

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a dark brown sweater, is shown in profile from the chest up, speaking into a silver and black microphone. She is holding the microphone with her right hand. In the background, a man in a suit is partially visible, looking down at a document. To the right, a large screen displays a presentation slide with the text 'The Youth Crime...' and other illegible text. The background is a solid green color.

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

FINAL REPORT TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

MARCH 2022

**LEADERS
UNLOCKED**



Lincolnshire
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
SAFER TOGETHER



CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Young People Reached Across Lincolnshire	5
Full Breakdown of Locations	5
About this Report/ Lincolnshire Youth Commission	6
2020/21 Project Award/What we did this year/ Recruitment	7
Identifying Priority Issues	8
Creating the Tools for the Lincolnshire Youth Commission	9
Who we've reached	10
Our Partners	11
Members	12
Priority 1: Mental Health	15
What We Found	15
Our Recommendations	17
Priority 2: Stopping Abuse	19
What We Found	19
Our Recommendations	21
Priority 3: Diversity and Inclusion	23
What We Found	23
Our Recommendations	25
Priority 4: Safer Communities	27
What We Found	27
Our Recommendations	29
Priority 5: Exploitation and Violence Affecting Children and Young People	31
What We Found	31
Our Recommendations	33
Priority 6: Relationships with the Police	35
What We Found	36
Our Recommendations	36
Conclusion and Taking things Forward	38
Testimonials	39

INTRODUCTION

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission (LYC) was first established in 2020 with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Marc Jones, and it is now in its second year.

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission is a peer-led project that is made up of **22 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 issues around policing and crime.

The key objectives of the Youth Commission were as follows:

- **Recruit 22 young people** from a diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences.
- Work with LYC members to identify the **6 key priorities** that they wanted to tackle for the second year of the project.
- Equip the LYC members with the **practical skills and training** required for the role.
- **Plan and deliver 1,200 conversations** with young people from across Lincolnshire for the LYC Big Conversation through various methods of peer-to-peer engagement.
- 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 and the Safer Together Team** to provide LYC members opportunities to influence strategies and decision making.

**(Note: Due to the continuing impact of Covid-19 throughout the duration of the project, the 'Big Conversation' has been delivered partly face-to-face and partly online, through a series of workshops, surveys and targeted social media engagement. The LYC Big Conversation conference was however delivered in person.)*

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission is facilitated by **Leaders Unlocked**, a social enterprise that has successfully delivered the Youth Commission peer-led model across 15 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



YOUNG PEOPLE WE REACHED OUT TO ACROSS LINCOLNSHIRE

This report is based on evidence that has been collected through extensive engagement outreach. The Youth Commission members have exceeded their target by reaching over 1,300 young people from across Lincolnshire. The responses have been gathered through both in-person and virtual youth-led engagement approaches, such as workshop events, targeted surveys and social media campaigns.

BREAKDOWN OF LOCATIONS:

Alford	Holbeach	Old Leake
Boston	Horncastle	Riseholme
Bracebridge	Ingham	Skegness
Branston	Kirton	Sleaford South Kyme
Brant Broughton	Lincoln	Spalding
Coningsby	Louth	Spilsby
East coast	Mablethorpe	Sutton on Sea
FishtoftFosdyke	Market Rasen	Tointon
Fillingham	New Boultham	Waddington
Gainsborough	North Hykeham	
Heighington	Nettleham	



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The report allocates each priority its own section which comprises 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 Lincolnshire 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' 2021-2022. The report is intended to inform the Police and Crime Plan as well as any future actions by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Lincolnshire Police and relevant partner agencies.

ABOUT THE LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION

The LYC focuses on the empowerment of young people, by giving them a platform for a stronger voice in raising policing, crime and community safety 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, Lincolnshire Police and partners.

The LYC engages with young people through **peer-led workshops** that provide young people with a space to speak to their peers comfortably and confidently on the highlighted topics. 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 at the 'Big Conversation' event and in this report.

A key element of the Youth Commission member's 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. It was also reflected in a number of the priority recommendations, that peer to peer conversations are preferred amongst the majority of young people in Lincolnshire when discussing sensitive issues.

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION 2020/21 PROJECT AWARD

The LYC members were nominated by the High Sheriff of Lincolnshire for the 'National Crimebeat Award 2022' for their pilot project in 2020/21. The National Crimebeat, is a youth crime prevention charity of the High Sheriffs' Association, which is governed by trustees who are mainly former High Sheriffs. The National Crimebeat award is presented in recognition most innovative and successful crime prevention projects carried out by young people.

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission 2021 Project made it through to the final 8 shortlisted candidates and further received a 'Commendation Award'.



WHAT WE DID THIS YEAR

RECRUITMENT

In Summer 2021, 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 2021 phase, we have recruited a total number of 22 LYC members.

Of the current members:

- **68%** Identify as Female
- **32%** identify as Male
- **60%** Are under 18 years old
- **9%** Identified as having a disability
- **9%** Identified as from ethnic minorities communities
- **18%** Identify as LGBTQ+

IDENTIFYING PRIORITY ISSUES

In September 2021 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.**

1. Mental Health
2. Stopping Abuse
3. Diversity & Inclusion
4. Safer Communities
5. Exploitation & Violence affecting Children and Young People
6. Young People and their 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:

- Develop interactive workshops
- Design materials for the workshops
- Practice presentation skills
- Identify a 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 gathering their research data, 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 opinions and experiences that young people have experienced but may feel uncomfortable discussing – the postcards are designed so that they are anonymous.



