

# Community Space Challenge

## The story so far...



# From rundown spaces to fabulous places



Many young people in the UK find themselves in seemingly impossible situations. At Catch22 we believe that every young person deserves the chance to get on in life no matter what.

We work to help young people out of difficult circumstances. Usually that means helping them to find a job they enjoy, somewhere safe to live and supporting them towards standing on their own feet.

Until we launched the Community Space Challenge in 2007, however, we hadn't worked in a major way with young people by encouraging them to grab a shovel or a paintbrush and give the spaces in their communities a makeover. Now, backed by money from the Big Lottery Fund and with support from our great array of partners, young people aged 8 to 17 are transforming some unloved public spaces, from Devon to Newcastle. The beauty of the programme is that it addresses many common agendas - community safety, community regeneration and cohesion, building intergenerational links and, of course, tackling environmental issues.

What's striking about the work - besides the improvements to neglected open spaces, parks, gardens and more - is how it changes the young people taking part. Groups of young people planting, digging and painting in their neighbourhoods are clearly enjoying seeing the results of their hard efforts; and are also determined to ensure that their improvements are not vandalised. As well as learning useful new skills they rightly take pride in their achievements, as do their families and neighbours.

Catch22 and our Community Space Challenge partners are now half way through a five-year commitment to improve communities and the lives of young people, right through to 2012. The hard work of more than 6000 young people in the Community Space Challenge deserves highlighting. I hope that in the following pages you too are impressed to see the changes young people are making.

Joyce Moseley, Chief Executive, Catch22

## Is there a Community Space Challenge project near you?

### North West

Altrincham  
Ashton Under Lyne  
Blackburn  
Bolton  
Burnley  
Chester  
Crewe & Nantwich  
Liverpool  
Manchester (4)  
Oldham  
Rochdale (2)  
Runcorn  
Wirral

### North East

Ashington  
Durham  
Easington  
Middlesbrough  
Newcastle  
North Shields  
Redcar & Cleveland  
South Tyneside  
Washington

### Yorkshire & Humber

Bradford (5)  
Castleford  
Doncaster  
Goole  
Grimsby  
Halifax  
Leeds  
Wakefield (2)

### West Midlands

Birmingham (2)  
Wolverhampton

### East Midlands

Derby (3)  
Nottingham (2)

### East

Luton  
Peterborough

### London

Barking & Dagenham (2)  
Barnet  
Battersea  
Bermondsey  
Camberwell  
Ealing  
Greenwich  
Hainault  
Hackney  
Islington  
Roehampton (2)  
Walworth

### South West

Boscombe  
Bristol (2)  
Torbay

### South East

Hove  
Portsmouth  
Southampton





**"I used to get in trouble** with the police", says Billy, aged 12 (on the right of the photo), who lives in Bermondsey, south-east London. "When the youth offenders team suggested I try out the gardening project I thought it might be boring. **Now I love it!"**






"I used to think vegetables only came from supermarkets. Now you can plant a seed and see it grow. **My favourite school subject is science,** and working on the allotment makes me want to work harder at it."










**"It's better than being at home** watching TV and eating", says 16-year-old Teresa from Hackney, east London. "I've enjoyed the painting because it's my first experience of it and **I'm doing great."**

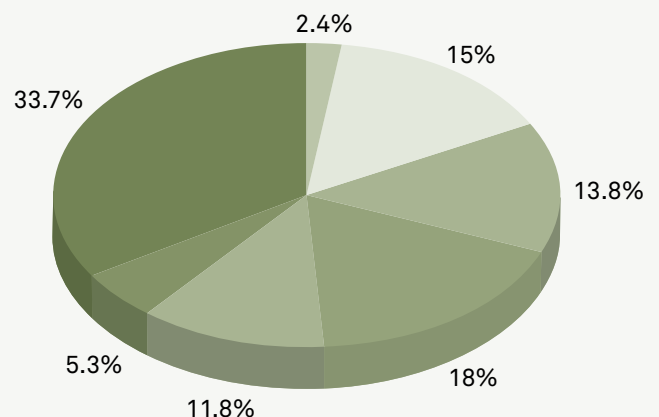
# GROWING NUMBERS

## At the half way point the Community Space Challenge programme has achieved the following:

-  6,499 young people growing up in tough situations have got involved in transforming their neighbourhoods.
-  1,441 young people have gained accredited awards that recognise their new skills and improve their chances of getting jobs or further training .
-  1,148 young people have been supported back into education, training, volunteering or on into work.
-  More than three-quarters (77%) of those who had been in trouble with the police are getting into trouble less – or not at all.
-  Through Community Space Challenge young people have given 66,949 hours of their time. That's 2,790 days or the equivalent of more than seven and a half years of young people "getting stuck in" to improve their communities.

