

Lincolnshire Youth Commission:

Final Report to the Police and Crime Commissioner

March 2021

**LEADERS
UNLOCKED**



Contents

Introduction	3
About this report	3
About the Lincolnshire Youth Commission	4
What We Did	4
Identifying Priority Issues	5
Creating the Tools for the Lincolnshire Youth Commission	5
Who we've reached	6
Our Partners	6
Priority 1: Mental Health	8
What We Found	8
Our Recommendations	10
Priority 2: Hate Crime	11
What We Found	11
Our Recommendations	12
Priority 3: Abusive Relationships	13
What We Found	13
Our Recommendations	15
Priority 4: Night-Time Safety	16
What We Found	16
Our Recommendations	18
Priority 5: Relationships with the Police	19.
What We Found	19
Our Recommendations	21
Conclusion and Taking things Forward	22
Testimonials	23

Introduction

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission (LYC) was first established in 2020 with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Marc Jones.

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission is a peer-led project that is made up of 28 active members from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences. The Youth Commission enables young people living in Lincolnshire aged 14-25 to have a voice on urgent issues around policing and crime.

The key objectives of the Youth Commission were as follows:

- Recruit 28 young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences.
- Work with LYC members to identify the 5 key priorities that they wanted to tackle this year.
- Equip the LYC members with the practical skills training required for the role.
- Plan and deliver 1,200 conversations with young people from across Lincolnshire for the LYC 'Big Conversation'.
- LYC members to present their findings and key recommendations at the Lincolnshire Youth Commission 'Big Conversation' conference to the PCC, Lincolnshire Police and partner agencies. *
- Work closely with the Lincolnshire Police to provide LYC members opportunities to influence Police strategies and decision making.

**(Note: Due to Covid-19 part of the 'Big Conversation' has been delivered online, through a series of workshops, surveys and targeted social media engagement. The LYC Big Conversation conference was also delivered virtually.)*

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission is facilitated by Leaders Unlocked, a social enterprise that has successfully delivered the Youth Commission peer-led model across 13 other PCC regions in England and Wales and is planning to expand further in the years ahead.

Leaders Unlocked exists to allow young people across the UK to have a stronger voice in their communities on issues that affect them. Accountability and fairness are paramount in helping organisations to adopt new ways of working with young people and the communities they serve.

You can find out more by visiting www.leaders-unlocked.org

About This Report

This report is based on evidence that has been collected by delivering extensive engagement outreach – the Youth Commission members have exceeded their target by reaching over 1,300 young people from across Lincolnshire in the last 5 months. The responses have been gathered through a youth-led engagement approach, virtual workshop events, targeted surveys and social media campaigns.

The report allocates each priority its own section, that consists of a comprehensive analysis of young people's opinions using exact quotes from individual participants, and the key recommendations based on the findings of the Youth Commission member's research.

This report is intended to be a genuine, independent record of what young people have told us through the Youth Commission 'Big Conversation'. The report is intended to support any future actions by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Lincolnshire Police and relevant partner agencies.

About the Lincolnshire Youth Commission



The LYC focuses on giving young people a stronger voice in raising policing and crime issues within their local communities. The LYC members work closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Marc Jones, to **challenge and inform** the work of the PCC and Lincolnshire Police.

The LYC engages with young people through peer-led workshops that provide young people with a space to comfortably and confidently speak to their peers. All the responses gathered during the Big Conversation are analysed by the Youth Commission members to create the key findings and recommendations. This is then presented to the PCC, the Police and local partners in this report.

A key element of the Youth Commission members role is to gather the views of young people through peer-to-peer engagement. This is a strength of the project, as it provides young people with a safe environment to talk to their peers about key issues in their communities. This peer-led approach allows for more honest information to be collected.

What We Did

Recruitment

In Summer 2020, Leaders Unlocked carried out a 2-stage recruitment process, that included sharing an easy to access recruitment pack with organisations across Lincolnshire and consisted of an application form and guidance notes relating to the role. The second stage was to conduct telephone interviews with all the applicants. This process has been made possible by working proactively with local organisations from education settings, youth organisations and the voluntary sectors. Our aim is to ensure that the LYC members are true representatives of their communities, be that by locations, backgrounds or life experiences.

Since the start of the 2020 phase, we have recruited a total number of **28 LYC members**.

Of the current members:

- **64% Identify as Female**
- **36% Identify as Male**
- **54% Are under 18 years old**
- **10% Identified as having a disability**
- **11% Identified as being from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities**
- **11% Identify as LGBTQ+**

Identifying Priority Issues

In October 2020 the LYC members hosted their inaugural meeting, that focused on members discussing **key issues and research ideas that they wanted to concentrate on over this phase of the project**.

LYC members decided to focus on the following key priorities:

1. **Mental Health**
2. **Hate Crime**
3. **Abusive Relationships**
4. **Night-Time Safety**
5. **Relationships with the Police**

Creating the Tools for the Lincolnshire Youth Commission

During the members meetings, **LYC members co-designed workshops** and took an active lead in running activities on the day. This comprised of **hosting quizzes, workshop demonstrations and presenting their plans**. This meeting gave the members the opportunity to develop:

- **Interactive workshops**
- **Design materials for the workshops**
- **Practice presentation skills**
- **Identify key organisation where the workshops could be run**
- **Learn new leadership skills**

During the members meeting the LYC members have **received training for their role** and have continued to develop their **active listening techniques, facilitation and leadership skills** throughout the project.

