

USING A SOCIAL ACTION APPROACH TO INVESTIGATE YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO TOBACCO VIA SOCIAL SOURCES

REPORT

For: NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service and University of Edinburgh (Centre for Population Health Sciences and Moray House School of Education)

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CONTENTS	PAGE
Thanks and acknowledgements	1
Part 1: About the project + a summary of findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Young people’s access to tobacco • Recruiting and supporting the community projects • The youth work agency approach: <i>social action</i> • Identifying learning and insight • Role of the Advisory Group • Project timeline • Summary of findings 	2
Part 2: Learning from the project: insight from participants about young people’s use of, and access to, tobacco <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people’s attitudes towards young people’s use of tobacco • Workers attitudes towards young people’s use of tobacco • Views on how young people access tobacco • A summary of key points and some reflective questions 	12
Part 3: Learning from the project: insight from participants on using the social action (participatory research) model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is social action and why use it in this project? • Familiarity with the social action model • Using the model: Ethos • Using the model: the 5 stages • A summary of key points and some reflective questions 	24
Part 4: Learning from the project: insight from participants on tobacco prevention and tackling social sourcing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight on tobacco prevention • Insight on tackling social sourcing • A summary of key points and some reflective questions 	45
Part 5: Pen-pictures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 1 • Project 2 • Project 3 • Project 4 	56
Appendix: Methodology	72

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PART 1

ABOUT THE PROJECT + SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Introduction
2. Young people's access to tobacco
3. Recruiting and supporting the community projects
4. The youth work agency approach: *social action*
5. Identifying learning and insight
6. Role of the Advisory Group
7. Project timeline
8. Summary of findings

1. Introduction

The project is a collaboration involving NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service and University of Edinburgh (Centre for Population Health Sciences and Moray House School of Education) and four community-based youth agencies operating in different parts of the Lothians. The purpose of the project is described as follows:

To investigate young people's (age under 18 years) access to tobacco through social sources such as family members, friends and adult (proxy) sales; and to design, implement and evaluate a pilot community based intervention to address the issue.

Alongside the work conducted by the youth projects an external agency, TASC (Scotland), was commissioned to identify learning and insight on the issue of social sourcing and use of the model used known as *social action*.

2. Young people's access to and use of tobacco

Smoking remains a public health concern. It is the single most preventable cause of premature death and inequalities in health in Scotland. Reducing smoking uptake among young people is a key public health goal, particularly among disadvantaged young people who are most likely to become smokers.

Tobacco sales legislation prohibits the sale of tobaccos to young people under the age of 18. Data from the Scottish Adolescent Lifestyle Substance Use Survey SALSUS (2013)¹ highlights an established pattern among young people who are regular smokers of them accessing cigarettes from social sources i.e. friends, family, other adults. A third of 15 year olds who smoke report that they ask an adult they know to buy them cigarettes while 28% ask an adult they don't know. 12% of 15 year olds who smoke ask someone else under 18 to purchase on their behalf. Of those who were 'given cigarettes' 38% were given them by a friend. A smaller number were given cigarettes by a parent/carer (9%) and siblings (8%). The proportion of 15 year old regular smokers buying cigarettes from shops dropped from 54% in 2010 to 31% in 2013.

Other research has also highlighted that young people are astute at circumventing tobacco sales legislation by exploiting social sources including proxy sales, and that as age

¹ National Services Scotland (2014) Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) Smoking Among 13 and 15 year olds in Scotland 2013. http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Public-Health/Publications/2014-11-25/SALSUS_2013_Smoking_Report.pdf

of sales restrictions tighten, it is assumed that young people will increasingly turn to social sources for their tobacco.²

The project partners – NHS Lothian and University of Edinburgh – view the accessibility of cigarettes from social sources as a significant problem which has potential to seriously undermine other prevention measures. A number of systematic reviews have all concluded that without concomitant attempts to curb social access, the efficacy of enforcing under-age sales legislation is undermined (Richardson et al, 2009)³. As highlighted in a recent mixed-method systematic review (Social Science Research Unit, 2011)⁴ the issue of young people accessing tobacco via social sources is an under researched area of tobacco control. There is therefore a lack of reliable data and/or examples of effective interventions designed to tackle the issue, making the need to undertake properly evaluated interventions on this subject a priority.

3. Recruiting and supporting the community projects

To recruit the community-based youth projects information about the initiative was shared widely and local agencies were asked to make an application in which they evidenced their track record of delivering successful community development and/or youth participation projects; this was to include experience of working on tobacco issues with young people. Each of the successful youth agencies received a grant to cover on-costs associated with delivering the field-work. It was expected that two paid part-time members of staff would be involved in working with young people throughout a 12 month period.

The work of the four community-based agencies (anonymised in this report) is described in part 5 of the report while insight gathered from their work forms the basis of other chapters. To contextualise later sections brief information about the participating projects follows:

Project 1 is a local community organisation established 18 years ago, it works with people of all ages and deliver a range of activities and services. The centre's programme includes children and youth people's clubs as well as services for adults including employability and benefits advice and social clubs. The Centre also has a café run by volunteers. Some of the communities served by the agency are within the 10% most deprived in Scotland.

² Donaghy E, Bauld L, Eadie D, McKell, Pringle B, Amos A (2013) A qualitative study of how young Scottish smokers living in disadvantaged communities get their cigarettes. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, 15, 2053-2059.

³ Richardson L, Hemsing N, Greaves L, Assanand S, Allen P, McCullough L, Bauld L, Humphries K, Amos A (2009) Preventing smoking in young people: a systematic review of the impact of access interventions. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 6, 1485-151.

⁴ Sutcliffe K, Brunton G, Twamley K, Hinds K, O'Mara-Eves AJ, Thomas J (2011) Young people's access to tobacco: a mixed-method systematic review. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Project 2 is a voluntary sector youth project based in a small town which attracts young people aged 12 to 18 years old from the town and surrounding communities. Established for over 20 years the project operates from a youth café/drop in facility which also offers a programme of activities. The project has a partnership with the local High School where it supports a range of life skills, employability and vocational learning as well as providing one-to-one support. Targeted work also engages girls and young women and young people with disabilities. In general terms the town and surrounding areas are fairly affluent with no communities in the 20% most deprived as measured in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Project 3 is a local community organisation established in 2005 and working with young people aged 12 to 21 on all aspects of health and wellbeing. Services and activities include one-to-one support and counselling, drop-in services, sexual health education and services and support around alcohol and substance misuse as well as complimentary therapies. The agency works from its own premises but also in local schools and Colleges and via street work. Some of the areas/communities served by the agency are within the 20% most deprived in Scotland.

Project 4 was established in 1992 and works with young people aged 10 to 21 years old across a large geographic area. Programmes include detached youth work, peer education, befriending as well as holiday programmes and training workshops. Some of the areas/communities served by the agency are within the 10% most deprived in Scotland.

4. The youth work agency approach: *social action*

The attitudes of both young people and adults, along with wider community norms towards the acceptability of young people being able to access cigarettes through social sources (including proxy sales), is seen as key. Project partners considered that a participatory research method (also known as social action, the term used primarily in the programme) is therefore considered to be a suitable approach to explore the topic of social sourcing further. This method enables local (young) people to investigate social issues, participate in the research process to understand the root causes of problems that directly impact them, and then take action. It is consistent with health promotion principles and promotes young people's involvement in their communities. Furthermore, the method emphasises the development of young people's knowledge, skills and abilities to be experts on issues of importance to them, and catalyse change in collaboration with their peers and supportive adults.⁵

⁵ Berg Powers C, Allaman E (2012) How Participatory Action Research Can Promote Social Change and Help Youth Development <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/8095> (accessed 27 November 2013).

5. Identifying learning and insight

In order to identify learning the work led by external consultant TASC (Scotland) used a range of qualitative methods to capture the work of the four youth projects. A summary of the approach is described below, a full description is found in the appendix.

Project workers engaged via multiple approaches:

- a. Approximately 3 months into their programme of work the first face-to-face interviews were conducted with project workers. These explored how they had approached the programme of work and captured progress to date.
- b. In terms of recording some detail about their work project workers were asked to complete an online report in advance of a project session. This asked them to record what they had planned for each session.
- c. Project workers were also asked to complete an online report *after* each project session. This asked them to record how the session had gone and put some focus on use of the social action model as well as the project's theme of social access to tobacco.
- d. At the projects reached the end of their programme of work final face-to-face interviews were conducted with project workers, exploring delivery of the programme and impact on the agency and participating young people.
- e. Finally, on completion of their programmes, project workers were asked to respond via email to final questions about their use of the social action model.

Young people engaged as follows:

- a. At approximately 3 months into their programme of work the first face-to-face interviews were conducted with young people; these explored their experience of participation to date and views on young people's access to tobacco via social sources.
- b. At the projects reached the end of their programme of work final face-to-face interviews were conducted with young people; these explored their experience and the impact of participation.

This report makes use of quotes from project workers and young people. Interviews workers and young people were recorded and transcribed. Quotes from online updates are taken directly from responses. Quotes are identified as coming from an interview or online report, by project (protecting anonymity projects are numbered 1 to 4) and as coming from a project worker or young person.

The information gathered across these different approaches informs the findings presented in this report.

6. Role of the Advisory Group

An Advisory Group was established to provide support and guidance and to have an overview of the evaluation process. The Advisory Group facilitated events at which participating workers talked about the work. Group members were also available to respond to individual questions from participating agencies. Further, approximately midway in the programme, members of the Advisory Group met with participating youth projects individually to discuss current work plans. Advisory Group members also received the online updates submitted by each of the youth projects. The Advisory Group met at regular intervals with meetings also attended by the external evaluator.

The project received approval from an appropriate University of Edinburgh Research Ethics Committee.

7. Project timeline

The table below identifies key points in the process.

March 2014	Information about the programme is published and community-based youth agencies are invited to apply.
May 2014	Agencies are interviewed and selected. TASC (Scotland) appointed.
July 2014	Successful agencies meet together with the Advisory Group for an induction.
September 2014	Work with young people and online reporting begins.
December 2014	A second joint agency meeting is held to discuss progress.
January 2015	TASC conducts first interviews with workers and young people in each setting.
March 2015	Agencies are asked to submit a current work plan and attend a meeting with Advisory Group members.
August 2015	Final interviews are conducted by the evaluator, with workers and young people.
September 2015	Projects submit final information about their projects.

8.A summary of findings

Insight from participants about young people's use of, and access to, tobacco

While some young people have a negative view of smoking others see it as normal and for some a part of growing up. With smoking seen as a legitimate personal choice non-smokers are keen not to judge others. Whether smokers or not young people support improved help to support young people stop smoking. Reflecting on smoking as the norm, workers are concerned that legislation about access to tobacco is having little impact on entrenched attitudes and behaviours. Young people recognise the need for help to stop smoking and that just telling someone to stop or punishing them for smoking will not stop them.

Across the programme of work young people and project workers have recognised the disproportionate impact that smoking has on people living in poverty, with a sense that even though national data might show decreases in smoking in some populations they believe this is not the case for young people living in areas of multiple deprivation.

When it comes to direct purchasing (the buying of tobacco from commercial premises) young people and workers identify the ease by which tobacco can be sourced. Young people and workers report that buying locally, at the corner shop rather than a large retail outlet, was made easier if a local shop sees tobacco and associated sales as essential income; it seems that young people and some shopkeepers are complicit in continuing an arrangement that suits them both.

Looking to social sources one method adopted by young people is to approach an unknown adult who will purchase cigarettes on their behalf, formally called 'proxy sales' young people refer to these adults as 'randoms'. While some randoms may buy the tobacco simply because they are asked, it can be usual for them to be given some payment, cash or cigarettes for making the purchase. While the young people involved in the local projects would themselves ask random adults, they also question the judgement of an adult who would do this for them.

Young people also identify other young people as a source of supply, sometimes this means peers selling single cigarettes. The final social source identified in discussion with young people is tobacco provided by parents, carers or other family members. Young people see this as an easy or convenient source.

The work undertaken by the community projects has led to a growing awareness of the extent to which young people access tobacco (in spite of legislation which addresses direct purchasing) and the complexity of tackling the issue. For project workers there is a strong feeling that it is simply too easy for young people to access tobacco and it is the range of options which young people who smoke have that makes tackling one particular source in isolation less likely to succeed.

Finally, in terms of an insight into the questions of young people's access to and use of tobacco, a topic of interest and concern has emerged in the course of the project: young

people's use of electronic cigarettes. At the start of the programme of work (August 2014) there were emerging concerns about access and use, by the conclusion of the work (August 2015) these worries about young people's use of the product are now substantiated by experience in the communities involved. Workers report that e cigarettes are seen as something to have and be seen with, and that young people who have never smoked tobacco are using them.

This insight on young people's use of and access to tobacco is explored in more detail in part 2 of the report.

Insight from participants on using the social action model

The *social action model* (also known as *participatory research*) was chosen as an approach by programme funders in response to the notion that that attitudes of both young people and adults toward social sourcing, along with wider community norms, are key factors to address. Through their participation young people and workers confirm that it is the normalisation of smoking and the social acceptability of the supply of tobacco – the transaction between young people and adults – that are at the heart of the challenge faced when it comes to tobacco prevention and tackling social sourcing.

Programme funders assumed that participating workers and their agencies would have a degree of familiarity with the social action approach. As work began it became clear through early interviews and online reporting that knowledge or confidence with the model differed across (and within) the participating staff and settings. However confidence and application of the model have developed and looking back, having completed their projects, it appears that working with the model has seen a positive reflection of the ethos which should underpin it – so that workers report a commitment to acting in the role of facilitator rather than leader, they see young people as active agents, they seek to undertake good planning, to listen to young people and be creative. Project workers also identify a legacy for their agencies, expressing a commitment to use the approach to influence other strands of their activities and build on what is already positive in terms of work with young people to create something which is increasingly young person led.

There have been aspects of working with the approach that have been challenging: workers report it is difficult to sustain the role of facilitator (rather than leader) when it feels like the group is not making enough progress; there has been an ebb and flow when it comes to young people as active agents in the process, so much so that in two settings group membership changed between outset and conclusion; the idea of creativity which is part of the social action model has perhaps been viewed in a somewhat limited way, sometimes connected to an end product (poster or music) and all of the groups chose a fairly traditional option of a survey to gather community views; in some settings behaviour that reflects young people's difficult circumstances and poor peer relationships has got in the way of progress.

Using the social action approach on the topic of tobacco and social sourcing has not worked equally well across the projects. Where workers feel that both smoking and accessing via

direct purchasing or social sources is seen as normal it appears a social action project on the topic has not inspired enough interest or been motivating enough to sustain young people's participation throughout the year long programme. In settings where the initial stage of exploration resulted in young people finding a route in to the topic and where they could identify something they want to change (adults complicity in supply, or their school's response to smokers) the model (and topic) has gained some traction.

The insight on using the social action (participatory research) model is explored in more detail in part 3 of the report.

Insight from participants on tobacco prevention and social sourcing

Tobacco prevention is concerned with both supply and demand, so with both prevention and cessation. The concern then is to restrict access (for example by limiting direct purchasing) as well as offering support to stop smoking. Several points of insight have been raised by programme participants.

Young people and workers highlight the need to retain some focus on direct purchasing, particularly in most deprived communities and suggest that both retailers and adults supplying tobacco should be clearer about existing laws and potentially face some extension of laws.

Both workers and young people recognise the iniquitous impact of smoking on communities experiencing social deprivation, reflecting national research on the issue. For some young people the insight that their community is viewed as one experiencing deprivation has been a point of self-realisation that has not always felt comfortable; workers have sought to make these discussions factual, insightful and non-stigmatising. Young people and workers highlight that poverty can matter in several ways: in terms of small businesses or individuals making money from sales, in terms of a community's understanding of harm and the use of tobacco (and alcohol and other drugs) as coping mechanisms, and a difference in the acceptability of under 18s smoking when comparing areas that experience deprivation and those that do not.

A link has been made with the supply of two restricted products – alcohol and tobacco. Social sourcing and direct sales are an issue in terms of the supply of both drugs, but young people identify that public or Police responses to each can be different, with more attention paid to alcohol supply and use because of the immediate impact on behaviour and public nuisance.

As highlighted already projects identify that at the heart of social sourcing are two important cultural factors. The first is that a pressure to smoke sits alongside a normalisation of smoking for many young people (within their peer group) and their families. Secondly, this then means that the transaction between the young person and the adult who supplies tobacco is also acceptable and normalised. Young people suggest that parents can feel unable to challenge a young person's smoking/drinking because they also smoke/drink. Shifting these norms or supporting parents in their role would seem to be at the heart of any relevant or effective means of addressing social sourcing.

