, Mixed race, Polish, Romanian, South American, Turkish Cypriot, Vietnamese.



Note: Those who ticked “Other” and indicated their religion including the following: Buddhist, Hindu, Kurd Alevi, undecided. Although Judaism was included as an option in the questionnaire, no Jewish faith was indicated in the sample.



Note: Many respondents indicated they were doing more than one of the above activities in Haringey. Where these multiples occurred, the most economically indicative measure was used first: “Working” took precedence over “Studying” which took precedence over “Living” in categorising and tabulating the responses.



Note: The respondents on the whole had a wide range of interests. Very few ticked only one interest and many ticked all the boxes. The favourites were spending time with friends, playing sports, music and going to the cinema. The least popular activities were dance and drama, ranking behind even "Learning". 12% (39 individuals) also added their own interests, which included football, shopping, computer games, MSN, singing, jamming, riding my bike, going on trips, creating, TV, just playing, having fun, art and design, modelling, art and textiles, everything, sleeping, jamming, hanging on streets, video games, rapping, time with my girl, reading, playing snooker, internet chat rooms, chilling at home, food and TV, swimming.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLICE RELATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

B: Parents' questionnaire

January 2008

Note on the data set: 500 questionnaires were sent out to parents in March 2006. 27 were returned, a rate of only 5%. Accordingly, since the data sample is so small, the approach is largely qualitative.

Question 1.1 Have you ever been a victim of crime? If so what type of crime was it and how did it affect you?

Twelve respondents (44%) had been the victims of crime and fifteen (56%) had not. Crimes indicated were burglary, car theft, mugging, assault, domestic violence and personal theft. One respondent had been the victim of crime ten times. Many crime victims spoke of their fear and shock at what had happened to them:

Yes, I have been assaulted twice. It makes you feel unsafe in your own area, and less confident to go out.

Yes, domestic violence. I was very traumatised at that time and calling the police made me feel safe.

I have suffered two burglaries to my home. My son and I have had at least three attempted thefts on our bicycles. The burglaries made me feel physically violated and dirty

I have been a victim of crime up to ten times, which affected me in various ways. My nerves were affected by crime as well as my space feeling invaded by property crime. It is not always easy to explain effects.

Question 1.2 Do you think family interaction is important regarding relations between young people and the police? If so why?

Most respondents (23 individuals) thought family interaction was an important area in shaping police relations, as shown in these comments:

Most young people mimic the political beliefs of their parents. How they see people around them interact with the police as well as the media gives young people their views on the police and vice versa.

I believe young people are the responsibility of both the families and the police and whatever happens within the family unit affects their relationship with the police. Their perspective on the police and their duties usually depends on what happens at home.

It is important that parents will advise that if they had any problems they can go to the police and talk to them without any doubts.

Others highlighted the importance of co-ordination, both for improving relations between police and young people and for fighting crime as a whole:

Yes, it will allow each other to understand what is going on, and this will allow them to give important information to the police.

Yes. The family can be the facilitator between young people and the police.

Yes. Families can help build a positive bridge between young people and the police.

I think this is a very important issue, families do need to strengthen their relationship with the police in order to beat crime in our everyday life.

Some focussed on their parental role in keeping their children safe and out of trouble:

Yes because the families need to be involved with their children's lives and has to know what their child up to.

Yes, so bad behaviour and problems can be resolved before prison sentences.

I believe if the parent has a good relationship with their children the children would behave good.

Two respondents analysed the situation very succinctly and suggested the following ways forward:

Yes definitely. The police are seen as the enemy. If the community and parents embraced the police force and the police force joined in more in the community maybe the police would not be seen as the enemy. There is also so much bad news instead of good.

Both the police and young people need to respect each other. There needs to be more police officers of different ethnicity in order to represent the different cultures in Haringey and also show young people being a police officer is a good job.

Question 1.3 Do you know what your children get up to when they go out? If not does this worry you and why?