For the purpose of data collection, the LYC members created **postcards** to collate the relevant information for their research. The postcard shows each priority that the LYC were collecting responses on, and a space allowing young people to provide their opinions of all priorities regardless of the workshop they were attending. The postcards have highlighted real-life views, perceptions and experiences that young people have, but may feel uncomfortable discussing - the postcards are designed so that they are anonymous.

Who we've Reached:

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission have actively engaged with over **1,300 young people** across Lincolnshire. This was done through interactive virtual workshops, surveys and social media engagement.

This year the LYC members focused particularly on engaging with young people from under-represented or more marginalised groups in particular those with lived experience of the criminal justice system, aged 14-25 years. To achieve this the members conducted **targeted workshops and 1-to-1 interviews** with young people from supported living accommodations, alternative education and young offenders.

The breakdown for each priority is as follows:

Mental Health	333
Hate Crime	182
Abusive Relationships	189
Night-Time Safety	251
Relationships with the Police	410
Total	1,365

Our Partners

The LYC members are very grateful to everyone who has supported us by allowing the members to hold workshops and share surveys and social media engagement within their organisations, and would like to say a **very big thank you to the following:**

Ambergate Sports college	Lincoln Art College	Academy
Athena school	Lincoln Castle Academy	Stamford High School
Barnes Wallis Academy	Lincoln Christ's Hospital School	The Acorn Free School
Bishop Grosseteste University	Lincoln College	The Gainsborough Academy
Boston College	Lincoln Minster Senior School	The Kings School
Boston Grammar School	New College Stamford	The Pilgrim School
Boston High School	North Kesteven Academy	The Priory Academy LSST
Bourne Grammar School	Queen Elizabeth's High School	The Priory Lincoln Academy
Branston Community Academy	University of Lincoln	The Priory Pembroke Academy
Caistor Grammar School	Eresby Special School	The Priory Ruskin Academy
Caistor Yarbrough Academy	Grantham Additional Needs	The Priory Witham Academy
Carre's Grammar School	Fellowship	The Thomas Cowley High School
Charles Read Academy	John Fielding School	Thomas Middlecott Academy
De Aston School	Riseholme college	University Academy Holbeach
Gainsborough college	Sir Robert Patterson Academy	Walton Academy
Giles Academy	Sir William Robertson Academy	William Farr School
Grantham College	Skegness Grammar School	William Lovell Church of England Academy
Haven High Academy	Skegness TEC	
Huntcliff School	Spalding High School	
Kesteven & Sleaford High School	Springwell Alternative Academy	
Selective Academy	St Francis School	
King Edward VI Grammar school	St Georges Academy	
Kirkstone House school	St Peter & St Paul Catholic Voluntary	

Children's Services:

Future4Me
Lincolnshire Appropriate Adult Service
Lincolnshire Children in Need Next Steps
Lincolnshire Young Inspectors
Lincolnshire Young Voices
Voices for Choices
YES Project (Youth and Employer Support)
YMCA
Lincoln City Foundation

Youth Groups/Clubs:

RAF Air Cadets Boston
RAF Air Cadets Coningsby
RAF Air Cadets Gainsborough
RAF Air Cadets Grantham
RAF Air Cadets Horncastle
RAF Air Cadets Lincoln
RAF Air Cadets Louth
RAF Air Cadets Mablethorpe
RAF Air Cadets Market Rasen
RAF Air Cadets North Hykeham
RAF Air Cadets Skegness
RAF Air Cadets Sleaford
RAF Air Cadets Spalding
Skegness & Spilsby Scouts
University of Lincoln Feminist Society

A special thanks to the individual Youth Commissioners who have offered their time and efforts into making this project a success:

Alexandra Smith	Lauren Rose	Olivia Victoria Smith
Amelia Robinson	Leo Brown	Ollie White
Elizabeth Maria Grayson	Lewis Welbourn	Poppy Kinsey
Ellie Smith	Louie William Boyes	Poppy Kitchen
Emily Roe	Lucy Dunning	Seth Magpantay
Georgia Louise Wright	Mason Millar	Sophie-Mae Pass
Harvir Singh Kullar	Molly FitzPatrick	Weronika Radziak
Isabella Vinter	Ocean Hunter	Willem Pearson
Kayden Jarvis	Oliver James Howard	
Lara Sweetin	Olivia Patricia Joan Henderson	

A final special thank-you to this year's Project Coordinator Claudia James who was instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.

Priority 1: Mental Health



The LYC has spoken to [over 300 young people](#) in Lincolnshire about Mental Health. Young people told us they are often educated on what ill Mental Health is, but not taught how to seek support or the process that follows after initially reaching out. This unfortunately leaves a lot of young people fearful of taking that first step and reaching out.

What We Found

Young people said there is [a lack of education on less commonly known mental health conditions](#) such as Borderline Personality Disorder [in comparison to Anxiety and Depression](#):

“In schools there is a focus on depression and anxiety. There needs to be more of a wider approach taken as it will help reduce the stigma around other Mental Health disorders. It could also help more people get the support they need quicker”

[72%](#) of young people in our survey said Mental Health is not talked about enough within Schools, Colleges and Universities.

When asked to what extent do you agree with the statement ‘I know where I can turn to for support with my Mental Health’ only [17%](#) of young people strongly agreed.

“I believe we have many support services out there now. I don’t think that’s the problem. I think that there needs to be more awareness of these services”

Young people in Lincolnshire have spoken about specific concerns around Mental Health during the [COVID-19 Pandemic](#):

“Not being able to socialise and feel normal, being locked in a house and in constant fear of the virus takes a toll on me mentally”

Loneliness as a result of isolations and the National Lockdowns has led young people to reporting significant negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. Young people have also reported specific concerns on the impact of **COVID-19** creating difficulty in accessing support with most resources reduced or working remotely.

