

Tottenham Together: Voices from Tottenham after the 2011 riots

This report is a summary of the findings from the community engagement work in Tottenham, commissioned by the Haringey Community Panel and carried out by the Young Foundation.



9 November 2011

The Young Foundation was commissioned by the Haringey Community Panel and to engage the community of Tottenham to understand how they viewed the impact of the August disturbances, and to consider actions that can be taken to help the area recover and improve.

Sections

- Introduction
- Summary of key themes and key actions
- 1. Views from **Local Traders**
- 2. Views from **Public Sector**
- 3. Views from **Youth** (CONEL)
- 4. Views from **Youth** (Gladesmore Community School)
- 5. Views from **Residents** (Parents, Rowland Hill Children's Centre)
- 6. Views from **Residents** (Members, African Women Welfare Group)
- 7. Views from **Residents** (BGAC, Seven Sisters, Northumberland Park)
- 8. Views from **Voluntary and Community Sector**

Over the course of two and half weeks, the Young Foundation engaged with more than **150 local residents and stakeholders** in Tottenham.

Our methods:

- **Deliberative workshops**

CONEL students, Gladesmore Community School students, public sector leaders

- **1:1 interviews with residents**

High Road - Seven Sisters, barbershops - Northumberland Park, Bernie Grants Arts Centre (BGAC), Rowland Hill Children's Centre and Nursery

- **Focus groups**

Members of the African Women's Welfare Group, local traders, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) leaders

We also spoke with Leon Joseph (Haringey Council Youth Services), Sharon Grant (Haringey Community Panel, local Citizens Advice Bureau Chair), and Alan Peake (Homes for Haringey).



Community engagement	Method	Participants	Demographic breakdown	
Local Traders	Focus group	6	GENDER: ETHNICITY: AGE:	5 males, 1 female 5 BME, 1 white 30s-60s
Public Sector Institutions	Deliberative workshops	8	GENDER: ETHNICITY: AGE:	3 males, 5 females 1 BME, 7 white 30s – 50s
Residents1 Parents , Rowland Hill Children’s Centre	1:1 Interviews	8	GENDER ETHNICITY: AGE:	8 females 6 BME, 2 white 20s – 40s
Youth1 CONEL	Deliberative workshops	35	GENDER: ETHNICITY: AGE:	20 males, 15 females 33 BME, 2 white
Residents2 African Women’s Welfare Group	Focus group	34	GENDER: ETHNICITY: AGE:	34 females 34 BME 40s – 70s
Youth 2 Gladesmore Community School	Deliberative workshops	21	GENDER ETHNICITY: AGE:	10 males, 11 females 16 BME, 5 white 14 – 16 years old
Residents3 BGAC, Seven Sisters, Northumberland Park	1:1 Interviews	36	GENDER ETHNICITY: AGE:	26 males, 10 females 26 BME, 10 white 20s – 70s
Voluntary and Community Sector	Focus group	5	GENDER: ETHNICITY: AGE:	1 male, 4 females 4 BME, 1 white 30s – 70s
Total		153	GENDER: ETHNICITY: AGE:	73 males, 80 females 125 BME, 28 white Teens – 70s

This research was framed around four main questions:

1. What are your **thoughts and experiences of the riots** and the **impact** on Tottenham?

*Sharing **thoughts and experience** on why the riots happened and how they affected you and your community.*

2. What is **hurting** Tottenham?

*Exploring perceptions of the **vulnerabilities** in Tottenham.*

3. What is **helping** Tottenham?

*Uncovering perceptions of the **strengths and assets** in Tottenham.*

4. What can be done to **make things better** (Tottenham tomorrow...)?

*Practical, on the ground **actions that can be taken** to make Tottenham a place where people want to live and move to.*

The following is a summary of key themes and actions that emerged from engaging with a range of people in Tottenham:

1. Positively engaging young people
2. Community cohesion and empowerment
3. Local infrastructure
4. Regeneration and local investment



Theme 1: Positively engaging young people

Opportunities and support for young people

It came through in many conversations that people feel that there are insufficient activities to keep young people “*busy*” and “*off the streets*” – this is exacerbated by the lack of local employment opportunities. It was felt that young people lack supportive individuals in their lives. Some people see involvement in gangs caused by a missing “*sense of belonging*”.

Tottenham Hotspur is “Great asset”, but The **Hotspur Foundation needs to do more** for local young people (e.g. employing them as stewards).

Voice and influence

Young people’s voices need to be heard and they need to be involved more in the community.

Police

There is a sense that the police are overly confrontational (e.g. young people complained about “*stereotyping*”, saying that being young, male, black and/or wearing a “*hoodie*” are reasons to be stopped and searched by the police).

Key Actions: Positively engaging young people

Employment

- Local traders told us to **capitalise on the initiative young people show** when they approach businesses looking for jobs.
- Create **partnerships between** local business and schools/young people.
- **Communicate job and other opportunities** more effectively.
- **Provide training** opportunities (e.g. involve CONEL to address skill gaps).

Engagement and participation

- Invite **young people to spend the day with local politicians** as a way of bridging the gap between young people and local representatives, and provide shadowing opportunities.
- Need to **get young people involved**: *“They must be part of it, from the grassroots right to the top, right up to chief executive meetings in the Council, young people must be there.”*

Key actions: Positively engaging young people

Extracurricular Activities

- **Workshops and educational opportunities** (outside of school) to expose young people to new experiences and opportunities.
- Maximise **existing assets** (e.g. youth clubs run in school buildings).
- Support **events and activities for young people** to take part in - *“We need to keep children busy at youth clubs, centres.”*
- Help **youth-focussed charities** develop new, creative programmes.
- **Social space** for young people is needed.