When considering prevention and support for young smokers, projects identify the need for earlier educational interventions and for non-stigmatising smoking cessation support for those young people who do smoke (rather than punitive responses). Workers across participating projects identify the need to improve school-based learning about smoking for younger children in primary school, attempting to inculcate some resistance to the pressures to smoke they might encounter in High School.

The insight from participants on tobacco prevention and social sourcing is explored in more detail in part 4 of the report.

PART 2

Learning from the project: insight from participants about young people's use of, and access to, tobacco

1. Young people's attitudes towards young people's use of tobacco
2. Worker's attitudes towards young people's use of tobacco
3. Views on how young people access tobacco
4. A summary of key points and some reflective questions

In the course of their projects both workers and young people have had the opportunity to talk about their attitudes towards young people's use of tobacco and give their perspective on how young people under the age of 18 currently source tobacco products.

1. Young people's attitudes towards young people's use of tobacco

A number of themes emerged from young people's discussion of their attitudes toward young people smoking. For the non-smokers smoking was described as a **dirty habit** and knowing the **health risks** was a deterrent to starting.

I don't think it's right because I think it's a dirty habit and I think it's a shame that young people smoke because it can affect their health greatly. (Project 1: YP Int.1)

One young person also described how she and her sibling put forward such arguments to stop parents smoking.

My dad and my step mum they used to smoke but then they stopped when my little sister was born cos like me and my sister, we used to always be around them when they smoke and we kept asking them to stop and then they're doing it for our health as well like all the chemicals, like you see in the adverts like smoking you see like all the smoke going through the air and it's horrible. (Project 1: YP Int.1)

Young people also talked about **smoking as normal**, perhaps from their early teens, and **influenced by peers**. While young people expressed concern that pre-teens were smoking, for some young people (across the participating projects) there was a strong sense of **inevitability** about young people smoking. Several extracts from young people interviewed in different settings make this point:

I: *What's your view on young people and smoking, do you have an opinion just now on that?*

YP 1: *I don't think it is anything that can be like stopped like really fast I think it will take a lot of time.*

YP 2: *Yeah, I don't really have a view either, because I think like there's a certain age, like 12 year olds shouldn't really be smoking but there's nothing really to do to stop it completely.*

I: *Do you think it's quite common for young people to smoke?*

YP 1: *Around here it is. (Project 1: YP Int.2)*

I: *Say before you started this what's your view on young people and smoking, what did you think about it before you got involved in this project?*

YP 1: *It's just something that happens every day really.*

YP 2: *It's just a normal thing, if someone tries smoking or knows people that some people don't smoke it's just something that happens.*

YP 1: *It's just a choice.*

I: *Yeah, would you say most of your pals who you know, do they smoke?*

YP 2: *Aye, most of them.*

YP 1: *Yeah.*

I: So you're all nodding. What age do you think they start?

YP 1: 13, 12/13 that's when most of my pals started.

YP 3: Some younger.

YP 1: Aye I've known people that have started younger, but the people that I know now that still smoke now started at 12 or 13ish basically when they went in first year when they started meeting new people and all that people that smoked, and older people and they just go out. (Project 3: YP Int.1)

YP: There was like, we did like a sheet about some things that can like influence and like friends or peer pressure or like maybe just like if they didn't fit in maybe they think it would be a bit cool to do it so then they do it. (Project 1: YP Int.1)

I: Yeah. So you said that you smoke.

YP: Yes

I: Do your family smoke?

YP: No, well my brother does, but I don't think it was from that, it was more friends and you know parties everyone starts and I just kinda stuck with it. But yeah it was more friends than family. (Project 2: YP Int.1 group 3)

YP 1: I think some people encourage folk to smoke is there, if they're around older friends who do it and stuff and they're younger and they hang about with them then they're around it more and it's more casual and they don't really think anything of it and there is also social facilitation wanting to be part of that group and not wanting to be excluded, that's why young people could, especially S2 I think was the most popular option, that could be why they were smoking.

YP 2: Yeah I agree I think people just gonna smoke if they're gonna smoke and they're not if they're not kind of thing. (Project 2: YP interview 2)

Seeing smoking as normal, and in particular seeing **smoking as a choice** a young person might make, was linked with **not judging** those who did so. Young people recognised the need for **help to stop smoking** and that just telling someone to stop or punishing them for smoking will not stop them.

YP 1: Well, I smoke. But like looking at the research it's crazy seeing how young it starts. I didn't realise how like young people start smoking and what they think of it. Um, I think I mean it's a life choice it's up to them it's a lifestyle but I don't know, it can, I dunno at a certain age it should be definitely wrong

YP 2: I don't think it's right like young people smoking at such a young age but it's their opinion so if they want to start smoking then they can. I suppose. (Project 2: YP int.1 group 3)

Later from the same discussion:

YP 2: Personally I would never smoke but I wouldn't judge someone else for smoking, if it was someone I knew personally I'd worry about them but I would never judge anyone for smoking no matter the age. If they were really young then it might be hard not to judge but I'd definitely try not to.

YP 1: *Yeah I agree, I also think it's not really dealt with, when underage people do smoke it's not dealt with properly, it's like, yeah they'll just get in trouble that's not gonna stuff them, they obviously, if someone's smoking they obviously need help, not help but help to stop so I don't think it's really dealt with right in every situation.*
YP 3: *I think that, I suppose it's difficult to stop them and there's not really good enough methods in place to stop people but I suppose if they feel they have to do it or they want to that's their choice.* (Project 2: YP int.1 group 3)

In discussion at one of the community projects young people made links between smoking and **use of cannabis** and in two of the projects young people made links between smoking and **living in an area of multiple deprivation** (this is explored further in subsequent chapters and in pen-pictures).

I'm not like judging people that are smoking, it's their own choice but like I don't really think you should do it like round our age because you've still got, when you're growing up and like you can get really ill from it and get really bad illnesses and start like loads of other stuff if you smoke like weed and all that. (Project 1: YP Int.1)

I: *How would you describe what you've been doing?*

YP: *Informative, very informative cos there were things that I didn't know before I came here, we were learning about various aspects of like your health 'em, the area that we live in and how like poverty and like how, how smoking, what smoking is like in comparison in different countries to here and laws and stuff.* (Project 1: YP Int.1)

Finally, the influence of **having parents who are smokers** was seen in two ways.

If some family members started smoking when they were younger they maybe think it is alright if they let their kids smoke, and some would have a different idea, if they did smoke, like a family member, they might think like "oh I don't want them turning into me. (Project 1: YP Int.1)

2. Workers attitudes towards young people's use of tobacco

As with young people a number of themes emerged from worker's discussion of their attitudes toward young people smoking. There was a recognition of the disproportionate impact that smoking has on **people living in poverty**, with a sense that even though national data might show decreases in smoking in some populations they felt this was not the case for **young people living in areas of multiple deprivation**.

It's a concern, I think it's always been a concern I mean I know our kind of statistics and stuff tell us it is gradually coming down but with the clients that we see we are kind of seeing an increase in the amount of young people smoking but I do appreciate that's only a kinda very small representation of the rest of (area named), some of our clients. (Project 4: Workers int.1)

Workers were interested in **peer group norms** (both pressures to smoke and to not smoke) and how they might challenge **family norms** on smoking too.

What do I think about young people smoking? I think I think it's a pressure to conform, to fit in. In certain peer groups the pressure will be not to smoke actually so I think there's a lot of stuff about families in there about if you challenge a young person to consider their relationship with smoking you might actually be challenging them to think what about their families relationship with smoking, and that can be really sort of uneven ground for young people, but I suppose there's a whole load of stuff in there. (Project 3: Workers int.1)

Reflecting on **smoking as the norm**, workers were concerned that legislation about access to tobacco is having little impact on entrenched attitudes and behaviours.

I think my view is that young people start smoking because it's a social thing to be doing and that's a real concern... I think my view on it was that a lot of young folk are starting to smoke and that in actual fact given all the changes in the law and of the age limit and stuff like that hasn't made any difference what-so-ever in my view, is what I see, that's what I think. (Project 2: Workers int.1)

3. Views on how young people access tobacco

While programme funders wanted the focus of the project to be on young people's access to tobacco via social sources there have been opportunities throughout to gather insight on how young people access tobacco from a range of sources. While the project has focused on access to tobacco workers have also commented on the emerging issue of electronic cigarettes.

When it comes to **direct purchasing** (the buying of tobacco from commercial premises) young people and workers have identified the ease by which tobacco can be sourced. Young people and workers recognised that buying locally, at the corner shop rather than a large retail outlet, was made easier if a local shop sees tobacco and associated sales as essential income.

... like in a supermarket it wouldn't be as easy but then like a local shop round the corner or something it would be easier because they don't usually ask for ID but when they're in supermarkets they do and they've got really good security. (Project 1: Workers int.1)

Yeah and the reason we started looking again, we went back to this difference between social and commercial, is because they kept going back to commercial, we kept saying that is different, it is different although some of the reasons that they came up with were the same about local shops maybe don't have enough money so as the kids are coming in and want to buy cigarettes they're also likely to buy chewing gum and

chocolate and crisps so maybe that's why the shops... so even though the reasons are the same we had to keep saying to them that we are looking at something different.
(Project 1: Workers int.1)

Young people and workers have reported that some cursory checks about age might be undertaken in a local shop, but that these are often bypassed by young people who look just old enough or by using fake ID.

If you look old enough, some shops I think they don't ask questions. (Project 2: Worker int.1)

YP 1: *Well I mean I don't know it's... I think the worst thing is shops selling them to, I mean it's bad for kind of I mean I can admit I'll have 18 year old friends and stuff and they'll go get some cos I'm not 18 yet, I mean I'm 18 in two months so that'll be fine once I'm 18 but there's lots of shops I know which sell youngsters so I think the shops bits really bad I think something should be done about that I mean I could probably name a few but I won't.*

YP 2: *It's really easy to get fake ID I know some people which can get fake ID like within a couple of days like, so like using fake ID to go into shops to buy fags I don't think that's right.*

I: *Do you think shopkeepers realise that it's probably fake?*

YP 2: *Yeah.* (Project 2: YP int.1 group 3)

Project workers were of the view that local shops provided a significant source of tobacco for young people under 18 years of age, and that despite the law **local shopkeepers may not have an interest in acting to prevent direct purchases**. This may also be because young people and shopkeepers are complicit in continuing an arrangement that suits them both.

Worker 1: *I wouldn't say it's changed, I would say it's reaffirmed stuff for me, stuff I would have anecdotally thought yeah I would think the majority get them from local shops that provide, I don't know that there's been any big shockers to me about how people access.*

Worker 2: *One thing that stuck out for me was that people who are underage smokers think the shop-owners are legends and it was all the different quotes about what's wrong with that, they didn't see a problem with getting fags underage from a shopkeeper or getting them from a random buying them they thought it was actually quite a positive thing as opposed to a negative thing so that's what stuck out for me a wee bit.* (Project 3: Worker int.2)

For workers, it seems that the link between direct purchasing and social sourcing is too important to separate them when viewing how young people access tobacco.

Worker 1: *There was an initiative in the community by the Police to get shop owners about the commercial side of things, to attend a training and information thing put on by the Police, I can't remember but it was something like one or none turned up for that. With 70% getting them from friends and family and the rest from commercial*

we're learning that it's just too easy for young people to access tobacco and there doesn't seem to be a community wide focus to bring that number down or put up some barriers to it. The people who sell tobacco don't seem to be interested in engaging an effort to stop it.

Worker 2: I think as well with this project, the social sources side, we were encouraging them to stay away from the commercial sourcing but they were really drawn to it and the more we picked at it and the more we looked into it it's because most shopkeepers in this community will still sell to under 18s so social sourcing to me was an issue but it's also commercial because its small corner shops make commercial sourcing an issue in this community... From speaking to young people in our group who are smokers... they are still able to walk into a shop in this community... From the NHS point of view, think that commercial sourcing has been totally clamped down on so it must be social sourcing, which in this community as an area of deprivation, shop keepers are taking money for anything they can get money for and so it was quite a contradiction to say we're not talking about commercial sourcing, we're talking about social sourcing when they are so closely connected. (Project 1: Worker int.2)

Looking to social sources one method adopted by young people is to approach an **unknown adult** who will purchase cigarettes on their behalf, formally called 'proxy sales' young people refer to these adults as **randoms**. While some randoms may buy the tobacco simply because they are asked, it can be usual for them to be given some payment, cash or cigarettes for making the purchase. While the young people involved in the local projects who smoke would themselves ask random adults, they also questioned the judgement of an adult who would do this for them.

This exchange is from young people from project 3:

YP 1: Most people get people to go in, they ask adults and adults go in, or you just go in and get sold them because people don't care anymore cos they make money.

I: How do you feel about young people getting cigarettes like that, or from pals or family, have you got an opinion on it?

YP 2: I think it's really their choice.

YP 1: I get them in that way but it doesn't bother me that they do that but the people who do go in for young people are obviously really irresponsible.

YP 2: They just don't care.

YP 1: Yeah and the shopkeepers are really irresponsible because they just do it to get extra money.

YP 2: But I don't know why they'd go in for a young person when they're going like, because they are obviously going somewhere or their planning to go home or something so why would they take that time to go buy...

YP 1: Quite a lot of them do it to go ask a person so when they go outside they ask the young person for money or cigarettes.

YP 2: So they're basically getting something out of it. (Project 3: YP int.1)

And this from another young person in project 2:

I think you... it's harder to have it in your school uniform in shops but I personally know a guy who would just go up to people on the street and say "I'll give you money for some fags" and it didn't matter what he was wearing whether he was in school uniform or not because they kinda just responded to his confidence so he could easily buy cigarettes. (Project 2: YP int.1 group 3)

Young people themselves were sometimes surprised by who would agree to purchase tobacco on their behalf. From project 3:

YP 1: Do you want me to tell you the weirdest person, when I used to ask people to go in do you want me to tell you who the weirdest person who went in for me?

I: Go on then yeah

YP 1: An old woman, you know those things they have to help them walk?

I: A zimmer?

YP 1: Yeah she was, looks about 80 and she went in for me, and then she took a cigarette after she went in for me, she was honestly really, really nice and she was really old too and we were all just being stupid and it was in the morning and we asked her just having a laugh with her and we were like "she's not going to want to" but she was like "aye" and I was like "what" and she was just walking really, really old, that was the weirdest person that ever went in for me. I've asked a shopkeeper, like someone who works in the shop to go in for me a few times and that didn't go very well. (Project 3: YP int.1)

Young people also recognised a further social source as **other young people**, sometimes this means peers selling single cigarettes.

Cos at school people buy cigarettes off one another because it's like, you buy a cigarette for like 50p and they're like making money off that. (Project 1: YP int.1)

The final social source identified in discussion with young people is tobacco provided by **parents, carers or other family members**. Young people identified this as an easy or convenient source:

YP 1: I think they probably get it from people they know, like I knew a guy who would just get them from his stepdad whenever he saw him on the street and I've seen quite a few kids go up to people they obviously know and getting cigarettes, so that's where I think they get it, personally yeah.

YP 2: I think just friends and family because it's easier and more convenient than most other methods. (Project 2: YP int.1 group 1)

Workers also considered the supply of cigarettes as an option that avoided conflict, but also one that might reflect a cultural practice in some families.

I: I suppose other adults must give their kids cigarettes, don't they? What do you think their views might be, why do you think they do it?

Worker: Why do they give their children?

