



# Cheshire Youth Commission:

## Final Report to the Police and Crime Commissioner

January 2017

**LEADERS  
UNLOCKED**

**YC:UK**  
YOUTH COMMISSION



## Introduction



Cheshire Youth Commission was established in March 2016 with funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire.

The project aimed to enable young people aged 14-25 to inform decisions about policing and crime reduction in Cheshire, working in partnership with the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Cheshire Constabulary.

The key objectives of the project were to:

- Recruit a diverse group of 25-30 young people from across Cheshire to join the Youth Commission. We aimed to secure representation from an appropriate mix of localities, ages, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Work with Youth Commission members to identify the key priority topics they want to tackle during the project.
- Provide Youth Commission members with the practical skills training they need for their role.
- Plan and deliver a 'Big Conversation' to enable the Youth Commission to gather meaningful views from 1,500 young people across Cheshire.
- Support the Youth Commission to turn these views into key findings and recommendations, to be disseminated at a final conference with the PCC, police and partner agencies.

Through this project, a diverse group of 28 young people from across Cheshire have been recruited to work in partnership with the PCC and Cheshire Constabulary to address urgent issues for young people across Cheshire. Their priorities for this first year have been: Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Cyber-bullying and Online Safety, Abusive Relationships, Hate Crime, Mental Health and Vulnerable Young People, and the Relationship between Young People and the Police.

The Youth Commission was delivered by Leaders Unlocked, a social enterprise that aims to enable young people to have a stronger say on the issues that affect their lives. Leaders Unlocked has established Youth Commissions working with PCCs in 5 other regions, and is planning to further expand the model moving forward. For more information about Leaders Unlocked please see [www.leaders-unlocked.org](http://www.leaders-unlocked.org)

## About this report



This report is grounded in an evidence base of over 1,500 conversations with young people, which have been recorded using a range of methods including Youth Commission postcards, the Youth Commission website, and through detailed notes from interviews and workshops.

The report is structured into 6 key sections that outline what the Youth Commission has found about each of its priority issues. Each section features comprehensive analysis of young people's responses, verbatim quotes from individual participants, 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 & Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Constabulary and relevant partner agencies.

## About the Youth Commission

The Cheshire Youth Commission aims to give young people across Cheshire a real partnership role in shaping the future of policing and crime reduction.

The purpose of the Youth Commission is to support, challenge and inform the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary.

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 gather the views of other young people through peer-to-peer engagement. This process provides a safe environment for young people to talk to their peers about the issues.

## What we did



### Recruiting the members:

Leaders Unlocked carried out a rigorous two-part recruitment process, including an accessible application form and a second-stage telephone interview, to select a group of young people to join the Cheshire Youth Commission. We worked proactively with local organisations from the education, statutory, youth and voluntary sectors to ensure that the opportunity was widely distributed, both within mainstream educational settings and within grassroots community settings.

### Identifying priority issues:

At their inaugural meeting on 19th March 2016, the Youth Commission identified 6 priority issues that affected their peer groups and communities.

The priorities they chose to focus on were:

1. Hate Crime
2. Abusive Relationships
3. The Relationship between Young People and the Police
4. Drug and Alcohol Abuse
5. Mental Health and Vulnerable Young People
6. Cyber-bullying and Safety Online

## **Skills training:**

Leaders Unlocked provided Youth Commission members with training in the key skills needed for their role – including effective communication, interviewing, workshop skills and public speaking. These skills were further developed through practical experience throughout the project.

## **Creating the tools for the Youth Commission:**

We developed a Cheshire Youth Commission postcard depicting the 6 priorities and providing young people with a space to record their views and suggested solutions. We also added a Cheshire page to the Youth Commission website at [www.youthcommission.co.uk](http://www.youthcommission.co.uk) to enable young people to post comments online via mobile, tablet or PC.

## **Working with Cheshire Constabulary:**

Cheshire Constabulary have been involved in the Youth Commission project throughout, including attendance at key meetings. Working with Cheshire Constabulary, the Youth Commission were able to get involved in advisory and scrutiny activity to influence police strategies affecting young people. For instance, Cheshire Youth Commission members took part in two Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel meetings. On September 20th, we held 'Evidence Sessions' at the Constabulary Headquarters, at which Youth Commission members presented their interim findings and recommendations to senior specialist officers from the Constabulary.

## **Running the 'Big Conversation':**

Reaching out to a wide variety of local community organisations and education institutions, the Youth Commission were able to talk to over 1,500 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 Cheshire Constabulary Headquarters on 26th October, at which they presented their final conclusions and recommendations for change. The Police & Crime Commissioner, Assistant Chief Constable, and a range of partner agencies and organisations attended the conference.

## Who we reached

Between May and October 2016, the Cheshire Youth Commission spoke to over 1,500 young people across Cheshire. This was done by carrying out a wide range of different events and outreach activities – including workshops, larger consultation events with students, and hosting stands on school and college campuses.

The Cheshire Youth Commission put particular effort and energy into engaging with harder-to-reach groups of young people, in order to gather insights into sensitive issues such as vulnerability and mental health. The Youth Commission carried out workshops and interviews with specific groups of looked-after children, young carers, and young offenders.

The table below gives a breakdown of the sample reached:

Young people from harder to reach and minority groups including: children in care, young offenders, and young people living in supported house, CAMHS service groups, and young LGBT people.	<b>220</b>
Students at Further Education Colleges and sixth forms	<b>480</b>
Students at secondary schools	<b>650</b>
Young people at public festivals and events, e.g. Disability Awareness Day, Warrington Mela, Chester Pride.	<b>90</b>
Young people at youth clubs and youth centres, and those taking part in the National Citizens' Service scheme	<b>120</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1560</b>

## Our partners

We are grateful for the support of a wide range of local partners who have allowed the Youth Commission to consult with the young people in their organisations. Thanks go to:

Ashley School Widnes	Children in Care Council	Live Wire Warrington	Upton-by-Chester High School
Blacon High School	Disability Awareness Day	Mid Cheshire College	Warrington Mela
CAMHS Crewe	GLYSS (Gay & Lesbian Youth Support Service) Warrington	National Citizens Service Warrington	Warrington Youth Club
CAMHS Macclesfield	Greenbank School	Poynton High School	West Cheshire College
CAMHS Winsford	Live! Chester	Sir Thomas Boteler	Winsford Academy
Catch 22 Youth Centre Ellesmere Port		South Cheshire College	YMCA Crewe

A special thank you goes to Cheshire Constabulary, who have collaborated closely with the Youth Commission throughout the project. Senior officers have devoted time and energy to support the Youth Commission, given constructive feedback on their research, and offered opportunities for the Commission to inform police initiatives. In particular, PC Liz Stanton MBE has provided invaluable input and support throughout the whole process.