Young people also highlighted there is still a stigma around mental health preventing many from accessing support:

“I’m nervous to talk to people as I feel I will be judged”

“I feel pathetic asking for help, I feel abnormal and weak. No one exposed me to this stuff as a child, I thought I was weak compared to others”

When discussing stigmas of mental health in our research, many young people spoke about the **strong stigmatisation on males suffering with mental health**. Young people reported that **old-fashioned views of ‘men don’t cry’ still exist**, creating **barriers** for young males seeking support. This has led to a number of young people requesting an **investment into more anonymous online services** to make initial steps more comfortable.

Young people have suggested that **in addition to enhancing the breadth of education** regarding mental health for young people in educational facilities, **education should also be targeted at the older generation**. This ensures a widespread approach **to targeting and combatting stigmas and enhance understanding**:

“I think that the younger generation is much better than the older, maybe more awareness needs to go to them. Some people still have old fashioned views such as ‘man up’ and ‘men don’t cry’ which could be hard to iron out”

Young people have also introduced the idea of **appointing ‘Mental Health Ambassadors’ or ‘Mental Health First Aiders’** within **educational facilities and the wider community** to allow adequate support for the various needs of all ages. Young people feel it is important **for the PCC to look at offering this additional support** as it will give young people an **outlet to talk** about their feelings alongside seeking professional help:

‘I know multiple people that went to the doctors for their mental health and were just given pills to help them, and never anyone to speak to about their issues. Some of those people ended up taking their lives.’

‘We need someone the students know and are comfortable talking to. Even someone their age, like a Mental Health Ambassador.’

Our Recommendations

Lincolnshire Police:

- **Spread awareness of mental health and promote support services.** Talk with young people in the community to show support for breaking down stigmas.
- **Advocate and encourage** safe ways of socialising during COVID-19 to help **combat loneliness** young people are experiencing **whilst abiding by restrictions and social distancing.**

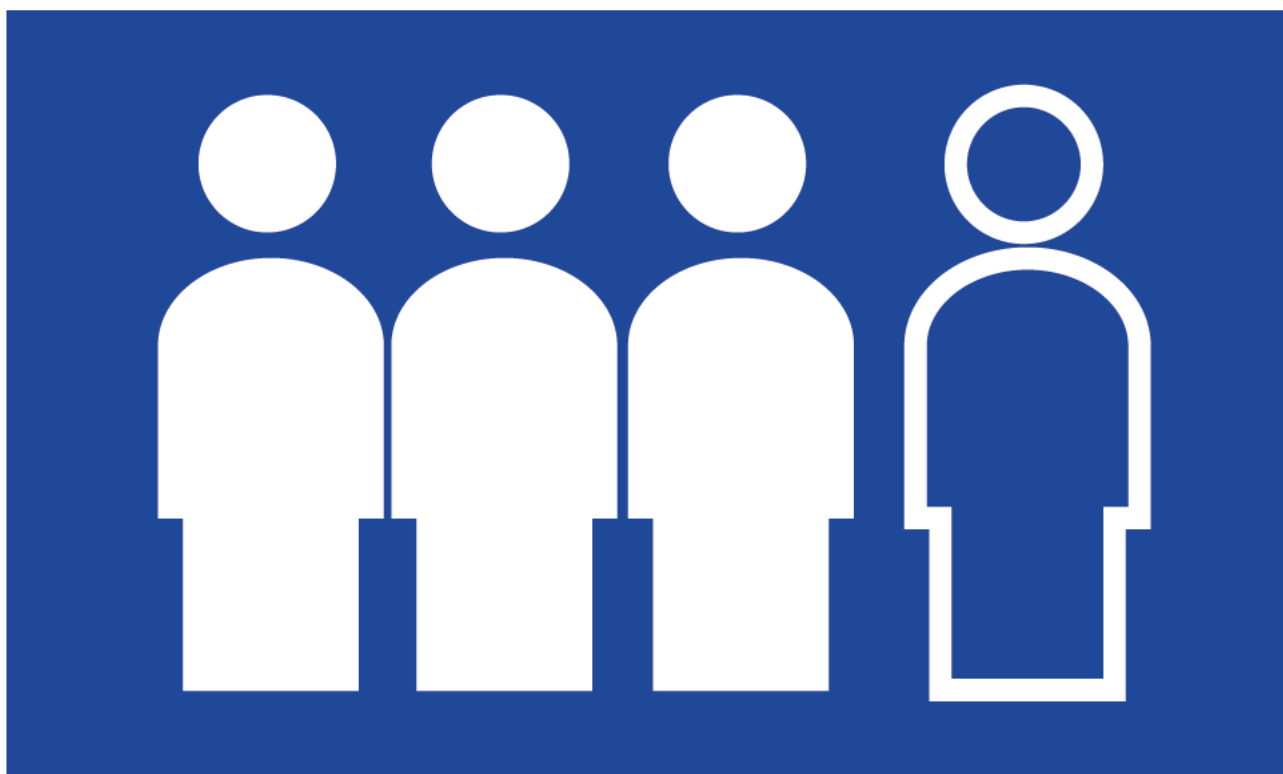
PCC & Partners:

- Appoint **'Mental Health Ambassadors'** or **'Mental Health First Aiders'** in the community and educational settings with a focus on supporting the various needs of all ages.
- **Raise awareness of how and where** young people can access both **virtual and face to face support services.**
- **Promote those with first-hand experiences** of seeking help for mental health and **step by step details on the processes involved** to help encourage others to **feel comfortable and informed when seeking support.**

Lincolnshire Youth Commission:

- **Be the voice of young people** and feedback up to date **concerns and ideas** relating to mental health to the PCC.
- Support partners to **raise awareness of how and where to get support** for **Mental Health** struggles.
- **Become part of the solution with Young Mental Health Ambassadors and educate** young people on how to support their own mental health and promote support services.

