

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/research/newideasfund/complete/safercommunities/?lang=en>



Rainer CtC Wales

Building safer communities
where children and young people are valued

Final report for the New Ideas Fund

Executive Summary

January 2008

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Background	2
2. The Communities that Care Risk and Protection Audit	3
3. The study	7
4. Findings	9
5. Conclusions and recommendations	18

1. Background

Established by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1997 and then merged with Rainer in 2006, Rainer CtC (formerly known as Communities that Care) is the UK's leading voluntary organisation working in the field of prevention science. Over the years, Rainer CtC has developed a tried-and-tested survey questionnaire which it uses – in Wales and across the UK– not only to measure levels of four related 'problem behaviours / outcomes':

- youth crime and anti-social behaviour,
- drugs / substance misuse,
- school failure and / or dropout,
- school-age pregnancy / parenting.

but also to gauge the relative prevalence within a local population of the risk factors shown by research to increase young people's involvement in these behaviours, and of the protective factors shown to promote resistance to risk.

Since 1998, CtC has surveyed some 350,000 young people in local surveys in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, using its 'standard' questionnaire. It has also conducted a national survey, with a representative sample of some 15,000 young people, giving access for the first time to normative data on risk and protection. The questionnaire has also been used, under licence, by the University of Sheffield and the Policy Research Bureau and to measure the impact on risk & protection levels of the government's On Track programme.

In 2004, initially as part of an exercise called the Safer London Youth Survey, CtC developed and piloted an extended version of its standard questionnaire. This additionally looked in greater depth at the issues of violence (including young people's exposure to / involvement with guns, knives and other weapons) and gangs. The 'new' questionnaire was eventually used to survey a further 25,000 young people in nine London boroughs. Though the exercise was chiefly concerned with gun crime, the survey deliberately cast its net more widely, the main aims being to explore the potential linkages between different outcomes (eg the linkage between violence and drugs misuse) and, at a local level, to describe the configuration of risk and protective factors which may be 'driving' those related outcomes - and which therefore need to be addressed as part of a coherent prevention initiative. In 2005 CtC adapted and piloted another version of the standard questionnaire which is currently being delivered in 4 communities in Belfast. This additionally looks at the issues around exposure to paramilitary activity.

In 1998 the first survey of young people in Wales using the CtC youth survey, was conducted on the East side of Swansea. Since that time the standard questionnaire has been used with over 50,000 young people in Wales. This means that Rainer CtC Wales has a vast set of comprehensive data about the lives of young people which is now available to be interrogated for a variety of purposes additional to those for which it was originally commissioned.

2. The Communities that Care Risk and Protection Audit

Introduction

Research in Britain, the United States and other Western countries has shown there are influential risk factors in children's lives that increase their chances of developing health and behaviour problems as they grow older. Equally important, there are protective factors that help to shield young people from problems.

Communities that Care, an initiative established and sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, is a long-term preventive programme which establishes a working partnership between local people, agencies and organisations to promote healthy personal and social development among young people, while reducing the risks of different problem behaviours such as:

- youth crime
- drug abuse
- school age pregnancy
- academic failure

The risk factors targeted by the CtC programme arise in four domains:

Family

- Poor parental supervision and discipline
- Family conflict
- Family history of problem behaviour
- Parental involvement / attitudes condoning problem behaviour
- Low income and poor housing

School

- Low achievement first identified in primary school
- Aggressive behaviour, including bullying
- Lack of commitment, including truancy
- School disorganisation

Community

- Disadvantaged neighbourhood
- Community disorganisation and neglect
- Availability of drugs
- High turnover and lack of neighbourhood attachment

Individuals, friends and peers

- Alienation and lack of social commitment
- Attitudes that condone problem behaviour
- Early involvement in problem behaviour
- Friends involved in problem behaviour

The protective factors and processes which help to buffer children against risk and prevent future problem behaviour are:

- School opportunities for pro-social involvement
- School rewards for pro-social involvement
- Family attachment
- Family opportunities for pro-social involvement
- Family rewards for pro-social involvement

The CtC questionnaire

For CtC community partnerships to develop appropriate strategies for tackling local problems, it is necessary to first to measure levels of risk and protection within the community. Over the last ten years, CtC has developed and piloted a self-completion youth survey which is now in use in a number of areas throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The survey is designed to provide information on the prevalence of risk and protective factors among young people aged 11-16, and also to assess the current prevalence of problem behaviours within a community.