# Priority 1: Hate Crime



## What we did

The Youth Commission set out to listen to young people's experiences of hate crime and hate incidents, raise awareness of hate crime, and challenge prejudice towards minority groups. Longer term, through this work the Youth Commission hopes to increase reporting of hate incidents and hate crimes among young people.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops and outreach events with young people from a range of organisations including: Live Wire Warrington, Blacon High, Greenbank School, South Cheshire College, Live! Chester, Winsford Academy, Warrington Mela, NCS Warrington, GLYSS Warrington, YMCA Crewe, West Cheshire College, Mid Cheshire College, Ashley School Widnes, and Warrington Youth Club.

The Youth Commission spoke to **153 young people** about this topic.

## What we found

Young people are very aware of hate crime happening around them. They are aware of people being intimidated, insulted or excluded due to factors such as **race, religion, sexual orientation or disability**.

*"Hate crime as a result of race orientation etc. is quite serious in the north. I have not actually witnessed it in my area but I certainly have witnessed intimidation as a result of differences."*

Many said that **'Brexit' has provoked a rise in hate crime**, commenting that people are using Brexit to validate their intolerance and hatred of other groups in the community. There is felt to be an increasing divide between the older and younger generation. Many young people are particularly concerned to see white British groups putting themselves above other groups.

*“Since Brexit I feel that there had been a divide between the older and younger generation. I also feel that there’s been an increase in racism and hate crimes against people.”*

*“There are too many people inciting violence and preaching hate speeches against minorities such as Muslims, foreign people, LGBTQ+, etc. Hate crimes such as graffiti is also common and should be controlled.”*

Young people are particularly aware of hate crime and hate incidents in **highly populated and diverse places**. Many told us that hate crime can occur in places such as city centres or sporting events, without being challenged or stopped. Several people said they witnessed name-calling, hateful chants and songs, and offensive graffiti in public spaces.

*“In city centres especially, I heard a lot of racism because those areas are made up of different races. I’ve never had a personal issue, but my friends have who are different ethnic backgrounds.”*

*“I hear racist comments a lot, even at my football matches and nothing is said.”*

When young people hear racist or hateful comments, they often feel nothing is said. Many people told us that there is overt racism in schools, with pupils using racist slurs or jokes because they don’t understand what they are saying. Young people told us they would be scared of being bullied or left out if they said anything.

*“People are racist at school and outside but I don’t think they realise how mean or nasty they are being.”*

*“I don’t think it’s right but I’m scared of being left out or bullied if I say anything.”*

Some groups of young people **don’t feel safe to go out late or alone**. We found that young people who have been racially abused don’t feel safe on the streets at night. Some said they are afraid of walking to their friends’ houses, and others said their parents are scared to let them go out. As a result, young victims can become very isolated.

*“I don’t feel safe on the streets as I’ve been racially abused. My parents won’t let me walk to my friends’ houses.”*

*“My friend won’t come around at night because people have shouted racist things at her. She doesn’t feel safe.”*

The **consequences of hate crime** aren’t well enough understood. Hate crime can be devastating for victims, causing mental health problems and social exclusion.

Some felt the **police lack sensitivity** and don’t always understand the differences between people. They commented that the police don’t seem to understand the perspectives of different groups. One young person from the Gypsy Traveler community felt that the police discriminated against her family. For instance, disabled young people told us that they are misunderstood and unfairly targeted by the police.

*“The police have stopped me 3 times because they think I’m drunk, not that I have a disability. They don’t even consider that may be the issue.”*

People are **scared to speak out** and witnesses often fail to step up to report these crimes. We heard that some young victims of hate crime are very reluctant to report it. For instance, young victims of homophobic hate crime said that they were afraid they would be subjected to further abuse and ridicule if they did report it. Some also commented that they didn’t feel the police would take it seriously.

*“I have been a victim of LGBT and hate incidents (non- reported). I know of quite a few of my peers that have had a similar experience. Personally I was afraid of further abuse and ridicule so I did not report it.”*



*"I am gay and don't believe I could report hate crime to the police as they wouldn't take it seriously. We have heard they aren't good."*

Similarly, young people from **Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) backgrounds** commented that they would not report hate crime to the police because it could make it worse. Young Muslims told us that they wouldn't report it because they feel that nothing will be done.

*"I am from a minority ethnic group and don't feel safe on the streets. I get things shouted at me but feel it would get worse if I told the police."*

*"I am a Muslim and since Brexit I have received abuse. I don't see the point in reporting it. Nothing will get done."*

When young people do make a report to the police, they sometimes feel **they are dismissed and not taken seriously**. For instance, one young person who received violent homophobic threats and filled out an online report said that the police tried to 'convince' them that the incident was not homophobic. Another young person who filled out an online report for abuse said that the police response was to blame them for the crime occurring and referred to it as 'victim blaming'.

*"Received homophobic and violent threats off an adult male while stood with my ex girlfriend when we were 16. Filled out an online report, police phoned me and 'convinced' me it was not because i was LGBT and offered extra help."*

*"Me and my at the time partner were stood saying goodbye to each other when a random guy hurled abuse at us and threatened to assault us. Filled out an online hate crime form out and they rang me and were victim blaming saying it was our fault that we were stood near his house."*

*"I am from an ethnic group and have had people shout at me. I once got into a fight because of it. The police were called, I felt like they didn't care that I was racially abused or that it didn't matter."*

The solutions put forward by young people during the Big Conversation included: More education about hate crime from primary school onwards; greater curriculum focus on teaching the history of slavery and oppression; more local events that promote community cohesion; improved police training on difference and disability and how to deal with victims; making it easier to report hate crime online through mobile devices; promoting initiatives such as Report-IT; helplines and support groups; greater consequences for offenders such as on-the-spot fines; restorative justice with offenders and victims.

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations

### For Cheshire Constabulary:

- Show that the Constabulary takes hate incidents seriously; "words can hurt just as much as being beaten."
- Improve the way officers engage diverse groups, such as those with disabilities.
- Get young people involved in police training.

### For Cheshire PCC and partners:

- Use media campaigns to raise awareness and tackle prejudice – e.g. radio, YouTube.

### For Cheshire Youth Commission:

- Continue to provide a voice for young people in relation to hate crime.
- Work with partners to raise awareness among young people about the severity of hate crime and how to report it.
- Work with police to improve their approach to hate crime and hate incidents.

## For support services for Hate Crime:



### **Cheshire Constabulary**

Cheshire Constabulary support pages on hate crime.

