



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

FINAL REPORT TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

JULY 2022



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INTRODUCTION

The **Nottinghamshire Youth Commission (NYC)** was established in **2015** with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Caroline Henry.

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

The key objectives of the Notts Youth Commission 2021–2022 were as follows:

- **Recruit young people** from a diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences.
- Work with NYC members to identify the **key priority topics** they wanted to tackle this year.
- Equip the NYC members with the **practical skills training** required for the role.
- **Plan and deliver 2,000 conversations** with young people from across Nottinghamshire during the NYC Big Conversation.
- **Present the NYC findings and recommendations** at the Nottinghamshire Youth Commission 'Big Conversation' conference to the PCC, Nottinghamshire Police, and partner agencies.
- **Work closely with Nottinghamshire Police** to provide NYC members opportunities to influence police strategies and decision-making.

The Nottinghamshire Youth Commission is facilitated by **Leaders Unlocked**, a social enterprise that has successfully delivered the Youth Commission peer-led model across 14 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 and influence 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 workshops. The NYC has exceeded its target by reaching **2,100 young people** from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in the last year. The responses have been gathered in youth-led engagement events and workshops, targeted surveys, and social media campaigns.

The report allocates each priority its own section, which 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.

This report is intended to be a genuine, independent record of what young people have told us through the NYC 'Big Conversation'. It is hoped that the work of the NYC will be the basis for future actions by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottinghamshire Police and relevant partner agencies.



ABOUT THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION

The NYC focuses on giving young people a stronger voice in raising policing and crime issues within their local communities. The NYC works closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to challenge and inform the work of the PCC and Nottinghamshire Police.

The NYC members engage with young people through **peer-led workshops** that provide a safe space to comfortably share and speak confidently to peers. All the responses gathered during the Big Conversation are analysed by the NYC 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 NYC'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 issues in their communities. This approach allows for more honest information to be collected.

WHAT WE DID THIS YEAR

RECRUITMENT

In 2021, Leaders Unlocked carried out a 2-stage recruitment process. This included distributing an easy-to-access recruitment pack which included an application form and information relating to the role. The second stage was to conduct telephone interviews with applicants. This process has been made possible by working proactively with local organisations from education settings, youth organisations and the voluntary sector. Our aim is to ensure that the NYC members are true representatives of their communities by location, background, and life experience.

Our current members:

- **47% identify as female, 33% male,**
- **47% are under 18 years old**
- **11% identify as having a disability**
- **40% Identify as from BAME communities**
- **58% are in Education**
- **7% have experience with the CJS**
- **7% are looked after children**

IDENTIFYING PRIORITY ISSUES

The NYC's inaugural meeting focused on members discussing **key issues and research ideas** for the next phase of the project. NYC members decided to focus on the following key priorities:

- **Relationships and Online Safety**
- **Offensive Weapons**
- **Night Time Safety**
- **Relationships Between Young People and the Police**

CREATING THE TOOLS FOR THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION

During the second members meetings, **NYC members co-designed workshops** and actively demonstrated how these workshops would run. NYC members also took part in **team-building exercises, interactive workshops and presented their plans**. These meetings gave the members the opportunity to:

- **Develop Big Conversation workshops**
- **Design materials for the workshops**
- **Practice presentation skills**
- **Identify key organisations where the Big Conversation should take place**
- **Learn new leadership skills**
- **Become a cohesive team of young leaders**

The NYC members have **received training for their role** and have developed their **active listening techniques, facilitation, and leadership skills** throughout the project.

For the purpose of data collection, the NYC members created **postcards** to collate information for their research. The postcard shows each priority that the NYC was collecting responses on, allowing young people to provide their opinions on all priorities regardless of the workshop they were attending. The postcards have highlighted real-life opinions and experiences that young people have faced but may feel uncomfortable discussing. The postcards are designed so that **they remain anonymous**, with the name of the individual not requested.



JOINT WORK WITH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE

This year the NYC has worked with Nottinghamshire police to further develop and embed their close relationship. This includes the continuation of our successful work with the Early Intervention Schools team, where NYC members had the opportunity to share the topics they are focusing on. The NYC has also been regularly attending Online Community Dialog meetings to share positive and negative interactions with the police, allowing members of the NYC to share ideas to increase positive perceptions and to share their experiences with new police recruits.

This year, the Notts YC had an opportunity to be part of the Police People's Panel for the recruitment of a new superintendent. This provided a Notts YC member to pose a question to each of the candidates and provide feedback after each one.

AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS

Nottinghamshire Youth Commission was nominated for the **Community Organisation Award for Age at The National Diversity Awards 2022**

This year the NYC have worked with the Violence Reduction Unit creating ways both organisations can work more closely together.