## Accredited awards achieved by young people so far

Total	1441	
 Open College Network	35	(2.4%)
 Duke of Edinburgh's Award	216	(15%)
 Youth Achievement Award	198	(13.8%)
 AQA Award	259	(18%)
 John Muir Award	171	(11.8%)
 Asdan Award	77	(5.3%)
 Other	485	(33.7%)



# People power and p

## Wildlife and allotment site, Barton Hill, Bristol



A group of young people have been working hard to clear a large patch of land in Barton Hill, Bristol. Clearing the deep covering of rubbish, tyres, shopping trolleys and scrap metal as well as brambles, called for young people to put in some really hard graft, bashing the brambles and digging.



Within weeks, with the support of Avon Wildlife Trust and Catch22, the land was ready to be planted and transformed into an allotment and wildlife site. As spring turned to summer the young people were learning that they needed to have patience, tend, weed, water and wait. And their reward was the satisfaction, after all the hard work, of taking home and eating vegetables and salads they had grown themselves.

“These young people have proven to me time and again, that if given the chance and the trust and a sense of ownership they are able to achieve brilliant things”.

Simon, Community Action Officer, Avon Wildlife Trust



Having built a pond to encourage insects and other wildlife to act as a natural pest control for their plants, they're now planning further clearance work, a seating area and an earthen oven, where they will be able to cook and enjoy their healthy homegrown food.



### Meets policy agenda:

- ✓ environment
- ✓ employability
- ✓ reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- ✓ community engagement and cohesion
- ✓ health

### Snapshots from around the country

- ✓ a wildlife walk with new benches and artwork has been created along the canalside in Goole, Yorkshire
- ✓ graffiti in Grahame Park Estate, Barnet has been replaced by a large art mural
- ✓ a piece of land in Newtown, Birmingham that no one wanted to claim responsibility for has been cleaned up and planted with hundreds of daffodil bulbs

# atience



## Mural Project Southwark, London

"It's fantastic, absolutely fantastic. I look out of my office window and say ohhhh! I'm so impressed by the young people; they have been focused, followed instructions and are proper interested. They want to see the end result and to tell people what they have done".

Faye King, Centre Manager  
Bethwin Road Adventure Playground, Southwark

### Meets policy agenda:

- ✓ environment
- ✓ community engagement and cohesion
- ✓ reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

Robert and Ben from Community Space Challenge's G-Force project in Altrincham, Cheshire meet presenter Fiona Bruce at the Keep Britain Tidy Cleaner Safer Greener Awards.

## Prize for G-Force's new park

A well-deserved Keep Britain Tidy Cleaner Safer Greener award went to the Community Space Challenge G-Force team for their renovation of a neglected and derelict park on the Broomwood Estate in Altrincham, Cheshire. Young people from G-Force went to Brighton to collect their prize from presenter Fiona Bruce.



The old park was neglected and vandalised, unsafe and unused, except by people drinking and taking drugs. But Community Space Challenge young people worked to transform the park: to clear bushes, trees and rubbish, creating borders and even new tennis courts. G-Force are providing rackets and balls so anyone can have a go. Helping them were groups of volunteers from John Lewis and The Alliance and Leicester Bank. People nearby are now delighted to see the park full of children using it in a positive way rather than it being a troublespot.

G-Force did not stop there. It has held monthly meetings with residents, and the council youth services, the local primary school, and others to discuss next steps for the park. Together they have mapped out a five-year improvement plan and have already secured £50,000 from the government Playbuilders scheme.

The young people involved are keeping a close eye on the park now. Since the work has been done park benches have stayed graffiti-free and there has been less nuisance behaviour in the area. More recently the group has also been given a North West in Bloom award for the park.

### Meets policy agenda:

- ✓ health
- ✓ employability
- ✓ environment
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# Keeping out of trouble

**As well as creating cleaner, greener communities, Community Space Challenge (CSC) gives young people an alternative to getting into trouble, crime and anti-social behaviour. In our recent survey of participants in CSC, more than three-quarters of those who had been in trouble with the police are getting into trouble less, or not at all, since they started taking part in CSC.**

“Getting involved has helped me become more confident”, said Kirsty, aged 17, from our project in Derby. “I am attending school more often and have not been in trouble with the police for about two months. I owe a lot to this programme”.

Another 17-year-old, a young man from Peterborough, who lives in a high crime area has a history of driving without a licence and is easily influenced by his peers. He told us: “My first impression of the CSC programme was that it was going to be boring because it was a nature project”.

“Actually I’ve really enjoyed it because we really get involved and Sughra [the project worker] asks us what we want to do. I am really looking forward to improving the seating area because there is so much rubbish around that is dangerous for the kids. I want to be proud of the area”.

Sughra commented: “He has really blossomed since getting involved. We’ve seen him calm down, he has gone on to pass his driving test and says he is going to come back next year as a volunteer when he is too old to attend as a participant”.

## GROT GRUMBLE & GO



Vicky, aged 14, shows the Wolverhampton group’s plan.

To find a grot spot it helps to go on a grumble walk, as Josh and Mason of Goole, Yorkshire have done. Josh, 16 and Mason 14, were members of a group who took part in an action learning day run by Community Space Challenge partner Keep Britain Tidy.