I: Yeah

Worker: *Maybe because they think that it's okay because they've been brought up in a background where as young children they were brought up to have cigarettes and that they can't see they can't physically see the danger that it's doing to them. (Project 1: Workers int.1)*

And from another setting:

Again probably quite concerning we have, we have a good amount of the young people who access their cigarettes and other tobacco products through their parents and parents are happy to hand them two or three cigarettes in the morning to go to school with. I don't know whether it's just an easier life for parents or whatever but that's quite concerning. (Project 4: Workers int.1)

The work undertaken by the community projects has led to a **growing awareness of the extent to which young people access tobacco** (in spite of legislation which addresses direct purchasing) **and the complexity of tackling the issue**. This growing awareness is described by these young people:

I: *So you, you can get it off pals or other young people, or off parents or off strangers, different sources. Does the stuff you know about that or how you feel about that, is that different now from what it was before you started the project?*

YP 1: *I didn't think of it as much of a deal but when I found out more like it quite shocked me, because I know like some smokers who are like my age, but like finding out all this stuff just completely changed my mind about young smokers because I used to think, like it wasn't alright but it didn't bother me, but now it does kind of like bother me and now I've fell out with other people who sit and smoke cos I'm like "urgh".*

YP 2: *And there's loads of different things that play a part, in young smokers, you don't really consider, you're too quick to judge.*

I: *Right, like what kind of things?*

YP 2: *Like, family situations, backgrounds, the areas that they live in, what kind of area it is, it might be rough or not. (Project 1: YP int.1)*

For project workers there is a strong feeling that **it is simply too easy for young people to access tobacco** and it is **the range of options** which young people who smoke have that makes tackling one particular source in isolation less likely to succeed. From project 2:

I: *And what's your view on how young people get their cigarettes?*

Worker 1: *Well, now this is going from nothing to do with what the research that the young folk have done in this project already but the young people that I know that they're getting them off their parents I know that they stand outside the shops and ask people to buy them fags so that's where I know the minority who I know smoke are getting them from. Very rarely going in and buying them themselves it's always someone else that's getting them for them or parents giving them them.*

Worker 2: *There's also young people who we're aware of who buy tobacco and roll cigarettes and then sell them on that way so, I mean these young people if they want it that badly they're going to get it But that like (co-worker) said, hang about outside the shops, parents, older siblings, friends.*

I: *So it's the social sources stuff?*

Worker 2: *Yes, very easy to access. (Project 2: Workers int.1)*

And from project 3:

It's certainly the anecdotal stuff for me when you hear young people are chatting it's about friends, older brothers older sisters older members of the family cousins things like that so folk who aren't going to get challenged about buying them, getting them maybe getting a cut or getting a couple, something like that. But you also do you hear people talking about their parents giving them cigarettes, you've also got, young people will know which shop keepers and which door to go to to get cigarettes, generally speaking, so if you're a committed smoker let's say, access isn't a particular problem for young people that's the impression I have quite strongly. (Project 3: Workers int.1)

Finally, in terms of an insight into the questions of young people's access to and use of tobacco a topic of interest and concern has emerged in the course of the project: **young people's use of electronic cigarettes**. At the start of the programme of work (August 2014) there were emerging concerns about access and use, by the conclusion of the work (August 2015) these worries about young people's use of the product are now substantiated by experience in the communities involved. Workers have reported that e cigarettes are seen as something to have and be seen with, and that young people who have never smoked tobacco are using them.

From project 1:

Over the last year or so we were just saying that tobacco doesn't seem to be the craze at the moment, its vaping or electronic cigarettes, we didn't really see that as a huge issue at the beginning of the project but now... there's young people that have never touched a cigarette in their life that are using e cigarettes now and that is becoming quite a big issue....it's interesting what can happen in a year. (Project 1: Workers int.2)

The young people began to talk about e –cigarettes or vapours. This is becoming a trend with young people in the local area. Some of the young people discussed that they do not smoke but they have or still use e-cigarettes. (Project 1/online report 28.04)

From project 4:

Worker 1: *I think the big changes looking outside tobacco, things like e-cigs are so easily accessible now they are a fashion statement for young people they're just accessible entirely. Parents are willing to buy them for their kids, they're sharing them with their friends, as well they know they, they've got no information to be able to pass on about these so it makes it difficult to gauge exactly what to tell people, and how to approach it, so their access is so much more open and wide and it makes it really challenging I think as workers and as general community to help tackle the problem effectively.*

I: *Do you know if any young people are going straight to using e-cigarettes, just skipping the traditional cigarettes altogether?*

Worker 2: *Yep.*

Worker 1: *Yeah, yeah entirely. I've got even within one drop in probably five or six young people that have not smoked a cigarette in their life but openly use e-cigs, some with the nicotine, some without, but it's very much an image thing now, it's just a fashion accessory.*

Worker 2: *Aye, I bought one last week and was shockingly surprised to see on the back of the box it clearly says for smokers, that you shouldn't start using it unless you're a smoker. But there's also a wee group of laddies and that hang about they're all primary 6s and I know they're primary 6s, and each of them has an e-cig, primary 6 what does that make them, 10 going on 11 and they all have e-cigs.* (Project 4: Workers int.1)

And from project 3:

For me, I've noticed out and about with street outreach the amount of young people who have turned to the vaporized cigarettes that seems to be a common trend just now. Especially if you go around the (neighbourhood) area and there's a peer group that we know of quite well, it's a group of Polish guys and they're quite a big peer group, maybe about 12, and half of them are on the vaporized cigarettes rather than on the normal fags. (Project 3: Workers int.1)

4. A summary of key points and some reflective questions

When it comes to the insight offered by participants on young people's use of and access to tobacco several themes have been highlighted. These are summarised below and some reflective questions are posed:

- While some young people have a negative view of smoking others see it as normal and for some a part of growing up. Participants in this programme have recognised this may be particularly true for young people growing up in our most deprived communities. With smoking seen as a legitimate personal choice non-smokers were keen not to judge others. Whether smokers or not young people support improved help to support young people stop smoking. Questions which arise might include: *How can peer group and family norms around the acceptability of smoking be addressed without imposing guilt or stigma? How do we shift from responses to young people's smoking that might be punitive to responses which are supportive and enabling?*
- Direct purchasing of tobacco from small/local retailers remains a problem. Young people also source their cigarettes from adults in their family and from strangers they approach, often outside a local shop. While young people are sometimes surprised that adults will supply or purchase on their behalf it is clear that as long as adults will say yes, young people will ask. For workers engaged in this programme it seems that it is simply just too easy for young people to source tobacco. In this light it is worth considering: *Is the current view of young people's access to tobacco reflective of the range and variety of sources available to young people? All sources rely on a*

compliant adult, how might adults be supported to understand that their complicity is at the heart of the problem of access and supply?

Part 3

Learning from the project: insight from participants on using the social action (participatory research) model

1. What is social action and why use it in this project?
2. Familiarity with the social action model
3. Using the model: Ethos
4. Using the model: the 5 stages
5. A summary of key points and some reflective questions

In the course of their projects both workers and young people have had the opportunity to talk about their understanding and use of a social action model.

1. What is social action and why use it in this project?

Few studies have explored young people's social access to tobacco and there is a lack of effective interventions designed to tackle the issue. The *social action model* (also known as *participatory research*) was chosen as an approach by programme funders (NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service and University of Edinburgh Centre for Population Health Sciences and Moray House School of Education) in response to the notion that attitudes of both young people and adults toward social sourcing - along with wider community norms – are key factors to address. With this in mind programme funders sought an approach that would engage young people in developing our understanding of the issue and what action to take on it. A social action approach was considered to offer a method of investigation of a social issue that would foster participant engagement, develop participant knowledge, skills and abilities and recognise them as experts on an issue which directly impacts on them/their peers. Finally, with an eye on identifying future action/change on tobacco prevention and social sourcing the model was seen as both consistent with health promotion principles while having some degree of familiarity to the community-based agencies and youth work professionals who delivered the work.

At the outset of the project this definition of the social action model was shared:

What is social action?

The role of the social action worker is to facilitate the group through a five-stage process. The intention is to change the traditional relationship between service users and the professionals employed to work with them. A social action worker is a facilitator, not a provider. In this process service users are not just consumers, they are active agents for change. Working alongside community members in this way requires the ability to plan and prepare well, to be creative, to listen actively, to be patient, to be disciplined and to be interested in people's lives. It is also essential to maintain a consistent and realistic level of optimism and enthusiasm that will fire the group. The five stages are as follows:

- 1. What:** This is all about discovery, finding out what is happening in people's lives. What are their issues, problems and concerns? What makes them angry, frightened, happy, and frustrated? What occupies their thoughts? The social action worker designs ways in which the community members can express all this, creating as comprehensive a picture as possible of what is going on in their lives at present, without interpretation and without at this stage having to worry about what to do with the material. This is often the longest stage of the social action process. Video, role-play, photography, drawing and discussion will all be used during this exploration of life in the community.
- 2. Why:** Once the issues have been agreed it is important to identify the reasons why they exist so that any solutions devised will attack root causes and not just

symptoms. Asking 'why?' helps people examine their private troubles in the wider context. It provides them with a deeper understanding of their causes. This is necessary if community members and service users are to go on to create and own positive social change. This stage of the process allows the community members to engage in analysis and to present their understanding of the problems facing them. It also helps to discover the most effective point of intervention; the place at which it is possible to make changes that will affect the final outcomes. This analysis is accepted by the social action worker, without interpretation once again, reinforcing one of our basic beliefs: people are experts in their own lives.

3. **How:** So what do we do with this understanding? How can the community members change things in a meaningful way themselves? Here the role of the social action worker changes. The responsibility now is to create safe spaces where the group can test out their ideas for change before putting them into practice. It is vital that the community members are not set up to fail and that their ideas undergo a rigorous examination before taking them to the world outside the group. The decision on which ideas will be taken forward lies in the hands of the group, but the social action worker must question their viability without crushing enthusiasm.
4. **Action:** The group then put their idea(s) for change into effect. They should by now have a realistic sense of the possible outcomes, whether it will solve their problem or simply be the first stage in a longer struggle. Even if the action disappoints, as sometimes happens, the legacy of the work is that the group members now have an understanding and practical experience of the tools needed for dealing with problems that they will face in the future.
5. **Reflection:** The fifth stage is for the social action worker to bring the group together and ask: *what happened? Now that we have carried out our action, are the issues, problems and concerns the same?* This critical reflection enables the community members to learn from their experience and to plan future actions for change. The What, Why, How process begins again.

Source: <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/research-faculties-and-institutes/health-and-life-sciences/centre-for-social-action/what-is-social-action.aspx> (last accessed 13.08.15)

Throughout the project there has been the opportunity to reflect on the use of the social action model. Project workers have been interviewed twice and have submitted regular online reports about their work. Young people in the participating groups have also been interviewed on two occasions. Some of the topics and themes identified in this chapter are also highlighted in the pen-pictures for each of the participating projects (see part 5).

2. Familiarity with the social action model

Programme funders assumed that participating workers and their agencies would have a degree of familiarity with the approach. Initial information about the programme and the invitation to apply named the social action model as the approach which it was expected each of the settings would adopt. Then, at the initial briefing meeting attended by the

successful applicants an input on the social action model was delivered and participants were encouraged to read more⁶.

As the programme developed it became clear through interviews and online reporting that **knowledge or confidence with the model differed** across (and within) the participating staff and settings. Typically, from two of the projects, these responses highlight a lack of practical experience of applying the model.

From project 1:

I: How familiar were you with that approach or that language before you started this project?

Worker 1: I'd heard of social action research and I knew kind of what it was about and I knew that we did in terms of the work that we do here with young people that we do a lot of that type of work but it's never been structured in the way or under the banner of social action research, does that make sense? So a lot of stuff, in terms of getting them to decide where they're wanting to go with something or letting them lead things, that's part of our everyday work, but actually structuring it under that and having that kind of structure to work towards I know that I hadn't done that...

Worker 2: Yeah, and I think I was on the flip side, I hadn't really been that involved in practical aspects or any of that work but we were going through it all at university and we're talking about all the different research methods and then when we went to start this, that was when all my classes started specifically on the social action research, so it all kinda started to overlap and it did start to make a lot of sense when you're doing it practically, but I think mine was definitely more theoretical at uni than in being involved in the practical side of it, before... (Project 1: Worker int.1)

From project 3:

I: So, we'll talk about it being about social action and participatory research, but its social action we talk about usually isn't it. So how familiar were you with the language of that, of that approach?

Worker 1: Fairly naive I suppose I sort of had never heard of it. I haven't had, I mean I've seen projects that have done that sort of work but not used that terminology, just it was, if that makes sense.

Worker 2: I know it from my studies, empowerment, acting quite very proactively and making decisions in a very self-determined way also and workers help or facilitate the process or reinforce peoples of whatever age, in that case young people's competencies or skills expand.

Worker 3: I suppose for me I was aware of the social action model and it, and I, probably like (colleague) has seen heaps of projects using elements of it over the years, maybe not entirely purist but probably they themselves are not phrasing it like that... but quite instantly I felt that we had the connection to the (project group named) which is a separate group that we run once a month and that actually a lot of what we were already doing in that was very much the social action model about empowering young people to

⁶ With a specific recommendation to use 'Empowerment in Action: Self-Directed Groupwork' by Mullender et al. as a way to inform their understanding.

set the agenda, to take action on things they thought were important so yeah that was my understanding of the model. (Project 3: Worker int.1)

As indicated above, although not using the model, project workers did report early in the process that they felt they worked in ways *akin* to the social action model, this from project 4:

I: So social action, or participatory research, are these terms you've used before or are familiar with in any way?

Worker 1: ...I think we tend to do it without saying that that's what it is, I think it's very much part of what we do on a daily basis especially through the peer education aspect, so the term social action I'm more familiar with studying rather than just in my work setting.

Worker 2: Aye, similar to (colleague named) I kinda learned most about social action when studying an HNC at college a few years ago and as (colleague's name) says it is kinda been, I can't say it's been complete social action because we've always had a little bit of control over it, but we've tried wherever possible that peer education is using a social action model and it's kinda led by young people but steered and directed by (name) and I when we feel like it's appropriate and necessary, a wee bit like the start of this project before we found our feet properly. (Project 4: Worker int.1)

It appears that at the outset of their projects **workers started with the assumption that their normal or traditional approaches to work with young people reflected enough of the model to make a start.** On returning to the second agency meeting (December 2014) it then became clearer to some participants that the social action model might require them to reflect more explicitly on their role and the approach. For some this was a discussion with colleagues, for others a discussion with young people about the social action model. From project 4:

Worker 1: I kind of left feeling quite good for the initial session, obviously as I said it was something that was almost new to us so there's always a bit of uncertainty when you're trying something new but after the kinda initial first meeting I came away feeling quite positive and it wasn't then until I came back and (colleague) and I sat down and we realised some of the issues that we were going to face but that was then that was kinda ironed out, reduced, helped greatly by the second meeting that we all had... (Project 4: Worker int.1)

And from project 2:

Worker 1: In the last meeting where all the groups came together we were thinking that we're doing too much for the group, came back, we put a presentation together about the social action theory methods and really put it across to them, asked if they understood what we were talking about and they were like yeah and we were like alright, over to you now.

Worker 2: Yeah so that was a struggle... it's quite a daunting thing, it was for them to feel like they were in charge, to feel like they had to make a decision all together without someone leading that and without someone prompting them and to work together and to make a decision together and to make sure that everybody was getting

their say and it was really daunting for them initially. But they've done really well with it cos it is quite a natural process once you get into it and us as youth workers do sit back watching them...

I: So do you think that stopping and being really explicit about the approach has made a difference? Do you think that they hadn't realised that that's what you were doing?

Worker 2: Yeah I do think that.

Worker 1: I think they were just coming along each week and just looking for instruction with what to do and in a sense we didn't help with that matter at all because we were always do this do that, they were still gathering information but led by our instruction, so them now being more aware of the social action, it's helping them, you know in the weeks forward with the questionnaires etc. (Project 2: Workers int.1)

Specifically, workers in this setting (project 2) also reflected that they should have been more explicit about the model at the outset:

I think in that time period we should have done more about the social action and made it possibly more fun somehow as opposed to it being something that they, cos when we did go over it with them it was daunting for them, they were a bit worried about it as I said, but I think that we should have done it more from the get-go because we would have seen more from them in terms of how they make decisions and all the rest of it. Although they came up with the survey and the general idea I just would have liked to have had them having a better understanding of what the project was about and why we were doing it the way we were doing it then. But in terms of the work that they'd done and the ideas that they came up with I think was pretty good. (Project 2: Workers int.1)

The model is now discussed in terms of two aspects; *ethos* and *the 5 stage model* which describes the process.

3. Using the model: *ethos*

The social action model describes 5 stages of work, but in advance of this there is a clear description of the qualities, characteristics or *ethos* that underpins the relationship between the worker and group participants. Project workers were asked to reflect on the use of the model via their regular online reports, and on completion of their projects were asked to reflect further on these qualities or characteristics, posed in the form of the questions which follow.

Were the project workers facilitators or leaders?