The NYC have also worked closely with SEIO to engage and deliver workshops to a wider range of young people in education across Nottinghamshire.

WHO WE'VE REACHED

The NYC has actively engaged with over **2,100 young people** across Nottingham. In total, the NYC ran **57 events** in a wide range of localities across the city and county.

This year, the NYC focused on delivering targeted workshops to engage with young people from alternative education, young people with experience of the criminal justice system and young people with disabilities.

Priority	Responses
Relationships and online safety	189
Offensive weapons	1,116
Night-Time Safety	465
Relationships Between Young People and The Police	330
Grand Total	2,100
Total	2,100

OUR PARTNERS

NYC members are very grateful to everyone who has supported us by allowing the members into their organisations, and would like to **say a very big thank you to the following** organisations:

Billborough College	Nottingham Youth Justice Service
Djanogly City Academy	Nottingham and Nottinghamshire VRU
High Pavement Sixth Form	Nottingham College
Inspire and Achieve	Nottingham Mencap
IMARA Trust	Nottinghamshire Police

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

Amarveer Singh Johal	Zara Samy
Amba Sharma	Hannah Fabiyi
Bailey Bowles	Jamie Lea Best
Beckham Ali	Jessie Bostock
Samuel Halliday	Karamveer Singh Johal
Simran Uppal	Romilly James
Callum Parr	Kathrine Tremayne
Erika Fernandez	Lizzy Gadriner
Ester Nunez-Lopez	Marisa Onarati
Grace Dougall	Muhammad Yasir Al-Fateh Abdul
Owen Brindley	Shivali Sharma

A special thank you also goes to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and Nottinghamshire Police, who have worked closely with the NYC throughout this project.

A final thanks to this year's Coordinator Kelese Hyacinth who was instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.





PRIORITY 1: RELATIONSHIPS & ONLINE SAFETY



The NYC has spoken to **189 young people** on Relationships and Online Safety. Since the pandemic young people have increased the number of hours they spend on social media, with more and more people looking towards the internet to meet people in the hopes of starting a romantic connection. The NYC set out to build upon the work on KYMS game on Abuse to understand from young people how safe they felt being online and to raise awareness on how abuse can manifest online.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people in Nottinghamshire stated that they did not always feel safe when accessing social media, with one of the reasons being that fake profiles are increasing across different social media platforms. Young people said they don't think social media companies are tackling the issue when it comes to reporting and taking action:

"I have reported lots of accounts in the past and never get a follow-up from any of the platforms"

"Social media services have a reputation of never doing anything about it, what's the point in making the report if nothing's gonna happen as a result of it"

"I think the two biggest issues with social media are that everyone has access to it and that the reporting process and just reporting things is not clearly stated and outlined"

In addition, young people told us that they have been groomed online or made to feel uncomfortable. Some reported receiving harassment from other people online, particularly when on social media platforms:

"I think a child and adult, or any person should be able to feel safe and comfortable online without having to worry about weirdos harassing them and texting"

"I have had people add me on Snapchat before and asked if I wanted to work for them and make some money"

"Social media is a big role in grooming young people"

When it comes to reporting fake accounts or harassment online, young people noted that social media platforms don't make it clear where they can report accounts or raise causes of concern when messaging other people. Young people identified that social media platform does not raise a lot of awareness of support services:

"The correct support services and reporting system should be clearer online its important as if it's not it can lead to worse consequences."

"Social media needs to be able to get rid of fake accounts, burner accounts and catfishes"

"I think the two biggest issues with social media are that everyone has access to it and that the reporting process and just reporting things is not clearly stated and outlined"

Dating apps are becoming increasingly popular within all age demographics, particularly among younger people. They told us that dating apps are very easy to sign up for and that there needs to be more ways that dating apps authenticate someone's age before someone signs up:

"Dating apps should do more thorough checks on people before they are allowed to sign up"

"They should ask for proof of your age, like ask for an ID picture with your age on instead of you just putting a random age and the website believing it"

Following this, young people would like to see stricter guidelines when online, with parents acknowledging their child's online use and signing off on websites before children can access them on their devices:

"I believe that parents who have children that can access the internet should be aware of what their children are doing and who they are speaking to"

"I think that parents should check apps before letting the children on them because any adults can contact them and message them about anything"

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE:

Share positive outcomes of cases to make people aware of the punishments that can be received when committing online crimes or relationship abuse.

Promote the seriousness of issues around unhealthy relationships and online crimes and how to report them.