The survey is delivered through secondary schools, usually across a whole Local Authority area, and pupils are asked to identify which community they live from a list provided with the questionnaire. Local Authority areas can be broken down into up to 70 local communities, thereby allowing information to be provided at a very local level without the need to identify individual young people.

The questionnaire is divided into several sections:

- A: Family
- B: Neighbourhood
- C: School
- D: Alcohol
- E: Smoking
- F: Drugs
- G: Crime
- H: Friends, brothers and sisters
- J: Attitudes / Spare time

Accuracy and reliability

The completed questionnaires are computer-scanned and the resulting dataset is then edited for inconsistencies, routing errors and inappropriate answers. During this editing process, the validity and honesty of the pupils' responses are assessed. Pupils are removed if they meet any of the following conditions:

- they claim to have taken all listed drugs in the past four weeks
- they report use of "derbisol", a fictitious drug, at both relevant questions
- they give two or more inconsistent responses to questions about alcohol or

smoking

- they give two or more inconsistent responses to questions about illegal drugs
- they give two or more inconsistent responses to questions about age

This strategy for removing pupils from the final dataset allows for pupils making occasional clerical mistakes. On average between 1 and 3% of completed surveys are identified by one or more of the above strategies and excluded from further analysis. The Risk and Protection Audit Report is primarily based on the remaining valid survey forms. This survey data is used to measure 13 of the 17 risk factors and all 5 protective factors. In addition we draw on secondary data sources, including the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and local education results from the LEA, to measure the four remaining risk factors.

The UK sample, the Local Authority overall sample group and the local community areas are each weighted to match the overall Local Authority sample in terms of equivalence in age and gender, to maximise comparability amongst the groups.

Notes on tables

- Percentages do not always add to exactly 100% because of the effects of rounding to the nearest unit per cent.
- Sub-group bases do not always add to the overall base as residual or very small sub-group categories, such as 'not answered' are not always shown.

Where responses to particular questions were inconsistent or unclear, they are re-coded as 'unclear' and are presented in the tables together with pupils who did not answer the question ('unclear / not answered').

Explanation of risk and protective factor scores

For each of the thirteen survey-based risk factors, the responses to the relevant survey questions are combined in order to create a score between 0 and 40, 0 indicating the lowest possible level of risk and 40 indicating the highest possible level of risk. A high score on the Availability of Drugs risk factor scale, for example, would indicate that the pupil felt drugs were easily available, while a low score would indicate that he did not.

Similar 0-40 scores are created for each of the five protection factors, with 0 indicating the lowest possible level of protection and 40 indicating the highest possible level of protection.

All thirteen survey-based risk factor scores are also combined in order to create an overall measure of risk for each pupil, again with scores ranging from 0 (which indicates the lowest possible level of risk) to 40 (the highest possible level of risk). A similar 0-40 overall protection measure is created.

Notes on interpreting the risk factor scores

It should be borne in mind that while each factor is scored from 0-40 for ease of reporting, a score of 10 for one risk factor does not necessarily indicate an equivalent level of risk to that indicated by a score of 10 for another risk factor. For this study, it would be misleading simply to compare the mean scores of each risk factor, in order to decide which is the biggest risk within any local area, or between local areas. Each risk factor should be considered *separately*, with regard being given to any additional relevant evidence or data that may be available.

3. The study

The aim of this study is to build stronger, healthier and safer communities in Wales where children and young people are valued and supported to reach their full potential. This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- To examine the very different profile of risk and protective factors experienced by young people growing up in the various communities and local authorities in Wales.
- To understand more fully where those differences originate and therefore what can be done to improve the risk and protection profile for all young people growing up in Wales.
- To establish clear, shared goals for the reduction in risk and increase in protection to be achieved for children and young people growing up in some of the most deprived communities of Wales.
- To disseminate this knowledge to service delivery partnerships allowing them to target their services more accurately and with a more preventative approach.

Methodology

Substantial data sets have already been produced as a result of surveying young people in 25 Communities First areas across Swansea, Bridgend, Flintshire, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr between 2004 and 2006. The SPSS data sets from this survey work were used as the starting point for this study.

Each local authority data set has been compared to the national sample taken in 2001 and each local authority is using the results to guide the actions of their Children and Young People's Partnerships and in some cases the Communities First and Community Safety Partnerships. However, there have not been the resources available to compare results between local authorities. The results obtained from these separate studies strongly suggest that the risk and protection profile experienced by young people may differ greatly from one authority to the next and from one community to the next. These differences are far greater than we had originally anticipated given the demographic similarities between the areas. We are asking for support from the New Ideas fund to enable us to examine these differences more closely and draw out general and specific learning points which could be used to influence public policy around the themes within the Social Justice and Regeneration portfolio of developing strong and safe communities and of ensuring that all our children and future generations may enjoy better prospects in life.

