



# Leicestershire Youth CommissionReport2015

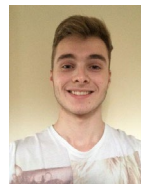
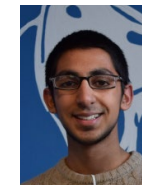
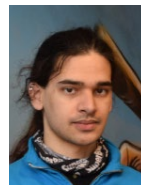
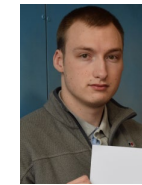
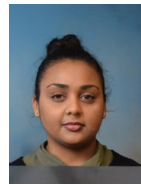
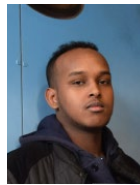
Final report  
April 2015



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# LEICESTERSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION



# FOREWORD

## BY SIR CLIVE LOADER

I would like to start by saying thank you. Thank you to all the members of the Youth Commission for giving up their time, and to the SHM Foundation for their continued support. The results detailed in this report reflect a year's hard work and dedication. Everyone involved should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved - I know that I am.

The past year has seen Leicestershire's Youth Commission make great strides in communicating with young people about issues that are facing them, issues on which they may find it difficult to engage with the police.

The 'Big Conversation', which saw consultation with more than 1800 young people, has helped to identify six areas of concern for the Youth Commission's focus. This culminated in our second annual conference which attracted more than 120 people from a wide range of organisations to hear young people's views on crime-related issues.

This past year has also seen the introduction of the Youth Police Advisory Group. This group provides members of the Youth Commission with an opportunity to discuss policing policy and procedures with senior officers and to advise them of the impact on young people. This can range from helping to identify training and development needs for officers, through to stop and search powers.

The Youth Commission has also worked with police colleagues and partners to develop a 'Reformed Character Qualification' (which was a recommendation that came from the last Youth Commission Conference). The qualification aims to improve the employability of those who have been involved in crime and have received a custodial sentence. Through close work with a local young offenders' institution, three offenders were able to take part in the programme and two gained employment upon completion of their sentence.

Creative ideas such as this provide a real opportunity to prove to wider society that young people are capable of being, and are willing to be, part of the solution, instead of being portrayed as the problem. Certainly, working together is essential if the barrier between police and young people is going to be removed. Actions speak louder than words so, whilst it is important to listen, it is also important that we act on what young people tell us.

Over the next year I am looking forward to seeing some of the Youth Commission's recommendations being taken forward not only by Leicestershire Police but also by partners and agencies with whom my office and the force work so closely. Improving relationships with our young communities is the reason why I set up the country's first ever Youth Commission and it is great to see their ideas beginning to be turned into real action.



A stylized, handwritten signature of Clive Loader in red ink, written in a cursive script.

**Sir Clive Loader**  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
for Leicestershire

# INTRODUCTION

In 2013 Sir Clive Loader was the first Police and Crime Commissioner to set up a Youth Commission on Police and Crime. The Youth Commission enables young people to become part of the solution to crime in their area, rather than being seen as part of the problem. Now in its second year, the Leicestershire Youth Commission has been taking forward the legacy of the pilot year, working more closely with Leicestershire Police and partners, and taking on new priority issues.

Through the Youth Commission, a diverse group of young people from across Leicestershire have been working in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner to address urgent issues in their areas. Their priorities for 2014-15 have been: drug and alcohol abuse, cyber-bullying, respect and communication between young people and the police, reducing offending and re-offending, domestic abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing from Home.

The project was set up in collaboration with an independent charitable trust, the SHM Foundation, which is working with Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces to support the effective engagement of young people. The SHM Foundation developed the Youth Commission model as a part of its wider strategy to equip young people in Britain to become active citizens.



**the SHM  
foundation**

# ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This report is grounded in an evidence base of 1,830 conversations with young people, which have been recorded using a range of methods including Youth Commission postcards, the Youth Commission website, police story cards, and online surveys.