The members also had various external opportunities outside of the project presented to them, which enabled further development of the above skills. These opportunities were:

- **Taking part in the Police and Crime Commissioner's annual Crime and Policing Survey**
- **'The Young Health Champions Award' a qualification combining areas of education and health & social care**
- **Hate Crime Ambassadors for JUST Lincolnshire**
- **Working closely with both the Safer Together Team and the Safer Communities Team in LYC meetings**
- **Engaging with young people from 'Future4Me', a branch of the Youth Offending Team.**

WHO WE'VE REACHED

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission have actively engaged with **over 1,300 young people** across Lincolnshire. This was done through interactive 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 alternative education and young people from Future4Me, a branch of the Youth Offending service.

The breakdown for each priority is as follows:

Mental Health	379
Stopping Abuse	159
Diversity & Inclusion	131
Safer Communities	283
Exploitation and Violence affecting Children & Young People	114
Relationships with the Police	236
Total	1,302



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 with young people in their organisations, and would like to **say a very big thank you to the following:**

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:

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

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Future4Me	Lincolnshire Young Voices	Lincoln City Foundation
NACRO	Voices for Choices	Young Peoples Learning Provisions (YPLP)
Lincolnshire Children in Need Next Steps	YES Project (Youth and Employer Support)	
Lincolnshire Young Inspectors	YMCA	

YOUTH GROUPS

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

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS

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

Abigail Diamond	Isabella Purdy	Oliver Birkby
Davis Bordelo	Isabella Vinter	Olivia Smith
Elizabeth Maria Grayson	Jessica Nicholas	Ollie White
Emily Bell	Jordon Darren Wheeler	Sara Obuchowska
Emily Roe	Joshua Jones	Seth Magpantay
Gabriella Crick	Lara Sweetin	Stephanie-Mae Duggan
Georgia Louise Wright	Lena Bodalia	
Grace Tidswell	Noah Jones	

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 reported that the **COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a negative impact on their mental health**. Young people mentioned **feelings of loneliness in isolation**, and **anxiety around the speed at which the world has started getting back to the 'new normal'**.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people felt that there is still a strong stigma around mental health. Approximately **60%** of young people in our survey mentioned they do not feel supported by their schools or workplace if they phoned in sick for mental health related issues:

"It's not deemed as important as physical health. People won't speak up over the stigma over mental health."

"There needs to be an easier way for people who are affected to have days off. It isn't treated like a real problem, but it is. You should be able to call your school or work and say, "I'll be absent due to mental health" and them just say that's okay and not judge you."

"It is not awarded the same kind of status as a physical illness until it is really bad and harder to help with/treat."

"Have a more understanding approach to people that are stressed or mentally exhausted and to treat it the same way as a physical illness. Everyone will be a lot happier if that is looked after how it should be."

When asked about knowledge of support services relating to mental health, **young people reported their educational settings as adequately sign posting and raising awareness on how and where to access support.** However, young people reported the issue around seeking help for mental health being predominantly the waiting times for receiving help. Young people **reported specific concerns** in accessing support from key resources in **Lincolnshire 'CAMHS' and 'Steps to Change' being unable to cope with the current demand:**

"Getting help and asking for help is one of the most difficult things, and I believe that young people tend to not be taken seriously or mental health services simply aren't sufficient. This can lead to a sense of hopelessness within young people."

"Waiting for appointments is crazy. Doctors are reluctant to refer and instead push self-help methods that aren't useful for a lot of young people. It feels like there is no help until it's too late."

"I've not even had my first CAMHS appointment, it won't be until around 2-3 months since I initially asked, as well as this I have been to my GP several times before seeking help, and it hasn't resulted in anything and even then, it will be over the phone. The under-funding of mental health services is a huge problem. Hearing people's horror stories from people my age recounting people who they thought were trustworthy professionals, so blindly dismissing their issues, is a nightmare, and it scares me."

A number of young people in conversations felt that conditions such as **depression and anxiety are very common amongst their peers.** However, they felt that many young people suffering from these conditions are **disregarded by the older generation, as they are 'too young to have problems':**

"The biggest barrier to young people getting support with their mental health is not being taken seriously and being told your fine and too young to be depressed."

"People think that you're too young or that you're doing it for attention."

"There is a huge fear of being shut down or told there's no issue. Invalidating someone's feelings is the worst."