The majority of respondents (21 individuals) usually knew what their children were doing. The level of control varied: some parents did not let their children go out at all without them, and one parent had their child “check in” at home every hour and then be allowed back out again. Many called them on mobile phones to check how they were while they were out. Even some of these parents with comparatively good knowledge of their children’s social lives still worried about them, usually about their safety.

Six respondents either did not answer or did not usually know what their children were doing. All these parents worried about their children, both in terms of their personal safety and that they might themselves be causing trouble.

Question 1.4 Why do you think young people in Haringey have a bad reputation?

Here the parents’ opinions fell into distinct groups:

- 9 (one third of) respondents thought the high crime rate in Haringey was to blame. One of these also blamed lack of parental discipline.
- 4 respondents thought young people were bored and had nothing to do and so ended up loitering in the borough
- 6 respondents took this thought further and blamed a group peer pressure culture for encouraging threatening behaviour from young people, and even leading them to becoming involved in gangs. “It makes them feel powerful,” one parent said.
- 3 respondents commented on the cultural mix in the borough and the prejudice and even racism this could result in:
 - Because we are poor and from ethnic minorities
 - Because it is a mixed group of cultures
 - Nobody has anything good to say about Tottenham. They see the bad first
- 3 respondents did not comment
- One respondent didn’t think young people in Haringey did have a bad reputation.
- One respondent spoke passionately in defence of the borough and blamed the media for the poor reputation of the young:

“I think the media has a part to play, in always showing the bad parts of Haringey and never the good. They never explain how well we are doing as a community. Considering the amount of new people entering Haringey and the many cultures Haringey does a very good job.”

Question 2.1 What was your first experience of coming into contact with the police?

11 respondents (41%) had had no contact with the police. Two of these people specified that they had not reported crimes they had been victims of - one respondent was too scared to contact the police when their mobile phone was stolen.

Of the 16 respondents who had had contact with the police, two emphasised the positive nature of the contact:

Very good. They have been very helpful. My husband hit me once and I had to call the police.

I had a positive experience of meeting the police. We met the police through our schools. They showed us how they interviewed people and told us how they dealt with crime. So we felt informed and involved.

However, five respondents had not had good experiences:

Frightened

When I was having problems with my ex-husband. The police blame me for not having good relationships with my children.

The community police officers are okay but when I reported an attempted theft on my son's bike they said they would come to my house the next day but they did not bother.

It was quite scary at first

Not good

One respondent had come into contact with the police when they themselves were young and "on the wrong side of the law".

Question 2.2 What do you think the police could do to improve their relationship with young people and parents, or make what they are doing more accessible?

14 respondents talked about increasing the links between police and community, particularly via community centres and schools:

More visits to schools and other centres

Go to community centres and mix with the young people and their parents

The police could attend meetings at community centres with young people. They should try to be more responsive to young people's ideas

More contact with schools

Have more meetings and dialogue with young people and parents to find out what their needs are

Interaction with families – explaining to the public what they are doing to help. They should always wait until they are called to deal with a conflict. They should foster friendship with the community

3 more respondents specifically mentioned fun and social activities:

Provide adventure training for kids at police colleges free

They could be more involved in happy community events ... The media could help!

The police need to be more involved with young people in football matches with mixed teams of police and young people. Talk more to young people and be seen as someone to help and not arrest.

2 respondents added practical suggestions for greater integration:

To recruit people into the police force which reflects the ethnic composition of Haringey.

Encourage young people to work with them

6 respondents talked about improving the approachability and understanding of the police towards the community in general, as well as young people:

They could be more approachable

Give [young people] a fair chance

They should listen to both sides. I have language barrier so they did not called interpreter and give me opportunity to express my opinion.

[The police] can listen to [the young people's] problems and views and try to understand them.

Try to make [young people] more comfortable to speak to the police, made lots of meeting in schools specially secondary not just be afraid from the police [sic]

If we feel like a threat regarding any issues in our life we need to feel free and comfortable to put forward our problem.

One respondent added hopefully, "The law could have a rule - always listen to your parents."

Question 2.3 What do you think young people in Haringey could do to improve their relationship with the police?

