

The Bronte Youth & Community Centre



Community Reporting Project Insight Report

Insight Report

People's Voice Media

September 2025



Introduction

“The first time I entered the Bronte, I felt joy and happiness.”

[The Bronte Youth and Community Centre](#) has impacted generations of young people from Liverpool and plans to continue that legacy into the future, thanks to regeneration work taking place on their original building.

As part of the renovation work, The Bronte reached out to People’s Voice Media to design a Community Reporting project for the young people they currently support.

The aim of the project was to train current Bronte members as Community Reporters and support them to gather thoughts and ideas from their peers and the wider community about the future of their youth club.

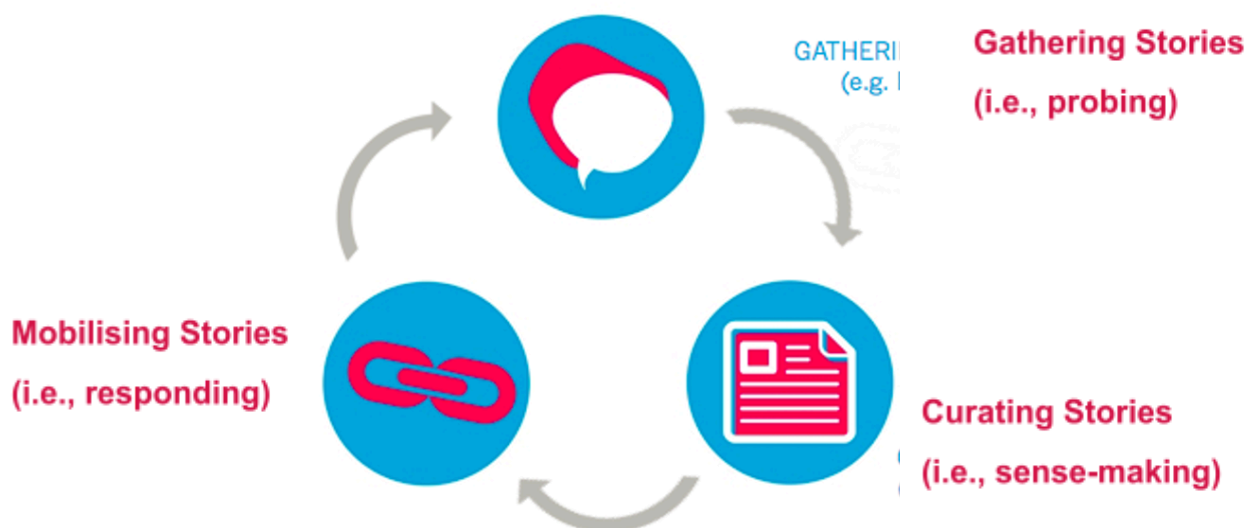
Throughout a series of workshops, young people developed interview skills, creatively explored their own vision for the future of the centre, and gathered a selection of stories from their local area about the memories, impact, and hopes for the future of The Bronte.

The insights from these workshops and stories have been compiled into this report to celebrate the work of the Bronte staff and young people, and to showcase the exciting things yet to come.

What’s clear is that the Bronte holds a place in many people’s hearts across the city. It has provided space for friendships to flourish, young people’s voices to be heard, hobbies and talents to be discovered, and memories to be made across several generations of young people (and big kids, too!).

Method

Originating in 2007, Community Reporting has been developed across Europe as a mixed methodological approach for enhancing citizen participation in research, policy-making, service development, and decision-making processes. It uses digital, portable technologies to support people to tell their own stories, in their own ways via peer-to-peer approaches. It then connects these stories with the people, groups and organisations who are in a position to use the insights within them to make positive social change. This approach to lived experience storytelling as a changemaking tool has three phases, loosely based on the Cynefin framework for decision-making in complex environments (Snowden and Boone, 2008).



Over the course of six workshops at their temporary home in Blackburne House, young people created collages, built sculptures, held discussions, recorded conversations, and captured interviews, all themed on the future of The Bronte. A mix of young people, community members,

youth workers, and professionals playing a role in the renovation work shared their stories, experiences and ideas.