Improving interactions between the Police

- **Interaction** between police and local young people **in non-confrontational settings** (e.g. continuing the success of police coming into schools, which has been received positively).

Key actions: Positively engaging young people

Mentoring and role models

- **Support for mentors and community leaders** (e.g. faith leaders, teachers, parents, neighbours and members of the community).
- **Identify youth role models** within the community to raise aspirations.
- Identify men in the community that could act as **father figures** for other young people - *“People don’t have a father figure and they need a father figure. If you don’t have one you don’t know where to go.”*

Support for parents

- Better education and more support for families, *“especially for young mothers”*.
- Young people need to have **contact with motivational adults** and many local parents need support to perform that role.
- With the highest mental health morbidity in the country, a strong range of support is required.

Theme 2: Community cohesion & empowerment

Strong community spirit and sense of neighbourliness

Most agree that Tottenham is a friendly and supportive place to live - “*The community is very strong and stays together.*” Those interviewed showed empathy for other residents and the problems they face, particularly related to the riots.

Pride in diversity

Residents see the area’s cultural diversity as a strong community asset and highlight that there is “*no fighting*” between ethnic groups.

Strengthening community engagement

Communication between authorities and the community is an area that needs improvement and it was suggested that consultation methods should be replaced with “*genuine conversations*”. This approach is also proposed for resolving “*antagonistic relations*” with the police.

Many residents, especially minority groups, feel that their voices are not being heard in decision-making processes and there is a need to create a stronger sense of local responsibility.

Key actions: Community cohesion & empowerment

Opportunities to come together

- The community needs to form new groups that promote neighbourliness and safety (e.g. neighbourhood watch).
- Support **community meetings**, e.g. providing public spaces: *“We need to be given a voice.”*
- Bring local people from **all backgrounds** together through positive, creative **community and cultural events**.

Participation:

- **Leadership** is needed that understands and reflects the community - *“The local authority needs to talk to local people”*.

Supporting V&CS:

- Support **organisations with proven track records**.
- Ensure that successful projects are not interrupted due to lack of funding. Tottenham has deep-rooted problems which need **long-term solutions**, *“not ones that are funded for 1 or 3 years”*.

Theme 3: Local infrastructure

Local amenities

It is widely recognised that the **area has good amenities** (e.g. schools, parks, retail and transport links). Though, many residents expressed concern about the **excessive number of betting and fast-food shops**.

Physical environment

The **deterioration of the buildings**, especially the High Road, contributes to the **feelings of neglect** felt by the community. Many people mentioned local **streets being littered**.

Housing

Some feel the need for **more affordable housing**, as waiting lists are long. **Poor maintenance of the existing housing stock** is also a concern as was the impact of new residents with higher incomes displacing low-income residents.

Key Actions: Local infrastructure

Physical infrastructure

- **Street lighting** need to be improved, especially in Bruce Castle park and Downhills Park, and the **streets more tidy**.
- More **playgrounds** are needed.
- Build **more affordable homes** and better prioritising of housing recipients.
- Change **planning policy to reduce the number of detrimental businesses** that encourage poor health and gambling.

Public Services

- Lessons should be learnt from the **effective and direct response to the riots** by public institution staff - “*services [must be] more visible in the community*”; moving away from “*ticking boxes and writing reports.*”
- More **police foot patrols**, especially in the evenings.
- Convert the site of the burnt **post office into a mutual** so that it can become a community resource.

Theme 4: Regeneration and local investment

Regeneration

External investment is welcome for the creation of jobs for local people and local growth though some fear that **“big businesses”** that may overlook local interests.

Tottenham Hotspur

Although the **club is seen as a great asset**, residents feel the **club isn’t** fulfilling the potential that is possible in terms of **supporting the local community**, especially for young people.

Supporting local businesses and investment

Many residents **support investment in small local businesses**.

Job creation

This was overwhelmingly portrayed as a **central concern for the area** and is seen as the way to solve many issues.

Negative perceptions

Many feel strongly that the negative perceptions of outsiders about Tottenham is **misplaced** and was worsened by the media coverage of the riots.

Key actions: Regeneration and local investment

Supporting local businesses

- Strengthen **partnerships between business and community groups**, and between SMEs and large businesses – *“if we don’t work together on a smaller level we won’t survive”*.
- **Support entrepreneurship** in the area – change planning policy to encourage new businesses to form and provide *“local contracts for local people”*.
- Support **local businesses to employ local people** and apprenticeships for young people.
- Ensure **parking regulation doesn’t harm** local businesses.
- **Capitalise on the Tottenham Hotspur** brand (e.g. encourage local franchising of Spurs merchandise).
- **Work with local traders** to increase their revenues from match day crowds (e.g. local shopping vouchers).

Key actions: Regeneration and local investment

Build the “Tottenham” brand and communicate positive messages

- Many see the need to send out a “*positive message*” about Tottenham to rebuild the sense of pride in the area, as well as attract new investments and people - this includes building an identity for Tottenham outside of the ‘Spurs’ brand.
- People need to buy into the “I love Tottenham” campaign because, “*if only a minority believes in it, it doesn’t work.*”
- Overcome the “*stigma hanging around Tottenham*” (e.g. follow the example of the re-branding of Brixton).
- Communicate positive messages about the area (e.g. the achievements of local residents).

Key actions: Regeneration and local investment

Creative, inclusive investment

- Attract desirable **external investment** (e.g. desirable shops, bookshops, restaurants and bars).
- Residents should be **encouraged to stay long term** (e.g. shared ownership schemes).
- *“Like Shoreditch, we should invite IT specialists, such as Microsoft to come into the area and develop it”; “We need to be bold about what we ask for”.*
- **Local residents need to have a strategic role** in a regeneration programme.
- Help **communities take over local disused assets** and work with businesses to make charities and social enterprises a success.