8 respondents did not answer this question or stated that they did not know.

6 respondents thought that young people should simply behave better and show more respect towards the police or even "stay out of there [sic] way".

13 responses (48%) spoke of the need for young people to forge links with the police, try and understand where the police could help them, and also co-operate in volunteering more information to help the police:

Try to strengthen the community and through this network of people try to build up positive relationship with the police force.

Talk to [the police], see what their job is about

They could have a positive attitude towards the police and be more helpful when giving information

They could try to work with the police and have a better understanding of what they do and why they do it.

They can try to understand the important role the police have in the community

Young people could change their attitude towards the police and recognise if a member of their family was a victim of crime or their car or phone was stolen it would be the police they would turn to.

Talk about the positive work the police do! Who would help us without them? What would society be like without them?

They can help tackle crime by disclosing information they know

I think the most important thing is the parents – how do they speak to their children about the police, and to let them know that the police is there to help them and it is not a monster.

Question 2.4 Do you think culture plays a part in the breakdown of relations between young people and the police? If so why?

11 respondents did not think that culture played a part in the breakdown of relations. Of the remaining 16 who did, some saw it as a longstanding local issue:

Still true to some extent

Yes. The relationship between the black community and the police needs a lot of work. It is an old problem.

Others explained the problem as follows:

I think that culture does play a part in the breakdown of relations between young people and the police. If the police don't know much about a certain culture they may find it difficult to understand the young people.

Culture is a problem and that's why as aforementioned we need to recruit more police officers from different ethnic backgrounds in order they can help people of their ethnic background as they would have understanding.

Yes, because the old bill can't understand our culture

Yes, some loud behaviour can be seen as dangerous but they could just be being loud amongst themselves

However, 3 respondents thought that communication was more specifically a problem than cultural differences:

Lack of communication plays an important role in the breakdown

Yes but more to do with communication

I think that lack of communication and understanding causes problems between young people and the police

2 respondents specified that the cultural problem depended on the individual:

Culture plays an important part but I believe it also depends on the police officer

It depends on the police officer's perception of multiculturalism

Question 2.5 Why do you think young people in Haringey seem to have an attitude towards the police?

4 respondents did not answer this question and one queried the assumptions behind it – “What survey assumed this?” Of the 22 respondents who answered, 3 put the responsibility for young people's attitudes squarely on themselves and their peers:

I think it's based at the home relationship. Have to learn from the parents how to behave.

8 respondents highlighted prejudice and stereotyping of young people by police, as perceived by the young people themselves:

Young people feel that they are not listened to and are not treated properly by the police

The police are tough and prejudiced towards young people.

The police do not treat the young people properly. They blame them for things they may not have done. So the young people don't like the police.

3 respondents specifically highlighted lack of information among young people about police activities:

They don't understand what the police stand for. They see them as enemies rather than allies.

Because they don't know about what the police do.

Young people don't know more things about police and what's happening around them

2 respondents thought it was not specifically an attitude towards the police, but matched young people's attitude to all authority figures and bureaucracy.

3 respondents cited various outside influences acting on young people's attitudes:

Maybe because of what they see on television

I think the media encourages young people to go against the police. I think all the gangster rap does not help. It's like as a society we are encouraged to go against the police.

Young people have a culture of them and us which is caused by racist police officers and young people listening to rap music which promotes violence and gun crime.

3 respondents cited the effect of peer pressure on young people's attitudes:

More to do with what they have been told from others

Because they're in front of gangs and friends

Because it makes them look hard in front of their mates

Question 3.1 What do you think is the main issue between young people and the police and what can be done about it?

The 23 answers to this question were extremely mixed, incorporating many elements of analysis and suggestions for future improvement, but few condemned only one side in their assessment of the situation.

The responses that were slightly more negative in tone included:

Police can give [young people] a chance

They police think they are all ASBO children and miss the children who do behave

The main issue is that the old bill stop you robbing others. Don't rob others and then you won't get in trouble with the police.

Children should be taught to respect people as well as property. When they learn to behave themselves they can live in harmony with the police.