Priority 2: Hate Crime



The LYC has spoken to over **180 young people** in Lincolnshire about Hate Crime. Despite the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement raising awareness of Hate Crimes, and injustice across society on a global scale, young people remain concerned.

What We Found

Young people feel that despite increasing awareness there is still a **clear lack of understanding** amongst young people of **what constitutes a Hate Crime** as well as the **vast number of characteristics** that a Hate Crime can cover.

“I feel a lot of young people don’t know what a Hate Crime is and covers, therefore they may be doing it without realising.”

“We need to raise awareness and educate people. Both of the consequences of a Hate Crime (on both the victim and perpetrator) but also the underlying prejudices that fuel them and why they are unacceptable.”

When asked **55%** of young people reported **not knowing how or where to report a Hate Crime**.

“I don’t know where to report it to”

“I’m scared to report it and it wasn’t actually a Hate Crime”

Many young people stressed that **further education is needed** in order to make people aware of not only the **legal consequences of their actions** relating to Hate Crime but to also **challenge unacceptable outdated societal views**. There is a shared idea amongst many young people that **older generations need to be educated**:

"The response of the older generation to the BLM movement during the pandemic worried me."

"We need to educate people about it, especially the older generation."

"Educate the older generation as well as the younger. Encourage vigilance in people so they recognise when someone could be the victim of this or even education on when someone could become a perpetrator of Hate Crimes might be good if possible."

In the current [COVID-19](#) climate requiring [individuals to spend vast amounts of time indoors](#), young people in Lincolnshire reported a shift in both the number and severity of [Hate Crimes occurring on a virtual basis](#). Young people mentioned racism towards the BAME community has increased through social media platforms in comparison to face-to-face offences.

"Hate Crime has increased rapidly even though we haven't seen people it can happen on social media."

"I've seen Hate Crime on the internet during the BLM protests."

"The pandemic has heightened racism towards the BAME community, specially towards Asian people (and more specifically the Chinese population) due to the origin in being in China."

Young people have expressed that the [Black Lives Matter media coverage](#) has also generated a focus on [how the Police handle hate crimes](#), drawing comparisons from [American Police with regards to incidents such as the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor](#). This highlights the importance of Lincolnshire Police to continue to actively show opposition to racism, neutrality and support for those affected by Hate Crimes to avoid media stigmatisation of all Police.

"In Lincoln, not that I've noticed. But across the world I feel that many Police have taken the chance to commit Hate Crimes in the 'name of justice'."

Our Recommendations

Lincolnshire Police:

- **Raise awareness of the legal consequences of both face to face and online Hate Crime.**
- **Promote the different ways of reporting a Hate Crime and the support offered to victims and individual's reporting crimes.**
- **Promote the support offered to those affected by Hate Crime.**

PCC and Partners:

- **Raise awareness of the impact of Hate Crime on victims, through stories of personal accounts.**
- **Promote a clear understanding of what constitutes a Hate Crime.**
- **Promote support services for victims of Hate Crime and the importance of reporting Hate Crime.**

Lincolnshire Youth Commission:

- **Through YC workshops and social media, create space for young people to talk about Hate Crime, promoting awareness, education and highlight support services that are engaging and accessible for young people.**
- **Engage with young people via workshops to educate what a Hate Crime is, and the different ways Hate Crime can be reported.**

Priority 3: Abusive Relationships



What We Did

The LYC spoke to [over 180 young people](#) across Lincolnshire about Abusive Relationships. Under the current circumstances of living in a COVID world young people have increased concerns around victims of abuse.

Living through multiple lockdowns in recent times have left many in dangerous and unhealthy relationships, and young people feel there is not enough awareness or support currently available to allow victims to confidently seek help.

Young people made it clear that [more needs to be done to support abuse victims](#) especially during COVID-19 pandemic, as [despite the restriction exemptions leaving an abuser remains difficult](#).

Our research also showed that a shocking [67%](#) of young people knew [someone that had been a victim of an abusive relationship](#).

What We Found

When speaking to young people in Lincolnshire they mentioned a [fear of reporting crimes of abuse exists](#). Young people mentioned [concerns about the abuser finding out, not being taken seriously, parents finding out](#) and generally being [unsure about the process that follows after initially reporting the crime](#).

"People are scared, scared of judgment, the abuser themselves, lack of education of where to report, fear of not being taken seriously or the issue not seen as justified."

"People afraid of nothing happening, and people are afraid of the abuser's reaction."

"The Police might not do much about it, and then if their abusive partner found out they had told the Police they would get mad and do worse."

Young people also reported a reluctance in reporting crimes of abuse was partly due to there [not being a clear understanding](#) of what types of behaviours are considered abusive. There was a significant number of young people in our research that were [unaware of financial abuse](#).

Young people felt that there was [a need for better education from an early age on all types of abuse](#) as it would allow better recognition of unacceptable or abusive behaviours. In addition, [young people reported not being aware of support services](#) available to support victims of abuse.