Over 20 young people participated in the workshops, helping to gather 28 stories in total.

They spoke to their peers, family members, the Bronte staff team, workers involved in the building renovation process, and the wider community - helping to paint a picture of what people want for the future of the Bronte.

Young People's Vision for The New Bronte

"Hopefully we get loads of people to come here and it just turns out boss."

From the stories, it's clear that the young people already connected to The Bronte have big hopes for its future. They are keen to widen the reach of The Bronte's work, and hope by regaining access to a bigger, purpose built venue, more people will be drawn into the space.

"I would like to do more drama and more sports, I'd like it to look more like it's a kids' place than it being just like it is now - it could look better, we'd get lots more people in the Bronte."

For the past eighteen months, whilst the renovation work has been underway, young people have been continuing to take part in Bronte activities at Blackburne House, a nearby venue. The 18th Century Grade II listed building has provided a hall for the youth club to meet and offices for the team to work from - something they are hugely appreciative of, but there is equal level of excitement about returning to their former home.

Having a purpose built space and the freedom to move around and use the facilities is important to the young people.

"I think it's gonna be bigger and better with more room to do activities. We're gonna have the whole building to ourselves when we get the new Bronte, it's gonna all be ours and be a very special memory for all of us."

The transition from their temporary home at Blackburne House to the newly renovated centre has sparked lots of ideas for future activities and events. Here are some examples young people have called for:

- Football Tournaments with other Youth Groups
- Gymnastics Equipment (bar, beam, air tracks)
- Stationery Area (pencils and pens)
- Trips outside of The Bronte
- Pantomimes & Productions
- Movie Night
- Kitchen Area (with new baking equipment)
- Jewellery Making
- Bronte Interviews (Youtube & Podcasts)
- Film Making Workshops
- Bronte Merch
- Boys Night
- Girls Night
- Fashion Show
- Easter Raffle
- Drama Club
- Irish Night
- Dance Shows
- Gaming Room
- Shared Meals & Food
- Rock Climbing

As well as thinking about the physicalities of the new building, young people have considered the kind of environment they'd like to create at The Bronte.

"I would like it to be a comfortable, fun, caring place where we can all trust each other - a safe environment."

It's clear they hope to replicate the care and compassion that has been demonstrated as they move into the future.

Young people have spent time speaking with the workers responsible for the adaptations being made to The Bronte building, showing their gratitude and appreciation.

"I'm really happy and I can't wait. You guys can work on making it even better, like you were saying with new heating - it's gonna be cozy over winter and I'm really excited for it."

With the winter months closing in, the newly installed heating system is going to be integral to hosting youth spaces that are comfortable and cozy - something the young people are also excited for.

Community Drive for Connection & Joy

"We're gonna have a hub and a cafe, people are gonna get together - that's what's good about it, seeing people come together."

Another key insight from the stories is how significant the drive for connection and joy is throughout the wider Bronte community. There's a real buzz about how the space will function, not only as a youth centre, but as a community hub. People want it to become a space for the community to come together, regardless of what part of the city they live in.

"It offers young people a safe space in their local community to come together to mix with other children. We're not necessarily from this area but unfortunately where we live there's not many places she can play out, we live close to a main road, so it's nice to come to a youth club, even though it's in a different area and be welcomed."

"What we're excited about more than anything is this club being open and about all the kids having somewhere to go of a night, meeting new people and new friends."

The safety element of having a space for people to join together is echoed in the stories too, with current Bronte members speaking of how positive their first experience of The Bronte was and continues to be.

"The first time I entered the Bronte, I felt joy and happiness, peace."

Hearing from the architects and construction firm, it's clear that they are just as passionate about creating a community focused space - factoring this into the design of the building, offering a range of different features which will hopefully become integral parts of the new Bronte.

"All the amazing users of the Bronte, they made it really stand out as a building as well as a community."