The role of project worker as *facilitator* or *leader* has been a point of reflection for all settings. The project workers have asked this question of themselves, and have discussed it directly with young people when talking about the work. A common theme for project workers was to report a developing role. At the outset workers appear to have assumed a

traditional role of initiating and driving forward the work (as leaders) then, with time to consider and develop the work as a social action project, the role of facilitator has emerged, characterised by more discussion about activity and decision making by young people. For example, for project 2, four months into the process workers reflected on the need *“To take a step back and let the young people operate in a way which comes naturally to the meeting dynamics”*. (Project 2 online report 16.12.14)

Typically when reflecting on their role, workers have reported the shift from leader to facilitator takes place when they build young people’s understanding and confidence to lead. These extracts from online reports from project 1 map this change over a number of sessions and highlight the worker’s role in building capacity:

- *“On the whole participation was very good and positive from all young people. They took charge of the activity but they still very much looked to us for guidance.”* (Online submission 21.10.14)
- *“...they are full of inspirational ideas that sometimes need to be slightly teased out by us. We often find that they come out with great ideas but find it hard to articulate them or write a summary of the discussion.”* (Online submission 04.11.14)
- *“We feel that they are really getting an understanding of what they need to do and they are picking out areas around the issue of social sourcing that really interest them... The young people are getting a really good grasp of what they are trying to achieve and we need to continue to facilitate this and continue trying not to lead.”* (Online submission 18.11.14)
- *“The young people learned that they had a much greater awareness and understanding than they initially thought. This was evident as at the beginning they were apprehensive to talk but by the end they were confident speaking out and amongst themselves were developing questions and solutions.”* (Online submission 25.11.14)
- *“We need to continue boosting confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills as although we are now noticing how much this has grown in the young people over the weeks we need them to be more aware of how far they have come. We maybe need to start incorporating activities that specifically focus on these areas and develop upon these skills and not always be so focused on only doing the research itself during each session.”* (Online submission 16.12.14)

As the project progressed workers continued to reflect on the positive experience of working within a programme where there was a focus on a young people led process, rather than fixed outputs, outcomes or targets which increasingly characterise funded programmes. This remains a challenge however so that when workers perceive a need for progress, action or results they feel a pressure to revert to a leadership role. At the end of their work programme the project workers have reflected on the question *‘were the project workers facilitators or leaders?’* as follows:

We started in more of a leader role but gradually over time gave young people more freedom to take the reins and drive the research forward in the way that matched their vision. At times we had to take more of the leadership role due to time constraints at

certain stages of the process, but overall we put a lot of effort into making the young people lead as much as possible. (Project 1)

For the first couple of sessions we feel that we led until the group had a better understanding of what the social action model was about. Thereafter we were (tried to be) facilitators who prompted discussion and decision making. (Project 2)

We were both. We were very much leaders at the start in terms of explaining and embedding an understanding of the social action model and taking the project forward. Then moved to facilitation as we worked hard to move the group from consumers to contributors to leaders – who in turn themselves began to facilitate elements of sessions. (Project 3)

I think we tried as much as possible to be facilitators, just allowing the group to meet and just exist and support as much as possible. There were points where we took more of a leadership role. There were points, maybe after meeting yourselves and others where we clicked on to think we probably did more than we should have, guided more than we should have... But very much now the group we will support, and bat around ideas and it's more about facilitation now. In the early days it's something we struggled with. We are used to going into groups with a set plan, this is what we are going to achieve, this is how we are going to do it and the young folk help to work around that. Now, last week, it's very much 'what can we do?' 'How can we help you?'. (Project 4)

Were the young people 'active agents' in the process?

In youth or community work terms an active agent would be understood to be a group participant who influences the group process and is engaged with the actions that come out of it; although this can happen in a project where the worker plays a leadership or facilitator role the suggestion would be that in a social action project young people's active engagement is more likely to occur when consideration is given to the worker's role (as posed in the earlier question). So rather than being perceived of as a passive recipient, perhaps a consultee, the young person as an active agent feels involved, has and takes control, and makes decisions. As an example, early in the process workers from project 1 reported their view of young people as capable/active agents who with support and appropriate resources would be able to build this role within the programme: "...our group of young people are very capable, but we need to point them in the direction of more young person friendly websites/sources of information" (Online submission 30.09.14). It might be expected that in most community and youth based practice young people would be perceived of as having the capacity to be active agents, but it might not be the case that this is experienced in all engagement with a youth/community work agency or project.

There are perhaps two stories connected to this particular question. In two of the participating projects there was a consistent membership across the duration of the work. In these settings when asked about their perception or experience of young people as active agents project workers have identified something of an ebb and flow with engagement. For some young people being active grew with confidence in themselves and the process, and then in general, over time, this has been built upon with a stronger sense that young people

have been active agents. Responding to the question 'were the young people 'active agents' in the process?' at the end of their programmes project 1 and 2 responded as follows.

Yes, the young people were certainly very active in driving our project forward. There were times where motivation and the level of productivity would decrease but this would again increase with a little encouragement from staff. Some young people were more engaged than others but the group handled this well and played to their strengths, while still finding meaningful roles for those members who were comfortable with less responsibility. (Project 1)

Some of the group members were initially not and followed the others in the group but we feel that mid and end of the project all young people were active agents. (Project 2)

In the other two participating projects membership of the group has not been consistent, and they share a characteristic where an initial group undertook early stages of the work, and different young people at different times picked up on information or findings from surveys and took the project through to completion. In these settings young people are described as *active agents* but this was not sustained beyond initial stages for the first cohort and so they have not been engaged with the actions that came out of the initial investigation. For those young people who joined the group later, while there has been involvement in activity which is more clearly linked to producing something - a poster, a song - they have not been involved in the initial investigation or information-finding by others. In these settings, from the worker's perspective, the young people have been active agents in their elements of the programme in which they engaged (as described below) but from an external perspective this is materially different from the engagement of young people who started and ended their project.

In terms of young people affecting the project and being affected by it – for the 'core' participants the simple answer is yes – they were 'active agents'; however for each individual this was experienced differently. For some who engaged in phase one of the project there were small shifts in how they viewed the 'smoking world' e.g. small shifts in their beliefs that 'everyone smokes' – this came partly from the responses to the questionnaire they had designed. For some of the phase two participants the levels of leading on, and therefore affecting, the direction of the project were much higher; e.g. planning the next week's session, deciding who the target audience would be for their poster campaign, etc. (Project 3)

Worker: I think there has been a bit of a fluctuation. When we first started off the young folk were extremely motivated and loved the whole idea of what else they could do, so they were very motivated, then we had a point where for some of them it became a bit stale, but since then with the newer group there's been that motivation and need to drive it on... There's been motivation, but there's been dips.

I: It sounds like there's been a difference now because you are doing the 'actions' stuff, you are looking at results, you are creating something and maybe that feels a bit more interesting than doing the investigation or the stuff that took a lot of time at the beginning.

Worker: That's definitely it. (Project 4)

Did workers plan and prepare, were they creative?

While conceptualising the role of the worker as facilitator rather than leader the social action model does not view the worker as passive and inactive. Rather, it is essential to the approach that group members have the support, resources and information they need to make progress. Across participating settings workers have reported that they have been committed to good planning and preparation, particularly where there is a need to manage a lack of confidence in young people or challenging behaviour. Across all the groups providing food and drinks and eating together has been identified as important. When it comes to creativity participating projects have relied, certainly in the early stages of the work, on discussion based activity, and in the latter stages on *producing* something more evidently creative such as posters or music. Early in the process workers did recognise the need, as project 2 put it, “to be upbeat and ensure the sessions are fun” (online submission 25.09.14) and at the end of the programme project workers reflected as follows on planning, preparation and creativity:

Again we tried to mix this up, most of the time we tried to ensure that the short term objectives, within our larger goals, were being met; however at times we had to be creative to keep our young people engaged, motivated and excited about the research, and the project as a whole. (Project 1)

All of meetings were discussion based but we did plan a few sessions which used props, power points and word boards to encourage thoughts. (Project 2)

Always! We built on the session plans agreed with or decided on by participants, knowing full well that due to the sometimes chaotic nature of young people’s lives (which can impact on attendance behaviour/focus) - that we as staff always need to have a ‘B Plan’ (actually C-Z plans too). We also know that within all of our planning and preparation flexibility is key; and at times abandoning a scheduled pre-structured session and being response and creative to the immediate needs and interests of the participants is the appropriate choice. Creativity is large part of how we work with young people and this project was no exception. (Project 3)

We would meet beforehand and plan, try to anticipate what was going on. We tried to be creative, to get things in place as much as possible without taking control because we’d much rather young people came to us and said, ‘well we’ve looked at this report, or read this, and this is what we need now’ and me and (co-worker named) would prefer that and assist rather than us trying to find something and do it, go with everything ready. We wanted them to see what we had to do in the background as well... trying to encourage them to see that we prepared things in the background... Definitely creative as well...through discussion. (Project 4)

Did workers listen, were they patient, disciplined and interested in young people's lives?

This set of characteristics and skills – listening, patience, to be interested - might again be viewed as attributes of a youth and community work approach. When it comes to young people who have been involved in this project it has sometimes been difficult for workers to balance these commitments with keeping the project on track. Challenging behaviour, chaotic backgrounds, complex life circumstances or a lack of experience of seeing things through have been part of the mix in some settings.

In considering this aspect of the *ethos* of the model it is important then not to underestimate the degree to which the social action process has felt difficult to sustain with such challenges in mind. As an example, for project 3, workers were already able to identify some of the challenges at the very start of the project as follows: *“Half the current group exhibited very short attention spans and found it challenging to focus on any activity for more than a couple of minutes. Staff will do their best to accommodate and work with this when pulling together any session plans”*. (Online submission 08.10.14)

Then, a further 2 months into the process, these issues had pushed the group to a point of crisis: *“There was incredibly disruptive behaviour displayed throughout the session by several of the participants, which contributed to one young person being asked to leave for the evening. On reflection I question the staff's desire to be as inclusive and flexible to the needs of all participants as possible, as at times detrimental to the needs of the group and research project as a whole. The near constant challenging of inappropriate, unacceptable behaviour often leads to very small amounts of progression in terms of the projects overall aims and can be visibly deflating for the few young people (within the context of this evening, the one young person) who are focused and enthusiastic to work on this project. Staff now need to, in consultation with the young people, explore the future of the group.”* (Online submission 04.12.14)

So, for some the needs of the group have been too disruptive to the process and the group has not sustained engagement (that is in the project, individual relationships have endured) while for others the space has been created and used to build stronger relationships and participation. In response to the question *‘did workers listen, were they patient, disciplined and interested in young people's lives?’* workers reflected at the end of the programme as follows:

Yes, while we put more emphasis on young people leading the project did slow down, however we were supportive, patient and encouraging in helping things move forward at a pace young people were comfortable with. There were times where our project was put to one side to deal with issues members were facing in their lives. The small and relaxed group dynamic encouraged trust between members and staff and allowed young people to open up on issues they had been keeping to themselves previously. (Project 1)

Yes, throughout. We are always interested in what young people had to say about the issues in their communities. Responding positively to all opinions which led to good discussion. (Project 2)

Being interested in the lives of the young people we work with is at the heart of the work we do here; as is listening. Young people brought personal issues and ongoing lifestyle dynamics (and dilemmas) to sessions and we strived to create space for these to be explored – sometimes within the group and when appropriate one-to-one; or even through referral in to other of our services. There were certainly times during phase one when our patience was challenged in relation to ongoing behavioural issues – on reflection I question if this was exaggerated for us by our sense of responsibility to meet the themed brief of the commissioning group. (Project 3)

I am used to going in and saying this is what we are aiming towards, this is our goal today, so I did find this challenging, just going in to young folk and saying, this is what we discussed last week, and how can we progress it this week.. but definitely a high level of patience with young people and getting involved in their lives. We saw young people taking ownership of the work and I think that's because they felt valued... they wouldn't have enjoyed the work or it wouldn't have been so creative if this wasn't in place. (Project 4)

Were workers consistent and realistic when it came to a level of optimism and enthusiasm when working with the group?

The definition of the social action model adopted in this programme talks about workers having optimism and enthusiasm that will *fire the group*. This might be interpreted as meaning project workers bringing motivation or stimulus when and where necessary – but done in a way that does not compromise the role of the worker as facilitator rather than the adult who *does* on behalf of the group. As the earlier question and responses have identified managing challenging behaviour in a group can make it difficult to stay enthused and feel like progress is being made. Project workers have identified that it can be difficult to be realistic if this means limiting or quashing young people's ideas; that there can be points at which *being realistic* feels in conflict with the role of facilitator. In their end of project responses to this question workers have also identified the need to help the group understand and manage disappointment or responses that may have blocked activity or creativity.

We tried to manage expectations while also encouraging young people to think 'big' in what they would like the project to achieve. The process helped young people realise the politics and 'red tape' that can stifle such campaigns and projects. Our attempt to have our logo painted onto pavements, walls and tunnels was rejected from the council, this frustrated the group but was a great learning curve. (Project 1)

Yes, we would not have encouraged any ideas that we thought were not realistic. (Project 2)

I'd consider us optimistic realists if that's not much of an oxymoron. With phase one participant's behavioural issues were incredibly challenging and our optimism for what they could achieve and potentially get out of the experience was tempered by the realistic understanding of individual's attention spans and the group's capacity to focus. We recognise that young people (and especially our clients who may be particularly vulnerable) are all unique and complicated beings, who are often experiencing and

doing their best to manage changing environments and life circumstances – all of which can impact on an individual's capacity to physically, intellectually and emotional engage with/or sustain an involvement with group work. Phase two participants were more self-driven, alongside staff who were at this stage more confident in the social action model, which led to increased optimism in connection to the groups aims. As an organisation/team we are ever optimist about the potential of the young people we engage with; and enthusiastic about our part in their journey and growth. However this is not to suggest that there has been as consistent a level of optimism and enthusiasm for the piece of work. There have of course been times when staff have doubted the journey of the project; particularly as our own understanding of the social action model approach increased – and alongside this the tension of using this approach with a pre-defined theme. (Project 3)

As workers have reflected on this question toward the end of their project it is also of interest that there is a sense of increased pressure to be *realistic* about what can still be done alongside a perceived pressure to produce something as evidence of success or to end the project.

Worker: I think we can jump down the road, picture in our head a result that looks amazing, and then quite quickly pull that back and go 'it's not gonna happen', we've not got time or resources for that.

I: Is this your ideas you're talking about?

Worker: No, it's like the young folk will say something, they'll be clearly motivated about it and loving the idea and we think it's amazing as well, then we process it and see an end picture and then quite quickly realise that we don't have 2 or 3 years here, or resources, we've got a few months left, and then quite quickly have to go to young folk and say guys, thinking about what you've suggested, bear this in mind, the fact is you've only got 3 months left, or moneys tight or this is what we're looking at. So we have trailed back some of their ideas... with the time frame now we can't support some of their ideas. Young people can think fresh, think now, without necessarily planning months down the line... clearly the motivations there but we're working up hill now. (Project 4)

Did the project see a change in the traditional relationship between service users and the professionals?

Each of the participating youth projects would purport to have constructive, meaningful and ethical relationships with the young people who participate in their programmes or use their services. All of the participating agencies has a track record of well recognised, highly valued work; they have all been an important part of the landscape of services in their communities for many years. From what can be perceived as a positive set of existing relationships the social action model seeks to see a change in what is perceived to be *this traditional relationship*. All projects report that being part of a social action programme has influenced and changed worker/young person relationships, talking about the model facilitating safe places to be together, a sense of equality in working relationships and a shift in the balance of power that exists between service users and professionals. Responding to this question at the end of their projects workers have responded as follow:

Yes, definitely. The informal and small group environment allowed for young people who are usually reserved in a large youth club to be themselves in a 'safe place' where members are trusted with information. The relationship between young people and staff is on more of an equal footing, which sometimes isn't possible in open youth work due to behavioural issues. (Project 1)

We feel the group viewed us more as equals as opposed to just adults and we think is because of the switch over in power. (Project 2)

Much of the social action model reflects the existing group work approach here in terms of respecting and valuing young people. As does the social action models 'Principles of Practise', for example: "All people have skills, experience and understanding that they can draw on to tackle the problems they face." "People working collectively can be powerful." "Workers are committed to social justice." (Mullender, Ward and Fleming, 2013, p.193) So as there was limited departure from our traditional practice there was in turn little change in our traditional relationships with young people. Although with a couple of key participants there was a shift in their understanding of their 'right' to request/instruct staff to undertake project related tasks; which in turn bolstered their ownership of the group/project. (Project 3)

With some young people it has. We had one young person, at school, and she's clearly transitioned from being a young person to being part of the volunteer base... we tend to work around this kind of issue quite often and so it's been like an every other week approach, the topics and the discussion around them are very common practice. (Project 4)

4. Using the model: The 5 stages

This section of the chapter reflects on how projects approached and worked with the 5 stages which gives structure to the social action model. Again, the working definition from De Montfort University, Leicester has been used, summarised below:

- **What?** Stage 1 is about discovery, finding out what is happening in people's lives, their issues, problems and concerns. The purpose is to create as comprehensive a picture as possible of what is going on in their lives at present, without interpretation and without at this stage having to worry about what to do with the material. This is often the longest stage of the social action process.
- **Why?** Stage 2 allows the community members to engage in analysis and to present their understanding of the problems facing them. It also helps to discover the most effective point of intervention. The stage emphasises that people are experts in their own lives.
- **How?** Stage 3 identifies what to do with this new understanding. The responsibility now is to create safe spaces where the group can test out their ideas for change before putting them into practice. The decision on which ideas will be taken forward lies in the hands of the group.