1. Thoughts & Experiences of the Riots

Perceptions

- *“It wasn’t a shock. I was expecting it”.*
- Feeling that people were frightened to visit Tottenham before the riots and are now more frightened.
- Many of those involved in the riots came from outside the area.

Fear and disappointment

- *“It saddened me that it happened in our community”.*
- The police didn’t deal with the initial demonstration well enough.

Positive about the future

- Some traders felt optimistic about *“[getting] to work to turn the situation around”.*
- Feeling that people want to defend their community.

LOCAL TRADERS

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Tottenham faces many social problems

- Tottenham is a “*melting pot*” with a lot of issues – anger, drugs, desperation, joblessness, struggling single parent families, etc.
- “*Avid criminality*” and a strong gang culture, especially in areas such as Northumberland Park, where guns are common.
- High drug use – especially cannabis, which is causing problems for many young people.
- A sense that young people using cannabis are abandoned and can end up on harder drugs.
- Feeling that many people of all ages locally have an attitude of “*why should we help?*” when they didn’t cause the problems.

LOCAL TRADERS

Lack of activities and opportunities for young people

- Many local youth services have been cut.
- Highest unemployment in London, with Northumberland Park having the highest in the UK.
- Red tape makes it difficult for local businesses to employ more people or offer apprenticeships to young people.
- This leaves “*nothing else on offer*” for many young people.

Lack of local investment

- Lacking local investment in the area, especially in supporting smaller independent businesses.
- Too many large businesses are supported to open up in Tottenham, e.g. Tesco Express, betting shops and takeaways.
- Large national companies such as Asda, William Hill and Ladbrokes don’t benefit the local area – their CSR is “*inexistent*” while they “*live off the misery of local people*”.

Lack of local investment (continued)

- Many local people don't shop locally – Tottenham High Road has become “*a thoroughfare for the West End.*”
- Tottenham seems to be defined by Tottenham Hotspur, but visiting fans don't spend locally.
- Difficulty understanding local parking rules (there are differences across the area), which prevents many from shopping locally for fear of getting tickets.

Negative experience with, and opinions of, the police

- Police officers have a “*power mentality*” and are unapproachable.
- Experiences of some police officers not fully investigating incidents between black and white residents.
- Feeling that it's pointless reporting incidents as they won't be thoroughly investigated and that individuals “*know what will happen.*”

3. What helps Tottenham?

Diverse community, neighbourliness

- Feeling that, generally, the people of Tottenham are good people.
- Tottenham is diverse with people of all ages, races and backgrounds.

Local amenities

- Tottenham Hotspur is a great selling point which could be built upon.
- There is some free parking available which brings in local shoppers.

Local business links to the community

- Local people support and understand small businesses – you “*don’t hear the groundswell for big business*”.
- Many local young people are interested in finding work and take the initiative of going into shops asking for jobs.
- Local traders talk to local young people and feel that taking an interest in them increases respect and understanding.
- Good Traders Association has meant that the council does listen to local business, but there’s a feeling it’s hard fought.

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

Build strong local identity

- Build an identity for Tottenham outside of the ‘Spurs’ brand.

Support young people into employment

- Find a way to capitalise on the initiative young people show when they approach businesses looking for jobs.
- Link in to local business to provide “*stepping stones*” into employment.

Reduce detrimental business

- Change planning policy to reduce the number of businesses that encourage poor health and gambling.

Support local business

- Support entrepreneurship in the area – change planning policy to encourage new businesses to form and provide *“local contracts for local people”* to support local businesses.
- Strengthen partnerships between business and community groups, and between SMEs and large businesses – *“if we don’t work together on a smaller level we won’t survive”*.
- Support local businesses to employ local people and increase apprenticeships for young people.
- Capitalise on the Tottenham Hotspur brand (e.g. encourage local franchising of Spurs merchandise).
- Work with traders to increase their revenues from match day crowds, e.g. local shopping vouchers.
- Ensure parking regulation doesn’t harm local businesses.

Support the community to support itself

- Help communities take over local disused assets and work with businesses to make charities and social enterprises a success.

Views from the public sector

The following is a summary of the key findings from a deliberative workshop held on 17 October 2011 at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre in Seven Sisters with eight **representatives from public sector institutions**, including representatives from health, education, employment and housing.



1. Thoughts on the Response to the Riots

Emergency response was effective

- *“In this regard, the response was fantastic. Real issues were addressed very directly and quickly”.*
- The crisis brought extra dedication to go beyond normal roles. People were put at the centre: *“we went back to basics”; “minimal bureaucracy”; “back to human needs”; “Volunteers knew what to do, where to go”.* This direct approach brought immense satisfaction.

Emergency response centre

- *“Multi-agency approach”* to help people on a one-to-one basis was very successful.
- Emergency Response Centre as a temporary community space was an important focal point for people. It was very successful but perhaps it closed too quickly.

Community response

- There was a very positive community response (e.g. generous donations to the Emergency Response Centre).
- The community pulled together for those who were made homeless.

Absence of institutional leadership during emergency response

- *“In fairness, there was no one around to give any leadership”.*
- The timing was significant as it was the holidays and no one was around to respond to the situation.

Police response

- Surprised at how shocked the police seems by the riots: Youth leaders had been warning the police this would happen.
- There wasn't anger at the police response, but at how little people knew each other across sectors.
- *“I think the police did the best they could in the circumstances”.*

Approach used for emergency response has not been sustainable

- Effective response resulted in “*very good press*”, but not enough has been done to “*keep the good news going*”.
- The riots represented a catalyst opportunity for mobilisation, but now the community faces the challenge of sustaining this organic and spontaneous organisation.
- What happened has now gone down in the agenda of priorities: “*We are now fighting different fires from the ones we were fighting in August.*”
- Approach feels disconnected, “*piecemeal*”; “*just for the sake of it*”.
- The police should be visible and have a stronger presence now, not just when there is a crisis.