Engage with the community on how they can keep safe online and share current scams.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Work with organisations and local projects to design online safety campaigns to encourage young people to look out for red flags and the dangers of social media.

Work with families and support services to raise awareness of healthy relationships and promote safe online guidelines.

Local authorities should promote online safety to young people within educational settings and promote how young people can report suspicious behaviours.

YOUTH COMMISSION:

Develop workshops that focus on delivering clear guidance to young people on healthy relationships and online safety.

Work with support services to raise awareness of support, healthy relationships and of how to stay safe online.

Work with police officers on a campaign to promote healthy relationships online.



PRIORITY 2: OFFENSIVE WEAPONS



The NYC has spoken to **1,116 young people** in Nottinghamshire relating to Offensive Weapons. Young people have raised concerns about how accessible offensive weapons are and called for stricter regulations. Young people identified that those from deprived areas are at higher risk of becoming involved in gangs and violent crimes. The NYC identified recommendations which will be used to inform decision-makers and tackle offensive weapons and violent crimes.

WHAT WE FOUND

The NYC identified that young people feel fearful and scared with some alternatively carrying weapons for protection and not knowing how to report to the police without putting themselves at risk, either being called a snitch or being prosecuted:

"There is too many young people carrying weapons around the streets"

"Protect the public so they don't need to protect themselves"

Although young people told us that their perception of the police is that they felt the police didn't take young people seriously when reporting a crime, however, they did say that they felt that the community policing approach works better in deprived areas:

"The police don't seem to take young people serious when they report crimes, they always think we are joking around"

"Police should help out in my area, there are many issues happening"

Young people told us they were unaware of available support and wanted to know more about how to access support services that can help move away from crime which included knowing where to hand in any offensive weapons without the fear of getting into trouble:

"More support services need to be advertised to young people so they can get support"

"Young people are too scared to talk about knife crime or report it because they are scared, they are going to get in trouble"

"Not enough talk about what if you do have a knife"

We found that a lot of young people do not feel safe in their area and have heard about gang-related issues in their community. They said they wanted more communication on how the police are going to protect them.

"I don't feel fully safe in my area, I have heard about knife crime & gang-related issues"

I don't feel safe travelling at night/in the dark"

"It would be nice to see more police officers walking around the area who are actually friendly and look like us it would make us feel more safe and also comfortable"

When we asked young people about the role stop and search plays in reducing weapons, we found that many minority groups felt they had been targeted and felt disproportionately stopped and searched, causing distrust and negative perceptions between minority communities and the police:

"Stop targeting minorities for stop & searches. It's discriminating and police aren't getting harsh enough"

"Reduce profiling within stop and search, focus on helping the kids stay safe. Reform > punishment"

"STOP targeting minorities, the system is set up to fail minorities"

"People don't get searched enough – happens to too many innocent people"

Throughout the big conversation, young people told us that the lack of things to do in the area was one of the key reasons they believe young people became involved in crime, especially in deprived areas:

"The government need to spend money on the youth and do more youth programs to help get them off the streets and offer them opportunities and jobs, we have nothing to do"

"Vulnerable people are more prone to carry weapons. It's built into society as poverty is everywhere. Poverty = need for money = gang activity = deaths & injuries. Education. Funding to community, complete reform of society"

"We need more youth clubs, my youth club only opens Wednesday-Friday, and it closes at 8:30pm, it's rubbish to be honest"

Young people expressed that they wanted to see tighter regulation of the sale of offensive weapons, as they are too accessible with little age authentication when purchasing online from unregulated websites:

"Certain weapons that can be harmful should not be so accessible they should only be able to be purchased in shops where people need to have a special license"

"Everyone who purchases an offensive weapon should be checked for I.D and it should be noted of who has purchased what item"

"I believe it should be harder to get weapons for everyone, increase verification needs for purchasing"

"Knife crime has always been a prevalent in my area – I have been threatened with knife crime before during a hate crime. Knowing knives are less accessible to young people would make me feel safer"



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE:

Increases community policing with a focus on **approachability** to help build better **relationships with young people who will feel more comfortable when reporting a crime.**

Attend **informal events** to make the community aware of the local neighbourhood team.

Promote how young people and the wider community can access local support including knife bins.

Increases awareness of **Scrutiny panels** and invite the Youth Commission members to look at stop and search data and statistics.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Work with support services and local education settings to **increase awareness of schemes like weapon amnesties** and where they can go for support.

Promote support organisations that **work with victims and families who have been impacted by offensive weapons.**

Local authorities should **implement more street lighting** to increase feeling of safety and to **discourage Anti-Social Behaviour**

YOUTH COMMISSION:

Deliver workshops focusing on **how young people can be diverted away from committing these offenses.**

Work with the PCC and the Violent Reduction Unit on a campaign to raise awareness of **diversion away from offensive weapons** and where you go for support.