- **Action:** Stage 4 sees the group put their idea(s) for change into effect. The group should be realistic about impact; whether it will solve their problem or simply be the first stage in a longer struggle.
- **Reflection:** Stage 5 sees the social action worker to bring the group together and ask 'what happened? Critical reflection enables the community members to learn from their experience and to plan future actions for change.

While participating projects were comfortable with much of the characteristics or ethos of the social action model - as previously described they saw an existing fit with their traditional work practices - it is in discussing how they have worked with the staged model that challenges are more evident. This may be because it was not until the projects were some weeks or months into their work that a more overt consideration was given to the stages themselves. Exploring several of the topics that have come up in interviews and online gives insight to the practical use of the model.

Starting with a topic (that isn't necessarily an issue of concern)

While all projects understood the programme sought to explore a topic – *young people's access to tobacco via social sources* – in the first wave of interviews with the external evaluator (January/February 2015) all identified that starting with the topic felt contradictory to their emerging understanding of the model, in which theoretically young people should start with a broad exploration of their lives and identify a concern that they would want to act on. Further, workers also reported that it became evident early in the process that the given topic was not necessarily one that many young people saw as problematic.

From project 3:

Actually the first group didn't see it as a problem which is useful for understanding that actually for a group of young folk it's not seen as a an issue so social action is a really challenging model to use there. (Project 3: Worker int.2)

However, while recognising the challenge, in two of the participating projects this tension has been successfully addressed. In these settings workers report that the young people, with time, became excited enough *by the process* to move beyond the topic to become active participants in a project that saw both learning and an interest in action.

From project 1:

I: The next thing is about participating in the process but I hear you describe that that's been achieved.

Worker 1: That's definitely been achieved, they've come across some stumbling blocks, they came across some areas where they've not been as engaged as they could be but they're young people and in the end they didn't pick, they chose to sign up to this project which is amazing but they didn't pick social sourcing of tobacco so I sometimes think they're, not even their lack of interest they were so interested in the process in the campaigning and getting to know how to do a research project, all the different elements like the process of the social action they were into all that. But maybe

sometimes they're lack of passion or enthusiasm was maybe to do with they didn't solely pick what they were going to be looking at... And they've participated amazing, like I couldn't fault where these young people have come from confidence wise, and the young people that attend this group they didn't set foot in this building before this project, like some other groups that we run here can be quite intimidating for young people running about that they wouldn't engage with normally but now that they're here they're volunteering, they're here every week they're part of this building so I think to even for them to have achieved that is amazing so they've participated amazing I just think maybe if the topic was the kept veering towards alcohol or towards they were in an area of poverty, they seemed more sparked off by that than social sourcing of tobacco...

Worker 2: Aye, it was more the process than the subject, they liked the empowerment, we always say we would give direction or we would give guidance but we really did try to point the young people, let them take their reins and really run with it, sometimes it worked really well but other times... (Project 1: Worker int.2)

And from project 2:

Worker 1: Yeah and it would be totally different if this project were about working with young folk and then social action theory and the method and the rest of it, it would have been so much better off to get young people to come up with something themselves and get them thinking about what's in your community and what do you want to change and how could you do it... They might think that smoking's really bad and they might have a realisation a bit, but I think also because they wouldn't view it initially as something that's interesting enough to want to do, but I don't think specifically social sources to tobacco would be, they wouldn't think about where are people getting their cigarettes, they would think why are people smoking, I think...

I: And do you think now, that they are...are you still fighting that battle?

Worker 2: No not at all.

Worker 1: No because they're leading it now.

Worker 2: They've got round it in their heads, they are finding it interesting.

Worker 1: And I think because they're aware that they can lead it wherever they want to from here, that there's loads of different avenues that they can take this once they've got this information do they want to find out more information, are they going to go down the street and ask people, are they going to develop a new programme or are they going to...you know there's loads of different things that they can choose now and they know that so I think they are a bit oh! What will we be doing? This is great like we get to do what we want and they're going to help us do it. (Project 2: Workers int.1)

Investigating: asking what and why?

The social action model requires participants to achieve a deeper understanding of the topic of concern. In all four projects the young people chose to conduct a survey as part of their investigation. At these early stages of the model it seems that there may have been a conflation of *finding things out* and *achieving the deeper understanding* required. In all projects the process of developing the survey then conducting it proved to be more complex and time-consuming than hoped for. It was at this point that two of the projects lost the

participation of the initial cohort of young people and then moved on to recruit new young people to pick up on the results of the survey.

One of the projects, project 2 in our series of pen-pictures (see part 5), can be seen to have worked through these stages with particular clarity; they identify that exploring and contextualising the issue meant that the hard work of doing their survey was ultimately successful and has informed action.

That was probably the most in depth part of our whole process the what and the why. I mean we made a huge point of going into so much detail from the micro of the individual right through to international corporate companies of tobacco and why they would want you smoking and why they would want people selling kids cigarettes and so I mean, in my view from that side of things I would say I would give them full marks for how in depth they went, they didn't just rush straight into 'oh we're gonna do a survey what do you think of social sourcing' they knew every detail we felt they could have found out themselves about social sourcing before they dived into it... we spent a lot of time on the surveys and getting them out there and getting them back and it did feel like quite a tedious, time consuming process I think through that point because we didn't want to take control, like we wanted the young people to have the control over what was going on but I think they were finding the process quite difficult through that time. So I think it was quite hard us taking a step back and seeing them going down the wrong route of maybe questions or how they were trying to collect information and getting out to community groups, it was a whole new thing for them to get their head around so we kind of went through that patchy stage a wee bit. I mean they've done amazing what they've come out with is amazing but that was a bit of a itty bitty stage you could see they were getting quite, a wee bit, nervous, not nervous they were getting a bit tired of it taking so long as well but now we've kind of, we've gotten through that and we're moving onto the action stage. (Project 2 Worker int.2)

What do we mean by change? What do we mean by action?

Stages 3 and 4 of the model are concerned with identifying change and putting ideas into effect. At the heart of the change identified by young people in each of the settings involved has been the need for adults to alter their behaviour, either in terms of them supplying young people with cigarettes or their lack of positive and proactive support for smoking cessation. These are important insights and reflect the programme funders concern with community norms around social sourcing of tobacco.

While some projects have put some effort into a particular product (a poster, a song) others have supported young people to engage with adults in discussion. For project 1 the move into the final stages of the social action model were explicit and young people relished the challenges faced.

There was also a buzz in the group tonight as were are talking about the action stage which they are very excited to be taking part in and eager to start... The young people now have a grasp about what they have learned and how to put that into action. The young people have also realized that how much they can do and achieve as a group.

They have been doing this for some time however there was a sense of realization and accomplishment tonight... the young people are keen and eager to start the action stage of the research. We acknowledged this would be an exciting stage for them but did not realise how much. (Project 1 online report 03.03.15)

However across the programme moving beyond insight to action has been somewhat tentative or preliminary, albeit that young people have gained an understanding and practical experience of (as the model is described) *the tools needed for dealing with problems that they will face in the future.*

Where evidence of impact is more certain is in terms of outcomes for young people and the ways in which the participating agencies now see their work. Young people have reflected on what they have gained from participation and have identified improved skills, confidence and understanding of the issues that impact on young people's use of tobacco. Workers have also enjoyed the experience of applying the social action model to their work and are committed to using the approach again. As an example, the workers and young people in project 2 report these impacts as follows:

When it comes to impact on young people:

Maturity, they show more maturity. I think if we were thinking of them from when we were taking more of a lead to when we took a step back they mature far more and behave more responsible when that's the case when we're not taking over the lead so that's interesting but we're still there, we're still kind of in the room, our presence is still there...they're all doing really well, they're keen, they're enthusiastic they help one another they enthuse one another, we're actually really lucky we've got a really great group... so in terms of social action I think they show more maturity, they show more interest because they know that they need to be totally involved in it to make it happen because nobody else is going to do it for them so they're more interested in making their goals happen and getting to each part of the kinda points that they've agreed to get to. So as an example, doing their questionnaires for today, there's no doubt in my mind that they have all done that and that they'll all have it done for today because they have to do it no one else is gonna do it so I think they're probably more proactive as a result of that. (Project 2: Worker int.1)

I: *What do you feel you've learned that is related to the experience of being part of the project?*

YP 1: *Working as a group. I think, I put this on my CV, helping to work as a group.*

YP 2: *We didn't know each other... didn't know these three before we started?*

YP 3: *It's just good to have seen the whole process and seeing it all come together and how we did it all ourselves it's nice to have that feeling, that sense of achievement.*

(Project 2: YP int.2)

And when it comes to impact on the agency:

Worker: *I think we maybe mentioned, or did we mention last time? About the engagement strategy? You can see it from all around you. (Worker points to material*

around the room). *We're going to have a massive overhaul of the way we run as a project, as an organisation so we're going to get a youth forum up and running, we've given every young person in a school opportunity to be a part of that, we done loads about youth work, we've really taken on board and learnt really quickly that hold on a minute, why have we not been using the social action, you know, more often and in more you know, in more ways in which the project runs. It's really simple but once it's running in a certain way it's really difficult to get out of that, so it's actually changed the whole way the youth project is going to be run in the future. The young folk are going to have much more of a say and be doing funding applications and you know...* (Project 2: Worker int.2)

5.A summary of key points and some reflective questions

This chapter has highlighted key themes in terms of working with the social action approach.

In terms of **familiarity with the approach** participating projects started the work with some, but perhaps not enough, of an understanding or practical experience. This meant that it was only as work progressed and workers reflected on the programme that they questioned whether traditional approaches were a good enough starting point for a social action project.

It is likely that the early familiarity with the approach started with workers recognising the qualities or characteristics described in the original definition of the model – its **ethos** – as akin to their normal work practices. It does appear that working with the model has extended worker/agency commitment to the role of facilitator rather than leader, or to see young people as active agents, or to ensure good planning, to listen to young people and be creative etc. It also seems that there has been a legacy for the project workers and agencies to use the approach to influence other strands of their activities and build on what is already positive in terms of work with young people, to create something which is increasingly young person led.

Thinking about the **5 stages** that underpin the social action model the participating projects have perhaps found the approach more difficult. In particular, workers cite as problematic starting with a topic that many young people did not necessarily see as a concern; however it is perhaps a failure to stop and reflect on what this meant for the project at the outset that meant creative means were not found to overcome the perceived problem in every setting. Facilitating the early stages of the project felt protracted and in two settings the original group left the process. Action which has been taken feels very much like it is at an early stage when it comes to bringing about change on the issue. However, individually and collectively young people have had a positive experience of participation.

In terms of further encouragement for youth work agencies to use the social action approach – when it comes to understanding of the model and the ethos and staged model which underpins the approach – some reflective questions are posed here:

- It seems that participating projects started the work with some familiarity with the model, but not an in-depth understanding or practical experience. With this in mind: *Is there scope to offer continuing professional development opportunities for workers in the field to ensure confidence and understanding of the approach? Does part of this support for awareness and skills associated with the social action model require workers to question more closely their current/traditional work practices so that they do not assume there is a natural or easy coherence between approaches?*
- In this programme workers have described a growing understanding and confidence in their role as *facilitator*. Workers have also identified that perceived or actual pressure to 'deliver' on progress, actions or results can make them feel they need to revert to a *leadership* role. Workers identified that facilitating a social action approach felt different from normal practice where funding or programme requirements can be overtly focused on targets and deadlines. In this light it is worth considering: *Is it time to review and reflect on the purpose of youth work when it appears work is often defined by pre-determined outcomes and outputs, where perhaps there is pressure to 'do something to' rather than 'do something with' young people? When adopting a social action approach what is the best way to ensure that workers assume the role of facilitator rather than leader from the outset? How can they sustain this role when feeling pressure to make progress or deliver outputs?*
- In this project participants report that there has been an ebb and flow when it comes to young people as *active agents* in the process, so much so that in two settings group membership changed between outset and conclusion. The experience has been that young people are more *active* when they are doing/producing something tangible. This points to difficulty in sustaining engagement in the early stages of the model when a participant gains a deeper understanding of an issue of concern, and raises the question: *How do we support and energise young people as active agents across the lifetime of a social action programme, including at the crucial early stages of discovery and investigation?*
- This project has evidenced that workers are committed to good planning and preparation. The idea of creativity has perhaps been viewed in a somewhat more limited way, connected to an end product (poster or music). All of the groups also chose a fairly traditional option of a survey to gather community views. In considering how a social action approach can be used it might be useful to consider: *How in the early stages of the model of discovery and investigation can discussion-based approaches be enhanced or improved with more creative approaches?*
- In some of the participating settings workers have had to balance their interest in young people's lives and a commitment to patience and listening to young people with managing challenging behaviour. On some occasions behaviour that reflects young people's difficult circumstances and poor peer relationships has got in the way of progress. For youth work agencies an important question arises: *Is the social action model appropriate for work with all young people or for all peer groups?*

- The social action model requires that the worker as facilitator is consistent and realistic when it came to a level of optimism and enthusiasm when working with the group. Participants in this programme have identified this is difficult when faced with challenging behaviour or blocks to the activity young people want to undertake. With this in mind: *When engaging in such a process how can youth workers build in time to reflect for themselves, and openly and honestly with young people, about group energy and commitment and real-world limits and parameters on the work?*
- Workers who have participated in this programme are positive about their existing relationships with local young people and communities; in this sense their *tradition* is already constructive and progressive. They have however all identified learning and benefits from engaging in an explicit social action approach. The social action model is unambiguous in attempting *to see change in the traditional relationship between service users and professionals*. A question then arises: At the outset of any social action project is it necessary for an agency/team to articulate and subsequently measure impact by asking: *In our setting what is our 'tradition'? How will this change if we facilitate a social action approach?*

To conclude, using the social action approach on the topic of tobacco and social sourcing has not worked equally well across the projects. Where workers feel that both smoking and accessing via direct purchasing or social sources is seen as normal (particularly so in projects 3 and 4) it appears a social action project on the topic has not inspired enough interest or been motivating enough to sustain young people's participation or interest throughout the year long programme as expected. In settings where the initial stage of exploration – the what and the why – have witnessed young people find a route in to the topic and identify something they want to change (adults complicity in supply, or their school's response to smokers) the model (and topic) has gained some traction.

Despite the challenges of the model in this programme the participating projects all identify some legacy for their setting. In each there is a commitment to thinking about or using the model, either for new groups or as a more strategic means by which to engage young people in the work of the agency. This is highlighted further in the pen-pictures in part 5 of the report.

PART 4

Learning from the project: insight from participants on tobacco prevention and tackling social sourcing

1. Insight on tobacco prevention
2. Insight on tackling social sourcing
3. A summary of key points and some reflective questions

As identified in the introductory chapter, smoking remains a public health concern, and specifically so when it comes to disadvantaged young people who are most likely to become smokers. The project partners – NHS Lothian and University of Edinburgh – view the accessibility of cigarettes from social sources as a significant problem which has potential to seriously undermine other prevention measures. This section of the report looks for insight from participants about the future of tobacco prevention and tackling social sourcing.

1. Insight on tobacco prevention

Tobacco prevention is concerned with both supply and demand, so with both prevention and cessation. The concern then is to restrict access (for example by limiting direct purchasing) as well as offering support to stop smoking.

To start this reflection on insight offered by programme participants it is worth restating the very fact of the easy access to both tobacco (and alcohol) in the participating communities. This from a worker in project 4:

A lot of the young people I speak to talk about accessibility. The area I come from we have a population of roughly 11,000 people and we have 92 licenses that are given out for supply of restricted products, so it's just over accessibility. Lots of young people identify with this because if they don't get sold something at one shop they just get sold at another shop. (Project 4: Worker int.2)

This programme of work has a specific interest in controlling access to tobacco via social sources, insight on the particular issues of social sourcing is dealt with in the section which follows, in these paragraphs the focus will be on controlling access and any insight offered by participants on approaches that support cessation.

As has already been established in part 2 of the report there has been agreement across the participating projects – from both young people and workers – that young people's direct purchasing is still common, particularly from local shops rather than larger retailers. Project workers have expressed concern that if public bodies, such as the NHS, assume that direct purchasing has been largely controlled then this is a mistake, suggesting that efforts to control tobacco access require a continued focus on direct purchasing.

