



The Goodie Hoodie

Young people fight back against negative youth stereotypes

The negative stereotypes of today's youth as, 'violent' 'disrespectful' or 'apathetic' were challenged, head on, today by the results of a innovative and straight-talking online youth poll, conducted by v, The National Young Volunteers Service.

Rather than demonising today's youth, the research paints a far more positive picture of today's 16-25 year olds which the charity hope will open the public's eyes and inform government and policy makers.

While **(82%)** of the youngsters who participated said they might own a 'hoodie' – this did not necessarily equate to anti-social behaviour. In fact, what the poll actually found was that **85%** of young people said that they or their friends don't carry knives; **86%** of respondents had never shoplifted goods worth more than a fiver and **69%** did not agree that drugs were ok for recreational use.

Further results from the poll revealed that **78%** of 16-25 year olds do, in fact, respect their elders; **75%** of young people are happy with the relationship they have with their family and **68%** of respondents are content living at home. A stark contrast between many modern day perceptions and the truth of what it's really like to be a young person living in the UK today.

The new online youth insight project from v, called **Voicebox**, is specifically designed to give 16-25 year olds a platform to express their real views on a variety of topical social issues, ranging from crime to the community, and blows apart the idea that the young generation are 'apathetic' or 'disengaged'. The research actually showed that young Britain's top 5 concerns in order of priority are (1) Education (2) Their Future (3) Employment (4) Family (5) The state of the world.

More worryingly, what the poll did reveal is that young people are becoming increasingly disillusioned with society and the government with **71%** of young people believing that we do not live in a fair society; **59%** of young people feeling the world is becoming a worse place; over half (**54%**) of respondents saying the recession has affected them and only **10%** of young people feeling that politicians are the best people to change the country.

Terry Ryall, CEO of v, The National Young Volunteers Service said:

“v prides itself on being youth-led and has created Voicebox to ensure that we really understand what young people are thinking. We will be using the findings to influence our programmes and campaigns; to help engage more young people in volunteering and to talk to government about what young people really want.”

Young volunteer Matt Johnston (Age 24) said:

“Voicebox is a brilliant idea. It’s about time that we get the opportunity to speak for ourselves. My generation is really passionate, but our opinions are often dismissed and usually go unheard. People just assume that they understand us and make sweeping generalisations, often getting it completely wrong. “

Young people have already been telling Voicebox what they care about:

“I care for fairness. I care about equality. I care that I can’t get a job. I care that politicians and bankers have bonuses and expenses when I can’t afford bread.”

“16 – 25 year olds care about the way many adults tend to treat us. A small minority are changing the way we are seen and it’s not fair!!”

“Firstly and foremost I care about my family. After all, whatever happens in life that’s the one true constant.”

“After doing voluntary work for a charity with disabled children I feel truly inspired by their spirit for life and their enthusiasm to learn.”

Over the coming months, **Voicebox** will continue to collect, use and share data about lifestyles, attitudes and behaviours of young Britain. The more people that take part, the more realistic picture v hopes to achieve. The full results of the research will eventually be fed into more detailed work with the think tank Demos, which ultimately, will be shared with government & policy makers.

In a modern day twist on writing to your MP, **Voicebox** will also be present in the Houses of Parliament, from 12-16 October, in the form of a robot installation. The **Voicebot** is an industrial web-enabled robot which is connected to the **Voicebox** site which will articulate the cares of a generation directly to politicians. To get your message heard – all you need to do is visit <http://voicebox.vinspired.com> write what you care about (in 160 characters) and this will be written by **The Voicebot** once it’s in the Houses of Parliament.

For further information, case studies and interviews with spokespeople please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

v, The National Young Volunteers Service aims to inspire a new generation of volunteers (aged 16-25) in England. It does this by funding voluntary organisations all over England to create inspiring, diverse opportunities and by helping to overcome barriers that stop people from taking action to improve lives, communities and the planet. **v**'s aim is to create a culture where volunteering comes naturally and where the benefits of volunteering are understood and celebrated.

v is an independent charity launched in May 2006 as a result of the Russell Commission report, A National Framework for Youth Action and Engagement.

Visit: www.vinspired.com for more information on what we do and how we do it.

Voicebox is **v**'s new innovative online youth insight project. Using interactive online surveys, data visualisation techniques and an open approach, the project aims to engage young people and get them to share their views on a variety of social issues from crime to the community. To begin each theme and find the initial results, **v** has taken the views of a representative sample of 1,000 young people in the UK. (The research was carried out by Dubit.) However, the online project is live and the data is constantly evolving as more young people participate on a daily basis. The aim with Voicebox is to engage as many young people as possible, to better understand their views, so **v** can deliver programmes more suited to their needs and influence government & policy makers.

Visit: <http://voicebox.vinspired.com> for your voice to be heard.

Respondents:

A sample of over 1,000 16 – 25 year olds took part in the online poll conducted by Dubit on behalf of **v** in May 2009. The data was weighted according to age, gender, and region to be representative of all British youth.

- Of the sample 500 were males and 500 were female
- These 1,000 young people lived across the UK, 219 in the North, 249 in the Midlands, 421 in the South and 110 in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- 786 young people were White, 70 young people were Black, 97 young people were Asian and 47 young people classified themselves as 'other' ethnic group
- 587 young people were in education, 423 were in employment and 123 young people were not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- 300 young people were 16 – 18 years old, 300 young people were 19 – 21 years old, and 400 young people were 22 – 35 years old

Results:

- **85%** of young people said that they or their friends don't carry knives
- **86%** of respondents had never shoplifted goods worth more than a fiver
- **69%** did not agree that drugs were ok for recreational use
- **61%** believed it was irresponsible to be a teenage mum.
- **56%** of respondents agreed it was not normal to have sex before the age of 16.
- **75%** of young people are happy with the relationship they have with their family
- **68%** of respondents are happy living at home
- **78%** of 16-25 year olds respect their elders (only 1% said that they don't respect their elders)