The steps of this study are as follows:

Step 1) negotiate with local authority partners to use the data sets for this project. Legally the data is owned by Rainer CtC, but we prefer to discuss the use of data with local authority partners and get their agreement as we hope to re-survey in those authorities in the future and get trend data.

Step 2) re-examine the original data sets from each area and group in such a way that they can be compared directly to each other.

Step 3) compare the risk and protection profile of the Communities First areas and identify the most pronounced differences between them.

Step 4) conduct a series of guided interviews with a range of focus groups made up of community representatives including young people and agency staff to examine further the differences and similarities identified in steps 2 and 3.

Step 5) produce a report in which the findings from steps 2 – 4 are set out along with recommendations for action to be taken at Communities First, Local Authority and Welsh Assembly levels.

4. Findings

This section sets out the findings of the study, starting with the findings from Steps 1 to 3, which have already been reported in the Interim Report, and then looking in depth at the findings from Step 4 which looked in more detail at the two highest risk areas and the two lowest risk areas of the 25 Communities First areas compared.

4.1 Findings from Steps 1 to 3 (set out in interim report dated August 2007)

The 25 Communities First areas compared were:

<u>Local Authority area</u>	<u>Communities First area</u>
Bridgend:	Betws Blackmill Caerau
Swansea:	Bonymaen
Vale of Glamorgan:	Gibbonsdown St Thompson
Flintshire:	Flint Castle Higher Shotton
Torfaen:	Thornhill Trevethin
Blaenau Gwent:	Abertillery Cwmtillery Blaina Ebbw Vale North & South Nantyglo Six Bells St Illtyd's (Llanhilleth) Rassau and Garnlydan Cwm, Waunlwyd and Victoria Tredegar Central and West and Sirhowy
Merthyr Tydfil:	Dowlais Gurnos Pennydarren
Rhondda Cynon Taf:	Tonyrefail West Gilfach Goch

Each area was randomly assigned a letter of alphabet from A to Y in order to preserve confidentiality in terms of results.

A statistical analysis of the existing data was conducted, comparing all 25 Communities First areas to a grand mean at each of the 13 risk factors and 5 protective factors measured by the Risk Audit. Statistically significant differences were found at 11 risk factors and all 5 protective factors. An overall analysis of Risk Factors and Protective Factors is shown below.

Risk Factors

Note: In terms of risk factors, the higher the mean score the higher the level of risk.

Overall Risk Factor scores

- 5 areas had no significant differences from the grand mean. These were areas D, L, O, W and Y.

Low risk factor scores

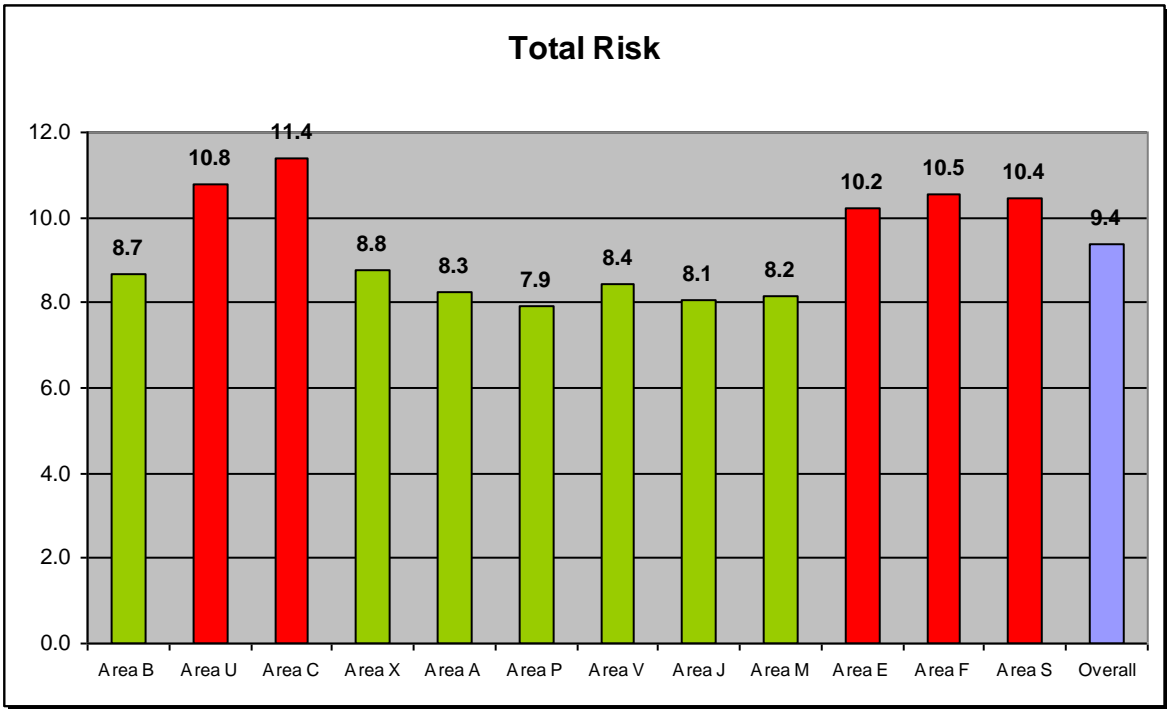
- 3 areas had only one risk factor score which was significantly lower than the grand mean. These were areas G, H and T.
- 1 area had two risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area I.
- 3 areas had four risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. These were areas B, Q and V.
- 1 area had five risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area X.
- 1 area had seven risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area A.
- 1 area had eight risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area M.
- 1 area had nine risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area P.
- 1 area had ten risk factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area J.