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Many young people don't feel part of the community

- Very fragmented community – some people feel part of it, but some young people don't. *“How do you get that to heal itself?”*
- Many young people feel no pride in Tottenham.
- Complete disconnection from the mainstream – young people don't feel a part of anything: *“We've really underestimated the problem.”*
- A mental health expert related that the *“pathology”* of gang members in Tottenham is as severe as *“child soldiers in West Africa”*. *“They don't feel part of anything”*.

Negative perceptions hurt Tottenham

- *“Northumberland Park is actually a nice place.”*
- Some stigmatisation of social housing after the riots.
- Tottenham is seen by others as an area with *“gangs, violence”* and students from other boroughs believe that if they go into the area, they are not safe – a view reinforced by their parents.

Lack of opportunities and support for young people

- Around 40% of young people in Northumberland Park are unemployed.
- Joblessness is part of residents' lives – there are no prospects or hope.
- Problems begin when young people leave school, as safety nets are removed (e.g. 16 and 17 year olds living independently with no family support).
- Someone drew attention to the fact that the area has a high number of refugees coming from war zones, and *“these are the young people we deal with”*.
- *“What support is there for the parents? They have no control over these kids, there’s no one there to help them”*.
- Homes for Haringey offers four apprenticeships per year and receives 300 applications.

Strong gang culture

- *“The issue of gangs in Tottenham is a real one”* (particularly in Northumberland Park). They give young people a sense of belonging that they may not get from their families - there are young men whose whole lives revolve around gang involvement.
- Youth services have been targeting marginalised youth. Removing this service increases susceptibility to gangs.

Living in Tottenham

- Having a very high level of people in transition (e.g. homeless, jobless) contributes to a lack of sense of belonging.
- The community is quite mixed (by income level), although the area is seen by some as a cheap “*temporary location*” for people hoping to move elsewhere.
- People living in Tottenham “*don’t see it as somewhere where they want to live*”, often choosing to move away for the sake of children.

3. What helps Tottenham?

Good local amenities

- Strong educational opportunities (e.g. CONEL, Gladesmore Community School, Haringey Sixth Form).
- Some good shops (e.g. Tottenham Hale).
- Transport links.
- Tottenham is a very affordable area.
- Tottenham Hotspur has the potential to be a great resource for the community.

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

Stronger social support for young people and families

- Young people need to have contact with supportive and motivational adults (e.g. a mentor) and many local parents need support to perform that role.
- With the highest mental health morbidity in the country, a strong range of support is required.

Tackling gang culture and supporting vulnerable young people

- Need to understand why young people are being driven to join gangs - *“...why are they disenfranchised? Education has improved, but why are they still disengaged?”*
- Need to build young people’s *“sense of belonging”* and *“pride”* so that they can *“see Tottenham in a different light.”*

Learning lessons from the riots

- Work together with other areas to understand why this has happened.
- Local issues should be addressed holistically.

Successful community engagement

- Engage directly with the community and have “*genuine conversations*” with young people - “*I don’t think any young person is unreachable, but you have to have the right systems in place.*”
- Lessons should be learnt from the effective and direct response to the riots by public institution staff - “*services [must be] more visible in the community*”, moving away from “*ticking boxes and writing reports.*”
- Staff time needs to be freed up so that they can engage with the community and address issues directly.

Encourage local investment

- Attract external investment (e.g. desirable shops, bookshops, restaurants and bars).
- People should be encouraged to stay long term (e.g. shared ownership schemes).

Creating a positive community identity

- Overcome the “*stigma hanging around Tottenham*” (e.g. follow the example of the re-branding of Brixton).
- People need to buy into the “I love Tottenham” campaign because, “*if only a minority believes in it, it doesn’t work.*”

2. Views of CONEL Students

The following is a summary of the key findings from a deliberative workshop held on **20 October** with **35 Further Education students** from CONEL. The majority of participants were from a BME background, aged 16-25 years old.



CONEL Students discussing the Tottenham Riots, 20 October 2011



1. Thoughts & experiences of the riots

Experiences with police

- Prior to the riots “*stop and searches were getting out of hand.*”
- Rumours surrounding the treatment of Mark Duggan’s death emerged due to the poor communication between the police and the community.
- Police are disconnected from the local communities and overly confrontational.
- Lots more police around after the riots – people generally feel safer.

Perceptions

- Although there are stereotypes of who was involved in the riots, in fact, “*it was all kinds of people*”.
- No feeling of ownership and identity over the ‘I love Tottenham’ campaign. Instead, Tottenham needs a campaign that captures local voices.

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Unemployment

- Not enough careers advice and a reluctance to recruit people from Tottenham (e.g. vacancies at the new Westfield Centre were not properly advertised).
- Some experience discrimination in job searches because of their address.

Negative perceptions of Tottenham

- The media misrepresents the community and riots, leading to people from outside the area being scared to come to Tottenham.

Poor infrastructure

- The streets in Tottenham are dirty which leads to people caring less about the community.
- The streets and parks are poorly lit.

Lack of support for young people

- Lack of belief in young people and their aspirations - “...my teacher said, ‘I don’t care if you pass or fail, I’m still getting paid to be here!’ It doesn’t make you want to work hard.”
- Young people often feel that they are not being listened to by decision makers.

Inadequate amenities

- Lack of new housing is leading to overcrowding.
- Lack of facilities such as youth clubs means fewer social and educational activities are available.