...in actual fact given all the changes in the law and of the age limit and stuff like that hasn't made any difference what-so-ever in my view... (Project 2: Worker int.1)

... but they're still able to walk into a shop in this community so it kinda, not took away from the social sources thing but I think there's a lot of emphasis being put on, as like from the NHS point of view think that commercial sourcing's been totally cracked down on so it must be social sourcing, but which in this community which is an area of deprivation shop keepers are taking money from anything they can get money for so it was quite a contradiction to say we're not talking about commercial sourcing, we're talking about social sourcing when they're so closely connected as well. (Project 1: Worker int.2)

For some workers and young people, increasing or improving efforts on tobacco prevention must involve increased awareness and implementation of existing laws or more severe penalties for shops selling to young people or adults supplying tobacco, as well as the need for Police to respond to young people under the age of 18 smoking in public places.

From staff in project 1:

We were just saying before it needs to be community wide, you've got Police going down the street, like we were saying they're not stopping young people smoking, it's highly illegal, they're not stopping and asking where did you get that from? (Project 1: Worker int.2)

And from young people in project 3:

I: If you could change anything about young people and smoking what would you change?

YP: I would change the law and make it completely illegal for children under the age of 18 to smoke. Make it illegal.

I: Do you think we should pass any laws about the adults who might give young people cigarettes?

YP: Yeah, I think it should also be against the law to supply young people with tobacco... I think that parents should be doing something about the smoking, stopping their children from smoking at a young age and I also think it should be the child's responsibility not to smoke, to know it's basically killing them off early. (Project 3: Young People int.2)

Participants have also discussed other factors when considering tobacco prevention.

Reflecting the concerns of project funders, project workers have recognised the iniquitous impact of smoking on communities experiencing social deprivation.

Even in (area named) we have a wide index of deprivation, we've got some areas that are really affluent. Within those areas tobacco use and alcohol use is extremely low. These young people know that they're in an area where everybody knows each other and there's an expectation that they adhere to the social guidance. (Project 4: Worker int.2)

With this in mind workers have identified a need to direct effort on controlling access and support for cessation in these communities. Young people and workers have highlighted that poverty can matter in several ways: in terms of small businesses or individuals making money from sales, in terms of a community's understanding of harm and the use of tobacco (and alcohol and other drugs) as coping mechanisms, and a fundamental difference in the acceptability of under 18s smoking when comparing areas that experience deprivation and those that do not.

Workers from project 1 have reflected on this topic and the nature of young people's growing awareness and discussion about it. From their first interview with the external evaluator:

...because this area is classed as an area of deprivation and they've focused in on that and there's been loads of discussions had around shopkeepers, like some shopkeepers or randoms on the street or friends selling them to make money because they need the

money and picked up on things around it being like a business, like business for people... (Project 1: Worker int.1)

From their second interview:

They were really confused at the concept I always remember of the fact that more people in areas of deprivation smoke but they were all like but they have less money, that was the concept that they were struggling to get their heads around and then we had good chats they were talking about drug users they were talking about loads of things I remember having loads of good chats about the fact that, not having the motivation in life not having a job to keep them going or like they would turn to drugs or alcohol or cigarettes to cope with what they were going through, I think they came to terms with the fact that this was an area of deprivation but I'll never forget that moment when they just, they were like 'what here?' like and it was quite hard hitting for us... (Project 1: Worker int.2)

In project 1 this interest continued and workers report a deepening of understanding and interest. From online reports:

When brainstorming ideas for the film members of the group spoke passionately about health inequalities in areas of lower income compared to more affluent areas. (Project 1 online report 12.05.15)

One young person opened a discussion with group members and staff around the impact the welfare cuts will have on tobacco use in low income areas. This was very impressive and showed that the members within the group are more aware of current political issues than they were before participating in the research project. (Project 1 online report 14.07.15)

The issue of e cigarettes has also been raised during the programme. While public/health policy is developing on their use projects have identified that young people under the age of 18 are using them, and some are using them even if they have never smoked tobacco.

For me, I've noticed out and about with street outreach the amount of young people who have turned to the vaporised cigarettes that seems to be a common trend just now. (Project 3: Worker int.1)

I think we were just saying as well over the last year it's been quite interesting that tobacco doesn't seem to be the craze at the moment it's vaping or electronic cigarettes I mean that's really taken off that we didn't see as a huge issue at the beginning of the project but now I mean we've got posters up in our mobile buses and our youth buses and stuff saying no vaping, there's young people that have never touched a cigarette in their lives that are using electronic cigarettes and that is becoming quite an issue so I think my views on that has changed from the beginning to think that electronic cigarettes weren't a bit deal at the beginning and it was still mainly tobacco use and now I definitely feel like my views have changed on that by now, the end of it. Which is interesting what can happen in a year. (Project 1: Worker int.2)

Project workers and young people have identified tobacco prevention needs to recognise the impact of pressure to conform to peer norms (where smoking is the norm in a peer or friendship group) and the idea that smoking is normal. This matters in terms of peer group attitudes and behaviours as well as adult attitudes and behaviours toward supply.

I think I think it's a pressure to conform, to fit in. (Project 3: Worker int.1)

I think some people encourage folk to smoke is there, if they're around older friends who do it and stuff and they're younger and they hang about with them then they're around it more and it's more casual and they don't really think anything of it and there is also social facilitation wanting to be part of that group and not wanting to be excluded, that's why young people could, especially S2 I think was the most popular option, that could be why they were smoking. (Project 2: Young People int.2)

This sense that smoking is *just what you do* is identified as making youth agency interventions on tobacco difficult because it is then seen as somewhat judgemental, a failure to recognise where the young person is coming from.

...it's really hard with tobacco to find any balance point so you almost have to just keep asking well what are the benefits why do people choose to, the social stuff that's there for people around smoking, feeling accepted perhaps and just keep opening those questions up but tobacco of the various many health and wellbeing issues out there would be one of the hardest to have that conversation around I think. (Project 3: Worker int.2)

Working on this notion of smoking as normal is seen by workers as explaining why in some communities, in some families or for some individual adults providing or buying an under 18 cigarettes is acceptable. In addition young people asking adults is also acceptable. So, the transaction between adult and young person (at the heart of social sourcing but fundamental to tobacco prevention) is not questioned, rather it is normalised. In order to tackle what has become socially acceptable it has been highlighted that adult and young people's perceptions, their psychology on this issue, needs to be addressed and shifted. These extracts from an interview with staff from project 3 recognise the issues:

One thing that stuck out for me was that people who are under-aged smokers think the shop-owners are legends and it was all the different quotes about what's wrong with that, they didn't see a problem with getting fags underage from a shopkeeper or getting them from a random buying them they thought it was actually quite a positive thing as opposed to a negative thing so that's what stuck out for me a wee bit. (Project 3: Worker int.2)

Actually the first group didn't see it as a problem which is useful for understanding that actually for a group of young folk it's not seen as a an issue... (Project 3: Worker int.2)

Worker 1: There's this little kernel there definitely about people don't see themselves as the bad guy, people don't see themselves as consciously out to harm someone so

actually if the campaigns are all just around health impacts but not about the psychology in your role in something I think we're missing something.

Worker 2: Aye, and I think it's the same for alcohol, that bit about doing someone a favour and being the good guy helping young folk out, remembering what it was like, there's all that stuff that folk buy into in terms of clinging onto your youth and having that relationship there... (Project 3: Worker int.2)

It is suggested, in terms of social sourcing via parents, that this normalisation of smoking (and similarly consuming alcohol) can sit alongside parents feeling unable to challenge a young person's smoking/drinking because they also smoke/drink.

I think young folk and a lot of parents still see drinking alcohol under age as a rite of passage, something that everybody should or will experiment with. So they don't differentiate, they feel smoking and drinking is a rite of passage. I've spoken to a lot of parents who say they haven't punished their child for smoking or drinking because they drink at the weekend, so they feel it's hypocritical of them to tell their children they shouldn't do it. And they're no willing to set that example, by not smoking or drinking. (Project 4: Worker int.2)

For young people there does appear to be a hierarchy of acceptability when it comes to adults helping them access tobacco, so while recognising that parents can be a source, this is less socially acceptable. Workers in one project described this as follows:

They had a strong view, they didn't mind as much randoms, strangers, and young people social sourcing but the thought of parents social sourcing to their children they were quite, they were pretty strong about... so it was quite interesting to find that out but they probably themselves social source from friends or randoms but would never imagine their parents giving them cigarettes or buying them so I think that's maybe where their views are coming from. (Project 1: Worker int. 2)

When it comes to interventions which might stop individuals from smoking in the first place, or supporting them to stop if they do, projects identified some possible responses.

Firstly the case has been made for improved support or provision of smoking cessation for smokers under 18. Pen-picture 2 describes a request from the group that their school should offer support for smoking cessation (rather than just learning about harm or punishment-based responses):

YP1: They should have a support group, not necessarily to stop and tell people that they just shouldn't smoke but maybe offer them help if they want it and not go on too much about the risks but make sure people are aware of them a bit more.

YP 2: Yeah I think the school support is just blunt and unempathetic they just say stop but they don't really spend enough time on how they could help the young people to stop. (Project 2: Young People int.2)

Workers in project 2 also identify the need for young people's smoking cessation to be supported with 'rewards' for participation and stopping smoking.

Workers across participating projects have identified the need to improve school-based learning about smoking for younger children in primary school, attempting to inculcate some resistance to the pressures to smoke they might encounter in High School. This from project 4:

Yeah I think for me there's a bit of a cross over so when we're working with primary school kids, we tend to find that even the later years, the primary 6 primary 7 there's still a very negative image attached to tobacco use where they hate it and everything about it, they hate it and it stinks and its gross and it's expensive. And then come first year and second year in that very short time there's been a complete change where suddenly it's acceptable and it's normalised. There's not a good understanding for us I think where that's came from, it's like you've missed them for summer and they've come back after the summer and the whole world's changed. (Project 4: Worker int.1)

Young people also expressed concerns about the age at which young people start smoking, with an understanding that the earlier a young person starts to smoke the more difficult it might be to stop. While accepting that young people might start in the middle teenage years (as they perhaps did themselves) young people recognised the need for early intervention in terms of efforts to stop younger young people smoking.

I: What would you like to change about young people and smoking, if you could?

YP 1: Stop them. Stop them smoking. But that's impossible.

YP 2: Yeah, I'd stop like the really young ones, like 13/14

YP1: Yeah that's what I mean.

YP 2: But I'd be hypocritical if I were to stop like 15/16 year olds.

I: Because you smoke?

YP2: Because I smoke.

I: Yeah but just because you smoke doesn't mean you don't want to support other folk. But why 13?

YP 1: It's just so young.

I: Do you think there's a potential consequence to starting that young that makes you kind of horrified by it?

YP 1: It's harder to stop the younger you start.

Yp 2: Yeah, they don't have any particular stress associated with school at that point they might have other stresses out of school but...

YP 1: They're probably still growing.

YP 2: There's just a lot more consequences for someone that young and they're not, not saying that they can't think for themselves but it's probably less thought out than if you're slightly older, when you're slightly older the line between that gets kind of blurry but when you're younger you don't think it through. (Project 2: Young People int.2)

The issues of social sourcing is explored further in the next section.

2. Insight on tackling social sourcing

Tackling social sourcing is concerned with *interrupting the supply of tobacco to young people* under the age of 18. In terms of tobacco supply social sources are friends, family members or other adults who buy on their behalf (known formally as proxy sales, young people in this project have called these adults 'randoms'). Across participating projects young people and workers have confirmed that social sourcing across these different routes remains common.

...so with 70% getting them from friends and family and the rest coming from commercial and I just think again that it's just learning that it's just a bit too easy to access tobacco for young people and there doesn't seem to be a community wide focus or you know anything to kind of bring that number down, to put up some barriers to that, again the people who sell tobacco don't seem to be interested in engaging in you know an effort to stop that and obviously 70% of young people who get them are getting them from family and friends and it's definitely an eye opener it doesn't seem like there's much in terms of barriers there. (Project 1: Worker int.2)

Worker 1: ...the young people that I know that they're getting them off their parents I know that they stand outside the shops and ask people to buy them fags so that's where I know the minority who I know smoke are getting them from. Very rarely going in and buying them themselves it's always someone else that's getting them for them or parents giving them them.

Worker 2: There's also young people who we're aware of who buy tobacco and roll cigarettes and then sell them on that way so, I mean these young people if they want it that badly they're going to get it. (Project 2: Worker int.1)

When it comes to insight from participants on tackling social sourcing several points of interest provide us with some insight.

As raised in an earlier interview extract an issue of interest to the participating projects has been to connect the social sourcing and supply of tobacco and that of alcohol. Young people and workers identify that similar strategies are used by young people to access both via social sources, but that alcohol use is more likely to be of concern (to the community or Police) because of the consequences of anti-social behaviour that might occur. However, young people and workers were consistent in their interest in linking access and supply of both as restricted products, including in terms of Police responses and as a way to challenge adult perceptions that smoking is less harmful and more acceptable than alcohol use.

I think alcohol is a bit more of a taboo and cigarettes just become kind of casual. (Project 4: YP int.2)

... they were just picking up on why aren't the police doing more, so like they were saying, it was him that said if the police were driving down the street and you saw someone with a bottle of vodka in their hand, a young person, you would stop and probably pick them up and take them home but they would drive right past somebody with a cigarette. And it were just starting to build up around, we started to talk about

the anti-social behaviour side of, is it because they are seen to be causing anti-social behaviour and causing trouble within the community with alcohol rather than smoking, it just sparked off a whole lot of conversation about why they see one as more serious than the other. (Project 1: Worker int.1)

As identified in the earlier section at the heart of the problem of social sourcing is the willingness of adults to supply. One of the participating projects has characterised the supply of tobacco by adults in general as them thinking that they are acting without consequence, that their action is disassociated from the harm done by the product they buy or give to the young person. The posters developed by the young people (discussed in pen-picture 3) prompt adults to take a moment to consider and reframe their actions by posing the question *do you still think you are doing them a favour?*

I: This thing that says 'still think you are doing them a favour' where did that come from?

YP: That was our slogan that we decided at the beginning, so basically that was trying to tackle the 'randomer' – do you still think you're doing them a favour by buying them their first cigarette. Then the second one is someone at school... and the same with that one, the parent giving their child a cigarette.

I: Tell me where the question came from?

YP: We decided on that one because it was the strongest comment and we hoped it would target parents and make them think.

I: Do you think that adults just don't think about what they're doing?

YP: I think they think about what they're doing, but it's trying to make them think 'what am I doing giving my child a cigarette?' (Project 3: YP int.2)

Finally in terms of insight on both the future of tobacco prevention and tackling social sourcing there is a reminder from the participating community projects that progress requires an understanding of communities that are most impacted by the issues, and a negotiated bespoke response where that is required.

When I think back to other work we have done kids have identified that change has to come at a local level... every area is different and the issues within an area affect people in that area... change has to happen in every local area... work with the locals and implement that change themselves, work for themselves. (Project 4: Worker int.2)

3. A summary of key points and some reflective questions

When it comes to the insight offered by participants on tobacco prevention and tackling social sourcing a range of themes and topics have been highlighted. These are summarised below and some reflective questions are posed:

- Participants have highlighted the need to retain some focus on direct purchasing, particularly in most deprived communities and have suggested that both retailers and adults supplying tobacco should be clearer about existing laws and potentially face some extension of laws. In this light it is worth considering: *How might learning from this programme about the failure to adequately address direct purchasing from smaller retail outlets inform tobacco prevention activity?*
- Both workers and young people have recognised the iniquitous impact of smoking on communities experiencing social deprivation, reflecting national research on the issue. For some young people the insight that their community is viewed as one experiencing deprivation has been a point of self-realisation that has not always felt comfortable. Workers have sought to make these discussions factual, insightful and non-stigmatising. Questions which arise might include: *How do youth work agencies support the people and communities they work with to understand and articulate their understanding of poverty and its relationship with health outcomes? How can inequality be addressed constructively as a matter of social justice rather than one of self-blame and disempowerment?*
- The use of e-cigarettes has also emerged as a topic of concern in the course of the programme. While not a focus of this programme the questions raised include: *How do we monitor and evaluate the impact which these products are having on the attitudes and behaviours of young people and adults in terms of smoking/tobacco products?*
- A link has been made with the supply of two restricted products – alcohol and tobacco. Social sourcing and direct sales are an issue in terms of the supply of both drugs, but public or Police responses to each can be different, with alcohol supply and use receiving more response because of the immediate impact on behaviour and public nuisance. With this in mind: *Are there lessons to be learned about taking a more rounded view of young people's access to restricted/licensed products? Can the understanding and subsequent responses of adults or key agencies be influenced to develop a more rounded and long term perspective of health impact rather than just short-term proactive/control responses?*
- When considering prevention and support for young smokers projects have identified the need for earlier educational interventions and for non-stigmatising smoking cessation support for those young people who do smoke. It might then be useful to ask: *How do those with an interest in tobacco prevention support the development of early learning that identifies not just the harm associated with smoking but also*

equips young people as they enter early adolescence with the skills, attitudes and confidence to not smoke? How do we identify young smokers and support them to come forward for responses which are not punitive but supportive?