Invite **officers into workshops** to have informal conversations with young people and to share the work they are doing around offensive weapons.



PRIORITY 3: NIGHT-TIME SAFETY



The NYC has spoken **to 465 young people** in Nottinghamshire relating to Night-time Safety. Young people have raised concerns about feeling safe during the night and when travelling alone using public transport. The NYC identified recommendations to work towards creating safer environments for young people.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people said that they don't feel safe late at night, one of the main reasons for this is the reduced number of regular transport options, with some young people deciding to walk home after a night out. The NYC identified that there needs to be a greater focus on public transport:

"There should be more tram, bus and police inspectors at later times (especially when it's dark) instead of having a big group in the day."

Young people expressed to us that there needs to be more cameras and brighter lights at night, especially in dark alleyways and poorly lit streets because those areas feel most unsafe and dangerous:

"There needs to be more police presence at night-time and cameras should cover all areas, also street-lights need to be brighter and in dark places like alleyways"

When we asked young people why they were reluctant to report crimes they said that they felt like nothing will be done and that issues such as sexual harassment or spiking reports aren't being taken seriously:

"I have been followed countless amounts of times, I have been catcalled and threatened to be killed if I didn't talk to this man, I have been sexually harassed a lot. Stop victim-blaming, it doesn't matter what you're wearing"

"I have had my drink spiked before and nothing was done about it when I reported it to the police"

Through our peer-led research, when we asked young people about how they felt bars and nightclubs could be held to account. Young people stated they want more scrutiny and increase protection within bars and nightclubs:

Security, regular staff to ask if you're okay, more CCTV, less blind-spots if there are any, less biased bouncers" etc.

"Bouncers should all be first aid trained"

"Charts on toilets to show different colours of drinks that have been spiked"

Young people told us that there are significant problems within the night-time economy in clubs and bars, such as drink spiking and needle spiking, catcalling and sexual harassment towards both men and women with women being significantly targeted.

"I've been catcalled a few times and it was absolutely terrifying, especially when there's no one around to tell? So more police stationed around would make me feel safer"

"I've been screamed at, shouted at, catcalled, flashed by a group of men, snogged by a random man, shoved to the floor by a man I hadn't even seen... and this is relatively normal for a woman my age. No, I don't feel safe going out at night time"

"Have systems in place where someone in danger can report, then can quickly get evacuated while the accused is apprehended"

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE:

Ensure young people's concerns regarding feeling safe at night **are listened to and respond with respect and care.**

Work with the Youth Commission to create a **night-time safety campaign.**

PCC & PARTNERS:

Work with partners involved in the **night-time economy, including affected communities, to make Nottinghamshire streets, bars and nightclubs safer.**

Work with the police to create **'safe zones' for young people to go at night when they feel at risk or vulnerable and promote these in bars and clubs.**

Work with **night-time industry partners** to ensure staff are properly trained, are alert to perpetrators, and can identify those who are at risk or need medical assistance.

Work with local authorities **to resource night-time safety such as cameras, brighter streetlights, and an increase in public transport at night.**

YOUTH COMMISSION:

Work with the PCC and the police to deliver **a campaign with the key message of staying safe at night.**

Invite police officers with experience working at night into workshops to discuss what you can do if you feel at risk, especially when out at night.

Raise awareness of national and local support services young people can access and encourage reporting of incidents to police.



PRIORITY 4: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE & THE POLICE



The NYC has spoken to **330 young people** in Nottinghamshire relating to Relationships between Young People and the Police. Young people have raised issues about the history of poor and negative relationships police have had with young people and are concerned on the impact on this has on positive perceptions. The NYC identified through young people's suggestions how the police can increase positive presence using social media and improved communication with the community.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people expressed feeling that they don't know the police well enough and don't feel comfortable around them, and said they feel police are not approachable, friendly, or trustworthy:

"We don't really know the police; they don't talk to people unless there's a bad situation"

"I don't trust the police because they are rude and don't look like kind people, they need to look more friendly and look like they don't care"

"Police often seem to view young people as criminals. They are guilty until proven innocent. It should be the other way around. Young people are also nervous around the police. Police should be more friendly and approachable. Young people should also be taught how to respectfully converse with police"

Young people perceived that the police abuse their power, especially towards those from ethnic minority communities, as they often felt racially targeted and mistreated by the police:

"Police create feelings of fear, not safety. They don't seem competent with technology. How can we trust 1 police officer if we can't trust all of them"

"Police over the last decade have been seen as an oppressive force that cares more about arrest than the people they're supposed to be protecting"

From young people, we understand when positive perceptions of the police are shared on social media this helps young people to build better trust and relationships with the police. However, they also mentioned that negative perceptions of the police are influenced by social media:

"Don't understand everything that they do in order to protect people"

"TV programmes put the police in a good light but as perceived poorly by the younger people because the tv programmes are not created in a way that promotes the police into a good light"

"It's popular to hate the police, and with social media kids only see bad police being heavy-handed or breaking the rules, they don't see the good side of law enforcement"

Throughout our peer-led research, young people said that historical negative views of police officers have been built up over time and that this needs to change. Young people and the police need to work on building a positive relationship with young people:

"Highlight times the police have been helpful in situations. Have workshops for students to know their rights in relation to the police"

"More awareness on events the police are doing within the community (opens days, youth events, supporting community events)"

"Utilise social media to spread awareness on the positive work the police are doing within the community"

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE:

Be more approachable, get to know young people in the community and allow **young people to become familiar with local officers**.

Increase **police presence on the streets**, especially in high crime areas.

Police need to have a **friendly face and be able to** address people's **individual needs in their local area**.

Raise awareness of **diversity within the police force** and promote a **better understanding of their role** and how young people especially from ethnic minorities can join the force.

PCC & PARTNERS:

Fund community events aimed at building a better relationship between young people and the Police in **deprived areas**. **These can be themed around food, music and cultural activities**.

Run campaigns to encourage more young people from **diverse backgrounds** to join the **police force and share** stories about a day in the life of an officer.

Ensure police training focuses on **better treatment** towards **minority groups, travelling communities** and those from the **LGBTQ+ community**. This needs to include people skills training and positive **communication with young people**.

YOUTH COMMISSION:

Work with the **police on initiatives and campaigns** that involve them sharing insight and information that helps to keep the community and young people safe.

Invite police to attend Youth Commission workshops to introduce themselves and the role they do, answer questions, and discuss topics such as Stop & Search.

Work with the police to develop positive stories and outcomes on social media **to increase young people's perceptions of the police**.

CONCLUSION: TAKING THINGS FORWARD



The NYC members have worked extremely hard and we are thankful for all the dedication they have shown.

We are also extremely grateful to all the local partners who have been involved in making this piece of work a success.

We are excited to build our relationships with the Violence Reduction Unit and work with Nottinghamshire Police to enable positive relationships between the NYC, Nottinghamshire PCC and Nottinghamshire Police.

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

TESTIMONIALS

"This year I have really enjoyed becoming more involved and helping to facilitate workshops and getting to meet more young people who are also like minded. I enjoyed the Community Dialog meetings sharing my own experiences with having a disability and my relationship with the police and how my wider community is impacted by police presence. I am looking forward to the next steps"

Owen Brindley, Notts YC member

"It is very good and well organised, public speaking is my thing, hopefully there will be more conferences like this. I feel it makes a difference to the young people of Nottinghamshire. We need to meet more and look at these subjects (talking about safety) in further detail, more deeply."

Joe, Notts YC member

"Growing up I have learnt that if there are issues that concern you, you should use your voice to bring attention to them and get involved in campaigns/activities to make a difference. I joined the Nottinghamshire Youth Commission three years ago because as a young person I am aware of the problems that my peers face, and I wanted to be part of the solution in addressing the problems so that young people don't get involved in knife crime or drugs. I have really enjoyed working with the team to research the issues that mattered most to young people, and then disseminating that material 1) to people in power like the Police Commissioner and Police, but also to young people via workshops. The Commission also allowed me to have my voice heard, but most importantly the voice of young people in Nottinghamshire by those in power"

Karamveer Singh Johal, Notts YC member

"Joining the Youth Commission was a way for me to make a difference. It was challenging juggling the research and engagement work of the Commission, but I think that the trust in us young people to lead on workshops, do research and then advise the Police and Police Commissioner what to do was very rewarding. Young people can really make a difference and improve our communities"

Amarveer Singh Johal, Notts YC member

"It has been a rewarding experience for our members to contribute to the wider conversations being had in the community on the safety of young people. Nottingham Mencap feels that the voice of people with learning disability and autism needs to be heard and their opinions and solutions to be taken seriously. We feel the Commission has worked in an inclusive and equitable way to ensure the voices of all young people are listened to and team were excellent at bringing out the best in all the young people they worked with, supporting them to contribute to the discussion on community safety. We hope we can continue to work with the commission in the future as the process and outcomes are valuable for the contributors, the police, and the wider community."

Karen Aspley, Mencap

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