[www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/hate-crime](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/hate-crime)

### **Cheshire CARES**

Cheshire CARES (Cope and Recovery Enhanced Service) is the Commissioner's dedicated service providing support to all victims of crime in Cheshire based on the individuals' needs.

[cheshire.cares@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:cheshire.cares@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)

### **Hate Crime (CPS)**

The CPS has useful resources through their Service School Hate Crime Project. There are downloads on each page which provide resources such as hate crime scenarios for young people to think about.

[www.cps.gov.uk/northwest/working\\_with\\_you/hate\\_crime\\_schools\\_project](http://www.cps.gov.uk/northwest/working_with_you/hate_crime_schools_project)

### **Remedi**

Remedi are a charity who provides a restorative justice and mediation service across Cheshire.

[www.remediuk.org](http://www.remediuk.org)

### **Report IT**

Good general information and information on reporting Hate Crime.

[www.report-it.org.uk/what\\_is\\_hate\\_crime](http://www.report-it.org.uk/what_is_hate_crime)

### **Stonewall**

Good information and downloadable leaflets and posters about Hate Crime.

[www.stonewall.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/campaign/9286.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/what_we_do/campaign/9286.asp)

### **Stop Hate UK**

Good leaflets explaining hate crime in an easy to understand format and details about the Hate Crime Awareness Week:

[www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)

### **Local Safeguarding Children Boards:**

[www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk)

[www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx](http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx)

[www.warringtonlscb.org](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)

[www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk](http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk)

## Priority 2: Abusive Relationships



### What we did

The Youth Commission set out to raise awareness of the different forms of abusive relationships and explore how to support young people to report abuse and seek help when they are victims or witnesses. Longer term, through this work the Youth Commission hopes to inform the way Cheshire Constabulary engage with young victims and witnesses of abuse.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops and outreach events with young people from a range of organisations including: South Cheshire College, Live Wire Warrington, Poynton High School, Blacon High, South Cheshire College, Disability Awareness Day, Winsford Academy, Warrington Mela, GLYSS Warrington, NCS Warrington, Warrington Youth Club, YMCA Crewe.

The Youth Commission spoke to **204 young people** about this topic.

### What we found

There are many **myths and misconceptions** about abusive relationships. Many young people believe that abusive relationships take place solely within couples. There also is a common perception that women are the victims of abuse, rather than men. There is a very limited understanding of all the different types of abuse, especially non-physical types of abuse.

*"Many people believe that abusive relationships must be between a dating couple, when often they can be between a teacher + students, parent + child etc."*

*"I don't think relationships that are abusive in a way that's not just physical are talked about enough."*

Young people are often **under-educated** about relationships. Young people told us that they are not being taught what a healthy relationship is. Therefore, they cannot easily identify unhealthy relationships in themselves and others. They feel they are not being told clearly enough what is acceptable both physically and sexually. In addition, media portrayals of relationships make it difficult to tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

*"There is not enough teaching around the subject. People do not know what a healthy relationship and so cannot identify unhealthy relationships in themselves and others."*

*"I believe teenagers need to be told what is acceptable physically and sexually."*

Many young people know someone in an abusive relationship or have **personal experience** of abuse. The experiences we have heard about include violence in the home, young people being pressured into sending sexual images, and having to protect a parent from an abusive partner.

*"I know people who have been pressured into doing things or sending sexual images."*

*"My mum used to be in abusive relationships they would hurt my mum and my brother. I had to protect them."*

Young people told us that abuse often **starts with small actions** such as checking someone's phone, and then can escalate. Young people mentioned controlling behaviour, jealousy, blackmailing, and being stopped from seeing friends. Some don't realise they are in an abusive relationship until it's over.

*"I had an experience with an abusive relationship I didn't realise it was abusive until it ended. He told me he'd kill himself if I didn't reply or talk to him and when I told him he was manipulative and abusive he said I was bullying him that I made him depressed and he tried to stop me having any friends."*

Abusive relationships can be **physically and mentally scarring**. They can cause people to become less confident and independent. Victims may have trust issues in the future or even become abusers themselves. People can be afraid to leave relationships because they live in the same house as the abuser and have nowhere else to go.

Young people may be **reluctant to report abuse** to the authorities. They fear nothing will be done and speaking out might make things even worse.

Many young people will not report abusive relationships as they don't feel they will be safe and protected. Many feel that the abuser will get away with it and they are afraid that no consequences will follow after a victim speaking out.

*"It is a bigger issue with younger people than police are aware as people are too scared to talk about it."*

*"I was too scared to call the police in case my dad found out and I think he would've killed me."*

We heard a particularly shocking story from one young person who was **used as a 'drug and gun runner'** and then ended up in the criminal justice system because they were too afraid to tell the truth. We have not quoted this individual in order to protect their anonymity.

Some young people we spoke to told us that **they did report abuse but they felt that nothing was done**. One person told us that they were abused by their foster carers while they were in care, and that the police 'did nothing' when it was reported. Another person said they were stalked and threatened and the police were unable to stop it from happening.

*"I was stalked and I informed the police. The man would watch me. He said he would get someone to beat me up if I told the police. The police were ok, but it's still going on. He has threatened my son who lives with my mum. He recently spat in my face."*

We also found that **gender stereotypes** have a negative impact on reporting, making men feel like they can't come forward as it's not 'masculine'. Male victims are less likely to come forward due to embarrassment. Young people feel that abuse against males should be more talked about and male victims need greater recognition.

*"Lads need to know that taking abuse isn't ok, it isn't alright or it doesn't make them less of a man."*

The solutions put forward by young people during the Big Conversation included: Awareness campaigns with male and female survivors; better education on healthy relationships and what to expect from a relationship; make reporting more accessible and less intimidating, including via mobile and online; refuges for male and female victims; support groups online and in everyday high street venues; more effective joint working between police and social services; a less intimidating interview process for young victims.

*"We were taken to a refuge until the person left, the refuge were really helpful and I hope others get that help."*

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations

### For Cheshire Constabulary:

- Ensure that new (and current) officers are **more approachable** to young people.
- Engage young people as a part of **officer training**.
- As much as possible, show that you are **doing something about each case of abuse**.

### For Cheshire PCC and partners:

- Work with partners to ensure **specialist services** are in place for victims – e.g. online support groups / phone lines, counseling, refuges – and ensure these services are well promoted.

### For Cheshire Youth Commission:

- Continue to **provide a voice** for young people in relation to abusive relationships.
- Conduct **school workshops** (from Primary) to raise awareness of healthy relationships among children and young people.

## For support services for Abusive Relationships:



### **Cheshire CARES**

*Cheshire CARES (Cope and Recovery Enhanced Service) is the Commissioner's dedicated service providing support to all victims of crime in Cheshire based on the individual's needs.*

**[cheshire.cares@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:cheshire.cares@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)**

### **The Hideout**

*Information for children and young people to understand domestic abuse, and take positive action.*

**[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)**

### **Womens Aid**

*A range of services including training, consultancy, online training and helpline (0808 2000 247) and links to other information.*

**[www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/useful-links](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/useful-links)**

### **Childline**

*Childline helps anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through.*

**[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

**Call 0800 1111**

### **Local Safeguarding Children Boards:**

**[www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk)**

**[www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx](http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx)**

**[www.warringtonlscb.org](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)**

**[www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk](http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk)**

## Priority 3: The Relationship between Young People and the Police



### What we did

The Youth Commission set out to listen to young people's experiences of policing, and challenge mutual stereotypes between young people and the police. Longer-term, through this work the Youth Commission hopes to support the Constabulary to engage more effectively with young people.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops and outreach events with young people from a range of organisations including: West Cheshire College, Live Wire Warrington, Catch 22 Ellesmere Port, Blacon High, Disability Awareness Day, Live! Chester, Children in Care Council, Winsford Academy, Warrington Mela, NCS Warrington, Warrington Youth Club, Upton-by-Chester High School, CAHMS Macclesfield, CAMHS Winsford, CAMHS Crewe, Mid Cheshire College, YMCA Crewe.

The Youth Commission spoke to **700 young people** about this topic.

### What we found

During the Big Conversation, we heard **many positive comments** from young people about Cheshire Constabulary. Many young people feel the police are doing a great job of protecting them and keeping their local areas safe. Many also said that the police are very friendly, and officers make an effort to communicate with young people.

*"I have never had any issues with the police, whenever I saw them they made efforts to be social and communicate with the youths, they were very friendly. In Knutsford where I live there are plenty of police and they do a great job at managing the area."*



Young people in schools and youth centres have **spoken positively about the police coming in to their organisations** to engage with them. For instance, one young person commented that officers came into the YMCA to play pool with the young people there. They felt that this had improved their perception of the police.

*"[One] constable came to YMCA and spoke to us, introduced himself, he also raised money for the YMCA in his own time. He stops by on his rounds, plays pool with us. It definitely improves the way we perceive police and stops the 'us and them.'"*

Other positive comments included the police doing a good job at football matches, being helpful when a person has been attacked, and being very supportive when a young person needed protecting from their parents.

*"I was taken away when I was younger to be taken safely away from my parents. The police were brilliant and made me feel like I can trust them."*

*"I went to a recent football match with Chester and there were many police officers in and around the stadium. I thought they did a good job preventing fights."*

*"A member of my family was attacked on the cycle path and the police were very helpful. They visited my house and spoke to my family member and increased the number of officers patrolling that area. I think the police are very useful in Chester."*

However, despite these positive comments, we also found that many young people feel **anxious, intimidated or guilty around the police**. Some feel the police focus too much on what they are doing wrong, and not enough on what they are doing right. This means they are not confident about contacting the police, as the police can be seen as intimidating and unapproachable.

*"As a young person I feel intimidated by the police in my area and I am ashamed to be a young person as I feel that we don't get any fair treatment from the police, even if you give them respect."*

*"Even though I have never done anything wrong I feel uncomfortable around the police."*

Many **young people feel stereotyped by the police**, although we also found that stereotyping exists on both sides of the relationship. Some young people feel they are stopped for no reason, or they are unfairly moved along when they are hanging out with their friends. These young people told us that the police are too quick to make negative judgments about them. They feel they are treated differently due to their age, social class, ethnicity, what they are wearing, or where they live.

*"I feel I get harassed in my area by the local police. I feel they stop me for no reason."*

*"Police officers talking down to youths. I have personal frequent experiences because I am a teen boy who stays out after dark. Officers talk down to me all the time, when they are supposed to be a guardian/role model."*

*"They stop me because of where I live and what I wear. They tell us to move on. Where are we supposed to go?"*

**Stop and Search is a particular concern** for some young people. Several said they didn't know why they had been searched, as they felt the grounds had not been explained. Some said they were not aware they had any rights at all. One young person said they had been repeatedly stopped and searched, yet had never been given a receipt. One person said they had been searched very roughly, with all of their belongings thrown on the floor.

*"Stop and search. I'm always being stopped by the police - but I have never been given a receipt by the police. I didn't even know they had to give me something to say they had stopped me."*

*"They stopped me for a stop and search and threw all my stuff on the floor. It was horrible. Then once they had finished their search they left me to pick it up."*

*"Stop and search - I get stopped a lot and I am not aware of my rights."*

What is more, several young people expressed a concern that the police were **unnecessarily heavy-handed** in their approach. These young people commented that the police can be aggressive or too violent, abuse their position, and give young people rough treatment. Some examples of young people's experiences include: being wrongly taken to the cells; being thrown in the back seat of a car; being chased in a riot van for no reason; and being kept in the cells for 2 days with no apology or explanation.

*"They arrested me at home at 4am and took me to the cells. They then realised hours later that they had mistaken me for someone else."*

*"They chased us in the riot van and followed us for ages when we hadn't done anything."*

*"I was arrested for street robbery and sent to prison. The way I was treated by the police was terrible. they kept me in a cell for 3 days and the solicitor was awful."*

We also found many young people want to see a **higher police presence in their local areas**. Significant numbers of young people were concerned that there was a lack of police presence and patrols in their areas. For young victims, there are issues with the way the police respond and the speed of their response. Some mentioned that the police were too slow to respond. Others felt the police were slow to inform them about the progress of their case. Others felt that the police had turned a blind eye when they were victims of hate crime.

The top solutions raised by young people include: Police training on dealing with young people, including those who are vulnerable and disabled; education for young people about their rights and the role of the police; better communication and listening between the police and young people; promotion of positive news stories about the police; more work experience opportunities with the police.

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations

### For Cheshire Constabulary:

- Get young people involved in **training for officers**, e.g. to deal with behavioural problems.
- Increase **education with young people** to make them feel comfortable with the police.
- Where possible, increase **visibility of police / PCSOs** in key areas.

### For Cheshire PCC and partners:

- Challenge the Constabulary to involve young people via **scrutiny panels**.
- Consider establishing a **Youth IAG** (Independent Advisory Group).

### For Cheshire Youth Commission:

- Continue to provide a **voice for young people** with the PCC/ police.
- Work with partners to raise awareness among young people about **their rights**, making them clear and easy to understand.
- Continue to provide **challenge and scrutiny** to Cheshire Constabulary in areas such as Stop and Search.