3. What helps Tottenham?

Positive sense of identity and place, appreciation of diversity

- Most feel safe in Tottenham - *“when you live here it feels safe.”*
- Many young people are keen to find solutions to make Tottenham a better place, and want be involved in the community.
- Dislike of outsiders stereotyping people from Tottenham.
- Positive attitude towards diversity.
- Appreciation of community assets such as CONEL and local parks (during the day) and good shops and a ‘strong identity’ around Bruce Grove.
- Strong social and community networks (e.g. families, mosques).

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

Quick Fixes

- Improved street lighting, especially in Bruce Castle Park and Downhills Park.

Challenging perceptions

- Communicate positive messages about the area (e.g. the achievements of local musicians and sportspeople).
- Challenge negative mindsets of young people.
- Build trust and community spirit.
- Combat stigma relating to the Job Centre.

Communication and engagement

- Bring local people from all backgrounds together through positive, creative community events.
- Bring together young people and the decision makers (e.g. David Lammy).
- Communicate job and other opportunities available to young people more effectively.
- More interaction between police and local young people in a non-confrontational setting (e.g. continuing the success of police coming into schools, which has been received positively).

Maximising existing assets

- Create partnerships between local business and schools/young people.
- Youth clubs run in school buildings.

Views of GCS students

The following is a summary of the key findings from a workshop held on 20 October 2011 with **20 students**, 14 to 16 year olds, at **Gladesmore Community School**.



1. Thoughts & experiences of the riots

Disruptive and foolish

- “...when the riots spread to other areas, it just ruined everything” and was no longer about the death of Mark Duggan.
- The riots were “a waste of time and money. It is disrespectful to burn people’s homes. Family memories, everything they have”.

Strained relationship between local youth and the police

- There was a significant emphasis on the relationship between the police and young people, which was linked to the events leading to Mark Duggan’s death.
- The young people suggested that the trigger for the riots was, in part, a response to police behaviour towards young people.

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Young men are more likely to be the targets of criminal activity (less so for young women)

- *“You have to think about yourself and where you are all the time.”*
- There is a generally held fear of venturing into unfamiliar areas.

Stigma associated with living in Tottenham

- The young people feel the stereotypes associated with Tottenham are unfair and that *“the media exaggerates.”*
- *“People have certain ideas of people living in Tottenham, but that is not who I am”.*

Prevalence of gang violence

- The young people want to see less hate and violence within the community.
- *“People carry knives and they think that they are safe with knives”.*

Tottenham is not a good place to raise children

Though young people enjoy living in Tottenham, it doesn't fit with their long-term aspirations to secure good jobs and raise children.

- *“I don't want to live in Tottenham when I'm older.”*
- *“If you want to be successful, you wouldn't want to live in Tottenham.”*
- *“The area is bad now and it will be worse when our children are older.”*

Unwelcoming physical environment

- Some of the young people feel that the local environment is tarnished with litter, noise and dirt.
- *“I like time away from Tottenham, escaping from the madness and going back to peace and quiet.”*
- Too many betting shops and takeaways.

Negative relationships with, and experiences of, the police

- Some young people described their feelings as “*hate*” towards the police.
- One person in the group had been stopped and searched, and a number recounted experiences of their friends and family members who had been stopped and searched.
- *“If you have a hoodie, you have dark skin and you are male, you are stopped.”*
- The riots *“showed people were angry with the stereotypes.”*
- *“It was a test for the police, we passed the test.... People tested what they can do, it showed the power of the masses.”*
- *“They shot Mark Duggan for no reason, so people tried to make a point”.*

3. What helps Tottenham?

Good community spirit and neighbourliness

- Feeling that, generally, people in Tottenham are supportive of each other and are very friendly.
- Students identified people within their communities, including their parents, who were active citizens. However, it was felt that people who are active in the community need more support.

Diversity

- The young people were proud of the diversity of the area.
- *“There is mutual respect here, there are so many cultures.”*

High regard for Gladesmore Community School

- The young people had a high regard for their school and the teaching staff in the school.
- Most people identified the nearby area as a good part of Tottenham.
- *“Gladesmore is a good school. The teachers come here because they care... I wish there were more schools like this.”*

Good local amenities

- Retail areas such as Tottenham Hale retail park and Seven Sisters are viewed positively.
- The young people like the organised activities that are provided for young people such as Tottenham Leisure centre, football clubs and martial arts clubs.

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

More activities for young people

- More activities and workshops to help expose young people to new experiences and opportunities.

Mentoring opportunities

- Support for mentors and community leaders. This could include faith leaders, teachers, parents, neighbours and members of the community.
- Invite young people to spend the day with local politicians as a way of bridging the gap between young people and local representatives, and provide shadowing opportunities.

Community role models

- Identify role models from within the community. In the past, role models were selected who did not come from Tottenham and with whom young people could not identify. Young role models from within the community would be more effective in raising aspirations.
- Identify men in the community that could act as father figures for other young people - *“People don’t have a father figure and they need a father figure. If you don’t have one you don’t know where to go.”*

Views of parents

The following is a summary of the key findings from interviews held on 18 October 2011 at the Rowland Hill Children’s Centre in **Seven Sisters** with **eight local residents**. The participants were mothers, aged 20-40 years.