“Abusive relationships are difficult to identify, report and enforce. There should be a lot more done to raise awareness about the different types of abusive relationships, the options that victims have and breaking down the stigma of abusive relationships.”

“There needs to be education within schools/colleges about what is a healthy relationship or how to spot signs of an abusive relationship so you can leave before it gets too far.”

Young people also suggested that [further education and training](#) on spotting and supporting victims of abuse needs to be implemented into [workplaces](#). This would ensure the successful use of schemes like ‘Ask for ANI’ and ‘Ask for Angela’ within the community:

“Better training is needed for everyone that works in customer services roles e.g. supermarkets, retail, food vendors. This way schemes like ‘Ask for ANI’ will be more successful in supporting people in abusive relationships.”

Young people also reported that there is [a strong stigma of who a victim is](#). It was found that [male victims of abuse are still rarely spoken about](#) and remains an issue in need of rectification.

“With sexual abuse victims there is a fear of coming forward, especially if the victim is male.”

“There is a need to provide much more support/guidance for victims of abuse so they know they’re not alone and everyone will be supported no matter what gender, religion, race etc.”

When discussing [re-sharing of explicit images](#), there was a [strong view amongst young people that peer pressure plays a key role](#). Young people also demonstrated [a lack of knowledge of the legal consequences](#) of re-sharing explicit images. Some considered that if young people were fully educated on the consequences it may deter many:

‘I feel that if young people knew about consequences and the severity of those by re-sharing explicit images without consent, they wouldn’t do it or think twice’

“I don’t think young people are aware of these consequences.”

Our Recommendations

Lincolnshire Police :

- **Increase awareness on how to report abuse** and provide **clarity on the process that follows** including **how the Police protect victims and the support they offer.**
- Increase awareness on the exceptions to COVID-19 restrictions for victims of abuse.
- Increase awareness of the legal consequences of resharing explicit images.

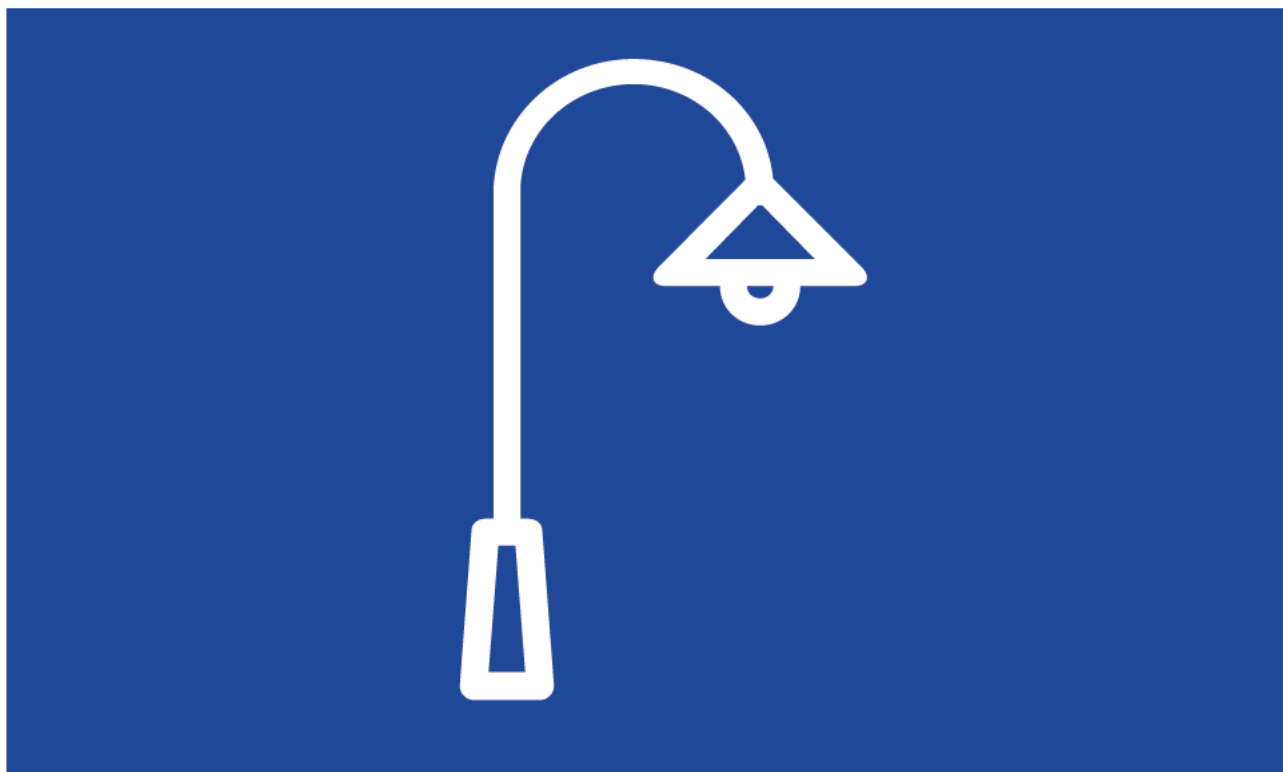
PCC & Partners:

- Ensure **education on all types of abuse** is delivered to young people from an **early age.**
- **Promote healthy relationships** and highlight unacceptable, controlling or abusive behaviours.
- Raise **awareness** that **anyone can be a victim**, regardless of **age, gender, race or sexual orientation.**
- Raise **awareness of support services through schools, social media and posters** around the community.