The police accuse young people without listening to them. The police need to develop better methods of communication with the young people.

The responses that were more balanced and positive in tone included:

That the police do not understand young age groups – and the young people do not understand what the police do!

Culture, understanding, power and fear. Police and young people working together on projects may help

I think it is vital these days to strengthen that link between young people and the police and at the end to understand the message of good publicity.

Young people need to learn more things about police officers and the things being done around where they live

Teach them that the police are the people who help no matter what

Lack of trust is one of the main issues. The police can organise activities with the youth to build greater trust between them

They don't trust each other and have a negative attitude due to crime. Young people can be given the opportunity to voice their opinions and can be involved in activities set up by the police

They need to respect each other and have a better understanding. They can set up activities and work together.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLICE RELATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

C: Police questionnaire

January 2008

Note on the data set: 500 questionnaires were sent out to police between March 2006. 21 were returned, a rate of only 4%. Accordingly, since the data sample is so small, the approach is largely qualitative. The police responses were, on the whole, much longer and more considered than either the parents' or the young people's, and their views less easy to pin down into categories.

Question 1.1 Why do you think young people in Haringey have a bad reputation?

The police response to this question was much more wide-ranging than either the parents' or the young people's responses - both these groups blamed Haringey's high crime rate for young people's reputation. Only 2 police responses cited this as a factor – and then with caveats:

Due to the high level of street crime which is either committed or perceived to be committed by young people.

As crime is perceived to be high in Haringey. Youths are frequently seen “hanging around” – this causes fear amongst the rest of the community. Even the most minor of offences cause fear, such as shouting, spitting, staring, laughing at people as they walk by.

9 respondents argued – some quite indignantly – that young people in Haringey did not have a particularly bad reputation, and that only a few individuals were to blame:

Unfortunately it's a classic case of a “few bad apples spoiling the bunch”

It's important to remember that not all young people in Haringey have a bad reputation.

I did not realise that all young people in Haringey had a bad reputation. Like all age sectors of people some people have a good reputation and some people do not.

That statement is outrageous [Then in response to question 2 regarding negative labelling of young people] You just did it above

I don't think young people generally do, and this question is unnecessarily stereotypical. Most of the kids in the Highgate and Muswell Hill schools are charming and only tend to be victims of crime rather than suspects. It's a minority of the N22, N15 and N17 kids that have a bad reputation. This has the effect of tarnishing the reputation of other kids in their area. The kids who do have a bad reputation deserve it for being rude, scared of no-one, abusive and seeming to have no concept of right and wrong, or are secure in the knowledge that nothing can be done to them in terms of punishment by the state to prevent them committing crimes.

I don't. I can give numerous examples of young people's achievements and successes. With 24 years' service I currently work in the Youth Offending Service. Dealing with young people who've been convicted of criminal offences I can repeatedly evidence young people who are keen to better themselves.

However, the majority accepted the contention of the question that there was a problem. Many spoke of groups of youths "hanging on the streets" as factors that contributed to young people's bad reputation – and often add that the media image exacerbates matters.

The young people walk around in large gangs wearing hoods and always appear to be rowdy and overbearing – the media do not help the situation.

Often loud, aggressive behaviour in large groups (not necessarily gangs). Lack of respect for public service figures/shopkeepers/teachers. Poor parental influences. In press a lot for crime. Aggressive dress codes – dark, hoods up. The perception is that they are involved in suspicious behaviour.

If you wear a hoodie then by definition of the tabloid press you are clearly up to no good

Because the media shows them as robbers, murderers and yobs. Also because groups hang around because they have nowhere to go.

I think media hype about young people and hoodies is part of the problem. The perception created by the media of young people means that the public start to think that all youths who are out and about are causing trouble which is clearly not the case.

2 respondents cited interesting cultural factors as follows:

I think this issue has a lot to do with respect towards each other, of themselves and of their surroundings. Perhaps this could be a problem that stems from various cultures, for e.g. Somalian people who chew

chatt (sp?) sit on street corners and spit on the floor. To me this is disgusting but to them it's second nature.