"I'm really excited about providing you guys with a new cafe and snug"

area, that's gonna be really fun coz there's gonna be space where you can sell some merch for the Bronte, get a coffee, meet your friends, do your homework, all sorts of meet up spaces."

Plans to modernise the space and reduce running costs by improving the efficiency of the roof, heating system, and insulation means more money to focus on these driving factors.

“What's important is to be sustainable, keeping the running costs of the Bronte down - great designs for insulation, new heating systems, and new roofing mean when they run the new Bronte, the costs will be as low as they possibly can.”

What shines through these snippets of conversation is that people want The Bronte to continue to act as a space for people to connect, grow and experience joy as a community.

Intergenerational Impact & Legacy

“I've been coming here since I was two, I'm fifty now and have become a board member”

One final theme which emerged from the stories is the impact and legacy the Bronte holds within its community, particularly amongst staff, young people and former members.

Take a read through what staff have to say about their experiences working with The Bronte:

Staff Testimonies:

“When I first came to The Bronte, I thought it was hectic, but that's what's to be expected from a youth club. I grew relationships and got to know you guys. I've had young people come to me in times of need and open up, and it's the young people that make The Bronte special - that's why I still work here with you all.”

“I've been working with children for 35 years in numerous clubs all over Liverpool City. When I first came to The Bronte - I mean look I've worked with thousands of young people - but The Bronte Children were just slightly different. Everybody knows how competitive I am, and I've never come across kids who are as competitive as me. No honestly it's been unbelievable, we've got toddlers one of the

smallest and the youngest has competed with the old boys as well. That was an attachment for me straight away, that was a case of nah I need to be here with this club and Laura got wind of that and it went from there. All round just beautiful children, and that's what I wanna be working with and I'm so happy to be involved with The Bronte.”

“It's more us isn't it? It belongs to us, it belongs to the people. The Bronte it's named after Laura's Mum, it's really nice to be achieving Mary's dream now she's gone. I think it's good to remember Mary and all the times she's struggled previously, it really is thanks to Mary that we've been able to achieve this.”

It's clear it holds a place in many people's hearts and continues to produce ripples of impact throughout each generation. Here's what young people had to say about their experience and memories of their time with The Bronte:

Young People Testimonies:

“Having the Bronte, it being the normal space you'd usually come to, it's really comfortable for me. The Bronte is close and I feel safer.”

“My favourite thing about The Bronte is going on residential and

having fun, I'm excited for the new Bronte to come so we can have lots of new activities.”

“It's gonna be an opportunity for the Bronte to make memories - I wanna thank our Blackburne house for

letting us have fun on Bonfire night, lots of bigger kids were messing around that night and we still got to do something and that was very memorable.”

“As I get older, I'm gonna start helping out at the Bronte at the minute i come to Yorkshire and have a good time, but I want to start

helping out as a volunteer and I like to DJ when they throw parties.

“What I like about the Bronte is going Yorkshire, that's one of me favourite things, going the pool in Yorkshire, playing football with all of me best mates and score goals and that”

Conclusion

“It needs to go on for generations. I listened to the stories today of how people's Mum's and Dad's met here and how it's helped them grow as kids, going through to adults then they bring their own kids and grandkids, it's great isn't it.”

Three clear themes have emerged from the stories highlighting the importance of the work The Bronte does and capturing the excitement for how this might develop in the future.

- Young Peoples Vision for the Future
- Community Drive for Connection & Joy
- Intergenerational Impact & Legacy

Young people have successfully gathered insights to shape the future of The Bronte Youth and Community Centre and have developed the core skills to continue with the Community Reporting approach into the future. We're excited to see where they take their storygathering activities and can't wait to hear more from them in their upcoming podcast. A huge thank you goes out to the hard work and dedication of the young people and staff involved in this project.

Do you have thoughts and ideas around shaping the future of The Bronte? Would you like to share a memory of your time there? Why not get in touch and share your story - there is a team of young Community Reporters waiting to hear what you have to say!

For further details about People's Voice Media's work or the work of The Bronte:

Visit: <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk> or <https://thebronte.org/>

Check out: <https://communityreporter.net>

Email: enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk