



CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION

**FINAL REPORT TO THE POLICE
AND CRIME COMMISSIONER 2023**

NOVEMBER 2023



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INTRODUCTION

The Cheshire Youth Commission (CYC) was established in 2016 with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), John Dwyer.

The CYC is a peer-led project that is made up of **32 active members from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences**. The Commission enables young people living in Cheshire aged 14–25 to have a voice on emerging issues around policing and crime.

The key objectives of the Commission are as follows:

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

The Cheshire Youth Commission is facilitated by Leaders Unlocked, a social enterprise which has successfully delivered the Youth Commission peer-led model across 16 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 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 Cheshire Youth Commission (CYC) has spoken to **1,400 young people** from across Cheshire this 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 CYC 'Big Conversation'. It is hoped that the work of the CYC will support and provide a basis for future actions by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Police and relevant partner agencies.

ABOUT THE CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION

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

The CYC 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 CYC 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 CYC'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 2023 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 CYC members are true representatives of their communities by location, background, and life experience.

Our current members:

- **70% identify as female**
- **30% identify as male**
- **25% are part of the LGBTQ+ community**
- **75% are under 18 years old**
- **21% identify as having a disability**
- **15% identify as from BAME communities**
- **90% are in Education**
- **6% have experience with the CJS**
- **3% are looked after children**

IDENTIFYING PRIORITY ISSUES

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

- 1. Hate Crime**
- 2. Online Safety**
- 3. Community Safety**
- 4. Relationships with the Police**

CREATING THE TOOLS FOR THE CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION

During the second members' meeting, **CYC members co-designed workshops** and took an active lead in running activities on the day. This included **team building exercises, designing interactive workshops and presenting their plans**. The meeting 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 could take place**
- **Learn new leadership skills**
- **Become a cohesive team of young leaders**

The CYC 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 CYC members created **postcards** to collect relevant information for their research. The postcard shows each priority that the CYC collected 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 openly discussing. They are designed so that participants **remain anonymous**, with the name of the individual not requested.

JOINT WORK WITH THE CHESHIRE POLICE

This year the CYC has worked with Cheshire Constabulary to further develop and embed their close relationship. This has included the continuation of our successful Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG) during which CYC members regularly meet with the PCC's office, Cheshire Constabulary and Partners to make suggestions and develop their understanding of policing and support services across the region. This year's YIAGs have included the following topics:

- **Safer Streets campaign**
- **Raising awareness of the Hollie Guard App**
- **Serious violence duty**
- **Equality and Disability**

As part of the CYC Community Safety priority, the CYC social media has supported and promoted the **Hollie Guard app** which enables young people and women to feel safer on the streets while walking alone.

Youth Ambassadors have been established in each region of Cheshire where CYC members have been designated a Police force to begin their working relationship with local policing units. This year members from Macclesfield and Runcorn had the opportunity to speak to their local officers about local policing matters.

The CYC members were also invited to attend **Chester Pride** by the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner to walk alongside the Cheshire Police force and given the opportunity during the event to engage with other young people and share their experiences with the Police and Hate Crime.

AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

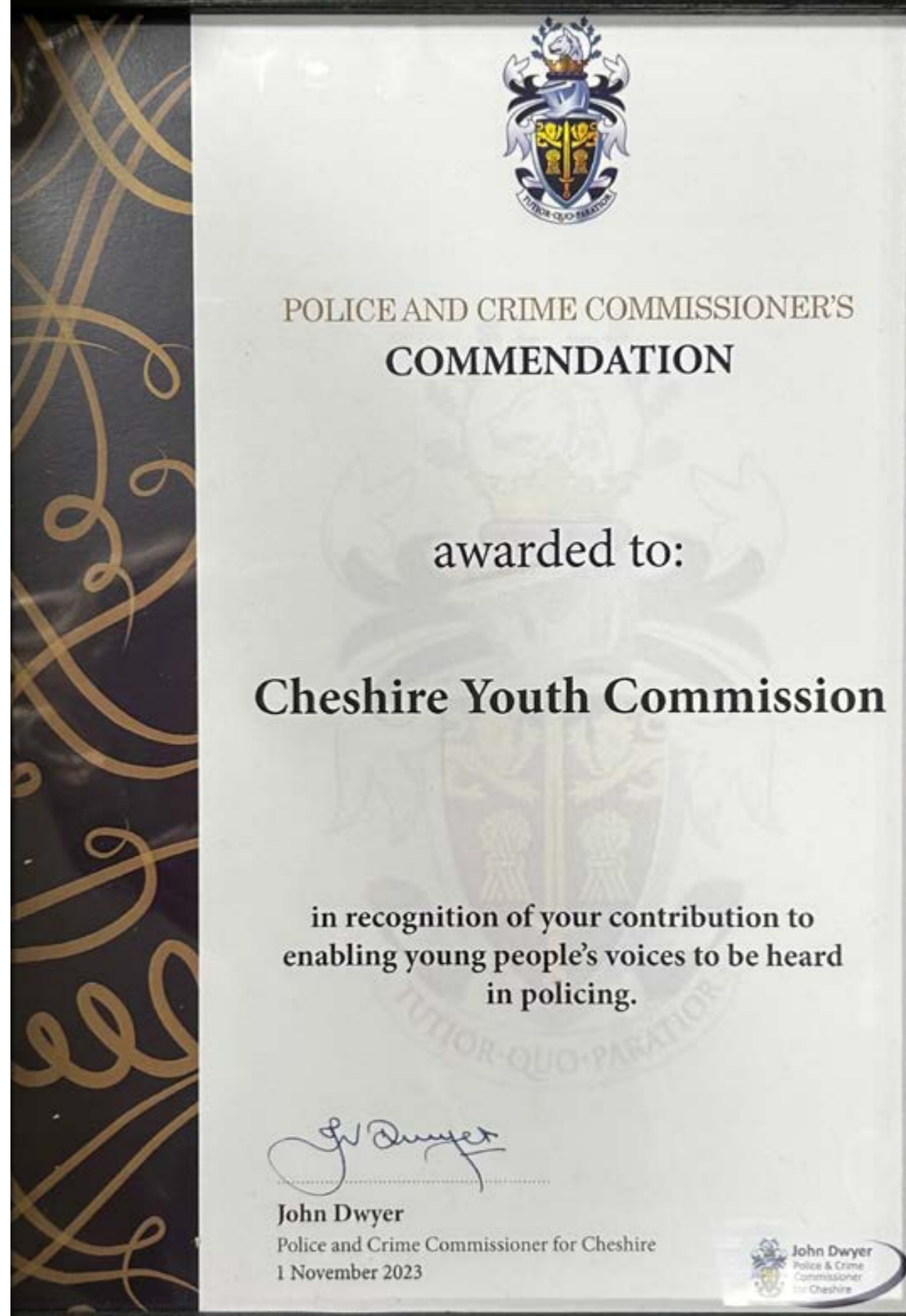
Following the successful 'Big Conversation' Conference held at the Cheshire Constabulary HQ in Winsford, the CYC was honoured to be presented with a **Commendation by the PCC John Dwyer**. This was awarded in recognition of the CYC's ongoing **contribution to enabling young people's voices to be heard in policing**. This incredible achievement is a true testimony to the young people's dedication and hard work to make a positive impact within the sector.

WHO WE'VE REACHED

The CYC has actively engaged with over 1400 young people across Cheshire. The CYC ran 16 events in a wide range of localities across the county.

This year, the CYC focused on delivering targeted workshops to engage young people with experience of the criminal justice system, young people from youth clubs and young people with disabilities.