The report is structured into 6 key sections, which outline what the Youth Commission has found about each of its priority issues for 2014-15. Each section features comprehensive analysis of young people's responses, verbatim quotes from individual respondents and the key recommendations that have been put forward by the Youth Commission as a result of their findings.

This report is intended to act as an honest, independent record of what young people have told us through this 'Big Conversation' process. It is also intended to be a basis for further action on the part of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Leicestershire Police and relevant local partners.





# ABOUT THE YOUTH COMMISSION

The Youth Commission aims to give young people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland a real partnership role in shaping the future of policing and crime reduction in their areas.

The model is based on recruiting a diverse group of approximately 25 young people aged 14-25 years to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Leicestershire Police. The role of this group is to support, challenge and inform the work of the Commissioner and the police.

The Youth Commission goes beyond traditional models of consultation; it is driven by young people and allows them to put forward solutions to the problems they identify in their own communities.

A key part of the Youth Commission's role is to run a 'Big Conversation' to gather the views of up to 2,000 other young people. This process creates a safe environment for young people to talk to their peers about the issues. The views gathered from young people through the 'Big Conversation' are then used by the Youth Commission to create a set of recommendations to present back to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the police and key partners.

In addition, this year the Leicestershire Youth Commission has collaborated with Leicestershire Police to establish the Youth Police Advisory Group. Chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Phil Kay, this new group has made it possible for the Youth Commission to feed their views directly into the police force.



# WHAT WE DID

## Recruiting the members:

The SHM Foundation carried out a rigorous recruitment process – including an accessible application form and a telephone interview – to select a diverse group of 28 motivated young people to join the Leicestershire Youth Commission for 2014-15.

In order to ensure that the Youth Commission was reflective of the diversity of the local youth population in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, we worked proactively with local organisations from the education, youth and voluntary sectors.

## Identifying priority issues:

At their first meeting, the Youth Commission selected 6 priority issues that they were passionate about tackling in their peer groups and communities. The issues they chose to focus on were:

1. Cyber-bullying and Social Media
2. Domestic Abuse
3. Respect and Communication Between Young People and The Police
4. Drug and Alcohol Abuse
5. Reducing Offending and Re-Offending
6. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing from Home

## Skills training:

The SHM Foundation provided Youth Commission members with training in the key skills needed for their role – including communication, interviewing, workshop skills and public speaking. These skills were then further developed through practical experience throughout the pilot.

## Creating the tools for the Youth Commission:

Building on the tools used in the Youth Commission pilot we developed a new Leicestershire Youth Commission postcard and added new icons to the Youth Commission website at [www.youthcommission.co.uk](http://www.youthcommission.co.uk)

## Setting up the Youth Police Advisory Group:

Working with Leicestershire Police, this year the Youth Commission set up the new advisory group and held the first three meetings with the Assistant Chief constable and specialists from Leicestershire Police.

## Running the 'Big Conversation':

Reaching out to a wide variety of local community organisations and education institutions, the Youth Commission planned and ran their own 'Big Conversation' to talk to over 1800 other young people about their priority topics.

## Recommendations for change:

In the final stages of the project, the Youth Commission hosted their own conference at Leicestershire Police Headquarters, at which they presented their final conclusions and recommendations for change. The conference was attended by a wide range of partners, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Chief Constable.





# WHO WE REACHED

Between April 2014 and December 2014, the Youth Commission spoke to in excess of **1800 young people** across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. This was done by carrying out a wide range of different events and outreach activity – including workshops, larger consultation events with students, stands on school and college campuses, and outreach at public festivals and events such as Leicester Pride.

This year, the Leicestershire Youth Commission placed particular effort and energy into engaging with harder-to-reach groups of young people, to gather insights into sensitive topics such as Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, and Missing from Home. The Youth Commission worked closely with third sector organisations to organise these opportunities. They also worked with HMYOI Glen Parva to arrange opportunities to talk to prisoners about their experiences.

As well as face-to-face outreach, the Youth Commission also gathered views online using the Youth Commission website at [www.youthcommission.co.uk](http://www.youthcommission.co.uk) and online surveys to tackle specific priority issues. They also engaged a wider audience through social media via their own Twitter account @leicsyc and their Facebook page.

**The table below gives a breakdown of the sample reached:**

Young people from harder-to-reach groups including care-leavers, young homeless people, and prisoners	250
Students at Further Education colleges	520
Students at schools and sixth forms	380
Young people attending public festivals and events, including Leicester Pride and Strawberry Fields festival	280
Online responses via Youth Commission website and surveys	180
Peer group outreach carried out by individual Youth Commission members	220
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,830</b>



# OUR PARTNERS

This year's Youth Commission would not have been possible without the invaluable support of a number of key partners, to whom we are enormously grateful:

- Abingdon Academy
- Catch 22
- Children in Care Council
- HITZ Tigers
- HMYOI Glen Parva
- Leicester College
- Leicester LGBT Centre
- Leicestershire Police
- Leicester Tigers
- Leicester YMCA
- Loughborough College
- Rutland Youth Council
- Samworth Enterprise Academy
- South Leicestershire College
- TwentyTwenty
- Waterfront Boxing Club
- Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College
- Youth Education Project
- Y-POD



# PRIORITY 1: CYBER-BULLYING AND SOCIAL MEDIA



## What we did:

The Youth Commission set out to understand young people's views on cyber-bullying and social media, their experiences of the issues, and what they thought should be done to tackle it.

To address this issue, we carried out dedicated workshops and events with young people from a range of organisations including: Rutland Youth Council, TwentyTwenty, Samworth Academy, Abingdon Academy and South Leicestershire College. Youth Commission members also carried out peer outreach within their own friendship groups and local areas using the Youth Commission postcards and website.

We spoke to over 400 young people about this topic. Respondents were aged from 13 – 24 years. They came from a wide range of postal sectors including LE1, LE2, LE3, LE4, LE5, LE7, LE10, LE11, LE15, and LE18.

## What we found:

Through our 'Big Conversation', we found that cyber-bullying affects many young people. The issue is a lot more serious than people realise, and the problem is getting worse with more young people experiencing it. It can have devastating effects with examples given of victims experiencing, depression, self-harm, jealousy and even suicide.

"Cyber-bullying is a huge issue and affects everyone. It can make you feel very isolated and unsure what to do."

"It has happened to some of my friends and can really wreck people's lives."

Some of the wide-ranging experiences we have heard about from young people include:

- "People sending bad messages."
- "A lot of name-calling."
- "They say that people are ugly."
- "People call others gay."
- "Threats."
- "People joking about rape."
- "Being called a slut."
- "Being targeted for skin colour and sexual identity."
- "Sharing nude pictures and sexting."

Young people told us that social media makes it easier for users to bully and get bullied, for a number of reasons:

- "It's anonymous."
- "Bullies can easily create another account."
- "You can hide behind a screen."
- "People are too open on the internet, and expose personal details."

- "Cyber-bullying is personal and regular, rather than one-off."
- "Young people are very dependent on technology so it affects them a great deal."

"People are so obsessed with the internet now, and social media is so big it's very easy to attack someone via the internet. Your profile can be anonymous so it's hard to stop the bully; I think the issue is a lot bigger than realised."

"People are massively dependent on technology so it affects them a lot...especially because people are anonymous."



# PRIORITY 1: CYBER-BULLYING AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Some of the platforms which are a particular problem are: Facebook, ASK.FM, Tumblr, MSN, Twitter and BBM. However, young people also emphasised that cyber-bullying is something which is changing every day, with changing patterns of social media use among young people. It is very important to stay on top of these changing trends.

Young people told us there are too many cases of cyber-bullying in and around their schools. School rumours can spread very quickly through the internet. This happens even in close friendship groups, among people who know each other well. Young people also pointed out that cyber-bullying is usually seen as a one-way thing, when it actually can be a two-way thing. The line between victim and bully can become very blurred.

A key problem is that cyber-bullying is not usually noticed and therefore not enough is being done about it. Young people do not know what to do when they are cyber-bullied so they do nothing. Many are not willing to talk about cyber-bullying, and therefore most cases of cyber-bullying go unreported.

"People who are cyber-bullied don't know what to do. When it happened to me I did nothing."

"It doesn't get tackled in the right way. Too many people get away; don't know how to report it."

"I am personally going through cyber-bullying recently and no one is doing anything about it."

We found some disagreement about whether it is possible to do anything to stop cyber-bullying. Some young people told us it would be impossible to prevent it. Some people feel the police won't be able to do anything as the internet is **so big**. Others felt that it was important for the police and other partners to try to take action.

The young people we spoke to came up with a wide range of solutions for cyber-bullying including: increased education and work with schools, asking the social media industry to do more; making it easier to report on social media sites; using third parties to make young people feel comfortable to speak out; and improving the police response and knowledge about the issue.

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner, Sir Clive Loader, should **request support from other Commissioners across the country** and lobby government to increase the use, promotion and accessibility of report buttons.
2. The Youth Commission should **advise Leicestershire Police at a senior level** about social media trends and threats on a regular basis. This could be done through the further development of the Youth Police Advisory Group.



# PRIORITY 2: DOMESTIC ABUSE



## What we did:

The Youth Commission wanted to improve the support for young people who are victims and witnesses of domestic abuse. We set out to talk to young people with relevant life experiences, to understand the issues and how to improve the support offered to these young people.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission ran a number of workshops with young people from diverse groups and organisations, including TwentyTwenty, Leicester YMCA, and South Leicestershire College.

Respondents were between 16 – 24 years from postal sectors including: LE1, LE2, LE5 and LE19.

## What we found:

Young people recognise that anyone can be affected by domestic abuse. Domestic abuse for young people can happen in many environments, including within the home, outside of the home and in cyberspace in the form of emotional abuse.

**"Domestic abuse can happen to anyone one of us. I find it's people that have been abused that abuse others."**

**"I witnessed my parents involved in Domestic Abuse, and experienced minor abuse from my mother due to her bi-polar disorder."**

The young people we talked to were clear that domestic abuse affects many different people on different levels. They talked about the multiple impacts for survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators. We found that young survivors of domestic abuse feel a lack of confidence, low self-esteem, often have no social life and can become reclusive. We heard that victims and witnesses can feel stressed, depressed, fearful, intimidated and can be vulnerable themselves to becoming a victim again or a perpetrator.

**"[For offenders] the impact is that they can lose everything, become homeless, abuse themselves, stops their social life, lose the children. Affect future outcomes on jobs and financial problems."**

We found that the issue is not being talked about enough with young people. Young people need more encouragement to speak out and report abuse. It is difficult to comprehend what domestic abuse is and the many forms that it can take (both physical and non-physical). Many young people who have been a victim do not fully understand how to report it or who they should

speak to. We found that young people are more likely to tell a close friend than someone in authority. They also do not understand what will happen to them and their family if they do report it.

**"It seems like every problem has a campaign about it but domestic abuse is really vague... Everyone knows what domestic abuse is but nobody knows how to respond."**

**"People don't normally speak up because of pressure. More should be done to prevent offenders putting pressure on victims and witnesses."**





# PRIORITY 2: DOMESTIC ABUSE



"Police only hear about something when it's really bad. People should have a way to record all the actions."

The young people we spoke to felt that someone who has been a victim of domestic abuse as a child would be less likely to report it and more likely to commit domestic abuse. They felt that offenders should be offered counselling before imprisonment. They also felt that offenders should be offered restorative justice, because they may have also been a victim or a witness in the past.

"It could make them have unhealthy relationships and become offenders. They might become offenders because their parents committed Domestic Abuse... a self-fulfilling prophecy."

During the 'Big Conversation', young people put forward a wide range of solutions including:

- Workshops in schools from a young age to encourage children to speak out.
- Information, advice and guidance made accessible to young people in a format they can share with peers.
- Provide a supportive environment for young people to share experiences and speak out.
- Offer personalised support to offenders and recognise that they may have also been a victim in the past.