1. Thoughts & experiences of the riots

Feelings about Tottenham have not changed

- Riots were described as “*unacceptable,*” “*very bad,*” “*stressful,*” and “*unfair*”.
- Most parents said they were not directly affected by the riots and that their opinions of Tottenham have not changed. “*I feel the same about Tottenham, things are back to normal now.*”
- However, for most, the area already felt “*threatening*” and unsafe before the riots, so the fact that “*nothing has changed*” is not necessarily positive.
- “*I wasn’t happy here before the riots and I’m definitely not happy here after.*”

Stigma

- “*This didn’t just happen in Tottenham, it happened in a lot of places.*”
- Feeling that it was blown out of proportion by the media.
- Negative perceptions of young people already existed - “*You can see it on the bus, my son gets it. He gets on and all the old ladies on the bus will clutch on to their bags and purses – it’s not their fault, but it’s damaging.*”

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Lack of employment opportunities

- High unemployment.
- There are “*inferior education standards*” which are being left to get worse.
- Young people cannot get jobs if they are from “*the wrong background*”.

Insufficient safe spaces for social and community activities

- There aren't enough parks or sports facilities.
- There are few affordable facilities provided by the council for older children, such as youth clubs.
- Many good services are being cut, such as children's and youth centres.

Ethnic exclusion

- “*Local businesses only employ their own*” (e.g. the Turkish supermarket only employs Turkish people).
- Some feel that the government doesn’t care about Tottenham because of the high number of ethnic minorities. For them, communities where the majority of the population is white, there are more opportunities, better schools and more support from the council.
- Feeling that it is harder for ethnic minorities to get jobs and that they are more at risk of knife crime.

Distrust in Police

- There is a “*language barrier*” between police and some BME residents.
- The police do not respond effectively to anti-social behaviour.
- The police do not always engage well with the community.

3. What helps Tottenham?

Good local amenities

- Tottenham Hotspur is a good asset, which shouldn't be moved out of Tottenham.
- Good local churches responded well to the riots (e.g. one set up a meal centre for those affected).
- Good local health services – especially hospitals and doctors' surgeries.
- Diverse local shops (e.g. West Green Road has lots of shops from around the world).

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

Interviewees suggested:

- Build more affordable homes.
- Better prioritising of housing recipients.
- More police foot patrols, especially in the evenings.
- Better education and more support for families.
- More opportunities for people to come together.
- Need to creatively engage the community.
- More opportunities and positive activities for young people.
- Encourage private investment to create opportunities for young people, boys in particular.

Views of the African Women Welfare Group

The following is a summary of the key findings from a focus group held on 18 October 2011 with **35 Somali women**. They are 35-60+ years old and most have lived in the area for 15-20 years.



1. Thoughts & experiences of the riots

Reactions and perceptions

- Strong consensus that the riots didn't only happen in Tottenham or only by "*black people, young people*", although that was how it was portrayed in the media.
- Negative press coverage of Tottenham "*makes us feel sad*".
- While other councils cleaned up areas in three days, it took 10 days for Tottenham to be cleaned.
- The AWWG Centre's landline hasn't worked since the riots.
- Many expressed that they were "*very scared*". They talk about "*before the riots*" (i.e. when Tottenham was a safe place) and "*now*" (i.e. a time when they are scared of being on the streets).
- The riots have altered their routines - "*there are problems after dark*"; "*we are trying to keep children busy inside*".
- "*Before the riots there were no jobs, but there was no fear.*"
- The women left Somalia due to "fighting" and "*now there is fighting in London. It's scary and worrying*".

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Issues with young people

- *“There is a lot of fighting”, especially between young people, which scares them and reminds them of fighting in Somalia.*
- Problem with guns and drugs.
- High unemployment - *“Many people graduate from uni and then are out of work for several years.”*
- Many children are not at school.
- The local schools are not good. *“Children aren’t given enough homework, instead they go out and hang around with their friends.”*

Fear of social services

- Fear of repercussions from social services if they discipline their children. *“The government tells you how you can’t discipline your child.”*
- Women said children use social work as threat against “discipline”. *“We don’t want to harm them, but they need discipline.”*

Relationships with and experiences of the police

- They said they were “*proud*” of the police before, but that this perception changed after the riots - “*We don’t know who is defending us, but before we had no problem*”; “*The police have less power now than before*”.
- Police very slow at responding: often attending a burglary “*will take at least one hour*”.
- The police do not “*get on well with young people. They just arrest them*”.

Lack of investment

- “*The government needs to invest to change*”
- “*What investments have there been in Tottenham?*”
- The private sector is even more “*scared*” of investing in the area since the riots.
- The government has cut funding to groups which support BME initiatives. They are not sure the Welfare Centre will survive past this month.

3. What helps Tottenham?

Happy to live in Tottenham

- When asked whether they wish to stay in Tottenham, all enthusiastically answered yes: *“We are settled here”*; *“We are hoping the government can solve the problems so that we can live here.”*
- Feeling of belonging: most moved to Tottenham straight from Somalia and do not have much experience of the rest of London.
- There is a strong connection between the women and their community: *“We enjoy living here, people speak our language”*.
- Many talked of liking living in Tottenham, that *“Tottenham is great”*, however, some have the feeling that some young people are ashamed of Tottenham.
- Reinforcing the “before and after” vision, some said that *“before the riots, Tottenham was a nice place.”*

Diversity and community cohesion

- *“There is no discrimination, no racism. No white, no black, no Muslim.”*
- *“A lot of people coming together”,* such as in the centre. *“It’s a good blessing”; “a unit”.*

Good local amenities

- They consider Tottenham good for shopping (although the closure of the Aldi supermarket, *“a cheap shop”*, was mentioned several times).
- Parks are well used.
- Mosques are well used.

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

Community involvement and responsibility

- The group feels that the community needs to get together and act - *“We are ready to do something as a community”; “We are ready to collaborate to make things better.”*
- Neighbourhood Watch: *“We need to find out who is committing crimes in the community and tell the police.”*
- *“Parents should have rights over their children”,* and they should pay attention to whom their children’s friends are.
- *“The community should come together. There shouldn’t be a Turkish community or a Somalian community or a West Indian community – there should just be one Tottenham Community. There shouldn’t be any differences between colour or religion.”*

Community participation

- Think about prevention rather than reacting to issues – address grassroots issues and problems in the community. *“It’s not good to just jump on something.”*
- The local authority needs to talk to local people; *“The will of the people alone can change things, but the Council and MPs have lost the will of the people and people feel distant from the Council and leaders.”*
- Need to talk to BME people, especially black mothers who have issues with their children. *“We have the responsibility to come together and orient our children.”*

More opportunities

- Increase jobs and education opportunities for young people.
- Provide events and activities for young people to take part in - *“We need to keep children busy at youth clubs, centres.”*
- The Council must help young people with activities to fill their free time.

Views of local residents

The following is a summary of the key findings from interviews of **36 local residents** at the Bernie Grants Arts Centre, on the High Road at Seven Sisters, and at barbershops in Northumberland Park.



1. Thoughts & experiences of the riots

Fear and sadness

- *“My children were scared and I was scared.”*
- One woman said she was very upset, wondering where *“all black boys had gone wrong”*.

Disappointment, frustration and anger

- *“People should be responsible for their actions”* but should be able to express anger *“without destroying infrastructure”*.
- Most believe Mark Duggan’s death was used as *“an excuse”*.
- Some shared the feeling that the situation was *“out of control”*, and that the riots *“could have been avoided”* if the police reacted earlier.
- *“The Tottenham I see in the media is not the Tottenham I recognise.”*

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Joblessness

- Unemployment is seen as Tottenham's biggest challenge.
- Residents link joblessness with troubles caused by *"people on the streets"*, especially young people, leading to *"crimes and drugs"*.
- The existing jobs are *"minimum wage jobs"*.

Lack of resources and amenities

- Not much trust for the local authority: *"they've lost so much money"*.
- *"The area is diverse but people stick to their own"*. It was reinforced that there is no fighting between groups.
- Shopping area is very poor, with too many betting shops and takeaways. No coffee shops or restaurants.
- No feeling of a high street: *"there is no reason for people to come here if they don't live here"*
- Lack of investments, poor facilities, *"it's very bleak"*.

3. What helps Tottenham?

Strong community spirit

- Although some residents felt Tottenham is an unsafe area and would prefer to live somewhere else, many liked living in the area and felt that the community is very vibrant.
- Community relations have generally improved over the years.
- Tottenham's strength is its cultural diversity: *"Tottenham embraces people from all walks of life."*
- Young people in the area respect their elders (e.g. youth workers, football coaches etc. are the respected leaders in the community).
- *"I love Tottenham. The community is very strong and stays together."*
- *"We came here for peace. The English welcomed us. They gave us free education, free house. And we wish to repay them for the education by working and by keeping the peace."*

Good local amenities

- Good parks in the area.
- Lots of good shops (e.g. West Green Road has a diverse range of shops from around the world).
- Tottenham Green leisure centre.
- Lots of historical assets, like Bruce Grove Castle and surrounding park; High Road was the old Roman Road.
- Good Schools (e.g. Haringey Sixth Form).
- The youth services were good and well used.
- Bernie Grant Arts Centre, local libraries are good.
- Good transport links.
-

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

Communication and engagement between residents and institutions

- Improve relations between the community and the police.
- Young people need to know they are valued. They need inspirational mentors, people in the community to sit and talk to them.
- Involve residents in local decision-making processes.
- More parental support, especially for young mothers.
- Need to support the newcomer community (e.g. eastern Europeans).
- *“Things will get better”*; *“the community is good”*.

White Hart Lane Stadium

- *“Great asset”*, but Tottenham Hotspur Foundation needs to do more for local young people (e.g. employing them as stewards).
- People coming to games need to be attracted to other things in Tottenham.

Strengthen community empowerment

- Build a sense of local responsibility and civility.
- *“Bring people together.”*
- Need to form groups and have more community meetings: *“The community needs to work together.”*
- *“We need to be given a voice.”*
- Local MP is supportive but needs to speak up on behalf of the area.
- Leadership that understands and reflects the community is needed.

Improving the physical environment and community facilities

- Buildings need to be maintained.
- More business investment (e.g. through improved shopping facilities) to generate jobs locally and draw in people from outside.
- Investment in children’s playgrounds and tidying up the streets.
- Hold more local cultural events.
- Convert the site of the burnt post office into a mutual so that it can become a good community resource.
- Whilst investment in physical landscape will improve the face of Tottenham, investing in the people living in the area will make a real difference.

Engaging young people

- Provide training opportunities (e.g. local apprenticeships, local traders).
- Youth charities to develop new programmes.
- Create more engaging activities for young people (e.g. There should be more sporting opportunities in the area, “*not just football but tennis and badminton too*”).
- Police need to talk more with young people and get more involved because they are still not getting through to the youth. The force has to adapt.
- More groups for young people to “*keep their mind occupied*” and stop them from doing “*bad things*”.
- Need more social space where young people can go.

Local investment and regeneration

- New growth and investment into small local businesses (e.g. cafes, bars).
- Need to remove the stigma of the area and highlight the positives.
- Independent research is needed into who local jobs are going to.
- Help local people buy property in the area; help the first-time buyers.
- Need a better standard of housing in the area.
- Spending of regeneration funds must be very transparent and more people need to be involved.
- Tottenham Hotspur can do a lot more (e.g. Community should be able to use the stadium for other activities, such as youth clubs and employment centres).
- Risk of overcrowding if too much new housing is built.
- More parity with the west of the borough. Need to redress the balance in resource allocation. Tap into available resources better.