I attend a lot of local meetings and get complaints about youth disorder... [There is a] lack of tolerance from the population of children. For instance the population no longer tolerate kids playing football and every estate now has no ball games stickers following complaints from residents of kids causing a nuisance by playing football. However ball games in my eyes are a good way to spend their time keeping out of trouble and it is something that historically locals wouldn't have complained about.

Question 1.2 Do you think negative labelling of young people can lead to them fulfilling these labels? If so why?

Police responses on this question were much more mixed than the young people's. The latter had almost universally agreed that negative labelling worsened behaviour. Only one police fully response agreed with this (and then with caveat): "Of course. If young people feel they are perceived in a negative light they may not wish to prove otherwise."

Many other respondents disagreed entirely – some believed that a negative label was not "an excuse" for bad behaviour ("This is absolute rubbish. A negative label doesn't make someone commit a robbery!"), and others thought there were other equally important factors:

No. I believe there is a certain social cachet attached to being a serious offender and the police knowing who you are. This was obvious to me during my stint on the Q cars, where young aspiring robbers would run up to the car and make a point of chatting to you, to show off to their mates.

...there are so many other issues which would have to be combined for a young person to fulfil negative labels – i.e. upbringing, school and education, social factors such as ability to interact.

Yes along with peer pressure from friends and groups

No. Comments that "young people have no respect these days" have been around for years.

Look at myspace and you will see lots of young Haringey youth presenting their "gangsta" image. Also the press do not help in making a big splash of bad things they do and only small items on any good news.

One officer used this question as an opportunity to set out their assessment of the broader social problem:

Unfortunately many indulge themselves in such labelling, viewing gangster life as worthwhile and stimulating. Many local role models (under 20) display wealth and solidarity with peers which is appealing,,, I do not think young people get labelled across the board. There are

clearly different types of youths. Sadly, Tottenham has a greater number of children with poor aspirations. Many have no game plan. Once unrealistic ambitions have evaporated (footballer or music) crime is often seen as a way to achieve fame and money. Every address I have been into re: a wannabe gang member has a “lyric” book full of notes/rhymes where they talk about killing, shooting, robbing and treating women “with disrespect”. [These children are] as young as 14.

Another described the cyclical nature of bad relations between police and young people.

Residents call police if groups congregate – police turn up – youths resent being hassled – youths develop an anti-police sentiment – more likely to be rowdy.

Question 1.3 Do you think culture plays a part in the breakdown of relations between young people and the police? If so why?

Respondents interpreted the word “culture” here in a number of interesting different ways – whereas most parents, for example, assumed that ethnic culture was meant.

Many respondents did pick up on the ethnic and religious implications however, although their opinions of how big a part this played in relations were mixed:

Yes, different cultures react very differently. For example the Orthodox Jewish community tends to be particularly polite and approachable whereas some of the other more prominent cultures don't have this attitude. This could be because of their experiences with police in their own culture in different countries.

Yes, different cultures have different relations with and opinions of the police. Youths are being brought up to have a certain opinion of the police before they have even had their own experiences.

Sometimes this creates a problem, but other times I think that people listen to too many rumours from other people without forming an opinion for themselves

In some cases maybe. A lack of cultural understanding must make relationships difficult, though not impossible.

No, but it is often blamed for a breakdown in relations. My own family came from a very different culture and yet my family and I have always had very good relations with police, neighbours etc.

Some take the argument further to specifically refer to family background as an influence:

Absolutely – if parents have no respect and time for police when why should the young people. A lot of young people from minority ethnic groups can be very quick to play the “racist” card.

Again, in my experience, young people's attitude to the police seems to come directly from their parents' views, and cultural inputs like rap etc make a minimal difference.

Some police respondents mentioned gang culture:

In a youth culture that glorifies violence, materialism by any means and lack of respect of anything or anyone but the self, this is inevitable.

In some cultures it is seen as cool to commit crime and gain respect through bad behaviour

One respondent succinctly identified an altogether different culture problem:

Yes. Police aren't cool.