"More people should be able to speak out about abuse. More services to be able to attend in a trusting environment."

"Help young people to tell a friend to boost their confidence and then tell a higher authority, e.g. police and social services."

"Make reporting easier, increase the number of third parties that people can report to, make it seen as a less risky option."



## The Youth Commission's key recommendation:

1. Youth Commission to **design a Domestic Abuse awareness resource** (and suitable repository) with the help of partners. The pack will be easy to read and focus on how to keep safe and reach out to organisations and what will happen if a report is made. A variety of resources will be provided for a variety of age ranges.



# PRIORITY 3: RESPECT AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE POLICE



## What we did:

This year the Youth Commission set out to improve communication and respect between young people and the police. One of the key things we did was to establish a new Youth Police Advisory Group to work with Leicestershire Police. Through this group, we enabled young people to conduct observations of police training and activities and give structured feedback to the police.

We also wanted to continue to talk to young people about their experiences of police interaction and how they could be improved on both sides. The Youth Commission spoke to hundreds of young people about this topic, including those in education and those from harder-to-reach groups. We ran workshops and outreach activity at a wide range of locations such as TwentyTwenty, Hitz Tigers Education Project, Youth Education Project (Y.E.P), Loughborough College, Leicester College and South Leicestershire College.

## What we found:

Despite the apprehension that many young people feel towards the police, they did highlight the fact that the lack of communication and respect is a two-way problem. They

felt that both sides find it very difficult to understand each other with stereotyping existing on both sides.

**"The police were hard to approach and both parties had the inability to talk to each other."**

Respect and communication between young people and the police depends on how the conversation is started. Many young people feel that the police are hard to approach and don't give them a chance, or they don't trust the police and won't give them a chance. Often they feel they are judged on the basis of their clothing, age and appearance. They feel the police are quick to criticise them, and don't communicate with them as equals but talk down to them. Despite these criticisms, young people and the police have admitted that it all depends on the situation and how it is interpreted.

**"The police are quick to criticise and arrest young people and tell them what they're doing is wrong. I've found some police will not explain WHY something is wrong so youths reoffend due to not realising the adverse effects their behaviour has on their community."**

**"If they get cocky we get cocky."**



# PRIORITY 3: RESPECT AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE POLICE



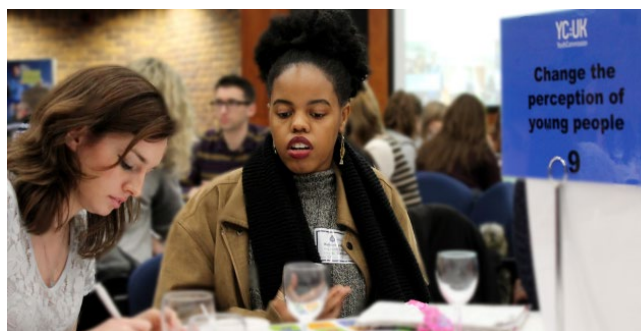
We found that stop and search was a recurring theme during the 'Big Conversation'. Stop and search can undermine respect and communication on both sides and many young people have criticised how stop and search is carried out. They've felt that they have been searched repeatedly in the past due to their family background and are given very little chance to change:

**"I felt like I was being judged, 'once a criminal, always a criminal', repeatedly being searched, five times plus in one day for no apparent reason."**

Particularly, young people in the city felt they were often stopped because of their age, ethnicity or what they were wearing; especially Black and Asian youths and groups of youths.

Despite this, many young people are supportive of the need for stop and search to prevent weapons and drugs and keep the streets safe. They just think the police should enforce it more effectively and stamp out bad practice in the way it is delivered.

**"Stop and search is a great system to remove illegal and dangerous items. However the approach and enforcement of stop and search is creating negative views and misconceptions of the system amongst the general public, and especially the younger and more easily influenced members."**



## The Youth Commission's key recommendations:

1. Youth Commission to **dip sample body-cam footage of Stop and Searches** completed on young people and adults.
2. Youth Commission to **carry out a 'youth audit' of key business areas of Leicestershire Police** to give critical feedback on the effectiveness of current interventions concerning young people.
3. **Options for informal engagement by Neighbourhood Policing Area (NPA) Officers in schools** to be designed by Youth Commission and Police together.
4. **Design and deliver the NPA Team training** as agreed by Leicestershire Police in 2015.