## For support services for The Relationship between Young People and the Police:



*Cheshire Constabulary provides web pages containing information about Stop and Search rights, how to feed back and how to make a complaint.*

[\*www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/your-rights-stop-and-search\*](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/your-rights-stop-and-search)

[\*www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/your-rights-stop-and-search/stop-and-search-ride-along-scheme\*](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/your-rights-stop-and-search/stop-and-search-ride-along-scheme)

[\*www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/your-rights-stop-and-search/strategic-stop-and-search-scrutiny-panel\*](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/your-rights-stop-and-search/strategic-stop-and-search-scrutiny-panel)

[\*www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/make-a-complaint\*](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/make-a-complaint)

[\*www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk/contact-me/feedback\*](http://www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk/contact-me/feedback)

### **Local Safeguarding Children Boards:**

[\*www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk\*](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk)

[\*www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx\*](http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx)

[\*www.warringtonlscb.org\*](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)

[\*www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk\*](http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk)



## Priority 4: Drug and Alcohol Abuse



### What we did

The Youth Commission set out to understand why young people get involved with drug and alcohol abuse, and raise awareness of the mental and physical effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Longer-term, through this work the Youth Commission hopes to help to prevent drug and alcohol abuse and reduce the anti-social behaviour associated with it.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops and outreach events with young people from a range of organisations including: Mid Cheshire College, Warrington Youth Club, Disability Awareness Day, GLYSS Warrington, Live Wire Warrington, Warrington Mela, NCS Warrington, West Cheshire College, Greenbank School, Poynton High School, Catch 22, Blacon High, Winsford Academy.

The Youth Commission spoke to **187 young people** about this topic.

### What we found

During the Big Conversation we found that young people see drugs and alcohol around them **on a daily basis**. Young people told us that drug and alcohol use has become 'normalised'.

*"I've never known any different. I have grown up in the area and I see it on a daily basis."*

The **first-hand experiences** we have heard about from young people include regularly smoking weed, being pressured into carrying drugs for other people, witnessing drug dealing in the open in their local areas, and having their first experience with drugs at the age of 12 or 13.

*"This issue began very early in age, my first experience being aged 14. I was educated on the dangers of alcohol and drugs but it was always very impersonal. It's seen as cool and almost a 'coming of age' thing which is not how it should be viewed."*

*"A lad in my estate once asked me to take drugs to someone's house. I said no and he hasn't asked me again. I was worried he may abuse or attack me."*

Young people take drugs and drink alcohol for a variety of reasons. The main reasons cited by young people were boredom, peer pressure, feeling that they have to do it, trying to fit in with the crowd, depression and to get rid of bad memories.

*"There is nothing to do in Blacon so they get bored and start to take drugs."*

*"Pressure on teenagers, making it seem like a cool thing to do and making them feel that they have to do it."*

*"Lots of people smoke because of depression and to get rid of bad memories."*

In some local areas, young people have commented that their neighbourhoods **feel unsafe due to the anti-social environment created by drugs and alcohol**. The issues mentioned by young people include drunken fights, violence caused by drugs, people selling drugs on the streets and in parks, and the presence of needles and bottles on the street. Young people feel vulnerable in these areas as a consequence, and sometimes their parents do not allow them to go out as a result.

*"Where I live, there are loads of people dealing drugs and this means my mum doesn't like me going out in the evening which isn't fair."*

*"I always see drug dealing in the park or from cars, Everybody knows where it happens, I think even the police do but you never see anyone arrested."*

*"There are people just leaving cans with about half of alcohol in it, also leaving loads of needles which could hurt little children like, could get stuck in their hands."*

A key message from young people is that drugs and alcohol are **too available and accessible from a young age**. We found that children as young as 12 are taking drugs, often due to the influence of older peers or family members. Some have commented that it's easier for them to get drugs than it is to get alcohol, even though alcohol is sold in shops. It is common for young people to know where to buy drugs in their local areas.

*"People as young as 12 years old will be taking drugs and alcohol at any point of the day."*

*"Drugs are a main problem. It is easier to get drugs more than alcohol in my area. Violence isn't a big thing only if you haven't paid your debts off you get hit."*

*"Drugs and alcohol are very easy to get hold of. It's normal to smoke weed. If I wanted to get some drugs right now I would know a few places to go to."*

Another major concern is the **presence of drugs and alcohol in and around schools and colleges**. People bring drugs and alcohol into school, and drug dealers target the areas surrounding the schools to sell substances to young people.

*"People deal drugs at the high school."*

*"It is bad that people even in year 7 are doing drugs and smoking."*

*"People bring alcohol into school."*

Several young people have commented that they feel the **police presence is not sufficient** to deal with drug and alcohol abuse in their areas. They feel the police should be doing more to keep drugs off their streets by targeting the major dealers and producers, rather than focusing on young people who are using the substances. They also feel the police should be doing more to regulate the supply of alcohol to under-age drinkers and excessive drinkers.

*"I think there should be more police because of many drunk people."*

*"Police like to look like their results are good so target young people with drugs - not the sellers or top dogs."*

*"There should be more police about / security to protect / help drunk people or the people who could be harmed by the person."*

The top solutions raised by young people include: More police on the streets after school, at night and in 'hot spots'; more dogs, raids, undercover stings and spot checks; more support for young people with addiction issues, such as helplines and clinics; more hard-hitting awareness campaigns highlighting the damaging effects and the dangers and not 'dancing around the subject'; more youth clubs and affordable or free activities for young people of all ages.

*"Hit hard with the facts, what happens to the body. Use hard-hitting stories. Stop dancing around the subject."*

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations

### For Cheshire Constabulary:

- **More visible presence** to prevent and detect problems at key times, e.g. when bars are closing.
- **PCSOs in the community** to raise awareness and reduce drugs and alcohol in and around schools.

### For Cheshire PCC and partners:

- Work with partners to **raise awareness about** the impact of drug and alcohol abuse – with facts and real stories, e.g. former addicts as guest speakers.
- Work with partners to look at **what's on offer for 18-25 year olds at night-time**, to ensure that the offer is broader than just pubs and bars.

### For Cheshire Youth Commission:

- **Raise awareness** and help young people to stand up to peer pressure.
- Encourage young people to be **active members of their communities**, as many felt boredom was a cause.

## For support services for Drug and Alcohol Abuse:



### **Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP)**

CWP provides mental health, substance misuse, learning disability and community physical health services. These services are provided in partnership with commissioners, local authorities, voluntary and independent organisations, people who use our services and their carers. They also provide specialist services within Liverpool, Sefton, Bolton, Warrington, Halton and Trafford.