Question 1.4 Do you think family interaction is important, with regards to relations between young people and the police? If so why?

The great majority of respondents saw lack of family example as being at the core of the problem of poor relations between young people and the police:

It would be nice to see that when the police catch a young person breaking the law that [the family] could actually reinforce some sanction instead of just encouraging them to lie.

Yes. A lack of respect [within the family leads to more conflict. A respectful relationship can resolve issues without need for arrests. This is more likely to lead to longer term problem solving.

Yes, we as police are used to teenage bravado, but it is a poor example when from the outset you are trying to explain things to a parent who is completely anti-police for no apparent reason.

We cannot expect young people to have respect for and show respect to police when their parents don't seem to have respect for police or indeed anyone other than themselves.

My view is that parental guidance of many youths is poor. No discipline. Poor family structures. It is no wonder kids do what they want and do not study. There is never anyone who says "No" or "Stop". The first time this occurs is when they get arrested... Haringey, at times, is like reading "Lord of the Flies".

Question 2.1 How do you think young people in Haringey perceive the police?

The sample was very evenly split on these question – with about half believing that young people had a negative view of the police, and half a positive view. This is a strong contrast with the data collected from young people, where only 12% expressed an actively positive view of the police.

Some negative comments were as follows:

They do not fear or respect the police and treat interaction with the police as a game

With lack of respect and ignorance. Not all young people have this impressed but again a lot are influenced by friends and the situation.

The majority believe that we have nothing better to do than harass them!

A soft touch. Racist due to unfair press. They have no respect for the police.

Adolescents are more difficult to re-engage once they have their confidence in police removed or reduced.

They probably appreciate what we do although publicly they wouldn't disclose this... Many times I have read a poem in people's homes which talks about "What is said inside stays inside". Children are taught not to talk to us about anything

[They perceive the police as] racist, ruthless, stupid

If you asked a young person honestly I think they'd say they get treated with as much respect as they give. However, it seems to be a feature more prevalent amongst young people to try and make a scene and blame the police's actions on their race rather than the fact they are known robbers.

As they're always stopping them from enjoying themselves whether lawfully or not, most see police as out of touch.

Some positive comments were as follows:

Most I believe realise we are doing our job by stopping them. It is only a very small minority involved in crime and these naturally are anti-police.

I believe that the majority of young people find the police approachable, helpful and friendly. Obviously those that get arrested may take a different view.

Question 2.2 What do you think the police's perception of young people is?

Many respondents commented on how seeing "the bad side" on society impacted on their views:

Possibly worse than young people perceive us, as we always see the bad side and can tend to taint everyone the same.

Undoubtedly seeing the whole of society at its worst has an impact on those called to do so.

Others commented on the entrenched problem of traditional enmity between youth and the police:

Personally I believe that only a minority of youth actually cause problems. Generally however it's a bit of us against them.

Many comments showed how the respondents had had mixed experiences:

I have had dealings with young people who I fear will never have a positive view of the police, though likewise I have dealt with young people with a background of problems most adults would never be able to cope with who are very approachable and positive towards the police.

There was also evidence for genuine concern on the part of the police for young people with problems in their background.

I feel sorry for young people growing up in Haringey which has such a stigma attached to it.

For many they are perceived as lost souls who lack proper role models and a positive structure.

Several responses however were unremittingly negative:

Once a troublemaker, a troublemaker for life.

That if half of them got a job at 16 and if the courts were a little more harsh then young people in this borough would be more successful.

Question 2.3 Do you feel intimidated by young people?

14 (two thirds of) respondents said they were not intimidated, but many added that they could see why others were intimidated particularly by groups of young people. Group dynamics were perceived as being different to dealing with an individual, and one officer made the telling comment that "like police officers [young people] hide behind groups but on an individual level they will react to how they are spoken to.

Others said they sometimes were intimidated, especially by large groups they did not know. One said, "We are often called to deal with a group of 20-30 youths hanging round on an estate. You do the maths!"

