

North Yorkshire Youth Commission: Key findings from the 'Big Conversation'

No Wrong Door
27th January 2016

Police and Crime
Commissioner
North Yorkshire



**LEADERS
UNLOCKED**

About North Yorkshire Youth Commission

- The project was set up in 2015 with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire, Julia Mulligan.
- The Youth Commission enables young people aged 14-25 to influence decisions about policing and crime.
- We have 30 members from across North Yorkshire. Their role is to go out into communities to gather views from other young people and to develop recommendations for change.
- Between August and January, NYYC carried out a 'Big Conversation' to gather views from over 1,500 young people about priority issues.



Priority 1: Legal Highs and Drug Abuse

Our key findings:

- Young people have told us about many shocking first-hand experiences, e.g. panic attacks and hospitalisation.
- Legal highs and drugs are far too easy to access and affordable for young people.
- Most people don't have the knowledge they need about the long-term effects. Education is missing the mark as it is too general.
- This leads young people to feel pressured and influenced through the 'lad culture'.
- Police seem too judgmental and users feel they are negatively labeled.



Priority 2: Cyber-bullying and Internet Safety

Our key findings:

- Cyber-bullying and online harassment is on the increase, and young people are very concerned about it.
- It can lead to serious issues such as depression, social isolation, self-harm, and even suicide.
- Young people don't know what constitutes a crime online, and they lack confidence in reporting.
- Police and other agencies do not seem to have the technological literacy to respond effectively.
- There is a feeling of large-scale helplessness. The problem often seems beyond our control.



Priority 3: Hate Crime

Our key findings:

- Hate crime is a big issue for many young people today. People are being targeted due to their ethnicity, race and particularly their sexuality.
- Verbal abuse is a common problem, with young people using language that can be offensive or divisive. This can escalate.
- Not enough is being done to address hate crime with young people from an early age.
- There is a lack of confidence to approach the police because people perceive that the police don't understand the issues, e.g. sexuality.



Priority 4: Vulnerable Young People

Our key findings:

- Mental health issues among young people are increasing. Young people aren't being diagnosed effectively or early enough.
- Many young people have told us about personal experiences of domestic abuse, sexual assaults and grooming. Often, they don't feel they can talk about it.
- When people run away from home, it is easy to get trapped in a cycle of crime. Sometimes no one asks the reason why the young person ran away.
- Young people are not reporting crime as victims and they don't know who to talk to. There is a lack of joined-up support from the police and other agencies.
- This leads to serious crimes going unreported and victims not getting the support they need. Instead, they are trapped in a cycle of crime and vulnerability.



Priority 5: Preventing Youth Crime

Our key findings:

- If the benefits of crime seem greater than the consequences of getting caught, people will continue to commit crime.
- Many people want to see more CCTV and greater police presence, but this will not work if the consequences are not clear.
- Young offenders have told us that they weren't aware of the consequences of their actions. They become trapped in a cycle of low life opportunities.
- The sources of youth crime are not being tackled enough, e.g. vulnerability and drug abuse.
- Solutions need to tackle the sources of youth crime, and highlight the long-term consequences of crime for both offenders and victims.



Priority 6: Relationship with the Police

Our key findings:

- Police presence makes young people feel safe on nights out, and the police presence is good on campuses.
- However, many young people feel they are judged by their looks, clothing and where they live. They feel they are singled out for no reason.
- Stop and search processes could be improved. Many people don't understand the reasons behind it and they don't know their rights.
- Young people lack confidence that the police will act on their concerns. Witnesses and victims often feel ignored and disregarded.
- Young people want to see a better relationship with the police. They want to know their local PCSOs better.