# PRIORITY 4: DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE



## What we did:

The Youth Commission carried out events and spoke to young people from a range of organisations including: South Leicestershire College, Leicester College, TwentyTwenty, and Leicester YMCA.

Respondents were aged from 16-23 years. They came from a wide range of postal sectors including LE1, LE2, LE4, LE7, LE11, LE12 and LE18.

## What we found:

We found that this problem is getting worse and really needs to be talked about. Too many young people are using drugs and alcohol from a young age, which is damaging their lives and having negative effects on the people around them. It is 'normal' to drink from 13/14 years old. Drugs are readily available to young people in many areas.

"In Braunstone I feel the drug and alcohol abuse is getting worse and young people could do with being talked to and listening to them."

"Weed and Legal Highs are too accessible in Narborough from what I see."

The young people we spoke to were concerned about the widespread use of drugs by young people within schools and

colleges. Many felt that schools and colleges were not doing enough to prevent drug use and raise awareness of the issues among their student body.

"I know quite a few people in my year group who have used drugs and alcohol mainly weed but some people have moved on to drugs like coke and M-cat when they got to 15/16."

"At college, I experienced a girl bringing in cannabis to college without getting caught by security."

We found from talking to young people that cannabis is the most widespread issue, but also legal highs, M-cat and cocaine. Young people feel that legal highs are a particular danger and high risk for young people because it's difficult for them to identify what they're consuming and being sold. Young people are often involved with selling weed and M-cat, as well as buying. When mixed with alcohol, these drugs make young people particularly vulnerable. Young people told us that when they get drunk they often find themselves being offered drugs like M-cat.

"When you're drunk people offer M-cat."

The root causes of these problems are very varied and can be different for different people. Young people highlighted the following root causes:

- "Wanting to 'fit in'."
- "Peer pressure."
- "Parents not caring."
- "It's the normal thing to do."
- "Relieve stress."
- "Unemployment."
- "TV and media influences."
- "Nothing to do."
- "To help them socialise."
- "Feeling happy."
- "To make money from it."
- "Not being aware of the consequences and harm."

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations:

1. Produce a creative drugs and substance misuse resource to be used in schools, colleges and other young people's organisations.
2. Different versions of this resource to be designed for different age ranges.



# PRIORITY 5: REDUCING OFFENDING AND RE-OFFENDING



## What we did:

The Youth Commission aimed to help develop solutions which would reduce offending and re-offending among young people. This year the Commission worked in partnership with HMYOI Glen Parva, probation services, and Leicestershire Police, to develop and launch a new programme to reduce re-offending called the 'Reformed Character Qualification'. This idea was one of the key recommendations from last year's Youth Commission pilot.

Youth Commission members were involved in the development of the innovative new qualification in collaboration with Leicestershire Police. They also designed a piece of communication to promote the qualification to prisoners. In August, three Youth Commission members went into HMYOI Glen Parva to interview six candidates for the qualification, and three were selected to take part in a pilot.

In addition to this, we continued to gather views and ideas from young people about the root causes of offending and the potential solutions.

## What we found:

Talking to young people, the Youth Commission has found that people offend for many reasons including social, economic and financial factors. Many young people get

mixed up with the wrong people on the streets and these influences can cause them to commit crime. Upbringing is a large part of the reasons for youth offending, including home and the environment. Social and economic factors play a key role, such as friends, whether crime is the 'norm' where you grow up, or if you are short on cash. Often, young people who get involved in offending behaviour do not actually feel like they are a part of the society at all.

Building on this, we found that re-offending occurs for a number of reasons: People who have offended often have a bad relationship with the police. They go back to their own area and fall back into their old crowd. There is not enough help for offenders to find employment. They are not kept busy with a job or school.