- The projects have identified that at the heart of social sourcing are two important cultural factors. The first is that a pressure to smoke sits alongside a normalisation of smoking for many young people and their families. This then means that the transaction between the young person and adult who supplies tobacco is also acceptable and normalised. Shifting these norms would seem to be at the heart of any relevant or effective means of addressing social sourcing, this poses some challenging questions. *How should youth work and other agencies challenge cultural norms which are harmful? What can be learned from work done on other harmful behaviour or traditional/cultural practices? Specifically, what works in terms of questioning and changing adult/parental behaviours that sustain the core practice of supply?*

PART 5: PEN-PICTURES

These pen-pictures provide a short description of key aspects of the work of the four participating community projects.

PEN-PICTURE PROJECT 1

1. Introduction and context
2. Overview of the work undertaken
3. Issues encountered in the project
4. Reflections on impact

1. Introduction and context

Profile

Project 1 is a local community organisation established 18 years ago, it works with people of all ages and deliver a range of activities and services. The centre's programme includes children and youth people's clubs as well as services for adults including employability and benefits advice and social clubs. The Centre also has a café run by volunteers. Some of the communities served by the agency are within the 10% most deprived in Scotland.

Profile of the participating young people

Fourteen young people participated in the early stages of the project. The young people were aged between 13 and 17 years old with a mean age of 13 years and 3 months. Three of the participating young people identified as having a disability (one hearing impairment and two with dyslexia) and in terms of ethnicity all identified as White. A smaller core group of 5 young people engaged beyond the early discussions. In terms of the core group 4 were female and 1 male. In terms of this core group 1 young person was a smoker.

Engagement with young people's use of and access to tobacco

The project has been involved in discussing smoking with young people in the context of youth clubs and has previously received a Youth Tobacco Action Grant (NHS Lothian and administered by Lothian Association of Youth Clubs) which was used by a group of young people to produce a short DVD that explored the health risks of smoking. Discussing their own perceptions of tobacco, project workers identified that smoking impacts disproportionality on the community served; and that young people are accessing tobacco from both social sources and from direct purchasing from smaller retailers.

2. Overview of the work undertaken

The project recruited young people who attend youth work provision in the Centre as well as others by promoting the project in the local High School, using flyers to give information and invite young people to come along and find out more at one of two introductory sessions. The young people attracted to the project did not all know each other, they were not a close peer group at the outset, workers report that the young people come from a range of backgrounds and abilities.

Initial work with the young people established that the project was not about telling them not to smoke, or the dangers of smoking, rather an exploration of smoking itself and

particularly how young people access tobacco products. As well as getting to know each other better the initial sessions looked at what an investigation or research looks like and whether the young people had any experience of researching a topic. From the early stages the young people were encouraged to think about who they might want to tell about their work, even though the approach and what they might find or decide was unknown they were encouraged to think about the project as outward facing.

In the course of the early sessions young people looked at the issue of tobacco use from the level of the individual (Why do people smoke? What influences that?) to a national perspective (What does the law say and why?) to thinking about the tobacco industry globally (What impact does it have on the environment? Do people smoke all over the world?). In their investigations they discovered that people from more disadvantaged communities are more likely to smoke. This also led to a recognition that their own communities are considered to be areas of multiple deprivation, this was not something they had been aware of and discussion helped young people recognise that some people struggle financially or that deprivation might be something seen and experienced through ill-health. Young people also identified and became interested in how young people access tobacco via direct purchasing and social sources.

As the young people's considerations developed, project workers felt that there was a distinction emerging for young people between 'blaming' young people for smoking and identifying that adults were responsible for the supply of tobacco.

After the first block of work the core group and workers had a residential weekend at which they reviewed progress. Young people undertook some individual evaluation with project workers, identifying what they had learned and how they felt about participation. These evaluations highlighted that young were feeling confident about their participation, they felt listened to and engaged in the process. Workers were also explicit with young people at this point about the social action approach and where they saw the group in terms of working through the stages of the model.

The group decided to conduct two online surveys, one for young people the other for adults. The adult survey asked if the adult had ever supplied tobacco and if so whether they had known the young person or been paid/rewarded for doing so. Attitudes towards smoking were explored, as were attitudes towards supplying tobacco compared to alcohol. The young people survey asked those who smoke how they get their cigarettes and what happens if they try to buy them directly. Young people were also asked if they have ever bought for/sold to another young person, whether Police have ever approached them when they or friends are smoking or drinking alcohol, whether they think smoking is a problem and finally the acceptability of the different ways a young person can access tobacco (from parents, friends etc.). Young people planned an approach and promoted the surveys to other organisations and in a nearby shopping mall. Workers describe this stage of the process as being more challenging for the young people in terms of the time taken to develop the survey tools, promote them and wait for responses.

With survey results (from 102 young people and 152 adults) in the young people planned how to communicate their findings and to decide on some key messages they wanted people

in the community and beyond to hear. They developed a logo and name for their group. The key facts chosen to communicate were:

- 65% of young people who have smoked had sourced tobacco from family or friends.
- 20% of community members have given a person under the age of 18 cigarettes.
- 54% of adults felt underage drinking was a greater problem than underage smoking.

The group wanted to stencil their logo on local pavements but the Council refused permission. There was also some frustration when the newspaper Evening News did not follow up on a commitment to feature the work. In the summer holidays the young people designed t-shirts and working as a team they took their messages and distributed leaflets at local festivals and in the city centre; the leaflets were a way in to create conversations with adults to talk about the project and their findings. The young people also created a Facebook page.

3. Issues encountered in the project

Smoking and deprivation/poverty

Young people have made connections between young people's use of tobacco and deprivation, rather than blaming individuals they saw this as unjust, an unfair burden on people and communities. The group of young people involved have expressed interest in doing further work with the agency, possibly using the social action model to explore poverty and benefits cuts.

Making links between access to tobacco and alcohol

The young people were interested in how young people also access alcohol via direct purchasing and social sources, and saw the need to make links with tobacco access when speaking to others. They identified that adult responses differed and felt that this showed that for adults tobacco access is less important, probably because tobacco use has less immediate impact on others through anti-social behaviour. For young people however this fails to address the health impacts in the longer term for the individual.

Frustration with other parties

Young people worked hard to try to get permission to use their logo locally but found it difficult to find the right person to ask and then in time were refused. As stated earlier the local newspaper also let young people down regarding coverage of their project. These are disappointing but, workers felt, also learning points for young people about the challenges of communicating and campaigning.

4. Reflections on impact

Impact of the project on young people

Workers report that young people have been engaged, keen to participate and committed to the work. Both young people and workers have talked about young people enjoying the

group/team work experience and cited increased confidence when it comes to speaking to others outside the group and a confidence in their own ideas and knowledge on the subject.

Impact of the project on workers and agency practice

From the outset project workers expressed interest in the social action model as an approach – coming at it from different experiences either more practical or more theoretical. Workers have seen the approach work as a way to engage young people over time in a more in-depth programme, and also as a way to engage young people who might not want to get involved in more open youth work provision. Workers have valued the depth of relationship built with young people over time. The project has left a legacy of further intention to use the model to explore or investigate other issues that matter to young people.

To conclude, involvement in the *Participatory Research Project: Young people's access to tobacco via social sources* has been a positive experience for workers and young people.

PEN-PICTURE PROJECT 2

1. Introduction and context
2. Overview of the work undertaken
3. Issues encountered in the project
4. Reflections on impact

1. Introduction and context

Profile

Project 2 is a voluntary sector youth project based in a small town which attracts young people aged 12 to 18 years old from the town and surrounding communities. Established for over 20 years the project operates from a youth café/drop in facility which also offers a programme of activities. The project has a partnership with the local High School where it supports a range of life skills, employability and vocational learning as well as providing one-to-one support. Targeted work also engages girls and young women and young people with disabilities. In general terms the town and surrounding areas are fairly affluent with no communities in the 20% most deprived as measured in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Profile of the participating young people

Eight young people participated in the project, with consistent involvement across the work. In terms of gender, four were female and four male. They were aged between 14 and 17 years old with a mean age of 15 years and 7 months. Two of the participating young people identified as having a disability (both dyslexia) and in terms of ethnicity all identified as White. In terms of smoking, two of young people reported they were smokers with a further three that they were 'social smokers'.

Engagement with young people's use of and access to tobacco

The project has not previously engaged in any depth with young people's use of or access to tobacco. Workers have attended information session on the issues provided by NHS Lothian and use engagement with young people in drop-in sessions and activity groups to encourage informal discussion and reflection on smoking. In discussing worker's perspectives on tobacco, project workers have expressed concerned about a perceived increase in numbers of young people smoking. There is also a perceived lack of action across statutory and voluntary agencies to address young people and tobacco, other than young people being moved on or asked to smoke out of public sight so that an organisation or school is not seen to be condoning smoking. In terms of how young people access tobacco this is seen as primarily through peers, family members or requests to adults to buy on their behalf (proxy sales). In a small town it is considered less likely (although not impossible) that small local retailers will breach the law and sell to under 18s.

2. Overview of the work undertaken

The project recruited young people from the local High School, predominantly activity was at school and in the school day. The initial idea and discussion with the School to facilitate a mixed group of young people from across all school years (S1 to S6) was not thought to be feasible, however recognising that senior pupils are encouraged to undertake voluntary work, and can have this timetabled, pupils in S4 to S6 were targeted.

The group were scheduled to meet weekly. The group decided on a large scale questionnaire in order to find out more from peers about smoking and access to tobacco. Once developed, members of the group took the survey to PSE classes, they also asked some form/registration teachers to ask their classes to complete the questionnaire; 669 questionnaires were returned before the end of term 1.

Following the Christmas holidays, with impending prelim exams, project workers reported that the group began to find it difficult to meet as one group, workers were concerned about attendance at pre-arranged meeting times. In response to concerns a number of social media platforms were suggested and tried as a way to foster participation. Young people then suggested WhatsApp, a mobile messaging app which allows you to exchange messages without having to pay. This then facilitated the allocation of tasks associated with analysing questionnaire results. Alongside this the group met in small teams with the project workers when necessary. The use of social media was successful in terms of keeping in contact but also facilitating young people working autonomously and taking ownership of their own tasks.

Toward the end of term 2 of their project young people began to identify what actions might come from their work. Attending a meeting in the youth project premises, rather than the school, group members identified some provisional ways forward, agreeing that what they wanted to achieve was a strategy to deliver a support project for smokers in their school. They identified this would need to be put to and agreed with senior managers in the school, that workshops and support should be delivered with outside agencies and with young people trained as peer supporters/mentors.

Having drawn together the results from the young people's survey the group then decided toward the end of the school year (June 2015) that it would support the case to be put to school if they could extend their understanding of the issue by asking adults in the community their views on young people's use of and access to tobacco. A questionnaire was designed and promoted through social media and completed by 33 adults.

At this point, at the end of the school year, some of the group had reached the end of school and were now moving on to work or University. This left a slightly smaller group to continue the work during the summer holidays. In order to complete their project young people decided to go on an overnight residential trip at which they focused on their personal thoughts and experiences of being part of the project and agreed to meet in subsequent weeks to look at survey results and firm up what actions they wanted to take.

In their final meetings young people agreed on some conclusions from their work and decided on the actions they would like their school to take. They concluded (*taken from the end of project report*):

- *Most young people who smoke become addicted very quickly and will find it very difficult to quit the habit.*
- *Young people who smoke during school hours will hide away during breaks, lunch or even skip lessons just to get their fix of nicotine. If caught, they are given a detention or their parents will be contacted.*
- *There is no help within school to support young people who are addicted to nicotine.*

And proposed that in their school there should be (*taken from the end of project report*):

- *More support for young smokers and that NHS Lothian should put programmes in place for schools to help support young people to stop.*
- *More empathy for young people who smoke. By this we do not mean be lenient as in life there are restrictions for smoking. However, a detention is not going to stop young people from smoking and a call home to parents will not always have a positive outcome especially if the parents are also smokers who are giving their child cigarettes, suggested compulsory cessation meetings.*
- *More information and time spent on dangers and consequences of smoking to be given during PSE classes or even earlier at primary school.*

Finally, in terms of community responses to social sourcing the group suggested (*taken from the end of project report*):

- *That a policy similar to Pub Watch is put in place for adults and young people with fake ID who continually access tobacco for young people. Shops would work together on this to identify who is buying for young people and liaise with the police.*
- *More publicity in the local community for pharmacy cessation programmes to encourage and support young people to stop.*

As the programme of work comes to an end the group has also decided to present the findings of their project to the local Community and Police Partnership, local elected officials and Community Council and to local shopkeepers who continue to facilitate direct purchasing.

3. Issues encountered in the project

Negative perceptions about involvement in a 'smoking' project and asking: 'Do you smoke?'

There were initial concerns amongst young people that getting involved in the project would either identify them as a smoker, or might be perceived as them collecting information about other young people smoking. The setting of the school for the work was seen as linking it to either monitoring or potential for a punitive response to smokers.

Concerns arising from the topic of tobacco use also emerged in the delivery of the project with the host School's senior management team asking the young people to withdraw the question which asked 'Do you smoke?' Young people spoke with school staff to explain the importance of the question and the issue was resolved, project workers saw this time as important in terms of the group's understanding and ownership of the work, with emerging understanding of how adults – parents and professionals in authority – might not wish to be faced with evidence of young people's use of and access to tobacco.

Asking the question '*do you smoke?*' continued to be of some importance to the outcomes for the group. Having tallied the questionnaire results at the end of term 1 young people were surprised by how few of their peers answered that they were smokers. Reflecting on this young people felt that this was perhaps a result of young people – taking part in the school setting - not understanding or trusting that the questionnaire was anonymous, and that the questionnaire was being conducted at a time when there was some effort by the school to crack down on smoking around school premises.

Smoking in a 'well off area'

Young people have made connections between young people's use of tobacco and perceptions about whether this is something that happens in an affluent community – with the assumption that smoking is more likely to happen in poorer communities.

4. Reflections on impact

Impact of the project on young people

Project workers identify a good level of engagement and involvement of all members of the group. Workers also identify that at the point in the process where they became more explicit about the social action model – where they explained it to the young people – this also saw an increase in young people's commitment to the work and development of skills and confidence as participants and leaders. Young people have also identified benefits in terms of working as a group, directing their work and a sense of achievement.

Impact of the project on workers and agency practice

For project workers the greatest impact has been on their commitment and confidence to adopt elements of the social action model in their work with young people, with an increased self-awareness of how young people can be supported to be leaders of their own experiences and learning. The agency is using the approach to develop a new strategic plan.

Impact in the school context

Choosing the school as a setting for the work done came out of an ongoing close relationship between the participating youth work agency and the school, and a somewhat pragmatic recognition that having young people participate as part of their school day might make recruitment of the group and delivery of the project somewhat easier. What has also resulted with the project being based in school is that the group have focused on what the school (rather than the community, or adults in the community, or other agencies) might do on the matter of tobacco access and use.

To conclude, involvement in the *Participatory Research Project: Young people's access to tobacco via social sources* has been a positive experience for project 2, both in terms of the agency and young people.

PEN-PICTURE PROJECT 3

1. Introduction and context
2. Overview of the work undertaken
3. Issues encountered in the project
4. Reflections on impact

1. Introduction and context

Profile

Project 3 is a local community organisation established in 2005 and working with young people aged 12 to 21 on all aspects of health and wellbeing. Services and activities include one-to-one support and counselling, drop-in services, sexual health education and services and support around alcohol and substance use as well as complimentary therapies. The agency works from its own premises but also in local schools and Colleges and via street work. Some of the areas/communities served by the agency are within the 20% most deprived in Scotland.

Profile of the participating young people

The project was delivered across 3 distinct phases each of which involved different groups of young people.

- *Phase 1* involved 8 young people aged between 14 and 17; 4 male, 3 female, 1 young person identified as having another gender identity. 3 of this group of young people have a disability. In terms of ethnicity 6 identified as White and 2 Arab.
- *Phase 2* involved 13 young people aged 17 and 18 years old; 7 male, 3 female and 3 young people identified as having another gender identity. 6 of the young people have a disability. In terms of ethnicity 12 identified as White and 1 Asian.
- *Phase 3* involved 8 young people aged 14 to 19; 4 male, 3 female and 1 young people identified as having another gender identity. 5 of the young people have a disability. In terms of ethnicity all identified as White.

Engagement with young people's use of and access to tobacco

The project talks regularly with young people individually or in group work programmes about smoking and supports young people to stop. Workers view smoking as the norm for many young people (although want to challenge that it is the majority or inevitable) and that access via social sources and direct purchasing in local smaller retailers is common. They also recognise that smoking impacts disproportionately on communities experiencing deprivation.

