

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Proposal for youth engagement following departure of Youth Commissioner
Item & Date: Item B3 2 June 2015

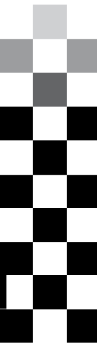
Executive summary: The Youth Commissioner, Kerry Boyd, formally commenced her role in April 2014. Kerry's brief was to engage with young people across the county to advise the Commissioner and inform the Police and Crime Plan. Kerry engaged with hundreds of young people and produced an interesting report that has been published on the Commissioners website. Kerry's contract finished in February 2015, a number of her recommendations have been included in the Police and Crime Plan.

To assist the Commissioner with determining how best to continue engaging with young people, a workshop was held involving young people and representatives of established groups/organisations who work directly with young people. Three options were identified for the Commissioner's consideration: another Youth Commissioner; create a new forum; and commission youth engagement out. The Commissioner has determined that her preferred way forward is to develop a new forum called the 'Youth Advisory Group'.

The Youth Advisory Group will bring together young people and representatives from a range of established groups who work with young people. Through direct and indirect engagement it will support, challenge and inform the work of the Commissioner. However, the Commissioner is also ring fencing £15k to enable the Youth Advisory Group to fund projects and support engagement activity with vulnerable or 'hard to reach' young people. The Commissioner is also keen that the Youth Advisory Group serves as a forum for other organisations to access young people and to engage with them.

Background:

1. In April 2014, Kerry Boyd formally commenced her role as Youth Commissioner. Kerry's brief was to engage with young people across the county to better understand their policing needs and opinions in order to advise the Commissioner and inform the annual Police and Crime Plan refresh.
2. Kerry engaged with hundreds upon hundreds of young people at Youth Councils/Parliaments, Pupil Referral Units and Detached Youth Provision seeking their views on policing and staying safe. Kerry also researched youth provision across the county, engaged with partners about youth services and participated in youth programmes – leading and mentoring young people.
3. Kerry produced an interesting report, which not only identified a range of issues affecting the relationship between young people and the police, but also recommendations as to how this could be improved for the future. Kerry's report has recently been published on the Commissioner's website.
4. A number of Kerry's key recommendations have also been reflected in the Police and Crime Plan following the 2015/16 annual refresh. These include:
 - Kent Police to pro-actively engage and maintain a rapport with young-people. This may include delivering educational packages, youth programme inputs or referring young-people onto community programmes.

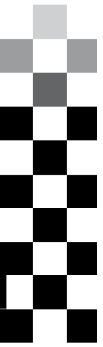


- Raise awareness of young people during officer and staff training.
 - Promote and support projects that aim to integrate young-people from diverse backgrounds. Work with partners to encourage the use of shared community spaces in a safe and non anti-social manner.
 - Work with partners to deliver consistent crime prevention and safety messages to young-people, including an awareness of what is considered anti-social behaviour and information on substance misuse.
5. Kerry's contract finished at the end of February 2015 and was not renewed. The Commissioner is now looking to the future and considering the best way of continuing to engage with young people and making sure their views are heard - after all, approximately 30% of the Kent population is under 25.
6. The Commissioner remains convinced of the need to 'listen and hear' as opposed to just 'talk at and tell'. The Commissioner is also keen to encourage young people who are perhaps more reticent to engage, to come forward – young people are the future and they need to have a voice.

Consultation:

7. To determine the best way of engaging with young people is clearly by talking to young people themselves and those who have direct experience of working with them. On 13 April 2015, a workshop was held involving a number of young people as well as representatives of established groups/organisations who either speak on behalf of, or work directly with young people.
8. In addition to two members of the Commissioner's staff, one of whom facilitated the workshop, participants included representatives from:
- Pipeline Youth Initiative
 - Youth Offending Service
 - Kent Police
 - Kent County Council – Specialist Children's Services
 - Medway – Specialist Children's Services
 - Kent Youth County Council
 - Medway Youth Parliament
 - Kent Police Independent Advisory Group
 - CXK
 - Democratic Services, Kent County Council
9. The following reflects the key areas of discussion:
- Recognition that in addition to engaging with the majority of young people who have no/limited experience of the police/other agencies, it is vitally important to engage with the small 'hard to reach' minority who have regular interaction. The reality is that probably two thirds of police/other agencies time is spent with this 'hard to reach' minority.
 - A need to raise awareness of current youth provision – how does a young person in the 'hard to reach' minority find out about the provision in their area?
 - Concern about simply creating a forum and expecting young people from a variety of backgrounds to engage. Recognition that alternative methods of engagement may be necessary (e.g. on the ground/in their territory and via those that the young people trust).