We gathered a range of solutions from the young people we spoke to: More community events for young people to feel part of the society; mentoring schemes in which young people can talk to other young people about how offending and re-offending can affect them long-term; help for offenders to move to a new area, keep busy or get a job; more schemes such as the 'Reformed Character Qualification' where employers work with offenders to get them employed.

"There is help getting offenders qualifications but not a lot of help getting them employed."

"Re-offending occurs for a number of reasons, 'one glove doesn't fit all' but mainly social factors."



## The Youth Commission's key recommendation:

1. Work with partners to **extend the list of organisations who accept the 'Reformed Character Qualification'.**





# PRIORITY 6: MISSING FROM HOME AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



## What we did:

This year the Youth Commission wanted to understand the experiences of young people who have gone missing from home and/or experienced Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops with young people from a range of organisations including: Children in Care Council, TwentyTwenty, and Leicester YMCA's 'YPod'.

Respondents were aged from 15 – 24 years. They came from a wide range of postal sectors including LE1, LE2, LE3, LE4, LE5, and LE15.

## What we found:

This is a very important area and it needs to be addressed. It's hard to tackle; it's often hidden and goes un-noticed. There has not been enough openness about talking about it.

A lot of young people we spoke to, and professionals who work with them, have some experience of CSE. However, young people are not always clear what counts as CSE. They can misinterpret it as a range of other behaviours including "being harassed", "being followed around by strangers", or "adults looking at your personal profiles online."

The Youth Commission has heard about a range of different exploitation situations from the young people we have spoken to. For instance, homeless children under the age of 18 can be exploited due to their vulnerable situation. Relying on a relationship for financial independence makes people more likely to be exploited. Young people can be pressured or forced into a social group in which they end up being exploited. They can easily lose control over the situation and their bodies.

"Getting pressured by other people to sell yourself and having no say over your body."

"We need to make it easier for young people to get support for employment and housing so that relationships are not seen as the only way to gain independence."



# PRIORITY 6: MISSING FROM HOME AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



There is a strong link between CSE and drug and alcohol abuse. For instance, men might bribe young people with drink and drugs and mislead them. Also, they might get young people selling drugs and drink, which leads to exploitation. The internet has presented new threats for exploitation. CSE can lead to other, even more serious risks. Some feel the police and other agencies are not doing enough to tackle and prevent this problem. However, some victims of sexual assault have also said the police have dealt with it well.

**"CSE has a dramatic and long-lasting effect on victims, both physically and psychologically. Professionals should be more aware of the signs of CSE and more openness in discussions about this will help. People and other agencies can do more to cooperate in tackling this issue."**

During the 'Big Conversation', young people put forward a wide range of solutions including:

- Raising awareness of the issue and helping everyone to understand what they can do about it.
- More CSE talks and sessions in schools and in communities.
- More Youth Commission sessions to teach people about CSE.
- Raising awareness of locally-specific risks and work with children, families and carers.

**"Open people's eyes to the issues."**



## **The Youth Commission's key recommendations:**

1. Youth Commission to **take part in Safeguarding Board meetings** and feedback to other Youth Commission members.
2. Youth Commission to **design a CSE awareness resource (and suitable repository) with the help of partners**. The pack will be easy to read and focus on how to keep safe and reach out to organisations and what will happen if a report is made. A variety of resources will be provided for a variety of age ranges.



# TAKING IT FORWARD

As a result of this year's work and the recommendations put forward by the Youth Commission, a legacy action plan will be created to be jointly owned by the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner. All of the recommendations contained in this report will be taken forward.

In the year ahead, a new cohort of Youth Commission members will be recruited from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, to continue the excellent work that has been done in 2014-15.

Working closely with Leicestershire Police, the Youth Commission will continue to develop the Youth Police Advisory Group as a youth-led forum for advice, scrutiny and feedback to senior people in Leicestershire Police.