Conversations with **young people at Lincoln College revealed a variety of well-being services in the community is key to tackling issues** around young people's mental health. Young people mentioned **specifically the success of therapy dogs in addition to young people from NACRO highlighting the success of well-being breakout rooms in educational settings.** There was also a desire for the creation of well-being clubs in the community:

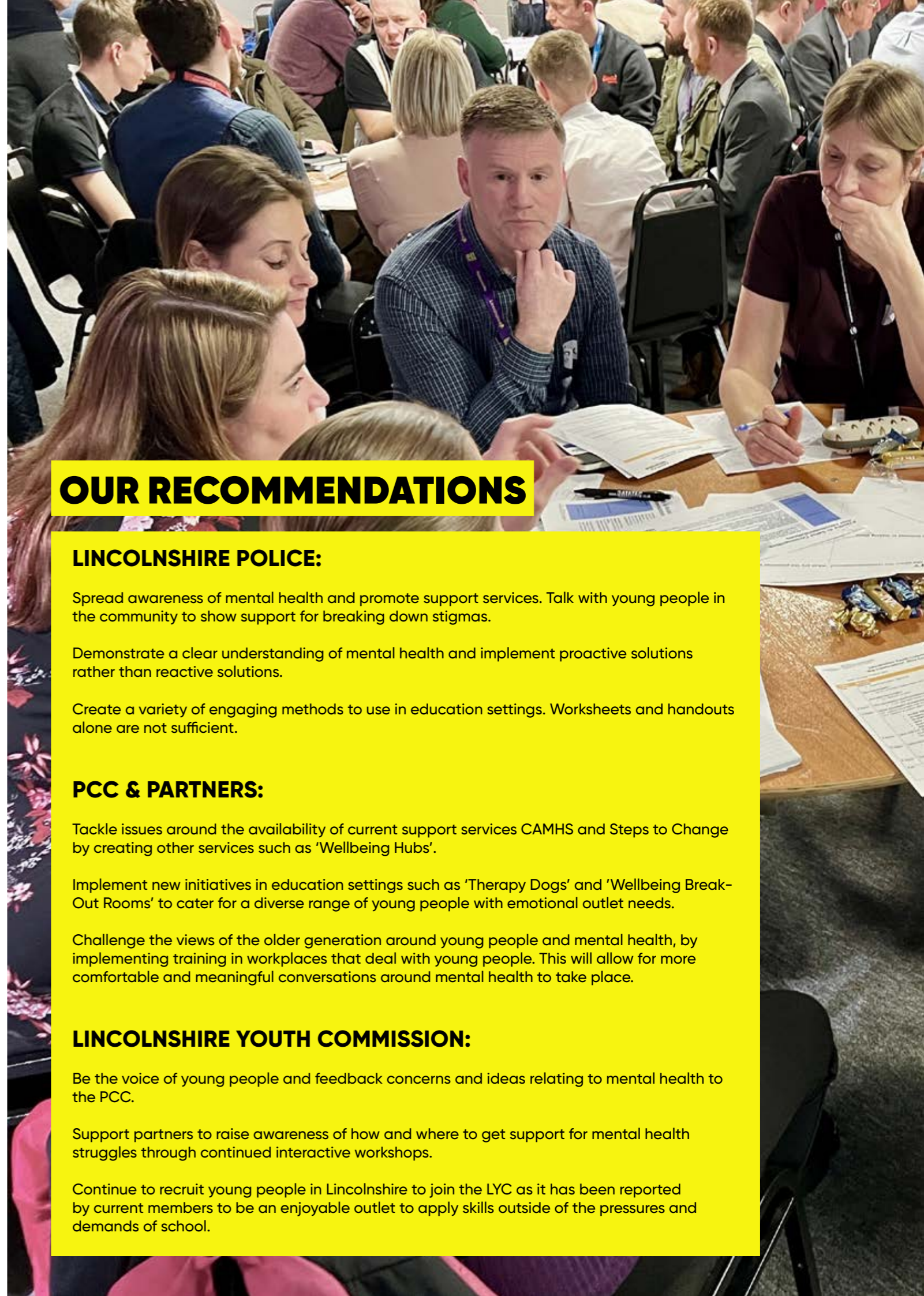
"We need to have therapy animals in all schools. The therapy dog at Lincoln College is amazing and really helps non-verbal people or people that struggle to discuss emotions."

In our Mental Health Survey over 50% of young people felt that full time education/ and or work had a negative impact on a person's mental health. A significant amount of young people pointed out that pressure to perform at School/College/University and Work causes stress and anxiety, leaving many feeling frequently burnt-out and exhausted:

"Burn out is a real thing and a lot of us suffer from it, especially as there is a huge work hard culture in our society."

"I'm autistic, and the pressures of school has a huge impact on my mental health."

"It depends on the individual and the environment itself. A lot of the time having a structure to life provided by full time work or education can be very positive, however for some it may be draining, overwhelming or stressful."



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.

Demonstrate a clear understanding of mental health and implement proactive solutions rather than reactive solutions.

Create a variety of engaging methods to use in education settings. Worksheets and handouts alone are not sufficient.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Tackle issues around the availability of current support services CAMHS and Steps to Change by creating other services such as 'Wellbeing Hubs'.

Implement new initiatives in education settings such as 'Therapy Dogs' and 'Wellbeing Break-Out Rooms' to cater for a diverse range of young people with emotional outlet needs.

Challenge the views of the older generation around young people and mental health, by implementing training in workplaces that deal with young people. This will allow for more comfortable and meaningful conversations around mental health to take place.

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Be the voice of young people and feedback 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 through continued interactive workshops.

Continue to recruit young people in Lincolnshire to join the LYC as it has been reported by current members to be an enjoyable outlet to apply skills outside of the pressures and demands of school.



PRIORITY 2: STOPPING ABUSE



The LYC has **spoken to over 159 young people in Lincolnshire about Stopping Abuse**. Through conversations, it was **clear that there is both a lack of education and lack of understanding on support services which young people can turn to for support around abuse**. This results in **many young people not seeking help when they, or someone they know are victims of abuse**.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people explained **a fear around reporting crimes of abuse**. Concerns specifically around reporting **cases of abuse where a victim is a friend or someone close to them** was highlighted through conversations:

"Both the Police and support services for victims of abuse need to be more transparent on the process that occurs if you report a crime of abuse. A lot of people including myself would be scared of the process, it would be the biggest thing stopping me getting help."

Through our Stopping Abuse Survey, we found that **Emotional Abuse/ Coercive Control was thought to be the most concerning form of abuse for their peers aged 14-25**. **Over 57% of young people voted Emotional Abuse as the most likely to be suffered by peers** over Physical/Violent abuse, Sexual Abuse, Financial Abuse, Honour Based Abuse or any other not listed:

"We need to talk about healthy boundaries in romantic relationships. Too many young couples are controlling or act 'toxic' with each other."

Conversations suggested that **there needs to be better education on all types of abuse and what behaviours constitute abuse.** In addition, **over 74% of young people** felt that better education could prevent a number of young people turning into perpetrators of abuse in the future:

"We can't fully stop abuse without attacking the root cause. We need to educate from a young age to do this."

"Teach everybody about the signs of abuse as they may not suffer themselves, but they may be able to help someone else who is."

Many young people said a stigma around victims still exists. It was felt that **Male victims of abuse are still rarely spoken about**, and therefore **lacked support in comparison to other victims**:

"As a male myself, I feel whenever we have been taught about abuse in school, they have never used a male victim as an example. There isn't a lot of male representation in abuse cases. It has improved in the past few years but more needs to be done."

"We need to start questioning more openly how males feel and normalise all genders feeling emotions. We need to make it abnormal to not feel emotions!"

"We need to keep the conversation going about victims not being a set type of person. Keep information and awareness out there that ANYONE can be a victim."

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE:

Increase clarity on the process involved in reporting crimes of an abusive nature including how the police protect victims and the support offered to victims.

Clearly communicate the support that male victims reporting abuse are offered.

Highlight ways the police can help young people suffering from emotionally abusive relationships.

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 and 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:

Increase awareness of all types of abuse and promote healthy relationships by utilising social media and educating through peer-led workshops working closely with PCC, Police and Partners.

Continue to be the voice of young people and feedback up to date concerns and ideas relating to 'Stopping Abuse' to the Police and PCC.

Work with the police and PCC to develop a campaign on Stopping Abuse.



PRIORITY 3: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



The LYC has **spoken to over 131 young people** in Lincolnshire about Diversity and Inclusion. It was reported by many young people that the **initial discrimination experienced by ethnic minorities as a result of COVID-19 reported in last year's 'Big Conversation', continues to be a huge issue at present:**

"It seems like limited human interaction over the pandemic has cemented people's discriminatory views and allowed more people to get involved with online abuse."

WHAT WE FOUND

There is a desire by young people, **to see more inclusion and diversity within their communities** by having **festivals or fairs which celebrate different religious days and cultures:**

"The Students Union at the University of Lincoln does an amazing job by creating a variety of events on campus such as dances, cultural and music events. Other schools should learn from this."

"There needs to be more acceptance of different religions and cultures and more collaboration between traditional British culture and the cultures of other individuals who may have moved here for their home."

"Workplaces/ Schools should celebrate religious days or celebrations such as Ramadan etc just as we do Christmas and Easter."

Through conversations with young people across Lincolnshire, it became evident that **there is a clear lack of understanding on types of disabilities**. Many young people **felt that there is a stigma around disabled people being wheelchair users which is not reflective of reality**:

"We should create 'Inclusion Days across Lincolnshire, where young people from all areas of the County in different schools share their story about living with a disability. This way differences can be celebrated and normalised by education on them all."

"As a young person with Cerebral Palsy, I want to encourage more discussions on my disability, as it stops a barrier being created and makes me feel more comfortable. People think that talking about my disability will make me uncomfortable, but it does the opposite and should be encouraged."

It was also found in our Diversity and Inclusion Survey, that **over 70% of young people were not aware of the vast number of protected characteristics that were included in the Equality Act 2010**. Some young people felt **that discrimination against certain groups of people could be reduced if there was greater awareness of what characteristics can be discriminated against under the act**:

"We need compulsory education on diversity and inclusion topics within schools beginning from a young age. Less focus in primary schools on things such as writing in cursive, and more focus on actual issues and topics within our community today. More education leads to more understanding."

"The use of racial, homophobic, ableist remarks is extremely normalised to the point of young children doing it. Make people learn that 'dark humour' is just plain offensive no matter what. Get more people who are included in the discriminated groups and have them (if they are comfortable with it) talk to young people and educate them."

From interacting with young people, it was discovered that **many felt their educational facility or workplace were both inclusive and diverse**. However, **they felt that education settings and employers need to do more to promote and actively demonstrate their diverse workforce**:

"Diversity could be celebrated by ensuring that workplaces recognise key days and months such as black history month, bisexual awareness week, trans visibility day etc."

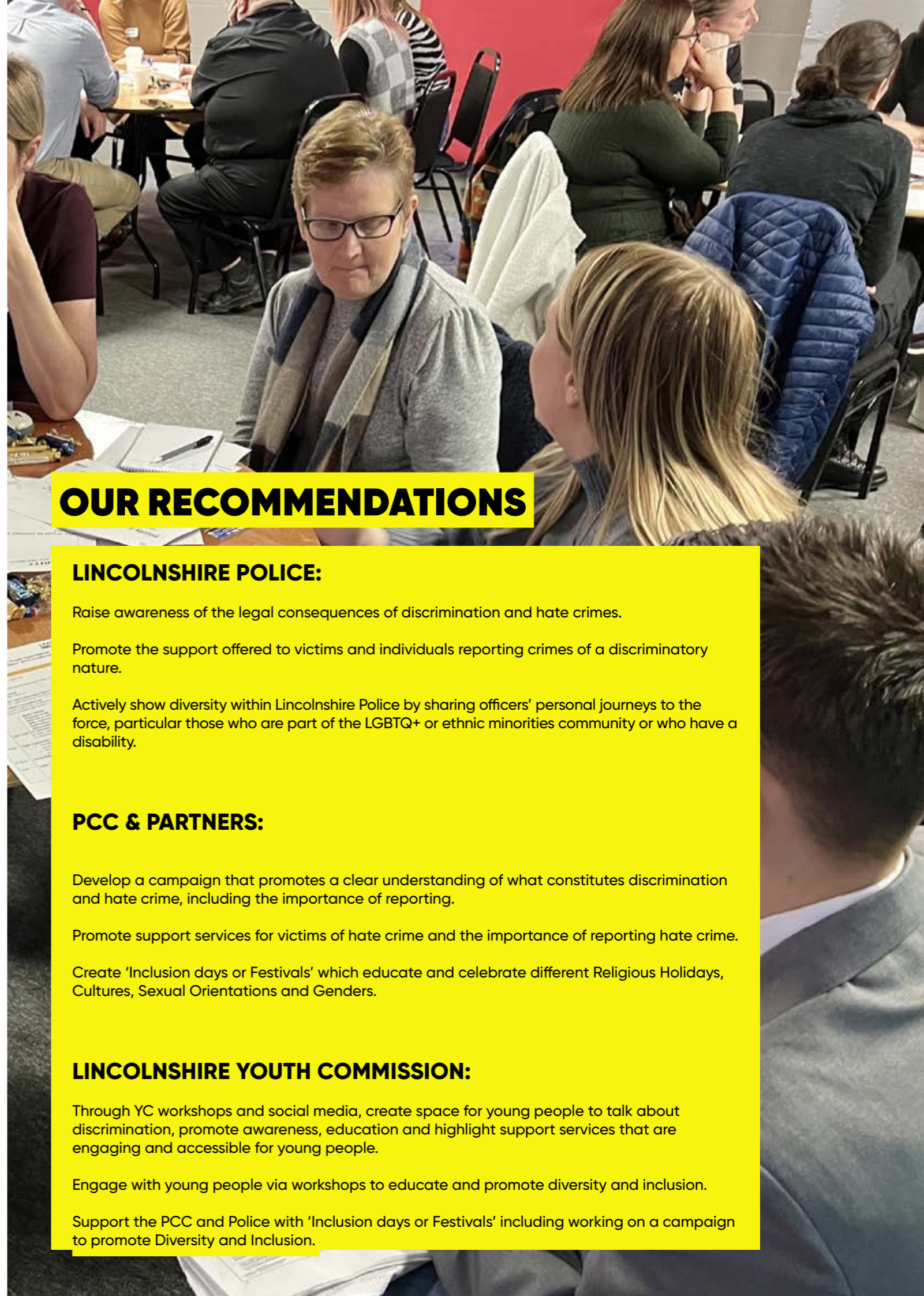
"Hearing from organisations in the community and personal stories from diverse members of their workforce and their journey to the role would be really beneficial to see and would help demonstrating diversity in workforces."

When discussing sexualities and identifiable genders, young people felt that **education settings need to educate on the variety of sexualities and identifiable genders there are in society from a young age**. However, it was felt that **this needs to be done in a way that doesn't make sexualities other than heterosexual feel like a separate or different group of people**:

"Gender identities are still very much discriminated against in society. There are certain social situations where I wouldn't reveal my preferred pronouns."

"People need to try their best to keep to pronouns...make it a thing to say how we all want to be referred to. Accept there is no one way to look at gender."

"In schools don't force pride days onto the cis/straight community it probably annoys them. Just have an open safe space for members of communities where they can celebrate without feeling insecure or shamed."



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE:

Raise awareness of the legal consequences of discrimination and hate crimes.

Promote the support offered to victims and individuals reporting crimes of a discriminatory nature.

Actively show diversity within Lincolnshire Police by sharing officers' personal journeys to the force, particular those who are part of the LGBTQ+ or ethnic minorities community or who have a disability.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Develop a campaign that promotes a clear understanding of what constitutes discrimination and hate crime, including the importance of reporting.

Promote support services for victims of hate crime and the importance of reporting hate crime.

Create 'Inclusion days or Festivals' which educate and celebrate different Religious Holidays, Cultures, Sexual Orientations and Genders.

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Through YC workshops and social media, create space for young people to talk about discrimination, promote awareness, education and highlight support services that are engaging and accessible for young people.

Engage with young people via workshops to educate and promote diversity and inclusion.

Support the PCC and Police with 'Inclusion days or Festivals' including working on a campaign to promote Diversity and Inclusion.



PRIORITY 4: SAFER COMMUNITIES



The LYC has spoken to **over 283 young people in Lincolnshire about Safer Communities**. In continuation of last years project findings, the topic of **streetlights in Lincolnshire not being on long enough when its dark, as well as many areas being poorly lit remained a significant issue**. As a result of this issue, **many young people feel vulnerable when walking alone**.

WHAT WE FOUND

When discussing the topic of Safer Communities in workshops with young people across Lincolnshire there was a consensus **that issues around public transport links across Lincolnshire existed**. This issue was reported **most significant at night**, when there was an **increased absence of reliable and frequent transport links** which have left many young people **in unsafe situations when trying to get home at night**:

"We need to create places that are open late at night such as cafes or other safe spaces. It would help if you found yourself out late at night alone and would give you somewhere that feels safe to wait in."

"There needs to be better transport options to make women feel comfortable."

"Maybe even sorting free scooters that young people can hire dotted around Lincolnshire would be a good solution to transport issues. It would make us feel safer then walking alone and would be eco-friendly."

A number of young people **felt there was not enough Police or PCSO presence in the community**. It was reported that in **Spalding and Spilsby, issues around antisocial behaviour would be alleviated with more visible patrols:**

"There is a bus stop in Spilsby that loads of kids go to round school times. They are really antisocial and break and vandalise things, they also smoke there, and it makes me feel really uncomfortable."

"There are also some really young kids that walk around the streets in Old Leake. They are always acting anti-social and making everyone uncomfortable."

"There needs to be more Police presence in Toynton? there is almost no Police ever round there."

When young people were **asked if the recent increase in reports of spiking in nightclubs made young people more reluctant to go out, over 92%** of young people in the targeted social media poll **voted yes:**

"More needs to be done on the issues of spiking and assault. Clubs and bars should all offer anti-spiking devices even if it means we would have to pay. Having the option to buy reusable cup covers or bottle stops would put many at ease."

"There are venues in Lincoln which need to be investigated as many people have claimed staff allow underage girls in the venue and encourage them to drink. The safest I have ever felt on a night out was when a female bouncer thoroughly searched my entire groups bags before entering the venue. Particularly with the spiking issue this should be encouraged strictly at all venues."

"At the moment there seems to be a lack of consequences for the people that spike others."

A further 64% of young people who took part in a targeted social media campaign further **reported not feeling very safe in the community generally.**

"In the winter around the youth center that I go to, there's never many people around. It's not nice and I know of one child that had to run to and from their kick boxing class because they were so scared."

Many young people also reported **issues around substance abuse amongst young people**. This has meant that **they have felt pressured both online and in-person to drink or experiment with drugs:**

"It is very common for young people to use drugs publicly."

"A lot of young people that live in Birchwood take drugs."

"Peer pressure and cyberbullying is still an issue, we need to make sure all young people are fully aware of e-safety."

One of the biggest concerns around community safety reported by young people was the issues regarding homelessness in Lincoln. It was reported by university students that frequent break-ins to student properties have been thought to be by homeless people. In addition, young people, in general, have reported concerns around homeless people being intoxicated in public and leaving used needles and bloody tissues on the street:

"Regarding the issue of homeless people, I have noticed a lot of human waste and bloody tissues around the areas where the tents are. This makes me feel unsafe in a hygiene sense."

"We need better solutions regarding the issue of homelessness in Lincolnshire. We need to get them off the streets and somewhere safe for them and to make young people feel safer."

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE:

Work alongside PCSOs or organisations such as 'Street Pastors' to patrol streets more regularly at night. On-foot patrols are more approachable, and the visibility reassures many young people.

Work with the PCC and Partner Organisations to tackle the issue of homelessness in Lincolnshire.

Work with PCC and Partner Organisations to tackle issues surrounding cases of spiking in bars and clubs.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Create transport schemes that enable young people to get home safely at night. Develop discount or partnership schemes with education settings that allow a 'pay later' option for taxi services.

Review street lighting across Lincolnshire and assess whether busy student locations could have streetlights on over-night.

Create 'Night Cafes' for young people to access that provide details on transport links and create a safe waiting spot.

Educate young people on night-time safety and hand out free 'drink toppers' or 'cup covers' to use on nights out to protect drinks from spiking.

Create a new campaign to educate young people on the consequences of underage drinking whilst actively combatting issues around peer pressure.

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Work with the Police, PCC and Partners on specific reasons why young people feel unsafe in Lincolnshire.

Raise awareness of how to keep safe during night-time hours including working with partners to highlight support services available such as 'Night Cafes' or Transport Schemes.

Invite guests with 'lived experiences' into YC workshops to talk about their drink or drugs story and how it affected their lives and those around them.



PRIORITY 5: EXPLOITATION & VIOLENCE AFFECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



The LYC has spoken to **over 114 young people in Lincolnshire about Exploitation and Violence Affecting Children and Young People**. It was found that there is a **significant misunderstanding around the meaning of exploitation** and what actions constitute exploitation. This means that **a large number of young people are at risk of being exploited in Lincolnshire** due to a **lack of understanding** that they may be a victim.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people reported fear as the biggest barrier to reporting crime, in particular crimes involving violence:

"Fear is one of my biggest barriers in my opinion, people are scared that their situation will become worse as the police cannot always provide protection straight away."

"A big barrier is fear. If they speak about it they might fear what their abuser will do when they find out. There is also a barrier of not being believed."

"They might feel that if they report issues then they might become a target."

"We need to teach children how to report crimes and make the process for a victim transparent so it's not scary."

An alarming number of **young people in our workshops admitted to carrying a knife**, due to **feeling at risk of being a victim of a violent attack** from other young people in rival postcode areas:

"There is a real postcode problem with LN2 and LN5. It is a problem that lasts until you turn 18 then it just stops."

"It is known that if you are in year 7 you are safe from being attacked as you are deemed too young. However, as soon as you hit year 8 anyone is a target if you are from the opposite postcode. I know a girl from the other postcode that would hide in bushes and jump out and attack people from the other postcode."

"I feel safe when I have my knife with me."

"If we had the chance to do free self-defence classes it might help some of us feel safer and feel able to protect ourselves if needed in a way that abides by the law and stops us carrying weapons."

A number of young people in workshops across Lincolnshire **felt that in their areas there was a lack of paid opportunities for young people who are legally allowed to work**.

"There are no jobs out there for young people aged 14-17."

"Maybe look at creating schemes within schools and colleges where you can make money at school for a small income and only allocate those roles to the younger students at that school."

Young people felt that a **lack of paid work opportunities could be a key reason** why young people **turn to criminal activity as a form of income**.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE:

Increase transparency on the whole process when reporting a crime.

Demonstrate the ways in which victims of violence can access support services or the police directly.

Work with young people in the community to find ways to tackle the issue surrounding postcode rivalry.

Work with LYC members and Partners to educate young people on the legal consequences of carrying a weapon or being with someone carrying a weapon.

Work with LYC members and Partners to educate young people on what exploitation is and how to recognise the signs.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Pilot 'Amnesty Bins' in the LN2 and LN5 areas of Lincoln, where knife carrying is reported most, with a view to installing them across the County following the pilot.

Consider offering 'Self-Defence Classes' as free after school clubs for young people to find alternative ways of feeling safe other than carrying weapons.

Work with the LYC members and Police to create a campaign to educate young people on how to report crimes and the support services available throughout the process.

Inject funds into creating a Countywide recruitment drive for young people in Lincolnshire, for paid employment opportunities, to tackle the issue of young people turning to crime as a source of income.

LINCOLNSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Work with the Police to create a campaign to educate young people on how to report crimes and feedback any specific concerns young people have around reporting crime in Lincolnshire.

Invite guests with lived experiences of knife crime into YC workshops to share their story and how it has affected their lives and those around them.

Raise awareness of what exploitation is whilst working with police and partners to highlight hot spots as well as promoting the support services available.



PRIORITY 6: YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE POLICE



The LYC has spoken to **over 236 young people in Lincolnshire** about Young People and their Relationship with the Police. As highlighted in last year's project, **the tragic murder of Sarah Everard continues to have a significant impact on the way young people view the police and the confidence they place in them.** Young people felt it is **paramount that Lincolnshire Police actively demonstrate that not all officers are bad, and that they can be trusted.**

"You need to show us you're not ALL bad. Make us feel safe. Go above and beyond to show us that you can be trusted, and above all don't generalise all young people and treat us as your equals. I'm sure you will not only get a lot more compliance but also respect from the younger generation if you take this on board."

WHAT WE FOUND

Over half of the young people spoken to in the project reported **not being aware of their 'Stop and Search' rights** when interacting with the Police. If there was **better education for young people around this topic, it may reduce hostility if searched and reduce any feeling of fear or vulnerability by young people in the process.**

Young people in Lincolnshire felt that Lincolnshire Police don't try to bond with them in the community regularly. This means that **many young people only interact with the Police if they are suspected of doing something wrong.**

In our Relationships with the Police Survey, **over 82% of young people** reported **never having a positive interaction with a Police officer in Lincolnshire.**

"We should create more ways that young people can interact with the Police in the community to start building relationships. This could be through police boxes or having mini police working in schools."

"A lot of us have an overall good impression of Lincolnshire Police, the only issue is we want the chance to continue to have that view and share it with other young people. Currently there isn't always a lot of opportunities to do this."

"As a university student, more opportunities to talk to or interact with the police through visits would be welcome."

Conversations with young people revealed that many felt the Police still have stereotypes of young people as 'bad'. Young people feel this **largely impacts the current relationship** and interactions between Police and themselves:

"Being a teenager myself, people view us as thugs. But not all of us are like that and we're all grouped into one."

"You cannot just expect respect or trust from young people, these are EARNED. You need to build up relationships within the community. Young people are so important because we are the future of the community. Invest in them, support them, and truly value their thoughts and opinions."

