

# **Raising the aspirations of young people**

5 September 2008

**Children and Young People's Services**

# What do we know?

- Pre-school and school age children achieve well in relation to “expected levels” for their ages
- School attendance, and attitudes towards community, school and learning are relatively good
- Children and young people say they want to learn, and get good jobs

# BUT.....

- Not enough young people get very high grades
- Too many young people drop out of education, employment and training after school
- The working population in Wigan is less well qualified than average

# Why?

- What is it about life in Wigan that causes this?
- Some assumptions to test out.....

# A low skill economy?

- Low numbers qualified to Level 4
- Limited opportunities locally in “knowledge based industries”?
- Not many people have NO real qualifications (e.g. NVQ1)

# A working culture?

- More young people than average want to get a job at 16
- When work-based routes (e.g. apprenticeships) are taken into account, a good percentage of Wigan young people continue in learning

*(In some ways this is a strength)*

# An unequal society?

- 400 babies (extract on factsheet)
- Area variation in attainment
- Higher education applications and acceptance
- Teenage parents
- Children in care

# Fading ambition?

- Above average achievement at primary age
- Average achievement at secondary/post 16
- Below average qualifications in adult population

# Young People say....

## CYPP 2006

- Everyone to be able to go to college or university if they want
- Importance of earning enough money for the basics in life (and some luxuries too!)
- Need to feel rewarded for trying hard at school or college (frequent references)

# Young People say....

Online CYPP survey 2007 (3000 responses)

- Want a good education, and a successful career/job
- Ambitions included actor, barrister, archaeologist, singer, sportsperson, army, police, hairdresser, fashion designer, mechanic, airline pilot/crew, teacher, builder, plasterer.....

# Young People say....

## Comunik8 CYPP Review 2008

- Value vocational learning, careers education and guidance, employer links
- Suggest more ways to contact key agencies (eg text)
- Agree that schools in less affluent districts should get more resource – also suggest “twinning” schools

# True or false?

- Wigan's young people are able, but they don't fully realise their potential as they grow up, because many lack ambition?
- Wigan's young people work hard and most get qualified to expected levels – there just aren't that many “high fliers”?

# True or false?

- Whether or not young people do well is more to do with the culture and the environment they grow up in than how clever they are?
- Lack of aspiration is all about inequality – people “imprisoned” within narrow horizons?

# What needs to happen?

- More success at higher grades, at all ages
- More participation in higher education, and advanced training
- Almost nobody dropping out of learning at 16
- Much better outcomes for those living in deprived neighbourhoods

# How?

- How can we create the conditions for these outcomes to be achieved?
  - In school/college/training/workplace?
  - In local communities and families?
  - In the local economy?