Question 2.4 What do you think young people in Haringey could do to improve their relationship with the police?

Many respondents mentioned the lack of respect shown to the police:

Drop the attitude! If we say hello when we're passing, say hello back.

Not be intimidated when we come and speak to them. Respect our jobs and our powers. Not partake in the rather stereotypical view that we are targeting them because they are young. Give us a chance to explain.

Others discussed ways of increasing mutual understanding between the two groups, and most thought this was a matter for the police to take initiative on rather than the other way round:

We need to talk to them more and try and include them in extra curricular activities and in the community. Young people have far too many negative role models... Also the courts and young offenders' system undermines the police by almost condoning their actions with the excuse of "no father figure" etc.

There is little young people can do themselves. Were in the case that they could visit police stations and see how we work etc and show them why we stop certain people it would improve their knowledge and make us more transparent.

It's not their responsibility, it's for the adults to provide opportunities for the relationship to be cultivated.

Question 2.5 What do you think the police could do to improve their relationship with young people, or make what they are doing more accessible?

One strong re-emergent theme, as with the parents' and young people's questionnaire, was social activities. These included many good suggestions and have been incorporated into the conclusion and recommendations section.

Several officers felt that they were already making great efforts to improve the relationship between themselves and young people, and that the latter needed to meet them halfway.

Question 3.1 What do you think is the main issue between young people and the police and what can be done about it?

Many officers summarised their earlier answers, reinforcing the impression that they see the problems as very complex and involving a wide range of factors including gang culture, socio-economic background, peer pressure and stress on the police as a result of dealing with the worst side of any group. Many showed tremendous understanding of and sympathy for young people's position. However, two notable factors missing from their summaries which were foregrounded by young people were racism and use of stop and search powers, and this is further discussed in the conclusion.

Note: One questionnaire displayed a shockingly negative attitude and is quoted below in full. It would appear, even from the small size of this sample, that this attitude is that of a very small minority within the police, and the trenchant bitterness evident in their responses suggests that a bad personal experience may be to blame. Clearly, this attitude worsens relations,

undermines any good work to build between links between young people and the police and tends to confirm all young people's worst assumptions about the police if they happen to come into contact with these officers.

1.1

Because they are all a bunch of plastic gangstas who think they are untouchable

1.2

They can fulfil it because they love to be right so they will do anything to make them look bad to adults as they think they know it all

1.3

No

1.4

No, they still hate us, don't think anything can help them.

2.1

They think we are dickheads and feds and [illegible]. They really don't like us.

2.2

They are all little shits really annoying should be [illegible] to stick them all.

2.3

Never

2.4

Don't get nicked, grass up their mates

2.5

Instead of interviews when we nick them talk to them for an hour to bore them to death.

3.1

They hate getting nicked and searched, we love doing it.

D: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey results demonstrate remarkable agreement between police, young people and parents on one factor: that the problem of mutual respect and mutual lack of information has to be solved by efforts on all sides. As one police officer put it:

As much as police officers should guard against forming stereotypical views of young people as the result of one bad experience of a young person, I equally think young people need to guard against forming stereotypical views of the police.

This tends to accord with the overwhelming impression of the data collected from question 6 of the young people's questionnaire – the problem is very much mutual stereotyping and a lack of mutual respect.

On other factors there was less agreement. For example, police and parents were both inclined to believe that a parenting example played a strong role in determining young people's attitude to the police. Young people were not at all clear on this point, or indeed on the whole purpose of the question, which may only go to indicate the subconscious extent of parental influences in determining young people's attitude towards the police.

Two notable factors missing from the police questionnaires which were foregrounded by young people as major issues between themselves and the police were racism and use of stop and search powers. Police on the whole did not consider either of these to be a problem.

Racism, conscious or subconscious, was not at all evident from any of the police questionnaires (even, arguably, the unremittingly negative questionnaire – see below). However, it was clear, as some officers pointed out themselves, that cultural differences could be confusing to them and hinder communication. One officer referred obliquely to this problem in suggesting more training for police in dealing with youth culture. On the other hand, some officers thought that young people were too quick to fall back on accusations of racism when the police were trying to do their job.