Priority	Responses
Hate Crime	338
Online Safety	400
Community Safety	308
Relationships with the Police	359
Grand total	1,405



OUR PARTNERS

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Brookvale Club and Theatre | Jabbin Dabbers boxing club |
| Cheshire College South & West | Remedi |
| Chester Pride | Wishing Well |
| Child Bereavement UK | YMCA Crewe |
| Cheshire Constabulary | Youth Justice Service Cheshire West and Chester Council |
| Congleton High School | Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire |
| The Heath School Runcorn | |
| Helsby High School | |



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

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alex Godfrey | Jess Crossett |
| Alfie Byrne | Jessica Whittaker |
| Amy Mules | Joanna Krupska |
| Ashley Hall | Laura Dmitrijeva |
| Bella Mulcock | Leah Priestley Black |
| Chelsea Cromwell | Lola Eaton |
| Chloe Whitehead | Lucy Boland |
| Clarissa Rigby | Lujean Elfturi |
| Ella Redmond | Max Crompton |
| Emilia Stone Nevado | Molly Sharkey |
| George Jenkinson | Natalie Gardner |
| Harriet Samantha Roylance | Oluwamuyiwa Soremekun |
| Harriet Smith | Ruby Turner |
| Isabella Permberton | Sam Dix-Baker |
| Jade-Louise Regan | Sumaya Saleem |
| James Oddie | William Davies |

A final thanks to this year's Project Coordinator Becca Evans and Project Manager Gabrielle Jones who were instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.



PRIORITY 1: HATE CRIME

The CYC has spoken to **338 young people in Cheshire** relating to Hate Crimes. Young people raised their concerns about how Hate Crime are most prevalent within schools and aren't taken seriously by teachers or the Police. This makes young people feel unsupported and less likely to report hate crimes. The CYC identified through the young people's recommendations that the Police and Partners should co-produce youth-directed campaigns to display their efforts of addressing and preventing hate crimes and raise awareness of anonymous reporting systems.

WHAT WE FOUND

Through our peer-led research, young people explained that the majority of Hate Crimes they experience, and witness are within educational settings such as schools and colleges. They identified a significant lack of intervention and punishment from teachers surrounding hate crimes.

"I was walking home from school and a group of kids started throwing rocks at a girl because she was wearing a pride badge."

"I was out in the early evening at the park and a group of students from my school saw me and started threatening to beat me up and yelling homophobic and transphobic slurs at me. They shoved me as I walked past them to leave the park."

"Doing things which could be considered a hate crime is very common in schools it's seen as a joke almost... it's easy to get away with."

"People openly say slurs directed at other races, people's sexuality and gender identity and seem to get away with it."

Young people expressed that they have misconceptions around the definition of a Hate Crime including what constitutes them being a crime, how to report it, if there are anonymous means, and what can be done to resolve their incidents.

"I don't actually know what the definition of a hate crime is? Like I know physical violence is but does the law cover verbal harassment or intimidation?"

"Wasn't made aware of anonymous reporting."

"Scared to report to the Police."

"They need to make people aware that anonymous reporting is a thing and anybody can do it."

Young people also voiced their concern over trusting the Police's responsiveness to Hate Crime reports, as they perceive the Police to hold prejudicial stereotypes towards individuals of different races and sexualities. They therefore perceive them to be unwilling to respond to their incidents.

"I have recently been bullied for being a girl and having a girlfriend which has upset me, I was under the impression that the Police don't respond to hate crime reports."

"Police system as a whole is prejudiced against the community and others whilst they do attempt to make an effort it isn't enough."

"A lot of hate crime experience and have reported but nothing happened."

Throughout the 'Big Conversation', young people shared a consensus that Hate Crime occur online through social media, in which **racism accounts for 39% of online hate crimes**. Young people also shared the detrimental impact online Hate Crimes can have on mental health.

"Someone could be acting like the nicest person ever in real life but a minute ago they just made fun of someone because of a disability they had behind their screen...People are getting upset because their being told horrible things which damages their mental health."

"I have saw people being bullied online and being treated as if their not human. I've saw people being told to kill themself by others."

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CHESHIRE POLICE:

Increase awareness of Police efforts to address and prevent Hate Crimes via posters, and targeted social media content e.g. TikTok, on their ability to prosecute Hate Crime offences.

Go into schools and colleges to raise awareness of Hate Crime and the consequences if a Hate Crime is committed.

Provide case updates for victims to build confidence that the Police are taking hate crimes seriously.

FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER & PARTNERS:

Co-produce campaigns with organisations and young people to share the different types of Hate Crimes and what the law says.