High risk factor scores

- 1 area had only one risk factor score that was significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area N.
- 1 area had two risk factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area K.
- 2 areas had four risk factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. These were areas E and G.
- 1 area had six risk factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area S.
- 1 area had seven risk factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area U.
- 1 area had eight risk factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area C.

Mixed high and low scores

- 2 areas had both significantly higher and lower risk factor scores. These were areas F and R. Area F had one significantly lower and four significantly higher scores. Area R had one significantly lower and two significantly higher scores.



Protective Factors

Note: In terms of protective factors, the higher the mean score the higher the level of protection.

Overall Protective Factors scores

- 13 areas had no significant differences from the grand mean. These were areas D, E, F, H, J, K, N, O, P, Q, R, V and W.

High protective factor scores

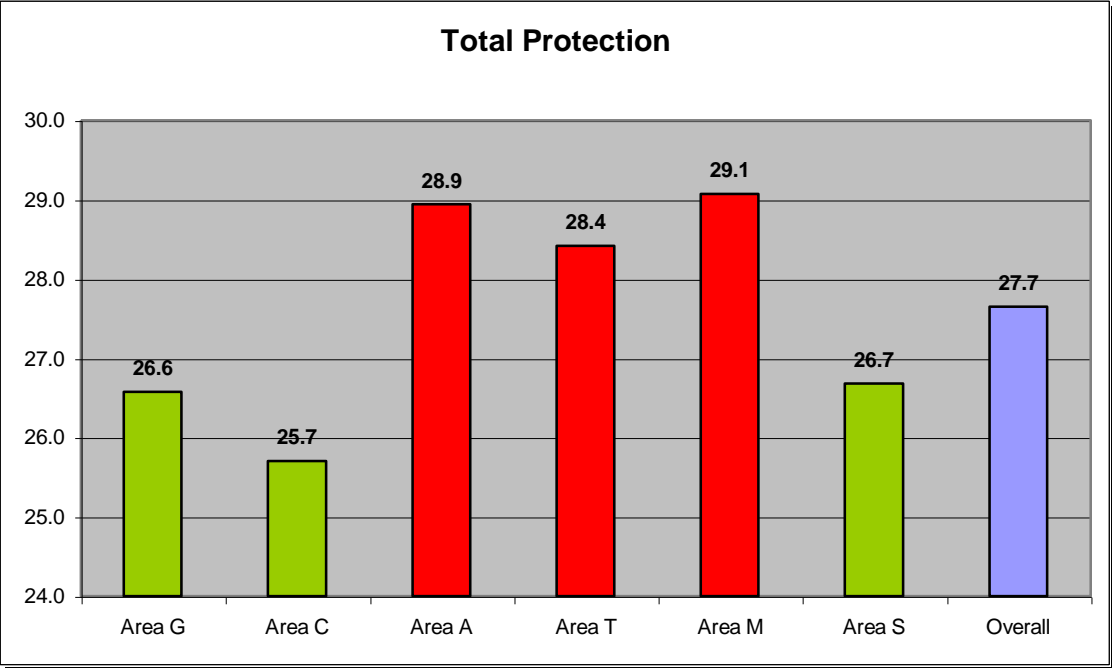
- 5 areas had only one protective factor score which was significantly higher than the grand mean. These were areas B, I, L, X and Y.
- 1 area had two protective factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area T.
- 1 area had three protective factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area A.
- 1 area had all five protective factor scores that were significantly higher than the grand mean. This was area M.