2. Overview of the work undertaken

The agency did not take one group of young people through the project or social action staged model, rather different groups completed different elements of the overall project. The phases of the project can be described as follows.

Phase 1 young people were recruited from young people known to the agency and from local High Schools where information and an invitation to get involved was shared. Once recruited the young people explored the health and socio-economic impact of smoking. Having done so the group decided to find out the views of other young people using a survey and spent time designing this. The group did experience some difficulties with group relationships and some behaviour that meant progress was sometimes slow. Young people did not necessarily see young people smoking as problematic, nor did they all see adult supply of tobacco products as a problem. Having conducted a small number of surveys by the end of the first phase of 3 months or so the young people decided not to continue with their involvement.

Phase 2 work saw a group of local young people attending a College course take up on the survey and used it to gather information from a larger number of young people. In total, this meant a total of 124 young people completed the survey. From the survey young people were able to conclude that most young people can identify negative health impacts of smoking. Many respondents also expressed negative views about shops who sell directly to young people.

In Phase 3 this information was shared with new recruits to the project who used it to design ideas for a health campaign which saw 3 posters drafted and one produced and disseminated across the community. The conclusion of this group of young people was that there was a need to focus on adult attitudes and behaviours and to challenge the supply of tobacco by parents, older young people and adults who will buy for young people. The posters developed showed the negative health impact of smoking and were based around a theme of asking adults: *Still think you're doing them a favour?*

3. Issues encountered in the project

Challenging behaviour and difficult peer relationships

The early phase of the project was impacted negatively by young people's behaviour and their ability to focus on the process and tasks.

Working with an identified topic/a topic that some young people do not see as problematic

The project workers and young people had difficulty starting with a pre-determined topic. Because the topic was not seen as problematic as such, and young people at the outset did not see the need to change adult supply of tobacco, the project found it difficult to find a way in to the theme and process. When young people who joined the project in a later phase were interested in addressing adult supply of tobacco it was easier to work with the social action model.

4. Reflections on impact

Impact of the project on young people

At whatever point in the process young people have been involved they have identified the development of skills in relation to researching an issue, developing and using a survey and communicating with others about the project.

Impact of the project on workers and agency practice

The profile and interest generated by the project saw the agency highlight smoking as a 'theme of the month' in the course of the programme; this meant that lots of information and discussion about smoking were encouraged.

Learning from the social action approach has been shared across the agency and in particular with a young people's advisory group who have decided to adopt the model as a way to identify and plan their further work and the influence/advisory role they have within the organisation.

Finally, project staff are reflecting on how learning from a social action approach might inform a current process they are going through to examine their agency role in campaigning and understanding and utilising young people's 'voice' on relevant matters.

To conclude, despite some key challenges with behaviour and peer relationships the involvement in the *Participatory Research Project: Young people's access to tobacco via social sources* has been a positive experience for workers and young people.

PEN-PICTURE PROJECT 4

1. Introduction and context
2. Overview of the work undertaken
3. Issues encountered in the project
4. Reflections on impact

1. Introduction and context

Profile

Project 4 was established in 1992 and works with young people aged 10 to 21 years old across a large geographic area. Programmes include detached youth work, peer education, befriending as well as holiday programmes and training workshops. Some of the areas/communities served by the agency are within the 10% most deprived in Scotland.

Profile of the participating young people

Membership of the group who took part in the project changed over time, with different young people involved in earlier and later elements. The young people who were involved were all current volunteers in a peer education project, although most relatively new to this role; prior to their peer educator role each had been involved as a young person in the agency's programmes. In total 8 young people were involved, 4 male and 4 female. All young people identified as White and none reported a disability. Participant ages from 15 to 21 years old with an average age of 17 years and 7 months. Six of the young people were smokers and two non-smokers.

Engagement with young people's use of and access to tobacco

The project has previously worked on tobacco issues via the peer education project which has developed resources to support engagement with young people on tobacco use (funded by a Youth Tobacco Action Grant from NHS Lothian and administered by Lothian Association of Youth Clubs). Workers view smoking as the norm for many young people and anecdotally report the numbers of young people smoking are increasing. Workers report that access via social sources and direct purchasing in local smaller retailers is common. They also recognise that smoking impacts disproportionately on communities experiencing deprivation. A concern is the age at which young people start smoking, workers report that the transition from Primary School to High School can be a point at which some young people start to smoke. In the course of the programme workers also reported a significant increase in the numbers of young people they see using e cigarettes, including young people who have not previously been smokers.

2. Overview of the work undertaken

An initial group of young people explored what the social action model was and talked about the impact of smoking locally and what influences young people to smoke. These discussions built on previous knowledge of tobacco issues which the young people had built from other peer education work.

The young people decided to design and use a survey to gather more information on young people's views. The process of designing the survey was challenging, and it was difficult to sustain young people's enthusiasm in this stage of work. However, after piloting it in a local drop-in and receiving good responses the young people then took it to other clubs and schools; other peer educators within the agency were recruited to help facilitate young people completing it.

The survey subsequently got 366 responses. 38% of respondents had tried smoking or were current smokers; they were asked how they access tobacco, how much they spend on tobacco products. All young people were asked whether it is acceptable for adults to supply and opinions on what might help to prevent tobacco use by young people. Finally, young people were also asked if they knew of the Scottish Government target for a smoke-free Scotland.

Results from the survey supported the view that social sources (particularly proxy purchasing) are key to accessing tobacco, although some young people do still purchase from a local shop. Young people who smoke also reported that they find it easy to access tobacco. On the whole young people agreed it was wrong for adults to supply tobacco, particularly to under 16s.

After reviewing the findings of the survey young people recognised the role of adults in supplying tobacco and discussed developing a mystery shopper/test purchase approach where any adult who agreed to purchase or supply/sell a young person tobacco would be given a card explaining that what they had done was wrong/illegal. However on exploration and with advice on legality this seemed a complex thing to negotiate and achieve within the time available and was not pursued.

Young people then considered how to communicate the findings of the survey to others, with a particular emphasis on the role of adults facilitating purchases or supplying tobacco. With young people having skills and interest in music they decided to produce a song, using a well-known current song with new lyrics, which was subsequently recorded and disseminated widely in the community.

3. Issues encountered in the project

Consistent engagement of young people

Recruiting young people already known and engaged with peer education elements of the agency's work saw benefits in terms of knowing young people and them having an interest in tobacco education, but also meant that young people were busy, including work and College

commitments. All of this meant that it was hard to sustain interest of a consistent group throughout the project.

Working with an identified topic/a topic that some young people do not see as problematic

The project workers and young people had difficulty starting with a pre-determined topic. There were mixed views amongst young people as to whether adult's supplying tobacco was problematic.

4. Reflections on impact

Impact of the project on young people

Although already engaged as peer educators workers observed increased confidence in young people. Young people enjoyed the engagement with others in promoting and supporting young people do the survey, they felt more confident as a result of knowing they could be in new situations and talk confidently about their project. Young people also learned new skills in terms of survey design.

Impact of the project on workers and agency practice

Workers have enjoyed the approach and the challenges it presents to traditional ways of working, even though these are seen as participatory and young-people focused.

To conclude, despite some key challenges with sustaining engagement the involvement in the *Participatory Research Project: Young people's access to tobacco via social sources* has been a positive experience for workers and young people.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

In order to identify learning the work led by external consultant TASC (Scotland) has used a range of qualitative methods to capture the work of the four youth projects.

1. PROJECT WORKER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EVALUATION PROCESS

- a. **At approximately 3 months into their programme of work the first face-to-face interviews were conducted with project workers using the following format/questions to structure the discussion.**

Introductions:

- Review of the purpose of the evaluation - using the information sheet given in advance.
- Reminder that the session will be recorded.
- Response to any questions.
- Check consent to continue.
- Can you give me an overview of the (name) youth project?
- Can you give me an overview of your work here at (name) youth project? Other than this project about young people's access to tobacco via social sources what other work do you do here?
- Can you describe for me any previous work the project has done on young people and smoking? Have you done any work on the topic in another work setting?

Background/context:

- What's your view on young people and smoking?
- What's your view on how young people who smoke get their cigarettes?
- How did you find out about the access to tobacco project?
- Can you tell me your views on the experience of applying and engaging with the project in the early stages?
- The project seeks to use a *participatory research method* also known as *social action*: how familiar were you with the approach before the project?
- Can you tell me your views on the initial training and induction session?

About the work to date:

- Can you tell me how you set up the project here at (name of project). Specifically:
How did you identify and recruit young people as participants?
What information was provided for young people?
Did you recruit those young people you had hoped or anticipated you might recruit to take part?
- What work was/has been done with other young people or adults (either within the project or in the community) prior to recruiting participants or since commencement?

- You have been part of the tobacco project for about 3 months now, I want to ask you some questions about it in a bit of detail, but just to get us started, give me an overview of what you have been doing as part of the tobacco project so far.
- Imagine I didn't know the project at all, if you were explaining the project to me in just a few sentences, what would you say it's about?
- Before we discuss some of the detail of what you have been doing, have young people participated as you had planned or expected?
- On these cards I have an outline of the things you have been doing as part of the tobacco project. This is taken from the routine data you have been providing as part of the project. *Interviewer shares cards representing sessions 1 – 12 (or number of sessions completed) on prompt cards. Each card will have a title or broad aim of the given session with a sentence that describes the core activity.*
- *Taking each session in turn:* Can you expand somewhat on what is here in terms of purpose and core activity described? What worked best about the session? Reflecting on the session, what would you have done differently if you were to do it again?
- Has the resource and support provided by the project commissioners met need? If there are gaps what are they?

About young people's engagement, learning, impact and what's next:

- What do think young people are getting out of being part of the project so far: thinking about their *participation, knowledge and skills*?
- Have you used the terms *participatory research method* or *social action* with young people? If yes how? If not why not?
- Can you identify how the project has impacted to date on any of the key pull factors when it comes to access to tobacco from social sources; for example, the sociability of sharing, exchanging or selling tobacco among young people or adult complicity in supplying cigarettes to young people?
- Can you describe what progress has been made in terms of deciding on or taking up any action or investigation young people want to undertake in terms of the project's themes?
- After 3 months, what would you say you have found most interesting about the project? Has anything surprised you?
- Do you know what you will be doing in the next phase of the project? What has informed this plan?
- This is a new project, and its early days. But, if this project was to be run again in this club or another youth project, what advice would you give to make it a success?
- Returning to the *participatory research method/social action* how would you describe your confidence with the approach? Do you need any further help or support with the model?

b. Online reporting: project workers were asked to complete an online report in advance of a project session. This asked them to record the following:

- Author(s) of this report:
- Date of session:
- Session number

- Very briefly, what is the broad aim of the next session?
- What do you plan to do?
- Why?
- How?

c. Online reporting: project workers were asked to complete an online report after each project session. This asked them to record the following:

- Author(s) of this report:
- Date of session:
- Session number:
- Number of young women present:
- Number of young men present:
- Number of under 18s:
- Number of young people 18+:
- Number of new members at this session (if any):

The questions that followed were described as follows: These questions encourage you to think about the work you do in the context of the social action model. A social action worker is a facilitator, not a provider. Young people are not just consumers, they are active agents for change.

- If young people planned tasks or actions in the previous session had they been done? If no, did they explain why not? If yes, were they undertaken as planned or differently?
- Briefly describe what the group did at this session (this will give context to the subsequent questions)
- Were there any differences from the plan you had? If no leave blank, if yes please describe why so (for example, problems with attendance meant you had to change the plan or perhaps young people raised an important issue they wanted to deal with).
- How did the young people participate? For example: Did they bring things they wanted to discuss? Did they take a lead on any activity? Did external factors impact on their participation today?
- Thinking about young people as active agents in the process what decisions did the group make at this session? (These can be small or significant, individual or collective. Or perhaps none were taken today).
- The social action model is about discovery, finding out what is happening in people's lives. It is also about understanding why things are so. What learning for the group or group members was evident today?
- The social action model is about how participants might change things in a way that is meaningful to them. Has the group made any progress re any action or investigation in terms of the project's themes?
- In the social action model you are a facilitator. You want young people to gain understanding, think about making a difference but you also want participants to be

part of a process that is constructive and safe. What learning do you as workers take from this session to the next?

- The social action model will in time mean that young people put their ideas for change into effect. Your group might be at this stage, but perhaps not yet. Please tell us about any specific actions that young people have agreed to undertake before the next session. These can be small or significant, individual or collective.
- You are a facilitator of the social action process. This is defined around a number of stages which are about supporting young people to identify what they are concerned about, why so, how they might change things, taking action to change something and then reflect on what has happened. Wherever you find yourself at the moment in your project what specific actions are required by you as workers before the next session?
- What worked best about this session?
- If you could, what would you have done differently?

d. At the projects reached the end of their programmes of work final face-to-face interviews were with conducted with project workers using the following format/questions to structure the discussion.

- Have your views on young people's use of tobacco changed in the course of the project?
- Have your views on how young people get their tobacco/cigarettes via social sources changed in the course of the project? (From strangers/randoms; from other young people selling; from parents/family members)
- A social action approach to the topic of young people's access to tobacco via social sources might have been expected to see young people investigate the issue, understand the problem, participate in the process and take action. To what extent have young people in your setting:
 - Investigated the issue of social sourcing?
 - Understood the problem of social sourcing?
 - Participated in the process?
 - Taken action on the issue?
- What are your thoughts about the use of the social action/participatory research model in your work context?
- How is the model like or different to how you would otherwise see or describe your work with young people?
- Has the structure/timing or other practical matters in relation to the way this project has been set up influenced or informed your use of the model?
- What are your thoughts about the future of tobacco prevention/tackling social sourcing when it comes to the communities you work in?
- What is the legacy for you as a practitioner and for your project having been involved?
- Can you identify what has changed as a result of your/young people's engagement with a social action/participatory research approach?

e. Finally, on completion of their programmes, project workers were asked to respond via email to these final questions about their use of the social action model

- Were you, as project workers, facilitators or leaders?
- Were the young people 'active agents' in the process?
- Did you plan and prepare, were you creative?
- Did you listen, were you patient, disciplined and interested in young people's lives?
- As workers, were you consistent and realistic when it came to a level of optimism and enthusiasm when working with the group?
- Did you see a change in the traditional relationship between the young people/service users and you as workers?

2. YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EVALUATION PROCESS

a. At approximately 3 months into their programme of work the first face-to-face interviews were conducted with young people using the following format/questions to structure the discussion.

Introductions:

- Hello and reminder of names.
- Review of the purpose of the evaluation - using the information sheet young people will have been given in advance.
- Reminder that the session will be recorded.
- Response to any questions.
- Reminder of commitment to anonymity and child protection.
- Check consent to continue.
- How long have you been coming to the (name) youth project? Other than this project about tobacco what other things have you been involved in here?

About the project:

- How did you find out about the young people's access to tobacco project?
- What's your view on young people and smoking?
- Do you, your family, friends smoke?
- So, you have been part of the tobacco project for about 3 months now, I want to ask you some questions about it in a bit of detail, but just to get us started, give me an overview of what you have been doing as part of the tobacco project so far.
- Imagine I didn't know the project at all, if you were explaining the project to me in just a few sentences, what would you say it's about?
- On these cards I have an outline of the things you have been doing as part of the tobacco project. *Interviewer shares cards representing sessions 1 – 12 (or number of sessions completed) on prompt cards. Each card will have a title or broad aim of the given session with a sentence that describes the core activity.*
- *Taking each session in turn:* Can you tell me what you remember doing? What was best about the session?

- After 3 months: What would you say you have found most interesting about the project? Has anything surprised you?
- What's your view on how young people who smoke get their cigarettes? Do you think this is the same as it was before you got involved in this project or has this changed since you started this project?
- Do you know what you will be doing in the next phase of the project?
- This is a new project, and its early days. But, if this project was to be run again in this club or another youth project, what advice would you give to make it a success?

b. At the projects reached the end of their programmes of work final face-to-face interviews were with conducted with young people using the following format/questions to structure the discussion.

- Just to start us off, imagine I haven't heard anything about your project on tobacco and social sources and tell me about your project.
- In your project you have talked about young people and smoking. What do you think about young people and smoking now? Have your views changed in the course of the project?
- You have also talked about how young people get their tobacco/cigarettes via social sources - so from strangers/randoms buying for them; from other young people selling; from parents/family members. What do you think about how young people get their tobacco now? Have your views changed in the course of the project?
- What do you know now that you would not have known before the project?
- What skills have you learned (or got better) at by being part of the project?
- What would you like to change about young people and smoking?
- Were you able to try to change anything by doing project?
- What more could be done to try to change things?