Raise awareness about the effects of Hate Crime on mental well-being through talks and posters within schools/colleges.

Provide more support for teachers on the signs of Hate Crime and how they can support a young person through the reporting process.

FOR THE CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Deliver workshops educating young people on what Hate Crimes are and their definitions.

Raise awareness of the effect Hate Crimes have on mental health through online or in-school advertisements/posters.

Develop a social media campaign on how to report Hate Crimes and reduce the stigma and feelings of mistrust from the Police.





PRIORITY 2: ONLINE SAFETY

The CYC has spoken to **400 young people about online safety**. The CYC set out to explore young people's experiences of online safety in Cheshire and identified this priority was of big significance in their lives. Young people shared a prominent need for more safety precautions on social media sites to ensure their risk of grooming and exploitation is minimised.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people in Cheshire shared their regular experience of hearing about exploitation and online grooming with some witnessing this for themselves. They revealed that they frequently receive unsolicited messages and unwanted inappropriate pictures from strangers on social media.

"There are plenty of young girls who are sent unsolicited 'messages' by older men who try to take advantage of them, and it seems to be getting worse with younger and younger children receiving these messages."

"My friend talks to people she doesn't know online, and I want it to be safer for her."

"Children are being groomed by older men."

We found that young people expressed that they are at high risk of harassment and cyberbullying, which can have detrimental effects on victims including serious mental health implications.

"People are getting bullied online and it isn't right."

"Online safety is a very important thing that should be monitored for the safety of young children everywhere who uses technology. Safety is important as young children can be victim to abuse and hate from people who are hidden behind a screen dishing out hate. This can lead children to do things would not normally do and possibly become depressed from this."

Young people also stated that there is a lack of education within schools surrounding how to stay safe and protect themselves online and that there should be more awareness of support services on how to report online crimes.

"More public talks at schools, contacting social media sites about the issue, informing children what they can do to keep their social media safe, having a report system easily available at school or Police for these issues as some girls may be embarrassed to talk about this."

"Have more moderation in place and serious lessons on cyber safety for all age groups."

"Encourage children to talk about cyber bullying or anything similar that has happened to them and ask them what they can do to stop this and help other people who are victims."

The 'Big Conversation' found that there was a unanimous need for more security precautions in place on social media sites to protect young people, these included age restrictions, privacy settings, and guidelines to restrict inappropriate language and behaviour.

"Don't add strangers, age restrictions in place, educating parents so they can monitor accounts because it happens so frequently in children for exploitation of social media."

"Enable for safe search to be everywhere and on every media platforms to be available."

"Age identity before talking to strangers and before signing up to apps."

When asked if they would report online offences, young people stated they would not due to not knowing about available anonymous reporting systems. This makes them feel their concerns won't be taken seriously and nothing will be done to about their incidents.

"No one takes it seriously when you report, it's just block/log off."

"Make it easier to report, anonymous reporting."

"Have it so it's easier to report unwanted content and have better filter on apps so unwanted content is blocked."

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CHESHIRE POLICE:

Increase public trust in Police responses to online offences by sharing social media coverage of successfully prosecuted offences to make young people more likely to report crimes.

Share within schools and Cheshire Police social media about how and why action is taken against online crime and those who commit it.

Promote the accessible ways to report online crime and talk young people through the process and how to do so.

FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER & PARTNERS:

Support services to work with the Police on training PCSO's on how to support victims of online crime including cyberbullying, grooming and exploitation.

Raise awareness of existing anonymous reporting systems to make young people aware of services available and how they access them.

Work with the Police to improve existing workshops in educational settings to discuss what online safety is, how to identify dangers and the impact it has.

FOR THE CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Distribute posters and social media posts promoting staying safe online.

Visit schools, colleges and youth groups to deliver workshops to engage and listen to young people on online safety concerns and ideas.

Work with the Police to create an educational video on how to be safe online.





PRIORITY 3: COMMUNITY SAFETY

The CYC has spoken to **308 young people across Cheshire relating to Community Safety**. Young people expressed that a majority of their areas felt safe but would avoid specific zones at night populated by gangs of teenagers, people on drugs or drinking alcohol. These areas make them feel intimidated and unsafe, due to prior experiences of hearing about stabbings and attacks. The CYC identified recommendations for the Police and Partners which involve running interventions for knife crime, raising awareness of the current 'Safer Streets' campaign and funding to create safe spaces and youth clubs for young people and women at night time.

WHAT WE FOUND

Within the 'Big Conversation', 60% of young people described that their areas felt safe with few incidents of crime in a community where everyone is perceived as nice.

"People seem to get along in Congleton and there is little crime."

"In my opinion the community safety is fine and most people are nice."

"I think our community is so caring."

We did hear from young people, especially women, that said they don't feel safe walking around at night and would avoid areas with intimidating large groups of young people wearing hoodies.

"Don't feel safe walking around at night as a young woman, more needs to be done to make it a safe and better environment for young women."

"In Congleton, there are not many issues on the streets, but they can look scary at night due to people in hoodies."

We found that in more rural areas in Cheshire, young people reported that they had rarely experienced crime and therefore felt crime was under control and dealt with effectively by the Police.

"I live in a very rural area and most people are quite nice."

"Because I'm in the country we don't get many things wrong."

"The safety in our area is very secure and the area we live is monitored to a very high extent."

Through peer-led research, young people shared that there was a 'big problem' with drugs, alcohol and vaping within their communities which made them feel unsafe in these areas, and when they made a report, they felt it wasn't taken seriously by the Police.

"When I'm out in town there are lots of drunk people and druggies hurting children."

"I always see people drunk and being strange downtown and it intimidates me."

"Nothing is done with drug reports."

Young people expressed concerns over the prevalence of knife crime and violent attacks which were reported high in areas such as Crewe, Congleton and Ellesmere Port after witnessing and hearing of stabbings in public places.

"Someone stabbed at the co-op in Congelton."

"A lot of attacks happen to children outside of school and a lot of the time nothing is done about it."

"Issues vary within certain parts of the area, some parts have higher rates of drug usage whilst other areas have higher rates of violence and knife crime."

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CHESHIRE POLICE:

Share campaigns to approach the issue of knife crime and support those affected.

Reassure young people that if they report a crime their incident will be taken seriously and they are supported, to ensure they feel comfortable to come forward in the future.

Increase the number of Police on patrol during the night time to ensure women and young people feel safe.

FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER & PARTNERS:

Initiate campaigns to tackle and raise awareness of the drug and knife crime problems in communities.

Work with local authority to designate funding towards creating safe spaces at night, and increase streetlights and CCTV in areas such as unlit parks.

Provide more funding opportunities for local charities and organisations to access to provide safe spaces and support for young people in the community.

FOR THE CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Implement engaging activities around Drugs and Alcohol and Knife Crime to explore further young people's concerns and develop solutions on these topics.

Continue to gather information and solutions from young people in workshops to further develop ideas on safe spaces and what and where to go if you feel unsafe.

Work alongside the PCC to promote community safety by supporting and distributing their campaigns.





PRIORITY 4: RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE POLICE

The CYC has spoken to **359 young people throughout Cheshire involving Relationships with the Police**. Young people shared that they perceive the Police as intimidating and unresponsive to taking their reports seriously. This contributes to the negative relationship between young people and the Police, which is reinforced by their experiences of Police mistreatment, specifically of neurodivergent individuals. However, others shared their positive experiences with Cheshire Police and importance of them not be associated with the Metropolitan Police. The CYC identified recommendations for improving this relationship by assigning specialised training to Police and targeting their social media towards a youth audience to share successfully prosecuted cases and positive news stories.

WHAT WE FOUND

Young people told us that they are unsure if they would report certain crimes to the Police due to having little trust that the Police will take their incident seriously and would not being informed of the case outcomes.

"People feel unsafe, scared to report hate crime as what may happen to them."

"Reporting takes too long and isn't listened to."

"The Police don't follow up on hate crimes."

"Police don't act on anything we report so what's the point."

"Sexually harassed multiple times at the same venue and case was passed onto someone 3 times and never got a resolution."

"I reported an attack on myself, and nothing was done about it."

Through peer-to-peer communication, young people shared their positive experiences when interacting with the Cheshire Police, including making them and their communities feel safe.

"Police were friendly and really sound, making sure they made you feel safer."

"I spoke to the Police at Chester pride and they were good and friendly."

"I think the Cheshire crime commissioner have done really well at keeping the roads safe."

"Good experience, had encountered violence and Police dealt with it greatly."

"I spoke to them when they came to the college and spoke about what it's like working as an officer. They spoke really well and enthusiastic about the job! They were really friendly and approachable."

Within our responses, 63% of young people felt it important for the Police to receive specialised training around mental health issues, specifically neurodivergent young people and how to engage with these individuals appropriately. This would help the Police to recognise and understand the differences between mental health conditions and criminal behaviour.

"I used to get regularly stopped and searched if I was stimming and under suspicion of drug use when I am actually just autistic."

"Brother has autism and Police were called to help. They handcuffed him tight and took him into hospital."

"Mental health related incidents. Some officers were very helpful and empathetic and some made the situation worse."

Throughout the 'Big Conversation', 61% of young people in Cheshire shared that they are unlikely to interact with the Police on social media due to the reporting negative stories and perceiving the website as being boring as a contributing factor.

"Police social media is boring."

"Social media and Police are negative."

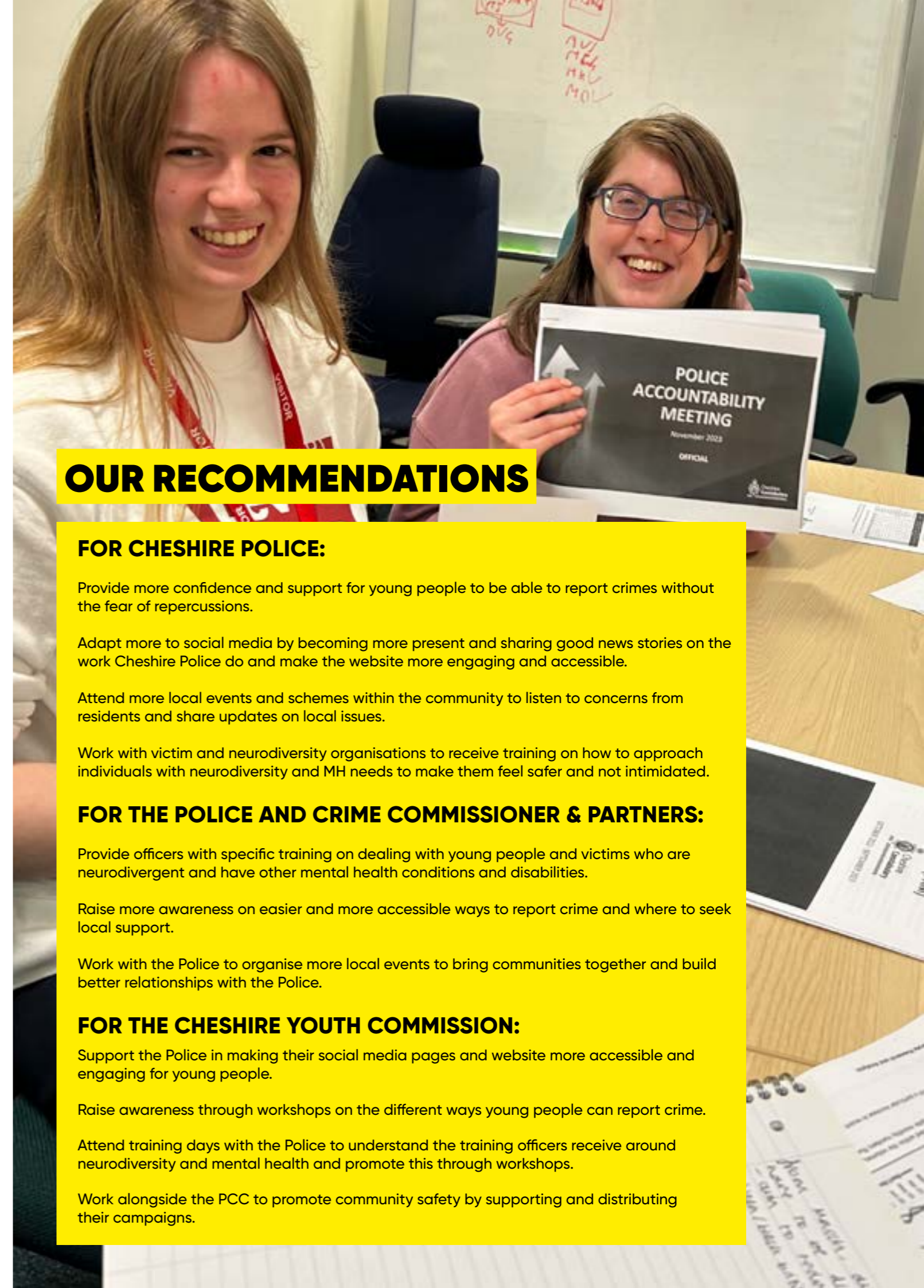
"Advertise good news stories on social media and billboards."