1. Thoughts & experiences of the riots

Feelings of distress

- The riots had been festering for a very long time.
- *“The killing [of Mark Duggan] was very sad but it was not the reason for the riots.”*
- *“I expected trouble but not this, and not now.”*
- *“Sadly I think there’s worse to come. I hope I’m wrong.”*
- Distress at *“yet another black man dead.”*

Negative consequences

- *“The riots have reverted us back to the days of the Broadwater Farm riots.”* It gave the impression that nothing has changed and reinforced images of young black people rioting.
- Tottenham’s image has been damaged nationally and internationally. *“Cyclical riots”* is the perception of people from the outside.
- Tottenham was *“on its way up”* before the riots, but now *“businesses won’t stay”*.
- At the same time, *“it’s shone a light on Tottenham. Now they’re putting hanging baskets on the High Street, cleaning the pavement. Did these riots really need to happen to create change? It’s putting people to shame”*.

2. What hurts Tottenham?

Lack of opportunities for young people

- There is a high young black male depression, mental health and suicide rate in the borough.
- There is no money coming in for young people so often they resort to making money how they can – drugs, muggings, etc.
- As they have no one to talk to, the group (gang) becomes their family.
- For many reasons, not just financial, young people are feeling excluded and *“we have to find a way to bring them back”*.
- Northumberland Park has the highest unemployment rate in the country. *“We need to remember that if youth unemployment is at say 40% then black unemployment will be more like 60%.”*
- Young people are not being treated with respect.

Issues in the local area

- Tottenham High Road is an “*aesthetic eyesore*”.
- The only new businesses target the vulnerable - “*greasy fast food shops and betting shops. The Council is letting this happen. It’s preying on vulnerable people, people with addictions*”.
- High inequalities - as a presentation done by David Lammy with bus route clips showed, males living in Tottenham lose two years in their life expectancy at each stop from West to East.

Multi-agency relationships

- “*Voluntary organisations have been marginalised*” which could have added tension to the situation which was brewing prior to the riots.
- “*Haringey doesn’t value its VCS organisations. They starve us of information so they can have the upper hand.*”

Relationship and experiences with the police

- There is a high number of “stop and search” of young people.
- This affects not only the people being searched, but also people who witness these searches every day. At the same time, many have learned to ignore what they see taking place.
- *“My mum used to say, ‘I don’t care who your brother hangs around with. I want him home. It’s the police I’m worried about.’”*
- The police are being *“antagonistic towards the public. They are winding people up to get a reaction. Some people have been deliberately stopped up to six times for a stop and search on the same road”*.

Funding and public cuts

- Politicians and decision makers are out of touch, living in *“Ivory Towers”*.
- In Tottenham, around 75% of the youth service is being cut. The youth club in Bruce Grove has been kept but the residents say it’s *“not fit for purpose”*.
- Services such as Northumberland Park Resource Centre are scaled back without any proper communication to local people.
- *“Haringey has consultation fatigue”*. Short-lived funding for programmes.

3. What helps Tottenham?

Strong sense of community

- During the riots people came together - *“It united people”; “for all its problems, I wouldn’t want to live in another borough”*.
- *“The ‘Tottenham Spirit’, doing things for yourself, is already here. Let’s develop that further”*.
- Diversity is a real asset: *“People gel well, it’s not an issue”; “Turks, Greeks, the Caribbean people... There are only a handful of gangs.”*

Building transparency

- Although there are problems with the police and the community, there are attempts to build transparency (e.g. allowing civilians to accompany certain police visits).

Existing knowledge

- They mentioned many successful projects that have been discontinued (e.g. Exposure in Muswell Hill and Collage arts).
- There are really good local *“people like Sharon Grant”*, who know *“what is happening on the ground”*.

4. Tottenham Tomorrow...

More analysis

- An analysis of what went wrong is needed “...we need to look at causes and solutions which go beyond our ‘feral youth’.”
- Impact of EMA cuts and a suggestion to investigate the proportion BME youth no longer entering universities.

Mobilisation of the voluntary sector

- The existing links within the community should be drawn upon using a holistic approach to finding solutions.
- Tap into organisations with proven track records of working with the community.
- “Let us decide how to organise ourselves”; “Vote people in from the community”.

Involve youth

- Involve CONEL to address skill gaps in young people locally. They can set up specific courses to address this.
- Need to get young people involved: “They must be part of it, from the grassroots right to the top. Right up to chief executive meetings in the Council, young people must be there.”

Community assets and resources

- Suggested mapping and long-term funding of successful projects and organisations.
- Need to ensure that successful projects are not interrupted due to lack of funding, regardless of which political party is in power.
- Tottenham has deep-rooted problems which need long-term solutions, *“not ones that are funded for 1 or 3 years”*.
- The Council to convene a collaboration of Trusts who fund social problems, such as JRF and Paul Hamlyn foundation.
- *“Resources must be directed to the people in Tottenham.”*

New investments and redevelopment

- *“Like Shoreditch, we should invite IT specialists, such as Microsoft to come into the area and develop it”*.
- Local residents need to have a strategic role in a regeneration programme.
- *“We need to be bold about what we ask for”*.
- Redevelopment schemes must be tied in with employment for local people.
- Exploring the potential role of social enterprise in redevelopment schemes

About the Young Foundation

The Young Foundation brings together insights, innovation and entrepreneurship to meet social needs. We have a track record of over 50 years' success with ventures such as the Open University, Which?, the School for Social Entrepreneurs and Healthline (the precursor of NHS Direct).

Our work covers health, ageing, education, communities and housing, justice, youth leadership, creative uses of the web, and wellbeing. We address issues by carrying out research, launching collaboratives, creating new ventures, and advising national and local governments and other public agencies. We work both in the UK and internationally.

For more information contact:

Tricia Hackett, Senior Associate
tricia.hackett@youngfoundation.org
www.youngfoundation.org