“On our grumble walk”, say Josh and Mason, “we saw rats, graffiti all over, flytipping everywhere – not very nice. We took some pictures of what we wanted to make better. With help from Keep Britain Tidy, we decided to improve the park. We painted over the graffiti with a mural, sanded down and painted all the equipment and built some new picnic benches”.

“It’s been an inspiration to meet young people who are so passionate about preserving the environment. The community looks much nicer and cleaner because the young people have also done litter picking sessions. I use the seating area now because it’s nice to sit there when it’s sunny.”

Mr Tikka (local resident – Gladstone, Peterborough)



## SIX KEY FACTS

1. Community Space Challenge transforms neglected local spaces for the good of the community.
2. There are 70 Community Space Challenge projects across England.
3. It puts young people growing up in tough situations at the forefront of creating cleaner, safer, greener communities.
4. Its £8.3m funds come from the Big Lottery Fund – with more than 90% spent directly in frontline delivery.
5. It is led by Catch22, with partners Keep Britain Tidy, The Prince’s Trust, Changemakers and with the support of the Youth Justice Board.
6. It runs from October 2007 until September 2012.

### A future for Johnny

Johnny, aged 14, got a taste for construction when he helped create a Community Space Challenge garden on what had been a wasteland in East Manchester’s Discus Project. He had a history of getting into trouble and had been excluded from school with no qualifications.

Community Space Challenge partner, The Prince’s Trust, offered Johnny a development award of £300, which enabled him to sign up for a construction taster course. This has helped him develop his practical skills and he now plans to join the college’s full Construction Course.

## Hannah Luik

### Hackney Project Worker, Catch22

"Whatever the weather, young people have been working for hours each week to clear rubbish, plant flowers, lay bark and rejuvenate the soil at the community garden. I've noticed that they now appreciate the hard work that goes into maintaining community spaces and are more mindful about their behaviour. I'm really proud of them.

Throughout the weeks local residents have seen the young people doing something positive for the area and given them praise. This has sparked new relationships between young people and older members of the community – relationships that were previously sometimes strained. Barriers have been slowly pulled down and the community as a whole is now more united".



Dear Warren,

I just felt I should write a few lines on behalf of the residents from Uplands and Barrow Close regarding your ongoing work in the wood. We would like to thank you and your team of dedicated helpers for cleaning (once again) the rubbish and burnt out scooters that had accumulated in the wood at the end of Barrow Close and Uplands Road. The youngsters involved should give themselves a pat on the back; they are a credit to the team.

An extract from a letter from Mr Taylor, local resident, to Hove Community Space Challenge project.



**Applause  
all round**

**Every year in Community Space Challenge we ask young people taking part how they feel about it. During the second year 635 young people completed our survey. Here's what they told us.**

#### **Fun**

- 🌿 Nine out of ten (89%) had enjoyed taking part in Community Space Challenge.
- 🌿 More than seven out of ten (72%) felt that that they had had a say in how their project was organised.
- 🌿 Eight out of ten (82%) would take part in something similar again.

#### **A sense of community**

- 🌿 Almost two-thirds (63%) felt more part of their community because of taking part in Community Space Challenge.

#### **Pride in where you live**

- 🌿 Almost two-thirds (63%) felt more pride in their neighbourhood.

#### **Making a difference**

- 🌿 Seven out of ten (70%) told us they now felt they could make a difference to the environment.

"Lots of fun and it's educational but not like school"

"It helps me and my friends stay out of trouble"

"Community Space Challenge supports young people often viewed as a problem to be a real part of the solutions"

# Intergenerational work - growing together

Anti-social behaviour, binge drinking and gangs: these were the top three phrases that adults associated with teenagers in research commissioned for Catch22. The 70 Community Space Challenge projects have been tackling these perceptions by giving young people the chance to show that they can lead the way in making our communities the best they can be.

Increasingly young people on Community Space Challenge projects are reconnecting with other residents where they live and recruiting their help. Young people at the Community Space Challenge project run by St George's Community Hub in Newtown, Birmingham got their parents, grandparents, neighbours and younger brothers and sisters involved in growing fresh organic vegetables in the Peace Garden that they had created. Through the project four generations worked alongside each other. Community Space Challenge partner and youth charity, Changemakers, are supporting the development of intergenerational work such as this.



“What struck me was the natural way everyone was interacting with each other. Many of the young people were proudly teaching their parents how to plant out seedlings, adults were helping young people build crop cages and a couple of grandparents were giving their green fingered wisdom. The whole group were having fun learning and sharing skills with each other!”

Linda, Changemakers

## Meets policy agenda:



health



environment



community engagement and cohesion



employability



reducing crime and anti-social behaviour



intergenerational

## Contact us:

For more details about Community Space Challenge and how to get involved visit [www.communityspacechallenge.org](http://www.communityspacechallenge.org) or [communityspacechallenge@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:communityspacechallenge@catch-22.org.uk)

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helping young people out