The negative press surrounding the Metropolitan Police can impact young people's perceptions of all police officers, however young people also thought it was important to not associate Cheshire Police with this negative light.

"It's only like 2% of officers that can be seen as bad but means the rest get a bad rap."

"Cheshire Police have not personally reflected what was found in the MET report."

"The Mets failings have had a ripple effect across the UK and confidence in policing and this can and will tarnish the way people and the youth look at the Cheshire Police. Our main focus is young people. Something we don't want to happen is for the youth to grow up with a lack of confidence in the Police due to the negative views of the Met. In order to change this and maintain good relationships with the youth we must work together to ensure that Cheshire Police is separated from this stigma. Cheshire Police aren't the met we are a good Police force and its important we show young people this. It therefore shows the importance of running projects like this to show young people Cheshire Police is not the met and share positive experiences."



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CHESHIRE POLICE:

Provide more confidence and support for young people to be able to report crimes without the fear of repercussions.

Adapt more to social media by becoming more present and sharing good news stories on the work Cheshire Police do and make the website more engaging and accessible.

Attend more local events and schemes within the community to listen to concerns from residents and share updates on local issues.

Work with victim and neurodiversity organisations to receive training on how to approach individuals with neurodiversity and MH needs to make them feel safer and not intimidated.

FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER & PARTNERS:

Provide officers with specific training on dealing with young people and victims who are neurodivergent and have other mental health conditions and disabilities.

Raise more awareness on easier and more accessible ways to report crime and where to seek local support.

Work with the Police to organise more local events to bring communities together and build better relationships with the Police.

FOR THE CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION:

Support the Police in making their social media pages and website more accessible and engaging for young people.

Raise awareness through workshops on the different ways young people can report crime.

Attend training days with the Police to understand the training officers receive around neurodiversity and mental health and promote this through workshops.

Work alongside the PCC to promote community safety by supporting and distributing their campaigns.

CONCLUSION: TAKING THINGS FORWARD

The CYC members have shown incredible devotion and enthusiasm throughout the project, and we are thankful for all of their hard work. We are also extremely grateful to all the local Partners who have been involved in making this project a success.

Over the next year, we will continue our 'Big Conversation' with young people across Cheshire and continue working closely with Cheshire Constabulary to enable positive relationships between the CYC, Cheshire PCC and Cheshire Police.

The CYC members will also be crucial in developing the recommendations that have been set out within this report and continue to give young people a voice on the issues that affect them.



TESTIMONIALS

I am grateful to the Cheshire Youth Commission for another year of really valuable work that informs policing and ensures young people's voices are heard.

Engaging with over 1,400 young people over the course of the year is no mean feat. Members of the Youth Commission give up their free time to have the sort of conversations with their peers which might not be immediately possible for me or the Police. This means we get the unfiltered insights that we need on young people's priorities and it enables us to act.