# TESTIMONIALS

## Sokol Hoxha, Youth Commission member



*When I heard about the Youth Commission I was very interested in becoming a member right away. As I had volunteered with young people in the past and in a job role working with that age group it was a no brainier. Also I know how important it is to hear their views and I believe engagement from any service with the public is vital.*

*My highlight from my involvement with Youth Commission has been hearing the many voices and experiences of young people in the City and County. Then feeding the information to YPAG and the Youth Commission Conference and seeing those recommendations being put to practice and not forgotten. I hope this great work continues in the future, no matter what structural changes that may or may not take place, as I believe the voices of young people are important in how policing is done in the future. Also the Youth Commission report highlights what our young people are experiencing and feeling about policing and crime within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.*

*I was able to put to good practise my skills of working with young people and develop new ones and I feel that I have made a positive contribution to Youth Commission throughout. I hope to engage with Youth Commission and YPAG in the future as I believe they are making a difference.*



## Adam Ahmed, Youth Commission member



*I've been part of the Youth Commission since the first year. Seeing where we were then, to where we are now, excites me even more. The Youth Commission has been a great experience, in terms of meeting and talking to people who I ordinarily would not interact with. This has allowed me to represent the young people of this city.*

*During my time volunteering with the Youth Commission I've also gained personal skills which have helped me and which I've utilised in my everyday life. I have recently become a Special Constable as a result.*

*Youth Commission members come from all walks of life and meeting all these new people enables you to learn new things. They are also extremely passionate about what they do. I would advise everyone to get involved, whether it's volunteering as a Youth Commission member or inviting us to your organisation to do one or two workshops as this will not only benefit us, but it will truly benefit you.*



## Phil Kay, Assistant Chief Constable



*I chair the Youth Police Advisory Group (YPAG) which meets quarterly. YPAG is made up of members of the Youth Commission and I very much enjoy having the opportunity to meet with such an engaging group. It is useful to meet and ensure that, we learn from each other to improve the police service.*

*I have been very impressed with the work done by the Youth Commission. A lot of effort is made by them in their own time to work with young people to gain insight in to what matters around crime and policing. The presentations on 'Stop Search and Communication with the Police' among others show that the subjects have been carefully researched seeking information from a number of sources.*

*The level of engagement by the commission with the police, their peers and partners is impressive. I am proud to be part of the work that is done and believe that the Youth Commission and YPAG will help us learn how to engage in a more positive and meaningful way with young people in the force area.*



# TESTIMONIALS

## **Detchema Baptiste, Youth Commission member**

*“In 2013, I attended the first Youth Commission conference and left inspired by how proactive they were in changing policing concerning young people. As a result of this, I joined in 2014 as I wanted to be a part of that change.*

*During my year on the commission I had many new experiences; from being interviewed on the radio, talking about how influential the youth commission can be for our generation, to sitting on the Youth Police Advisory Group discussing current issues that we as young people have been faced with in our communities.*

*I had also ran many workshops on the 6 focus issues, in particular domestic violence and Child Sexual Exploitation, which received such touching responses that enabled me to present my findings strongly, which was definitely a highlight.*

*Through the Youth Commission I have developed both personal and professional skills that I was take into studying at university level, within employment and enabling me to have the confidence to continue promoting positive change in my community.*

*I also hope that the Youth Commission has a lasting effect on all those young people I and the rest of my team have*

*been fortunate to interact with, due to us all being given the platform to express our opinions and ideas on aid to change our futures.”*

## **Simon Cole, Chief Constable**

*“This year has been a great year for youth engagement! The Youth Commission has played an important part in this work; we have been focussed on achieving more with young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.*

*I really enjoyed attending the Youth Commission Conference, it was fantastic to hear the feedback from members following the 'big conversation' with nearly 2000 young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. I look forward to continuing to work with the Youth Commission in planning how to take the points and recommendations and using them to further improve Leicestershire Police's relationship with young people.*

*It is amazing to see how the Youth Commission has developed over two years! I would like to say thank you to Sir Clive and the members for all their time and effort they have put into making this initiative a success.”*



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[Suzanne.Houlihan@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Suzanne.Houlihan@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)



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