[www.cwp.nhs.uk](http://www.cwp.nhs.uk)

### **Drinkaware:**

Provides advice about reducing drinking and staying safe while drinking

[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

### **Drugwise:**

Promotes evidence-based information on drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

[www.drugwise.org.uk](http://www.drugwise.org.uk)

### **Home Office NPS Resource Pack:**

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) resource pack for informal educators and frontline practitioners.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-psychoactive-substances-nps-resource-pack](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-psychoactive-substances-nps-resource-pack)

### **Talk to Frank:**

Provides user-friendly information for young people on substances and their effects, including the A to Z of drugs:

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

### **Local Safeguarding Children Boards:**

[www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk)

[www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx](http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx)

[www.warringtonlscb.org](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)

[www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk](http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk)

## Priority 5: Mental Health and Vulnerable Young People



### What we did

The Youth Commission set out to listen to the experiences of vulnerable young people, and challenge the stigma surrounding mental health with young people. Longer-term, through this work the Youth Commission hopes to support the Constabulary to engage more effectively with young people with mental health conditions and learning difficulties.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops and outreach events with young people from a range of organisations including: Blacon High, Poynton High School, CAMHS Crewe, CAMHS Macclesfield, CAMHS Winsford, GLYSS Warrington, Warrington Mela, Mid Cheshire College, Winsford Academy, West Cheshire College, NCS Warrington.

The Youth Commission spoke to **127 young people** about this topic.

### What we found

Many young people are concerned about the stigma around mental health and learning difficulties. They perceive that this stigma means that people unwilling to talk about mental health.

Young people with mental health issues and learning difficulties feel as though they are treated differently – including being bullied, treated like a criminal, or treated as if they were stupid. They feel other people in society look down on them. The media portrayal of mental health promotes negative associations between mental health and criminality, which reinforces the stereotype.

*“See lots of negative association in the media of often young people who commit crimes and any mental health difficulties they may have. Enforces the stigma and negative stereotypes of people with mental health issues committing crimes.”*



Young people with mental health issues, learning difficulties, or other vulnerabilities are **reluctant to open up about the issues**. Young men, in particular, often don't speak up as they may be worried they will be emasculated.

Often, **young people suffer in silence**. The wide-ranging experiences we have heard about from young people include being isolated and self-harming; getting bullied for having ADHD or borderline Personality Disorder; suffering from depression and hearing voices; having a manic episode and being treated poorly by the police. Young people feel these conditions are often misunderstood.

*"I have borderline personality disorder which is something not many people are aware of. I really wish that there were sessions dedicated to mental health inside colleges and high schools because I find it really hard to talk to people because there's so little understanding around this topic. I also get bullied for having it."*

*"I struggle with depression and hearing voices. I don't think it's fair how mental health isn't looked at as much as physical health and how mental health is stereotyped."*

Many young people fear that they will **not be believed or taken seriously** – whether this is at home, at school or by medical professionals. Young people feel the treatment by professionals is a problem. For instance, professionals might talk to parents instead of talking directly with the young person. The transition between child and adult services can be difficult, as children are treated very differently to adults.

*"I don't think that young people with mental health issues are taken seriously enough or are not believed at home or at school."*

*"My parents were asked about what care I should receive rather than me."*

*"Young people are generally 16-25 yet in mental health services you are treated as a child up to 16, then an adult and the care is very very different."*

There are particular concerns about the way the **police treat young people with mental health issues**. Young people feel that many police officers don't understand mental health issues. The police might treat young people like criminals, even though they are ill and vulnerable and only a risk to themselves. Some officers make young people feel like they are doing wrong, for instance by grabbing them roughly. Some officers treat young people the same as they would treat adults, without the appropriate sensitivity towards their vulnerability.

*"I suffer from mental health problems and I've had dealings with the Police and had bad experiences of being in a mental health crisis and the Police."*

*"I have personal experience where my cousin had a manic episode due to drug induced psychosis and was treated poorly by the police. I have also been as well."*

*"People with mental illness sometimes are not comfortable with being touched. If they are stopped and searched this could be uncomfortable."*

*"When I was in a adolescent psychiatric unit and I absconded from the ward, the police who came to find me, treated me very roughly as if I was a criminal. and I was 13 years old. I hadn't done anything illegal or wrong or against the law and yet I was treated with disrespect. It made me feel worse about myself which deteriorated my mental state and suicidality which actually led to more instances that police had to get involved."*

On the other hand, we have heard about **some positive experiences** of support from police officers. However, young people have commented that 'it's the luck of the draw' in terms of which police officer you will encounter during a mental health crisis.

*"I was taken to A&E by a policewoman and she was really good. She slowed me down, sat with me, asked if she could call my parents and stayed with me until they arrived. She was good. "*

*"It is luck of the draw what police officer you will get in a crisis. And nature comes into it too some are naturally caring, others you can tell really don't care about you at all. Even if you try to tell them what's wrong."*

*"I was taken to A&E by a male and female officer. Female was good but the male made me feel like I was doing something wrong. He said he could be out fighting crime not sitting here. He kept grabbing me."*

A key message from young people is that **their mental health is not seen as a priority and they want to see a more concerted effort** from all agencies to tackle it. There is a lack of safe spaces to seek help, the schools don't pay enough attention or recognise the stress on young people, and there are not enough attempts to talk openly about the issues with young people.

*"Mental health in young people is often overlooked. While it is not a priority, I think young men often don't speak up about their own issues as they may be worried they will be emasculated."*

*"I feel there isn't enough support to help support and diagnose mental health issues. I believe it's improving but I feel it needs to be addressed and needs to encourage safe, comfortable places for people to seek help."*

The top solutions raised by young people include: Education and public awareness campaigns to address the stigma; teaching young people how to spot the signs and help people in crisis; counsellors in and around schools; promotion of initiatives by police and other agencies; better training with police officers and professionals to encourage a more empathetic response; mentoring schemes to connect people with personal experiences.

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations

### For Cheshire Constabulary:

- **Improve communication** with people with mental health issues. "Talk with them, not to them."
- **Training to help officers** to develop empathy and think about how the young person feels.

### For Cheshire PCC and partners:

- Work with partners to get **rid of the stigma**. Encourage people to talk about mental well-being and have more public conversations.
- Dedicate more money to vulnerable young people. Make sure young people have **the right support** to prevent crisis.

### For Cheshire Youth Commission:

- Continue to **provide a voice** for young people in relation to mental health.
- Carry on doing **peer workshops** in schools, speaking to as many young people as possible.
- Work with partners to develop **awareness raising materials** for young people, e.g. posters.

