

We carried out three online focus groups with over 20 pupils at Kirklees College, Thornhill Community Academy and Westborough High School - and a cross section of their views are summarised below.

Kirklees college (age 17-21)

“There are too many empty buildings in Dewsbury. Can’t we turn them into houses? Or places for people to work? I also think we need to give the town centre a clean-up. There are not enough bins and it feels scruffy.”

“I would like to move away from Dewsbury as there’s not much to offer here. The town centre has too many run down places and it doesn’t feel welcoming.”

“There needs to be more spots to hang out. There’s no real place for young people. My parents have lived here all their lives and they say it’s changed for the worse. Dewsbury used to be a lot more vibrant when they were younger. There’s a massive arts centre in Bradford and lots of nice shops. But we don’t have that here.”

“When we go to the town centre we sit outside Greggs on the tables. There is nowhere else for us to go. It’s much better in Leeds or Bradford. I’d like to go into Dewsbury more, but there’s nothing there for us.”

“Money should be spent on making Dewsbury a fun place to be. Culture would help – and it needs to be cleaner. A better shopping offer would help too. Daisy Hill sounds a good scheme. Watching our town go downhill has been painful. What will it be like in a few years’ time?”

“Me and my sister used to sleep at my grandma’s and she owns a pub in Dewsbury. We would walk through the streets and there would be drug needles on the floor and quite a few homeless people. There is too much crime here and it’s intimidating.”

“I fear crime will get worse because everything is closing. Huddersfield has a lot of knife crime and I’m worried that Dewsbury could be next. There are too many people taking drugs and it doesn’t look like anyone is doing anything about it. I wouldn’t bring my little sister here.”

The safeguarding lead for the college also added that they had concerns around the growth of county lines drugs gangs. In the last six months, they have seen evidence of a county lines gang in Dewsbury.