This year we've seen the Youth Commission's work expand in a really positive way, with increased Partnership working with Constabulary and wider groups. It shows that by getting involved you can make a real difference, and I hope we can continue engaging in that spirit.

John Dwyer – Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire

This has been my first year on the Cheshire Youth Commission. I've really enjoying delving deeper into some of the key issues that young people are facing. As a group we have discussed our key priorities and gathered views through online surveys and workshops. Personally I've been involved in going through our survey data, sharing our findings on the National Youth Commission conference and taking part in a Police accountability meeting. For me it's really important that our voices are being heard and I think it's a real privilege to be able to try and influence change around my area, especially as young peoples views and opinions aren't heard as much. I am looking forward to what 2024 has in store for the commission!

Harriet, Cheshire YC member

The last year has witnessed the Cheshire Youth Commission take an exciting new direction of leadership, and alongside that comes the pleasure of volunteering with talented and dedicated young adults, many with differing interests and personalities, joined by the love for their community and betterment of their peers. Through the commission, I have had the opportunity to engage with Youth Advisory Group projects, help lead workshops, engage in sessions with social workers and their clients, and more broadly attending social events such as college induction days and gay pride, discussing concerns both local and personal, of which you will see throughout this report. For those wanting to engage with a diverse team, and learn more about how Cheshire Police are partnering with young adults, it is a wonderful opportunity to try something new.

Will, Cheshire YC member

I started with the youth commission 2 years ago now due to staff at school recommending for me to apply. It seemed to be exactly what I would be interested in as I was looking to progress to be in the Police in the future. I loved getting the younger generation's opinion of crimes in their area and how they felt their crimes were being dealt with by the Police. It felt like the youth commission as a group were giving young people a voice and a chance to raise their concerns. The team were amazing to work with and all due to the great leadership of the Police and crime commissioner John Dwyer! He is so determined to let young people have a voice and express their concerns about the crime that they are witnessing in their areas. It shows how he is so keen on helping the relationship with the Police and the youths grow and become successful. Being able to attend the ACE awards with the Youth Commission was so enjoyable and to be nominated for an award showed just how vital and respected the Youth Commission is in Cheshire Police!

The youth commission made it clear to me that I wanted to be a part of the solution, no matter how small, and work in the Police. I applied to the special Constabulary and passed all my training and my final assessment in August, the support that the youth commission and John Dwyer gave me throughout the process was unbelievable! It truly felt like a family, a surreal moment for me was in 2022 being at Chester pride with the youth commission and completing the postcards with the young people who were attending the event. Then to return to Chester Pride in 2023 as a special, the youth commission gave me the support and motivation to apply and be apart of the solution. I can't thank the youth commission and John Dwyer for everything in the past 2 years, it has truly been a pleasure!

Molly, Cheshire YC member

Hi, I'm Bella, I'm 16 and this is my second year on the Cheshire Youth Commission. I really enjoy being on the commission as it gives me amazing opportunities to express my views on issues in my local area, but also collect and hear other people's views on issues they face. From this I really enjoy creating feedback for the Police departments on what young people feel are key issues and ways of improving these. The youth commission also runs some incredible experiences for us such as a two day takeover in Police HQ (Winsford). In these days we better developed our understanding around multiple policing departments, their jobs and roles, and how they attempt to better our community everyday. This was an eye opening experience especially as a 15yr old at the time. The youth commission also allows me to connect with people between the ages of 14-25 who also, like me, want to better our communities. This makes the YAG's and workshops so much fun to attend/run as you are always working alongside such lovely people whose end goal is always similar to yours. I also really enjoy our end of year conferences at Police HQ as I personally can voice my findings through the year and alongside my peers develop a factual powerpoint so the policing community can truly understand from us what it is young people feel needs to change. We have to sift through data and collate the main points, and then section these off into categories in order to present our findings. After our presentation we each take a table with a range of different PCSO's, officers or just schools and colleges and expand on our points to them. Overall the youth commission has been an amazing experience for 2 years and I can't wait to see what this year holds for us!

Bella, Cheshire YC member



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