Low protective factor scores

- 4 areas had two protective factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. These were areas G, N, S and U.
- 1 area had four protective factor scores that were significantly lower than the grand mean. This was area C.

Mixed high and low scores

- No areas had both significantly higher and lower protective factor scores.



Selected areas for further study

The two areas of greatest risk and least protection overall were areas C and U and the two areas of greatest protection and least risk overall were areas M and A. Based on these results Rainer CtC Wales carried out further study, under Step 4, of Areas **C** and **U** and Areas **M** and **A**, with Areas C and U representing Communities First areas with a significantly high risk profile and Areas M and A representing Communities First areas with a significantly low risk profile.

- Area C had 8 significantly higher risk scores and 4 significantly lower protective factor scores. It was also highest on the overall mean score
- Area U had 7 significantly higher risk scores and 2 significantly lower protective scores.
- Area M had 8 significantly lower risk scores and 5 significantly higher protective scores. It was also highest on the overall protective score.
- Area A had 7 significantly lower risk scores and 3 significantly higher protective scores.

4.2 Findings from Step 4 (in depth study of 4 Communities First areas)

Introduction

The four areas chosen are all Valleys communities, one of the high risk and one of the low risk areas are made up of a number of small communities brought together under the Communities First banner. Each of these also had existing well-established community development organisations which had been working in the area for many years prior to Communities First. The other two are small, single communities without any previous significant community development infrastructure.

In order to find out whether we could identify any reasons for differences in profiles between areas which, at face value, look very similar physically and have similar economic and social issues, we spoke to a range of young people and professional workers from these four areas.

We spoke to 35 people in all: 24 young people, aged 11 to 17, through focus groups in each area; and 11 professional workers, including the Communities First Co-ordinator, a Youth Worker from each area and community safety representatives, through semi-structured interviews. All workers had been involved in the area for at least 2 years and the majority for 5 years or more. This sections outlines the results under the headings of attitude towards the young people, attitude towards the local area, issues facing young people and local services for young people.

Attitudes towards the young people

Higher risk areas: there was general agreement that the young people in their areas were no different to those from other parts of Wales. The majority of them are 'good kids' with a small minority seen as 'bad' or spoiling things for the rest.

Their expectations may be lower but, as one worker put it, 'they worry about the same things'. There was also agreement that, given time and effort, they could turn the problem youngsters around: they are 'no more difficult than any other kids, once you get to know them they are good, even the disruptive ones'.

Lower risk areas: as with the young people from the higher risk areas, the workers generally saw their young people as no different to youngsters everywhere. The majority were seen as good kids with just a few creating problems. Some workers talked of some young people having low aspirations, but to a lesser extent than with the higher risk areas. Generally young people were seen as 'enthusiastic and feisty'.

Attitude towards the local area:

a) physical environment

Higher risk areas: both groups of young people said they didn't like the physical environment. They spoke often about graffiti and vandalism, old buildings, new facilities being ruined very quickly by other people: 'the new houses are nice down ... but have been wrecked and rubbish gets dumped there'. These views echoed the findings from the Risk and Protection Audits for these two communities, for community disorganisation and neglect. The views about the appearance of the area were not echoed by the workers who ranged from saying the areas were about average to talking very positively about the areas.

Lower risk areas: again, both groups of young people spoke very negatively about the physical environment: 'it doesn't look friendly', 'the park is wrecked and full of rubbish', and frequently speaking of graffiti and vandalism. These views echo the findings from the Risk and Protection Audits for these two communities, where levels of community neglect were significantly higher than the UK average. The workers did not feel strongly about the physical environment, commenting that it was a little run down but nothing out of the ordinary.

b) community

Higher risk areas: there were mixed views from the young people on this issue. Many said they liked the area and could give many examples of adults in the area they could go to for advice or support, both professional workers and community members. The majority also felt they would miss the area, and in particular the local people, if they had to move away. The Risk and Protection Audit results are inconclusive here, with each area showing high and low risk responses at various questions on neighbourhood attachment.