## For support services for Mental Health and Vulnerable Young People:



### **Bodygossip**

Body Gossip is a charity that combines Arts and Education to empower every body to be the best and rock their own brand of gorgeous.

[www.bodygossip.org/what-we-do](http://www.bodygossip.org/what-we-do)

### **The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust**

Working with young people, parents, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds, this Trust has produced 3 short films concerning self-harm.

[www.cwmt.org.uk/noharmdone](http://www.cwmt.org.uk/noharmdone)

### **Cheshire CARES**

Cheshire CARES (Cope and Recovery Enhanced Service) is the Commissioner's dedicated service providing support to all victims of crime in Cheshire based on the individuals' needs.

[cheshire.cares@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:cheshire.cares@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)

### **Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP)**

CWP provides mental health, substance misuse, learning disability and community physical health services. These services are provided in partnership with commissioners, local authorities, voluntary and independent organisations, people who use our services and their carers. We also provide specialist services within Liverpool, Sefton, Bolton, Warrington, Halton and Trafford.

[www.cwp.nhs.uk](http://www.cwp.nhs.uk)

### **Headmeds**

Advice specifically for young people about medication, treatments, general information and contacts.

[www.headmeds.org.uk/general-advice](http://www.headmeds.org.uk/general-advice)

### **Time to Change**

Works to counter stigma and discrimination. Information, downloadable resources, quiz, films & personal stories.

[www.time-to-change.org.uk/mental-health-stigma](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/mental-health-stigma)

### **Young Minds**

Information and support for children, young people, parents and professionals.

[www.youngminds.org.uk/about](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/about)

### **Local Safeguarding Children Boards:**

[www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk)

[www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx](http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx)

[www.warringtonlscb.org](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)

[www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk](http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk)

## Priority 6: Cyber-bullying and Safety Online



### What we did

The Youth Commission set out to listen to young people's experiences of cyber-bullying, grooming and sexting, and raise awareness among young people of the limits of acceptable behaviour online. Longer term, through this work the Youth Commission hopes to support young people to stay safe online and report any incidents and concerns.

To address this issue, the Youth Commission carried out workshops and outreach events with young people from a range of organisations including: Greenbank School, Poynton School, Blacon High, Disability Awareness Day, Live! Chester, Winsford Academy, Children in Care Council, West Cheshire College, Warrington Youth Club, NCS Warrington, Mid Cheshire college, Warrington, Live Wire Warrington.

The Youth Commission spoke to **112 young people** about this topic.

### What we found

Cyber-bullying is happening everyday, everywhere. **The majority of young people we spoke to have fallen victim** to cyber-bullying and have growing concerns with online safety. Young people feel there is no escape, even in the safety of their own home. It is often overlooked, as it is too difficult to find out who the perpetrators are.

*"Cyber bullying is happening everywhere, especially in Cheshire. I feel that it is overlooked as it takes to much 'effort' to find out who it is that is doing the bullying because they are behind a screen so we can't physically see them."*

*"You can't escape it, there is no way to stop it."*

**Bullying has 'mutated'** over recent years. Young people are being targeted online by people of all ages for a variety of reasons. The experiences we have heard about include nasty messages, nude pictures, blackmailing, being groomed by older men, and receiving unwanted messages from strangers.

*"My current issue is that abusive relationships for young people are constantly overlooked, while bullying has mutated into the form of 'banter' or 'firing shots'."*

*"I think the biggest issue is nasty messages and nude pictures travelling round to lots of people and using them to blackmail."*

These issues are faced on every **media and gaming platform**. Young people have highlighted social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, as well as gaming platforms such as Minecraft.

*"Huge problem amongst teenagers, making them vulnerable. Everybody is on Facebook etc. and are thus targeted by people of all ages for a variety of reasons."*

*"Nasty messages threats and pictures are the worst for bullying, It's on Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram are the main places."*

*"It's bad. It has happened to me online on Minecraft."*

**Grooming is a big concern** across all of these platforms, including the gaming sites. Not all platforms enable people to report abuse.

*"I was groomed by an older man that I knew but didn't realise it was him at the time."*

*"I know a lad who got groomed on Minecraft because they believed him gullible and easily led."*

These experiences can be **damaging and can ultimately escalate**. Young people are very vulnerable as a result of these problems. The effects include self-harm, isolation, depression, low confidence, leaving school or running away from home. Many told us that local young people have even committed suicide as a result of their experiences online.

*"People have taken their own lives locally because of this and so it needs to be taken more seriously."*

*"My friend was cyber bullied and was involved in hate crime and unfortunately committed suicide last year. I think more should be done about online bullying and more ways to prevent online bullying from happening."*

*"It can change someone's life for the worse and there are many bad things that can happen such as self-harm or suicide, leaving school, running away."*

Too often young people feel **they can't speak out**. Young victims feel insecure and scared. They can feel alone and isolated because they think no one will believe them. Young people don't tell anyone because they think no one cares. Many people don't feel comfortable to talk about these experiences and how they are feeling.

*"It's affected myself, it made me feel really insecure and scared."*

*"A lot of this still takes place in Cheshire yet people don't tell anyone because they think they won't care. This needs to change and the police force needs to prove that they can actually help."*

*"I've been through cyber bullying and it's hard to get through it alone and to ignore it. It can make you feel alone and you just want to isolate yourself from everyone."*

*"Nobody knew because it was on social media. I felt alone! No one believed me so it was hard to talk to family and friends."*

Some young people told us the **police should be doing more** to address cyber-bullying and the other online dangers they face. Some told us that, when they tried to report issues to the police, nothing was done.

*"I told my parents who reported it to the police. This was 4 months ago and still nothing has happened to him."*

*"I was bullied online & the police didn't do anything and said to speak to the school."*

There is a **lack of understanding and a lack of safe spaces** for victims to talk about the issues they are facing. Young people are not educated enough about how to stay safe online and the consequences of offending. There is also a lack of parental education about the sites young people are using. The perpetrators feel they cannot be found out and there is a lack of regulation of social media sites. Some of the gaming platforms like Minecraft do not even have reporting buttons.

The solutions put forward by young people during the Big Conversation included: Education and awareness about how to spot it, what to do and who to go to; more police involvement and more secure mechanisms for reporting abuse to the police; more control on social media and web platforms; support groups, helplines and peer mentoring schemes.

Overall, young people were pleased that these issues were being raised and we were listening to their views.

## The Youth Commission's key recommendations

### For Cheshire Constabulary:

- Be seen to **take cyber-bullying** seriously.
- Monitor social media and encourage people to **report incidents**.