Lincolnshire Youth Commission:

- Raise **awareness** of campaigns like **'Ask for ANI'** during lockdown.
- Increase **awareness of all types of abuse** and **promote healthy relationships** utilising **social media and educating through workshops** and working closely with **PCC and Partners.**
- Continue to be **the voice of young people** and **feedback up to date concerns and ideas** relating to abusive relationships to PCC.

Priority 4: Night-Time Safety



The Lincolnshire Youth Commission members spoke to over 250 young people about Night-Time Safety in Lincolnshire. When looking at how young people felt regarding their safety at night the LYC were interested in exploring various topics. The LYC explored young people's concerns around walking, cycling or driving at night in Lincolnshire, as well as investigating experiences and influences around underage drinking and substance use.

What We Found

In the LYC's Night-Time Safety Survey, 68% of respondents claimed they don't feel comfortable walking alone at night in Lincolnshire. Young people further expressed that they feel the biggest threats to their safety at night are sexual assaults or harassment:

"As a Trans person, I feel there is an extra threat from Transphobes which worries me."

"Personally, as a woman, I'm just afraid of being attacked at night, there are frequent attacks which create this fear."

"I feel afraid because I know that if someone wanted to do something at night and when I'm walking alone there's nothing really to stop them."

"As a young woman in today's society, I find it upsetting that I have to be so worried about simply taking a walk when it's dark."

Young people have also expressed there being a stigma around males feeling unsafe walking alone at night. It was felt that this stigma consequently puts an expectation on young men to walk alone at night, despite in some circumstances feeling reluctant or uncomfortable:

"It is important to realise that boys are just as vulnerable as women at night and men do get scared too."

"We need workshops to raise awareness on how to keep safe and break the stigma that men can get scared too as men are too embarrassed to be afraid."

A staggering number of young people in our surveys, workshops and social media polls all mentioned [serious concerns regarding streetlights in Lincolnshire](#). Young people have voiced a shared opinion that the [streetlights are not on long enough when its dark](#). They have also specifically mentioned areas in Lincolnshire such as the [West Parade area](#), as always being [poorly lit](#) which has [made a vast number of young people unsafe at night](#):

"For the safety of all people to be taken seriously, more so at night. Having the lights on throughout the night is the first step in the right direction."

"I feel like the streets aren't safe, I worry about being attacked, there is very dim lighting in some areas."

"Lights are limited, it's extremely dark. Lots of dodgy people lurking around the town."

"Streetlights need to be on! Especially in Lincoln, with a large student population there is a huge student based NTE and as a result at 3/4am there are large amounts of young people walking through streets in the dark under the influence of alcohol/drugs. The dark streets make it more likely they would be unsafe if an attacker was approaching them."

"We need streetlights in alleys or more of the quiet streets."

Young people have also stated a [desire](#) for there to be an [increase in Police presence at night and more CCTV](#) to be installed in residential areas. Young people have also mentioned [during COVID-19](#) when the [streets have been generally quieter it increases a sense of vulnerability amongst young people](#). In order to address these concerns, the Youth Commission recommends increasing Police presence where possible:

"We need more Police presence, streetlights on for longer, better and more CCTV, and the ability to get public transport after a certain time."

"Whenever you're in Grantham all you can smell is weed, so less of that would make me feel safer. More Police on the streets."

"Keep the streetlights on and increase Police patrols in the suburb areas."

"We need more Police patrols on foot at night, it is easier to approach officers that way and makes you not feel so alone when walking about. Maybe even bring back Police boxes or something similar?"

When discussing [underage drinking and substance use](#) with young people in Lincolnshire, members found that [77% of young people knew a young person who had taken drugs before](#). LYC members also discovered that [peer pressure although not being the sole cause](#); continued to be a [contributing factor](#) in young people's [decision to engage in drinking or drug use](#).

"I feel it's more of a media problem rather than peer pressure. In films it is glorified to drink underage but the consequence are often not shown, I feel this would prevent young people if they were fully aware."

"I still think peer pressure is an issue with drinking. I didn't drink until my friends did, and I felt pressure."

Shockingly we found that amongst young people that there was **very little knowledge of support services** that can assist with **drinking and drug use**. However, young people mentioned that **something more than signposting numbers or support services** needed to be offered to young people in order to be beneficial:

“Young people are always given information or leaflets on the dangers of drinking. They don’t read them. It’s not engaging, and they won’t respond to that. In my school we had ex drug users come in to speak to us about their experiences and how they have now turned their life around. This actually helped and got a lot of young people’s attention. I feel personal experiences are the best way to spread awareness, maybe other schools should get ex alcoholics to come and speak to students.”

Our Recommendations

Lincolnshire Police:

- More **Police presence** around **residential areas** of Lincolnshire when it’s **dark**.
- **Work with YC members in local educational or youth settings** to talk about how young people can help themselves to **keep safe at night and in dangerous situations**.

PCC & Partners:

- **Work with partners to pilot voluntary night stewards** being placed in **higher populated areas** of Lincolnshire to help young people **feel safe walking alone in the dark**.
- Look at a **discounted transport scheme** in certain areas at when it’s late evening to **help young people get home safely rather than walking home alone**.
- **Pilot a streetlight scheme to have them on for longer at night and coming on earlier in the morning in the Winter months**. Review areas such as **West Parade** that are a **poorly lit** popular student location.
- **Work with partners to access to free rape alarms** in the same way condoms are given for free to young people, making young people feel reassured in case of any unsafe situation.

Lincolnshire Youth Commission:

- **Raise awareness** of how to keep safe during night-time hours including **working with partners to highlight** support services available.
- **Feedback to PCC and Lincolnshire Police** about **specific areas where young people feel un-safe in Lincolnshire**.
- Invite **guest speakers** into YC workshops who **have past experiences with drink or drugs** to give their story and how it affected their lives.

Priority 5: Relationships with the Police



The Lincolnshire Youth Commission spoke to over **400** young people across Lincolnshire about Relationships with the Police. Young people raised concerns over the current relationship young people have with the Police. Young people stated there is a lack of trust from both young people towards the Police, and also the Police towards young people.

In our survey only **7%** of young people strongly agreed with the statement that they have trust and confidence in the Police.

Only **43%** of young people were aware of their rights when interacting with the Police such as **PACE and Stop and Search rights**.

40% of young people **agreed** and a further **44% strongly agreed** that **Police believe young people are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour than people over the age of 25**.

What We Found

From our conversations with young people throughout the project, it was found that the majority of young people feel one of the **main reasons for the lack of trust** in the Police is the **medias portrayal of the Police, and the influence of issues within American Police**:

"I don't think it is specifically Lincolnshire Police, but young people don't like Police in general because they can be rude and racist."

"I feel like what has happened in other countries influences a lot on how people view the Police here."

We had the opportunity to speak to some young people from [Youth Justice and Offending Teams](#) and young people who have been [victims of crime](#). They also shared their thoughts on the [influence of the media](#) on [young people's views of the Police](#):

"There is an Influence of media and America. Young people often view the Police as one group despite them being from different countries."

"Media influence has a big impact on how young people view the Police. The Black Lives Matter protests have also impacted their views."

Young people mentioned [a large number of them had not had first-hand experiences](#) with the Police. [40%](#) of young people [agreed their opinions and views](#) were influenced by [family, friends and the medias representations](#) and a further [19% strongly agreed](#).

"If your family have experiences or strong views and as young people you have little or no interaction of your own, you are likely to have the same views as your family."

A large number of young people reported [not being aware of any positive work or campaigns that Lincolnshire Police are currently running or involved in](#). If [more was done to ensure young people were kept up to date](#), our research indicated that it would have a [positive impact on young people's views and perceptions](#) of the Police:

"It will allow young people to see for themselves what they Police do."

"If the positive work the Police are doing in the community was made more public, it might help with the respect side."

In addition to creating awareness on the positive work of the Lincolnshire Police, [young people expressed a desire for more frequent and meaningful interactions with the Police](#) in order to [build positive relationships](#):

"Police only come to schools to tell kids off, they should come in just to bond and talk with students and it will build a relationship."

"Maybe have projects working alongside the Police that young people can get involved in so they can see the work they do and form their own views."

"The Police should offer to have football games with young people in the community. It would be fun and remind them they are normal people and create a good bond."

"Showing that the Police can be more than just a threat. Humanise them by allowing them to talk with students at schools showing the positive side to policing."

It was also found that certain areas of Lincolnshire such as [Spalding](#), [had significantly fewer positive interactions with the Police](#):

"When I was younger living in Spalding, there used to be lots of PCSO's interacting with the young people in the community which was really good. In the past few years, I haven't seen anything. It needs to go back to how it was."

"Sleaford and Grantham have a good relationship with the Police, they see them regularly in the community and have good interactions. Spalding hasn't got a good relationship. They never see the Police and they never come in schools and have little community interactions."

Our Recommendations

Lincolnshire Police:

- **Reach out to Youth Clubs and Extra Curricular Clubs** to create better relationships between Police and young people.
- Through face to face and social media, promote the Police as being **approachable and not to be feared or just there to tell off** and are there to protect and make young people feel safe.
- **Offer opportunities such as work experiences** or similar activities for young people.
- Prompt first-hand experiences of what the Police do and **why they should trust them.**
- **Building on the positive reputation within some communities** of the Police, learning lessons and transferring these to areas where young people have a **less positive relationship with the Police** i.e., by taking an interest in the lives of young people.

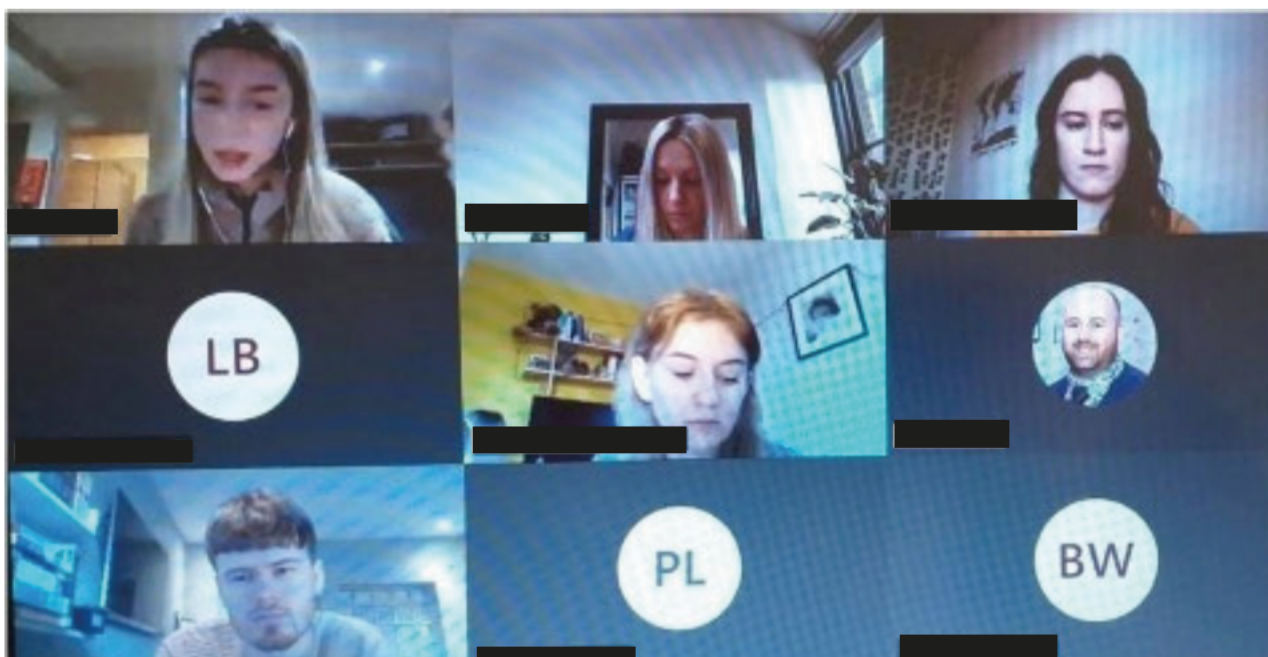
PCC & Partners:

- **Promote the Youth Commission social media as a safe space** for young people to **communicate regularly** with the Police on **issues.**
- Work with the Police to promote **'experience days'** such as **'a day in the life of an officer'** allowing young people to see **first-hand the positive work the Police** do, helping to build a **relationship and forming more positive opinions.**

Lincolnshire Youth Commission:

- **Invite Police into workshops to help build better relationships** with young people and **share positive stories of their work on social media.** Promote the Police's **positive reputation** in Lincolnshire.
- **Hold drop in 'meet your officer' events with YC members** where young people can ask questions and discuss how they can improve **their relationship with young people.**
- **Have YC priority themed meetings with key Police officers to feedback up to date concerns and ideas** relating to relationships with the Police and other YC priorities.

Conclusion: Taking Things Forward



The Lincolnshire Youth Commission members have worked extremely hard to ensure the success of this project and we are thankful for the dedication they have shown throughout. Particularly as the project ran through two National lockdowns. We would also like to give our thanks to all of the local partners who have been involved in this project.

The LYC members are keen to continue working alongside the Lincolnshire PCC, Lincolnshire Police and partners in the future and further develop their peer-led research to empower the voices of all young people across Lincolnshire. We have enjoyed the opportunity to work with young people from diverse backgrounds and hope to continue to reach out to young voices that are not often heard from and offer them a platform to share their views, experiences and solutions.

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission members will also be a critical element in developing the recommendations that have been set out in this report.

Testimonials

Marc Jones – Police and Crime Commissioner

The work done by the members of the Youth Commission is remarkable for the commitment, dedication, creativity and practicality that has been brought to bear over many weeks. I have been genuinely impressed by the way the commissioners have engaged with 1,300 young people, listened to their hopes and fears and shaped these voices into a series of deliverable actions.

Joanne Davison – Partnership Delivery Manager, OPCC

“Feedback from those attending the ‘Big Conversation’ was fantastic and partner agencies are keen to work with the Youth Commission to develop their findings and recommendations into action.”

Sue Wilson – Project Support Officer, OPCC

“It has been a privilege working with the Lincolnshire Youth Commission members and being able to participate in their ‘Big Conversation’ event. The findings and subsequent recommendations relating to their 5 key priorities were presented clearly and now the work begins to address these.”

Kerrin Wilson – ACC

“I am thoroughly impressed with the insights and understanding for the issues around policing, safety and challenges that have been aired in the Big Conversation and this gives me confidence that Lincolnshire Police can work with the Youth Commission to seek solutions to some of these challenges.

I also look forward to developing a strong relationship that can influence a whole range of policing activities. Working together will support the forces overall ambition to increase the trust and confidence of all parts of our community and young people are a significant demographic that we must engage with if we are to deliver effective policing. I very much look forward to working with them in the hope of making the suggestions in this report a reality.”

Isabella Vinter, 15 LYC Member

“The reason why I wanted to join the Youth Commission is to make the community a better and safer place by raising awareness on some of the key issues we identified. I feel very passionately about our Night-Time Safety priority as I feel no one should feel unsafe when walking, driving or cycling around Lincolnshire. I have enjoyed talking to other people from different areas of Lincolnshire to decide on our key issues, as well as having in depth discussions to come to our recommendations. Overall, I have loved this project as I feel I am now helping to make the community a better and safer place.”

Lewis Welbourn, 21 LYC Member

“I applied to join the Youth Commission as it was something entirely different to anything I had done before. The opportunity to formulate and deliver workshops to young people living in Lincolnshire was excellent; the fact that the feedback we gather goes to the PCC for consideration bolsters the feeling that genuine and positive change can come from it. I enjoyed working within a cohesive team to create these workshops that focuses on what we believe to be the most pertinent issues. Although COVID had prevented us from face-to-face meetings, I do not believe it took away from the experience, as online meetings can be more convenient particularly for young people.”

Harvir Singh Kullar, 15 LYC Member

"My reason for joining the Youth Commission was due to my interest in key issues such as youth crime, mental health and relationships. I also joined in the hope of making new friends and being able to communicate with different people all sharing similar views.

Although COVID has set some of the original aims of the Commission back, such as in person workshops, I still thoroughly enjoyed group work and using the opportunity to present my ideas to people of different ages and backgrounds."