- General agreement that on the whole Kent Youth County Council and Medway Youth Parliament represent the majority of young people who have no/limited experience of the police/other agencies.
- Since hard cash had been invested previously – the Youth Commissioner's salary - there was concern that without a replacement the perception would be that the Commissioner had dis-invested in young people.
- Agreement that it's too visionary to try and engage with every young person in the county - this isn't achievable with adults let alone young people.
- Acknowledgement that services and resources available to young people vary across the county, therefore a one size fits all approach to engagement is unlikely to succeed.

10. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants identified three options as to how the Commissioner might engage with young people in the future:

a) Youth Commissioner

- General consensus that the Youth Commissioner role had been a success.
- Recognition at how mischievous and vicious the press could be and that this was a significant burden for one person.
- Concern that too often the press and others are quick to judge and can place an individual under intense scrutiny.
- Some concern at the workload and how effective one person can be at representing the views of young people across the county.

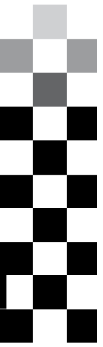
b) New forum (bring together workshop participants and representatives from other established groups)

- Recognition that partnership working is vital and that there is already a range of established groups with youth representation.
- Agreement that a new structure shouldn't be created - sensible to draw on established groups, but bring together to improve representation and add greater value.
- Kent Youth County Council and Medway Youth Parliament already have elected representatives, many of whom have specialist skills/knowledge.
- Act as an advisory panel – take burden off one individual and create a group who can engage and feedback.
- May require some funding to commission projects or support engagement with 'hard to reach' young people (e.g. by practitioners on the ground).
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide a co-ordinator role.
- Opportunity for multi-organisation access to young people (e.g. link to the Independent Police Advisory Group).

c) Commission out

- Commission an individual or established youth organisation to provide an advisory group.
- Part second staff from established youth organisations to perform engagement function.

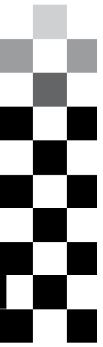




Proposal for future youth engagement:

11. Having considered the three options, the Commissioner's preferred way forward is to continue working with workshop participants to develop a new forum called the 'Youth Advisory Group'.
12. The Youth Advisory Group will bring together young people and representatives from a range of established groups who have direct experience of working with young people from across the county. This includes:
 - Pipeline Youth Initiative
 - Kent Youth County Council
 - Medway Youth Parliament
 - CXK
13. The Youth Advisory Group will support the Commissioner in listening and hearing young people by:
 - actively engaging and consulting with young people in local communities;
 - amassing a rich and varied evidence base;
 - advising on young peoples' concerns and priorities to inform planning and the annual Police and Crime Plan refresh.
14. The Youth Advisory Group will act as the voice of young people through:
 - Direct engagement: representatives acting as a Focus Group to obtain fast time feedback.
 - Indirect engagement: representatives engaging with other young people in their organisation and/or local communities, providing a safe environment for them to say what they honestly think.
15. However, the Commissioner also recognises the difficulties associated with engaging the minority, and that you can't simply put a group of vulnerable or 'hard to reach' young people in a room and expect them to talk. As a result, the Commissioner will ring fence £15k (the equivalent of the Youth Commissioner's salary) to enable the Youth Advisory Group to fund projects and support engagement with vulnerable or 'hard to reach' young people. For example, the engagement may need to take place on the ground, in their territory via established organisations/individuals they have a relationship with and trust – this may incur some costs, such as overtime or travel.
16. The Commissioner is also keen that the Youth Advisory Group serves as a forum for other organisations to access young people and to engage with them. For example, it is hoped the Independent Police Advisory Group will consider this an appropriate way to engage with young people in the future.
17. The Youth Advisory Group will support, challenge and inform the work of the Commissioner. It moves away from traditional methods of consultation, as it is driven by young people themselves and those who have direct experience of working with young people. This allows solutions to be put forward to problems young people identify or experience in their own communities.





18. Whilst the exact composition and size of the Youth Advisory Group is yet to be worked through with workshop participants, it will initially be chaired by a member of the Commissioner's staff. Any administrative overhead will also be absorbed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
19. It is anticipated that due to its on-going development and the summer holiday period, the first meeting of the Youth Advisory Group will take place in September 2015.
20. The Commissioner does not underestimate the value and insight young people and those who work with young people can provide in ensuring communities remain safe, re-offending is reduced and trust and confidence in the police is maintained. As a result, the Commissioner remains committed to engaging with young people and making sure their views are heard via her new Youth Advisory Group.