However, there was also general agreement that it was not safe to be out on their own after dark, both due to the levels of violence in the areas and drug and alcohol abuse. These views echoed the findings from the Risk and

Protection Audits for these two communities, where issues of safety and levels of violence were significantly higher than for the UK average.

In terms of young peoples safety, the workers strongly agreed, with one worker commenting that they had 'often seen evidence of young people escorting each other home' to keep safe. The workers also felt that there was a great deal of apathy and lack of aspiration from adults in both communities which had a knock on effect on the young peoples own attitudes.

Lower risk areas: again, there were mixed views from the young people, with most saying they would miss the people if they had to move away and able to name community members that offered support. Both of these views are reflected in the relevant parts of the Risk and Protection Audit Report for the areas. However, generally views were either indifferent or negative about the community, with many young people talking about being moved on by the police regularly or not being allowed to use facilities. There was a strong feeling of not being safe after dark, due to threats of violence and drug and alcohol abuse. The Risk and Protection Audit results for feeling safe after dark came in at the UK average for both areas. However, the UK average is 22%, showing significant numbers of young people who do not feel safe in their own communities at night.

The workers were also fairly non-committal about the local community and spoke of low expectations from some parents but not as widespread as with higher risk areas. They did not see young peoples safety as a particular issue for the area, which reflects the Audit results shown above.

c) school

Higher risk areas: as would be expected there were mixed views about school, with some young people saying they enjoyed it and others saying they didn't. The Risk and Protection Audits for these two communities both showed higher than average numbers who did not enjoy school. However, both groups of youngsters were able to name several teachers who they had had good relationships with and whose classes they enjoyed. Most were also involved in after school clubs for sports and other activities, provided by the school.

Lower risk areas: again, there were mixed views about school, with many negative comments about the schools being run down and having poor facilities. However, both groups could name many staff members they got on well with and enjoyed the classes of. This reflects the Risk and Protection Audit results, with both areas having relatively low risk levels in terms of lack of commitment to school, one being at the UK average and one being significantly better.

Issues facing young people

Higher risk areas: when asked about the issues facing young people in their area there was unanimous agreement from all the workers that the key issue was apathy and low aspirations, including a lack of aspiration from both their parents and the community as a whole. This was echoed to a large extent in the attitudes of the young people themselves, one of whom commented that their community was 'at the bottom of the food chain'.

Lower risk areas: when asked about the issues facing young people the workers spoke of a range of concerns. Low expectations from parents and a lack of aspirations was one, but also of strong concern was the lack of opportunity to get decent jobs and the feeling that young people had to move away to succeed. Also raised were the potential to get drawn into drug or alcohol abuse and the high level of teenage pregnancies.

Local services for young people

Higher risk areas: when asked about what there was for them to do, young people from both areas could name a number of services, including youth clubs and sports clubs. However, there was also a general feeling that there simply wasn't enough, particularly during the school holidays. In terms of support and advice services, both groups felt that there were plenty of people they could go to, including the local youth workers.

Again, these views were echoed by the workers who all said they felt more detached youth work was needed to get to those young people who won't use organised facilities.

Lower risk areas: the young people from both areas were very negative about what there was for them to do, with almost no formal activities being mentioned or if they were with the caveat that they were aimed at young kids. This was generally echoed by the workers, who, with one exception, agreed that there was very little organised activity for young people.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The four areas studied, although having very different Risk and Protection profiles, do not, from these investigations show themselves to be particularly different on the surface. The fact that all four are Communities First areas means that they are all economically deprived and also that all four are now receiving significant levels of support from the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities and other bodies. There were, however, two areas where differences can be drawn out:

- All four areas have facilities for young people but the facilities in the two higher risk areas are seen as very good by most of the workers we spoke to, whereas the facilities in the two lower risk areas were seen as generally poor. This would seem to suggest that it is not the level of services which is increasing levels of risk for the young people.
- In terms of issues facing young people, low aspirations was raised in all four areas. However, this came out very strongly as an issue for the two higher risk areas whereas in the lower risk areas it was seen as something that affected some young people.

5.2 Recommendations

We recommend that further, more extensive research is carried out in order to investigate the initial conclusion that it is young peoples level of aspiration, and the aspirations adults have for them, that have a significant impact on the level of risk faced by young people, regardless of the level of services provided for them.

Rainer CtC Wales would be happy to take part in such further research and to make available the data from it's Risk and Protection Audits for the relevant areas, subject to such data being treated with the utmost confidentiality and local areas researched not identified in any resulting reports or actions.