"Police need to approach young people with a totally different attitude, have training with regards to hidden disability and problems such as ADHD and tics. Do not judge and discriminate against teenagers not wanting us around."

When discussing personal interactions and first-hand experiences in workshops with young people, those who had previously **made reports around sexual harassment/assault felt that the police did not take them seriously**. This has led to a number of young people **losing confidence in the police and has put them off seeking help in the future**:

"I spoke to someone involved with the police not long ago and over the phone she was quite rude, and nothing actually happened with the crime I reported. They make you feel like what happens to you isn't important."

"It makes you feel unprotected and worthless."

"They should try to empathise more with the victim and let them know where to go to for support rather than trying to dismiss them and play it off as nothing."

Young people in our survey **reported the media's representation of the police as impacting their own views more than anything else**, with over 65.9% voting Media over Personal Experiences (47.6%), Views of Family and Friends (35.4%), Films and TV (15.9%) and Social Media (25.6%):

"I don't think the media supports the police in the way that they should. the media are responsible for a lot of the public mistrust in the police."

"The media has absolutely abolished getting the word out about the amazing work that the Police do. I love the Police as both my parents are/were Police. It's hard to communicate the amount of absolute rubbish the Police put up with and the genuine incredible work they do."

Young people felt that **to help counteract the negative media on the Police, that Lincolnshire police should use platforms such as TikTok to show the positive work they are doing**. TikTok was **favoured by many as it is currently the most used and most engaging platform for this**.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE:

Reach out to young people in the community through face-to-face engagement and social media platforms such as TikTok, this will promote the police as being approachable and not to be feared.

Offer opportunities such as work experiences to allow greater exposure to what the positive work police do.

Increasing transparency on the process once a crime has been reported. This will help break down the fear barrier and allow young people to see that their reports are documented and taken seriously.

Work with LYC members to help educate young people on their 'Stop and Search Rights'.

Work alongside partners to tackle issues around sexual assault and harassment and share the support available to victims.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Promote the Youth Commission's social media as a safe space for young people to communicate regularly with the police and PCC on issues concerning young people.

Work with the police to promote work experience opportunities for young people to engage with the police.

Work with the police to arrange regular officer visits in local schools. Also, consider the creation of 'Get to know your officer scheme' where a diverse number of officers attend local community centres and hold Q & A sessions for young people once a month.

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 YC priority themed meetings with key police officers to discuss up to date concerns and ideas for joint action 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 peer-led project and we are thankful for the dedication they have shown throughout, with many members travelling across the county to deliver workshops to young people. We would also like to give our thanks to all of the local partners who have been involved in this project in allowing us to work with their young people.

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 are extremely grateful for the opportunities we have had to engage with diverse young people in Lincolnshire. It is our hope that this is only the beginning, and that we can continue to reach out to young people from all different backgrounds and continue to provide a platform to have their views, experiences and recommendations for change heard.

The Lincolnshire Youth Commission members will also be a critical element in supporting the PCC, Lincolnshire Police, partners and young people across the county in developing the recommendations that have been set out in this report.

TESTIMONIALS

"Hearing the voice of young people and their recommendations for change has been really insightful, it has helped us to better understand the experience of young people in communities across Lincolnshire. The recommendations and learning will be taken on by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as our partner agencies, who have complimented the feedback and want to continue to hear the voice of young people to shape their work."

Phil Clark, Deputy PCC

"I am very proud of the work undertaken by the youth commission, and the very insightful ideas and opinions that they have presented. It can be difficult to know and understand the concerns of young people in a rapidly changing society, but the scope and breadth undertaken by the young people involved in this work is nothing short of remarkable. They have given a number of our partners and I some really challenging things to consider when we make our plans for ensuring that Lincolnshire is as safe as could be. I have also had the very real privilege of discussing findings with some members of the commission, and their passion and very tight focus on making Lincolnshire a better place to live absolutely shone through. I commend this work to anyone working in Lincolnshire as an essential piece of understanding for our county."

Chris Davison, (Temporary Assistant Chief Constable)

"My name is Lara, I am 22 years old, studying Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Lincoln, and I have been with the Lincolnshire Youth Commission for 2 years now. I joined the Youth Commission because I wanted to help make a difference in our community, to help young people feel safer and to address the issues that young people face through spreading awareness and giving them an opportunity to share their concerns about our community. Working on this project has been extremely rewarding and eye-opening as we have spoken to lots of young people across Lincolnshire who all have different views and experiences. I hope that from this project we will be able to create a safer community for young people together, which enables and encourages young people to speak out, be heard and come together to support one another."

Lara Sweetin, Youth Commission Member

"I am one of many that stayed in the Youth Commission for another year, I can see a massive change now that restrictions were lifted and we can feel more free. I feel that the Youth Commission is more prepared now that we have all faced the tough year stuck inside and now we can start working together in person to motivate more change in Lincolnshire. I want the Youth Commission to be listened to and taken seriously. I hope we can really make a change in Lincolnshire and we want to see that change so we can be proud. Hopefully, we can make Lincolnshire a place where people can feel more safe and listened to. I also hope that the Youth Commission is able to stay for many more years as we as young people bond really well and understand local problems and crimes that Lincolnshire people fear."

Ollie White, Youth Commission Member

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