Use of stop and search powers is, of course, a regular feature of the job, and although police may have received careful training in employing them sensitively, they may overlook the impact this process has on those undergoing it. Stop and search contact was the greatest source of dissatisfaction to young people when rating the police for the respect shown to them – 63% felt they had not been treated with respect. **This is a larger proportion even than those who had committed crimes and felt they had not been treated with respect – only 55%.** Several police officers opined that most young people knew they were just doing their job in stop and search, although they thought young people being arrested might take a less sympathetic view. The data does not bear this out.

In discussing ways forward to improve relations between young people and the police, attitudes were generally positive from all parties. One police officer said, "It's not [young people's] responsibility, it's for the adults to provide opportunities for the relationship to be cultivated." This accords with the conclusion of the young people at question 7 – the single most important factor in future progress was thought to be police engagement with young people.

The recommendations fall into three categories, exchange of information, social activities and wider initiatives.

Exchange of information

Many young people and parents mentioned schools, youth clubs and community groups as good forums for police to come and get to know young people – on a regular basis perhaps with an annual general meeting to take stock of relations. Their instinct is borne out by the evidence at question 3 that these informal contacts tend to result in good contacts being experienced by young people.

Several young people also mentioned the idea of mentoring, and were echoed by this police officer: "I think it would be beneficial to kids who are on the wrong side of the law to have a 'pet' policeman they can talk to, like school officers currently".

Another police officer contributed the following practical idea: "Send the most wayward of them out on patrol with officers. Get them to realise we are only human and many have been through what they are [going through], even held similar opinions re Police."

Social activities

Social activities were among the most interesting suggestions made by respondents. Particularly striking were the young people who exhorted the police to remember that they were children, and to "play with us". One police officer suggested that it was the role of the police to enforce the law, and not be surrogate social workers or surrogate parents – however, social activities may be a good compromise as they do not appear to fall into this category.

Many excellent ideas were mentioned, and are listed as follows.

Young people:

They could come to youth centres or just come and see what we get up to or mentor us

Police have to be friends with them so they might stop committing crime

Organise things that will get young people off the streets and give them free things like trainers

Activities, football, sports, that kind of thing

Fun fairs

Interact with kids so they can find out why they're so bad. Find out their slang.

Parents:

Provide adventure training for kids at police colleges free

They could be more involved in happy community events ... The media could help!

The police need to be more involved with young people in football matches with mixed teams of police and young people. Talk more to young people and be seen as someone to help and not arrest.

Note: *the mention of adventure training seems a particularly good idea as it utilises resources the police already have. It would encompass both social activity and exchange of information, as the young people would visit police training centres*

Police:

There isn't exactly much for young people to do in Haringey over the weekend/holidays apart from "hanging around". Why not set up activities in accompaniment with sports, e.g. street cricket, golf, football in the evenings? Discounts in cinemas and bowling if they attend police functions and education programmes?

Wider initiatives

There are two avenues which can be pursued here.

1. One parent and a couple of young people mentioned the under-representation of ethnic minorities in the police force, which is clearly a subject to be pursued at borough level and above. The comparatively few responses show that this is not seen to be a major issue in explicit terms. However, the "us and them" mentality evidence throughout the young people's responses would suggest that any similarities between the profile of police and young people should be cultivated and highlighted.
2. It is striking from an overall view of the surveys how often police and young people are in agreement about the problems they face in dealing with each other. Many, many respondents from all groups repeatedly mentioned the word "respect". This may be key to every initiative which seeks to address the problem of poor relations.

One idea may be therefore to use the data collected in this survey itself and publicise it in "bite-size" chunks to the community. Many of the comments from young people on police and vice versa are extremely articulate, thoughtful and balanced – an advertising campaign of some

kind could be used to “promote” each group to the other. If young people themselves could get involved in organising this campaign in conjunction with police, this would represent an activity to occupy their time and also provide valuable work experience.