### For Cheshire PCC and partners:

- Work with partners to **raise awareness** in schools. Allow bullies to understand the impact of their actions. Raise awareness among parents.
- Work with partners to introduce **more safe spaces or places** to allow young people to get support.

### For Cheshire Youth Commission:

- Continue to **provide a voice** for young people.
- Have young people **speak about their experiences** to others, to let them know they are not alone.
- **Raise awareness** among young people about safe spaces or places.

## For support services for Cyber-bullying and Safety Online:



### **Childline**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **Cheshire Constabulary support pages:**

[www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/internet-safety-and-security/cyberbullying](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/internet-safety-and-security/cyberbullying)

### **CEOP (Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre)**

[www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre)

### **Childnet**

A non-profit organisation working with others to help make the internet a great and safe place for children.

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

### **E-crime**

Practical information for adults and children about cyber-crime.

[www.ecrime-action.co.uk](http://www.ecrime-action.co.uk)

### **Kidscape**

Demonstrates skills to tackle bullying and safeguarding issues through workshops, advice and training. Aimed at parents, children and young people and professionals.

[www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying)

### **NSPCC**

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying)

### **Local Safeguarding Children Boards:**

[www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk)

[www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx](http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx)

[www.warringtonlscb.org](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)

[www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk](http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk)

## Conclusion: Taking it Forward



We are grateful to the members of the Cheshire Youth Commission and all the various local partners who have been involved in making this piece of work a success. Through the insights and recommendations contained in this report, the Cheshire Youth Commission has already made a significant contribution to the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary.

Through their 'Big Conversation' with over 1,500 young people, the Youth Commission has managed to reach and engage a diverse cross-section of the youth population across Cheshire. They have made particular efforts to hear from those whose views are often overlooked. This peer-to-peer process is of enormous value, both as a piece of research and as an engagement exercise.

On 26th October, a wide range of stakeholders came together at the Cheshire Youth Commission conference. At this conference, stakeholders were actively involved in roundtable discussions about the Commission's findings. Some of the key messages arising from these discussions were:

- Partners from different sectors are keen to be involved in working together on these priorities.
- There is a need for partners to be more actively involved in addressing the issues faced by young people.
- Education on these topics should be more embedded in the school curriculum.
- There is great support for the idea of a Youth IAG and getting young people involved in police training.
- Stakeholders felt the peer-to-peer approach was highly valuable as a means of getting messages across to young people.
- Moving forward, stakeholders hope to see a wider diversity of young people taking part in the Youth Commission, e.g. from BAME communities.

Subject to final decisions about the future of the project, our hope is that the Cheshire Youth Commission will be further developed as a means for young people to inform both the Police & Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary. As shown through the pilot, the Youth Commission can help bring the gap between young people and policing, through ongoing engagement with the youth population. They can provide youth-centred advice on a range of policing and crime matters affecting young people. They also have an important role to play in the development and evaluation of the recommendations they have set out in this report.



# Testimonials

## **David Keane, Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner**

*"A major part of my role is to provide a voice for the public in policing and with over a quarter of Cheshire's population being under 25, young people have the right to be heard. The Youth Commission have provided me with great support by identifying the issues that matter to young people, getting out and having conversations directly with their peers and making sure the feedback that they received is heard by me, local police service leaders and partners across the county. It is now our responsibility to work alongside young people to make sure that we take the recommendations put forward by the Youth Commission and look to how we can make the changes.*

*Finally, I would like to thank all the Youth Commission members for their hard work – you have done a brilliant job."*

## **Sarah Boycott, Assistant Chief Constable**

*"Talking with and listening to young people's views is essential as we continue to look at ways to improve. Having the opportunity at the final conference to hear the comments made by young people on behalf of young people was very humbling and it was great to hear both what we are doing well and where we can improve. I look forward to working in whichever way we can to take the recommendations of the Youth Commission and work with our partners to develop the service we deliver across Cheshire."*

## **PC Liz Stanton MBE, Cheshire Constabulary Safer Schools & Young Persons Partnership**

*It's been a privilege and an amazing journey working alongside the Youth Commission. They have inspired me to continue to educate my peers in the issues and concerns that our young people face on a daily basis.*

*The Safer Schools & Young Person's Partnership are in a fortunate position within the police force that enables us to take on board these concerns and to look at how we can change the way we deliver our service to ensure it's right for them."*

**Ben McCrorie, Commissioning and Partnership Manager, Office of the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner**

*"The Youth Commission has provided a fantastic opportunity hear directly from young people on issues that matter to them. I have been hugely impressed by everyone who volunteered to be involved in the project. The passion and commitment they have shown in representing the voice of young people across Cheshire has been hugely impressive and valuable. The final conference showed that they have been able to collect a really diverse and rich set of views from our local communities and they should be very proud of what they have achieved so far."*

**Molly Humphries, Cheshire Youth Commission member**

*"The Cheshire Youth Commission on Police & Crime have allowed me to enhance my understanding of the police force whilst providing me with a renewed sense of social responsibility. As a result of my involvement, I have an elevated level of self confidence which has had a notable impact on my career prospects. Those I have met throughout this experience possess a sense of duty that has ultimately inspired me to take an active role both within my community and my personal life, I hope future projects are as beneficial as this one."*

**Qasim Quayyum, Cheshire Youth Commission member**

*"I joined the Cheshire Youth Commission for two reasons: personally to enhance my CV, and the other to make a positive difference and evaluate recommendations. I was aware of some of the problems in our society, but as my involvement in the Youth Commission grew, and I met those people who faced abuse/hate crime etc, I became more aware of the extent of how important of a problem it is*

*It was a great experience for me personally to be a part of this excellent group of individuals, as i developed my communication and teamwork skills, which are essential in terms of in aid of seeking a job. Overall, we hope our recommendations and data collectively, are taken on board by the senior officers, in the hope of successfully tackling the six topics we have covered on this project."*

**Juliana Christianson, Cheshire Youth Commission member**

*"I applied to join the Cheshire Youth Commission because I wanted to find out more about how the police function in our communities and how we can work with them to ensure there are good relationships between the police and young people. I gained this knowledge and so much more from the experience, as my confidence and ability to speak to new people or groups of people has increased as a result of workshops and events I took part in. I loved being a part of the group as I got to meet lots of new people, many of whom I am sure I'll keep in touch with and who I wouldn't have met otherwise. I am hopeful that the CYC will run again as it so beneficial for young people and you learn new skills whilst working with some amazing people, like our 3 coordinators. The CYC needs to keep going as the issues we focused on are ones that continue to change and have an impact on our communities, so we still need those young people to help make sure everyone gets their views on them heard."*

**Get in touch:**

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