



The Youth Commission: Social Impact Summary

August 2015

The Youth Commission on Police and Crime provides a platform for young people to influence the future of policing and crime prevention in their areas. The Commission allows young people aged 14-25 to work in partnership with their Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces to tackle urgent issues such as reducing youth offending, relationships with the police, and support for young victims and witnesses.

Following successful pilots in Leicestershire, Hampshire & Isle of Wight and Sussex, the Youth Commission is now being rolled-out in all 3 of these areas, as well as in two new areas of North Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

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Since 2013, we have recruited and trained **over 220** young people aged 14-25 as Youth Commission members. The membership includes those from under-served groups including looked-after-children, care-leavers, ex-offenders, and young people from the traveller community. These young people have received practical skills training in research and interview techniques, public speaking and engaging others.

With the right support and tools, Youth Commission members have so far carried out 'Big Conversations' with over **10,000** of their peers to gather constructive views on key priority topics including: Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse, Relationships with the Police, Youth Offending, Knife Crime, and Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Youth Commission members have delivered over **250** peer consultation events including interactive workshops, outreach stands, small group and individual interviews. These Big Conversations have reached a wide demographic - including over 10% from harder-to-reach groups including young homeless people, young LGBT people, care-leavers, young people who have been victims of abuse, young offenders, and prisoners.

Through these powerful **peer-to-peer conversations**, the Youth Commission members have unearthed unique insights from their peers – shining a light on the root causes of youth crime, the influences that shape risky behaviours, young people's real experiences with policing, gaps in existing services, and potential solutions for police and partners.

Youth Commissioners have presented their findings and key recommendations at **4 Big Conversation conferences** to high-profile audiences including PCCs, Chief Constables, MPs, and over **600** professionals from police and partner organisations.



The Youth Commission is not just a think-tank; it's also a do-tank. The Youth Commission has been involved in creating a wide range of actions for change:

- We have established **'Youth Police Advisory Groups'** in Sussex and Leicestershire to allow young people to advise and challenge the police at a senior level.
- Youth Commissioners have been **actively involved** in the training of police and PCSOs in Leicestershire.
- Youth Commissioners have been lay observers of **Stop and Search** and the policing of the Nighttime Economy in Sussex.
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Youth Commissioners have **influenced decisions** about funding for youth diversionary schemes to reduce offending.
- A new **'Reformed Character Qualification'** has been piloted with Europe's largest young offenders' institution in Leicestershire, as a result of a recommendation made by the Youth Commission.
- Sussex Youth Commission is producing a new **'Youth Contract'** to guide the way Sussex Police interact with young people.
- Leicestershire Youth Commissioners have taken part in **ethics committee proceedings** to scrutinize police complaints.
- Youth Commissioners have participated in **policy forums** to shape plans for the future of local policing.

Being a part of the Youth Commission has **changed young people's lives**. Youth Commissioners have gained valuable skills for life and work, including public speaking, research and engagement skills. They have gained hands-on experience of policing and commissioning. Several Youth Commissioners have now become Special Constables, and others have taken up related roles such as Independent Custody Visitors and Community Court members. For those Youth Commissioners who were unemployed and/or had been former offenders, the experience has resulted in them gaining new training and employment opportunities.

I'm incredibly proud of all of my Sussex Youth Commission members for reaching out across the county into age groups that it is not always easy for the police to engage with. The experience of the last year has always been very rewarding and it has shown the value of trusting and investing in young people to start the conversations and ask the questions that we might otherwise find difficult or perhaps would not even think of. Their "Big Conversation" with over 2000 young people has helped me understand the way they view the police and the way young people believe the police view them. By recruiting and enabling the Commission members, I'm confident that I have created a credible and respected new channel for young people that allows peer to peer exchanges about personal and difficult policing and crime issues.

Katy Bourne, Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

The SYC is a truly representative group of Sussex young people who are challenging and are actively investing their time and energy in the future of our communities. They have been a great group to work with and it has been a real privilege to get to know them. As the Children and Young Persons lead officer in Sussex police, but also nationally for UK policing, I am keen to work with the SYC to address their concerns and help improve the experience of all young people in our society. They can help us keep young people out of the criminal justice system, help to keep themselves safe and help develop a more positive view of the police as a listening and enabling service rather than purely an enforcement one.

Olivia Pinkney, Deputy Chief Constable Sussex Police

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 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, in which received such touching responses that enabled me to present my findings strongly, which was definitely a highlight.

Detechma Baptiste, Leicestershire Youth Commission member

The Youth Commission is run by a specialist social enterprise, Leaders Unlocked, which helps organisations to engage effectively with young people and under-served groups.



We're interested in hearing from new partners. To find out more please see www.youthcommission.co.uk and get in touch via @leadersunlocked or email rose@leaders-unlocked.org



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